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'Local authority responses to the needs of young people in care:  
a case study'.

Thesis submitted for  
Doctor of Philosophy Degree  
Sheena Christine Erskine  
University of Edinburgh 2003



I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Sheena Christine Erskine

Signature.

## Abstract

This study examines the educational problems facing young people in the care system in Scotland during a period of significant legislative change. The role of literacy as a determining factor and key to better quality of life for children in the care of Local Authorities has long been acknowledged. The aim of the study was to examine how young people experience the policies put in place to support them.

Two major areas are identified and addressed; firstly, the absence of a theoretical and conceptual framework sufficiently robust to permit analysis of how the needs of children are identified and met by Social Work Services and Education. The resulting framework allows the systems of Social Work and Education and their interrelationship to be interrogated together.

Secondly, the need to define quality and effectiveness within services for children is addressed. Criteria of effectiveness that reflect principles and intention of public policy in Social Work, Education and Legislation are drawn up and their critical points of effectiveness established. These reflect significant changes contained in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Key elements of both Education and Social Work systems are analysed and key inter-relationships mapped to create a General Model of Provision.

The Case Study applies quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the implementation of the 1995 Act in three Local Authorities. It explores how young people experience support for their learning in school and in different care settings. Data was collected from young people leaving the care system, young people currently in school, parents, carers, Social Work and Education staff and Senior Managers in 93 interviews.

The findings indicate that young people view literacy as an important key to a better future. They remain reasonably optimistic about the promise of Further Education. Of concern, however, is their relationship to society. These young people experienced an overly powerful system which tended to undermine their sense of individual agency rather than facilitate their attempts to establish themselves independently in the community. Reasons for this were primarily withdrawal of support at critical junctures compounded by lack of financial and social support which resulted in threat to their security. Local Authorities are urged to adapt their responses to the needs of children in care in the light of the findings.

Implications for future policy and practice raise issues about the establishment of improved services to assimilate young people leaving care into the wider community. There is a role for the Scottish Executive in locating developments within the Social Strategy at the interface with Criminal Justice and Human Rights Legislation in order to redress the ongoing imbalance of power.

# Contents

Abstract	i
Contents	ii
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vi
List of Appendices	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
<b>Chapter 1:Introduction</b>	1
Literacy, The Key to a Better Quality of Life	3
Summary	18
Organisation of This Study	19
<b>Chapter 2:Research Review</b>	23
The Support of Education of Children Looked After by The Local Authority	26
Summary	38
<b>Chapter 3:Theories</b>	40
What Do Children Need?	40
The Framework	43
The Theoretical Framework for meeting Children`s Needs	46
The Theoretical Framework for Professional Intervention	58

<b>Chapter 4:Models</b>	63
Criteria of Effectiveness	67
Legislative Change	74
The Responsibilities of Social Work, Education and Health	85
Professional Values	93
The Research Schedules	107
<b>Chapter 5: Method</b>	114
Researching the Problem	114
The Purpose of the Study	114
The Design of this Study	114
The Selection of Local Authorities	121
Interviews with Senior Management	126
Policy Documents	126
Content Analysis	127
Background Information	128
Group Interviews	129
School Staff	129
Residential Care Managers	130
Facilitation	131
Multi-Perspective Case Studies	132
The Young People	134
How the Young People contributed	139
Data Analysis	140
Categories and Themes	141
Contributions of the Study	145
<b>Chapter 6:Findings: Qualifying Success</b>	147
Comparisons Between each Local Authority	147
The Experiences of Young People in Different Care Settings	153

<b>Chapter 7: Theory Re-examined</b>	186
The “Switch”	187
Individual Agency	193
Victimisation and Incrimination	199
Qualifying success	202
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions, Implications and     Recommendations</b>	209
Summary of findings	209
Conclusions	217
Implications	226
Recommendations	234
Bibliography	239
Appendices	261

## List of Figures

3.1	Linkages in Theory	43
3.2	The Drama Triangle	56
4.1	Triangular relationships and the child	67
4.2	General Model of Support	72
4.3	The Overlapping Responsibility of Social Work, Education and Health	88
4.4	General Model and Process of Provision	103
5.1	Map of Local Authorities in Scotland	122

