
VULNERABLE/LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN
RESEARCH REVIEW 1

Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people



Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) identifies and coordinates local, regional and national evidence of 'what works' to create a single and comprehensive picture of effective practice in delivering children's services. Using this information, C4EO offers support to local authorities and their Children's Trust partners, working with them to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

It is focusing its work on eight themes:

- Early Years
- Disability
- Vulnerable/Looked-After Children
- Child Poverty
- Safeguarding
- Schools and Communities
- Youth
- Families, Parents and Carers.

C4EO works with a consortium of leading national organisations: National Children's Bureau, National Foundation for Educational Research, Research in Practice and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

The Centre is also supported by a number of strategic partners, including the Improvement and Development Agency, the Family and Parenting Institute, the National Youth Agency and the Institute of Education.

There is close and ongoing cooperation with the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Local Government Association, the NHS Confederation, the Children's Services Network, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, Ofsted and the regional Government Offices.

C4EO is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people

Isabelle Brodie (University of Bedfordshire)
Data annexe: Marian Morris (National Foundation for Educational Research)

First published in Great Britain in November 2009
by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's
Services (C4EO)

© Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services
(C4EO)
All rights reserved

Written by Isabelle Brodie (University of Bedfordshire). Data annexe written by
Marian Morris (National Foundation for Educational Research)

This report is available online
www.scie.org.uk

Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services
(C4EO)
8 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7QE

Tel 020 7843 6358
www.c4eo.org.uk

Contents

Contents

iv

Acknowledgements	v
Summary	1
1. Introduction	5
2. Policy context	8
3. The evidence base	10
4. The accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions	14
5. Views on what constitutes positive educational outcomes	17
6. The contribution of the attitudes, skills and abilities of foster, residential, kinship carers, teachers and birth families to positive educational outcomes	24
7. Conclusions and main messages	27
Data annexe	29
References	42
Appendix 1: Research review methods	49
Appendix 2: Scoping study process	50
Appendix 3: Parameters document	76
Appendix 4: National Indicators and data sources	84

Acknowledgements

The review authors would like to thank the Department for Children, Schools and Families for funding the Centre's activities and the Theme Advisory Group for their guidance. We are grateful to Janet Clapton at the Social Care Institute for Excellence for conducting and documenting the literature searches.

Thanks are due to the people who provided such helpful comments on the draft report, to the library staff who checked all the references and to our administrators for their work in formatting the text.

Summary

This review tells us what works in improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people (LACY), on the basis of a systematic review of the research literature and analysis of key data. It aims to provide evidence that will help service providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The review was carried out by the University of Bedfordshire on behalf of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO). The National Foundation for Educational Research carried out the data analysis.

Key messages

- A high proportion of children and young people see their entry into care as beneficial in relation to their education.
- This does not mean all care placements are helpful and the evidence suggests there is considerable unevenness in practice.
- National, regional and local policy has resulted in an improved awareness and understanding of the need to prioritise the educational experiences and achievements of looked-after children and young people.
- There is growing evidence that new initiatives such as virtual school heads (VSHs), personal education plans (PEPs) and designated teachers are having a positive effect on the experiences of looked-after children and young people.
- The educational achievement of looked-after children and young people interacts with many other elements of the care and educational systems. Improving educational outcomes will be linked with overall improvements in the quality of care that is delivered.
- Improving educational outcomes will include attention to all stages of a child's educational career, from early years through to support for further and higher education.
- There is a serious lack of evidence about the complex learning and behavioural needs of many looked-after young people and the ways in which they do or do not benefit from recent policy and other initiatives.
- Measurement of educational outcomes of the looked-after group is complex and improvements on the ground may not be reflected in local authority returns.
- There is evidence of many creative and useful initiatives at all levels of regional and local authority practice that are valued by those who use services.

Who are the key people with important knowledge and views working to improve services?

- looked-after children and young people
- foster, kinship and residential carers, kinship carers
- education based staff; including teachers in different kinds of schools, tutors and designated teachers, pastoral support staff and SENCOs
- virtual school heads (VSHs)
- looked-after children education services or teams (LACES)
- social workers
- specialist front line professionals
- policy makers

Looked-after children and young people are those whose educational experience and achievement is directly affected by the nature and quality of current policy and practice. The research confirms the value that young people attach to consistent educational support, ideally from a stable placement, for their education. They are especially concerned about the way in which information about them is shared.

Foster, residential and kinship carers provide the day-to-day care and support required by looked-after children and young people in order for them to attend and achieve their potential at school. Evidence about their experience is more limited, but continues to emphasise their need for comprehensive information about education at the time of placement, and access to appropriate expertise and support should problems emerge. Their contribution also needs to be viewed in the context of what is known more widely about good practice in supporting placements.

Managers, including virtual school heads, manage and coordinate policy and practice relating to the education of looked-after children and young people. Evidence suggests considerable progress has been made in this area. Monitoring of looked-after children's education, together with better communication and co-ordination of practice between professionals, helps ensure that young people do not become 'lost' to the system and local trends can be identified.

Looked-after children education services or teams have played an increasingly important role in providing direct services such as tutoring, collecting data and providing advice and training to other front line professionals such as designated teachers. These teams appear to work well and have a positive impact on the educational progress of looked-after children and young people. More systematic evaluation of their work would be beneficial.

Social workers co-ordinate care planning for looked-after children and young people, which includes personal education plans (PEPs). This is a key role and carers report that the input of social workers in liaising with other professionals can be extremely valuable.

On the other hand, shortages and changes of social worker is a frequent complaint and can result in social workers becoming somewhat marginal to the educational experience of looked-after children and their carers.

Specialist front line professionals may be involved in a number of ways in providing education support or access to additional educational opportunities, including music, sport and arts-based activities. These activities have flourished in recent years and are viewed very positively by young people and their carers.

Birth parents and families continue to play an important role in the lives of looked-after children and young people, including their education. Unfortunately, little information is available about how this works out in practice.

Policy makers in government departments are engaged in introducing new policy and implementing and reviewing the effectiveness of existing policy. Their role has been crucial in heightening awareness of the educational needs of children and young people in care and in creating an infrastructure through which these needs can be met.

Is there specific data available to inform the way forward?

The quality of national data on the placements, care careers and some educational outcomes relating to looked-after children and young people has improved and makes an important contribution. However, this data does not capture the more complex processes involved in working with looked-after children and young people, and the many different ways in which policy and practice is impacting on their educational experience and outcomes. Published research at local, regional and national level is critical to providing a more comprehensive picture.

The evidence base

The research base relating to the education of looked-after children and young people has increased considerably over the past decade. The quality of national data concerning looked-after children's educational placements and outcomes has improved and there is a growing body of information regarding the impact of national and regional initiatives. However, there are weaknesses and there is a need for:

- more discussion of theoretical and conceptual frameworks
- more cross-disciplinary research
- more research involving schools and addressing learning processes
- more research that differentiates the educational experience of different groups of looked-after young people, and examines the effects of gender, ethnicity and disability
- research that examines the impact of specific interventions designed to improve educational outcomes for looked-after young people
- research designs that involve a wider range of methodologies.

Review methods

Research literature was identified through systematic searches of relevant databases and websites, recommendations from the Theme Advisory Group (a group of experts in the policy, research and practice field of vulnerable/looked-after children), and through reference harvesting. The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to systematically select literature of the greatest relevance and quality to include in the review. This approach attempts to eliminate bias in the selection of literature, in order to ensure that the research findings are objective. The majority of the literature is UK-based and focuses on children and young people who are currently looked-after, rather than care leavers or those who are adopted.

Next steps

An updated version of this review is due to be published in Autumn 2010. This will include good-practice examples and views from children, young people, parents, carers and service providers.

C4EO reviews on improving the emotional and behavioural health of LACYP and the number of care leavers in 'settled, safe accommodation' are also available on the C4EO website. Local decision-makers and commissioners working in local authorities and Children's Trusts may also find it helpful to read the Vulnerable Children directors' summary, which presents the key messages from all three reviews.

www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren

C4EO is using the main messages from the three Vulnerable Children reviews to underpin its knowledge sharing and capacity building work with Children's Trusts, and through them the full range of professions and agencies working with looked-after children and their families.

1. Introduction

This review aims to draw out the key ‘what works?’ messages on improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people (LACYYP). It addresses three questions that were set by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s (C4EO’s) Theme Advisory Group (TAG). These questions are:

- What do we know about the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions initiated by central, regional and local government and independent sector?
- What are LACYYP’s views on what constitutes positive educational outcomes and how do they compare with those of policy-makers, children’s services personnel and independent sector providers?
- What do we know about the contribution made to positive educational outcomes for LACYYP by the attitudes, skills and abilities of foster, residential, kinship carers, teachers and birth families and interventions to support this contribution?

The review is based on:

- the best research evidence from the UK – and where relevant from abroad – on what works in improving services and outcomes for children and young people
- the best quantitative data with which to establish baselines and assess progress in improving outcomes.

C4EO will use this review to underpin the support it provides to Children’s Trusts to help them improve service delivery and, ultimately, outcomes for children and young people. It will be followed by a knowledge review, which will update the research evidence and also incorporate:

- the best validated local experience and practice on the strategies and interventions that have already proved to be the most powerful in helping services improve outcomes, and why this is so
- stakeholder and client views on ‘what works?’ in improving services.

Definitions of key terms

The following definitions were agreed by the TAG.

Looked-after children and young people (LACYYP)

The following groups are included as LACYYP:

- under 25-year-olds who are or have been in medium- or long-term care (more than six months) - wherever they are placed (for example, residential care, foster care, a young offenders institution)

- under 25-year-olds who are or have been looked-after for several short-term (up to six months) periods in local authority care (either under a care order, or on a voluntary basis)
- under 25-year-olds who have left or are preparing to leave medium-term or long-term local authority care.

In practice, the literature rarely specifies this level of detail, largely describing children as ‘in care’ or ‘looked-after’.

In recent years outcomes for looked-after children have usually been measured or defined in relation to national indicators (see Data annexe). The relevant national indicators for looked-after children and directly relating to education are:

- 99 – looked-after children reaching Level 4 in English at Key Stage (KS) 2
- 100 – looked-after children reaching Level 4 in Mathematics at KS2
- 101 – looked-after children achieving five A* - C GCSEs (or equivalent) at KS4 (including English and Mathematics).

These national indicators feed into Public Service Agreement target 11: Narrow the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children.

Accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of interventions

‘Accessibility of interventions’ refers to how easy it is to access services or interventions. The effectiveness of interventions which are rarely available, or unattractive to people who use services, will be compromised if no one can, or wants to, use them.

‘Acceptability of interventions’ refers to how acceptable interventions are to the people and their carers who use services, and to other people (staff, for example) involved in delivering them. Accessibility and acceptability of some interventions may be affected by practicalities, such as lack of transport in rural areas, but also by cultural and attitudinal issues such as language barriers, stigma and other barriers or facilitators to participation.

‘Effectiveness of interventions’ refers to how effective interventions are (in a practice setting), usually assessed by measuring outcomes in various dimensions. For example, a service designed to help LACYP achieve better educational outcomes might be assessed by direct long-term outcomes (such as number of GCSE passes), or by indirect shorter-term indicators (such as attendance at school).

Methods

The research included in this review was either cited in the scoping study ‘Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children’ (Brodie *et al* 2009) or identified by the TAG as relevant to the review. Two new studies were published during the period of the review. The research team ruled out obviously irrelevant research studies by screening study titles. Remaining research studies were then coded on the basis of the full texts. Coding took account of each study’s features – including research design, relevance to the

scoping review questions and country of origin – to identify the key items. The review team have appraised these key items to ensure that the evidence presented is the most robust available.

Strengths and limitations of the review

The strengths of the review include:

- identification of the best available evidence from research and national datasets to inform specific questions
- comprehensive and documented searching for relevant information
- an analysis of the quality and strength of evidence
- guidance from an advisory group on the issues of greatest importance in early childhood research, policy and practice.

Limitations of the review include:

- The review has been unable to extend the search criteria and does not incorporate literature relating to the care of LACYP generally, which may be extremely important in understanding the educational experience of the looked-after group.
- The very tight deadlines which the review had to meet, which limited the ability of the team to extend and develop the evidence base through reference harvesting and hand searching.
- The review was limited to English-speaking countries only.

2. Policy context

Policy relating to the educational achievement of looked-after children and young people (LACYP) has developed rapidly over the past decade (Social Exclusion Unit 2003). Concern was first generated by evidence demonstrating the low educational achievement of the looked-after group (Jackson 1987). The introduction of national statistical collections from 1999 has shown that looked-after children perform poorly in Key Stage tests and GCSE examinations in comparison with their peers. A disproportionate number of LACYP also experience exclusion from school or time out of school for other reasons. Few progress to higher education. This level of achievement has serious implications for their future life opportunities (Social Exclusion Unit 2003).

Current policy states that the low achievement of looked-after children can be explained by: pre-care experiences that can create barriers to learning; experience of the care system, including movement between placements; and the school system, either because schools are not aware or do not understand that children are in care or are not taking appropriate action to help children progress at school (DCSF 2009b). Even taking these barriers into account, however, policy emphasises the need to appreciate the individuality of LACYP and the need to focus on helping them achieve their individual potential. There is a growing awareness of the needs of looked-after children in school, which has been reflected in the inspection framework and admissions procedures.

Attention has increasingly been drawn to the relationship between social disadvantage and educational attainment. Recent analysis by the DCSF (2009a) states that, while this link is by no means inevitable, a range of factors – from poor support for learning in the early years, to the approach taken by schools and external influences – continue to mean that disadvantaged pupils progress less well at school. The majority of looked-after children come from backgrounds of extreme social disadvantage; reasons for entry to care typically involve family breakdown and abuse and neglect (DCSF 2009b). This thinking, together with a growing recognition of the importance of the home environment for early learning (Desforges with Abouchaar 2003; Coghlan *et al* 2009), has important implications for the development of support for LACYP, their families and their carers. Understanding of the relationship between disadvantage, entry into care and learning is also likely to develop further following changes to data analysis which mean statistics on children in care are now linked to the national pupil database (see Data Annex). There is also a growing interest in the needs of children and young people who are in need and possibly on the verge of entry into care.

The government has introduced a series of legislative measures and other initiatives through which to address these issues, beginning with the Quality Protects initiative in 1998. This introduced a series of objectives linked to performance targets. Since then policy relating to the education of LACYP has evolved to become more integrated with broader policies relating to children and families. Improving educational outcomes for this group therefore corresponds to the Every Child Matters objective to 'enjoy and achieve'. This framework also recognises the relationship between positive educational experiences and other aspects of wellbeing, including children's safety.

Increasingly, policy has also taken account of the educational needs of children and young people at different stages of their educational careers. Guidance relating to school admissions ensures that LACYP are prioritised in the allocation of school places.

Consequently, changes in curricula and practice relating to young children, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, acknowledge looked-after children as a group that may have additional needs. At the other end of the spectrum, legislation relating to care leavers recognises the importance of consistent support for looked-after young people as they take exams and make the transition to further and higher education or employment.

Section 52 of the *Children Act 2004* (England and Wales Statutes 2004) placed a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievements of looked-after children. Although this duty does not include schools, guidance makes clear that schools should be closely involved in these arrangements. Guidance linked to this sets out a framework for local authority planning and accountability, and explains the roles of the different individuals involved in supporting and monitoring children's education. This guidance emphasises the priority that should be given to finding an appropriate school placement (within specified timescales), ensuring that all looked-after children have an active personal education plan (PEP) and supporting the educational achievements of young people leaving care (DfES 2005). Under the *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000* (GB. Statutes 2000) and the *Children and Young Persons Act 2008* (GB. Statutes 2008), local authorities also have a statutory obligation to provide support up to the age of 24 for young people formerly in care who are in full-time education.

In 2008, the government introduced proposals for the introduction of a new tier of professional support, the virtual school head, with responsibilities for tracking every child in care in a local authority and ensuring that appropriate provision is in place. Personal education allowances have also been introduced to provide further support – for example, tutoring – according to a child's individual learning needs. This should complement the statutory care plan and the PEP.

3. The evidence base

This section of the review describes the extent of the evidence base, the types of evidence available and the gaps in the literature.

At the review stage the aim is to focus on study findings in order to respond to the review questions. This must involve further assessment of the quality of findings. However, as Gough (2007) points out, assessment of the quality of research studies when considering applied research is complex and needs to include notions of 'fitness for purpose' and 'relevance of research' in answering different conceptual or empirical questions. To this extent, the criteria for inclusion was broader than would be expected in a traditional systematic review of the literature.

The question of the rigour of research design is traditionally the fundamental criterion for inclusion in a systematic review. The scoping study established that the majority of studies meeting the inclusion criteria were similar in research design, were qualitative and did not include experimental designs or involve a comparative element. This review therefore includes a range of designs all the way through to synthesis and has used criteria of quality and relevance to deal with this problem. As regards 'fitness for purpose', the research was assessed in terms of whether the research design was appropriate to the research question and the overall quality of methodology. A difficulty in this review concerned the use of single case studies; these were frequently well conducted but raised questions about their applicability to other contexts. More general methodological difficulties included the failure of many studies to distinguish different placement types when describing samples. The overall gap in evaluative evidence results means that there is an absence of reliable information about what constitutes 'good practice' in this area.

Following a systematic search of over 5,000 papers and books, the scoping study identified 68 items as relevant to the review questions (see Appendix 2). Publication of new material and the Theme Advisory Group recommendations resulted in a further eight items being screened and coded for relevance to the scoping review questions, study type and main methods, population and location. All 76 items were screened on the basis of the full text of the report or journal article. At review stage further screening took place in relation to the nature of the research question, the appropriateness of the methodology in answering this question, and judgement as to the weight of evidence provided by the item in respect to the review question(s). The final sample consisted of 23 items, the majority of which were UK-based.

Table 1 shows the distribution of review items for the different questions. Note that some items were relevant to more than one question. The vast majority – 18 items – were empirical studies.

Table 1. Research question relevance

Research question relevance	Number
Review Question 1: intervention and services	9
Review Question 2: LACYP's views	12
Review Question 3: carers and birth families	11

Table 2. Main methods

Main methods	Number
Interviews and focus groups	21
Surveys	10
Case studies	6
Secondary analysis	4
Literature review	0
Control trial	2
Ethnographic	0
Other/adequate information/not research	0

It is important to note that a high proportion of the studies involved a mixed-methods approach. This is important in permitting some triangulation of data: in several studies, samples of young people and/or carers were small making such cross-analysis especially important.

Table 3. Study population

Study population	Number
LACYP	15
Care leavers	5
LACYP of black and minority ethnic background	5
Disabled LACYP	3
Frontline paid carers	6
Teachers/other education staff	6
Other health, social care and housing staff	5
Birth families	0
Other	0

General issues and gaps in the evidence base

Another key issue in analysis of the evidence base is the nature of the time-frame in the research base concerning LACYP. Specialist research in this area can be traced back to Jackson (1987) and gathered pace during the 1990s (Goddard 2000). Nevertheless, and as the scoping study made clear, it remains weak in comparison with many other areas of educational and social research. Three areas of concern can be identified:

Conceptual and theoretical issues

- the lack of cross-disciplinary research, for example, studies drawing on research regarding processes of teaching and learning
- the absence of explicit theoretical and conceptual frameworks through which to interpret findings.

