

JANUARY
2007

looked after children
& young people:
we can and must do better

Working **together** to build improvement in the educational outcomes of Scotland's **looked after** children & young people.



one
scotland
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

looked after children
& young people:
we can and must do better

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ISBN: 978-0-7559-5305-9

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Edinburgh
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Produced for the Scottish Executive by Astron B49523 01/07

Published by the Scottish Executive, January, 2007

Further copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS

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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

The Scottish Executive has consistently pledged its commitment to working in partnership with local authorities, health boards, voluntary organisations and all other relevant individuals and agencies who have a contribution to make to improving outcomes for all looked after children; both those who are looked after at home and those who are looked after and accommodated.

The problems are deep rooted and difficult, but not impossible to deal with. The Executive's commitment to crack the challenges is greater than ever. We have already shown commitment in real terms by making available additional targeted resources of £16 million to support work in this area. This has yet to show results. Much more needs to be done to ensure that all looked after children and young people can access the same opportunities as their peers and are supported to develop to their full potential. Scotland needs all of its young people to succeed and we need to be ambitious and aspirational for each and every one of them.

This report indicates our desire to see a step change in outcomes for looked after children and sets out the actions which need to be taken to ensure that this happens. The status quo for these young people is simply not acceptable.

In taking this work forward we recognised the importance of seeking views from stakeholders – those actually providing and delivering support on a daily basis as well as those in receipt of that support. We wanted to hear about real experiences, to establish where we are getting things right and where the strengths of the system are, as well as where there are gaps in provision and more needs to be done.

That is why we set up a working group to consider the educational outcomes for looked after children and young people. It had a diverse membership drawn from the voluntary and public sectors, and included a foster carer and a care leaver. The group met on five occasions between November 2005 and June 2006, during which there was wide-ranging discussion.

As a result of these discussions it became clear that whilst the group was focused on educational outcomes it needed to look at areas beyond the traditional sphere of education that impact upon the lives of looked after children and young people and can, in turn, impact on their educational outcomes. This realisation led to the identification of 5 key themes:

- Working together
- Becoming effective life long learners
- Developing into successful and responsible adults
- Being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy
- Feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting.

These themes fit with Scottish Ministers' vision that all Scotland's children and young people should be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible, and included.

This report signals our intention to re-double our efforts to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people, a priority group in **More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland**, and a key priority under our **Closing the Opportunity Gap** approach to tackling poverty and disadvantage in Scotland.

By setting out the strategic way forward, resourcing the right initiatives and through improved working by local authorities in their role as corporate parents, we aim to enable our most vulnerable children and young people to achieve their potential and to develop their capacities as more successful learners, confident and resilient individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

This report raises many important issues: however the action points within it cannot be considered to be final achievements. Rather, we will continue to press onwards with further improvements and actively consider new approaches. We will: look at ideas that develop; continue to listen to stakeholders; and, consider lessons learned from the current educational pilot programmes.

Finally, we wish to thank each and every member of the group for giving so generously of their time in taking this work forward. We believe that it pays to work together; together we can make a difference.



HUGH HENRY



ROBERT BROWN



ALLAN WILSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is two-fold. At the heart of it, we are seeking to better understand the educational barriers and issues looked after children and young people experience. However, we also want the report to act as a catalyst in driving forward positive solutions.

Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better is intended for everyone who is concerned with looked after children and young people and their families; elected members, local authority staff, staff in voluntary organisations, private providers, foster carers, health professionals and those involved in developing and improving children's services.

The main impetus behind the report was a desire to see a step change in outcomes for looked after children and young people. To this end **Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better** reflects the discussions which took place during the meetings of the Ministerial short-life working group and refers throughout to the views and experiences of looked after children and young people.

However, looked after children and young people are not a homogenous group. The term 'looked after' includes children who are subject to supervision and live with family members as well as looked after and accommodated children who live with foster carers or in residential schools or care homes. **Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better** is concerned with all of these looked after children and young people; where the report refers to looked after children and young people, it means all looked after children and young people unless indicated otherwise.

The group's deliberations raised many important issues regarding all looked after children and young people. The depth and range of these issues and the group's views and concerns are reflected in both the structure and also the content of the report, and in particular, in the 'What the group said' section of each chapter. Thereafter, where 'We' and/ or 'our' is used, this refers to Scottish Ministers.

An additional useful term which is used in the report is:

- **Corporate parent** – meaning the formal and local partnerships needed between all local authority departments and services, and associated agencies, who are responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children and young people

Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better also builds on the excellent work contained within **More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland (More Choices, More Chances)** and the Social Work Inspection Agency's 2006 report, **Extraordinary Lives – creating a positive future for looked after children and young people in Scotland (Extraordinary Lives)**. It looks forward to the children's services reform signalled by **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**.

Crucially, **Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better** sets out 19 specific and targeted actions that we will deliver under the 5 key themes we identify in the report: working together; becoming effective life long learners; developing into successful and responsible adults; being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy; and, feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting.

The report highlights and addresses 8 notable messages:

- The importance of the corporate parent role;
- The need to raise awareness of the educational needs of looked after children and young people and improve training for all foster carers, residential workers, lead professionals, support workers and associated professionals;
- The need for clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of the designated person within schools and residential establishments;
- The importance of providing flexible and appropriate support before, during and post transitions;
- The importance of physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing in facilitating positive educational outcomes;
- The need for good quality accommodation, which supports the education, training or employment of looked after children and young people;
- The importance of clear advice and a range of emotional, practical and financial support for looked after young people as they make the transition to adulthood/ independent living; and,
- The vital importance of stability and continuity within education and care settings.

Further information on the actions and on how these will be delivered can be found in the main body of the report.

As **Extraordinary Lives** points out “there is nothing inevitable about looked after children doing less well in education”. We do see success stories and there are examples of both sound and also innovative practice in local authorities.

For children and young people who are looked after, it is our job to ensure that we are creating as many opportunities for success as it is possible to create; and that we put in place safety nets at every stage of their journey, which can help safeguard each child or young person when they come across barriers to success. It is our job to create a safe environment for Scotland’s children and young people and to assist them as they navigate their potentially trickier journey through life. We are committed to ensuring that this happens for all of Scotland’s looked after children and young people both now and also in the future.

Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better provides an opportunity to take forward this debate; to look more closely and in more detail at some of the factors outside of school which may impact on not only educational outcomes but also later, on the wider outcomes for these vulnerable children and young people. It has been an opportunity for us to understand the issues relating to educational outcomes in all of their complexity, and to respond to them in a way that acknowledges and takes account of this complexity. This has been an opportunity for us to set out how we will take forward positive and definitive action.

In **Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better** we build on both the positive work that has been previously undertaken and that which is ongoing. It is not, however, intended to be a final response. Rather **Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better** is the next chapter of a longer story; it sets out our next steps as we continue to work together to build improvement in the educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children and young people.

We hope you will agree that this report marks an important shift in not just how we view the issues and barriers faced by looked after children and young people, but also a shift in our emphasis on how we intend to make an impact on these educational outcomes. Together we can improve educational and life outcomes for Scotland's looked after children and young people.

The membership of the working group is detailed in Appendix A.



01 / WORKING TOGETHER

OUR VISION



Second best is not good enough for Scotland's looked after children and young people. As corporate parents, local authorities have a challenging role, and acting like good parents and being aware of the needs of their children and young people must be a key priority. In discharging their corporate parent responsibilities, they need to put and keep the needs of the child or young person at the centre of everything they do. It is essential that the individuals and agencies who form the corporate parent for Scotland's looked after children and young people are more aware and alert to their children's needs and work together to deliver for them.

OUR VISION

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WHERE WE ARE NOW:

As at 31st March 2006, there were 12,966 looked after children and young people in Scotland. Of this group:

- 56% were looked after at home by their parents or with other family members or friends and 44% were looked after and accommodated in foster care, residential or secure settings;
- Almost 53% of Scotland's looked after children and young people are aged under 12 years;
- Just over 64% of children and young people looked after in foster care are aged under 12 years;
- Almost 91% of children and young people looked after and accommodated in a non-secure local authority residential home or unit are aged 12 years or over; and,
- Over 90% of children and young people looked after and accommodated in residential schools are of secondary school age or older.

(Looked After Children Statistics 2005 – 06)

In recognition of the need to have more accurate information about looked after children and young people, we are working in partnership with local authorities to deliver a more robust and comprehensive data collection and reporting framework which will encompass wider education outcomes for Scotland's looked after children and young people.

Since the introduction, in April 2004, of the Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland Regulations, local authorities have a corporate parent duty to prepare young people for the time when they will leave care and live independently.

In light of this the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, a voluntary organisation established in 1998 to provide support to young people leaving care, have produced **How Good is Your Throughcare and Aftercare Service?**, a good practice guide and self-assessment tool. This guide was launched on 6th October 2006 and is aimed at service providers and relevant policy makers and builds on the statutory duties set out in the Regulations.

Extraordinary Lives reinforces the significant role of the corporate parent in relation to the lives of Scotland's looked after children and young people; "the single most important thing that will improve the futures of Scotland's looked after children and young people is for local authorities to focus on and improve their corporate parenting skills" but recognises that the role of the corporate parent is "ill defined and often misunderstood".

