Achievement at Key Stage 4 of Young People in Public Care

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National Foundation for Educational Research

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Contents

Executive Summary

Background

A variety of reports from government agencies, voluntary agencies, researchers and the young people themselves have established that the education of young people in the public care is a cause for concern. There is a remarkable degree of consensus as to not only the difficulties but also the solutions. Following a range of developmental work on policy and systems, attention has now focused on the outcomes of statutory schooling for these young people — in particular, their attainment at key stage 4. Data show that the average performance of young people in care is significantly lower than national averages for the age cohort and that a disproportionate number of young people are not entered for GCSE or GNVQ at key stage 4 (47 per cent of total care leavers, compared with 3.6 per cent of boys and 3.1 per cent of girls nationally).

In order to explore in greater depth the end of key stage 4 performance of the cohort of pupils who were in the public care in summer 2001, the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills, together with the Local Government Association, jointly sponsored the National Foundation for Educational Research to undertake a research project.

Methodology

The research was conducted in two phases.

Phase 1 involved collecting data about the relevant population from twelve local education authorities in England known to have relatively sophisticated procedures for collecting and tracking data on their in-care population. These local authorities were sent a pro forma to complete for each young person who was in the care of their authority during June 2001 and in year 11 in the academic year 2000-2001. Those authorities with the smaller number of pupils in the relevant cohort were asked to complete a pro forma for the total cohort; those with larger numbers of young people were offered the option of completing pro formas for a sample. The potential sample was approximately 600; pro formas were returned for 377 young people (62 per cent of the total cohort). A range of local authority staff were involved in the completion

of the pro forma and the processes by which they collected the data varied from authority to authority, depending on record-keeping systems and the location of available data.

Phase 2 involved case studies of young people identified on the basis of data from phase 1. A long list of potential case studies was drawn up, representing identified categories related to progress and attainment (eg 'average' attainment; good key stage 3 attainment and poor key stage 4 attainment, and vice versa; poor attainment throughout key stages 3 and 4), identified special educational needs (eg learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties), established groups of care users (eg young mothers, asylum seekers) and post-16 plans. Efforts were made to contact an original group of eleven young people but a total of nearly 30 young people were eventually contacted, as replacements were sought for those who were unwilling to participate, no longer available or uncontactable. Case studies of seven young people were finally completed. Interviews were conducted with the young person and his/her carer, social worker and school contact(s) relevant to year 11.

Key findings

It should be pointed out that data should be treated with caution as many of the pro forma were returned with partial data only.

Educational Placements

- the majority (two-thirds) of the sample had had only one or two educational placements during their secondary phase schooling while they were in care; nearly a third had had three or more different placements;
- nearly half the placements were in mainstream schools; a fifth were in special schools or alternative provision;
- it was not clear that all placements were to the benefit of the young people — rather than to the benefit of adults seeking solutions for them; decisions did not always involve all the relevant people (including the young people themselves);
- analysis of pupils' different levels of engagement in different aspects of education was inadequate;

- positive school factors included: stable tutoring, mechanisms for the identification of individuals' needs and progress, and a rich range of formal and informal support — all routinely available.

Special and additional educational needs

- one-third of the cohort were reported to have a statement and two-fifths to have no identified special needs;

- misunderstanding of special educational needs exacerbated educational difficulties, increased 'failure' and resulted in damaging 'labelling' of the young person;

- additional needs (eg for language support) were not always met effectively on account of lack of clarity regarding sources of support and resources;

- post-16 choices were not sufficiently informed by existing data about special and additional educational needs;

- support was often not adequately evaluated.

Key stage attainment

- hardly any data were available for the cohort's performance at key stages 1 and 2; key stage 3 data were available for only half the sample;

- nearly one-third of the sample were entered for five or more subjects at GCSE; one-quarter of the sample were not entered for any subject; data were missing for one-third of the sample;

- less than ten per cent of the sample achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C; one-third achieved five or more subjects at grades A*-G; almost half achieved at least one grade A*-G;

- young people with the highest number of changes of educational placement in key stages 3 and 4 were most likely not to be entered for any GCSE;

- about half the sample followed the key stage 4 curriculum and examination courses in normal classes with their peers;

- under one quarter of the sample were known to have achieved alternative accreditation.

Information

- information about educational careers was frail;

- data were conflicting and contradictory accounts were given;

- data were not regarded by many social workers as relevant to their work with the young people.

Post-16 careers

- two-fifths of the sample were in further education or a school sixth form in the October following the end of key stage 4; approximately one-fifth were in a training placement or employment; one-fifth were in neither employment nor training;
- the young person's career aspirations/plans were unknown to the respondent or missing in almost two-thirds of cases;
- at the end of August 2001, two-thirds of the sample were still looked-after, with under half continuing in the same care placement as in July 2001;
- there was little evidence of programmes of support to accompany young people's education/training plans.

Attitudes

- some young people had developed attitudes and/or behaviour which were incompatible with learning in school; it was not clear that there had been adequate intervention to help the young people re-channel their energies and develop more positive attitudes and behaviour;
- both motivated and disaffected young people were insightful about the strengths and weaknesses of their educational placements.

Care placements and carers

- a third of the sample had been in one care placement from age 11 to age 16 or during their time in care during this period; one-third had two or three care placements and one-quarter had six or more placements (maximum 21) during this period;
- data suggested that stability of care placement was associated with higher performance at key stage 4;
- carers referred to systemic deficiencies and poor corporate parenting in the form of poor information, lack of resources and failure in communication channels.

1. Introduction and Background

It is now firmly established that the education of young people who are in public care is problematic. There has been remarkable consensus among government agencies (Utting, 1991; DoH and Ofsted, 1995), voluntary agencies, researchers (Jackson, 1987; Fletcher-Campbell and Hall, 1990; Fletcher-Campbell, 1997; Borland *et al*., 1998) and young people themselves (Fletcher, 1996; Shaw, 1998) regarding not only the difficulties but also the solutions. Following a range of developmental work (eg Jackson and Kilroe, 1995; DoH, 1999; Who Cares? Trust, 1999; DfEE and DoH, 2000; Ofsted, 2001) attention has now turned to the attainment of these young people and, in particular, the outcomes at the end of their statutory schooling (DoH, 2001a and b). The establishment, within the Quality Protects initiative (DoH, 1999), of the initial target that all young people in public care should achieve at least one GCSE grade was significant. It marked the beginning of the collection of performance data in relation to this cohort, even if there has been concern about the appropriateness of this single target in the light of what is known about the heterogeneity of the overall cohort.

While, as in any innovatory data collection, there were difficulties for this data collection exercise in methodology and interpretation, there were early indications from the first cohort (DoH, 2000) that most young people in care who were entered for GCSE or GNVQ (87 per cent) achieved at least one subject (albeit at the lowest grades) and that a small proportion (six per cent) achieved other qualifications (ie those listed in DfEE circular 2/99). However, there was a significant group (47 per cent of total care leavers or 73 per cent of those care leavers with no GCSE or GNVQ qualifications) who did not seem to be entered for any examination and thus were not given the opportunity to have any achievement recognised in national certification. (These figures do not include those young people who were stated to have a health condition or disability, which precluded their sitting the examination). This proportion was considerably in excess of the normal distribution. Nationally, data for examinations taken in 1999 (DfEE, 2000) showed that 3.6 per cent of boys and 3.1 per cent of girls were not entered for any GCSE subject (these figures do not include maintained and non-maintained special schools, hospital schools and pupil referral units but only about two per cent of pupils are in these placements). Figures for the

following year (ie those leaving care during the year ending 31 March 2001 and having the opportunity of taking GCSEs before leaving ─ thus in summer 2000) show a slight improvement: 40 per cent achieved at least one GCSE grade A*-G or GNVQ (compared to the previous year where the figure was 29 per cent, (DoH, 2000)). Furthermore, in summer 2000, 26 per cent achieved at least five GCSE grades A*-G and five per cent at least five GCSEs A*-C. Higher performance seemed to be associated with the longest 'latest periods in care' which were, it could be assumed, the stable foster care placements (DoH, 2001c).

At this stage, given the well established issues surrounding the education of children in care, it was possible to engage in relatively informed conjecture as to the reasons for the discrepancies between the performance of the in-care cohort and the overall national population. Possibilities included the incidence of special educational needs (reportedly proportionally higher in this cohort although data may not be accurate), disaffection, placement on alternative curriculum projects at key stage 4 (some of which do not offer the possibility of GCSE courses), disrupted education (including changes of placement within key stage 4 thus adversely affecting the submission of coursework) and low expectations.

In order to collect evidence to confirm or refute these conjectures and to explore in greater depth the end of key stage 4 performance of the cohort of pupils who were in the public care in summer 2001, the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills, together with the Local Government Association, jointly sponsored the National Foundation for Educational Research to undertake a research project.

1.1 Aims

The aims of the project were to address the following issues with respect to a sample of the cohort of young people who were in care and at the end of key stage 4 in summer 2001:

- to investigate the reasons why a disproportionate number of the cohort were not entered for public examinations;

- to identify the educational careers of the cohort: educational placement(s) (type and changes), attendance, identified special educational needs, additional support during key stage 4;
- to identify the care careers of the cohort: type and nature of placement(s);
- to ascertain the whole range of key stage 4 achievement of the cohort – eg including alternative accreditation;
- to collect evidence on the cohort's post-16 situation in terms of where they were living and what they were doing.

The research was conducted in two phases:

- phase 1 involved collecting data about the relevant population from twelve local education authorities in England (further details are given in section 2.1);
- phase 2 involved case studies of seven young people (further details are given in section 3.1).

Section 2 describes the methodology for the research. Section 3 presents the data from phase 1, section 4 gives narrative accounts of the young people involved in the case studies in phase 2. A summary of key points and issues for consideration are presented in section 5.

2. Methodology

2.1 The Pro Forma Exercise

Fifteen local authorities in England were invited to participate in this research; 12 agreed to take part. The authorities were selected because they were known by the research team and/or members of the project steering group to have some of the relatively more sophisticated data collection and tracking procedures for the young people in their care. For example, the authorities had centrally maintained records for at least some of the required data, had a member of staff nominated as the contact point for the research project and were keen to participate. It is important to note this relatively strong starting point in the light of the frailty of some of the data that emerged, as discussed below. Invitations were originally sent to the person(s) identified in each authority as having formal responsibility for the education of young people in public care. The position of this person varied across authorities. In some cases s/he was at directorial level; in others in a relevant operational management position. This person either agreed to take things forward in the research personally or nominated a more appropriate colleague ─ the latter was the case, for example, when formal responsibility lay at directorial level.

Table 2.1   Types of authority participating in research

Type of authority	Number of authorities
Shire Counties	4
Metropolitan Districts	3
Unitary Authorities	3
London Boroughs	2
N = 12	

Table 2.2   Geographical spread of participating authorities

Area	Number of authorities
South East	3
East Midlands	2
South West	2
North West	1
Yorkshire & Humberside	1
West Midlands	1
Inner London	1
Outer London	1
N = 12	

The above tables show that the participating authorities included a variety of authority types and geographical areas. The research team would like to stress however, that the authorities were selected on their ability to provide data on the young people in public care, and not on the authority type.

The 12 local authorities were sent eight-page pro formas to complete for each young person who was in the care of their authority during June 2001 and in year 11 in the academic year 2000-2001. The maximum number of young people who fitted these criteria within the 12 authorities was 606, but the exact number of the potential sample is not known because each authority gave an estimate of the maximum number of young people within the authority who matched the criteria. However, it can be assumed that the authorities' estimates were reasonably accurate. All 12 authorities were asked to complete as much of the pro forma as they could for each young person in this cohort and to return the pro formas to the NFER by the end of November 2001. By this date, returns had been received from two authorities. Others had explained that it was taking a long time to collate the information. The deadline was thus extended. By the end of January 2002, 11 out of the 12 authorities had returned data on at least some of the young people: pro forma were received for 377 young people (62 per cent of the total cohort).

2.2 The Case Studies

2.2.1 Identification of potential case studies

On the basis of the educational data available from the pro forma, a 'long list' of potential case studies was drawn up. This long list represented what might, from prior knowledge of young people in public care, be regarded as interesting situations.

First, young people were identified in the following categories:

- average/good key stage 3 attainment; average/good key stage 4 attainment
- good key stage 3 attainment; poor key stage 4 attainment
- poor key stage 3 attainment; good key stage 4 attainment
- poor key stage 3 attainment; poor key stage 4 attainment.

The researchers were interested in educational careers which appeared to be 'normal' (what factors established this 'normality'?); those which appeared to have been very positive in key stage 4 (what factors 'turned round' a young person who had unimpressive key stage 3 performance?); and those which appeared to have deteriorated during key stage 4 (what had inhibited potential shown at key stage 3?).