Research questions

- research questions have tended to focus on the 'looked-after' element of children's experience, and have not tended to include consideration of issues of gender, ethnicity and special educational need
- research focuses on the local authority sector in relation to the provision of services and does not tend to include the voluntary or independent sectors
- there is an absence of research examining children's schooling experience or that includes the views of teachers and other educational professionals
- there is an absence of research on the experiences of the care population in alternative educational settings and in the further education sector
- birth families have been almost entirely excluded from research into the education of LACYP, despite other evidence highlighting the high proportion of LACYP who return home.

Research design and methodology

- an absence of research using comparative or experimental design
- few studies use longitudinal designs
- a lack of methodological discussion, including the difficulties associated with this type of research
- samples drawn from a 'mixed' looked-after population, with the result that numbers from any placement type are very small.

The reasons for these gaps can be attributed to the relatively recent emergence of the education of LACYP as a matter for research and evaluation. National statistics relating to the educational achievement of looked-after children have existed since 1999. While improvements have been made in the collection of reliable statistics, there are concerns that data is not complete and that current recording practice makes interpretation of these statistics problematic (Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006; Jacklin *et al* 2006; Berridge 2007). The emergence of many new initiatives and services during the past decade means that insufficient time has elapsed for the effects of these to be tracked through research and evaluation.

There are also significant practical difficulties associated with undertaking research in this area. These problems include the small numbers of looked-after children in most schools – making it difficult, for example, to find sufficiently large samples of teaching staff with experience of working with looked-after students. The rapidly changing and often-transient nature of the looked-after population also makes the tracking of samples an extremely complex task. Evaluation of large-scale policy initiatives, even in relation to their operation at local level, is complex and effects are difficult to attribute (Berridge *et al* 2008).

4. The accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions

This section looks at what we know about the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions initiated by central, regional and local government and the independent sector. It is based on nine studies, all of which are UK-based. The scope of these studies is broad and evidence from them is also included in Sections 5 and 6 of the review.

Key messages

- Overall, evidence suggests that policy change and initiatives relating to the education of looked-after children and young people (LACYP) have been effective in developing local policy and practice.
- The introduction of strategic roles, including the pilot virtual school heads (VSHs), and the building of cross-professional expertise appears to have been effective in terms of improving the educational experience of children.
- Though managers and professionals report improved practice, making an impact on local authority statistics relating to LACYP achievement is more difficult.
- The quality of data collection has improved but requires ongoing monitoring.
- Research indicates that the use of personal education plans (PEPs) has been variable, but there is improvement in implementation of these and in children's participation.
- Existing evidence indicates that there is a useful role for additional, compensatory interventions that address prior disadvantage in learning.
- Projects involving direct work with young people, either through extra-curricular activities or school-related support, appear generally popular and sustainable.

As the section on policy has described, a wide-ranging set of initiatives, services and interventions has been introduced. This review has focused on research relating to policies, services and interventions targeted at LACYP specifically. Research relating to vulnerable children more generally, including those on the verge of care, has therefore been excluded. It should be noted, however, that any and all policies or interventions aimed at improving standards of education generally and the achievements of disadvantaged children specifically, may have an impact on those in the care system.

It is important, given the scale of policy innovation in recent years, that some caution is exercised in relation to the gap between data collection, research publication and current practice (it is also important to note that studies were excluded where data collection had taken place prior to 2000). That said, where studies have taken place consecutively it has been possible to consider the extent to which improvements have taken place across time.

Policy and strategic intervention

Five studies were identified that investigated policy initiatives or interventions at a local authority level. Harker *et al* (2004) and Dobel-Ober *et al* (2006) evaluated a regional initiative, Taking Care of Education, which took place in three English local authorities.

Berridge *et al* (2008) examined the impact of the Quality Protects initiative. Berridge *et al* (2009) evaluated the Virtual School pilot in 11 pilot authorities. Fletcher-Campbell *et al* (2003) and Fletcher-Campbell and Archer (2003) examined school-based and other professional support for looked-after children at school, and Hayden (2005) looked at the use of PEPs.

Overall, the existing evidence concludes that the increased emphasis on the education of LACYP has been effective in the following ways:

- Awareness of the importance of education has been increased across agencies and at all levels, resulting in the development of more and better procedures for practice.
- Greater political awareness – at elected members' level – is perceived as significant.
- National, regional and local government policy has been influential in developing expertise, including the introduction of specialised posts.
- Legislation such as the *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000* has resulted in many more written procedures and protocols, which have improved accountability and consistency in some areas of practice.
- There is indicative evidence that the impact of initiatives at all levels has been less for some groups of LACYP, specifically those placed with relatives or those placed outside local authorities.
- It appears that, at local authority level, approaches to improving the educational achievement of LACYP involves a combination of input from specialised teams and professionals, and the integration of looked-after children within 'mainstream' educational provision.
- While national policy and new funding streams have helped energise local policy and practice, studies emphasise the ongoing challenges presented by structural issues such as shortages in social care staff.
- The quality of pupil-level information available has improved, but is variable across local authorities.
- There is evidence that the overall level of practical support available to LACYP, in the form of books, computers, access to extra-curricular and leisure activities, has increased.

School-based interventions and educational support

Looked-after children represent only a very small proportion of the population of most schools. Research involving schools emphasised that, for the most part, looked-after children were either indistinguishable from the majority of the population, or that their needs were met through the usual learning and pastoral support routes (Fletcher-Campbell *et al* 2003; Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006). Although it is known that a high proportion of LACYP have special educational needs (Berridge 2007) there is an unfortunate lack of evidence about this aspect of their schooling experience.

Additionally, specific policy interventions relating to LACYP in schools were considered. All schools should have a designated teacher, who is expected to monitor the education of

the looked-after children, coordinate support for looked-after children and ensure that each looked-after student has a PEP. They should also act as advocate for looked-after children in school and find out from students if they have any problems or issues that may need addressing in respect to individual learning. The school's governing body should support the role by providing specific resources and ensuring that there is access to relevant training.

Fletcher-Campbell and Archer (2003) report positively regarding the role of designated teachers. Through interviews with over 100 school staff, they concluded that the role was helpful in overseeing the progress of looked-after children and that there was an awareness of the different dimensions of the role, including liaison with carers and other agencies, advocacy, maintaining an overview of individual progress and monitoring the use of PEPs.

In further interviews with 30 designated teachers during the second phase of the same study (Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006), the research team expressed more concerns about the variability evident in the way the role was practised. These included the lack of time available to designated teachers in carrying out their role, the delegation of some aspects of the role to junior staff and ambivalence about the extent to which a designated teacher should engage directly with individual children. Berridge *et al* (2009) suggest that practice is becoming more consistent over time; that understanding and awareness of the role of designated teachers has improved among schools, carers and children and young people.

The use of private tutoring as an alternative means of educational support has also been encouraged over recent years. The evidence on this is limited to one study (Berridge *et al* 2009) and suggests that the ways in which this is implemented – for example, in terms of eligibility for taking part – varies. That said, local authorities who reported on their experience of tutoring thought it had been helpful and had resulted in improved outcomes for some children and young people at various stages of their educational careers.

Inter-professional working

The evidence supports the view that, overall, inter-professional awareness of the educational needs of looked-after children has improved. There is more communication and liaison, and professionals are more likely to know where to go for advice and information (Berridge *et al* 2008). There is also a growing interest in new models of professional expertise that incorporate an inter-professional approach, most notably the social pedagogy in children's residential care pilot programme, Young People from a Public Care Background: Pathways to Education in Europe (YiPPEE). The initial piloting of this approach in the UK appears to offer some promise and, in the context of this review, would exemplify a mode of professional practice that recognises the role of education in both care and learning contexts.

The development of strategic roles within local authorities has been identified as key to embedding good practice (Harker *et al* 2004; Berridge *et al* 2008). These roles appear to be best placed at senior level, involving individuals whose experience cuts across education and social care (Harker *et al* 2004; Berridge *et al* 2009). Evaluation of the new role of VSHs was positive; although the role is new it had provided a locus for

5. Views on what constitutes positive educational outcomes

consolidating policy and practice. While outcome statistics are not definitive as a measure of impact, the 11 authorities involved in the pilot compared well to the national average.

There has been no systematic evaluation of looked-after children's education support teams. Evidence suggests these vary in their service location, and in the range of professionals involved and services offered. Qualitative evidence suggests that the input from these teams is valued by professional colleagues – especially social workers – and by carers (Fletcher-Campbell *et al* 2003; Berridge *et al* 2009).

Personal education plans (PEPs)

Evidence suggests that there is a gradual improvement in the accessibility and effectiveness of PEPs. More recent evidence (Berridge *et al* 2008; Berridge *et al* 2009) found that most young people had PEPs and were involved in the development of these. Some caution should be exercised in relation to this finding, as it seems likely that use of the plans continues to be somewhat uneven in terms of effective use and quality of content (Harker *et al* 2004; Hayden 2005).

Earlier evidence showed that children, carers and social workers were unclear as to the purpose of PEPs and were frequently unaware of their existence. Further interviews with designated teachers during the same study (Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006) found that views were extremely mixed: some designated teachers felt they had a useful role and facilitated participation by young people and other professionals, while others thought the overlap with other planning processes was too great and, indeed, largely ignored the plans as they currently operated. O'Sullivan and Westerman (2007) highlight the problems associated with obtaining the comprehensive information necessary to produce an effective PEP.

Direct interventions with children and young people

In addition to policy-related interventions, a range of individual projects has been carried out with the aim of improving educational outcomes for LACYP. Unfortunately, these have not been systematically evaluated and/or published. The lack of replication of these studies – and the small scale of the majority of this work – is problematic in terms of deriving general messages, as the interventions have not been tested in different contexts. It is not possible, therefore, to compare the relative effectiveness of these interventions.

This should not detract from the creative and wide-ranging manner of these interventions, many of which are thought to have a role in improving children's resilience, encouraging participation in a wide range of arts-based activities and providing support for school work through homework clubs. Where studies included these projects, they were viewed positively by participants and seemed to result in a high level of engagement from young people and carers (Harker *et al* 2004; Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006; Berridge *et al* 2009). However, those responsible for initiating such projects sometimes expressed concern that looked-after children placed in the area from other authorities could be unaware of such activities or even be ineligible to participate.

This section explores looked-after children and young people's (LACYYP's) views on what constitutes positive educational outcomes and asks how they compare with those of policy-makers, children's services personnel and independent sector providers.

Key messages

- The diversity of care and educational experiences present in the care population make 'representative' sampling difficult.
- Positive educational outcomes are generally seen as encompassing experiences beyond the school gates and including participation in a variety of extra-curricular activities, including sports and the arts.
- Overall, children and young people viewed entry to care as having had a positive effect on their education, though experiences were uneven.
- Young people value recognition of their achievements, and celebration of these achievements.
- Emotional and social support is key to engagement with education.
- Satisfaction with a placement, rather than the type of placement, is important in relation to educational progress.
- The differences in the views of young people concerning their educational experience highlight the importance of talking and listening directly with children and young people.

The screening process generated 11 studies in this category. Five of these studies contained a longitudinal element and tracked young people through longer periods of their care careers. These studies explored young people's views through qualitative methods, mainly interviews, but usually combined these with surveys, file searches, analysis of local authority data and interviews with key professionals. Sample size varied considerably.

Evidence is stronger regarding the experiences of teenagers than younger children in relation to their educational experience. The weight of this evidence also tends towards those in contact with social care services, for example, leaving care teams. There is also some bias towards those living in residential care, partly because generally more research about this population has taken place, and partly because samples are more accessible.

To this extent the inclusion of information based on consultation exercises is important, in that these may be more accessible – for example, via the internet – and may reach a slightly different group of children (A National Voice 2007; Morgan 2009). Review of the literature would, however, lead to the conclusion that the experiences of some children are absent from the literature. These include, for example, children who experience especially high levels of mobility and are, therefore, more easily lost from research samples (Berridge *et al* 2008) and those whose educational experiences are especially problematic, for example, those who have been excluded or have been out of school for long periods for other reasons. Children and young people with disabilities also tend not to be integrated into studies focusing on the care experience.

Analysis of these studies in relation to the review question is difficult, as the research has tended to be fairly general in approach to children's educational experience and their

perceptions of outcomes. Questions tend to focus on young people's school status and experience, for example, their experience of difficulties such as school exclusion. With exceptions (for example, Barn *et al* 2005), there is little discussion of the differential experiences of gender and ethnicity, the children's peer groups or indeed the nature of the classroom experience.

The care experience

The care experience is, inevitably, an individual one. The research studies reviewed suggested that, for most young people, entry to care was considered to have been beneficial for their welfare, including their education (Jackson *et al* 2005; Morgan 2009). This is a key message of the review.

This does not mean that children and young people's experience had been uniform throughout their time in care or that they did not have bad experiences. Bullying and violence, especially within residential establishments, was identified as a particular problem (Morgan 2007).

Young people defined positive educational outcomes in terms of a shift in their school experience – for example, going to school regularly, or getting on better with teachers – or in relation to the encouragement they received from carers and teachers. Rewards for their achievements – for example, through reward ceremonies – were also highly valued as a marker of achievement (Harker *et al* 2004).

Active interest from carers and teachers

The evidence is clear that young people value individual support in relation to their education. It does not appear to matter who gives this support, though it is more likely to be found from carers and teachers than from social workers or other professionals. The input from social workers, in particular, tends to be seen as either irrelevant (owing to frequent changes or lack of contact with social workers) or related to procedural issues, such as personal education plans (PEPs) (Harker *et al* 2004).

Although access to resources such as computers is considered important by young people, emotional support features even more highly when young people rate barriers to learning or, equally, key factors of effective support (Jackson *et al* 2005; A National Voice 2007).

A weakness of studies involving young people is the failure to provide adequate information on the type of placements young people are living in, and the bearing this has on educational progress. Berridge *et al* (2008) highlight an otherwise neglected issue, namely the way in which care and education placements overlap for many young people. A high proportion of their sample lived in dual-registered (for both care and education) residential establishments, and those living in residential emotional and behavioural difficulty schools were also included.

Support involves:

- everyday interest in, and attention to, educational issues, such as homework
- encouragement, which can take different forms, and may include incentives and rewards, or larger-scale celebrations of achievement
- practical support, in the form of books, computers, software and stationery, which needs to be available to all looked-after children in a consistent way
- financial support and access to safe and secure accommodation in the longer term, in order to participate in further and higher education
- interest and concern to ensure children and young people are made aware of the consequences of not working hard or going to school
- ensuring that planning takes place in advance concerning the future education and training of young people
- focusing individual attention on progress, not problems.

Stable care placements

The relationship between placement stability and positive educational outcomes has been a major theme of policy and guidance (DfEE and DoH 2000; DfES 2005). A sense of having a secure base is considered an important factor in developing children's resilience (Gilligan 2000) and there is good evidence to illustrate the negative effects – educationally and emotionally – of placement change.

In considering this relationship, it is important to distinguish between the length of a single care episode and the amount of movement a child may experience within the system. Statistical evidence also suggests that children are remaining within the care system longer, and analyses of the data suggests that longer periods in care results in more positive outcomes for looked-after children (Berridge *et al* 2008). However, the evidence is complex and research also indicates that, for example, disabled children are likely to remain longer within the care system with fewer opportunities for permanency or a return home (Baker 2006).

Asking young people about their experiences of placement stability and change and the impact of this on their educational achievement was common to almost all the studies examined. The evidence suggests that the number of placements experienced by children and young people in the research samples varied greatly, as did the number of school changes associated with this. More important than the number of placements, however, are young people's perceptions that the level of disruption was high and had a negative impact on their education. Specific groups, such as young asylum seekers, may experience especially high levels of disruption (Stanley 2001).

Studies suggested that placement change usually occurred in relation to the care system, rather than for reasons of schooling. In other words, young people tended to move as part of planning that was intended to meet young people's needs more effectively, rather than to attend a different educational placement. Disruption was associated with periods of non-attendance at school. However, the timing of moves can also be crucial and if these occur at key points in a child's schooling – most obviously, close to school transition points, or

near an assessment – the impact can be very serious indeed, significantly reducing a child's chances of sitting examinations and thus gaining important qualifications (O'Sullivan and Westerman 2007).

Conversely, stability was associated with a positive view of the care experience (McAuley 2005). There is also evidence that a move to a placement that is more supportive educationally, may be viewed by young people as an important 'trigger' to improved educational achievement (Dearden 2004; Harker *et al* 2004).

All the research studies emphasised the need for planning and for children to feel secure about the future. Evidence from young people attests to the anxiety many feel about what is going to happen to them, both in the short and longer terms – suggesting that this issue is not always effectively addressed by professionals (Jackson *et al* 2003; O'Sullivan and Westerman 2007; Berridge *et al* 2009).

School-based support

This review has already established that the role of schools in supporting LACYP is a neglected part of the evidence base. Harker *et al* (2004) found that, most commonly, young people cited teachers as their main source of educational support.

In interviews with 55 young people, Harker *et al* (2004) found that 24 had heard of the designated teacher role, while 31 had no knowledge of it. The evidence was unclear about whether having a designated teacher enhanced existing support, as the designated teacher role tended to overlap with another pastoral role, in which capacity students would have expected help from the member of staff. Young people were, however, enthusiastic about the idea of a designated teacher and thought this role would be useful.

Berridge *et al* (2009) evaluated children's and professionals' awareness and experience of the virtual school head in 11 pilot authorities. The nature of this role varied in the different authorities, but overall these were senior and primarily strategic roles. The work these individuals had undertaken – which often involved focusing on key areas such as the implementation of PEPs, coordination of the work of designated teachers or addressing problems such as non-attendance – was valued and appeared to have a positive impact on practice.

Despite the evidence demonstrating the high levels of non-attendance and exclusion, there is an absence of detailed evidence regarding the way in which this experience is managed by teachers, or indeed views of the experience from young people. In accordance with other evidence, Barn *et al* (2005) found that gender and ethnicity were significant to the experience of exclusion for looked-after children: boys and Caribbean, mixed parentage and white young people were more likely to be excluded than Asians and Africans. A high proportion reported not receiving any education at all (44 per cent), a quarter had home tuition and the remainder went to a special-school unit. Mixed parentage and white young people reported receiving less help from their social worker and with learning and tuition than any other group. Daniels *et al* (2003), who included LACYP in a wider study of school exclusion, emphasise the reduced likelihood of young people obtaining qualifications post-exclusion and their limited aspirations for the future.

Information sharing and confidentiality

The question of information sharing and confidentiality is a powerful theme in the accounts of LACYP. The research message is that this is an issue that should be addressed with individual young people.

Views among children and young people vary greatly about the sharing of information in school, ranging from those who see their care status as irrelevant to their schooling, to those who want both teachers and peers to know they are in care. There is some difference between samples: for example, most young people interviewed by Harker *et al* (2004) wanted to ensure that only their closest friends know they are looked-after – but the overriding message concerns diversity and the need for sensitive, individual negotiation of this issue. Inevitably, these views are coloured by negative and positive experiences and interviews revealed that young people tended to focus on one key incident that had a particular effect on them.