In relation to the educational element of the corporate parent role, some progress has been made as a result of the 2001 **Learning with Care - the Education of Children Looked After Away From Home By Local Authorities report (Learning With Care)**. For example:

- All local authorities have either developed or revised joint policies and protocols aimed at improving the educational outcomes of their looked after children and young people;
- All local authority educational establishments now have a Senior Manager who has a designated responsibility for looked after children and young people; and,
- Most local authorities have developed systems to gather relevant information in relation to the care and broad educational outcomes of their looked after children and young people.

A series of practical materials was also produced to support the findings of **Learning With Care**. The materials developed and subsequently published included:

- self evaluation indicators;
- a comprehensive training pack for foster carers, residential workers, teachers and social workers;
- a video outlining the views of looked after children and young people; and,
- an information booklet for foster carers, residential workers, teachers and social workers.

The 2001 **Learning With Care** training materials provide an ideal multi-disciplinary training opportunity for teachers, social workers, foster carers, residential workers and other relevant professionals working with looked after children and young people. They have been used extensively, although not consistently, across Scotland.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) is currently developing plans for specific inspection work into looked after children and young people, the aim of which is to ensure that provision for, performance of, and future planning for young people leaving care is rigorously evaluated and reported. The starting point for this work is the nine **Learning with Care** recommendations.

In addition to the various initiatives aimed specifically at looked after children and young people, Executive priorities such as the Integrated Children's Services Planning Framework, local Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) implementation, the new Quality Improvement Framework and joint inspections of children's services are helping local agencies to plan and deliver more integrated and child centred services. They also sit very comfortably with the concept of the corporate parent. Implementation of **Getting It Right For Every Child** will underpin these priorities by providing for a single assessment of a child's needs, a single plan and an electronic record - with a lead professional appointed to oversee delivery of the plan. We have proposed legislation as part of **Getting It Right For Every Child** which will place duties on agencies to be alert to the needs of children and to act to improve a child's situation; a duty on agencies to co-operate in order to meet the needs of children and to establish local co-ordination and monitoring mechanisms.

WHAT THE GROUP SAID:

The group felt that local authorities, as good corporate parents, need to ask themselves a number of key questions:

- Do elected members and senior officers know:
 - How many looked after children and young people their local authority has corporate parent responsibility for?
 - The reasons why their children are looked after?
 - The profile of their looked after children and young people, e.g. gender, race, religion and disability?
 - Where their children and young people are looked after?
 - How many placement and education moves children and young people experience whilst being looked after?
 - Whether the information above is appropriately shared between relevant council services?
 - That a clear set of outcomes have been agreed for looked after children?
 - If outcomes for their looked after children and young people are improving year on year?
- Do all educational establishments know which pupils are looked after, whether they are accommodated or looked after at home, and by which local authority?
- Is there clear guidance for social workers, foster carers, residential workers and teachers on what comprises full-time education? Do all local authorities know which of their looked after children and young people are not receiving a full-time education? Can they define the range and quality of education received by children and young people who are not in full-time education?
- Do social workers, foster carers and residential workers know who they can speak to in schools in relation to looked after children and young people? Do schools know who to contact? Do they know when contact is necessary and/or appropriate?
- Is there clear guidance for social workers, foster carers, residential workers and teachers on their role and on issues of confidentiality/ sharing of information about looked after children and young people?

The group agreed that all local authorities – from elected members and senior officers to individual workers, foster carers and residential workers across the authority – need to be more aware of their respective corporate parent responsibilities. They felt that an effective and aspirational corporate parent is central to improving the outcomes, including educational outcomes, of our looked after children and young people. They affirmed that they wished to see a corporate parent who is aware of the needs of their looked after children and young people, who takes their responsibilities seriously and who put the needs of their looked after children and young people at the centre of relevant planning, policy development and service delivery.

During the discussions of the working group, reference was made to the innovative approach being taken by the London Borough of Barnet in relation to their role as corporate parent. Barnet targeted issues such as the role of senior managers, budgetary control, recruitment and retention, training and valuing staff as part of this approach. However, it was the role of Senior Managers that attracted discussion in the group. As part of this approach, young people in the care of the London Borough who were due to sit their GCSE examinations were allocated a senior council manager, e.g. the Chief

Executive, the Director of Education and Children and the Head of Children's Services, to supervise their progress under a programme called **Education Champions**.

The young people and their **Education Champions** do not meet; but the senior officers work behind the scenes to address any barriers to progress as the young people approach their examinations. The group were interested in the results Barnet's approach achieved. In both 2005 and 2006, the GCSE results for Barnet's looked after young people were above the national average for this group of young people. In 2005 69% achieved at least one GCSE A-G, 51% received five GCSE A-G and 20% achieved five A*-Cs. In 2006 77% achieved at least one GCSE A-G, 54% received five GCSE A-G and 23% achieved five GCSE A*-Cs.

The group also felt that communication between education and social work departments was particularly important. They agreed that joint protocols and clear procedures need to exist and be used effectively to identify when a child becomes looked after or moves school – this was seen as vital in order to provide an appropriate and personalised level of support to each looked after child. Similarly the group felt that the pastoral care role within the school is a vital one, the importance and potential impact of which cannot be underestimated.

The group was critical of the fact that teachers and social workers, in the main, receive separate training. They felt that this mitigates against a shared understanding of the issues faced by these vulnerable children and young people, of the role of professionals and their responsibility as corporate parent. There was also concern that where initial teacher training includes only minimal coverage of looked after children and young people then teachers may feel ill-equipped to deal with this vulnerable group of young people. Similarly in relation to training for social workers, foster carers and residential workers, the awareness of issues surrounding the educational needs and outcomes for looked after children and young people is generally limited. The group felt that this was simply not good enough: more needs to be done.

The group also agreed that we need to be aspirational and ambitious for all of Scotland's looked after children and young people. In doing so, we must strike a balance between taking forward specific actions to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people, while avoiding labelling these children and young people and potentially isolating them from other services, which may also be able to help.

WHAT SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID:

Having Your Say "The Burning Issues in Education" (Having Your Say) highlighted three issues central to the theme of working together: raising awareness, training and sharing information. In relation to raising awareness, the children and young people thought that it was important to explain to the public and professionals, the different types of looked after status and what each meant. Under training, some children and young people suggested that it was important for young people to be involved in the training of staff. They identified behaviour management and circle time as crucial training topics. With regards to information sharing, the children and young people's views varied, with some supporting complete openness and others resisting what they saw as intrusion. However, there was general agreement that links between foster carers, residential workers and dedicated members of school staff and social workers should be clear.

The Debate Project 2005: Report (The Debate Project) agreed that there was a need for better partnerships between agencies and local authorities and that local authorities should “reinforce [young people’s views] through training.” These young people also believed that all support workers “should communicate and try not to duplicate work.” They emphasised their desire to be able to meet with local authorities and decision makers locally to ensure the issues that they valued were kept on the agenda. They felt that all decisions made about young people should be “explained more to young people” and that more young people should be involved in interviewing social work and care staff.

COMMON THEMES:

- **Working together** is essential to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people.
- **The role of the corporate parent** requires to be more clearly defined to ensure that the corporate parent works in the best interest of their looked after children and young people.
- **Training and raising awareness** of the educational needs of looked after children and young people amongst school, social work, foster carers, residential workers and the general public is essential.
- **The collection, reporting and sharing of accurate information** in relation to looked after children and young people underpins policy and practice development.

THE WAY AHEAD – OUR PLEDGE TO SCOTLAND’S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

We all have a responsibility for Scotland’s looked after children and young people.

ACTION 1:

We will fund the appointment of a Senior Executive who will work closely with Chief Executives and Senior Officials within each local authority. He/ she will discuss what is being done to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and young people and care leavers with the relevant corporate parents and will provide reports twice a year to Cabinet.

Next steps required

- a) We will identify and appoint a Senior Executive.

We cannot underestimate the importance of the corporate parent role.

ACTION 2:

We will work together with local authorities to identify measures which could be put in place to improve the effectiveness of their corporate parent role, and we will write to them in the first instance to alert them to this work.

Next steps required

- a) We will ask local authorities to explore how different approaches and/or models of corporate parenting, such as that developed by the London Borough of Barnet could be applied in their authority.
- b) We will work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to develop a “Good Corporate Parent” guide for issue to all elected members, chief executives and senior officers within each local authority. As part of this guide, we will recommend that councils ensure that:
 - a clear involvement and consultation policy for looked after children and young people is developed and implemented which will guarantee the inclusion of their views at every level;
 - all current and newly elected members are fully briefed on their role as corporate parent;
 - the council establishes a means of regularly “celebrating success” for looked after children and young people;
 - education (including further and higher education), training and employment needs for all their looked after children and young people are central to care/pathway planning and to the provision of appropriate accommodation;
 - policies and protocols are developed or revised, together with local health services, to incorporate a proactive strategy and procedure for ensuring that all looked after children and young people are provided with a comprehensive physical and mental health service;
 - elected members establish a robust scrutiny mechanism to ensure that a clear set of outcomes for looked after children are developed; including educational outcomes (including further and higher education), training and employment destinations, the number and nature of placement moves and moves between educational establishments. Those scrutiny mechanisms should regularly monitor progress across the council in achieving these outcomes.