Second, the list included young people from other groups that emerged from the pro forma data:

- those with moderate or severe learning difficulties
- those with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties but no identified learning difficulties
- young mothers
- asylum seekers.

Specialist support is commonly available for these groups; the researchers were interested in the degree to which such support was accessible to young people who were also in public care and the degree to which advocates ensured that this support was appropriate and maintained.

In addition, a list was drawn up of young people who were identified as having positive plans to pursue post-16 education (eg identification of drama course, FE prior to HE) or some training/apprenticeship which suggested that this was a positive choice rather than a 'lowest common denominator' course (eg 'stonemasonry' as opposed to 'key skills' course).

As the case studies in section 4 show, the categories to aid selection of the case study sample were not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, information given prior to a case study was not always accurate: evidence collected during the case study could result in different criteria applying to a young person. The young people did not fit into neat categories: rather, the categories were a means of gaining access to some of the young people's stories.

The process of trying to secure case studies was very time-consuming, both in terms of time spent making a series of phone calls in order to make contact with a social

worker, for example; and in terms of the lead time between making an initial call and finally 'closing' the case, having identified all the relevant contacts and undertaken the interviews. Responses to letters sent or messages on voice mail were very slow to come and then a social worker might only be able to arrange a telephone interview for six weeks' time. The research over-ran its original scheduled timetable. It is important to note this. Research that is not easy does not tend to get done: it is only possible with the understanding of the sponsors and the possibility, on the part of the research team, of flexibility. It is important that such research does get done: otherwise, only those young people to whom access is relatively unproblematic appear in case studies and the 'hard to reach' remain thus.

Eleven young people were originally selected as possible case studies. Initial contact was made with the relevant social worker, who was asked if s/he would either release the young person's address so that a letter from NFER could be sent to the young person, explaining about the research project and asking if they would agree to participate; or would pass on a letter to the young person. The relevant social workers were identified by the respective local authority contacts: the people who had organised the administration of the pro forma. Each pro forma had an NFER identification number and the local authority contact was asked to keep a record of the young person to whom each pro forma applied. The NFER had a list of the original identification numbers and knew which batch had gone to which authority. Beyond this, the names of no young people were known to the research team and, if the social worker passed on the letter to the selected young person and the young person declined to participate, the NFER did not know the identity of that young person.

2.2.2 The process of confirming the sample and seeking replacements

Of the original eleven identified cases, seven were eliminated as possibilities after initial contact had been made.

One young person was not contacted after the researcher had spoken to the social worker as the young person's father had just died and it was felt that contact would be intrusive. A replacement, with a similar profile, was identified and contacted but did not respond and a series of phone calls were made to the social worker and local

authority contact. The young person eventually responded to the authority and agreed to take part; however, he did not have a telephone on which he could be contacted and so arrangements had to be made by letter. Arranging a time and a date was, thus, problematic. (This process of communicating by letter was followed by his social worker when she wanted a meeting). It turned out that the young person was in the process of moving from the authority anyway so it was decided not to pursue this case. Another replacement was sought.

Six young people did not want to take part. One young person was just returning to live with her father and did not feel that it was a good time for her; another considered that she was too busy ─ she attended college full-time and also had an evening job.

Replacements were sought for the original seven which turned out not to be possible. The research team attempted to identify young people with similar profiles to those on the original short list. In total, a further 11 young people were identified and local authority contacts were asked to communicate with them or their social worker. Of these:

- three agreed to take part
- two did not want to participate but gave no reason
- two were not allocated a social worker at the time and so trying to obtain contact details was extremely difficult
- one was in a secure unit and, although his location was stable, it proved to be problematic in gaining access within a short space of time on account of health and safety policies
- one was agoraphobic, allegedly as a result of bullying at school, and was reluctant to meet with a stranger
- one was described by his social worker as 'the scarlet pimpernel' as he was a very poor attender both at college and at meetings with his social worker
- one was in the process of court proceedings to maintain custody of her daughter; she was extremely wary of professionals, among which she included researchers.

Most of the social workers preferred to contact the young person themselves. The NFER team was, thus, reliant on social workers taking action and remembering to mention the research at the next meeting. There are additional difficulties in 'second-hand' approaches of this nature. Research teams generally like to make initial contact with potential case studies themselves, so that they can describe the research accurately and clearly and present it positively to the person or institution concerned.

In most cases, a letter from the NFER team is sent and this is followed up by a telephone call in a few days time. When the research team does not have control of this process and is unable to ensure that the work will be presented positively (and there is, of course, no reason why overworked social workers should take any interest in such a piece of educational research) there are, clearly, methodological difficulties. These added to those identified above.

In section 4 narrative accounts of seven young people are presented. Data were obtained from the young people themselves, their carers, their social workers and the relevant staff from the school that they were attending in year 11. Each narrative contextualises the story in the light of what is already known about the situation of this group of young people. Pseudonyms have been attributed. Before this, however, the findings from the pro forma exercise are reported.

3. The Pro Forma Exercise

3.1 Introduction

As stated in the previous section, 11 local authorities participated in the exercise whereby they returned a pro forma for either the total number, or a sample, of the young people who were in their care and at the end of key stage 4 in summer 2001. A copy of the pro forma can be found at appendix 1.

3.1.1 Responsibility for data collection

The contact in each local authority managed the data collection exercise differently, according to local circumstances. Across authorities, a range of people was involved in the whole process, including senior managers from education and social services departments, social workers and administrative assistants. More than half of the authorities delegated some or all of the data collection exercise to the looked after children's team within the education department. Half of the authorities involved social services for assistance with at least some of the information required and one-third of the authorities delegated the task directly to the young people's social workers.

Each process had advantages and disadvantages. Databases enabled the quick retrieval of information but were limited to their fields, which may have been established some time ago when information needs were different; if some information did not match any of the database fields it would not be recorded. If social workers undertook the task, information was generally up-to-date and additional personal data were available. However, return of data depended entirely on the individual collecting it and data were missing where that individual did not have direct access to the source. The experience of the research suggests that procuring accurate data regarding the education of young people in the care system is still largely opportunistic and that record-keeping systems and data-collection mechanisms are not as yet functioning effectively. If this is the case, it generates further difficulties for data-sharing. Data-sharing is the critical next step forward: even if data are recorded efficiently, if they are then not used to inform policy and practice, they serve little purpose.

3.1.2 The main sources of information

Many of the participating authorities had access to some kind of database for children in public care. However, these varied in terms of the type of data held and degree of sophistication. In most cases the databases did not hold historic data regarding care placements; this information was more often accessed from social services files. Social workers were often able to provide anecdotal information on the young people's career aspirations and plans ─ because this was 'current' information ─ but found it more difficult to list all the young person's educational placements, especially where there had been changes in social workers. There are issues here relating to the best location for the storage of information about a young person. Central record-keeping facilitates whole authority monitoring and evaluation but does not help the individual social worker to chart the patterns of a young person's life and to identify anomalies, or strengths and weaknesses which may aid decision-making regarding the young person's education or career aspirations. It is hoped that the introduction of the new Integrated Children's System will address this issue and facilitate more efficient recording and retrieval of key data on children in public care.

3.1.3 Time needed for the data collection process

The time it took authorities to complete the pro formas depended on a number of factors, including the number of young people within this cohort in each authority, the amount of information accessible on a central database, and the number of people contributing. Contacts' estimations of time it took them to complete the set of pro formas ranged from one day to two weeks.

The local authority contacts commented on difficulties with the timing of the task. Difficulties in completion within the original agreed schedule were attributed to staff sickness and staff shortage and the fact that resources had to be focused on OC2 returns to the Department of Health. Clearly, the data collection for the research was time-consuming, regardless of whether information was collected from a central database or from individual social workers. In these circumstances, such an exercise is, understandably, a low priority, although it can be argued that unless it is engaged in, understanding of the situation locally and nationally remain limited.

3.1.4 Data collection difficulties encountered by the participating authorities

Commonly, respondents had difficulty supplying attendance data, post-16 information and historic data. Some of the looked after children databases were only just beginning to incorporate historic data. Other problems were related to changes in social workers. The pro formas were sent out shortly after the cohort of young people had been transferred to a different team of social workers (on account of the age of the young people concerned), so the current social workers did not know the young people very well at this stage. An overall difficulty with this data collection exercise was that the required information had to be collected from a variety of sources and could not all be accessed from one place or one person. Again, the findings reinforce the fact that fragmentation of information is a major inhibiting factor in the lives of young people in care and that procedures for data-sharing and gaining ready access are at an early stage of development in many cases. It was not the case that the data were not available anywhere: with unlimited time and resources they would have been retrievable. The difficulty lay in the fact that the data were not readily accessible and were thus unavailable to contribute to planning or decision-making around the young people concerned. It should be pointed out here that those completing the pro forma were given opportunities throughout the instrument to respond 'do not know'. The research team considered that it was important to collect accurate, known data rather than estimates or 'good guesses'; however informed these may have been. Research experience suggests that, in a spirit of co-operation, respondents will submit unreliable evidence, on the grounds that they ought to know the response, unless they are specifically given a means of expressing the fact that the data are not available to them as they complete the instrument.

Many local authority respondents commented that the data collection exercise had been useful in identifying gaps in the information they held on children in public care and in highlighting how difficult it could be to collect some basic information on these young people. They had found participating in the research a useful means of self-assessment. (As stated above, all authorities were keen to participate.) It should be pointed out that data quality was poor across all the returned pro forma. In all cases, data were partial within each individual return (only one pro forma was fully completed). In addition, there were differences in the type of partial completion

across authorities: clearly, in some authorities a certain section of the pro forma was difficult to complete. There was no consistency as to the section(s) left with no response. In situations where there is such consistency, it can usually be surmised that there is a design fault in the instrument or that the data are unavailable nationally. In this case, the situation was more idiosyncratic. As long as this remains the case, comparisons across authorities with different practices and provision will be difficult.

3.1.5 Conclusions about data quality

The previous description about the difficulties encountered by those kindly collecting data for the research raises questions about the quality of the resulting data. While the NFER team is reasonably confident that the data are the most reliable and helpful available at the time, they would yet point out that this confidence is in the relative quality rather than in the absolute quality: that is, that notwithstanding developments in data collection, prompted by government requirements, there is still a lot of developmental work to be done. Until reliable and adequate data are available from all authorities, analysis to inform the development of policy and practice (to enhance the experiences of young people in the care system) is inhibited.

3.2 Education

3.2.1 Educational Placements

Table 3.1   Number of educational placements during secondary schooling

Number of Education Placements	Frequency of young people	% of young people
1	101	27
2	163	43
3	53	14
4	23	6
5	15	4
6	10	3
7	5	1
8	4	1
11	1	<1
Not known	2	1
	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

More than two-thirds (70 per cent) of the sample of young people had been in only one or two educational placements during their secondary schooling and nearly one-third had been in three or more different placements during the five years (National Curriculum years 7 to 11). One young person had been in 11 educational placements during this period. It should also be noted that some data were incomplete and did not always cover the young people's educational career for all five years; the difficulty of supplying historic data was referred to above. The actual number of placements was likely to be greater for some of these young people.

National data are available on pupil mobility but only with respect to total percentage movement in and out of a school in the course of an academic year — not at pupil level. There is inconsistency in the way in which mobility is defined and the way in which its relationship with attainment is calculated. However, Ofsted (2002) reports that schools with high levels of mobility tend to have lower than average GCSE scores, although this may be a factor of social disadvantage rather than the mobility itself; the situation is complex and some of the findings contradictory. Critical to the mobility of pupils in public care is the way in which schools manage difficulties caused by mobility and establish systems that ease the integration of the new pupils into the school. Ofsted's list of criteria of effectiveness (Ofsted 2002) is clearly relevant in meeting the needs of a cohort which is likely to experience placement moves at non-standard times.

Arguably, it is justifiable for information on education to be kept by the authority only on a young person's entry to care. However, the lack of information on education prior to this entry does not help decision-making in the school or education placement in which the young person is presently located. Many of the young people were probably known to social services prior to coming into care; however, what social services 'knows' is limited and it is unlikely at this stage to embrace details of educational placement and progress.

Table 3.2   Types of educational placement experienced by the sample

Types of provision	Count	% of all placements
Mainstream placement	381	43
Special school placement	130	15
Alternative provision/specific project	54	6
Pupil referral unit	33	4
No provision	33	4
Home tuition	27	3
Further education/technical college	26	3
Custodial placement/secure unit	17	2
Community home with education	15	2
Dual registered	13	2
Excluded	8	1
Vocational placement/training scheme	6	1
Other response	25	3
Type of placement not known	123	14
Missing data	2	<1
Total	893	100
N = 377		

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.
NB. Some young people had more than one placement, therefore the total exceeds N.