Overall, the views of young people do not appear to contradict policy, which emphasises the importance of information sharing. Rather, these views reinforce the need – also present in policy and guidance – for teachers, carers and others to ensure young people are engaged actively in discussions about information sharing at school, perhaps especially when there are changes in a young person's situation. Evidence from designated teachers (Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006) indicates some confusion concerning confidentiality and a similar spectrum of views to those expressed by young people.

Moving on to further and higher education and employment

National statistics have demonstrated the disparity between the proportion of care leavers progressing to further and higher education and the general population (see Data Annex and Research Review 9). This reflects lower pass rates in GCSE and A level examinations, but also the lack of planning and support for the transition to further and higher education that is available to other young people (Jackson *et al* 2005).

Barn *et al* (2005) found that young people from minority ethnic groups (especially those of Asian, African and Caribbean background) appear to be more likely to attend college to try to further their studies than the white and mixed parentage young people in their sample. Jackson *et al* (2003, 2005), in their sample of looked-after young people who went on to higher education, found that those born outside the United Kingdom had clearer educational goals, were more highly motivated and worked harder than their UK counterparts.

Twenty-seven per cent of Barn *et al*'s sample had no qualifications at all, but this sample also revealed important gender and ethnic group differences. Thus 31 per cent of young men had no qualifications compared to 24 per cent of young women. These gender differences were greatly increased for Caribbean young people – 28 per cent of young males had no qualifications compared with only 6 per cent of young women. White young people were more likely to have no qualifications than other groups.

Young people moving to further and higher education did not always find the transition easy. The amount of practical and financial support was variable, though this improved

slightly in the course of the Jackson *et al* (2003, 2005) research. This was attributed to changes in legislation and policy. Young people highlighted their need for, and frequent lack of, social and emotional support, for example, during university vacations. Critically, however, the majority completed or continued their studies and felt that undertaking further education had been of immense value.

6 The contribution of the attitudes, skills and abilities of foster, residential, kinship carers, teachers and birth families to positive educational outcomes

This section examines the contribution made to positive educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people (LACYP) by the attitudes, skills and abilities of foster, residential, kinship carers, teachers and birth families and identifies interventions to support this contribution.

Key messages

- A high quality of care and education will include recognition of the role of education and school in a young person's life, and will support this.
- Honest and up-to-date information about a young person's educational experience is needed if carers are to be able to support children effectively.
- Carers value additional support and information regarding education and appreciate input from other professionals.
- The role of birth families in supporting education is missing from the literature.

Eleven studies were included in regard to this review question. Discussion of Review Question 2 highlighted the importance young people accorded the contribution of carers, teachers and birth families in supporting their education. The research available is less able to identify the nature of these attitudes, skills and abilities and there is an absence of literature that evaluates interventions that might support this contribution.

Overall, the evidence base for this question was judged to be weak. No studies were identified that examined the role of birth families in supporting the education of LACYP.

Foster, residential and kinship carers

There is a consensus in the research that a high quality of care in a placement will embrace a commitment to education. This view is not new; a similar view was expressed in previous research studies (see, for example, Hicks *et al* 2007 regarding residential care). This suggests that evidence demonstrating ways in which overall skill levels can be improved will have an impact on support for education. The extent to which current models of training for carers integrates care and education appears variable and is less developed than in continental Europe (Cameron *et al* 2007).

Analysis of the literature suggests that there is a tension between the attributes of individuals and the systems within which they are working. Thus, carers and teachers may be very skilled in working with an individual child or young person, but their work may be limited by, for example, placement location or the nature of care planning. Unreliable support from, or frequent changes of, social workers were viewed as unhelpful (Harker *et al* 2004). Young people moving on to further and higher education reported differences

between authorities in relation to ongoing support from foster carers (Jackson *et al* 2003, 2005).

Even where these tensions exist, however, it is clear that the individual, emotional qualities of carers and other adults can help promote positive educational outcomes for LACYP. In order to deliver a **high quality of educational** care, it is essential that carers receive appropriate and comprehensive information relating to education. The absence of this can have long-term implications for children's placements and on their progress and achievements at school (Cooper and Johnson 2007).

An early UK study (Heath *et al* 1994) argued that the educational deficit experienced by looked-after children made it necessary to provide interventions that helped compensate for earlier disadvantage. There is some indicative support for this in terms of support offered to foster carers. In a United States-based randomised trial of 48 kindergarten children placed in foster care, Pears *et al* (2007) reported findings from a pilot evaluation of an intervention designed to improve school outcomes in pre-school foster children. A therapeutic playgroup was provided weekly to children in the summer holiday prior to entering school, with the aim of improving emotional and social skills. The findings from this small-scale study were encouraging in relation to children's readiness for, and successful management of, the transition to school.

There is evidence of medium strength that interventions involving **added expertise** and liaison are perceived positively by carers. Berridge *et al* (2009) report positively on the introduction of additional tutoring services for looked-after children. Golding (2002) describes the development of a support project involving psychological counselling for foster carers. Evidence from the United States would also appear to support this, though studies are again dependent on single case studies (Zetlin *et al* 2004, 2006a and b). The nature of the role appears to vary from a liaison figure who is based in another agency, to the more strategic role provided by the virtual school head (Berridge *et al* 2009). The extent to which they help build carers' own expertise is weaker: findings indicate that the presence of an **educational expert** results in more consultation on the part of carers and the perception that such collaboration results in better outcomes for children and young people.

The precise impact of such interventions has not been measured and findings should be treated cautiously, on the grounds that any support may be viewed as better than none – but the take-up of such services would indicate some value.

Birth parents

The experience of birth families prior to entry to care, in terms of education and schooling, stands outside this review. No studies were identified that examined the role of birth families in supporting the education of LACYP. That said, studies highlighted the pre-care educational experiences of the looked-after group as key to understanding their in-care progress (Berridge *et al* 2008). Other research evidence also attests to the high proportion of looked-after children who return home (Biehal 2006), which raises questions about how educational support is continued in the longer term.

The question of relationships and contact with birth families was considered in the majority of studies, though not from an educational perspective.

Teachers

The support received from teachers was highly valued by young people (Harker *et al* 2004; Morgan 2009). Overall, teachers who were 'good teachers' and non-stigmatising appear to be most appreciated. There were examples of specific instances where teachers had provided additional support – for example, when a child had just moved to a new school.

Although limited, there was some evidence that teachers also supported carers (Harker *et al* 2004; Dobel-Ober *et al* 2006). Studies that included teachers found that they were sympathetic to the role of foster carers in particular (some were, in fact, foster carers themselves) and were anxious to provide support where this was possible. Understanding of residential care was more limited and at times unsympathetic. Nevertheless, there is evidence from studies including teachers that considerable efforts are made to support looked-after children, including advocacy for young people and to avoid sanctions such as exclusion (Daniels *et al* 2003). Teachers in existing pastoral and support roles tend to view looked-after children as part of a wider group of vulnerable children and provide pastoral support accordingly. There was also evidence that teachers were keen to emphasise the potential of many looked-after young people and to give examples of high achievement from among looked-after students.

7. Conclusions and main messages

This section focuses on the main messages and

conclusions arising from the literature and data. It tries to relate the review questions concerning improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people (LACYP) to C4EO's model of whole-system change as proposed by Every Child Matters.

The scoping review concluded that improvements in the educational outcomes of looked-after children required a more **sophisticated modelling** of the relationship between the experience of looked-after children and other dimensions of their experience. Specifically, a better understanding of their experience at school and as learners – together with consideration of other emotional and care needs – was required. This review reiterates these conclusions, and it is important that findings are considered alongside those from the two partner reviews:

- Improving the emotional and behavioural health of looked-after children.
- Increasing the number of care leavers (young people) in 'settled, safe accommodation'.

The review has revealed ongoing gaps in the evidence base. This is due, in part, to the rapid development of policy and practice regarding the education of LACYP. The expertise of children and young people, carers, families and other professionals is, therefore, especially important in order to appreciate fully the current state of knowledge.

Findings support the view that LACYP are **children first** and that their school experiences are an important part of their personal histories and identities. The experience of being in care is, similarly, important but not all-defining. To this extent, research findings are consistent with current policy messages. Children value the individual support they receive from adults, and especially their carers and teachers. Ideally, this is offered within a stable placement situation. Encouragingly, the review concludes that entry to care is by no means negative in respect to children's educational wellbeing and progress, even where this is not apparent in local authority statistics. Indeed, children and young people are more likely to view care as making a positive contribution to their schooling experience.

The evidence remains weak in respect to the mechanisms through which inter-agency governance contributes to improved educational outcomes for LACYP. These structures are in place, but the measurement of impact is problematic – though this may change as more time elapses. There is medium-strength evidence that integrated strategy and processes are having some effect on the educational experience of LACYP, especially through the personal education plan and through the new role of virtual school head.

There is an emerging body of evidence concerning integrated frontline delivery. There is also some evidence that communication and liaison between social care services and schools has improved. Comparative research testing the **social pedagogy** model suggests this is useful in integrating care and education but is yet to be evaluated in a United Kingdom context (Cameron *et al* 2007). This is promising in offering a different conceptual framework that would integrate current thinking about good practice in respect to the support offered by carers and others to LACYP.

Evidence is weak from this review concerning the specific skills of frontline professionals that support the learning and educational achievements of LACYF. It is suggested that this question is necessarily linked to wider issues of quality of care and to the much larger body of evidence relating to the skills and training of carers, teachers and other professionals. There continues to be unevenness in the way in which children experience support for their education while being looked-after, suggesting that further efforts are required to ensure good practice is embedded for all groups of children and young people.

Data annexe

This data annexe was produced as part of the scoping study on which this review is based. It will be revised and updated in the forthcoming knowledge review. The C4EO website also contains data relevant to managers working in the field of looked-after children.

1. Introduction and availability of data

The main focus of this priority is ‘improving the educational outcomes of looked-after children’. In the majority of cases, children cease to be looked-after on their 18th birthday, although, under the provisions of the *Children Act 1989 Section 20(5)* (GB. Statutes 1989) young people may be looked-after until their 21st birthday if they are being looked-after in a community home which is suitable for children aged 16 and over. In practice, few young people fall into this category and, according to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), tend to be young persons with severe physical or mental disabilities (DCSF 2009).

The DCSF is the main source of data on Every Child Matters outcomes for looked-after children up to the age of 16. It provides comprehensive data on a range of educational outcome indicators (including attendance and attainment at Key Stages 1 to 4) for young people who have been looked-after continuously for at least 12 months. Data on young people who have been looked-after for a shorter period (or for short-term breaks as respite care) is not published nationally.

Longer-term tracking of educational outcomes, once young people have left care, is not comprehensive, since data on activities and accommodation on their 19th birthday is only collected on young people who were looked-after during the final year of compulsory education (Year 11). Tracking data on young people who were looked-after in previous academic years, but who returned to their families by Year 11, is not systematically recorded.

This data annexe presents further discussion about the data currently available on looked-after children. It provides:

- a summary of the search strategy for identifying data
- an overview of the nature and scope of the data that was found, with a brief commentary on the quality of this data, and any gaps that have been identified
- some examples of the type of charts and diagrams that could be produced, showing, for example, comparisons between outcomes for looked-after children and all children.

A summary table of the data sources of readily available, published data for looked-after children at a national, regional and/or local authority level is produced in Data Annexe Appendix 1.

2. Search strategy

There are a number of archival databases in the UK, such as the National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) and the UK data archive, some of which have services that facilitate

searching or access to macro- and micro-datasets (including ESDS International). Even so, searching for current and recently published data cannot yet be conducted in the same way as searching for published research findings. Access to newly published data is not supported by comprehensive searchable databases in the same way that literature searches are supported, although the DCSF and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) produce a publications schedule for statistical first releases and statistical volumes.

Data for this data annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods but primarily by obtaining online access to known Government publications (such as the statistical first releases and statistical volumes from the DCSF) and access to data published by the Office of National Statistics. Since the main focus was on educational outcomes, sources of data on other outcomes (including other government departments; the National Health Service and other national, regional and local bodies) were not explored in great detail. It should be noted that links to statistical sources that were live at the time of searching may not remain live at the time of publication.

3. Nature and scope of the data

Data on looked-after children has been collated for at least seven years via local authority OC2 statistical returns. While this facilitates the provision of some trend data, it is important to recognise that these returns have always been on an aggregate basis at local authority level, providing, for example, information on the number of children who were looked-after, the ethnicity of children who were looked-after, and the educational status (mainstream or other education, including home schooling) and attainment levels of the various cohorts of children and young people. This means that while we can identify the number of boys, the number of pupils from white ethnic backgrounds and the Key Stage 3 attainment outcomes of any looked-after children in a particular cohort (such as those in Year 9 in Summer 2007) we cannot identify, for instance, the Key Stage 3 outcomes for boys from white ethnic backgrounds. Outcomes and trends in outcomes that are currently presented in published statistics are primarily from cross-tabulated data and do not allow for more illuminative multivariate analysis.

More recently a new data collection form, the SSDA903, has been introduced. This moves away from the collection of aggregated cohort data.¹ The form collects data on individual children (including those as yet unborn, but known to the local authority) using a unique local authority-generated identifier that follows the child through the care system. Although this identifier (of no more than 10 characters) is to be aligned to the Unique Pupil Number (UPN) that is provided for children once they enter schooling, it is not the same as the UPN (which has 13 characters). Local authorities are requested, in addition, to record the UPN for any child above the age of six on the SSDA903 or to indicate why that number is not available (perhaps because the child is newly looked-after, educated outside England or discrepancies in date of birth or the way the name is recorded have been found).

¹ Data for the year 2008/09 is to be collected on every child who is looked-after by the local authority at any time during the year ending 31 March and children who were being looked-after by the local authority on 1 April 2006 under any legal status other than those accommodated under a series of short-term breaks for respite care and whose date of birth fell between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1990.

Work is underway to match data from the SSDA903 to the National Pupil Database (NPD). That work is being evaluated and for the year 2008/09, therefore, two data collection systems are still in place. OC2 returns for 2008/09 will still be required to ensure that the existing indicators for attainment data can be replicated. The DCSF hope that the OC2 data collection can cease 'after the 2009/10 Statistical First Release subject to satisfactory matching to the NPD using UPNs' (Britton 2008).

This move towards the collection, collation and provision of individual level data provides the possibility of multivariate analysis in the future. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that, while some trend data on educational outcomes can be identified (and is included in this annex), it should not be seen as a comprehensive insight into the outcomes of all groups of looked-after children. Apparent changes in outcomes for young people at Key Stage 4, for example, may reflect changes for particular groups of children within that cohort that may not be identifiable from cohort-level data alone. In future, looking at improvements in outcomes for looked-after children should be more reliable, while the relationship of any such improvements to particular interventions should be easier to ascertain.

Some further issues for this data scoping study relate to the ways in which certain types of data are recorded. While work has taken place to ensure that information on ethnicity is consistent and comparable between OC2 and SSDA903 returns, the School Census (which feeds into the National Pupil Database) and the Children in Needs Census, data on disability, for instance, is still fraught with difficulties. Indeed, no disability data for individual children will be recorded on the SSDA903 returns for 2008/09, although there are plans in place to include it in future annual returns. Data on OC2 returns for GCSE equivalent qualifications has been limited to GNVQs and does not include the wider spectrum of qualifications that would be included in the NPD for all children. It is possible, therefore, that attainment at Key Stage 4 may be underestimated for some young people.

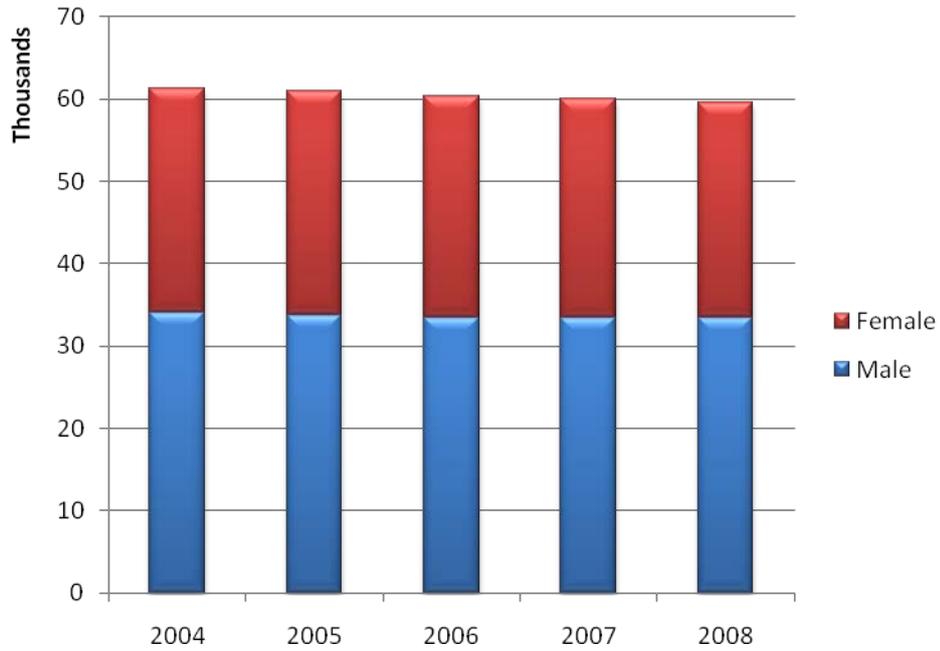
4. Examples of charts showing trends and regional data

Data on the demographics of looked-after children and their educational outcomes at Key Stage 1 to 4 have been identified from the DCSF. In addition to cohort data, these cover the national indicators specific to looked-after children (NI 99 to NI 101) as well as national indicators for attainment and educational progress for which data on looked-after children can be identified, such as NI 74, NI 87 and NI 114.

Exemplar 1: Looked-after children – demographic information

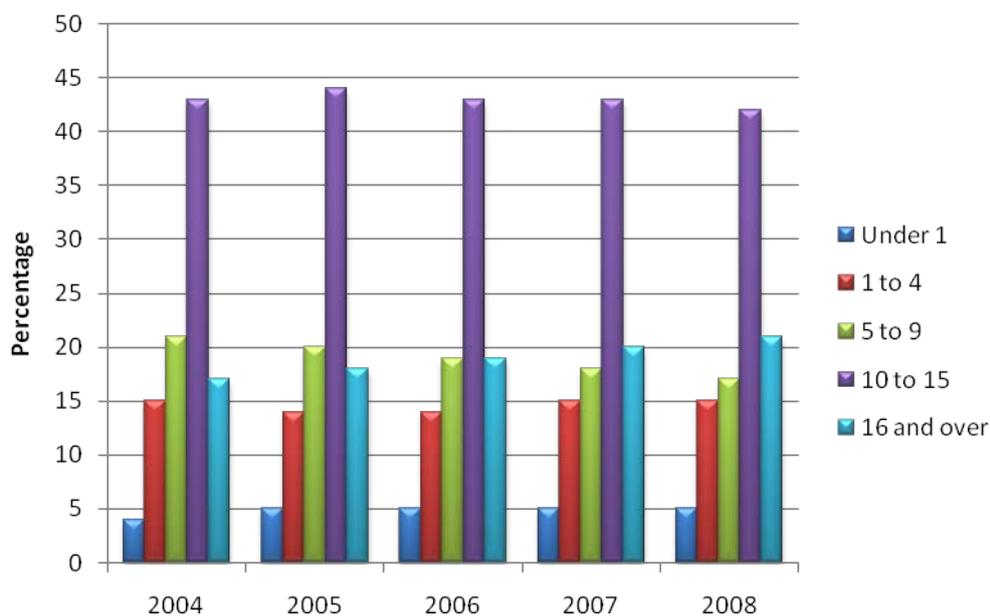
Of the 60,000 or so children and young people who were recorded as looked-after in each year from 2004 to 2008, over half in each year were male (see Figure 2) and over 40 per cent were aged between 10 and 15 (see Figure 3). There has been little observable change in the proportion of each age group who were looked-after, except in the age group five to nine (where there has been a four percentage point decrease, from 21 per cent to 17 per cent) and in the proportion of over-16-year-olds, which increased by four percentage points, from 17 to 21 per cent.