Elected members have a central role in relation to ensuring that the corporate parent responsibilities of their council are discharged appropriately.

ACTION 3:

We will work together with COSLA and the Improvement Service to include corporate parenting in the induction programme for new elected members.

Next steps required

- a) We will meet with COSLA and the Improvement Service to discuss and agree how to take this forward.

Educational outcomes of our looked after children and young people remain poor when compared to the wider school population and there continues to be disparity within and between local authorities.

ACTION 4:

We will ensure that progress on improving the educational outcomes of looked after children and young people is one of the key components of the outcome agreements for children's services to be tested with pathfinder local children's services partnerships.

Next steps required:

- a) We will discuss and agree with pathfinder local children's services partnerships the content and appropriate resourcing of the outcome agreements.

Good corporate parents must provide support which meets the educational needs of their looked after children and young people and care leavers.

ACTION 5:

We will inform all local authorities, relevant educational establishments and care providers that they must be able to demonstrate in the course of their inspection cycles, that they actively meet the educational needs of all looked after children and young people for whom they have responsibility.

Next steps required:

- a) We will ensure that the joint inspection arrangements for services for children have a consistent approach in relation to incorporating outcomes for looked after children and young people into their inspections of local authorities, health boards, educational establishments and care establishments.
- b) The Care Commission, SWIA and HMIE will undertake specific inspection work into looked after children and young people to ensure the provision and performance of and future planning for young people leaving care, is rigorously evaluated and reported.
- c) To ensure a consistent approach across the country, we will encourage all local authorities, relevant educational establishments and care providers to use the appropriate **How Good Is Our School? (HGIOS) self-evaluation document, (Inclusion and Equality – Part 1: Evaluating education and care placements for looked after children and young people)**.
- d) We will encourage all local authorities, relevant educational establishments and care providers to develop an action plan, which is based on their HGIOS self evaluation and to be reviewed on an annual basis. We will ask the Care Commission, SWIA and HMIE to raise this at the time of inspection.
- e) We will ask the relevant inspection agencies to undertake an inspection of all local authorities in relation to the effectiveness of their corporate parent role by 2008.

Parents, foster carers, residential workers, teachers, educational psychologists, social workers, health workers, appointed lead person and/or other relevant workers do not always feel equipped to provide the appropriate support and encouragement to our looked after children and young people.

ACTION 6:

We will improve training for parents, foster carers, residential workers, teachers - including teachers in training – social workers, health workers and appointed lead professionals.

Next steps required:

- a) We will address foster carers' needs through the planned National Fostering Strategy and associated consultation.
- b) We will revise the **Learning with Care** training materials which emphasise the importance of multi-agency and partnership working to improve the educational outcomes of looked after children and young people. We aim to complete this work by Summer 2007. We will also consider accreditation of these materials.
- c) We will ensure that the Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care (SIRCC) embed in their training courses for residential workers, modules on emotional literacy and the education of looked after children and young people, based on the **Learning With Care** training materials.
- d) We will ensure that initial teacher educational (ITE) course directors review those elements of their courses that relate to looked after children and young people, to ensure priority is given to those aspects.
- e) We will continue to emphasise the need for multi-disciplinary working across service boundaries and the need to provide skills for staff, including leaders and managers in accordance with **Changing Lives**, the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, along with the complementary **National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland**. We are currently developing a paraprofessional role to serve this multi-agency working agenda.
- f) Building on the activity and development initiated by **Learning with Care** we will, in conjunction with ITE and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Providers, the National CPD Co-ordinator, and Learning and Teaching Scotland, compile a resource aimed at both student and registered teachers.
- g) Learning and Teaching Scotland, together with the National CPD Co-ordinator, will develop and facilitate CPD opportunities for teachers and other professionals to promote and support the educational participation and achievements of looked after children and young people.
- h) Learning and Teaching Scotland will use their multi-agency expertise to share good and innovative practice on parental involvement and supporting children's learning. In addition, they will communicate with parents, foster carers and residential workers through the **Parentzone** website on how they can support their children's learning.
- i) Through the **Heads Together** forum, Learning and Teaching Scotland will facilitate the sharing of ideas and emerging practice on a number of issues including leadership and approaches to supporting and raising achievement of looked after children and young people.
- j) Action plans for each child (as set out in **Getting It Right For Every Child**) will spell out the contribution of professionals and their responsibilities.

It is essential that we have accurate information on all of our looked after children and young people in order to meet their needs most effectively.

ACTION 7:

We will continue to work in partnership with local authorities to deliver a more robust and comprehensive data collection and reporting framework in relation to the educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children and young people.

Next steps required:

- a) We will establish a working group with relevant representatives of local authorities, information system providers, Who Cares? Scotland, and the Scottish Executive to consider current practice in this area and develop the new framework, in the context of the Scottish Executive's streamlining bureaucracy agenda.

Appointed lead professionals, foster carers, residential workers, teachers and young people want to be more involved in supporting educational attainment and sharing good practice.

ACTION 8:

We will fund the development of a national network and information website for professionals, foster carers, residential workers, parents and looked after children and young people.

Next steps required:

- a) We will commission the **LAC Education Forum**, in partnership with Learning and Teaching Scotland, to pilot the development of a national network and information website.



02 / BECOMING EFFECTIVE LIFE LONG LEARNERS

OUR VISION

Scotland's looked after children and young people should be encouraged and supported throughout their lives to maximise their educational potential. All of our looked after children and young people should have the required skills, knowledge and confidence to become effective life long learners.

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WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Guidance to the **Children (Scotland) 1995 Act** states:

Children who are looked after should have the same educational opportunities as all other children for education, including further and higher education, and access to other opportunities for development.

In reality:

- In 2005–06 the attendance rates for children and young people looked after at home was 84.8%, looked after away from home was 91.5% and for all looked after children and young people was 87.9%; compared to an attendance rate of 93.1% for children and young people who were not looked after.
(Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 2005–2006)
- In 2004–05, the exclusion rate per 1000 pupils for children and young people looked after at home was 323, for looked after away from home was 354 and for all looked after children and young people was 339; compared to 53 for those who were not looked after.
(Exclusion from Schools 2004–2005)
- In 2004–05, 4.1% of children not looked after left school with no qualifications at SCQF level 3 or above; this figure increased to 24% where the young person was looked after and accommodated and 41.9% when looked after at home.
(SQA Attainment and School Leaver Qualifications in Scotland 2004–2005)

Information regarding attendance and exclusion are gathered through schools management information systems and reported separately to the school census. Currently, while looked after children and young people are not always identified consistently within the various educational establishments, rendering the data gathered less reliable than it should be, there is general consensus that the statistics accurately reflect trends. Thus, it is widely accepted that, as a group, looked after children and young people perform less well at school; when compared to the general school population their attendance rates are lower, their exclusion rates are higher and their academic attainment is lower.

Extraordinary Lives acknowledges that looked after children and young people can face additional barriers to success in education, including a lack of full-time education (sometimes for substantial periods of time) when looked after children and young people are excluded from school. In addition it highlights particular difficulties faced by children in residential schools, including a shorter school week and weaknesses in pupils' attainment in English and Mathematics.

Because of poorer educational attainment at school fewer looked after children go into further and especially higher education. Raising the educational attainment level will provide greater opportunities for them to benefit from further or higher education. Educational attainment in itself will not be enough and colleges and universities must be responsive to the holistic needs of this group.

Of course, some looked after children and young people do well at school in relation to their attendance and attainment and go on to further education, employment or training. Building on the publication of the 2001 **Learning With Care** report there has been a variety of policy initiatives, both locally and nationally, to support children and young people to do just this.

Learning With Care recommended that each school should have a Designated Senior Manager with specific responsibility for looked after children and young people. This has now occurred; however there is still a great deal of variation as to how the role is both defined and carried out across Scotland.

We have established several targets around **Closing the Opportunity Gap** which focus on improving outcomes for this cohort of young people. Target B deals with reducing the proportion of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training; Target F looks to increase the average tariff score of the lowest attaining 20% of S4 pupils; and Target G aims to reduce the number of looked after young people leaving care who are not in education, employment or training.

We are also funding 18 local authorities across Scotland to take forward pilot work to improve the educational outcomes of looked after children and young people. These pilots target a cross-section of the issues and barriers to success in education which are raised in both this report and **Extraordinary Lives**. The initiatives include flexible teaching, homework and exam support, nurture groups, resilience based initiatives, transition support and training. All of the pilot initiatives will conclude by Summer 2008 and a national evaluation of the various initiatives will be published by the end of the same year. In addition, each of the funded local authorities will also produce a final report detailing the development and impact of their individual pilot initiatives.