Just over two-fifths of the educational placements were in mainstream schools, with one-fifth in special schools or alternative provision. It should be pointed out that all the above categories are, in practice, discrete although technically it might be argued that they are overlapping.   There was evidence for this in qualitative data collected during the course of the research reported here.   For example, a pupil may be 'excluded' but have access to a school place after negotiation; another pupil may have 'no provision' because s/he had recently moved into the LEA and a school prepared to offer a place has not yet been found. Not all excluded pupils in the sample for whom data were being collected were in a pupil referral unit.   The data suggested that inadequate arrangements were being made for some pupils regardless of the formal guidance to try to eliminate these.

Table 3.3   Location of educational placements

	Count	% of all placements
Within own authority	499	56
Outside own authority	198	22
Not known/missing data	196	22
Total	893	100
N = 377		

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.
NB. Some young people had more than one placement, therefore the total exceeds N.

Over half of all of the educational placements were within the home authority and over one-fifth were outside the home authority. All responding authorities had listed some educational placements that were outside their authority.

3.2.2 Attendance

Table 3.4   Young people's attendance during year 11

Attendance	Frequency of young people	% of young people
0%	25	7
1-50%	19	5
51-75%	34	9
76-99%	113	30
100%	32	9
Unspecific data	44	12
Not known/missing data	110	29
	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

The school attendance of the young people in this cohort for their last academic year (during year 11) was over 75 per cent for more than one-third, with nine per cent achieving 100 per cent attendance. However, seven per cent had been recorded with no attendance during the academic year 2000-2001. No data on attendance were provided for nearly one-third of the young people. For some young people (12 per cent) respondents provided 'unspecific' data, including 'poor attendance', 'good attendance' or 'less than 85 per cent attendance'. The lack of data suggested either that the issue was not a priority or that data were inaccessible to the respondents (probably being maintained at school level); questions might be asked as to whether data ought to be specifically kept for this cohort for monitoring purposes. It is critical to monitor attendance and the way in which pupils are accessing education. The fact that a school place is available is only the first step to the engagement of the young people in their own learning. Furthermore, poor attendance may result in the withdrawal of the provision: for example, a home tutor will not continue to visit a pupil's home if that pupil is persistently unavailable, even if the pupil is officially recorded as in receipt of home tuition as his/her 'provision'.

3.2.3 Special Educational Needs

Table 3.5   Percentage of young people with special educational needs

	Frequency of young people	% of young people
None	150	40
Code of practice stage 1 or 2	13	3
Code of practice stage 3	39	10
Code of practice stage 4	2	1
Statement of special educational need	136	36
Not known/missing data	37	10
	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.
NB. At the time the pro forma was administered and for the period to which it referred, the original *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DfE, 1994) was in operation.

Forty per cent of the cohort of young people were reported as not having any special educational needs (SEN) at June 2001. Over one-third were recorded as having a statement of SEN; of those (136 young people), approximately one-fifth were entered for at least one GCSE. It will be noted that the proportion of the cohort identified as having a statement was high, reinforcing other evidence that the incidence of significant special educational needs is disproportionally high among young people in care. The average proportion of pupils with statements nationally is 3.1 per cent (DfES, 2002a); the average proportion of all pupils with statements for the case study authorities was 3.05 per cent, with most authorities within a couple of decimal points of the national average and only three significantly (more than 1.4 per cent) lower or higher. The proportion of the research sample at (old) code of practice stages 1-3 was average. But in the light of the case study evidence, these data should, perhaps, be treated with caution as several social workers were unsure as to any support that a young person was receiving at school.

Table 3.6   Principal and subsidiary special educational needs

	Principal Needs		Subsidiary Needs	
	Count	% of Cases	Count	% of Cases
Emotional & behavioural difficulties	62	33	16	8
Learning difficulties	58	31	17	9
Communication difficulties	8	4	10	5
Sensory impairment	5	3	2	1
Physical disabilities	3	2	2	1
Other difficulties	4	2	0	0
Not known/missing data	69	36	155	82
Total	209	111	202	106
	N = 190		N = 190	

NB. Respondents were able to select more than one category of need, therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

Emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and learning difficulties predominated as the principal identified needs, with nearly one-third of the cohort identified as in each category.

3.2.4 Key Stage 1 Attainment

Table 3.7   Key stage 1 attainment

Key Stage 1 Tests	English		Mathematics	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not sat/entered	2	1	2	1
Not in this country/not applicable	24	6	24	6
Not known/missing data	351	93	351	93
	N = 377	100	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

No key stage 1 levels were provided for any young person. This information was not known or was missing for 93 per cent of the young people, therefore the data does not give an accurate picture of the key stage 1 results for this cohort. The key stage 1 tests for these young people would have taken place in 1992, almost ten years prior to this data collection. It may be that many of these children were not in care at this time, or if they were in care, information from this period may be more difficult to access or retrieve from the files. This highlights the fact that it has been difficult to look at the longitudinal progress of these children as information has largely been

kept manually. The problem should be alleviated with the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data now tagging each young person of school age and recording, electronically, information such as performance in National Curriculum assessment.

3.2.5 Key Stage 2 Attainment

Table 3.8   Key stage 2 attainment

Key Stage 2 Tests	English		Mathematics		Science	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Working towards level 1	2	1	2	1	0	0
Level 1	4	1	2	1	3	1
Level 2	3	1	7	2	4	1
Level 3	6	2	7	2	5	1
Level 4	5	1	1	<1	4	1
Level 5	1	<1	2	1	2	1
Not sat/entered	4	1	4	1	4	1
Not in this country/ not applicable	23	6	23	6	23	6
Not known/missing data	329	87	329	87	332	88
	N = 377	100	N = 377	100	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

Key stage 2 data were not known or were missing for 87 per cent of the young people (for English and maths) and for 88 per cent of the young people for science, therefore this information does not give an accurate picture of the key stage 2 results for this cohort. Only six young people whose attainment data were provided achieved the expected level (level 4 or higher) for English and science and only three young people achieved level 4 or higher for maths. Returns for Quality Protects now include end-of-key-stage performance so this is another area where the problem of data availability will be largely eliminated in time. This illustrates the fact that the formal requirement for data return, though it may add to administrative burdens, can have a positive effect right across a cohort of young people, provided that intelligence is brought to bear on that information.

3.2.6 Key Stage 3 Attainment

Table 3.9.   **Key stage 3 attainment**

Key Stage 3 Tests	English		Mathematics		Science	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Working towards level 1	5	1	3	1	2	1
Level 1	1	<1	1	<1	1	<1
Level 2	10	3	8	2	6	2
Level 3	14	4	22	6	24	6
Level 4	38	10	37	10	42	11
Level 5	30	8	24	6	31	8
Level 6	8	2	12	3	5	1
Level 7	0	0	1	<1	0	0
Not sat/entered	17	5	17	5	17	5
Absent	11	3	12	3	10	3
No level awarded	7	2	7	2	6	2
Disapplied	17	5	17	5	17	5
Not in this country/ not applicable	21	6	21	6	21	6
Not known/missing data	198	53	195	52	195	52
	N = 377	100	N = 377	100	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

No key stage 3 data were provided for over half of the young people and only ten per cent of the total cohort were recorded as achieving the expected levels at key stage 3 (level 5 or above). The situation here is, perhaps, a little more surprising than that for earlier key stages as, for the cohort of young people under scrutiny, key stage 3 assessment took place just two years prior to the research pro forma being completed. As schools routinely use key stage 3 data to predict GCSE grades and as a planning tool to guide GCSE entry (for levels of papers, for example) it could be expected that this would take place similarly at the pupil level. There is some indication (from the 'not sat/entered', 'absent' and 'disapplied' categories) that some of these young people may have been beginning to show signs of disaffection. Raw data such as those presented in table 3.9 cannot, of course, give any firm messages in themselves but they do suggest that the careful monitoring of individuals is critical.

3.2.7 GCSEs/GNVQs entered for and achieved

Table 3.10   **Number of full GCSEs/GNVQs the young people were entered for and achieved**

Number of full GCSEs/ GNVQs	Young people entered for full GCSEs/GNVQs		Young people with full GCSE passes A*-C		Young people with full GCSE passes A*-G	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
0	97	26	146	39	91	24
1	14	4	20	5	15	4
2	11	3	18	5	17	5
3	11	3	12	3	15	4
4	10	3	8	2	12	3
5	15	4	6	2	19	5
6	11	3	7	2	14	4
7	17	5	4	1	22	6
8	30	8	2	1	23	6
9	21	6	6	2	25	7
10	14	4	2	1	14	4
11	4	1	0	0	3	1
Exams not yet taken	4	1	2	1	2	1
Not known/ missing data	118	31	144	38	105	28
	N=377	100	N=377	100	N=377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

One-quarter of the sample were not entered for any GCSEs. Of these, 16 per cent were reported as having significant special educational needs so GCSEs/GNVQs were considered inappropriate. Given that some schools successfully enter pupils with special educational needs ─ particularly those with moderate learning difficulties ─ for GCSE while others do not, the accuracy of the decision that entry was 'inappropriate' for the cohort in the research study may be debatable. Nearly one-third of the sample were entered for five or more GCSEs. No data were provided on nearly one-third of the young people. This again, highlights the difficulties encountered by the participating authorities in supplying data on the young people in public care.

From the data provided, seven per cent of the young people in the sample achieved five or more A*-C grades, compared to nearly half (47.5 per cent) the pupils in maintained schools in England (DfES, 2002b); five per cent of the national cohort in care achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (DoH, 2002). Nearly one-third of

the cohort achieved five or more A*-G grades and almost half achieved at least one GCSE (A*-G); the national in-care proportion for summer 2001 was 24 per cent (DoH, 2002). The national percentages for all maintained schools in England were 89.0 per cent and 94.6 per cent, respectively (DfES, 2002b). Although no direct comparisons should be made between the young people in this cohort and the national percentages for England, the variations in achievement are significant enough to highlight the difference. The analysis identified approximately 35 young people (nine per cent) who were not entered for any GCSEs and who were not recorded as having significant special educational needs: such discrepancies are interesting. Where data were provided, most of the young people achieved the same number of GCSEs as they were entered for, albeit at a low level. This shows that the young people did tend to sit the examinations that they were entered for, but whether they were entered for an appropriate number of GCSEs in relation to their ability and needs is another issue.

The quarter of the cohort who were not entered for any GCSEs (97 young people) had a total of 116 educational placements between them during year 11. Table 3.11 illustrates the type of provision these young people experienced during year 11. It will be noted that a few young people changed placement during year 11.

Table 3.11   Nature of year 11 placements for the young people who were not entered for any GCSEs

Type of provision	Count	% of placements in year 11 for young people not entered for GCSEs
Mainstream placement	22	19
Special school placement	17	15
Alternative provision/specific project	16	14
Pupil referral unit	13	11
No provision	11	10
Further education/technical college	8	7
Community home with education	7	6
Home tuition	6	5
Custodial placement/secure unit	4	3
Dual registered	4	3
Vocational placement/training scheme	3	3
Excluded	1	1
Other response	3	3
Type of placement not known	1	1
Total	116	100
N = 97		

NB. Some young people changed placement (type of provision) during year 11, therefore the total number of placements exceeds N.

Only one-fifth of the placements for the young people in year 11, who were not entered for any GCSEs, were in mainstream schools. Sixteen of the placements (14 per cent) were where young people had no provision, were excluded or were in a secure unit for some or all of year 11. Young people should have access to the National Curriculum but entry to GCSE may be dependent on the nature and timing of the placement. Secure units are often a regional resource so continuity and progression for young people in these placements may be compromised and they are unlikely to be returned to school.

Out of the young people in the sample identified as having been in six or more educational placements during secondary schooling (20 young people), only one was entered for any GCSEs, over three-quarters were not entered for any GCSEs and there was no information on the remaining three. Only two of these 20 young people were known to be continuing education or training when their pro forma were completed.

Within the total cohort, fourteen young people had achieved short course GCSEs and nine had achieved some type of GNVQ.

3.2.8 Other Accreditation

Table 3.12   Other accreditation the young people achieved

Types of accreditation	Count	% of young people
Basic skills	66	18
Other curriculum subjects	59	16
Vocational/life skills	29	8
None	21	6
Leisure	11	3
Other accreditation	4	1
Not known/missing data	282	75
Total	472	127
N = 377		

NB. Respondents were able to list more than type of accreditation, therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

Under one-quarter of the young people were known by the authorities to have some kind of other national or local accreditation. The most common types of extra

accreditation were in basic skills (eg Royal Society of Arts (RSA) certificates in English, mathematics and IT) and in other curriculum subjects (eg Welsh Certificate of Education). Other accreditation included ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards and vocational certification accreditation such as City and Guilds Motor Vehicle Maintenance or Health and Hygiene. The respondents did not know, or could not provide, information on other accreditation for a large majority of the young people. The situation in this regard may be little different from that obtaining for the total cohort of young people at key stage 4: publicly recording and crediting this achievement is an issue among teachers working with young people whose special educational needs preclude GCSE/GNVQ entry. However, the effects may adversely affect the in-care cohort. Many young people are proud of their certification for alternative key stage courses, particularly as many of these are carefully tailored to the young person's needs and state clearly what that young person can and cannot do. (For young people with learning difficulties, the certificate may be based on a course which is grounded in the young person's individual education plan and may be as particular to the pupil as an assessment of that pupil's ability to travel from home to school independently.) It is, thus, unfortunate that there is no public recognition of their achievements. The sharing of this information would give a better indication of the achievements of this cohort (and other pupils who do not achieve GCSE/GNVQs) and stress the positive, rather than negative, elements of their educational careers.   However, the disadvantage of such public recognition might be assumptions being made about the level at which pupils in public care are capable of working.