Figure 2. Looked-after children 2004 to 2008: by sex



Source: DCSF (2008a)

Figure 3. Looked-after children 2004 to 2008: by age

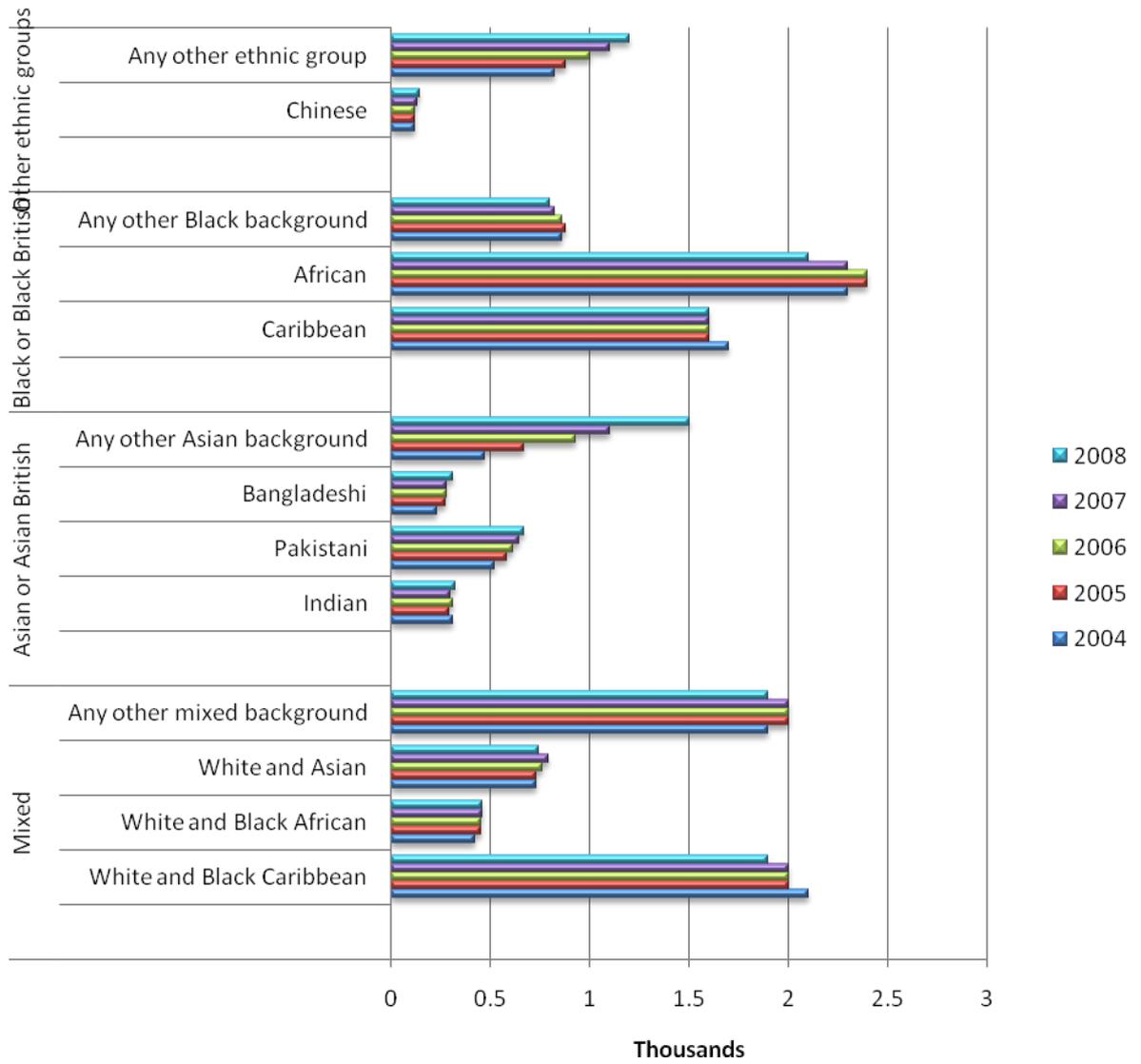


Source: DCSF (2008a)

The highest proportion of looked-after children were from a white ethnic background; over three quarters of all looked-after children in each year came from this group. Of those from different minority ethnic groups, the greatest percentage came from black or mixed-race backgrounds (around eight per cent in each case). Although the proportions of children from each of the minority ethnic groups who were looked-after remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2008, there appeared to be some minor increases in the number of Pakistani, ‘other’ Asian and ‘other’ ethnic group children becoming the responsibility of the local authority (see Figure 4).

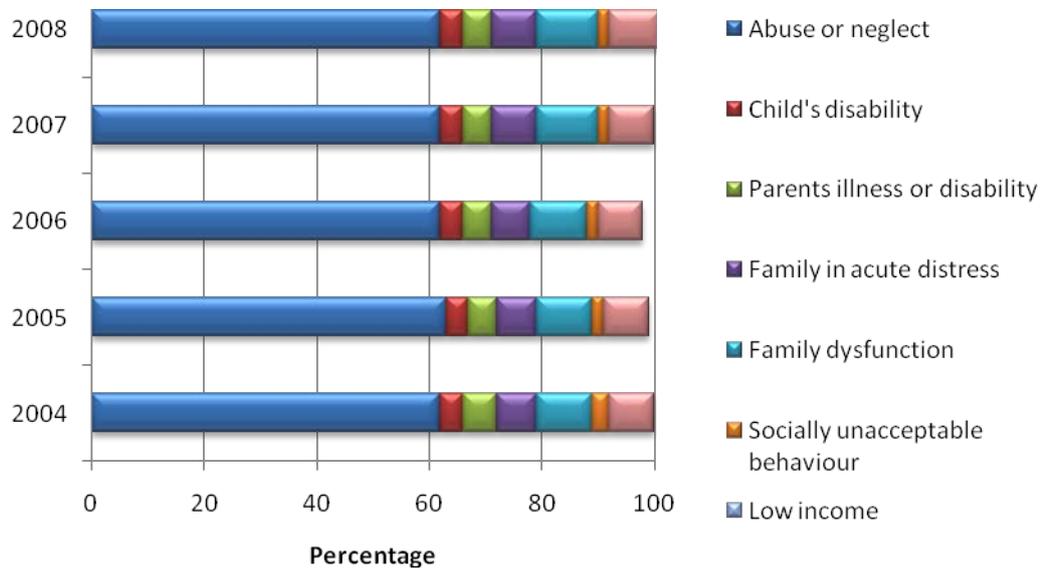
The reasons for children and young people becoming looked-after appear, predominantly, to be related to abuse and neglect. This was the category of need that was identified for over 60 per cent of looked-after children at the time when they were taken into care (see Figure 5); it may not be the sole reason for which they remained in care. Family dysfunction, family in acute distress and absent parenting were the other main reasons for children being looked-after; although low income was recorded as the primary reason in about 100 cases in each year from 2004 to 2008, the proportion of such cases was less than 0.2 per cent of the total, and so does not appear in Figure 5.

Figure 4. Looked-after children 2004 to 2008: by ethnicity



Source: DCSF (2008a)

Figure 5. Looked-after children 2004 to 2008: by reason for being taken into care



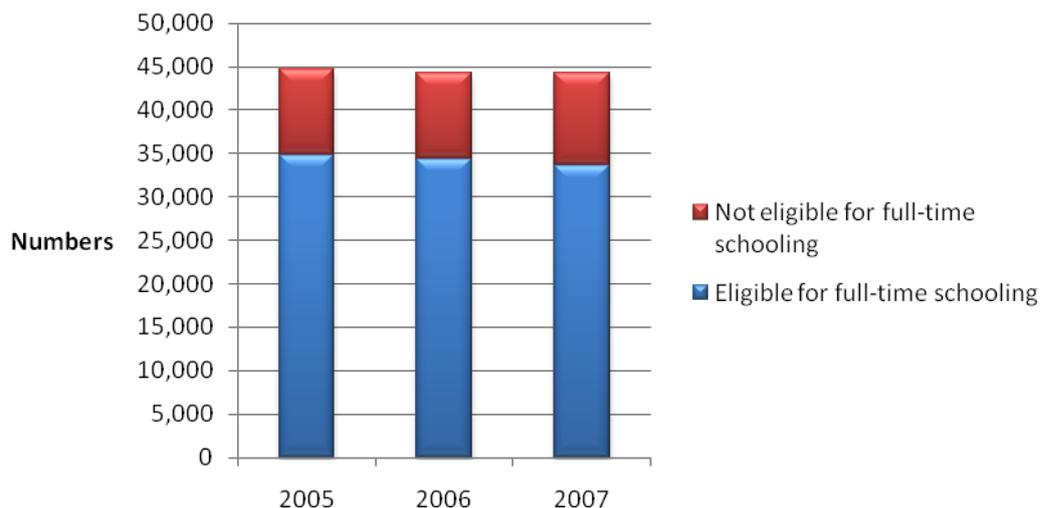
Source: DCSF (2008a)

Exemplar 2: Looked-after children eligible for schooling

Data on the outcomes for children and young people who are looked-after is presented for fewer young people than would have been in care in total, since it refers only to those young people who were in care continuously for a period of at least 12 months. In 2007, for example, a total of 60,000 were recorded as having been looked-after. Of these, 44,200 (just under three quarters) were identified as having been in long-term care.

Data from the DSCF statistical first release (DCSF 2008b) shows little change in the numbers of children and young people who were in long-term care in England between 2005 and 2007, although the proportion eligible for schooling showed a very small decrease (from 77.9 per cent to 76 per cent), suggesting that marginally more pre-school children may have been taken into long-term local authority care in 2007 (Figure 6).

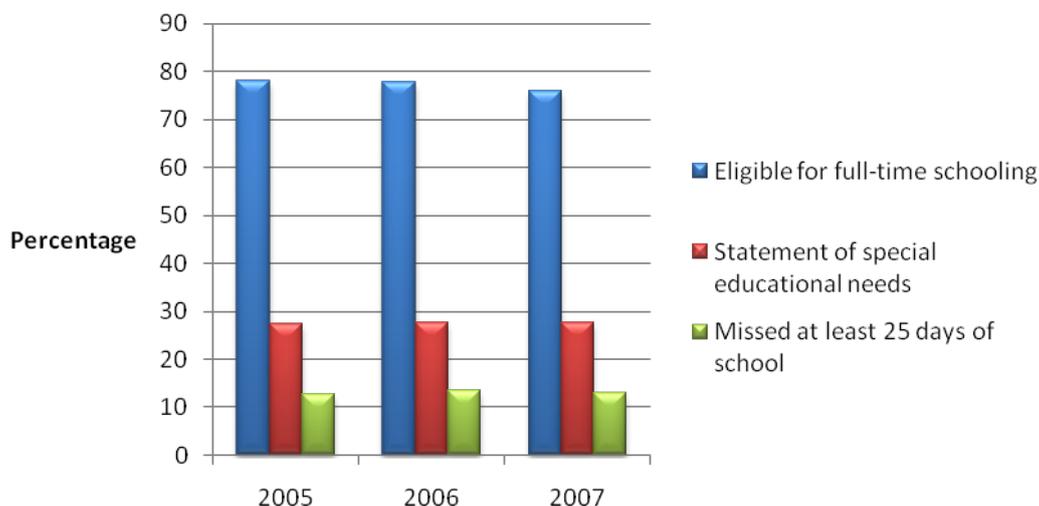
Figure 6. Numbers of looked-after children 2005 to 2007: by eligibility for schooling



Source: DCSF (2008b)

Of those looked-after children who were eligible for schooling, the proportion who were designated as having special educational needs remained constant at around 27 per cent (see Figures 7 and 8), but the proportion with five or more weeks of non-attendance showed some variation: between 12.6 per cent in 2005, to 13.4 per cent in 2006 and 13 per cent in 2007 (see Figure 7).

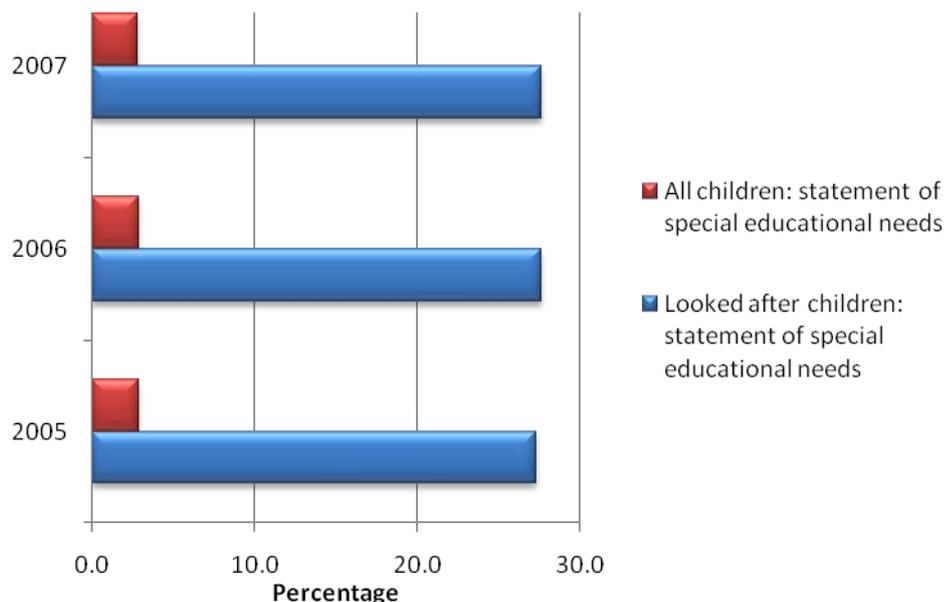
Figure 7. Looked-after children 2005 to 2007: SEN and absence data



Source: DCSF (2008b)

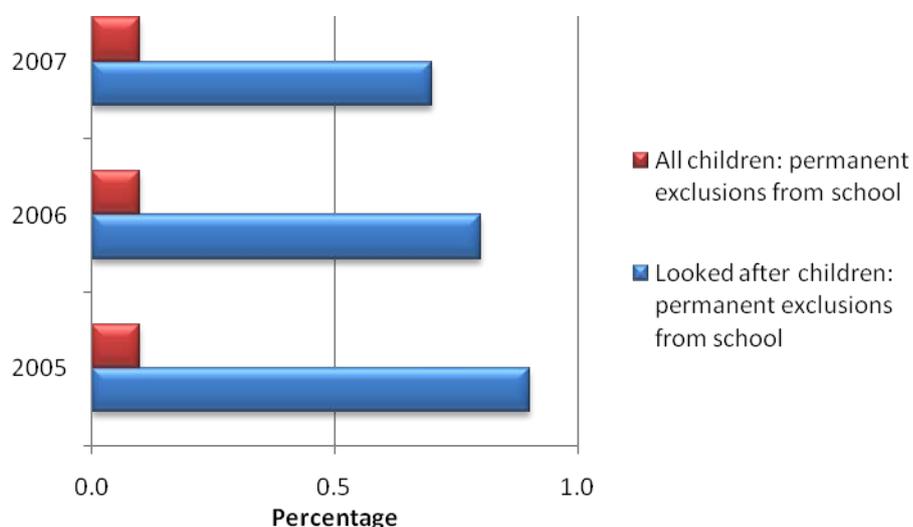
By comparison with all children, a far higher proportion of looked-after children are identified as having special educational needs (see Figure 8) and have been subject to permanent exclusion from school (see Figure 9). Comparative data on pupil absence is not available, since this data is not recorded in the same way for all children.

Figure 8. Statements of special educational need: by status



Source: DCSF (2008b)

Figure 9. Permanent exclusion from school: by status



Source: DCSF (2008b)

Exemplar 3: Outcomes at Key Stage 2 and 3

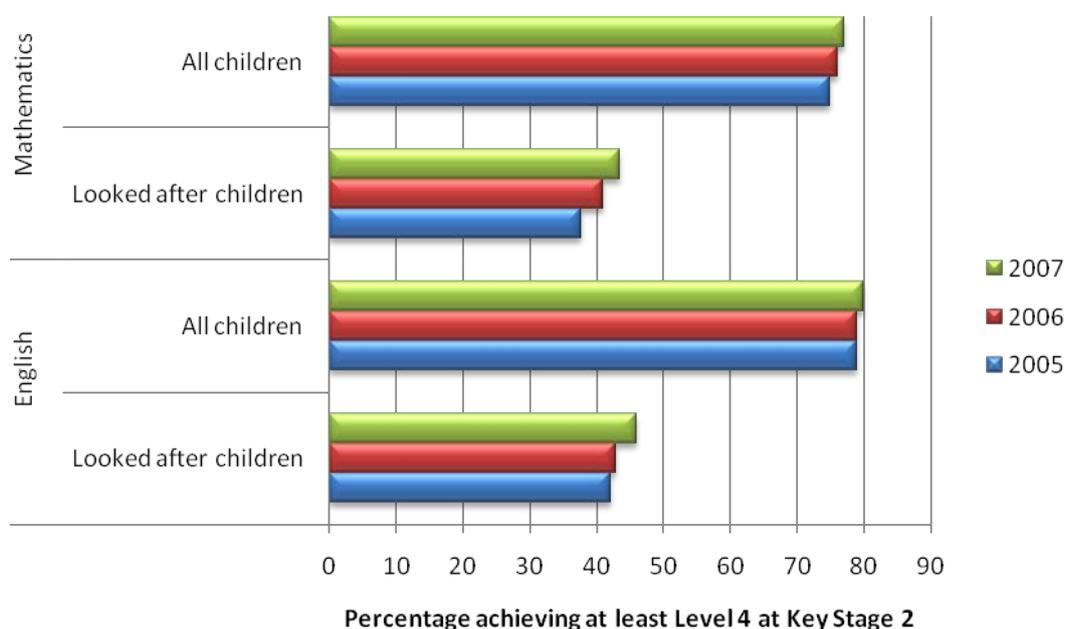
Data on outcomes in the Foundation Stage Profile (NI 72) are not yet published for looked-after children.