In addition to the various initiatives aimed specifically at looked after children and young people, there are numerous policies and initiatives targeted at improving the educational outcomes and experiences of all Scotland's children and young people – especially those young people who may be at risk of school disaffection. For example:

- **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (the ASL Act)**, commenced in November 2005, aims to create a stronger, better system for supporting children's learning. This Act aims to ensure that all children and young people receive the additional support required to meet their individual needs and to help them make the most of their education. The term additional support needs applies to children and young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support in order for them to make the most of their school education. The Act introduces a new framework for supporting children and young people in their school education.
- The ASL Act imposes duties on education authorities (in Scotland these are the local authorities) to make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support needs for each child or young person and to make arrangements for identifying additional support needs. The Act also has significant implications for service providers and professionals working in health and social work and requires them, and other appropriate agencies, to help the education authority in the exercise of their duties under the Act when requested to do so.
- We provide authorities with £29 million per year within the National Priorities Action Fund (NPAF) which may be used for flexible support provision within schools.
- **A Curriculum for Excellence** reaffirms our commitment to provide choice and flexibility within education to meet the needs of individual young people.
- Our Positive Behaviour Team for **Better Behaviour – Better Learning** continues to provide training and support to education authorities and schools to embed approaches to promoting positive behaviour and relationships in school, e.g. Restorative Practices and Solution Oriented School.
- The **2001 Teachers Agreement** explicitly sets out that all teachers have a duty to promote and safeguard the health, welfare and safety of all.
- The **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006** recognises that children's learning outcomes are enhanced when parents, foster carers and residential workers are effectively involved in their education. The Act requires every education authority to prepare a strategy for promoting parental involvement, which must include how they work with parents, foster carers and residential workers in relation to children who are looked after.
- The Personal Support for Learning Implementation Team will be spending time focusing on raising awareness of the needs of looked after children and young people.
- We are promoting knowledge and understanding of the 10 standards for Personal Support for Learning (pastoral care) set out in **Happy, Safe and Achieving Their Potential** across all of the relevant bodies and organisations.
- HMIE will monitor and evaluate education authorities in their implementation of the **ASL Act** and will report to Ministers in Autumn 2007.
- The Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland **Life through Learning, Learning through Life** published in February 2003, has as one of its five goals, a Scotland where people have the chance to learn, irrespective of their background or current personal circumstances.

WHAT THE GROUP SAID:

The group agreed that a number of factors can contribute to becoming effective learners, including: the learning environment; family and home circumstances; health; and social and environmental factors. However, the group was critical of the current educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children and young people. They felt very strongly that these were nowhere near good enough; more must be done to improve the opportunities and chances for our looked after children and young people to overcome earlier disadvantage and become effective life long learners.

The group was adamant that to achieve the best outcomes for looked after children and young people it is essential that they receive the right sorts of supports and educational stimulation at all ages and stages of their lives; from pre-school to further and higher education. This is even more important for this vulnerable group of young people given their individual circumstances, which have led to them being looked after.

What can be challenging times for all children and young people – the transition from pre-school to primary school; the transition from primary to secondary school; the transition to post-school; subject choice; sitting exams; making decisions which affect future career options – can be particularly difficult for those looked after children who may also be coping with difficult family circumstances; a change of home; a change of school; or, as they reach adulthood, how they will cope living on their own.

Thus the group was shocked at how highly looked after children and young people feature in the exclusion rates from school. They felt that whilst it is important that head teachers retain the right to exclude disruptive pupils, schools also need to be aware of the many challenges and obstacles looked after children and young people face; schools need to deal with looked after children and young people's behaviour in, and attitudes to, school with sensitivity.

In addition, the group was extremely concerned about the anecdotal evidence presented which suggested that many of our looked after children and young people have experienced placement or school moves around the time of their examinations.

The group saw continuity, stability, a sense of security and support as key to ensuring that looked after children and young people do as well as their peers in terms of achievement and attainment at school and in positively participating in the wider school community.

These considerations led the group to ask:

- What mechanisms are in place to flag up how many looked after children and young people are in a school, or likely to be sitting examinations?
- What mechanisms exist to flag up when a looked after child or young person might require additional support?
- How easy is it for parents, foster carers, residential workers, social workers and designated members of staff to talk to one another?
- How confident do these people feel about sharing information?
- Is there clarity around the respective roles and responsibilities of the key people in a looked after child or young person's life?

The group acknowledged that there were no easy answers. However, there was a general consensus that we must be more aspirational and coordinated in our commitment to and delivery of improving educational outcomes for our looked after children and young people.

WHAT SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID:

Having Your Say came up with a powerful range of issues, which the children and young people felt needed to be addressed in their learning environment in order to impact more positively on their educational experience and journey. These were: homework support, exclusions, support in schools, role of the school base, access to professionals in schools, information sharing and transition. The most frequently cited priority for these children and young people was homework support and exclusions. However the children and young people were also vocal in the nature of support they desired in school, in the school base and when facing transition. These were: tutor support; advice leaflets on exclusions; assurance that exclusion would not become a process of "a one way road, with no return"; buddy systems; circle time; flexible packages of teaching support; chill out rooms; and opportunity to share concerns and worries and feel listened to in regard to these.

The **Debate Project** also considered the issue of education and the learning environment. While only just over a fifth of young people mentioned that they had gained or were studying for formal qualifications, at least half said they would like to go to college or to take up further education. However, nearly half of those who answered did not have a quiet room to study in or adult help or encouragement to study and learn. Young people also mentioned that poor literacy skills and grades, learning difficulties, lack of support and poor self-worth hindered their ability to achieve. The most commonly cited support that the young people involved in this project said mattered to them was: support workers, one-to-one support, friends, nice teachers, foster parents and someone to talk to and trust.

More than half of looked after children and young people consulted as part of the production of **A Different Class? Educational Attainment – the views and experiences of looked after young people, (A Different Class)** expressed their aspiration to achieve academically; however only a few were aiming for third level education and only females aspired to attend university. For younger children, their aspirations lay in the social aspect of school life and they were motivated by the need to learn. A key motivation for the children and young people was a positive relationship with teachers. For many of the children and young people their motivation was equalled by their aspirations. In relation to improving their educational outcomes the recommendations from the children and young people included: increase the numbers of teachers and support staff, increase class resources and decrease class sizes. In addition, the children and young people also recommended that there should be increased levels of participation in school and an increased awareness of the issues faced by looked after children and young people by school staff.

COMMON THEMES:

- **Learning environments need flexibility** in order to provide not only effective academic support, but also opportunities for personal and social support.
- **Self-worth and self-esteem** are integral to the learning process.
- **Exclusion and transition** are critical and potentially cross-road points in the lives of looked after children and young people; there is the strong potential that additional support will be required at these times, both as a preventative measure and also in response to their occurrence.
- **Raising awareness** of the educational needs of looked after children and young people amongst school, social work, parents, foster carers and residential workers is essential.

THE WAY AHEAD – OUR PLEDGE TO SCOTLAND’S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

Our looked after children and young people need someone both in school and at home who understands their issues and supports their educational attainment.

ACTION 9:

In partnership with COSLA, local authorities and Learning and Teaching Scotland, we will produce a list of core tasks which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the designated person within each school or residential establishment who undertakes this important role. The list of core tasks will be published as part of a practical resource developed to provide support for the designated person.

Next steps required:

- a) We will write to councils and independent providers of residential establishments asking them to identify a senior member of staff who will take particular responsibility for ensuring that appropriate resources are in place within their establishment for supporting the education of their children and young people.

- b) We will consult with existing Designated Senior Managers, lead professionals and relevant stakeholders, to collate information regarding current practice around:
 - the role and responsibilities of Designated Senior Managers/ lead professionals
 - sharing of information
 - recording procedures
 - homework
 - flexible curriculum
 - attending meetings/reviews/children’s hearings/parents’ evenings
 - “hellos and goodbyes” (welcome and transition procedures)
 - involving children and young people in decision making.
- c) Based on the outcome of the consultation, we will develop a list of core tasks and a practical resource and toolkit.
- d) We will publish and distribute practical resource to all educational establishments and all providers of residential care outlining our expectations in relation to this role.

There are too many disparities in transitional arrangements for our looked after children and young people, whether this is on entering the system, moving to a new placement, moving school, leaving school or exiting the care system.

ACTION 10:

We will commission the development of guidance and a practical resource which will focus on those looked after children and young people who have experienced or who are likely to experience a challenging transition.

Next steps required:

- a) We will commission an appropriate provider to develop a practical resource and toolkit, which will provide guidance, templates and activities on how to minimise the impact of beginning and endings in the educational and care settings, i.e. induction to new school, reintegration following school exclusion, and transitions to new learning and care experiences, settings and staff. This will include cross-reference to risk transition planning, as required by **Getting It Right For Every Child**, and the ASL Act as outlined in the guidance contained in the **Supporting Children’s Learning Code of Practice**.
Materials will be produced, with a view to being rolled out during the academic year 2007–08
- b) We will work with HMIE to develop a guide on effective transitions to post school taking account of the provisions of the ASL Act and the transition from school guidance produced by Skill Scotland.
- c) Post School Psychological Services, in rolling out the strategy as part of NEET implementation, the twenty services funded will be encouraged to ensure that looked after young people are a high priority group in developing improved transition support and information sharing procedures.
- d) **Getting It Right For Every Child** will put in place a lead professional where appropriate. This lead professional should either be, or liaise significantly with, the key person who supports educational attainment. The **Supporting Children’s Learning Code of Practice** also identifies

that the appointment of a key worker is something that should be considered for a child or young person with additional support needs during the transitional phase to post school provision.

Too many looked after children and young people continue to experience higher rates of non-attendance and exclusion than their non-looked after peers.