## List of Tables

4.1	A Typology of Needs	68
4.2	Research Summary	109
5.1	Audit of Care Provision by Local Authority	123
5.2	Number of interviews with Young people, Parents and Carers	125
5.3	Constas' (1992) Documentation Table for the Development of Categories	142
6.1	The range of support available for literacy development in any one school within each Local Authority	151
6.2	Range of assessment techniques employed in assessing learning difficulties	172

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1:	Interview Schedule – Principal Teachers of Learning Support	261
Appendix2:	Interview Schedule – Managers of Residential Units	265
Appendix 3:	Interview Schedule – Care Review Officers	267
Appendix 4:	Interview Schedule – Principal Teachers of Guidance in Schools	270
Appendix 5:	Interview Schedule – Social Workers/Teachers	272
Appendix 6:	Interview Schedule – Individual School Leavers, Parent and Carers	274
Appendix 7:	Interview Schedule – Group Interview – School Leavers	277
Appendix 8:	Interview Schedule – Group Interview – Pupils in S1-S2 in Secondary Education	280
Appendix 9:	Research Schedule on Policy Positions	283
Appendix 10:	Interview Schedule – Senior Managers in Local Authorities	284
Appendix 11:	Correspondence – Initial Trawl of Local Authorities	286
Appendix 12:	Correspondence – Invitation to Local Authorities to Participate in the Study	288
Appendix 13:	Research Note – On Gatekeeping	289
Appendix 14:	Research Paper – Generating Models: Care, Education and Virtual Reality	294

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **On Literacy**

*Let me learn  
To read, to find an inner life  
Child of the world  
To write, to grow in knowledge  
And in truth  
To find  
In self  
A spirit of the wider world  
A life to live.*

This case study explored the relationship between the lives of children looked after by Local Authorities, literacy and public policy. The aim has been to understand more clearly how young people experience public policy set in place to support them in three Local Authorities in Scotland, and in view of the findings, consider any implications for future policy and practice. The case study defined successful implementation of policy by reference to the experiences of young people leaving care and education in three Local Authorities in Scotland.

It focused upon how policies developed in response to legislation have been implemented and experienced by young people who had left care and who were educated before and during the introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (*1995 Act*). The experiences of pupils looked after by Local Authorities and who attend school during this time were also sought as part of the general context in which Local Authorities were operating during this important period of transition.

The study explored how young people experience support for their learning in school and in different care settings. The Case Study applied quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the implementation of the *1995 Act* in three Local Authorities. It explored how young people experienced support for their learning, and to what

extent the tenets of public policy influenced their experience of support in school and in different care settings. Findings reveal to what extent public policy had helped young people become literate and independent. They provide an indication of the extent to which policy implementation has taken root.

The main research question the Case Study sought to answer was 'What are young people's experiences of being in and of leaving care?' In order to answer this the following key variables were identified:- the educational provision and support available within each Local Authority; the role of professional and specialist services in the identification and assessment of children's needs; the corporate response of Local Authorities to the arrangements for provision of support for young people in the care system within each Local Authority; policy and how the young people have benefited from it.

Five of Scotland's thirty-two Local Authorities were selected after a sampling frame of Local Authorities had been drawn up. Having been informed about the subject and scope of the research three agreed to participate. One was representative of conurbations with a wide urban sprawl and is called *Urbanity* to preserve anonymity. With a population of approximately 170,000 it can be described as mostly industrialised and urban with areas designated as concentrations of multiple deprivation. Seventeen per cent of children live in lone parent families; twenty-two per cent of children live in families dependent on income support. Some communities have high unemployment and poverty, while others are affluent.

Another Authority was representative of rural communities. The population is approximately 200,000 living in a few large towns and wide rural area. Much of the land has been given over to sheep farming. There is a coastal strip and fishing is an important part of the local economy. Due to its high level of deprivation the area receives additional funding from the European Union to assist in its development. There is a divide between rich and poor, but the fact that the population is sparse and widespread renders it less visible than in other authorities. For purposes of anonymity it is called *Rurality* in the study.

The third Local Authority represents areas that have a combination of rural and urban areas within their boundary. For that reason it is called *Diversity* in the study. The population is approximately 100,000. There are five main centres of population, a large rural area and island communities off the coast. There is high unemployment, and low income presents a serious problem in rural areas. Some urban and rural areas are designated areas of deprivation.

An initial trawl of the literature had revealed three major problem areas; firstly, the absence of a theoretical and conceptual framework that was sufficiently robust to permit analysis of how the needs of children are identified and met by Social Work and Education; secondly, the need to define quality and effectiveness within services for children; thirdly, the need to determine the way in which public policy is experienced by young people.