Data on national indicators (NI 99 to 100) for the proportions of pupils who were looked-after children achieving Level 4 or above in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 are presented in Figure 10. Figure 11 provides information for the proportions of pupils who were looked-after children achieving Level 5 or above in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3, although no national indicator has been established.

The data suggests that, although overall outcomes for looked-after children are significantly below those of their peer population as a whole, the proportion achieving Level 4 outcomes in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 have increased year-on-year since 2004 (particularly in mathematics, with a higher percentage points increase – 5.8 percentage points compared with two percentage points for all children). The story for Level 5 outcomes is less well defined, although, on average, there has been a 2.5 percentage point increase from 2005 to 2007 in attainment in mathematics and English for looked-after children, compared with a two percentage point increase in mathematics and no observable improvement in English for all children.

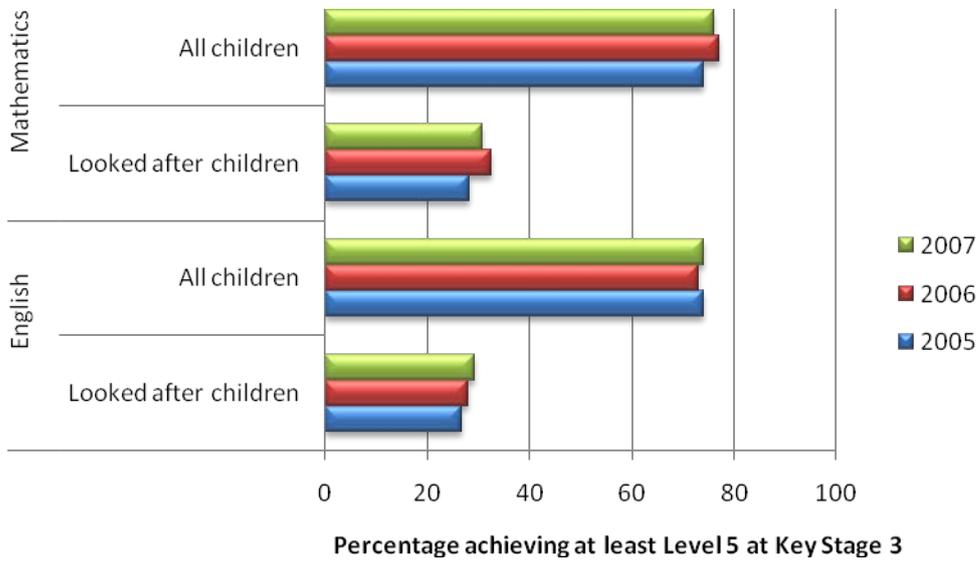
No specific indicator has been established for the attainment of looked-after children in science. Nonetheless, the data published by the DCSF enables a comparison of outcomes in science at Key Stage 3 for national indicator 83 (achievement at Level 5 or above). This suggests that outcomes for looked-after children in science follow a similar pattern to that for mathematics and English (see Figure 12).

Figure 10. Outcomes at Key Stage 2: by status



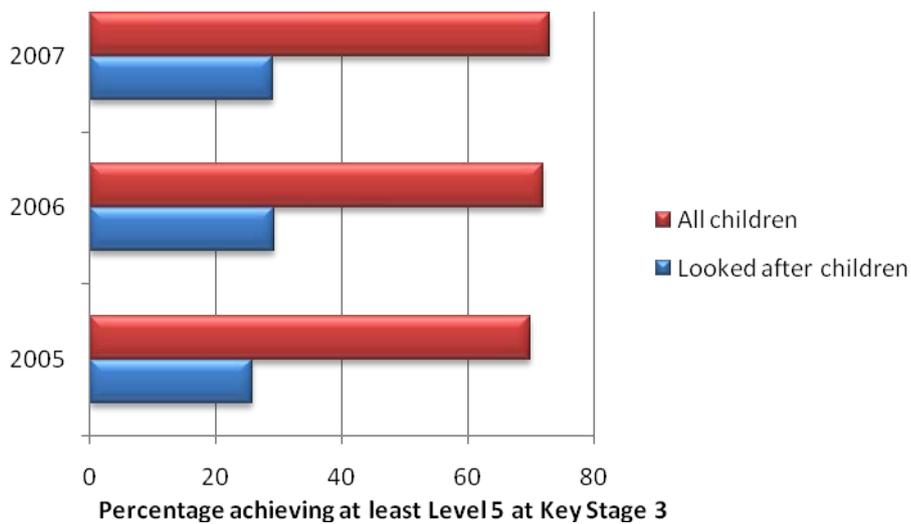
Source: DCSF (2008b)

Figure 11. Outcomes at Key Stage 3: by status



Source: DCSF (2008b)

Figure 12. Outcomes in Science at Key Stage 3: by status

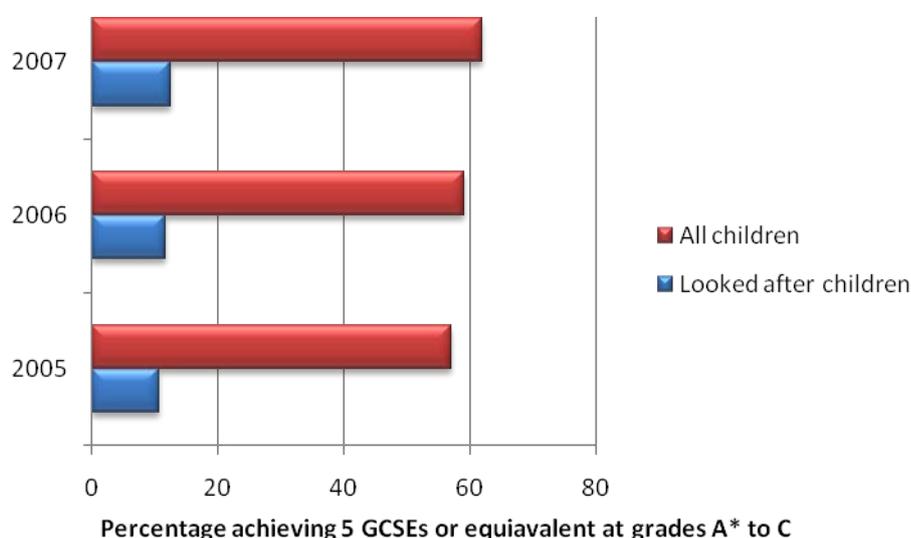


Source: DCSF (2008b)

Exemplar 4: Outcomes at Key Stage 4

The national indicator for Key Stage 4 (NI 101) is the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*–C grades (or equivalent) including English and mathematics. To date, this information has not been published for looked-after children, although the overall proportion achieving 5 or more A*–C grades is available (see Figure 13). While attainment at Key Stage 4 for looked-after children is significantly lower than for all children, it should be remembered that OC2 returns do not include all of the GCSE equivalents that would be available at individual pupil level on the NPD.

Figure 13. Outcomes at Key Stage 4: by status

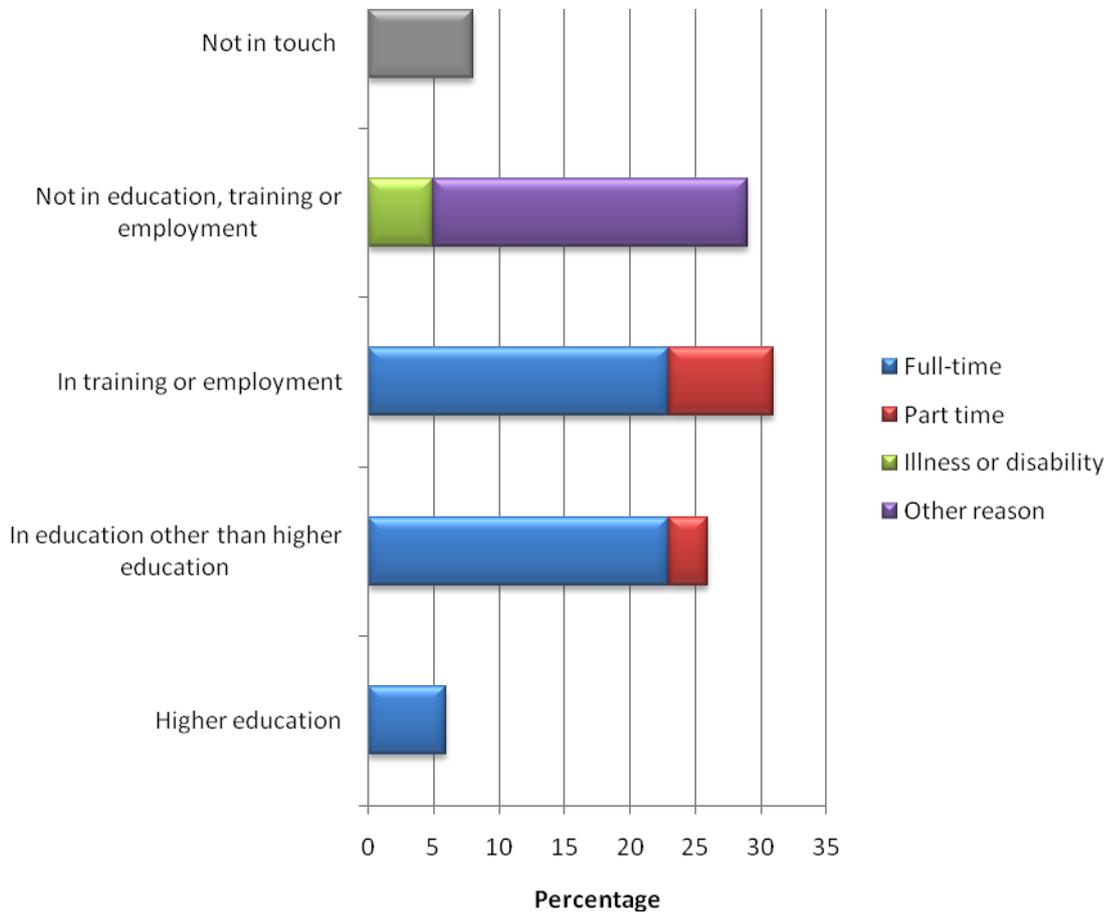


Source: DCSF (2008b)

Exemplar 5. Outcomes at age 19

The data on outcomes on looked-after children at age 19 is not comprehensive, since it draws only on data about young people who were in local authority care during Year 11, and relies on the ability to track these young people into their post-16 destinations and beyond. As Figure 14 indicates, of the 5,800 young people who were looked-after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years old, some eight per cent were not in touch by September 2007. More than one quarter (29 per cent) were not in education, training or employment (NEET). However nearly one third (32 per cent) were in some form of learning, and over one quarter of these were in higher education – six per cent of the looked-after cohort who had been in cohort local authority care during Year 11 in 2004.

Figure 14. Outcomes at age 19: by activity



Source: DCSF (2007)

5. Summary

At present, categorical data on outcomes for looked-after children are available and can provide some trend data on aspects of attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, on attendance (aggregated) and on permanent exclusions from school (aggregated). The extent to which existing data can provide detailed insight into the extent to which educational outcomes for looked-after children are improving is open to debate, however, as it is not possible to look at attendance by type of looked-after child, or to undertake any multivariate analysis to ensure that comparisons with all children control for variations in special educational needs, sex or ethnicity, for example. In future, the ability to match SSDA903 returns to the NPD should provide more illuminating insights into actual levels of educational attainment – and improvements in that attainment.

References

- A National Voice (2007) *Please sir! Can I have some more?* Manchester: A National Voice (available at www.anationalvoice.org/docs/please_sir.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).
- Baker, C. (2006) 'Disabled children's experience of permanency in the looked-after system', *British Journal of Social Work*, vol 37, no 7, 1173–1188.
- Barn, R., Andrew, L. and Mantovani, N. (2005) *Life after care: the experiences of young people from different ethnic groups*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Berridge, D. (2007) 'Theory and explanation in child welfare: education and looked-after children', *Child & family social work*, vol 12, no 1, pp 1–10.
- Berridge, D., Dance, C., Beecham, J. and Field, S. (2008) *Educating difficult adolescents: effective education for children in public care or with emotional problems*, London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Berridge, D., Henry, L., Jackson, S. and Turney, D. (2009) Looked-after and learning: evaluation of the virtual school head pilot, London: DCSF (available at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR144.pdf>, accessed 3 September).
- Biehal, N. (2006) *Reuniting looked-after children with their families: a review of the research*, London: National Children's Bureau.
- Brodie, I., Bostock, L., Clapton, J., Fish, S., Fisher, M., Morris, M., Kearney, P. and Rutter, D. (2009) *Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people* (C4EO Vulnerable Children Scoping Review 1), London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (available at www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/files/c4eo_improving_educational_outcomes.pdf, 12 November).
- Cameron, C., McQuail, S. and Petrie, P. (2007) *Implementing the social pedagogic approach for workforce training and education in England: a preliminary study*, London: University of London, Institute of Education, Thomas Coram Research Unit (available at http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/67/1/Social_pedagogic_approach_report.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).
- Cooper, P. and Johnson, S. (2007) 'Education: the views of adoptive parents', *Adoption & fostering*, vol 31, no 1, pp 21–27.
- Coghlan, M., Bergeron, C., White, K., Sharp, C., Morris, M. and Rutt, S. (2009) *Narrowing the gap in outcomes for young children through effective practices in the early years* (C4EO Early Years Knowledge Review1), London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (available at www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/earlyyears/default.aspx, accessed 16 July)
- Daniels, H., Cole, T., Sellman, E., Sutton, J., Visser, J. and Bedward, J. (2003) *Study of young people permanently excluded from school* (DfES research report 405), London:

DfES (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR405.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

Dearden, J. (2004) 'Resilience: a study of risk and protective factors from the perspective of young people with experience of local authority care', *Support for learning*, vol 19 no 4 pp187–193.

Department for Education and Employment and Department of Health (2000) *Guidance on the education of young people in public care*, London: DfEE and DoH (available at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/EDGUIDEMIG1120.pdf>, 12 November 2009).

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Statutory guidance on the duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004*, London: DfES.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009a) *Improving the educational attainment of children in care (looked-after children)*, London, DCSF (available at <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00523-2009.pdf>, accessed 21 April).

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009b) *Breaking the link between disadvantage and low attainment: everyone's business*, London, DCSF (available at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00357-2009.pdf> , accessed 17 June).

Desforges, C. with Abouchaar, A. (2003) *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: a literature review* (DfES research report 433), London: DfES.

Dobel-Ober, D., Brodie, I., Kent, T., Berridge, D. and Sinclair, R. (2006) *Taking care of education: final evaluation report: Derby*, Derby: Derby City Council (available at www.derby.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3D740570-BD32-47CD-BD1E-8E364F415502/0/GatsbyPhase2FinalDerby2006.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

England and Wales. Statutes (2004) *Children Act 2004. Chapter 31*, London: The Stationery Office.

Farrington, D., Gottfredson, D., Sherman, L. and Welsh, B. (2002) 'The Maryland Scientific Methods Scale', in Farrington, D., MacKenzie, D., Sherman, L. and Welsh, L. (eds) *Evidence-based crime prevention*, London: Routledge.

Fletcher-Campbell, F. and Archer, T. (2003) *Achievement at Key Stage 4 of young people in public care* (DfES research report 434), London: DfES (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR434.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

Fletcher-Campbell, F., Archer, T. and Tomlinson, K. (2003) *The role of the school in supporting the education of children in public care* (DfES research report 498), London: DfES (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR498.pdf, accessed 11

March 2009).

Gilligan, R. (2000) 'Adversity, resilience and young people: the protective value of positive school and spare time experiences', *Children & Society*, vol 14, no 1, pp 37–47.

Goddard, J. (2000) 'Research review: the education of looked-after children', *Child & family social work*, vol 5, no 1, pp 79–86.

Golding, K. (2002) 'The development and delivery of a support project for carers of children who are "looked-after"', *Clinical psychology*, vol 15, pp 6–9.

Gough, D. (2007) 'Weight of evidence: a framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of research', *Research papers in education*, vol 22, no 2, pp 213–228.

Great Britain. Statutes (2000) *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. Chapter 35*, London: HMSO.

Great Britain. Statutes (2008) *Children and Young Persons Act 2008. Chapter 23*, London: The Stationery Office.

Harker, R., Dobel-Ober, D., Berridge, D. and Sinclair, R. (2004) *Taking care of education: an evaluation of the education of looked-after children*, London: National Children's Bureau.

Hayden, C. (2005) 'More than a piece of paper?: Personal education plans and "looked-after" children in England', *Child & family social work*, vol 10, no 4, pp 343–352.

Heath, A., Colton, M. and Aldgate, J. (1994) 'Failure to escape: a longitudinal study of foster children's educational attainment', *British journal of social work*, vol 24, no 3, 241–260.

Hicks, L., Gibbs, I., Byford, S. and Weatherly, H. (2007) *Managing children's homes: developing effective leadership in small organizations*, London, Jessica Kingsley.

Jacklin, A., Robinson, C. and Torrance, H. (2006) 'When lack of data is data: do we really know who our looked-after children are?' *European journal of special needs education*, vol 21, no 1, pp 1–20.

Jackson, S. (1987) *The education of children in care*, Bristol: University of Bristol, School of Applied Social Studies.

Jackson, S., Ajayi, S. and Quigley, M. (2003) *By degrees: the first year. From care to university*, London: National Children's Bureau.

Jackson, S., Ajayi, S. and Quigley, M. (2005) *Going to university from care: report by the By Degrees Action Research Project*, London: University of London, Institute of Education.

McAuley, C. (2005) *Pathways and outcomes: a ten year follow up study of children who have experienced care*, Belfast: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

(available at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/pathways_outcomes.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

Morgan, R. (2007) 'Boarding school care', *Adoption & fostering*, vol 31, no 1, pp 100–105.

Morgan, R. (2009) *Life in children's homes: a report of children's experience by the Children's Rights Director for England*, London: Ofsted.

O'Sullivan, A. and Westerman, R. (2007) 'Closing the gap: investigating the barriers to educational achievement for looked-after children', *Adoption & fostering*, vol 31, no 1, pp 13–20.

Pears, K.C., Fisher, P.A. and Bronz, K.D. (2007) 'An intervention to promote social emotional school readiness in foster children: preliminary outcomes from a pilot study', *School psychology review*, vol 36, no 4, pp 665–673.

Social Exclusion Unit (2003) *A better education for children in care: Social Exclusion Unit report*, London: Social Exclusion Unit (available at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/SEU-Report.pdf.pdf>, accessed 11 March 2009).

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L. (2003) *Quality in qualitative evaluation: a framework for assessing research evidence. A quality framework*, London: Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit (available at www.gsr.gov.uk/downloads/evaluating_policy/a_quality_framework.pdf, accessed 11 December 2008).

Stanley, K. (2001) *Cold comfort: young separated refugees in England*, London: Save the Children.

Zetlin, A., Weinberg, L. and Kimm, C. (2004) 'Improving education outcomes for children in foster care: intervention by an education liaison', *Journal of education for students placed at risk*, vol 9, no 4, pp 421–429.