ACTION 11:

We will highlight the particular issues faced by looked after children in relation to school attendance and exclusion.

Next steps required:

- a) We have included specific reference to the needs of looked after children in our guidance on attendance in Scottish schools – **Engaged and Involved**. This is currently published for consultation and will be issued in 2007.
- b) We will review existing guidance to education authorities on school exclusion to ensure that it properly reflects their role as corporate parents and the specific needs and circumstances of looked after children.
- c) We know there are examples of good practice in Scotland where education authorities use corporate parenting training and their authority guidance on school exclusion to encourage special consideration of the needs and circumstances of looked after children when making decisions on how to respond to their behaviour in school. We will put in place a mechanism to share good practice in this area.
- d) We will continue to monitor and analyse differential data on exclusion of looked after children, and to consider what further action may be required.



03 / DEVELOPING INTO SUCCESSFUL AND RESPONSIBLE ADULTS

OUR VISION



Scotland's looked after children and young people will be encouraged and supported as they approach adulthood; they will be provided with the same types of opportunities as other children and young people, so that they may grow into valued, effective life long learners and successful and responsible adults.

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WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Looked after children can too often become needy, disenfranchised and alienated adults. It is widely accepted that they are more likely to: need mental health services; go to prison; be homeless; and, have their own children removed from them. The cost of wasted potential, of long-term support services including the cost of imprisonment, and of another generation of children in public care is almost beyond comprehension.

(BAAF and TFN 2005:4)

At the same time it is recognised that:

Each step up the educational ladder is associated with improvements in health, both mental and physical, employment, income, housing, family life, absence of addiction problems and lower involvement with the criminal justice system.

(Jackson and Simon 2005)

Success stories can and do happen. **Extraordinary Lives** highlights an example of a care leaver who had gone on to be successful at university and quoted his frustration at the lack of success stories in the public domain. **Extraordinary Lives** also highlights a range of factors which help care leavers to feel safe, more secure and valued, thus helping young people become more successful and responsible. A selection of these are:

- social skills and an adult to turn to
- good quality surroundings
- opportunities to experience activity, adventure and cultural, leisure and sports activities
- transition and/ or Pathways planning and continuing support and practical help from foster carers, residential staff and social workers
- continuing support if serving a prison sentence and on release
- professional and support staff awareness of what financial supports are available to care leavers if they decide to aim for further/higher education
- continuing financial and practical support while at college/university
- genuinely involving young people in decision making processes

In recognition of this, we have been increasingly focussing on the needs of care leavers. In 2004 we introduced the **Supporting Young People Leaving Care Regulations**, the general principle being that young people should continue to be looked after until 18 and supported as necessary beyond this point. Central to the legislative changes is the duty for local authorities to carry out an assessment of the needs of the young person. Materials entitled **Pathways** exist to assist local authorities with this duty; every young person leaving care should have both a Pathways co-ordinator and also a **Pathways** plan. The guidance also states that local authorities should work closely with Careers Scotland; which they do.

Careers Scotland has produced guidelines to cover care leavers and other young people with additional support needs leaving a residential school. These guidelines aim to ensure that young people leaving residential establishments receive appropriate career planning support on their return to their home area. These arrangements are being monitored and reviewed; the first review was held in September 2006.

We have also provided Columba 1400 with £1.2 million to pilot a Care Leavers Leadership Academy. It aims to assist young people between 16 and 25 who are preparing to make the transition to independent living. The pilot is being fully evaluated and the final evaluation report will be published in due course.

In addition to the various initiatives which specifically target looked after children and young people, there are numerous policies and initiatives, which focus on this crucial transitional stage. These include:

- Local authorities are required to work with their partners to produce homelessness strategies, under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. In preparing and delivering their strategies these local partnerships focus on those at risk of homelessness when moving to independent living.
- **More Choices, More Chances** which aims to prevent young people from becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in the first place and to help those who are NEET to progress towards the labour market.
- **The ASL Act** requires education authorities to plan well in advance when a child/young person with additional support needs is preparing to leave school. Education authorities should ensure that the arrangements required for transition to post-school are clear so that the child or young person, and all those involved, know exactly what is happening, when it is happening, and who is responsible.
- **Post School Psychological Services (PSPS) Pathfinders** have a key role in improving outcomes for vulnerable young people by supporting their transitions from school. Care leavers are a priority group.
- Careers Scotland work with schools, local authorities and a number of agencies to support transition to post-school education, training and employment. All care leavers will be allocated to a Careers Scotland adviser or key worker who will ensure progress is reviewed and monitored.

- Careers Scotland offers additional and measurable support to pupils in designated schools within the seven NEET priority areas (Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Glasgow, East Ayrshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire) through the Enhanced Resource Pilot. Looked after and accommodated young people will be a target group for additional support.
- Because of their financial circumstances care leavers who go on to a full-time higher education course in Scotland will be eligible for the maximum Young Students Bursary. Additionally they may be eligible for the Vacation Grant for Care Leavers to help meet accommodation costs. There are discretionary bursaries available for further education students which are administered by individual colleges.
- Within institutions there are support structures in place to advise and support students with learning and pastoral issues. However, to be effective, institutions need to work in partnership with the other agencies, notably social work services, so that they are aware of these needs in individual cases.

WHAT THE GROUP SAID:

The group was concerned that the transition from care into independent living and all that this entails can often be very difficult. There was further concern, that this issue of “moving on” largely arises in a young person’s life at a critical stage in their schooling, when they are likely to be preparing to sit examinations and potentially considering a move onto further or higher education. They asked the question: what depth of impact can this uncertainty have on young people’s educational and longer-term prospects?

The group discussed the fact that young care leavers may well experience a range of feelings as they approach/enter this critical transition into adulthood, including: excitement, anticipation, fear, anger, stress, and loneliness. The group also felt that it is little surprise that young people can be confused about supports that are available to them as they make this transition.

In particular, the group was concerned that if and when a looked after young person is considering a move onto training or further/higher education, frank clear and consistent advice regarding potential financial and practical supports is generally not available. Similarly, they were concerned that when a young person moves onto independent living or into employment while additional support is often required it is not always routinely identified or provided. The group were highly concerned that many young people who wished to or were considering leaving care were not fully aware of the financial and practical implications of making this decision.

Finally, the group agreed that we need to have the same high expectations of our looked after children and young people as we do of our own children: and more crucially, we need to provide for and support them as we would our own children as they make this critical transition from adolescence to adulthood.

WHAT SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID:

In the transitions section in **Having Your Say**, the young people referred to experiencing “more stress” than their peers. Generally the young people agreed they required more support in taking their next steps and in knowing what supports were available to allow them to do so most effectively.

The **Debate Project** highlighted future careers. While less than a third of those questioned had gained or were studying towards formal qualifications and most did not know what qualifications they needed to follow their desired career path, half desired to go onto further or higher education and most expressed an interest in a care related career.

Finally, the young people also highlighted the issue of personal responsibility: “Young people need to be ready to help themselves, so it's not just social workers”.

COMMON THEMES:

- The transition from school to further/higher education or employment and/or care into independent living can be an extremely difficult and stressful time for young people.
- Young people need timely financial and practical advice and support when making decisions on employment, further and higher education and independent living.
- A variety of supports are required to assist young people in this transition and consistency of support as the transition is undertaken is critical.

THE WAY AHEAD – OUR PLEDGE TO SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

Looked after children and care leavers must be entitled to receive adequate financial support from their corporate parent, in the same manner that any non-looked after child or young person is entitled to financial support from their parents.

ACTION 12:

We will encourage local authorities to use existing powers under Section 30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to provide appropriate financial support for care leavers who are in full-time education, training or a modern apprenticeship.

Next steps required:

- a) We will write to local authorities reminding them of the existing powers under Section 30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. We will also highlight examples of, and circumstances when, it may be proper and appropriate to provide financial support.
- b) We will ask local authorities for examples of best practice. We will collate and share these amongst all local authorities.

Around and during the time of a young person's transition into adulthood it is essential that they have access to relevant information about education, employment, training, finances and health, etc.

ACTION 13:

We will work with colleges and universities to raise awareness and responsiveness to the issues faced by care leavers who enter further or higher education.

Next steps required:

- a) We will be supportive of initiatives such as the Frank Buttle Trust's Quality Mark for universities which demonstrate support to care leavers.
- b) We will be supportive of moves to enable care leavers to be identified possibly through the UCAS application system.
- c) We will work with the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council and the Regional Widening Access Forums to raise the profile of care leavers as a discrete group and the particular issues they face during the transition to further and higher education.
- d) We will monitor the effectiveness of local initiatives already in place such as the Enhanced Vocational Initiative Programme in Glasgow, the work that individual colleges do with the Big Step and disseminate good practice across Scotland.

ACTION 14:

We will commission the development of a resource pack for looked after young people and care leavers which will provide them with information relevant to their transition into adulthood.

Next steps required:

- a) We will consult with the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, the Big Step, Who Cares? Scotland, local authorities, Student Awards Agency for Scotland and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the information which should be contained in the resource pack.
- b) We will commission, develop and publish the resource pack, including information on how to manage your money, where young people can get advice on money matters, and the financial support available to those who enter further and higher education.