3.2.9 Key Stage 4 Education

During key stage 4, almost half (46 per cent) of the cohort followed the relevant exam courses (normally with their peer group) but the other half (48 per cent) did not. No information was provided for the remaining six per cent.

For the young people who did not follow the relevant exam courses, a number of reasons were provided.

Table 3.13   Reasons why the young people did not follow relevant exam courses normally with peers

	Count	% of young people out of those who did not follow exam courses with peers
Followed an alternative curriculum at key stage 4	86	43
Had significant special education needs	60	30
Did not/could not complete the required coursework	47	23
Was in a placement which did not offer GCSE/GNVQ exam courses	47	23
Had (a) difficult care placement(s)	35	17
Withdrew from the exam courses	20	10
Expressed a wish not to be entered	9	5
Was excluded with no educational provision	9	5
Was refused entry by his/her school	7	4
Not known/missing data	21	10
Total responses	341	170
N = 202		

NB. Respondents were able to indicate more than one reason for the young person not following a normal exam course therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

Other reasons provided were that young people:

- Refused/failed to attend placement
- Changed to a local college/training provider
- Did not take some/all exams entered for
- Moved area
- Only had a part-time placement
- Expected to take exams in 2002 or 2003.

Almost half of these young people followed an alternative curriculum at key stage 4. Approximately one-third of respondents referred to young people's special educational needs as a reason why they had not followed the relevant exam courses. About ten per cent of the young people withdrew from their examination courses. Just under one-quarter of them had withdrawn during year 10 and over half had withdrawn during year 11. It was not known when the remainder withdrew. Respondents indicated that seven young people were refused entry to GCSE exams by their schools. Five of the young people did not or could not complete the coursework in time; of these, two also had significant special educational needs.

3.2.10   Key Stage 4 Support

Table 3.14   Support used by the young people to help with key stage 4 studies

	Count	% of young people
Support from local project/organisation	33	9
GCSE revision/support sessions	23	6
General educational support/training provision	20	5
Computer/computer software	16	4
Support with work from foster/residential carers	13	3
Home tutor	13	3
Work experience placement	9	2
Careers interview/advice	7	2
Mentoring programme	7	2
Extra curricular activities	5	1
GCSE resources	4	1
Books	4	1
EAL support	4	1
Behaviour support	4	1
Financial support	2	1
Counselling/family therapy	2	1
Homework clubs	2	1
Individual sessions for asylum seekers	2	1
None	7	2
Other support	4	1
Not known/missing data	256	68
Total	437	116
N=377		

NB. Respondents were able to describe more than one type of support, therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

The participating authorities did not provide information on the strategies, services and practical help used by the young people to help with their key stage 4 studies for over half of the cohort. Where information was provided, there were various types of support made use of by these young people, including support from local projects and organisations, general educational support and GCSE revision sessions. It was not possible to ascertain whether the support was discrete for pupils in care or was in the form of general support sessions. Both may be important: if the young person is engaged in the latter, then it is encouraging insofar as they have made use of the support available (they may have needed encouraging). Yet there is evidence that some authorities are making positive efforts to boost the performance of this cohort with support sessions specifically focused on their needs.   It was not possible to ascertain from the available data whether there was a relationship between support

received during key stage 4 and higher GCSE grades. Numbers were too small to undertake any statistical analysis and, anyway, unless the particularities of the cases were known, with baseline data/predicted grades taken into account, the data are meaningless. In some cases, support may have kept a pupil in school; in another, it may have resulted in course work being submitted so that the GCSE entry could be made; in another, it may have helped secure a higher grade. Such a relationship could only be suggested with larger cohorts and far fuller data sets and, even then, the context of the school (which the case study work suggested was important - see section 4) is an additional variable.

3.3 Care History

3.3.1 Care Placements

Table 3.15   Number of care placements during key stages 3 and 4

	Frequency	% of young people
1 care placement	126	33
2-3 care placements	112	30
4-5 care placements	45	12
6-10 care placements	73	19
11-15 care placements	11	3
16-20 care placements	6	2
21+ care placements	3	1
Not known/missing data	1	<1
	N = 377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

One-third of the sample had been in the same care placement from age 11 through to 16, or during their time in care within this period. Almost one-third of the young people had had two or three care placements during this time. One-quarter of the sample had had six or more (up to 21) care placements during this time.   Because of the way that they were submitted on the pro forma, data did not allow for disaggregation of the key stages; furthermore, respondents did not indicate the stage in the academic year in which changes were made. Just over one-fifth of respondents stated that inability to complete course work was a factor in non-entry to GCSE (table 3.13). However, case study evidence would suggest that it was not just a matter of non-completion of course work caused by a change of school placement, for example: school careers had, clearly, broken down prior to key stage 4 when pupils are taking

GCSE courses. Those working with these young people clearly need to be aware of the potential problem here.

The number of care placements was compared with the number of educational placements that each young person had been in through his/her secondary schooling. Data showed that almost half the young people had a greater number of care placements than educational placements, suggesting that for these young people educational placements did not break down in excess of care moves. Approximately one-quarter of the young people had more education than care placements and one-quarter had an equal amount. However, it should be noted that some data were incomplete and did not always cover the young people's educational or care history for all five years; therefore the data might be frail.

Of the 93 young people with six or more care placements, 15 per cent achieved five or more GCSEs (A-G), 15 per cent achieved one to four GCSEs, and one-third achieved none. (Data were not known or were missing for 37 per cent of these young people.) Of the 126 young people who remained in the same care placement during their secondary schooling or during their time in care within this period, 45 per cent achieved five or more GCSEs (A-G) and 18 per cent did not achieve any. (Data were not known or were missing for 18 per cent of these young people.) While the cohort for whom data were available was small, findings suggest that stability of care placement is associated with higher performance at key stage 4. This is unsurprising and reinforces findings from earlier studies. However, there is no simple relationship. Frequent changes may indicate a pupil moving between a foster home and his/her own home. A number of changes of care placements while a single educational placement is maintained may not be as damaging as a corresponding number of educational placements (although the traumas of changing care placement cannot be underestimated). Some changes may be beneficial and mark greater appropriateness for the young person. Again, the message is that those making decisions on behalf of the young people should be aware of the possible positive and negative effects on their education.

Table 3.16   Type of care placement

	Count	% of all placements
Foster care	762	52
Residential care	453	31
Placement at home/with family/friend	150	10
Semi-independent provision	25	2
Secure unit/custodial provision	22	2
Independent living	13	1
Other care	9	1
Hospital	5	<1
Type of placement not known	23	2
Missing data	1	<1
Total number of placements for 377 young people	1463	100
N = 377		

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.
NB. Some young people had more than one placement, therefore the total exceeds N.

Over half of all the care placements were in foster care and nearly one-third were in residential care. It should be remembered that these two groups may be qualitatively different: those in residential care are more likely to be harder to place than those in foster care. Furthermore, 'foster care' is not a single entity; the quality of care varies as does the nature of the carers' attitude to, and support for, education.

Table 3.17   Location of care placements

Location of educational placements	Count	% of all placements
Within own authority	1098	75
Outside own authority	279	19
Not known/missing data	86	6
Total number of placements for 377 young people	1463	100
N = 377		

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.
NB. Some young people had more than one placement, therefore the total exceeds N.

Three-quarters of all of the care placements were within the authority and almost one-fifth were outside the authority. Again, there were also a number of placements for which data were not available. The data here do not distinguish between placements that are just outside the authority's boundaries (for example, as in neighbouring London boroughs) and those that are many miles from the young person's home authorities. The difference is critical in terms of ability to monitor and provide consistency of provision on the young person's return.

3.4 Post-16 Careers

3.4.1 Post-16 Destinations

Table 3.18   The post-16 destination of the sample on 31 October 2001

	Frequency of young people	% of young people
College of further education	122	32
At home/unemployed/not training	73	19
Training placement	42	11
School sixth form	29	8
Employment	25	7
Residential/special school	14	4
Custodial provision/young offenders' institution	7	2
Still completing key stage 4	7	2
Awaiting start of training placement	2	1
Not known/missing data	56	15
	N=377	100

NB. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not always sum to 100.

Two-fifths of the sample were in a college of further education or in school sixth form at the end of October 2001 (four months after the end of year 11). Approximately one-fifth were in a training placement or in employment and approximately one-fifth were neither training nor employed.

Nearly all the young people who achieved five or more GCSEs A*-C (25 of 27) continued in education, in a college of further education or in school sixth form. However, of the 97 young people who did not achieve any GCSEs, only about one-third (30 per cent) stayed in education post-16; 11 per cent entered into a training placement or employment and 30 per cent were reported to be either unemployed or not training. While there is evidence that the GCSE attainment of this cohort does not necessarily reflect their ability/potential, nevertheless, the data here highlight the importance of the qualifications for progression at 16+. Compared with the national figure (at the end of 2001, 71.2 per cent of 16 year olds were in full-time education (DfES, 2002c)), the 30 per cent staying-on rate is low, particularly in the light of the fact that colleges of further education provide a good resource by way of courses focused on the needs of young people with learning difficulties. It may be, in fact, that these young people were well represented in those staying on, as they may have followed regular patterns of progression from special schools.

The one-fifth of the cohort not profitably engaged post-16 give cause for concern. At the time of the study, the Connexions service was relatively new and it was probably the case that the young people in the sample were variously able to access the support of Connexions advisers. It would be hoped that, provided attention is paid to issues of access, the situation improves as Connexions develops.

3.4.2 Career Aspirations and Plans

Table 3.19   Young people's career aspirations and plans

	Count	% of young people
Further study/training	57	15
Career undecided	32	9
Manual work	31	8
Caring professions	16	4
Creative work	10	3
Sports, leisure and retail	10	3
IT related work	6	2
Professions with lengthy training (eg law)	4	1
Armed forces	4	1
Other responses	14	4
Not known/missing data	242	64
Total	426	114
N = 377		

NB. Respondents were able to give more than one career plan for each young person; therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

The young people's career aspirations and plans were either not known or were missing from almost two-thirds of the cases. Fifteen per cent of the young people were identified as planning to do further study or training. The situation regarding planning for post-16 education and training is likely to improve following the introduction of the Pathway Plan from October 2001. This replaces the care plan when young people are leaving care and applies to young people from the age of 16-18. The young person's social worker or personal adviser is expected to help the young person to prepare the plan, which should address future education, training and work plans, the young person's living arrangements, and the support available to him/her after care.

3.4.3 Young People's Current Living Situation

Table 3.20   Young people's living situation in August and October 2001

	As at 31 August 2001		As at 31 October 2001	
	Count	**% of young people**	**Count**	**% of young people**
Still looked after by the authority	283	75	263	70
Continuing in same care placement as in July 2001	160	42	146	39
Started independent living	38	10	42	11
Case closed/no longer looked after	18	5	16	4
Residential educational placement	8	2	9	2
Placement with family	6	2	8	2
Semi-independent placement	4	1	4	1
Custodial placement	3	1	2	1
Bed and breakfast accommodation	3	1	1	<1
Homeless	1	<1	1	<1
Residential placement	1	<1	0	0
Other	1	<1	1	<1
Not known/missing data	28	7	41	11
N = 377	554	147	534	142

NB. Respondents were able to select more than one response; therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

At the end of August 2001, three-quarters of the cohort were still looked after by their local authority, with under half continuing in the same care placement as in July 2001. By the end of October 2001, the number of young people who were still looked after by their local authority had declined slightly as had the number who were continuing in the same placement as in July 2001.

Of the 146 young people who had stayed in the same care placement through to October 2001, nearly half had remained in education, either at school sixth form or at a college of further education.   Of the 42 young people who were living independently, less than one-third had remained in education and just over one-third were not training, employed or studying.