This chapter continues to set the context for the study by tracing briefly a recent history of the educational problems facing children in care and the motivation behind the research. The impact of separation in the lives of children and their capacity to cope with life and learning is then considered. Conceptual issues underlying the concepts of literacy, empowerment and citizenship are explored. The theme of literacy as the key to a better quality of life for children leaving the care system is reviewed. The way in which public policy has been affected by changing legislation is discussed. Finally, the organisation of the study is detailed.

### **Literacy, The Key to a Better Quality of Life**

Literacy has been seen for some time as the key to a better education and to improved life chances for children in care (Jackson 1987 and 1989). Jackson noted that in Social Work literature

Almost all the meagre references to education and schools in the childcare practice literature relate to problems of attendance or

classroom behaviour. Nowhere is there a sense of school as a central part of a child's life, or education as the key to his future.

(Jackson 1987, p.6)

One of the main factors identified as leading to the educational success of children in care is the "learning to read early and fluently" (Jackson 1998; Jackson and Martin 1998; Jackson and Sachdev 2001). In the research study *Troubled and Troublesome* Masud Houghghi (1978) drew attention to the low level of literacy among children at Aycliffe School, a regional centre for the most severely disordered and delinquent children in England. The low level of basic attainment reported was in sharp contrast to the high level of disruptive and anti-social behaviour the children exhibited. The desperate attempts of children trying to conceal from peers and staff their inability to write a letter or read a newspaper were described as pathetic (Houghghi 1978). In Sonia Jackson's review of this research she commented, that for the Aycliffe children in the study

The more extreme their behaviour the more backward they seemed to be in basic attainments.

(Jackson 1987, p.10)

My interest in seriously researching this subject began during a one week stay at Aycliffe School in 1978 at the invitation of Masud Houghghi, who had in turn visited the school within the Scottish Assessment Centre in which I was Teacher-in-Charge. This visit prompted my inquiry into various aspects of the educational problems facing children in care within care settings and subsequently as a professional assistant administrator within the Educational Directorate of one Local Authority. Delamont (1992) for example regards qualitative research as "a mental golden journey" as described in the vein of James Elroy Flecker's poem *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (Flecker 1922), in which the explorers venture forth "to make the strange familiar". Delamont (1992) asserts that researchers undertake scholarly studies in order "to make the familiar strange" (Delamont 1992). Throughout my professional career and "mental golden journey" in the field of research it has been confirmed again and again that the more familiar the problems concerning care and education may appear, the more they yield to further discovery.

The task of assisting young people in a regional Assessment, Observation and Treatment Centre in Scotland involved contact with many children separated from their families, sometimes for considerable periods of time. During these periods of separation the Local Authority funded residential care and education. Children benefited and developed personally and educationally as records of their individual progress showed (Erskine 1979 and 1980). After the assessment stages, during periods of stability children made rapid strides educationally. Attention given to improving reading and writing skills in preparation for subsequent moves and placements or for a return to home and school proved successful. Improvements in reading and spelling ages were confirmed by the application on a child's arrival, and at regular intervals during a prolonged stay in the Assessment Centre, of the Schonell Reading and Spelling tests (Erskine 1979 and 1980). Many evinced renewed enthusiasm for learning. The confidence of children also appeared to grow.

Despite apparent gains made, especially in literacy, returning to school from the residential setting was fraught with difficulty for some. Reasons for this were rarely clear. Sometimes the young person refused to attend school. Sometimes the school refused the child admission. Either way any benefits gained during the period of care were at risk of being lost. The consequent lack of education in the community compounded difficulties and prompted deterioration in circumstances, which, in some cases, resulted in readmission to care.

The separation of children from their own homes is of major import for the care and educational experience (Parker 1981; Kahan, Pilling and Jackson 1987).

The home we know plays a vitally important part not only in the formation of character and personality but also in influencing children's physical development, and most aspects of their ability to learn.... Taking a child into care and away from his family is so undesirable that parliament decided in 1963 that local council's must "promote the welfare of children by diminishing the need to receive children into care or keep them in care...."