04 / BEING EMOTIONALLY, MENTALLY AND
PHYSICALLY HEALTHY

OUR VISION



Scotland's looked after children and young people will benefit from access to a range of appropriate services designed to meet their emotional, mental and physical needs. Professionals, foster carers, residential workers, teaching staff and parents will be trained to understand the importance and value of meeting these needs. All of our looked after children and young people should grow to be emotionally, mentally and physically healthy.

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WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Good physical, mental and emotional health is a fundamental and underpinning component of positive health and well-being.

“Mental, physical and emotional well-being of young people are essential preconditions for successful learning.”

(The Journey to Excellence, HMIE 2006)

There are also strong links between the mental and emotional health of children and their personal and social development and academic performance.

One study of looked after children in Scotland found that three quarters of children looked after away from home thought that their health was 'good' or 'very good', a view backed by their carers.

(Triseliotis *et al.* 1996)

Another report concluded that:

“It is not the state of the child's health on the day they enter the system. It is rather the history of unmet need prior to being accommodated.”

(Forgotten Children 2004)

Despite this, Extraordinary Lives makes clear that as a group, looked after children and young people have poorer physical and mental health than that of their peers. Children and young people with disabilities and/or complex needs can be further disadvantaged if their condition is either misunderstood or overlooked. Some studies have also found that young people looked after away from home are particularly vulnerable to drug and alcohol abuse and self harm.

(Ridley 2001; Meltzer *et al.* 2004)

Thus, **Extraordinary Lives** highlights the importance in creating “emotional warmth”. Children develop their personal identity and a sense of self-worth through their relationships with other people; “Informal support networks, mainly friends, family and wider kin are extremely important to most young people ...schools emerged as a very important site for the provision of support.” Some solutions which **Extraordinary Lives** suggest helps to create stability for looked after children and young people are; links with birth families, regular attendance at school, friends and social networks.

Our attention is increasingly turning to the importance of developing resilience and the mental and emotional wellbeing of looked after children. **Extraordinary Lives** highlights that a supportive family is one of the single most powerful factors in creating resilience: “It is important that qualities of a supportive family are re-created in every setting in which children are cared for”. Mental and emotional wellbeing has been described as “a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

The Mental Health of Children and Young People: A Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care (Scottish Executive, 2005)

In recognition of these issues, we have seen an increasing drive to tackle some of these issues in both policy and also practice. HeadsUpScotland (the National Project for Children and Young People’s Mental Health, funded by the Executive) is currently – and has been for the past year – running training sessions across the country, delivered by Young Minds, on the mental health of looked after and accommodated children and young people. This is being co ordinated by Social Work training managers. This year’s activity is “training the trainers” so that there is a means to sustain the knowledge-base.

We have also commissioned HeadsUpScotland to produce a multi-agency training resource for all those who work with children and young people. The focus will be on resilience – What is it? How do you get it? How do we develop it? How do we maintain it? The training resource will be piloted in autumn 2006 and should then be available as a web-based resource by the end of the year.

We also provide an A-Z of special issues, in the **Safe and Well** handbook on child protection and wellbeing in school, including sections on looked after children and young people and mental health issues. Here we set out practical steps that schools may take to support looked after children and young people.

We have published **National Care Standards** across a range of care settings for looked after children. The Standards are founded on six key principles of dignity, privacy, choice, safety, releasing potential and equality and diversity; and set out what a young person can expect from a care service and how to raise any concerns. The Care Commission, as the national regulator, must take the standards into account when regulating care services.

In addition to the various initiatives which target looked after children and young people, there are numerous policies and initiatives aimed at improving the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of Scotland’s children and young people. For example:

- We have set every school in Scotland the target of becoming a health promoting school by 2007.
- We have developed nutritional standards and guidelines for schools, and early years settings. **The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill** will build on this, aiming to make the standards in schools statutory. This Bill will also seek to introduce a statutory duty for schools to be health promoting schools, which would involve a whole-school approach to promoting the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff. The Bill will also seek to introduce standards for food in schools beyond school lunches and for food served in school hostels, local authority residential special schools and grant-aided schools.
- We provided financial support for the establishment of the Scottish Healthy Care Network and we will part-fund the appointment of a development worker to the Scottish Healthy Care Network.
- Healthy Respect is the National Health Demonstration Project for the sexual health and wellbeing of young people, hosted by NHS Lothian.
- We fund work being undertaken by the Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit to provide information and guidance to schools on how to promote the emotional health, mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- We fund the **see me** campaign to eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness; this undertook two high-profile phases of campaign activity (2005 and 2006) specifically aimed at raising awareness of mental and emotional health problems in children and young people.
- We published **The Mental Health of Children and Young People: a Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care** in 2005 to address the support needs of vulnerable young people. It is designed to support local planning and practice to take forward the aims of the 2003 Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) report on **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**. The Framework therefore covers:
 - promotion of positive mental wellbeing;
 - prevention of mental health problems;
 - care/treatment of mental health problems when they do arise.

We expect the elements outlined in the Framework to exist within local services by 2015. The Child and Maternal Health Unit are currently in the process of setting milestones for 2008 and 2010 with a view to working towards full implementation.

- We have established **Breathing Space** (a telephone advice service for people experiencing low mood or depression, targeted particularly at men aged 16-40) and established a national suicide prevention strategy (**Choose Life**).
- We recommend peer support (e.g. buddying or mentoring) in our frameworks for positive school ethos and relationships (**Better Behaviour – Better Learning**) to promote positive peer group connections. Many Scottish schools have used peer support to help vulnerable pupils to cope in transition and to gain positive experiences of change.
- We fund a social networks co-ordinator, hosted by the Rock Trust, to take forward the Homelessness Task Force's recommendations on strengthening and promoting homeless people's social networks. This involves bringing together befriending, mentoring and mediation services and disseminating good practice to ensure that young people's family and social relationships are considered when they are facing housing difficulties.

- We currently support two demonstration projects examining how to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills, where these may be insufficiently developed in the context of difficult home and life experiences, through different approaches to Nurture Groups.
- We are continuing to work in partnership with councils, Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) and Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW), NHS Health Scotland and other key stakeholders to ensure high quality and appropriate Sexual Relationship Education, consistent with national guidance, is delivered in school and other settings to vulnerable young people.
- We provide funding to the Partnership Drugs Initiative, managed by Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, which supports voluntary organisations working with children and young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse.
- We are developing catering specifications for the NHS which will improve the provision of healthy food for children in hospital.

WHAT THE GROUP SAID:

The group agreed that looked after children and young people generally experience poor physical and mental health and that this may impact (often negatively) on their educational experiences. They also agreed that many looked after children and young people will have had experience of separation, loss and/or trauma and that many lack self esteem, confidence, resilience and self worth.

This led the group to ask:

- Is each and every looked after child and young person registered with a dentist and a GP? Do they receive regular dental and medical health checks?
- Are financial/ mentoring supports available for children and young people who wish to take part in physical activity?
- What range of therapeutic support is available to young people?
- How readily available are these supports?
- Can a child or young person self refer for support?
- What level of training can parents, foster carers, residential workers and all relevant workers and professional access on critical topics such as child development, attachment, resilience, restorative practices, or positive behaviour management?

The group were adamant that appropriate supports need to be in place for looked after children and young people. For some young people this may include access to counselling services, a flexible curriculum and out of school support. For younger children nurture groups and various types of therapy such as art, music and play need to be considered. The group was emphatic that, in all cases and in all settings the ethos should be one of warmth; physical health, activity and mental and emotional wellbeing should be promoted and supported.

The group strongly felt that health and wellbeing should not sit only with those working in the health arena; emotional readiness, mental wellbeing and physical health have paramount importance to the educational and life outcomes of our looked after children and young people. They felt hopeful that health and wellbeing is moving closer to where it needs to be – at the centre of our strategy for improving educational outcomes for looked after children and young people.

WHAT SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID:

Having Your Say commented on the emotional barriers looked after children and young people felt that they faced. They highlighted a spectrum of feelings they might experience, including “feeling scared”, “bullied”, “anger”, “lost” and “unwanted”. They listed the types of support in schools that they both valued and wanted to see more of, including: buddy systems, chill out rooms, circle time and flexibility – from teachers and in their curriculum. In relation to the school base, the young people desired it to be somewhere where they could “chill out” and take “time out” and that there would be support within the base to “listen” to young people’s “worries and concerns.”

The **Debate Project** reinforced a lot of the points raised by **Having Your Say**. Here the young people focussed on emotional barriers such as, enormous stress, everyday problems of adolescence, peer pressure, in addition to exams, being moved around and catching up with education they may have missed. As with **Having Your Say** these young care leavers wanted resources and support which are “sensitive to the individual and....available on a needs-led basis.” They too highlighted the importance of “people,” calling for more “caring people in their lives”.

COMMON THEMES:

- **Physical, mental and emotional wellbeing are critical** in facilitating positive educational outcomes for looked after children and young people.
- **Positive, consistent relationships** are equally critical in fostering identity, self-esteem, self-worth, resilience and a sense of stability and trust.
- **School based supports** are central to providing continuity and security, which in turn are essential pre-requisites for effective learning to take place.
- **Support available must be varied** in order to meet the spectrum of individual need.
- **Accessing services and general awareness of what is available** could be improved.