The data here raise issues about the appropriateness of post-16 placements. There is a degree of pressure to move young people out of care at 16 so that younger ones may enter. But this sort of life change does not happen in the normal course of events for young people at this age. Similarly, the fact that carers can state preferences for looking after younger children, so that the older ones have to seek other placements, is

not in any way reflected in any 'normal' situation. At the same time, there may be good arguments for a young person moving on as the placement, which was supportive for his/her needs at 13, may have achieved a task and not be appropriate for the new task.   The message again is that each case needs to be carefully considered and the effects of the placement on the young person's education and training need to be rigorously addressed.

4. The Case Studies

4.1 Jane

Education:	*Mainstream school – year 7; no provision for part of year 8; special school for severe learning difficulties – years 8-9; special school for moderate learning difficulties – years 9-11*
Care:	*A series of foster care placements during years 7-8; a series of residential care placements during year 8; foster care – year 9; foster care – years 10-11*
SEN:	*Statement with principal need identified as learning difficulties, also had Asperger's*
KS4:	*Four GCSEs (C,D,E,F). BTec First Diploma in drama*
Post 16:	*Expressive arts course, art & design and English GCSEs; plans to start BTec National Diploma September 2002*

Jane was an articulate young lady who was vocal in drawing attention to the inappropriateness of some of her educational placements; she particularly resented the fact that she, as the most able in her class, had on occasion to support her peers. Jane has Asperger's syndrome. The number of young people on the autistic spectrum is increasing rapidly and, although there is a growing understanding of their particular educational needs, such understanding is not widespread and the needs of young people with Asperger's are often not identified. It was, therefore, in many ways unsurprising that Jane, particularly in her younger days, did not receive the specialist support that might have made her educational career more positive. For example, Jane reported that, at nursery, she was made to sit in the corner for being naughty. There would be many other examples, within the general population, of such an inappropriate response to a child with autistic spectrum disorders. However, it should be noted here that her difficulties were compounded by this lack of specialist support. Had she received it, it would have been recognised, first, that change for Jane, as indeed for anyone with autistic spectrum disorders, is particularly traumatic; and second, that this trauma, unsupported, would inevitably lead to unacceptable behaviour. A vicious circle was thus established whereby Jane's behaviour deteriorated, under stress, (as it would for many young people with Asperger's) so

both her educational and care placement broke down. At one stage, following the failure of a foster care placement, Jane was sent home but this did not work out either as she did not get on with her mother.

As it was, Jane claimed that she went through a series of 15 foster carers (her present carer confirmed that there were 12 in one year) and had a period in which no school place was allocated, before being placed in an out-of-authority residential special school when she was in year 8. She reported that someone 'took her there and left her with her bags'. At the time, she was severely depressed, had mental health difficulties and, all this compounded by Asperger's, could not handle social pressure. She was under 24-hour care as she was self-harming. She reported that staff 'could not control me and put me in the exclusion room for being disruptive'. Had she been placed at this age (ideally, earlier) in specialist placement where staff understood the causes of particular negative behaviours and could put in place strategies to transform them into positive ones, it is arguable that Jane would have been happier and achieved more.

Jane's educational career took an upward turn in key stage 3 when she was returned to her home authority to a special school. The school was designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties but had developed a specialism for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The headteacher of this school went, with a local authority officer with particular responsibility for the education of young people in public care, to Jane's out-of-authority school to assess her needs and prepare for her entry to special school. A new foster placement was found for Jane — a friend of her previous carer. Education was not discussed with the carer and the carer was not given any information about Jane's educational needs as 'this was not top priority'. Given the fact that the educational needs of people with autistic spectrum disorders are very often the key to their managing their social/family lives effectively, this is perhaps, surprising. However, Jane was fortunate in that, perhaps for the first time in her life, staff at the school understood how to support her effectively. The headteacher reported good relations with her carer and noted that, by managing her autistic spectrum disorders, she could gain access to other opportunities. She was able to spend one night a week at the school and join in extra-curricular activities and was receiving counselling from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS).

At the end of key stage 4, Jane had four subjects at GCSE, seven subjects within the Certificate of Achievement and an ASDAN bronze award. The headteacher commented that pupils were not expected to select options at the end of key stage 3 — they were exposed to a broad curriculum and external examination entries were made as late as possible in order to maximise their strengths and any late development. Jane also participated successfully in a special drama project with other local schools in collaboration with a professional theatre company — this led to a BTec qualification. A tremendous amount of planning, support and effort went into guiding Jane about post-16 opportunities. When interviewed, she was at a specialist college. She would soon have to move on from her care placement as she was approaching the age of 18 and should move on to adult services; her carer was not involved in the adult carer scheme and felt that her skills and preferences lay with younger children.

Jane's social worker was not engaged in her education as she felt that care issues and planning for Jane's future took precedence. However, she had been to Jane's school when particular difficulties occurred and when careers were discussed and, similarly, she had been to Jane's college to discuss her planning document. She had sent Jane's personal education plan to the college to complete and, on return, had filed it. She had not found it of use; rather, she regarded it as extra work and more appropriately the business of the school or college.

It was interesting that once Jane was in control of her autism, like others in similar circumstances, she was able to reflect on her social difficulties. She was aware that she always looked for the 'odd person out' or someone with disabilities to make friends with. She commented that she would have liked her teachers to have helped her not to make inappropriate friends. These 'friends' involved her in incidents that she could not manage. For example, when at mainstream school, she was taken shoplifting by another girl and, when she returned to school and immediately reported what had happened, got into an increasingly distressing situation.

Jane was able to reflect on times when staff, in their ignorance, had made matters worse rather than better. She cited the example of when a number of staff chased her round the school (wanting to contain her after an incident) instead of 'leaving me

alone to calm down'. It is well known that many children with autistic spectrum disorders get a 'buzz' out of being chased and this action was the very worst thing that the staff could have done. These examples highlight the fact that, until she received the specialist support to address her special educational needs, Jane's difficulties were often made worse by the environments in which she was placed and, as a result, the perception of her was of an increasingly difficult young woman and one who was an increasing challenge for the care system. Had her educational needs been correctly identified at an earlier stage, it is likely that Jane's care placements would have been far more stable.

However, the story was relatively successful insofar as Jane's needs had eventually been identified and addressed, she had achieved certification and she was confident in her abilities. At college at the time of the research, she had a Pathway Plan. Had she not been in care, her Asperger's might have been identified at an earlier age (through parental pressure) and, certainly, she would have been less distressed (and might not have developed mental health difficulties) if she had not been moved around care placements. As stated above, Jane was extremely articulate about her own difficulties and demonstrated the resilience which is associated with overcoming the negative effects of being in care. Particularly telling was the following comment about her:

> She has always tried very hard at school, especially when she was misunderstood, she would still try her best.

4.2 Lydia and Elsa

Lydia	
Education:	*Not in country – years 7-8; mainstream school – years 9-11*
Care:	*Foster care – years 9-10; foster care – year 11*
SEN:	*None*
KS4:	*Eight GCSEs (all D-G)*
Post 16:	*AS maths, retaking GCSE English, GNVQ in information technology. Plans to start A levels September 2002*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Elsa</td></tr>
<tr><td>Education:</td><td>Not in country – years 7-8 (arrived during year 8); mainstream school – years 9-11</td></tr>
<tr><td>Care:</td><td>Residential care – year 8; foster care – years 8-11</td></tr>
<tr><td>SEN:</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>KS4:</td><td>Nine GCSEs (including one A and four C grades)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Post 16:</td><td>At college of further education retaking GCSE maths and English and doing additional GCSEs in English literature, information technology and sociology. Plans to start A levels September 2002</td></tr>
</table>

Two young people were in the category of asylum seekers, having arrived, unaccompanied, in key stage 3. Both were extremely articulate and their difficulties with education were of a nature different from those of the other young people in the sample. Both were extremely motivated, worked hard and were determined to take control of their lives and lay out the foundations for their own future.   Both commented on what they regarded as 'poor teachers' ─ those who did not make the students work and who seemed to want to take the easiest route in terms of student support. Lydia commented:

He didn't push us ─ if you didn't do it, that was it ─ he wasn't a good teacher.

However, both were fortunate in that they were excellently supported by the majority of the teachers at their respective schools. One young person was also critical of what appeared to her as students' disrespect towards teachers ─ the cultural differences of schools in London and in her home country were striking.

Neither young person reported being bullied though it was not entirely clear whether they had higher tolerance thresholds than some of their peers or were able to regard their peers' behaviour with a degree of maturity and tolerance perhaps born out of the incomparable traumas which had been suffered prior to arrival in this country. Lydia commented, for example, that she was largely ignored by peers in her class before she became more comfortable with English:

You know, because I don't speak, they don't speak to you. And you find yourself lonely.

Lydia had enough personal resilience to overcome this isolation but she referred to a friend of hers from the same country of origin who had started not attending her school because of similar treatment. Interestingly, Lydia had not been put in touch, at school, with other pupils, in other year groups, who came from the same country and spoke the same language. As will be seen below, this was standard practice in the school in which Elsa was placed and seemed greatly to ease her entry into the school.

Lydia spoke of her peers' annoyance at the teacher's praise when she was the only student to have completed a holiday assignment:

I just ignored them. Sometimes the teacher heard them and told me it's alright, don't worry about them. Because they don't want to do their work, it's not your fault.

Elsa remarked that talking about bullying, had it happened, would have been difficult — this perhaps suggests a cultural difference. When asked who she would tell about bullying, Elsa said:

I probably wouldn't even tell her [foster mother] because it's not the kind of easy thing you can say — 'I'm being bullied'. That's the way I am.

What troubled both young people was their lack of fluency in English. In Elsa's words:

It's like you want to say something but it doesn't come out.

Lydia was adamant that language support was inadequate and did not last long enough. For someone such as her, who had sights on, and the obvious ability for, higher education, her functional literacy was inadequate. She remarked that she considered that she had the same opportunities as her peers (she was not denied them on account of her legal status) but she had access problems because of her insufficient grasp of language. One of her teachers commented that Lydia had arrived just a little

too old to assimilate language structures with ease. Lydia pointed out that 'people forget how little I've been in England' and that, even after four or five years, it was still a struggle for her to read and write in her additional language. She realised that people probably over-estimated her ability because her comprehension was good. But she needed extra time in exams, which she did not seem to have been granted.

She was reluctant to press for additional support. She had asked her social worker ─ when she was eventually allocated one ─ for extra support but none had been forthcoming. The social worker's comment was that 'the young person is articulate so didn't need extra tuition as such'. The carer felt that this was a function of the fact that it was the end of the financial year.

Lydia would not ask for help at school unless it was directly offered:

> I didn't ask them because they didn't offer we could come and ask them [for help].

This highlights the importance of staff with the authority to access relevant support being aware of the changing circumstances of young people in public care. For example, Lydia changed care placements in the middle of her GCSE examinations but the teacher at her school who was most closely involved with her situation was unaware of this. The teacher was, similarly, unaware of any external support available to help Lydia, though her perception that Lydia's foster carer lacked the skills to help Lydia suggested that she was aware that the girl needed support.

Elsa felt welcome at the school in which she was placed and did not feel isolated as did Lydia. She was allocated a pupil-mentor who spoke her language and she attended a language induction class for a year. Interestingly, she commented on the fact that, in maths, her English peers were several years behind the norm for same age pupils in her own country. She felt that she had adequate support:

> Basically, if you want to learn, there's everything.

Elsa seemed to have access to a considerable degree of support at her school as a matter of course ─ the support was readily available to all pupils. The school

arranged an Easter holiday revision course, for example ─ 'and we could phone him [the tutor] up if we had any other questions'. Homework clubs were on offer, though Elsa preferred to work at home (where she had good facilities in her room, including a computer) as she realised that her friends distracted her in the club and she worked harder at home. Towards the end of year 11 ─ when, she commented, it was too late ─ Elsa had access to a tutor from social services and was able to go to 'the LAC room' (this seemed to be an informal tutorial/catch-up facility).

At the time of interview, Elsa was reporting problems with concentration and deteriorating relations with her carer, which were affecting her work. She presented a mature analysis of the problems of choosing foster carers for young people from other countries and other cultures. While she greatly appreciated being placed in a family from her own country of origin, so that she could maintain cultural links and her own language, she yet commented that there were cultural differences *within* countries ─ she pointed out that this might be more pronounced in some countries than others and, for a child from a different country, there might be no problem. In her particular case, she was, perhaps, more comfortable in an 'urban' culture (and had, presumably, been affected by the peer culture of English friends at school in addition) and thought that the fact that her carer was originally from a more traditional rural community (though she had been in England for over two decades) caused tensions in their relationship. Clearly, the perceptions of articulate young people such as Elsa ought to be taken extremely seriously.

Elsa's foster carer positively promoted education and, when Elsa arrived, went to considerable trouble to seek information about possible schools ─ she went to the library to look at prospectuses, league tables and A level results and also made visits to the possible schools. She placed much value on education:

> Looking after them is not enough ... my main concern is education ... can I make a difference? ... Can they have a future?