Zetlin, A.G., Weinberg, L.A., and Shea, N.M. (2006a) 'Improving education prospects for youth in foster care: the Education Liaison Model', *Intervention in school and clinic*, vol 41, no 5, pp 267–272.

Zetlin, A.G., Weinberg, L.A. and Shea, N.M. (2006b) 'Seeing the whole picture: views from diverse participants on barriers to educating foster youths', *Children & schools*, vol 28, no 3, pp 165–173.

Further reading

Abbott, D. (2000) *Disabled children and residential schools: a study of local authority policy and practice*, Bristol: University of Bristol, Norah Fry Research Centre.

Ahrens, K., Richardson, L., Lozano, P., Fan, M. and DuBois, D. (2007) '2: Foster care youth with adult mentors during adolescence have improved adult outcomes', *Journal of adolescent health*, vol 40, no 2, pp S3–S4.

Ainslie, S., Foster, R., Groves, J., Grime, K. and Woolhouse, C. (2007) 'Making children count: issues and challenges facing schools in implementing the Every Child Matters agenda', paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Institute of Education, University of London 5–8 September (available at www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/168639.doc, accessed 11 March 2009).

Bostock, L., Brodie, I., Clapton, J., Fish, S., Fisher, M., Morris, M., Kearney, P. and Rutter, D. (2009) *Increasing the number of care leavers in 'settled, safe accommodation'* (C4EO Vulnerable Children Scoping Review 3), London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (available at www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/files/c4eo_increasing_the_number_of_care_leavers.pdf, accessed 12 November).

Britton, M. (2008) *Re: changes to children's social care returns for 2009–10* (Letter to local authority information contacts in England 30 September), London: DCSF (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/pdf/2009_10%20new%20collection%20letter_final.pdf, accessed 5 March 2009).

Calder, A. and Cope, R. (2003). *Breaking barriers? Reaching the hardest to reach*, London: The Prince's Trust.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Children looked-after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2007* (statistical first release 27/07), London: DCSF (available at www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000741/index.shtml, accessed 5 March 2009).

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008a) *Children looked-after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2008* (statistical first release 23/08), London: DCSF (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000810/index.shtml, accessed 5 March 2009).

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008b) *Outcome Indicators for children looked-after: twelve months to 30 September 2007, England* (statistical first release 08/2008), London: DCSF (available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000785/index.shtml, accessed 9 March 2009).

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008c) *Strategic overview: Every Child Matters change for children* (available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/strategicoverview/, accessed 6 February 2009).

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Measuring progress at pupil, school and national levels*, London, DCSF (available at www.publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RIP-09-02.pdf, accessed 20 August).

Evans, L.D. (2001) 'Interactional models of learning disabilities: evidence from students entering foster care', *Psychology in the schools*, vol 38, no 4, pp 381–390.

Evans, L.D. (2004) 'Academic achievement of students in foster care: impeded or improved?' *Psychology in the schools*, vol 41, no 5, pp 527–535.

Francis, J. (2000) 'Investing in children's futures: enhancing the educational arrangements of 'looked-after' children and young people', *Child & family social work*, vol 5, no 1, pp 23–33.

Gilligan, R. (2007) 'Spare time activities for young people in care: what can they contribute to educational progress?' *Adoption & fostering*, vol 31, no 1, pp 92–99.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons (2007) *Care matters: time for change* (Cm. 7137), London: The Stationery Office.

Great Britain. Statutes (1989) *Children Act 1989. Chapter 41*, London: HMSO.

HM Inspectorate of Education (2008) *Count us in: improving the education of our looked-after children*, Livingston: HMIE.

Jackson S. (1989) 'Residential care and education', *Children & Society*, vol 2, no 4, pp 335–350.

Jones, L. and Lansdverk, J. (2006) 'Residential education: examining a new approach for improving outcomes for foster youth', *Children and youth services review*, vol 28, no 10, pp 1152–1168.

Maclean, K. and Gunion, M. (2003) 'Learning with care: the education of children looked-after away from home by local authorities in Scotland', *Adoption & fostering*, vol 27, no 2, pp 20–31.

Mallon, J. (2005) 'Academic underachievement and exclusion of people who have been looked-after in local authority care', *Research in post-compulsory education*, vol 10, no 1, pp 83–103.

McGill, P., Tennyson, A. and Cooper, V. (2006) 'Parents whose children with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour attend 52-week residential schools: their perceptions of services received and expectations of the future', *British journal of social work*, vol 36, no 4, pp 597–616.

Meltzer, H., Gatward, R., Corbin, T., Goodman, R. and Ford, T. (2003) *The mental health of young people looked-after by local authorities in England*, London: The Stationery Office (available at

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_4019442, accessed 9 March 2009).

Pecora, P.J., Kessler, R.C., O'Brien, K., White, C.R., Williams, J., Hiripi, E., English, D., White, J. and Herrick, M.A. (2006) 'Educational and employment outcomes of adults formerly placed in foster care: results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study', *Children and youth services review*, vol 28, no 12, pp 1459–1481.

Ridge, T. and Millar, J. (2000) 'Excluding children: autonomy, friendship and the experience of the care system', *Social policy & administration*, vol 34, no 2, pp 160–175.

Ritchie, A., Morrison, E. and Paterson, S. (2003) 'Care to learn? The educational experiences of children and young people who are looked-after', *Scottish journal of residential child care*, vol 2, no 2, pp 51–62.

Roy, P. and Rutter, M. (2006) 'Institutional care: associations between inattention and early reading performance', *Journal of child psychology & psychiatry & allied disciplines*, vol 47, no 5, pp 480–487.

Scottish Executive (2007) *Looked-after children & young people: we can and must do better*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive (available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/162790/0044282.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

Social Work Inspection Agency (2006) *Extraordinary lives: creating a positive future for looked-after children and young people in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Social Work Inspection Agency (available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/140731/0034643.pdf, accessed 11 March 2009).

Utting, W. (1997) *People like us: the report of the review of the safeguards for children living away from home*, London: The Stationery Office.

Whitemore, E., Ford, M. and Sack, W.H. (2003) 'Effectiveness of day treatment with Proctor Care for Young Children: a four-year follow-up', *Journal of community psychology*, vol 31, no 5, pp 459–468.

Appendix 1: Research review methods

The review includes literature identified by a

C4EO scoping study (Improving the educational outcomes of looked-after children and young people) as being relevant to the review questions. The scoping study used systematic searching of key databases and other sources to identify literature which was then screened and coded (see Appendices 2 and 3 for the parameters document and search strategy).

Apart from reference harvesting and investigation of the suggestions made by the Theme Advisory Group, no further searching for material other than that located by the scoping review was undertaken for this review. All coding took place on the basis of the full texts of documents.

The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to select literature of the greatest relevance and quality for the review. This entailed identifying:

- The items of greatest relevance to the review questions.
- The items that came closest to providing an ideal design to answer the review questions.
- The quality of the research methods, execution and reporting.

The team reviewed all priority items and summarised their findings in relation to the review questions. The reviewer also assessed the quality of the evidence in each case. In judging the quality of studies, the team was guided by principles established to assess quantitative research (Farrington *et al* 2002) and qualitative studies (Spencer *et al* 2003). In view of the applied nature of the review questions, issues of 'relevance' and 'fit' proved especially important.

The scoping study had generated a total of 68 items; the more stringent review process resulted in a sample of 23 items. This final sample was predominantly based on UK studies, which in turn can be attributed to the significance of the UK policy and practice context in answering the review questions. Almost all the final sample consisted of empirical studies, usually involving a mix of qualitative, survey, case study and secondary analysis. An overall weakness in the literature is the absence of experimental and comparative studies. With honourable exceptions, there is also very limited discussion of theoretical, methodological and analytical issues, even while researchers acknowledge the difficulties of research in this area.

Appendix 2: Scoping study process

The study began with the Theme Advisory Group (TAG)

– a group of experts in the policy, research and practice field of vulnerable (looked-after) children – establishing the key questions to be addressed and the parameters for the search (see Appendix 1). The scoping study used a broad range of sources to identify relevant material:

- searches of bibliographic databases
- searches of research project databases
- browsing relevant organisations' websites
- recommendations from the Theme Advisory Group.

See the Search strategy section below for the sources and strategy used.

The research team undertook an initial screening process of the search results, using record titles and abstracts (where available) to ensure the search results conformed to the search parameters and were relevant for answering the scoping study questions. Items were excluded if they were:

- not about looked-after children or care leavers, aged up to 25
- published before 2000
- not from a peer reviewed journal or report or not a key book
- not empirical research
- not relating to a study in the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand
- did not answer the scoping study questions
- a fuller report was published elsewhere
- could not be obtained in full text, either at all, or within the scoping study deadline
- duplicate records.

The inclusion/exclusion criteria are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The following criteria were applied sequentially from the top down:

Inclusion/ exclusion criteria		Guidance
1	EXCLUDE Date of publication before 2000	Published before 2000
2	EXCLUDE Publication type not peer reviewed journal or report	Exclude books, dissertation abstracts, trade magazines, policy (unless evaluated), guidance (unless evaluated) Include relevant reports, evaluated policy
3	EXCLUDE Location not UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, NZ	
4	EXCLUDE Population Not about looked-after children or care leavers, or their care	Upper age limit 25
5	EXCLUDE Research type Not empirical research	Exclude case study, vignette, opinion piece, commentary, or briefing
6	EXCLUDE Scope	Use if not excluded above but does not answer one of the questions
7	EXCLUDE insufficient details to identify reference	
8	EXCLUDE unable to retrieve	Covers records for which full text could not be obtained at all or not in time for this piece of work
9	EXCLUDE full study already reported	For studies where identical methodology and findings are reported in more than one record
10	INCLUDE	Not excluded by above
EXTRA EXCLUSION CRITERION for emotional behavioural priority questions where interventions involved	EXCLUDE Not intervention	Intervention is defined as a named, bounded, activity or set of activities with specific objectives that are assessed/evaluated in some way

Additional criteria were applied in relation to emotional behavioural priority sub-questions on interventions and the records re-screened. This served to define interventions more strictly as a specific activity with specified outcomes that concerned the emotional and behaviour health (EBH) of looked-after children and young people (LACYP). The papers included in Emotional behavioural priority sub-questions on interventions were also required to include some evaluation of outcomes, whether related to effectiveness, accessibility or acceptability: descriptive accounts were excluded as it was felt they did not contribute to our understanding of interventions. These measures were intended to narrow the focus and to exclude system-wide approaches (such as an account of introducing LACYP into a child welfare system). While system-wide approaches may concern the EBH of LAC and young people, they are not always linked directly to outcomes addressing emotional and behavioural difficulties and usually have a wide remit to improve the overall performance and accountability of the child welfare system. Policy was excluded unless evaluated. A proportion of records of doubtful relevance according to the available abstract/title were set aside for later examination.

Records from the searches that were screened as relevant according to title or abstract were then loaded into the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI)-Reviewer database. Full texts were retrieved for the second stage of screening, since the team considered that scoping required the use of full texts. All records screened for inclusion were sought. Inclusion/exclusion criteria were then applied to the full text articles. Approximately one third of retrieved items were excluded using full texts (see exclusion criteria above; see flow chart, below). 38 items could not be retrieved in full text within the scoping study deadline.

The content of the **rejected** records included those that focused on:

- adopted children
- policy
- overviews or briefings of the topic
- descriptions of interventions with no indication of outcomes.

The research team then assessed the remaining items and coded them in relation to the following:

- relevance to research question or questions
- country (UK, Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia or New Zealand)
- study type (including experimental study with comparison/control, non-experimental study and systematic review)
- main methods (including survey, interviews and focus groups, control trial, and literature review)
- intervention setting (including foster care, residential care, school, housing services or floating support)
- study population (including LACYP, care leavers, health, education, housing and education staff)

- cross-cutting issues (child poverty and safeguarding).

It was subsequently agreed that the term ‘intervention setting’ is an ambiguous, and therefore unhelpful, term. It can capture, for example, both the environmental space in which an intervention happens (such as a school meeting room) or the context in which the child(ren) are placed. Many studies don’t report either and therefore, the scoping review does not analyse the responses checked on this section of the coding form.

An agreed part of the scoping methodology was to undertake independent coding quality assurance checks on 10 per cent of the references. References were selected randomly from Endnote listings of papers allocated to each sub-question. In addition, all studies excluded on reading the full text were checked (ie reviewed by at least two people). The checks on coding demonstrated a high degree of consistency and reliability in the use of the coding tool. With minor exceptions (such as varied understanding of ‘intervention setting’: see above), the result of double-coding was principally to add to the recording of methodological detail.

The check on exclusions at full text again demonstrated the consistent and reliable use of scoping criteria, and did not reveal any systematic bias in the decisions. In three cases, an exclusion decision was subject to further discussion before being resolved.

The process is summarised in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Summary of different stages

	Stage	Material used
1	Question setting	
2	Searching, browsing and recommendations to identify relevant material	
3	Initial screening using inclusion/exclusion criteria	Using title and abstract
4	Included studies entered into EPPI Reviewer software	
5	Second stage screening	Using full paper
6	Final included studies coded	Using full paper
7	QA on 10% of coded papers	Full paper
8	Assessment of content and scope of included papers	Full paper

Please see Table 10 for a full copy of the coding tool.

The numbers of items found by the initial search, and subsequently selected, can be found in the following table. The three columns represent:

- items found in the initial searches
- items selected at first screening for further consideration (those complying with the search parameters after the removal of duplicates)

- items considered relevant to the study at second screening by a researcher who had read the abstract and/or accessed the full document.

Table 8. Overview of searches for all topics

Source	Items found ¹	Items selected for consideration	Items identified as relevant to this theme
Databases			
Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)	3,508	128	7
Australian Society and Family Abstracts	59	52	2
British Education Index (BEI)	443	291	7
ChildData	8,576	977	57
Cinahl	3,889	576	29
Cochrane Library	71	10	1
EMBASE	2,929	277	2
Google	n/a	1	1
HMIC	2,615	154	0
IBSS	900	47	6
Medline	3,325	235	15
PsycInfo	4,539	908	26
Social Care Online	7,673	490	35
Social Services Abstracts	3,114	257	6
Social Work Abstracts	2,044	187	3
Zetoc	1,159	4	1

¹ Where n/a is indicated, this is because these resources were browsed rather than searched. Initial output was publication date from the beginning of 1990, this was restricted to the start of 2000 at first screening.

Internet databases/portals (also see Search strategy section)			
Barnardos	n/a	1	1
British Library Welfare Reform on the Web	n/a	n/a	n/a
CERUKplus	57	47	1
INTUTE	n/a	n/a	n/a
INVOLVE	n/a	n/a	n/a
JSTOR	n/a	n/a	n/a
Research Register for Social Care	Incorporated in Social Care Online search		
Reference harvest “Taking care of education”	n/a	9	2
TAG recommendations (including texts and organisations)	n/a	56	8

NB duplicate removal was ongoing throughout the process.

Search strategy

Total number of relevant records by question

Whole priority: Improving educational outcomes: 68

By question:

Services/interventions (effectiveness, acceptable, accessible): 36

LACYP's views: 28

Attitudes and skills of carers and families: 17

Note: studies may be coded as relevant to more than one priority.

Table 9. Overview of search output for Improving educational outcomes

Source	Items identified as relevant to this priority
Database	
Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)	3
Australian Society and Family Abstracts	0
British Education Index (BEI)	6
ChildData	16
Cinahl	5
Cochrane Library	0
EMBASE	1
HMIC	0
Google	1
IBSS	1
Medline	1
PsycInfo	12
Social Care Online	11
Social Services Abstracts	2
Social Work Abstracts	0
Zetoc	1
Reference harvest: "Taking care of education"	2
TAG recommendations (including texts and organisations)	4

Note: as this was derived from aggregated output of all searches, no columns are given for initial output.

The following section provides information on the keywords and search strategy for each database and web source searched as part of the scoping study. Searching was carried out by the SCIE social care information specialist.

The list of databases and sources to be searched included the databases recommended for systematic reviews, 40 organisations' databases and subject portals identified by a SCIE scope and recommendations from TAG members. The general approach was:

- A detailed search on terms relevant to the looked-after children population was carried out across 15 databases. The search strategy was translated for each database and the output was de-duplicated, creating a database of approximately 19,000 records.
- Topic specific searches were carried out on this combined population database, to create a second database.
- References obtained by recommendation and browsing were added to these records, creating a database of approximately 5,000 records.
- All these records were screened for relevance to all the questions. This approach dealt with significant overlap in topic relevance between the priorities.

All searches were limited to the publication years 2000 to 2008, in English language only. The keywords used in the searches, together with a brief description of each of the databases searched, are outlined below. The following conventions have been used: (ft) denotes that free-text search terms were used and * denotes a truncation of terms. (+NT) denotes that narrower subject terms have been included (where available).

Stage 1: Compiling the looked-after children population set

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)

(searched via CSA Illumina 27/08/08)

ASSIA is an index of articles from over 500 international English language social science journals.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| #1 | looked-after child* (ft) | #11 | care orders |
| #2 | child* in care (ft) | #12 | special guardianship (ft) |
| #3 | foster care (+NT) | #13 | leaving care (ft) |
| #4 | adoption (+NT) | #14 | care leaver* |
| #5 | kinship care (ft) | #15 | secure accommodation |
| #6 | children (+NT) or adolescents (+NT) or young people (+NT) | #16 | unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #7 | residential care (+NT) | #17 | placement (ft) and #6 |
| #8 | #6 and #7 | #18 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #8 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #9 | group homes (+NT) | | |
| #10 | #6 and #9 | | |

Australian Family and Society Abstracts

(searched via Informit 13/11/08)

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| #1 | child* (ft) | #4 | residential childcare |
| #2 | adopt* (ft) or foster* (ft) | #5 | looked-after children |
| #3 | #1 and #2 | #6 | #3 or #4 or #5 |

British Education Index (BEI)

(searched via Dialog 11/11/08)

BEI provides information on research, policy and practice in education and training in the UK. Sources include over 300 journals, mostly published in the UK, plus other material including reports, series and conference papers.

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| #1 | looked-after children (ft) | #10 | residential care and (child* (ft) or children) |
| #2 | child* looked-after (ft) | #11 | care order* (ft) |
| #3 | child* in care (ft) | #12 | special guardian* (ft) |
| #4 | orphan* (ft) | #13 | care leav* (ft) |
| #5 | orphans | #14 | leav* care (ft) |
| #6 | adopted children | #15 | secure accommodation (ft) |
| #7 | foster (ft) | #16 | unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #8 | foster care or foster children | | |
| #9 | residential child care (ft) | | |

Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people

- #17 placement* (ft) and (child* (ft) or children)
- #18 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or

#12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17

Campbell Collaboration C2 Library

(searched 14/10/08)

The Campbell Collaboration Library of Systematic Reviews contains systematic reviews and review protocols in the areas of education, criminal justice and social welfare. The Education and Social Welfare sections were browsed but no relevant records were found.

CERUK Plus

(searched 11/11/08)

The CERUK Plus database provides access to information about current and recently completed research, PhD level work and practitioner research in the field of education and children's services.

- #1 (looked-after children) or (care leavers)

ChildData

(searched via National Children's Bureau Inmagic interface, 01/09/08)

ChildData is the National Children's Bureau database, containing details of around 35,000 books, reports and journal articles about children and young people.