THE WAY AHEAD – OUR PLEDGE TO SCOTLAND’S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

The health of our looked after children and young people remains poor when compared to other children and young people. This has the potential to have a serious and negative impact upon educational outcomes and future lives.

ACTION 15:

Each NHS Board will assess the physical, mental and emotional health needs of all looked after children and young people for whom they have responsibility and put in place appropriate measures which take account of these assessments. They will ensure that all health service providers will work to make their services more accessible to looked after and accommodated children and young people, and to those in the transition from care to independence.

Next steps required:

- a) We will encourage joint assessment and planning which takes into account the views of the young person and includes details of their particular health needs, including registration with a GP, dentist, regular health and dental checks, advice on sexual health, mental health and emotional wellbeing and access to any mental health services required.
- b) NHS Scotland will scope the role and develop a competency framework for nurses of looked after children and young people.
- c) In partnership with NHS Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland will develop supports to ensure high quality sex and relationship education and drugs education.

ACTION 16:

We have agreed with the Care Commission that they will review the health of looked after children and young people.

Next Steps required:

- a) As part of their cycle of inspection, and taking account of the relevant **National Care Standards** published by Scottish Ministers, the Care Commission plan to look at nutritional standards and physical and mental wellbeing with a view to reporting on these by the end of 2007 and mid 2008, respectively.



05 / FEELING SAFE AND NURTURED IN A HOME SETTING

OUR VISION

Scotland's looked after children and young people will live somewhere they feel safe and nurtured; a place that they can call home, a place free from abuse and harm, a place where they feel safe and confident to express their views to develop into well-rounded, successful and responsible adults.

05



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Scotland's looked after children and young people will live somewhere they feel safe and nurtured; a place that they can call home, a place free from abuse and harm, a place where they feel safe and confident to express their views to develop into well-rounded, successful and responsible adults.

WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Scotland's looked after children and young people live in a wide variety of home settings, broadly speaking they fall into the following groups:

- At home with their birth parent(s)
- With friends and relatives of their family
- In foster care
- In a residential unit/children's unit
- In a residential school
- In secure accommodation

Extraordinary Lives noted that in relation to creating a safe environment, "Children and young people's esteem and behaviour can be enhanced by good quality surroundings, furniture and decoration."

Extraordinary Lives also highlights how some young people have felt abandoned when their placement came to an end. A report by Dixon and Stein found, that of young people leaving care in Scotland, nearly half felt they had no choice about when they left care.

(Dixon and Stein 2001)

The living environment does appear to have a direct bearing on the educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children and young people. Based on the information gathered for the **Children's Social Work Statistics** and **Scottish Executive National Statistics Publications** in relation to educational outcomes, when compared to other looked after children and young people:

- Children and young people who are looked after at home with their parents do least well, as a group, in terms of attendance and achievement when compared to other groups of looked after children and young people.
- Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated in foster care do best, as a group, in terms of attendance and achievement when compared to other groups of looked after children and young people.
- Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated in residential units do least well, as a group, when compared to other groups of looked after and accommodated children and young people.

A group of children who face particular risks are those who live in substance-misusing households. We have published **Hidden Harm – Next Steps**, a comprehensive action plan designed to tackle this complex and challenging area. Ministers have also made clear that chaotic substance misuse is incompatible with parenting and have set out a number of areas that need further action in order to protect this vulnerable group of children. These include a more interventionist approach by professionals and an emphasis on better communication, sharing of information and clear care plans and timetables that reflect the needs of children.

Over recent years there have been a number of inquiries, and significant developments in the legal and policy frameworks in relation to the protection of children and young people; including those who are looked after. The outcome of this has been significant advances in the training and knowledge of social workers, teachers, foster carers and residential workers in relation to various aspects of safe care; including child protection, safer recruitment, and professional boundaries.

A number of the local authority pilot initiatives aimed at improving the educational outcomes of looked after children and young people which we are currently funding are looking at the creation of a safe and nurturing home setting. Irrespective of looked after status, children and young people need to be able to experience the same opportunities and experiences as all other children, such as hobbies, outdoor activities and overnight stays.

Guidance on overnight stays for looked after and accommodated children and young people will be published in due course.

In relation to residential care, we are currently funding the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC), the aim of which is to ensure that residential child care staff throughout Scotland have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care.

The development, and subsequent inspection, of the **Care Standards** in relation to residential and foster care aims to ensure that children and young people who are looked after and accommodated live in safe and nurturing placements. Similarly, the development, as part of the **Learning With Care** materials, of the self-evaluation tool **How Good Is Our School?** in relation to a child or young person's placement also aims to provide a practical toolkit to create an educationally rich environment within the placement.

In addition to the various initiatives aimed specifically at looked after children and young people, there are numerous policies and initiatives targeted at improving the educational outcomes and experiences of all Scotland's children and young people. For example:

- We offer funding to the voluntary organisations which support families in transition – Family Mediation Scotland, Relate, Scottish Marriage Care and Stepfamilies Scotland.
- We provide targeted support for vulnerable families with very young children (0-3 years) through **Sure Start Scotland**. The objectives of **Sure Start Scotland** are to improve children's health; to improve children's ability to learn; and to strengthen families and communities.

- We are providing Working for Families funding to several local authorities to pilot young parent projects which provide holistic, key worker support to help clients boost their self-esteem and confidence and take steps towards education, training and employment. Looked after young people are one of the key groups included in these pilots.
- We are also providing £2 million over 2 years to provide intensive supervision and intervention to turn around the lives of troubled and troublesome families in Perth and Kinross, South Lanarkshire and Falkirk. Each of these schemes will be rigorously evaluated.
- We have introduced legislation (The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004) which sets standards that temporary accommodation provided for homeless households with children or pregnant women must meet (unless exceptional circumstances as defined in the Order apply). These standards include the requirement that temporary accommodation must be suitable for children, must meet physical standards and must have accessible health and education services nearby.
- We are issuing statutory guidance to help local authorities carry out their duty to have regard to the “best interests of children” (as required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended) to ensure when providing permanent accommodation to homeless households with children that the accommodation is suitable for children. This guidance will help agencies work together to meet the needs of the individual child.
- We are introducing a new permanence order in the **Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill** to give children who cannot return to their birth family stability and security. The Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 7th December 2006. We will provide guidance to support the introduction of the permanence order in due course.

WHAT THE GROUP SAID:

The group were emphatic that all children have a right to live somewhere they feel safe and nurtured and where they can call home. For many looked after children and young people this will be the parental home, albeit subject to supervision by the local authority; for others this will mean moving to a new home whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

The group acknowledged that there can be tension between deciding whether to provide family support or to remove the child and place in foster care or residential setting at an early stage; such decisions are never easy. The long-term objective of fostering and residential care should be that each and every looked after child or young person goes on to live a happy, successful and fulfilling life, regardless of their initial experiences. The group felt that depending on the young person’s care plan, resource(s) may need to be invested into the family where the child has come from as well as into where the child is placed. It should not always be the case that the resource solely follows the child.

This led the group to ask:

- Do local policies and procedures proactively support minimising the number of placement moves experienced by looked after children and young people?

The group felt very strongly that stability is key to looked after children and young people feeling safe in their home setting, and further, that the impact of frequent moves by those children and young people looked after at home may have a significant impact on their lives and potential outcomes. It recognised the need to break the cycle of frequent house and school moves which many young people experience as a result of their parents' chaotic lifestyle prior to becoming looked after. This was important in terms of providing a safe and secure setting in which the young person can develop and prosper.

The group felt that more needs to be done to limit the number of moves experienced by looked after children and young people once they are in the care system, whilst recognising that unsuitable placements should not be maintained, and to ensure appropriate placements are secured at as early a stage in the young person's life as possible.

The group heard anecdotal information about cases where young people, residential staff, or foster carers would like an established care placement to continue for longer than the system currently allows.

Of particular concern to the group was the experience of some young people, foster carers and residential workers, where young people are moved – sometimes from a long-term placement – because they had reached the “cut-off” age of 16. This led the group to ask:

- What do we do for our sons and daughters as they turn 16?
- How can we make sure that looked after children and young people are afforded the same treatment?

In developing this point, the group considered how they supported their own children as they reached the 16-18 age range. They reflected that they do not ask them to leave home and they do not change their schools.

Rather they:

- encouraged their children to consider career options
- supported them in making their career choices
- assisted them in learning how to drive
- advised them on gap year possibilities
- offered advice, guidance and assistance when their children did move on
- reinforced the message, that if moving on did not work out, then their children would be welcome back at home.

The group was also emphatic on the need for young people to be able to remain in care for longer and for more supported accommodation to be available when a young person does decide to move on.

WHAT SCOTLAND'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID:

Having Your Say touched on this issue in their response to transitions. They commented on their need for extra support when moving to either a new home and/ or community, "You get stuck with a family you don't know in a new town." They emphasised how big a barrier it was to always have to try and "fit in". Regarding the transition to independence, one of the young people reported that he "thought a lot about being alone".

The **Debate Project** also outlined a strong list of recommendations regarding this issue of feeling safe and nurtured in the home setting. When in care, young people should be able to "get in touch with social services much easier." They also felt that "young people shouldn't get moved about so often" and were keen to see more family work being done. They wanted to see restraint "used in residential only as a last resort." They emphasised that "young people need to be ready to leave care" and that the moving on point of their 16th birthday should be extended. Indeed, the children and young people questioned felt that there "shouldn't be an age limit when support should stop" and that they should be allowed to return to care "if things did go wrong."

