

# Briefing Pack: What do we know about ethnicity in the family justice system in Wales? - Public law



Nuffield Family Justice Observatory improves the lives of children and families by putting data and evidence at the heart of the family justice system.

To be effective and fair, the family justice system needs to understand how the system is used and experienced by children and adults, and how this experience differs for different families. One way to consider this is to examine whether there are variations in the experiences and outcomes of families from different ethnicities.

The data presented in this briefing aims to contribute to the knowledge base around ethnic diversity in the family justice system.

### **Recommended citation**

North, L. , Hargreaves, C., Alrouh, B. and Barnett-Jones, B. (2022) *Briefing pack: What do we know about ethnicity in the family justice system in Wales? - Public law. Nuffield Family Justice Observatory.*

The following briefing packs are also available:

- *What do we know about ethnicity in the family justice system in Wales? - Private law*
- *What do we know about ethnicity in the family justice system in England? - Private law*
- *What do we know about ethnicity in the family justice system in England? - Public law*

### **Disclaimer**

Nuffield Foundation has funded this project, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory or the Foundation.

Copyright © Nuffield Family Justice Observatory 2022

100 St John Street, London EC1M 4EH T: 020 7631 0566

Part of Nuffield Foundation: Registered charity 206601

nuffieldfjo.org.uk | @NuffieldFJO www.nuffieldfoundation.org | @NuffieldFoundation

# About this briefing

- This briefing on public family law ethnicity and diversity in Wales is based on findings from:

North et al. (2022). *What do we know about ethnic diversity in the family justice system in Wales?* <https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/what-do-we-know-about-ethnic-diversity-in-the-family-justice-system-in-wales>

- We have created these bitesize briefing packs to give those working in the family justice system a snapshot of the ethnicity of adults and children in England and Wales accessing public and private law.
- They are designed to inform your thinking and reflections when reviewing your local data and when developing action plans that address questions of disparity and disproportionality in your local family justice area.
- We welcome questions and feedback after you have viewed them.

[contactfjo@nuffieldfoundation.org](mailto:contactfjo@nuffieldfoundation.org)

# About the initial study

The aim was to:

- produce an overview of the ethnic diversity of children and adults in public and private law cases in Wales
- consider, against the national picture, whether particular ethnic groups are over- or underrepresented in the family justice system in Wales
- set out recommendations regarding data collection and analysis

The study used:

- Anonymized individual-level, population-scale data on children and adults in public and private law cases, 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2020

The Cafcass Cymru cohort included approximately 122,500 records:

- 14,000 children and 19,500 adults in public law cases
- 37,000 children and 52,000 adults in private law cases

## **Linked data method**

Cafcass Cymru did not routinely collect ethnicity data, therefore the study used a linked data method to examine the ethnicity of individuals involved in the family justice system in Wales.

An individual-level ethnicity variable was derived using multiple data sources that record ethnicity and are available within the SAIL Databank. The data sources used to create this variable for this analysis included a range of health records (e.g. hospital admissions, GP records) and 2011 Census data. These data sources were harmonized and transformed into an ethnicity variable, based on the latest date an ethnicity is declared in any data source, and linked to the Cafcass Cymru cohort.

## **National ethnicity estimates**

National ethnicity estimates are from the publicly available Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2019 experimental statistics (ONS 2021). This report uses the same 5 ('high-level') ethnic group categories as the 2011 Census.

# Number of adults involved in public law cases from different ethnic groups in Wales

- White
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- Other ethnic group



The numbers on this slide reflect the 2,300 adults for the fiscal year 2019/2020.

# Number of children involved in public law cases from different ethnic groups in Wales

- White
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- Other ethnic group



The numbers on this slide reflect the 1,680 children for the fiscal year 2019/2020.

# Who is over or under-represented in public law?

- Individuals in the Black, African, Caribbean or Black British and Other ethnic group reflects the proportion of individuals in the White group
- Individuals in the Asian or Asian British group are around **50%** less likely per 10,000 to be involved in public law proceedings than individuals in the White ethnic group
- Individuals in the mixed or multiple ethnic groups are **1.75 x** more likely per 10,000 to be involved in public law proceedings than individuals in the White ethnic group

The numbers on this slide reflect children and adults for the fiscal years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The population estimates are taken from the 2019 ONS estimates.



# Conversation starters: What next?

- How can we gather information from groups who have been historically (understandably) wary of providing data, or unable to?
- What do you know about ethnic representation in your area?
- Are some ethnic groups overrepresented in your area? Why might this be?
- Are there differences between ethnic groups regarding case duration, final order, why might this be?
- Does the data provide insight into how different ethnic groups are accessing the family justice system in your area?
- What actions can you take to better understand how different ethnic groups are experiencing the family justice system in your local area?
- Deep dive case analysis, user feedback surveys?

# Get in touch

Nuffield Family Justice Observatory is now in the fourth year of its pilot phase (2019–2026). It is incubated and funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

Our work reflects Nuffield Foundation’s commitment to independent thinking, collaboration and rigorous, evidence-based research.

We are always keen to expand our network of partners and would invite anyone who is interested in improving the lives of children and families in the family justice system to get in touch.

E [contactfjo@nuffieldfoundation.org](mailto:contactfjo@nuffieldfoundation.org)

T +44 (0)20 7323 6242

Copyright © Nuffield Family Justice Observatory 2022

100 St John Street, London EC1M 4EH

T: 020 7631 0566

Part of the Nuffield Foundation: Registered charity 206601

[nuffieldfjo.org.uk](http://nuffieldfjo.org.uk) | @NuffieldFJO

[www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org) | @NuffieldFoundation.