She had no support in this activity ─ she merely acted from her experience with her own son and daughter:

> None of the social workers went to check at the school.

She commented that educational information about unaccompanied asylum seekers is rarely available. Later, annoyed at the social workers' lack of attention to education, she sought out specialist help (there was an education team for children in public care in this particular authority). While she pointed out that, because of her experience with her own children, she was both able and willing to take the initiative with regard to Elsa's education, and felt that her expectations and encouragement were the key to Elsa's success at GCSE ('the grades she got compared to others, she done very well'), the lack of systemic approach was worrying:

> My concern is how many foster carers they [social workers] know that know which is a good school ... I've been in this country for 24 years.

The foster carer attended a carers' support group but noted that discussion was mostly around young people who were being difficult:

> We don't really discuss education: that is disappointing for me.

Evidence from Elsa's school suggested that she was well placed and that her foster carer, by good luck or good management, did her excellent service in securing a place at that particular school. The needs of asylum seekers and pupils in public care were clearly understood (a member of staff commented: 'It's hard for children in public care to fit into friendship groups which already exist' but that the school ethos was such that 'students here are generally welcoming'). A member of staff commented that Elsa had had a positive experience on account of a range of factors:

- her supportive foster home ('not typical of foster carers of asylum seekers')
- her wise choice of friends ('her friends had a good work ethic')
- the good standard of teaching at the school.

In addition, school organisational factors which seemed to be significant included the following:

- tutors progressed through the school with a year group, offering continuity and stability to more vulnerable young people
- a personal interview was provided for all new entrants to identify needs

- close monitoring of all pupils ensured that difficulties were identified at an early stage
- pastoral care systems catered for a range of needs ('Elsa attended a girls' self-esteem group where she was encouraged to explore her sense of identity as a refugee').

In addition, there was local authority support if the school felt that it did not have the resources to address a particular difficulty:

> I'd go to the School Inclusion panel or Social Services if there were serious concerns.

As seen above, Lydia herself was very tolerant of the situation regarding her education (as was the other asylum seeker, who came from the same country); she did not assume that she should have received support and did not consider that any agency had been negligent. Arguably, it is others who should have acted as an advocate for her. While giving much support for education, Lydia's foster carer did not challenge the situation in a way that, perhaps, might have activated the positive support that Lydia needed. For example, the carer felt that information regarding Lydia's attendance and behaviour 'was enough' and remarked that she always asked the young person if she had had a good or bad day at school. It is debatable if this was enough to help a young person struggling alone with receiving all her tuition in an additional language and a strange country to sort out her career aspirations and the route to realising them. Having remarked that 'Lydia's social worker has changed many times' and had included agency staff and a period without an allocation, the carer then commented that:

> Lydia has had some very good social workers who have even contacted her from home.

While, certainly, this commitment is to be commended, it is not, in itself, sufficient. The lack of continuity alone was not conducive to a permanent and effective scrutiny of education.

The social worker, who supported both these asylum seekers, considered that her role was to promote independence and anti-discrimination, to empower the young person and help them meet their full potential. She had contacted their respective schools to

enquire about their attendance, social experiences and social ability. Again, important though these things may be, they do not address the young people's very real concern about the way in which their limited language ability was hindering their career options.

At the time of the research, Lydia was doing A and AS levels in a school sixth form, having tried a college of further education but not been comfortable on account of language difficulties and lack of support. She had plans to extend her subjects at A and AS level the following year. Elsa had taken 9 GCSEs and achieved one A grade and four C grades. At the time of the research she was at college, retaking some GCSEs and preparing to do three A levels.

4.3 Rachel

Education:	*Mainstream school – years 7-11 (start of year 11); individual package – year 11 (although not accessed)*
Care:	*Residential care – year 11; foster care – year 11*
SEN:	*Code of Practice stage 3*
KS4:	*No GCSEs*
Post 16:	*Completed maths course; planning to start childcare course September 2002*

Rachel's profile was characterised by aggression towards staff and disaffection from school generally or, at least when things did not go her own way. Of one school she said:

> You could get away with anything and that's what I liked. What I hated was when you did get caught out ... Some teachers were a bit cocky.

She considered that it was the hardness of the teachers that caused her to get excluded:

> I wouldn't have been excluded if all the teachers were really cushy.

Her real interests lay in craft, design and technology (CDT) and staff said that she was very good at it. In these lessons, she reported that she concentrated and attended extra lessons whereas:

> In the other lessons I didn't do the coursework; I couldn't be bothered.

There were hints that, behind this attitude lay a history of lack of encouragement:

> If my dad [had] said, 'come on Rachel', but he didn't ... so I thought what's the point; I won't do it….. I would've liked some support like 'you can do this Rachel; just buckle down and do it', but because I never got any of this support I never did this.

Like many other young people, she blamed herself for being placed in care:

> Living away from home. I've been all over the place ... that's like a downfall ... being away from my family... I've had no contact with them now for over a year. When I was at school, I kept going over it in my mind asking what I've done that is so bad.

Unfortunately, following an incident when Rachel put others in physical danger in the CDT room, she was excluded.

Rachel's school was experienced with pupils in public care ─ at the time of the research there were 20 on roll. The designated teacher (who was also the inclusion manager) wrote a weekly memo to all staff giving non-confidential but useful information about the cohort. She would pass on more sensitive information face-to-face on a need-to-know basis. Aware of the consequences of these pupils not having a school placement, the school tried hard not to exclude pupils in care. The head of year kept contact with the residential unit where Rachel was placed and rang immediately if she did not turn up for school. He commented that no one customarily came to open/parents' evenings for Rachel and he was 'not sure' about the position regarding attendance of school staff at reviews or contact with the social worker.

Rachel had been referred to a special key stage 4 alternative curriculum project (based at the local college, with support) but Rachel was reported not to turn up at

placements (vocational training). Placement on this project apparently precluded entry for GCSE. Staff at the school said that they had spent 'loads of time' on Rachel despite the negative outcomes at the end of key stage 4.

But since leaving school, Rachel had successfully completed a maths course at college (and achieved 80 per cent in her AEB test) and had been accepted for a childcare course, about which she was thrilled. She had matured and was able to reflect on her schooldays, not without regret but positively in that she was determined to make a success of the future now that she had decided her chosen path.

> When I kept getting suspended for like a week or two I thought 'this is a laugh! I'm doing it again!' But when they said 'you're permanently excluded and you're not coming back', I thought, 'Oh no! What've I done now?' Now I wish I'd listened because I really regret being kicked out of school now .... I used to start swearing at the teachers and then I'd get in trouble. I did enjoy school when I was there. I didn't really want to leave but I had no choice in the matter. Initially, I got suspended for two weeks and then they said I could go back but when I went back in they said 'we're not ready for you yet - come back in another week'. I thought, fair enough, because what I'd done was pretty bad. So I went back and they said 'one more week' so when I went back they said the girl's mum had made a complaint and I wasn't allowed back. I thought, 'why didn't you tell me that first off?'

Rachel had clearly 'turned the corner', largely through her own initiative. But there is an issue about the degree of support that she would need now that she was returning to study after having had a chequered school career.

Rachel's residential carers commented that no information on her previous education had been available when she arrived ─ they had had to seek it all. They commented that, although Rachel's difficulties were, at the time, purely emotional (following family bereavement and the inability of the remaining parent to cope, especially with parenting), there were potential mental health problems if these emotional difficulties remained unchecked (the unit where she was living was primarily for young people (16-25) with mental health difficulties). They found the school supportive but lacking resources to do anything positive (for example, during times of exclusion) and the education welfare officer was reported to be 'unhelpful'. Residential staff commented

that they too lacked the resources to give Rachel the support that she needed and which might have made her return to school ─ to which she was looking forward as representing 'normality' if nothing else ─ more successful. The school had requested that the residential unit provide a member of staff for Rachel's first day back at school but this was difficult for them as they only had two carers on duty during the day to care for 25 young adult residents, many with mental health difficulties. One of the carers commented that the definition of their role as 'corporate guardian' was difficult as they did not have the resources to undertake the role successfully and they did not consider that it was their role. A carer commented that it was difficult to monitor homework: there was a six-week schedule of shifts and many days could go by before any one staff member saw a particular resident again.

Rachel began being increasingly violent and she self-harmed but had no medical support. A carer thought that this was a *cri de coeur*. The carers said that she had 'excellent' class reports and very good ones for some subjects but very poor ones for English. Apparently no one had tried to find out either why this was the case so that the positives could be built on and the negatives turned round, or, indeed, whether the reports were, in fact accurate. The carers commented that, in some ways, Rachel's was a more straightforward case in that she was at school locally ─ many of the other residents in the unit came from out of area/authority and the allocation of responsibility, where more than one authority was involved, was said to be difficult and fraught with funding issues.

The social worker allocated to the case made quite a lot of assumptions about Rachel's education. For example, she had no dealings with the school because Rachel was excluded when she took her on ─ she did not, for example, consider the possibility of her influencing the reinstatement of the pupil to school ─ something which might have added stability to her life at the time. The information that she received on Rachel was 'basic' and merely mentioned 'problems' at school and the fact that she had been excluded. She 'did not think' that Rachel had a personal education plan and was uncertain about any educational support that she had received. She implied that, in the light of Rachel's extreme personal difficulties, education was a non-starter.

4.4 Karl

Education:	*Mainstream school – years 7-8, then permanently excluded; home tutor for start of year 9; KS3 pupil referral unit – year 9; KS4 pupils referral unit – years 10-11*
Care:	*Foster care – year 8; residential care – year 8; foster care – years 8-9; residential care – year 9; foster care – years 9-11; foster care – year 11; foster care – year 11*
SEN:	*Code of Practice stage 3*
KS4:	*No GCSEs*
Post-16:	*Planning to start sport and recreation course in college of further education in September 2002*

Karl attended a pupil referral unit (PRU), where about a third of the attendees were in care. Contact with social workers was reported to be 'needs driven' rather than systematic or regular. PRU staff aimed to inject some sense of cause and effect into the lives of the pupils along the lines of 'if you do x, y will happen', as they had generally had little consistency in their lives.

In a PRU there is, clearly, a relatively fast turn-over. However, the teacher in charge was not intimately familiar with the young people for whom he had responsibility: having said that Karl 'could have got better GCSEs' he then found that he had, in fact, taken none; and this was despite the fact that he said that Karl had full access to the six or seven GCSEs (including maths and English) that were offered at the PRU. He commented that a lot of their pupils were very bright but often their school's perception of them was that they were not. He did not elaborate on this, comment on how this ability was assessed or detail the way in which the unit addressed it. Clearly, this is an important issue for young people whose intelligence may be diverted into disruptive behaviour. Similarly, the head of the PRU said that Karl found it difficult to 'maintain thinking' (as a result of 'deprivation as a child') and that this was the reason that he did not achieve a GCSE, but he did not refer to the specific strategies employed to support his learning difficulties. Further, he did not comment on the anomaly that, while Karl 'must have got at least level 5 in English key stage 3 SATs', he had not achieved any grade for English GCSE while at the unit.

Karl said that he moved around and had had mid-term moves — one of the consequences of moving about was that he never really got to know teachers and got confused with their names. Another was that he was never on top of the syllabuses:

> I was always lost with the work. I never knew where I was ... so I used to walk out ... I never fitted in ... this did not worry me.

However, as it was reported that Karl had a level 5 in English at the end of key stage 3, he may have been underestimating his own ability to cope. Furthermore, efforts had, apparently, been made to help him catch up: in the summer holidays between year 8 and year 9, he received support from a private tutor hired by the children's home in which he was living.

Karl said that he was bullied but never took any action like talk to teachers (unsurprising if he was unfamiliar with them). His perception was: 'I felt dumped in the worst schools'. Interestingly, he would, by choice, have gone to a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties ('I've heard it's got a good reputation'). He did not seem to have been involved in any decisions regarding his school placements and said several times, 'I never got a say in it'. Placement in a PRU 'helped me to know that there are others with problems' but he repeatedly said that had he been to a mainstream school he would have got GCSEs.

Karl got into drugs and into trouble with the law. And he was also, of his own admission, violent at school. But his perceptions here were telling:

> I would get excluded for having an outburst. I would be abusive in school and sometimes lash out at people because I had so much anger in me for what was happening to me. But they never saw what was happening to me - only what I did to everyone else ... I never got any support at school.

He claimed that there were no teachers and no pupils who helped him.

But, as with other young people, there were signs that more positive attitudes were forming.

> I wasn't really ready for education. But now I think I wish I'd done some GCSEs and I wish I'd stayed at school. Everyone used to encourage me to attend but I never did.

He had become physically fitter and felt that he might aim for the fire service. His ex-carers had helped him plan his future:

> We worked backwards along the line to see what I need to do to get there. I've spoken to careers advisers but I felt that they were offering me something I didn't want. I'd rather choose for myself.