Accommodation appeared to be a critical concern for these young care leavers. The young people were concerned that upon leaving care, they would find that they would be offered poor housing in deprived or disadvantaged areas, given little support and have no-one to turn to if things went wrong. Some of the actions the young people recommended are:

Bed and breakfast accommodation should be stopped; more supported accommodation and more half-way houses between care and own tenancy; and young people should have longer to live where they want.

(The Debate Project)

Overall, these young people wanted to see more support from local authorities and voluntary organisations up until the age of 25.

COMMON THEMES:

- **A stable, safe and nurturing home setting** is essential for looked after children and young people to feel both safe and nurtured and to realise their potential.
- **A supportive home setting which promotes education** is essential for looked after children and young people to improve their educational outcomes.
- Young people require **good quality accommodation**; accommodation that meets their various needs, both when in care and also when living independently.
- Young people need to be **better supported during the transition to independent living**.

THE WAY AHEAD – OUR PLEDGE TO SCOTLAND’S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

It is acknowledged that the provision of good quality accommodation is essential to meeting the needs of looked after children and young people.

ACTION 17:

We will provide £5 million of additional funding in the current financial year to local authority and voluntary providers of children’s homes and units in residential schools to improve their physical environment and to create an educationally rich environment for the children and young people who live there.

Next steps required:

- a) We will write to all local authorities and voluntary providers to advise them of the funding arrangements, allocations and information regarding recent research in this area which may inform expenditure.
- b) All local authorities and voluntary providers will be required to produce a report detailing how their allocation was used and the envisaged improved outcomes for their children and young people.

The practice of moving our young people out of a stable and secure care placement as they approach adulthood has a serious and negative impact on educational outcomes and future lives.

ACTION 18:

We will clarify the duty on local authorities to ensure that they provide safe, secure and appropriate accommodation to looked after young people until at least 18. The accommodation must appropriately support their longer-term outcomes in terms of education, employment and training.

Next steps required:

- a) We will write to local authorities to remind them of the principle that, where required, young people should continue to be looked after and accommodated until they are 18.
- b) We will encourage local authorities to ensure that children and young people remain in their established care/school placement around the time of examinations, and are given adequate support.
- c) We will encourage local authorities to ensure that young people are able to remain in their established foster placement beyond their 18th birthday where the young person, their foster carer and their social worker agree that this is in the best interests of the young person. We understand that in some instances local authorities have interpreted the Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 to mean that they must remove the young person at 18 when there is another unrelated foster child in the household and a foster carer of the same sex. We will be amending these regulations and will consider what amendments might be required to address this issue.
- d) We will introduce a new permanence order in the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill to give children who cannot return to their birth family stability and security. The Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 7th December 2006. We will provide guidance to support the introduction of the permanence order in due course.

ACTION 19:

We will clarify the duty on local authorities to provide appropriate support to their care leavers up to the age of 21.

Next steps required:

- a) We will write to local authorities to remind them of their duties in relation to supporting care leavers until they are 21.
- b) We are considering how to prevent homeless care leavers up to the age of 21 from being housed in unsuitable temporary accommodation.
- c) We will work with relevant stakeholders, to improve the provision of dedicated supported accommodation for young care leavers.
- d) We will commission a review of existing research relating to the transition of young people from a care setting to independent living. The review will consider evidence about the models of assessment and support that enable successful transitions to independent living and the factors which impact on the approach needed to enable young people to make and sustain that transition.
- e) We will ask SWIA, the Care Commission and HMIE to report on the age at which young people are leaving their care placements and the quality and range of their destinations as part of the inspection process.



APPENDIX A / MEMBERSHIP OF GROUP



Peter Peacock MSP

At the time of his membership of the group and until 14 November 2006, Peter Peacock was the Minister for Education and Young People. His portfolio responsibilities included school education, nurseries, children's services, social work, HM Inspectorate of Education, HM Social Work Inspectorate and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Robert Brown MSP

Robert is Deputy Education Minister and his portfolio responsibilities include pre-school education and children and young people.

Allan Wilson MSP

Allan is Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and his portfolio responsibilities include transitions to work and skills for life and work.

Cllr Rev Ewan Aitken

At the time of his membership of the Working Group, Ewan was an the Executive Member for children and families in the City of Edinburgh Council and Education Spokesperson for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. He is now Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council. He is also on the Pupil/Student Support Committee and Advisory Committee on Youth Services and the Executive (Educational Matters). He has interests in Dunedin Housing Association, Youthlink Scotland and the Ripple Project and he is a member of the Iona Community and the Church of Scotland and an Oxfam supporter.

David Cameron

David is Director of Children's Services in Stirling Council. He was previously Head of Education in East Lothian and has a considerable background as a Teacher, Adviser and Development Officer.

Julie-Anne Jamieson

Julie-Anne is Head of Employability and part of the senior management team in the Scottish Enterprise area of Careers Scotland. She has a specific responsibility for interventions to prevent young people becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) and to support those young people who are already NEET into sustainable opportunities. Julie-Anne also has responsibility for Additional Support Needs and sits on the Scottish Executive ASN Advisory group.

Tom Watson

Tom is a director of Fairbridge, which is a charity offering young people a combination of individually tailored support packages and structured activities in 15 of the most disadvantaged areas in the UK. Tom was also part of the SE core group that was involved in developing the NEET strategy. He also worked on the Employability Framework.

Anna Fowlie

Anna is Team Leader - Children and Young People in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). She is the policy lead for integrated children's services, education, children and families social work and youth justice and is a member of a variety of national working groups on children's issues. She also has a role within COSLA's Employers' Function.

Lynne Isaacs

Lynne originally trained as a police officer and then retrained as a residential social worker. She has been a foster carer for 26 years, 14 of which have been in Angus. Lynne has been a member of the Children's Hearing system. She is active in the Angus Foster Carers Association which fundraises to take fostered children on trips. Lynne is a member of the Angus Carers' Consultative Groups which takes forward general issues and concerns raised by foster carers to Angus Council. She is very interested in fostered children obtaining the best education possible and sees this education forum as a positive step.

Anne Gibson

Anne has worked with HM Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) for almost 4 years, mainly inspecting community learning and development provision. She was recently appointed as Lead Inspector Inclusion with responsibility for leading tasks on integrated community schools and "Count Us In". Anne chairs the cross directorate Inclusion Reference Group within the Inspectorate and is responsible for the strategic development of inclusion. She is a qualified primary and secondary teacher and has a post graduate qualification in community education – youth and community work. She has worked in community education in Edinburgh and the Lothians for a number of years and was an Integration Manager for New Community Schools in East Lothian prior to joining the Inspectorate.

Damion Hartley

Damion Hartley is from Inverness and has been involved in a range of developments relating to young people leaving care. Damion has been involved with Barnardos Springboard project, participating in staff recruitment and planning activities for young people. He is also a Columba 1400 leadership academy graduate and is involved with the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum's Debate Project. Damion is currently a member of the steering group that is setting up the Care Action Group with SCCYP.

James MacKenzie

James is currently head teacher at Williamwood High School, East Renfrewshire. He is a Graduate of Glasgow University (Mathematics) and Jordanhill College. He taught in Riverside Secondary School Glasgow and eventually became Head Teacher Dumbarton Academy in 1990. Whilst at Dumbarton Academy he chaired the Scottish Office Working Party on "Computer Ethics and Internet". James was appointed Head Teacher in Williamwood High School East Renfrewshire in 1996. His particular interests are in Pupil Support and Social Inclusion and the use of ICT in Learning & Teaching. James was seconded for 18 months to the core design team for the PPP school building project of which a new Williamwood High School (opening 2006) was the major constituent. Outwith school, James was a member of the Royal Naval Reserve for 24 years and served from 1986 to 1996 as Commanding Officer of an ocean going minesweeper.

Hugh Mackintosh, OBE

Hugh has been Director, Barnardo's Scotland since 1991. He holds a Masters Degree in Social Services Management and his practice background is primarily in residential childcare, including 6 years spent at the Caldecott Community in Kent where he was Assistant Director. In 1981 Hugh undertook the initial work which led to the formation of SCAFA, now Children in Scotland.

Scottish Executive Officials:

Colin MacLean	Head of Children, Young People and Social Care Group, Education Department
Rachel Edgar	Head of Looked After Children and Youthwork Division, Education Department
Shirley Laing	Head of Looked After Children Branch, Education Department
Robert Kelman	Looked After Children Branch, Education Department
Graham McCann	Educational Outcomes Development Worker, Looked after Children Branch, Education Department
Anne-Margaret Thompson	Educational Outcomes Development Worker, Looked after Children Branch, Education Department
Trudi Sharp	Head of New Educational Developments Division, Education Department
Melanie Weldon	Post-School Transition, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department

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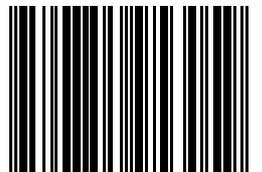
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ISBN 978-0-7559-5305-9



9 780755 953059