**WESTMINSITER HEALTH FORUM**

**Reducing Health InEqualities in England**

**What should BEST START look like?**

 ©J Willicott

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

It's more prudent to head off a disaster beforehand than

to deal with it after it occurs.”

– 'De Legibus' (c. 1240)

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What has changed since Marmots review ‘'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' 2010? Well a lot, Mental Health has been pushed to the fore, only because of the UN’s recommendations way back in 2010 and again in 2012 and the Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020’ - ‘Social Determinants of Mental Health’ and ‘ROAMER: A Roadmap for Mental Health and Wellbeing Research in Europe’ (ROAMER).

But whilst that is all well and good, one could say: ‘at east we are talking about Health/Mental Health – but what about the massive white elephant still standing in the room, aka (the A word) [Austerity] and its dire political and fiscal ramifications held against early intervention, the best start in life?

The UK prides itself in being the 5th/6th largest economy on the planet earth, however the ‘health data’ somehow doesn’t reflect that. As a professional health scientist and researcher, I was forced to become a carer and home educator, I am not only a statistic, but l am the lived experience.

For this article, I will highlight Domain 5

The latest Annual Global Kids Index published [14:2:19] delivered is clear succinct data on the UK. The KidsRights Index is the annual global index which ranks how countries adhere to and are equipped to improve children’s rights. The KidsRights Index is an initiative of the KidsRights Foundation, in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam: Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies. It comprises a ranking for all UN member states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and for which sufficient data is available, a total of 181 countries.

There are 181 countries in total, each country adhering to 5 Domains that cover Children’s Rights.

Those domains are:

1. Right to Life
2. Right to Health
3. Right to Education
4. Right to Protection
5. Enabling Environment for Child Rights

The UK is notably one of the most powerful and richest countries on earth, currently ranking 6th.

However, when it comes to Domain 5 & Domain 3, we are one of the worst nations in the world.

Richer does not necessarily mean better...

Out of the 181 countries, we are ranking 170th, we used to be 11th.

• 2013 we were 11/156
• 2014 we were 8/165
• 2015 we were 17/162
• 2016 we were 11/163
• 2017 we were 156/165
• 2018 we were 176/182
• 2019 we are now 170/182

What is Domain 5:

Indicators:
- Non-discrimination
- Best interest of the child
- Respect for the views of the child/child participation
- Enabling legislation
- Best available budget
- Collection and analysis of disaggregate data
- State-civil society cooperation for child rights

THE UNITED KINGDOM NOW RANKS 181/181 on Domain 5.

Why:

“The developed nation of United Kingdom (rank 170) and New Zealand (rank 169) both hold bottom positions following very poor performances in domain 5, that is the Enabling Environment for Child Rights. This is mainly due to a harsh assessment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to the enabling environment for children’s rights in the UK and New Zealand. However, this doesn’t mean that children in the United Kingdom are necessarily worse off than children living in countries ranking above the United Kingdom. It does mean that the United Kingdom should invest more in children’s rights, in line with the resources it has available.”

[https://www.kidsrightsindex.org/](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.kidsrightsindex.org%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2BKW51K8o5bHHNXre6XzMj-DwRdyob3jk9eGtqMP_wfoPPTw3LSncJrzk&h=AT3HNI5sBXM6ok7wrNVG-X_58Axmqr4Jctf5hZpTsYqLhjXgTJpuv2FXXmNeLax4fYAkKyO825r1kse6g473y0nRICth7fAkYWr76cE_HE9mpHJ5vXmWkSp0NwiihO3IoGUc0rgpMzVYoKqBYj0d3jW2fojwUDtqIq20W4L7g09iH-t2mq9anTWciyzLKCQgsAhrWAltCbpBhC7F7RzUIh_aco4omcSyOq5GTUzRIlVSuAte9xhlZoLkAupXjp-_Pjkgs7Ets6ApXp0bHqy603CQaolXGvIvoBch8qhCg4zaQgsnqcULfDTdL0kbVf7CnpiUzwk6w3-_47ZSI1Uu4uO7pPGamEAPvG9gi48HQVj-YBKLuR0KQ636Xh6IHNNIXY-unrlfWWl_26bQ3sJlUXUq1y_sxBrS24xlNzeody1H6MrEibrBA8wMkEfq19IH4TtGwKnkjHu3dHl31cavtiQW1sPcqAdQ_rY0DySHmbMTUYyMqp9NFC8RoEoiHTWZ700izHehoCUQXlNzVNgDkn2NSW3ucC0Ej4Gh371LkwmLR_A4GNIMxcy11KOeh50Xp4LmtyNKY7nwo2MteWwOuuP2ecGgL5MryySsGQddiPjj8xahLG5izArRsJPw)

In truth, we have only started talking…. Whilst, politicians, health professionals, Local Authorities, Government Departments and Parliament, simply smile and say, ‘lets look at the positive’.

Looking does nothing, it simply highlights the path ahead, but what matters is that action is brought to the fore.

As health professionals’ leaders and politicians, we should by now understand what health means. During the conference, it was pointed out, ‘well, what does health mean’? or ‘what is the real definition of heath’? Should one have had to be Oxbridge educated to really implement the Health Principles [1946]? The definition of health is clear – ‘Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’

Do we have to go back to the drawing board as a whole nation to apply the most basic of all nuances…. Primum non nocere? We cannot begin to implement local government innovations, if central government refuses to acknowledge the [A word] and the true meaning of Primum non nocere, otherwise the ‘Best Start’ will always fail.