4.5 Paul

Education:	*Pupil referral unit (EBD) – year 7; no provision – year 8; secure unit – year 9; education via foster care agency – years 10-11; secure unit – year 11*
Care:	*Foster care – year 7; foster care – year 7; residential care – year 8; secure unit – year 9; foster care – years 10-11; secure unit – year 11*
SEN:	*Statement of SEN – principal need EBD*
KS4:	*AEB basic tests; four Certificates of Achievement*
Post 16:	*At college doing a Life Skills course*

Paul had learning difficulties and Attention Deficit Disorder. At the end of key stage 4 he was in an agency education placement, having been excluded from various schools and having spent time in a secure unit. In the agency unit, there were four pupils per teacher. Information about him was reported to be 'disrupted' as he had moved from social worker to social worker and from authority to authority: the quality of the information was reported to vary according to the social worker and the authority. When he arrived at the unit he did not have a personal education plan, and had been out of school, roaming the streets. He had both learning and behavioural difficulties.

At the unit, planning for him was done on a daily, weekly and annual basis, jointly with the workers in the home. The staff worked mid-day to mid-day shifts but all came in once a week for a meeting to discuss the young people. Young people attended either a morning or an afternoon session in the education unit and were accompanied by residential workers who acted as classroom assistants. For the rest of the time they did homework or were engaged in 'educational activities' (videos and sport were mentioned). They had one-to-one attention. The evening programme was withheld if homework was not done. It was not immediately clear if this particular regime, with minimal teaching, was the result of careful planning with educational needs in mind or administrative convenience. Equally, while one-to-one attention may have been necessary for some young people at some times, it was not clear that it was critical for moving on young people.

Unit staff felt that the causes of educational failure lay within Paul and listed them as:

- he could not concentrate
- he could not get on with other young people
- he could not identify boundaries between messing around and getting out of hand.

There was a strong belief that 'his behaviour got in the way of educational achievement'.

Paul subsequently left for a secure unit. Now he was out of that, his social worker found it hard to keep in contact with him as he did not keep appointments. He found it hard to concentrate and was poorly motivated. He was working with a Connexions adviser and an after care worker. They were trying to move him to foyer provision (semi-independent placement for young people engaged in education or training).

His social worker thought that he had 'quite a good education' insofar as he had achieved Certificate of Achievement in four subjects. (Whether or not 'education' ought to be summed up in this way is debatable). She considered that his special school was difficult 'because of his emotional difficulties'. This was interesting insofar as the social worker did not seem to consider that the inadequacy of the special school was something to be challenged. If the school could not meet the pupil's need, then, arguably, it was not an appropriate placement. Claims could certainly be made that Paul had received an individualised education programme and

had been fully occupied during the school day. However, the appropriateness of this programme and its capacity for facilitating progression did not seem to be questioned by the social worker.

Paul himself was clearly disaffected from school; no interest had been kindled in anything on the curriculum and he was clearly unaware of the logical demands of an educational environment:

> I like dossing around with my mates and having a laugh. What I don't like is ... most teachers nag you for coming back from break late ... It was also bad that we weren't allowed to smoke on school premises... I never really worked much in school. I used to wind others up and do some bullying to those being teacher's pet.

But he also hinted at a feeling of being let down by teachers and of things not being quite right:

> It was known as a school for dossing around ... The teachers weren't too interested in you because they're just there to do their job and even some of the teachers said if they weren't paid well they wouldn't be there.

He had been placed on a horticulture course but 'I couldn't be bothered to go on the work placement': it was not clear whether anyone gave him support to get to the placement and maintain it once he had arrived.

A passing comment regarding personal advisers was telling:

> The personal adviser's quite good ... I've seen her more times than I've seen my mum.

4.6 Brian

Education:	*Mainstream school – years 7-11*
Care:	*Foster care – years 7-11*
SEN:	*None*
KS4:	*Nine GCSEs, (all A-C except one)*

Brian was the young person within the sample for whom 'the system' had been most effective and had offered stability and support. He spoke glowingly of his school experience. He felt that the staff were really helpful, interested in the students and willing to support them in their own time. There were good facilities at the school and the buildings and equipment were well maintained. He had chosen this secondary school himself, following a three-day taster offered by the school to primary school pupils. He felt that he had ownership of this choice: his mother had preferred a Catholic school which would have been an hour's bus journey away but left the decision to Brian. When it came to option choices at key stage 3, the school had a scheme by which year 9 pupils were able to talk with year 10 and 11 students who were currently in the first and second year of GCSE courses. Brian remarked that most subjects offered additional classes at weekends and he claimed that he would not have done as well in technology as he did without the opportunity of additional help in this way. He also said that if any student had problems with coursework ─ which was mostly completed at home ─ the staff would always help in lunchtimes. He had good personal support from his tutor whenever he wanted it. He said that all the teachers made subjects interesting and treated students as adults.

There was, clearly, something in the whole school *modus operandi* which made it possible for students to make use of opportunities to learn. It is noticeable that in a situation such as this, few additional arrangements for pupils in public care are needed ─ the support is part of the whole-school offer. The case study work did not allow for the pursuit of two contrasting pupils within the same school. Thus, whether or not this school, which certainly engendered a positive response in Brian (as did Elsa's school), would have been equally effective for a young person in care who was not initially so favourably disposed towards school is a matter for conjecture and future research.

Contributory factors were:
- a stable foster placement with the role model of the foster parents' own son, with whom Brian got on well (again, this is similar to Elsa's situation);

- maintenance of his (primary) school placement on coming into care ('He had been in the primary school, had friends and wanted to stay there');
- 'normal' transfer to secondary school with his peer group and friends (the secondary school head of year commented that 'no one batted an eyelid about his being in care ─ they accepted it at the age of 5/6 when they are more tolerant than at 13/14');
- good communication between home and school;
- the same secondary school tutor throughout key stages 3 and 4;
- use made of learning support opportunities generally available at his school (eg Saturday GCSE revision classes);
- peer group/friends stayed on into the sixth form as did Brian (got into right company);
- involvement in out-of-school activities (scouts, CCF, martial arts, drums in a band);
- stable social worker (seven years).

He was reported by his head of year to be well liked by his peers and staff, balanced, 'a standard kid', articulate and well-mannered. He had, however, now 'reached the 16-year old thing' and was making statements about himself as an individual. The school was slightly worried that he had dropped to only two AS levels. Brian maintained that this was on account of timetabling clashes; he felt let down by the school and felt that he had not been warned of the difficulties. He was thinking of taking a further two AS levels the following year and staying a third year in the school sixth form.

4.7 Conclusions from case studies

The case studies illustrate all the original conjectured reasons for young people not achieving success in GCSE, including, special educational needs, personal trauma, disrupted schooling, low expectations, education being a low priority, poor motivation. However, there was evidence that the situation could be transformed.

From three cases (Brian, Jane, Elsa), there was compelling evidence that appropriate selection of school was critical. In two cases (Brian, Elsa), where the young people had no special educational needs, the schools seemed to be very good at providing for the learning needs of all pupils, teaching was sound and expectations were high as a matter of course. The young people in care entered this environment which was supportive *per se*; in addition, they had support from their foster carers.   In the third case (Jane), the final school placement was appropriate for the special educational

needs of the young person. And addressing educational needs resolved some of the care needs.

The evidence from the research reported here highlights the importance of informed decision-making about the optimal school for a young person. While there may be excellent reasons for a young person being placed in a school with which his/her foster carer is familiar — particularly at the primary school stage — it yet has to be remembered that individuals differ and what may suit one young person does not suit another. Again, while acknowledging not only the extreme efforts that many foster carers expend in finding a school place for a young person but also the experience of many of these carers, there are yet times when decisions also need to be influenced by other professionals who have a detailed knowledge of both the school and the particular needs of the young person. As there was evidence in the research that young people flourished in schools that were stable and apparently well managed, it is arguable that such factors as the latest Ofsted report and LEA judgements about a school should be taken into account, especially when a pupil is known to be particularly vulnerable. Although all schools should have the capacity to provide effectively for pupils in care, it may be that those in particularly challenging circumstances or special measures, or engaged in widespread reform following the expression of concern about their performance, are not best placed to take on the additional responsibility of a pupil for whom individual planning and regular, perhaps frequent support, is vital.

From another two cases (Karl, Rachel), there was evidence that young people needed to grow up sufficiently to reflect on their own circumstances. In these two cases, the young people regretted the difficulties that they had created at school and wanted to take a new turn. This illustrates the necessity for providing appropriate support post-16, as and when young people need it. It should be pointed out that although it was encouraging that the young people in the case study sample generally had plans for further education or training, it was not immediately clear that these plans or their related hopes would be realised, for the plans did not seem to be associated with a clear support plan. Many young people find the move into further education or, later, into higher education, difficult on account of different expectations, work patterns and teaching methods. As the majority of the young people in the sample had not had a

problem-free school career, it is perhaps, unrealistic to expect them to adapt to post-16 education and training merely because they appear to be better motivated. There is, clearly a need for Pathway Plans to be sufficiently sophisticated to establish support needs in order to ensure that opportunities for progression are viable.

From the case study data, questions remain about the way in which disaffection in the young people concerned developed. There was an assumption on the part of some interviewees that these young people were difficult and that they largely generated their own problems. While of course, it is essential for all young people to learn that they have to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour, there are nevertheless, questions remaining about 'early intervention' and whether corporate efforts had been made by corporate parents (rather than isolated individuals trying to support) at an early enough stage in the young people's educational careers. While there was evidence from the research that various strategies were tried with some of the more difficult young people, it was not immediately clear that these were carefully planned and rigorously monitored and reviewed ─ rather than being 'perceived solutions' for professionals with extremely heavy workloads. Placing a young person on an alternative curriculum project or in a unit where s/he will get one-to-one support may appear, on the surface, to be a positive move but unless it is supported by a rationale for which there is evidence, it may rather, represent passing on the problem.

The case study data showed the range of difficulties faced by young people and each situation was unique. However, the underpinning reasons why young people were not attaining at key stage 4 seemed depressingly familiar and reinforce all that is already known about low expectations, the fragmentation of information, and the disruption to schooling.

5 Summary of key findings and issues for consideration

5.1 Key findings

The following key findings are based on the particular piece of research reported above. It will be seen that many of them reflect earlier research studies and are either in accordance with established good practice or implicitly ignore guidance already available. They thus act as a reinforcement of what has already been noted as important in the education of young people in care, rather than produce significantly new messages. As was apparent from section two of this report, many of the hard data, gathered from the pro forma exercise, were partial and thus need to be treated with caution; there were many missing data throughout all returned pro forma.

5.1.1 Educational placements

- more than two-thirds of the research sample of young people had had only one or two educational placements during their secondary phase schooling while in care; nearly a third had been in three or more different placements;
- nearly half the placements of the sample were in mainstream schools while in care; a fifth were in special schools or alternative provision;
- one-fifth of the sample were identified as having an attendance figure of less than 75 per cent for year 11, including 6.6 per cent with zero attendance; nearly two-fifths of the sample had an attendance rate of over 75 per cent, including 8.5 per cent who had 100 per cent attendance; however, these figures must be seen in the light of the fact that data were missing or unspecific for two-fifths of the sample;
- educational placements perceived as 'solutions' could represent a solution to professionals' operational difficulties rather than to the pupil's educational difficulties;
- decisions about educational placements did not always involve the most relevant adult(s);
- decisions about educational placements did not routinely involve the young person at the centre of the decision;

- analysis of why a pupil was motivated and engaged in one lesson/context and disruptive in another ─ in order to build on the positives and reduce the negatives ─ was inadequate at best and non-existent at worst;

- positive school factors included: stable tutoring, mechanisms for the identification of individuals' needs and progress, a rich range of formal and informal support opportunities (both pastoral and curriculum), and access to external support when needed;

- in some schools, young people were deterred by having to take the initiative to seek help (for academic work or if subject to bullying) rather than having support being routinely and readily available to them.

5.1.2 Special educational needs and additional educational needs

- it was reported that two-fifths of the sample had no identified special educational needs; one-third had a statement; and the proportion of pupils at stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice current at the time (DfE, 1994) was average but data may not have been accurate;

- the special educational needs of young people in public care were not always adequately addressed; misunderstanding of special educational needs resulted in further educational difficulties, aggravating the cycle of failure and leading to erroneous and damaging 'labelling' of a young person;

- some special educational needs were exacerbated by insensitive care placements which ignored the way in which care and educational placements interact;

- additional needs, such as for continuing language support in order to access the curriculum and assessment opportunities, were not always met effectively on account of lack of clarity regarding sources of support and resources;

- additional needs were not always sufficiently considered when decisions regarding post-16 placements were made;

- needs were acknowledged and some support mobilised but maximum support was not always demanded or fought for;

- those who presently secure additional support may not be in the best position to evaluate that support.