- | | |
|--|---|
| #1 children in care | #11 care orders |
| #2 looked-after child* (ft) | #12 special guardianship |
| #3 child* looked-after (ft) | #13 leaving care |
| #4 orphans | #16 care leaver* (ft) |
| #5 foster care or foster carers or foster children | #17 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #6 kinship care | #18 placement |
| #7 adoption or adopted children | #19 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 |
| #8 residential care or residential care staff | |
| #9 group home* (ft) | |
| #10 children's homes | |

Cochrane Library

(searched via Wiley Interscience 09/09/08)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| #1 child, institutionalized (+NT) | #7 kinship care (ft) |
| #2 looked-after child* (ft) | #8 adoption (+NT) |
| #3 child* in care (ft) | #9 residential child care (ft) |
| #4 child, orphaned | #10 group homes (+NT) |
| #5 orphanages | #11 care order* (ft) |
| #6 foster home care | #12 special guardianship (ft) |

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| #13 care leaver* (ft) | #16 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 |
| #14 secure accommodation (ft) | or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or |
| #15 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) | #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 |

Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (Cinahl Plus)

(searched via EBSCO Host 29/08/08)

CINAHL Plus provides indexing for 3,802 journals from the fields of nursing and allied health.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| #1 looked-after child* (ft) | #9 leaving care (ft) |
| #2 child* in care (ft) | #10 care leaver* (ft) |
| #3 "orphans and orphanages" (+NT) | #11 secure accommodation (ft) |
| #4 foster home care (+NT) | #12 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #5 kinship care (ft) | #13 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 |
| #6 adoption | or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or |
| #7 residential child care (ft) | #12 |
| #8 special guardianship (ft) | |

EMBASE

(searched via Ovid SP 05/09/08)

The Excerpta Medica database (EMBASE) is a major biomedical and pharmaceutical database. There is selective coverage for nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, psychology, and alternative medicine.

- | | |
|---|--|
| #1 looked-after child* (ft) | #9 care orders (ft) |
| #2 child* in care (ft) | #10 special guardianship (ft) |
| #3 orphanage (+NT) | #11 leaving care (ft) |
| #4 foster care (+NT) | #12 care leaver* (ft) |
| #5 adoption (+NT) or adopted child (+NT) | #13 secure accommodation (ft) |
| #6 residential home (+NT) and (child* or adolescen* (ft)) | #14 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #7 group homes (ft) and (child* or adolescen* (ft)) | #15 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 |
| #8 children's homes (ft) | or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or |
| | #12 or #13 or #14 |

Health Management Information Consortium (HMIC)

(searched via Ovid SP 03/09/08)

The Health Management Information Consortium (HMIC) database is a compilation of data from two sources, the Department of Health's Library and Information Services and King's Fund Information and Library Service. Topic coverage is on health services.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| #1 | looked-after child* (ft) | #11 | care orders |
| #2 | child* in care (ft) | #12 | special guardianship (ft) |
| #3 | children in care | #13 | former children in care or care leavers |
| #4 | orphans | #14 | secure accommodation |
| #5 | disabilities (+NT) | #15 | unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #6 | (foster care or foster children or foster parents) (+NT) | #16 | placement (ft) and children (+NT) |
| #7 | kinship care (ft) | #17 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 |
| #8 | (adoption or adopted children or adoptive parents) (+NT) | | |
| #9 | residential child care (+NT) | | |
| #10 | children's homes (ft) | | |

International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)

(searched via EBSCO Host, 05/09/08)

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----|--|
| #1 | looked-after child* (ft) | #10 | care order* (ft) |
| #2 | children in care | #11 | special guardianship (ft) |
| #3 | orphanages | #12 | leaving care (ft) |
| #4 | orphans | #13 | care leaver* (ft) |
| #5 | (foster care or foster child* or foster parent) (ft) | #14 | secure accommodation |
| #6 | kinship care (ft) | #15 | unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #7 | adopted children | #16 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 |
| #8 | residential child care (ft) | | |
| #9 | children's homes (ft) | | |

JSTOR

(searched 14/11/08)

JSTOR is an international archive of journal articles and 'grey' literature.

- | | |
|----|-----------------------|
| #1 | children in care (ft) |
|----|-----------------------|

Medline

(searched via Ovid SP 27/08/08)

MEDLINE is the primary source of international literature on biomedicine and health care.

- #1 looked-after children (ft)
- #2 child* in care (ft)
- #3 looked-after child* (ft)
- #4 child, orphaned (+NT)
- #5 orphanages (+NT)
- #6 foster home care (+NT)
- #7 kinship care (ft)
- #8 adoption (+NT)
- #9 residential child care (ft)
- #10 special guardianship (ft)
- #11 leaving care (ft)
- #12 secure accommodation (ft)
- #13 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft)
- #14 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13
- #15 child (+NT) or adolescent
- #16 group homes (+NT)
- #17 #15 and #16
- #18 #14 or #17

PsycInfo

(searched via Ovid SP 05/09/08)

PsycInfo contains more than 2.5 million records on psychological and behavioural science.

- | | |
|---|--|
| #1 looked-after child* (ft) | #12 leaving care (ft) |
| #2 child* in care (ft) | #13 care leaver* (ft) |
| #3 orphans (+NT) | #14 secure accommodation (ft) |
| #4 orphanages (+NT) | #15 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft) |
| #5 foster children (+NT) or foster care (+NT) or foster parents (+NT) | #16 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 |
| #6 kinship care (ft) | #17 child (+NT) or adolescent |
| #7 adoption (child) (+NT) | #18 group homes (+NT) |
| #8 adopted children (+NT) | #19 #17 and #18 |
| #9 residential child care (ft) | #20 #16 or #19 |
| #10 care orders (ft) | |
| #11 special guardianship (ft) | |

Social Care Online

(searched 21/08/08)

Social Care Online is the Social Care Institute for Excellence's database covering an extensive range of information and research on all aspects of social care. Content is drawn from a range of sources including journal articles, websites, research reviews, legislation and government documents and knowledge of people who use services.

- #1 looked-after children
- #2 children looked-after (ft)
- #3 child* in care (ft)
- #4 foster care (+NT)
- #5 foster children
- #6 adoption (+NT)
- #7 adopted children
- #8 residential child care
- #9 care orders
- #10 special guardianship
- #11 leaving care
- #12 care leaver* (ft)
- #13 secure accommodation and (children or young people)
- #14 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft)
- #15 placement and (children or young people)
- #16 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15

Social Services Abstracts

(searched via CSA Illumina 02/09/08)

Social Services Abstracts is an international database covering social work, social welfare and social policy.

- #1 looked-after child* (ft)
- #2 child* in care (ft)
- #3 orphans
- #4 foster care or foster children
- #5 adoption (+NT)
- #6 adopted children (+NT)
- #7 residential care (ft) and (children (+NT))

- #8 children's homes (ft)
- #9 special guardianship (ft)
- #10 care leaver* (ft)
- #11 secure accommodation (ft)
- #12 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft)
- #13 placement and (child (+NT))
- #14 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13

Social Work Abstracts

(searched via Ovid SP 03/09/08)

Social Work Abstracts covers material published in primarily US-based journals with social work relevance.

- #1 looked-after child* (ft)
- #2 child* in care (ft)
- #3 orphan* (ft)
- #4 foster* (ft)
- #5 kinship care (ft)
- #6 adoption (ft)
- #7 residential child care (ft)
- #8 children's homes (ft)
- #9 care orders (ft)
- #10 special guardianship (ft)
- #11 care leaver* (ft)
- #12 leaving care(ft)
- #13 secure accommodation (ft)
- #14 unaccompanied asylum seeking child* (ft)
- #15 placement and (child* (ft))
- #16 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15

Zetoc

(searched via British Library 03/09/08)

Zetoc provides access to the British Library's electronic table of contents of journals and conference proceedings. This search interface has quite limited functionality.

- #1 looked-after children (ft)
- #2 foster care (ft) and health (ft)
- #3 adopted children (ft) and health (ft)
- #4 residential child care (ft)
- #5 children's homes (ft)
- #6 special guardianship (ft)
- #7 care leaver (ft)
- #8 care leavers (ft)
- #9 secure accommodation (ft)
- #10 placement (ft) and children (ft) and care (ft)
- #11 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10

Search output from each database was combined (using OR) in an EndNote library, which was subsequently searched for each priority. The EndNote library was produced from the above references on 05/12/08.

Stage 2: Topic-specific searches

(All later aggregated for screening for all priorities, due to overlap in relevance.)

Education priority

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|----------------------|
| #1 | school* (ft) | #4 | pupil* (ft) |
| #2 | education* (ft) | #5 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 |
| #3 | learning (ft) | | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Educational outcomes and positive school experiences set

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #1 | achievement* (ft) | #14 | friend* (ft) |
| #2 | qualification* (ft) | #15 | career* (ft) |
| #3 | examin* (ft) | #16 | occupation* (ft) |
| #4 | key stage* (ft) | #17 | job* (ft) |
| #5 | college* (ft) | #18 | employ* (ft) |
| #6 | university (ft) | #19 | citizen* (ft) |
| #7 | degree* (ft) | #20 | school refusal (ft) |
| #8 | attendance (ft) | #21 | school phobia (ft) |
| #9 | truan* (ft) | #22 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #10 | stability (ft) | | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #11 | dropout* (ft) | | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #12 | expulsion* (ft) | | or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 |
| #13 | exclu* (ft) | | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Views set

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|----------------------------|
| #1 | opinion* (ft) | #4 | listen* (ft) |
| #2 | view* (ft) | #5 | voice* (ft) |
| #3 | feedback (ft) | #6 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 |

This output was used to answer the question on LACYP's views on educational outcomes.

The education set was searched using the following terms:

Educational policy and interventions set

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| #1 | virtual school head* (ft) | #9 | education at home (ft) |
| #2 | education support (ft) | #10 | guidance (ft) |
| #3 | out of school hours learning (ft) | #11 | policy |
| #4 | specialist* (ft) | #12 | green paper* (ft) |
| #5 | designated teacher* (ft) | #13 | white paper* (ft) |
| #6 | club* (ft) | #14 | Every Child Matters (ft) |
| #7 | personal education plan* (ft) | #15 | Children's Act |
| #8 | mentor* (ft) | #16 | Care Matters (ft) |

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| #17 educational psychologist* (ft) | #21 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #18 mental health professional* (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #19 camhs (ft) | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #20 achievement ceremon* (ft) | or #18 or #19 or #20 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Acceptability, accessibility and effectiveness set

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| #1 acceptab* (ft) | #11 outcomes (ft) |
| #2 accessib* (ft) | #12 evaluat* (ft) |
| #3 satisfaction (ft) | #13 making a difference (ft) |
| #4 service uptake (ft) | #14 success* (ft) |
| #5 service use (ft) | #15 improvement (ft) |
| #6 engage* (ft) | #16 implementation (ft) |
| #7 involv* (ft) | #17 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #8 participat* (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #9 effective* (ft) | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 |
| #10 What works (ft) | |

This output was used to answer the question on the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions.

The education set was searched using the following terms:

Foster, residential and kinship carers and birth families

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| #1 carer* (ft) | #6 mother* (ft) |
| #2 worker* (ft) | #7 father* (ft) |
| #3 assistant* (ft) | #8 parent* (ft) |
| #4 guardian* (ft) | #9 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #5 family (ft) | #7 or #8 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Attitudes, skills, aptitudes and behaviours set

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| #1 attitude* (ft) | #10 promote (ft) |
| #2 skill* (ft) | #11 help* (ft) |
| #3 abilit* (ft) | #12 assist* (ft) |
| #4 behaviour* (ft) | #13 facilitate (ft) |
| #5 behavior* (ft) | #14 value (ft) |
| #6 encourage* (ft) | #15 engage* (ft) |
| #7 supportive (ft) | #16 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #8 supporting (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #9 empathy (ft) | or #13 or #14 or #15 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Training and support for above behaviours set

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| #1 training (ft) | #3 competen* (ft) |
| #2 support* (ft) | #4 regist* (ft) |

- #5 counselling (ft)
- #6 assess* (ft)
- #7 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Quantitative, correlate set

- #1 quantitative (ft)
- #2 correlate* (ft)
- #3 effective* (ft)
- #4 statistic* (ft)
- #5 cohort* (ft)
- #6 percentage (ft)
- #7 significant difference (ft)
- #8 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7

The output from this set was used to answer the question on the contribution of carers and birth families, and interventions to support them.

Emotional/behavioural health priority

Population terms EndNote library above was searched using the following terms:

Emotional/behavioural health set

- #1 children's centre* (ft)
- #2 family centre* (ft)
- #3 confiden* (ft)
- #4 esteem (ft)
- #5 grie* (ft)
- #6 happy (ft)
- #7 happiness (ft)
- #8 emotion* (ft)
- #9 self control (ft)
- #10 mental* (ft)
- #11 qaly (ft)
- #12 quality of life (ft)
- #13 resilen* (ft)
- #14 respect (ft)
- #15 wellbeing (ft)
- #16 antisocial (ft)
- #17 anxi* (ft)
- #18 attach* (ft)
- #19 behav* (ft)
- #20 bereav* (ft)
- #21 bully* (ft)
- #22 conduct (ft)
- #23 cortisol (ft)
- #24 depress* (ft)
- #25 hyperactiv* (ft)
- #26 relationship* (ft)
- #27 risk taking (ft)
- #28 self harm (ft)
- #29 stress (ft)
- #30 suicide (ft)
- #31 personality disorder* (ft)
- #32 ADHD (ft)
- #33 buddy (ft)
- #34 mentor* (ft)
- #35 counsellor* (ft)
- #36 psych* (ft)
- #37 advoca* (ft)
- #38 therap* (ft)
- #39 support worker* (ft)
- #40 key worker* (ft)
- #41 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20# or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Positive emotional and behavioural health set

- #1 confiden* (ft)
- #2 esteem (ft)

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #6 | happy (ft) | #15 | wellbeing (ft) |
| #7 | happiness (ft) | #16 | feeling good (ft) |
| #9 | self control (ft) | #17 | feel good (ft) |
| #11 | qaly (ft) | #18 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #12 | quality of life (ft) | | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #13 | resilen* (ft) | | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #14 | respect (ft) | | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Views set

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|----------------------------|
| #1 | opinion* (ft) | #4 | listen* (ft) |
| #2 | view* (ft) | #5 | voice* (ft) |
| #3 | feedback (ft) | #6 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 |

This output was used to answer the question on LACYP's views on emotional and behavioural health

The emotional/behavioural health set was searched using the following terms:

Emotional/behavioural health policy and interventions set

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #1 | advoca* (ft) | #14 | Healthy Care (ft) |
| #2 | mentor* (ft) | #15 | mental health professional* (ft) |
| #3 | counsell* (ft) | #19 | camhs (ft) |
| #4 | therap* (ft) | #20 | achievement ceremon* (ft) |
| #5 | dedicated (ft) | #21 | guidance (ft) |
| #6 | specialist (ft) | #22 | educational psychologist* (ft) |
| #7 | policy (ft) | #23 | psychiatrist* (ft) |
| #8 | legislation (ft) | #24 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #9 | green paper (ft) | | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #10 | white paper (ft) | | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #11 | Every Child Matters (ft) | | or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 |
| #12 | Children's Act | | or #23 |
| #13 | secure attachment (ft) | | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Acceptability, accessibility and effectiveness set

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #1 | acceptab* (ft) | #11 | outcomes (ft) |
| #2 | accessib* (ft) | #12 | evaluat* (ft) |
| #3 | satisfaction (ft) | #13 | making a difference (ft) |
| #4 | service uptake (ft) | #14 | success* (ft) |
| #5 | service use (ft) | #15 | improvement (ft) |
| #6 | engage* (ft) | #16 | implementation (ft) |
| #7 | involv* (ft) | #17 | #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #8 | participat* (ft) | | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #9 | effective* (ft) | | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 |
| #10 | What works (ft) | | |

This output was used to answer the question on the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions.

The emotional/behavioural health set was searched using the following terms:

Foster, residential and kinship carers and birth families set

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| #1 carer* (ft) | #6 mother* (ft) |
| #2 worker* (ft) | #7 father* (ft) |
| #3 assistant* (ft) | #8 parent* (ft) |
| #4 guardian* (ft) | #9 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 |
| #5 family (ft) | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Attitudes, skills, aptitudes and behaviours set

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| #1 attitude* (ft) | #13 facilitate (ft) |
| #2 skill* (ft) | #14 value (ft) |
| #3 abilit* (ft) | #15 engage* (ft) |
| #4 behaviour* (ft) | #16 bond (ft) |
| #5 behavior* (ft) | #17 sympath* (ft) |
| #6 encourage* (ft) | #18 warmth (ft) |
| #7 supportive (ft) | #19 love (ft) |
| #8 supporting (ft) | #20 belonging (ft) |
| #9 empathy (ft) | #21 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 |
| #10 promote (ft) | |
| #11 help* (ft) | |
| #12 assist* (ft) | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Training and support for above behaviours set

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| #1 training (ft) | #5 counselling (ft) |
| #2 support* (ft) | #6 assess* (ft) |
| #3 competen* (ft) | #7 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 |
| #4 regist* (ft) | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Quantitative, correlate set

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| #1 quantitative (ft) | #6 percentage (ft) |
| #2 correlate* (ft) | #7 significant difference (ft) |
| #3 effective* (ft) | #8 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 |
| #4 statistic* (ft) | |
| #5 cohort* (ft) | |

This output was used to answer the question on the contribution of carers and birth families, and interventions to support them.

Safe, settled accommodation priority

Population terms EndNote library above was searched using the following terms:

Accommodation set

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| #1 accommodation (ft) | #8 independent living (ft) |
| #2 housing (ft) | #9 floating support (ft) |
| #3 homeless* (ft) | #10 tenan* (ft) |
| #4 flat* (ft) | #11 B&B (ft) |
| #5 bedsit* (ft) | #12 bed and breakfast (ft) |
| #6 lodging* (ft) | #13 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #7 hostel* (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Safe, settled set

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| #1 safe* (ft) | #4 permanen* (ft) |
| #2 settled (ft) | #5 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 |
| #3 secur* (ft) | |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Views set

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| #1 opinion* (ft) | #4 listen* (ft) |
| #2 view* (ft) | #5 voice* (ft) |
| #3 feedback (ft) | #6 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 |

This output was used to answer the question on LACYP's views on emotional and behavioural health

The accommodation set was searched using the following terms:

Not in settled accommodation set

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| #1 unsafe (ft) | #7 lost (ft) |
| #2 unsettled (ft) | #8 rough sleep* (ft) |
| #3 temporary (ft) | #9 on the street* (ft) |
| #4 homeless* (ft) | #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #5 out of touch (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 |
| #6 not in contact (ft) | |

This output was used to answer the question on those not in suitable accommodation by age 19.