5.1.3 Key stage attainment

- information about pupils' prior attainment at key stages 1 and 2 was unavailable in the vast majority of cases and for half of the sample at key stage 3, when only ten per cent of the total cohort were recorded as achieving level 5 or above (the expected level);

- one-quarter of the sample were not entered for any GCSE; nearly one-third were entered for five or more subjects; data were missing for one-third of the sample;

- less than ten per cent of the young people in the sample achieved five or more A*-C grades (cf. 47.5 per cent of all pupils nationally); one-third achieved five or more subjects at grades A-G and almost half achieved at least one grade A*-G;

- pupils in the sample with the highest number of educational placements in secondary schooling were most likely not to be entered for any GCSE;

- under one-quarter of the sample were known to have achieved alternative accreditation;

- about half the cohort studied followed the key stage 4 curriculum and examination courses (normally with their peers); a number of reasons were given for the other half not doing this;

- a wide range of support opportunities were cited as being used by young people in care during key stage 4 but numbers were very small and it was not possible to link support with accreditation achieved.

5.1.4 Information

- information about previous educational careers, including the young person's strengths and weaknesses, was still not routinely and immediately available on changes of placement;

- in some cases educational information, while available, was not regarded by social workers as relevant to their work with the young person;

- there were many instances where professionals working closely with a young person said that they were unsure of basic information about that young person, and where conflicting accounts were given by different interviewees.

5.1.5 Accreditation

- some young people in the sample had accredited achievement instead of, or in addition to, GCSE/GNVQ certification; the published statistics do not record this.

5.1.6 Post-16 careers

- two-fifths of the sample were in a college of further education or a school sixth form at the end of October 2001; approximately one-fifth were in a training placement or employment; one-fifth were not in employment or training;

- the young people's career aspirations and plans were not known to the respondent or missing in almost two-thirds of cases; 15 per cent were identified as planning to do further study or training;

- at the end of August 2001, two-thirds of the sample were still looked after, with under half continuing in the same care placement as in July 2001; by the end of October 2001, both figures had declined slightly;

- while the case study young people had plans for their future education and training, there was no evidence that these opportunities would be successfully taken up as they were not accompanied by a programme of support.

5.1.7 Attitudes

- some young people had developed attitudes which were incompatible with learning in school (eg not wishing to accept any direction or academic discipline); it is not clear whether these attitudes could have been refocused through earlier intervention;

- some young people's behaviour was clearly unacceptable in school but it was not clear as to whether adequate earlier interventions had signalled this to the young people and whether opportunities had been given for them to rechannel their energies;

- both motivated and disaffected young people were insightful about the strengths and weaknesses of their educational placements.

5.1.8 Care placements and carers

- a third of the sample had been in the same care placement from age 11 to age 16 (years 7-11) or during their time in care during this period; one-third had two or

three care placements during this time and one-quarter had six or more placements (maximum 21);

- almost half the young people had a greater number of care placements than educational placements; a quarter had more education than care placements; and a quarter had equal numbers;

- data were in some cases frail but seemed to suggest that stability of care placement was associated with higher performance at key stage 4;

- while both residential and foster carers were keen to do their best for the young people, they all referred to systemic deficiencies by way of poor information; lack of, or confusion about, resources; or failure to respond by particular agencies, thus creating a weak link within the corporate parenting.

5.2 Questions for consideration arising from key findings

It must be stressed that the following questions do not represent a comprehensive list of questions which corporate parents should address. There is ample well-documented guidance (Who Cares? Trust, 1999; DfEE and DoH, 2000; Ofsted, 2001) as to the content which needs to be addressed and the process by which it is most effectively addressed. The following issues, thus, relate to the findings from the specific research project reported above which was, it is to be remembered, specifically focused on reasons for the relatively poor key stage 4 achievement of the cohort of pupils in care in summer 2001.

5.2.1 For social services managers

- are there accessible, helpful and familiar systems for social workers to locate comprehensive information about the educational careers of the young people for whom they are responsible?

- are there opportunities for social workers to discuss this information with relevant colleagues (in social services or in education) in order to elicit the implications for the young person's short, medium and long term plans?

- are there established and familiar procedures by which social workers regularly monitor and review the appropriateness of a young person's educational placement?

- are there established and familiar procedures by which social workers can analyse a young person's varied response to different parts of school life in order to try to ascertain the patterns behind this?

- have social workers access to sources of information about schools' performance and their appropriateness for pupils with different interests and abilities?

5.2.2 For social workers

- do you know where to locate comprehensive information about the educational careers of the young people for whom you are responsible?

- do you know where to get help, if this is needed, to interpret this information and elicit the implications for the young person's short, medium and long term plans?

- do you regularly monitor and review the appropriateness of a young person's educational placement?

- do you analyse a young person's response to various parts of school life in order to ascertain the patterns behind this?

- do you know where to get information about a school's performance and its appropriateness for a young person with regard to his/her particular interests and abilities?

- do you know if the young person has access to support at school to enhance his/her learning? do you know to whom to talk about this at his/her school?

- do you know if the young person has special educational needs which will have implications for selection of post-16 placements? do you know to whom to talk about this at his/her school?

- do you regularly ask the young person whether he/she thinks that his/her educational placement is appropriate?

- have you talked with anyone at school regarding the young person's GCSE entry? do you know to whom to talk about this at his/her school?

5.2.3 For senior/middle managers in schools

- are there mechanisms for the 'fast-tracking' of young people in care for professional needs assessment if s/he has significant difficulties in relation to his/her learning and/or social behaviour but has missed out on assessment?

- are there clear channels of communication and sources of support for staff when a young person in care transfers to the school at a non-standard time? is there a policy on the communication of sensitive information?

- what monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that the special and additional needs of pupils in care are addressed?

- do all relevant staff know the sources of support for young people in care?

- what are the mechanisms for ensuring that effective guidance is given regarding key stage 4 options and careers advice, given that the young person may have little support from elsewhere?

- what opportunities are available for a young person to catch up on education missed previously because s/he was in care?

- are decisions to place a young person on an alternative curriculum package at key stage 4 always made with maximum consultation of relevant professionals, the young person him/herself and his/her parents/carers?

5.2.4 For carers

- have you adequate information about the young person's previous educational career?

- do you know whom to consult regarding important educational decisions for the young person?

- do you know the source of additional resources to support the young person's education (eg for computers, extra tuition)?

- does the young person's social worker talk to him/her regularly about progress at school?

- are you satisfied that planning for the young person included contingency arrangements should a plan fail?

- are you satisfied that the school has given the young person access to advice about options/careers choices?

- are you able to monitor the young person's progress so that you can identify if s/he is having difficulty with a GCSE/GVNQ course?

5.2.5 For young people

- are you always consulted about changes of school or educational placements?

- is there someone with whom you can discuss your responses to education? (eg why you find some lessons easier to manage and others harder?)
- do you know to whom to go if you are subject to bullying?
- if you do not understand any of the work in lessons, do you know how to seek help?
- has the pattern of GCSE course work been explained to you so that you know how you are doing and if you need any additional help during years 10 and 11?

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Appendix 1

Young People in Public Care in Year 11

(end of key stage 4) in June 2001 – pro forma

(Separate document – Appendix 1)

Young People in Public Care in Year 11 (end of key stage 4) in June 2001

The Department of Health, the Department of Education and Skills, and the Local Government Association has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research to investigate the situation regarding the leaving qualifications of young people in care: in particular, to explore reasons why a disproportionate number of young people in care are not entered for public examinations (GCSE/GNVQ) at the end of key stage 4, and to identify strategies which would help to address this situation.

This pro forma seeks background information on all young people who were in **Year 11 during 2000-2001 academic year** and were looked after by the authority **at any time in June 2001,** for **any length of time**.

Please use one form for each young person for whom you are responsible.

Please note that the data will be treated in confidence: the focus is on the system and not on the young people. At this stage of the survey the NFER is not asking for any identifier for the young person concerned but asks that whoever completes this pro forma keeps their own record of the name of the young person and the serial number at the top right hand corner of this page. We realise that some data may be unavailable. Where this applies, please enter **NK** (not known), rather than 'guesses'. We are keen for data to be accurate.

If you would like an electronic version of this pro forma, please e-mail

a.bannerman@nfer.ac.uk.

Please return this pro forma by **30 November 2001**, using the pre-paid label enclosed, to:

NOE, NFER, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berks, SL1 2DQ

If you have any queries, please e-mail Tamsin Archer at t.archer@nfer.ac.uk or phone her on 01753 574123, ext. 262.

Education Placement

1. Please list **all educational placements** the young person had throughout secondary schooling. Please list in **historical order**, starting with the beginning of year 7. If placements for a particular year are not known, please enter **NK** next to the placement number.

School placement number	Type of provision (mainstream school, special school, PRU, custodial placement, other *(please specify)*, or no provision including exclusions)	Year (7–11) in which placement made	Please state if **WITHIN** or **OUTSIDE** home authority
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Please photocopy this page if placements exceed 10

Attendance

2. Please enter percentage of days attended school (e.g. 85% attendance) over the past academic year (September 2000 – July 2001).

$\boxed{}$ %

Special Educational Needs

3. Has the young person any special educational needs?

(please tick ONE box)

No		1
Code of Practice Stage 1 or 2		2
Code of Practice Stage 3		3
Code of Practice Stage 4		4
Statement of special educational need		5

(If young person does NOT have a statement, please go to Question 5)

4. Please tick the needs referred to on the statement

	Principal need	Subsidiary needs	
Learning difficulties			1
Emotional and behavioural difficulties			2
Communication difficulties			3
Sensory impairment			4
Physical disabilities			5
Don't know			6
Other (*please state*) …………………………………			7

Please comment below if you wish

National Curriculum Assessment Scores

5. Please enter level of attainment in previous end-of-key-stage standard assessment tests.

Key Stage	English	Mathematics	Science
1			n/a
2			
3			

6. Please enter key stage 4 attainment.

	Full GCSEs	Short-form GCSEs
Number of **GCSE/GNVQs entered for**		
Number of **GCSE** passes **A*-C**		
Number of **GCSE** passes **A*-G**		
Number of **GNVQs** passed		

7. Please list all **other national or local accreditation** gained by the young person, e.g. Welsh Certificate, ASDAN awards, music/drama examinations, sports awards, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. If the young person has learning difficulties and the P scales have been used, please give the relevant P scale scores. We are interested in the whole range of the young person's achievements.

Care Placement

8. Please list **all care placements** the young person had throughout secondary schooling. Please list in **historical order**, starting with the beginning of school year 7 (September 1996). If placements for a particular year are not known, please enter **NK** next to the placement number.

Care placement number	Type of care (foster care*, residential care, placement at home/with family, other)	School Year (7–11) in which placement made	Please state if **WITHIN** or **OUTSIDE** home authority
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

*please note that if the young person was placed with an independent fostering agency, **all** changes of care placement should be listed*

Please photocopy this page if placements exceed 10

Key Stage 4 Education

9. Please tick all statements that apply to the young person and then give details and reasons below.

During Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11, age approx. 15 and 16) the young person:

(please tick ALL applicable)

Followed all the relevant examination courses, normally with peer group	1
Did not/could not complete the required coursework	2
Followed an alternative curriculum at Key Stage 4	3
Was in a placement which did not offer examination courses	4
Had (a) difficult care placement(s) and could not focus on school work	5
Expressed a wish not to be entered	6
Was refused entry by his/her school	7
Has significant special educational needs: GCSE/GNVQ considered inappropriate	8
Was excluded with no educational provision	9
Other (*please specify below*)	10
Withdrew from the examination courses	11

(If last item ticked please specify the term and year below)

term 1	term 2	term 3	year 10	year 11

Please give details and reasons below.

Support Used by Young Person

10. Please list any strategies, services and practical help that the young person made use of and which supported him/her in key stage 4 studies.

Post 16 Destination

11. Please indicate where the young person is on **31 October 2001**.

(please tick one)

in college of further education		1
in school sixth form		2
in a training placement		3
in employment		4
at home/unemployed/not training		5
other *(please specify below)*		6

12. Please comment on the young person's career aspirations and plans

13. Please tick the most appropriate box to describe the young person's living situation on 31 August 2001 and 31 October 2001.

(please tick relevant boxes in each column)

The young person:

	31 August 2001	31 October 2001	
is still looked after by the authority			1
has started independent living			2
is continuing in the same care placement as in July 2001			3
is in bed and breakfast accommodation			4
is in a residential educational placement			5
other *(please specify below)*			6

14. Please comment on any aspect of the young person's education which you feel is relevant but has not been covered above.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS PRO FORMA

Please keep a confidential log for your records of the unique pro forma number (on front page) and the name of the young person this information refers to