The accommodation set was searched using the following terms:

Accommodation policy and interventions set

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| #1 floating support (ft) | #3 housing service* (ft) |
| #2 housing support (ft) | #4 housing officer* (ft) |

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| #5 benefit* (ft) | #15 Children (Leaving Care) Act (ft) |
| #6 credit* (ft) | #16 affordable (ft) |
| #7 grant* (ft) | #17 low cost (ft) |
| #8 fund* (ft) | #18 guidance (ft) |
| #9 dedicated | #19 joint working (ft) |
| #10 specialist* (ft) | #20 Homelessness Act (ft) |
| #11 policy | #21 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #12 legislation | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #13 green paper (ft) | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 |
| #14 white paper (ft) | or #18 or #19 or #20 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Acceptability, accessibility and effectiveness set

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| #1 acceptab* (ft) | #11 outcomes (ft) |
| #2 accessib* (ft) | #12 evaluat* (ft) |
| #3 satisfaction (ft) | #13 making a difference (ft) |
| #4 service uptake (ft) | #14 success* (ft) |
| #5 service use (ft) | #15 improvement (ft) |
| #6 engage* (ft) | #16 implementation (ft) |
| #7 involv* (ft) | #17 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #8 participat* (ft) | #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 |
| #9 effective* (ft) | or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 |
| #10 What works (ft) | |

This output was used to answer the question on the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions

The emotional/behavioural health set was searched using the following terms:

Foster, residential and kinship carers and birth families

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| #1 carer* (ft) | #6 mother* (ft) |
| #2 worker* (ft) | #7 father* (ft) |
| #3 assistant* (ft) | #8 parent* (ft) |
| #4 guardian* (ft) | #9 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or |
| #5 family (ft) | #7 or #8 |

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Attitudes, skills, aptitudes and behaviours set

- #1 attitude* (ft)
- #2 skill* (ft)
- #3 abilit* (ft)
- #4 behaviour* (ft)
- #5 behavior* (ft)
- #6 encourage* (ft)
- #7 supportive (ft)
- #8 supporting (ft)
- #9 empathy (ft)
- #10 promote (ft)
- #11 help* (ft)
- #12 assist* (ft)
- #13 facilitate (ft)
- #14 value (ft)
- #15 engage* (ft)
- #16 financ* (ft)
- #17 fund* (ft)
- #18 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Training and support for above behaviours set

- #1 training (ft)
- #2 support* (ft)
- #3 competen* (ft)
- #4 regist* (ft)
- #5 counselling (ft)
- #6 assess* (ft)
- #7 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6

The output from this set was searched using the following terms:

Quantitative, correlate set

- #1 quantitative (ft)
- #2 correlate* (ft)
- #3 effective* (ft)
- #4 statistic* (ft)
- #5 cohort* (ft)
- #6 percentage (ft)
- #7 significant difference (ft)
- #8 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7

This output was used to answer the question on the contribution of carers and birth families, and interventions to support them.

For all priorities

Literature suggestions from Theme Advisory Group and other experts

These were incorporated into the pool of references that were screened.

Policy, government agencies, academic and third sector websites

The following websites were browsed and searched for each priority, and relevant documents incorporated in the screening EndNote libraries. These websites included government departments and agencies, academic centres and third-sector organisations.

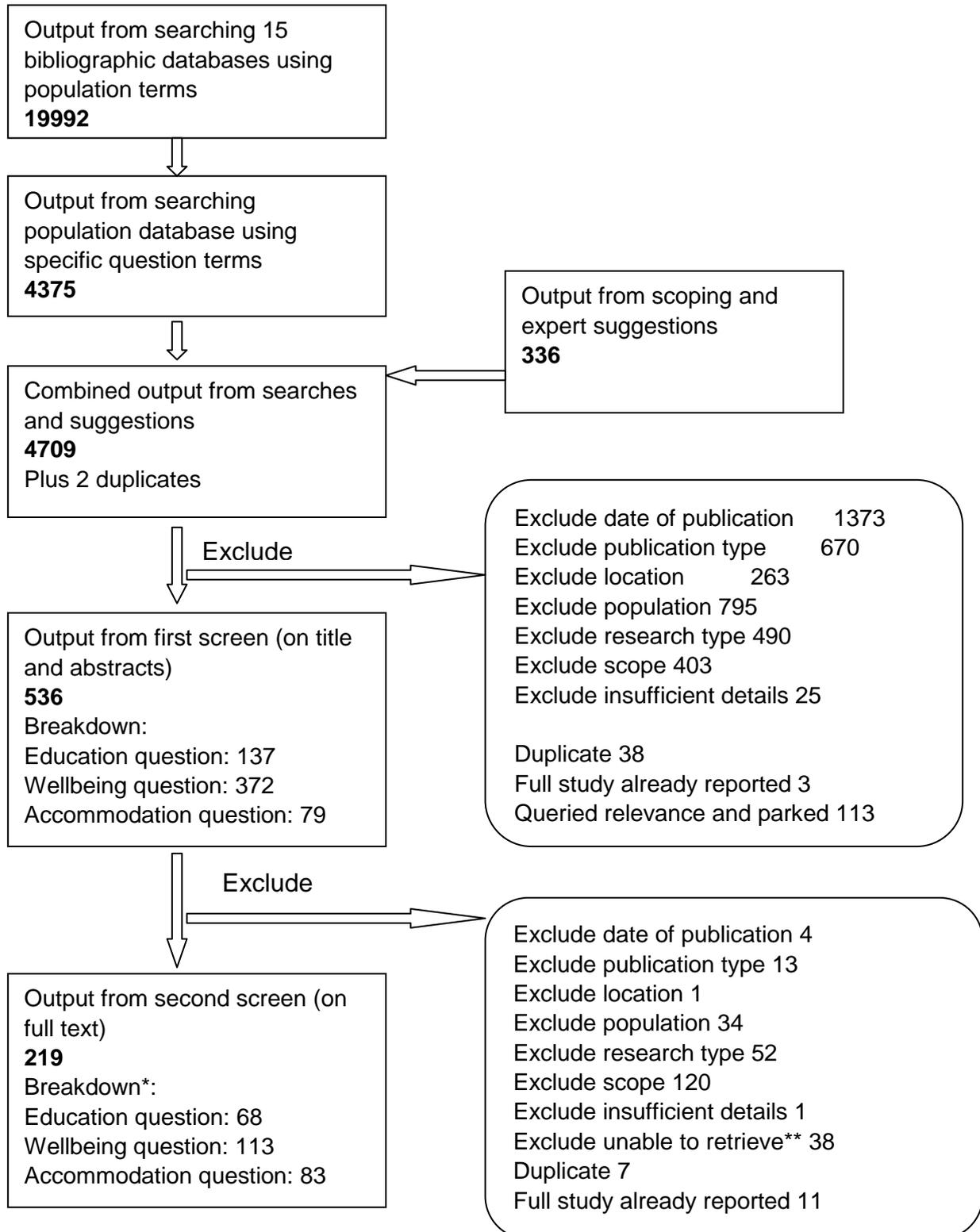
Output figures were not compiled for each website because this work was carried out during background preparation for this project.

Organisation	URL
4 Nations Child Policy Network	www.childpolicy.org.uk/
A National Voice	www.anationalvoice.org/
Barnardo's	www.barnardos.org.uk/
British Association for Adoption & Fostering	www.baaf.org.uk/
Care Services Improvement Partnership Knowledge Community	http://kc.csip.org.uk/
Caspari Foundation	www.caspari.org.uk/
Centre for Policy Studies	www.cps.org.uk/
Connexions Direct	www.connexions-direct.com/
DEMOS	www.demos.co.uk/
Department for Children, Schools and Families	www.dcsf.gov.uk/
Department of Health	www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm
Evidence Network	www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/evidence
Government Social Research	www.gsr.gov.uk/
Howard League for Penal Reform	www.howardleague.org/
Intute	www.intute.ac.uk/
INVOLVE	www.invo.org.uk/
Institute for Public Policy Research	www.ippr.org.uk/
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	www.jrf.org.uk/
Kings' Fund	www.kingsfund.org.uk/
Local Government Analysis and Research	www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=1036233
Mental Health Foundation	www.mentalhealth.org.uk/
Nacro	www.nacro.org.uk/
National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care	www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?sve=934
National Centre for Social Research (NATCEN)	www.natcen.ac.uk/

National Children's Bureau	www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp
National Library for Health	www.library.nhs.uk/
Office for National Statistics	www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp
NCVCCO (Children England)	www.ncvcco.org/
National Foundation for Educational Research	www.nfer.ac.uk/index.cfm
National Youth Agency	www.nya.org.uk/
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People	www.niccy.org/
Personal Social Services Research Unit	www.pssru.ac.uk/
Prison Reform Trust	www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/
Promising Practices Network	www.promisingpractices.net/
Research in Practice	www.rip.org.uk/
Restorative Justice Consortium	www.restorativejustice.org.uk/
Rethink	www.rethink.org/
What Works for Children	www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk/
York Systematic Reviews in Social Policy and Social Care	www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/srspsc/index.htm
Young Minds	www.youngminds.org.uk/

Figure 15. Literature flow chart

Note: removal of duplicate references took place throughout; referral between priorities took place at second screening.



Notes: * includes referrals from other priorities

** includes material which could not be obtained at all as well as records which could not be obtained in time for this piece of work.

Appendix 3: Parameters document

1.C4EO Theme 3 Vulnerable Children

2. Priority

3.1 Improving the educational outcomes of looked-after children and young people (LACYP)

3. Context for this priority

The recent narrowing in the gap between the educational attainment of LACYP and other CYP, has begun to increase again largely due to improvements in the educational achievements of children in the non-looked-after population. Educational attainment is a key indicator of outcomes identified by Every Child Matters (ECM), enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, stay safe and achieve economic well-being as well as future health experiences. Improving the educational attainment of LACYP is therefore at the forefront of government policy initiatives, such as piloting virtual schools heads as part of the Care Matters implementation. It should be noted that the wider educational literature highlights that socio-economic risk factors, such as poverty and social class, linked with family breakdown and admission to care also predict low educational achievement (Berridge 2008). Where information exists from young people themselves, while recognising that educational difficulties often predate coming into care, they emphasise that LACYP should be encouraged to achieve regardless of their circumstances (A National Voice 2007).

4. Main review questions¹ to be addressed in this scoping study (no more than five; preferably fewer)

Overall question:

What do we know about how to improve the educational outcomes of LACYP?

Sub-questions:

- 1. What are LACYP's views on what constitutes educational outcomes and positive school experiences and how do they compare with those of policy makers, teachers, social workers and other service providers?**
- 2. What do we know about the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of policies, services and interventions initiated by central, regional and local government and the independent sector for LACYP?**
- 3. What do we know about the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of school-initiated (if not -based) policies and interventions?**
- 4. What do we know about the contribution made to the educational outcomes of LACYP by the attitudes, skills and abilities of foster, residential and kinship carers and birth families and interventions to support their contribution?**

Which cross-cutting issues should be included? (**Child poverty; safeguarding; equality and diversity; disability; workforce development; change management; leadership; learning organisations**)? Please specify the review questions for cross-cutting issues in this scope, and please keep these limited in number.

Child poverty

Safeguarding

Equality and diversity

1. Definitions for any terms used in the review questions

Population of young people:

- Looked-after children and young people in medium- and long-term care (more than six months) – wherever they are looked-after (for example, residential care, foster care, young offenders institution) – up to age 25, and their families.
- Children and young people who have several short-term (up to six months) periods in local authority care (either under a care order, or on a voluntary basis).
- Children and young people preparing to leave medium-term or long-term local authority care.

Outcomes:

ECM Outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

Government indicators of the above outcomes:

National indicator set 99: Looked-after children reaching Level 4 in English at KS2

National indicator set 100: Looked-after children reaching Level 4 in Maths at KS2

National indicator set 101: Looked-after children achieving 5 A*–C GCSEs at KS4 (including English and Mathematics)

Plus

National indicator set 61: Stability of placements of LAC: number of placements

National indicator set 62: Stability of placements of LAC: length of placement

PSA 14: increasing the number of young people on the path to success

Specific LACYP-defined outcomes to be identified during the scope.

Service provision definitions:

Definition of central, regional and local government includes local authorities and children's trusts.

"School" is defined very broadly to include e.g. pupil referral units; educational psychologists, educational welfare officers, youth services; including partnership working; residential care homes and fostering services that provide education, extended day.

7. What will be the likely geographical scope of the searches?

(Work conducted in/including the following countries)

- England only
- UK only
- Europe only
- Europe and other countries (English language)

NB: UK, US, Canada, Australia and NZ.

8. Age range for CYP:

Up to 25

9. Literature search dates

Start year

2000

10. Suggestions for key words to be used for searching the literature

Education base library	
Setting	school Education Learning (pupil) Pupil referral units
Educational outcomes and positive school experiences	
Attainment	Achievement Qualification Examin Key stage College University degree

	Attendance NEET truancy
Other outcomes	stability dropout expulsion exclu friend career occupation job Employ citizen School phobia School refusal
Views (common across all priorities)	
Opinion View Feedback Listen Voice	
Suggest specific phrases: Children's views Children's opinion Listening to children	
Accessibility, acceptability, effectiveness (common across all priorities)	
Accessibility and acceptability	Acceptability (acceptab*) Accessibility (accessib*) Satisfaction (satisf*) service uptake service use engagement (engage) involve participat
Effectiveness	Effective What works Outcomes Evaluat Making a difference Success

	Improvement implementation
Educational policy and interventions	
<p>Virtual school head</p> <p>Education support</p> <p>Out of school hours learning</p> <p>Specialist</p> <p>Designated teacher</p> <p>club</p> <p>personal education plans</p> <p>mentor</p> <p>Education at home</p> <p>guidance</p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Legislation</p> <p>Green paper</p> <p>White paper</p> <p>Every Child Matters</p> <p>Children's Act</p> <p>Care Matters</p> <p>educational psychologist</p> <p>mental health professional</p> <p>camhs</p> <p>achievement ceremon</p>	
Foster, residential and kinship carers and birth families terms (common across all priorities)	
<p>Carer</p> <p>worker</p> <p>assistant</p> <p>guardian</p> <p>family</p> <p>Mother</p> <p>Father</p> <p>parent</p>	
Attitudes, skills, abilities and behaviours	
<p>Attitude</p> <p>Skill</p> <p>Abilit</p> <p>Behaviour</p> <p>behavior</p> <p>Encourage</p>	

Supportive
supporting
empathy
promote
help
assist
facilitate
value
engage

Training and support for above (common across all priorities)

Training
Support
Competen
regist
counselling
Standards
Assess

11. Suggestions for websites, databases, networks and experts to be searched or included as key sources.

CYP Bill and Care Matters: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

Other DCSF commissioned resources

New national indicator statistics on achieving KS4 English and Maths and 5 GCSEs A*-C

NFER work in this area

Children's Rights Directors <http://www.rights4me.org/reports.cfm>

Rainer's mentoring scheme: <http://www.raineronline.org/>

A National Voice: Please Sir, can I have some more? Report on LACYP views on education needs and outcome

Voices from Care Cymru (<http://www.voicesfromcarecymru.org.uk/main.htm>)

Professor Sonia Jackson – LAC educational outcomes

http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid=470&470_0=7866

Professor David Berridge – LAC educational outcomes

[https://www.bris.ac.uk/iris/publications/details/person_key\\$rzvR3LEQCqiyYJmTKNaeAUNxGOhSxl/personPublications](https://www.bris.ac.uk/iris/publications/details/person_key$rzvR3LEQCqiyYJmTKNaeAUNxGOhSxl/personPublications)

Professor Ian Sinclair – placement stability

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/swrdu/Staff/ian.html>

Teaching and learning Scotland

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/lookedafterchildren/index.asp>

Fostering Network

BAAF

Voice http://www.voiceyp.org/ngen_public/default.asp

12. Any key texts/books/seminal works that you wish to see included?

SCIE's work on fostering outcomes, residential care and challenging behaviours

Key works by Sonia Jackson

Key works by David Berridge with colleagues Isabelle Brodie & Rachel Harker

Ian Sinclair Review of outcomes for LACYP for DH Choice Protects programme

ANV's *Please Sir, can I have some more? Report on LACYP views on education needs and outcome*

Barnardos: *Failed by the system: care leavers views on their educational experience:*

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/failed_by_the_system_report.pdf

Better education, better futures: Research, practice and the views of young people in public care

Harker, R., Dobel-Obel, D., Berridge, D., and Sinclair, R., (2004) 'Taking Care of Education: An Evaluation of the Education of Looked-after children',

13. Anything else that should be included or taken into account?

Looked-after children education support teams (LACES)

Virtual school heads bring together teams of multi-disciplinary colleagues to improve education attainment, this is a useful presentation on their by various heads to Young London Matters

<http://www.younglondonmatters.org/uploads/documents/implementingcarematterspresentationworkshop1virtualschoolheadgreenwichandsouthwark.ppt#270,9>, Initial work focus

Note on setting review questions

The review questions are important because the scoping team will use these to assess the available literature. Review question need to be clear, specific and answerable. For example, the questions addressed in a scoping study on diversity in the early years might identify the following questions:

1. What is the evidence of different outcomes for children from diverse backgrounds and with different characteristics?
2. In what ways do early learning environments impact on children's sense of identity and understating of diversity?
3. What is the evidence to support specific strategies that help children from all backgrounds and with diverse characteristics to access the curriculum and make good progress in the early years?

In addition to suggesting review questions, it is important to provide definitions of key terms and concepts (for example, for 'outcomes' 'diversity' 'early learning environment' and 'early years' in the above example).

Appendix 4: National Indicators and data sources

Every Child Matters outcome	National indicator (NI)	NI detail	Data source (published information)	Scale (published information)	Links to data source
Enjoy and achieve	NI 72	Achievement of at least 72 points across the Early Years FS with at least 6 in each of the scales in PSED and CLL	Foundation Stage Profile	National, regional and local authority (LA) level	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000879/index.shtml
	NI 73–74	Proportions of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in both English and maths at each of Key Stages 2 and 3	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
	NI 75	Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A*–C grades (or equivalent) including English and maths	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
	NI 83 (DSO 3)	Achievement at Level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
	NI 87	Secondary school persistent absence rate	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml

Every Child Matters outcome	National indicator (NI)	NI detail	Data source (published information)	Scale (published information)	Links to data source
	NI 99–100	Looked-after children reaching Level 4 in each of English and maths at Key Stage 2	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
		Looked-after children reaching 5 A*–C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and maths)	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
	NI 114 (DSO 6)	Rate of permanent exclusions from school	DCSF: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked-after, Twelve months to 30 September 2008 – England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000842/index.shtml
	NI 79 and 81	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification (and gaps) by the age of 19	Data not yet identified for looked-after children		
	NI 80 and 82	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification (and gaps) by the age of 19	Data not yet identified for looked-after children		
Additional indicators		Outcomes at age 19	DCSF: Children Looked-after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml
Additional indicators:		Characteristics of looked-after children	DCSF: Children Looked-after in England	National, regional and LA	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml

Every Child Matters outcome	National indicator (NI)	NI detail	Data source (published information)	Scale (published information)	Links to data source
Population			(including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009		ml

NOVEMBER 2009

**Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO)
8 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7QE
Tel 020 7843 6358**

www.c4eo.org.uk