(Wedge and Prosser 1973, pp. 31 - 33)

The implications of this for Local Authorities may affect the ways in which they discharge their duties and responsibilities. At the outset of the study current legislation under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 placed a general duty on every Local Authority, “to promote social welfare by making available advice, guidance and assistance on such a scale as may be appropriate for their area”

Since the implementation of the above legislation in 1968 emphasis has been placed on the need to prevent reception into care if at all possible. Children are unlikely to be removed from home unless there was strong evidence to support the decision. This evidence was and still is investigated by a Reporter, who although appointed by the Local Authority, acts independently, and is seen as the lynch pin of the whole system (Thomson 1991). It is the Reporter’s duty to arrange a Children’s Hearing to consider all evidence available. A panel of members of the community, appointed by the Local Authority, and known as the Children’s Panel, is made up of people with knowledge of social work or an interest in social work and childcare. At a Children’s Hearing three members of the panel, one of whom acts as chairman, and both a man and a woman must be present to hear the evidence (Thomson 1991). The Children’s Hearing is not a court. This system of children’s hearing has endorsed plans for care arrangements and provided a forum for discussion with the child and family about the nature and implementation of future plans since 1968. In principle this allowed the views of children to be taken into account and allowed adults to act in the best interests of the child in all matters, especially when removal from home was under serious consideration.

How can Local Authorities support appropriately the separated child for whom they are responsible? This separation itself is tremendously significant in terms of influencing the kind of separation experience and the implications for successful care and education subsequently. The effects of the previous care experience will be significant as will the act of separation itself and the emotional agenda pertaining to it.

In respect of educational performance we know that the home experience enhances or restricts capacity for learning. For example

The general amenities of the home and its immediate neighbourhood can affect children's development in various ways. They can restrict the child's opportunity for investigation and exploration, for secure but independent play, for "space to dream", within the house itself and outside. But a length of space and amenities not only affects the children directly, it usually implies extra strain on other members of the family with consequent indirect effects upon the children.

(Wedge and Prosser 1973, p.25)

When care proceedings are instigated by a Local Authority Social Work Department the subsequent care experience and its consequence for the health, well-being and education of the child become the responsibility of the Social Work Department.

The conviction that over the years children in care have been denied their right to a proper education in ordinary schools underpins the work of key researchers in this area (Jackson 1987, 1989; Fletcher-Campbell and Hall 1990). Both identified the dual problem of securing places in ordinary schools for children in care and helping children keep those places to make more of the education on offer. In 1995 Sonia Jackson wrote

Research shows that children in care are consistently behind in reading and maths. Yet it is through education that children can earn a passport to a different kind of future.

(Jackson 1995, pp.12-13)

In Scotland one seminal work reported on the written evidence of Scottish school leavers who were asked to write about school and life afterwards (Gow and McPherson 1980). Those young people were not identified as leaving care. We do not know how many of them may have been care leavers. However, the documentation of their experience illustrates the importance of certification as an indicator of future prospects. Young people in the study who did not have examination passes in subjects that could facilitate and support their entry to the workplace faced a bleak prospect. That the problems facing children in care in Scotland were severe was confirmed when, in 1988 the Secretary of State for Scotland appointed a Review Group drawn from a wide variety of professions, disciplines and relevant interest groups

To identify, in the light of developments since the implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, options for change and improvement in child care law, which would simplify and improve arrangements for protecting children at risk and caring for children and families in need;

to assess the resource implications of any proposals for amendments of the law; and to report to the Secretary of State.

(HMSO 1990, p1)

This Review Group subsequently reported to the Secretary of State for Scotland

Services provided by health and education authorities are essential components in the range of provision required by children in care. There is increasing evidence through research that children in care experience significant disadvantage compared with children living in their own families. In particular they are likely to have a history of greater ill-health and lower educational achievement compared with the wider population. These differences cannot be entirely explained by their experiences prior to coming into care. The evidence available appears to indicate increasing disadvantage with the length of time a child is in care.

(HMSO 1990, paragraph 10.1)

Consequently, an understandably high value has been placed on the role of literacy in relieving such disadvantage.

Literacy, a familiar term in contemporary language, covers an ever increasing range of skills and frames of reference. It has come to reflect a highly contested area (Castleton 2001). But what is literacy? Why is it so important? To answer these questions we must explore in some measure an ever-increasing domain of skills required and understand literacy and its contemporary terms of reference more fully. According to Margaret Meek, literacy began as a way of record keeping before its usefulness extended into communication at a distance and over time. She says

History, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, social and cultural theories all contribute to understandings of literacy, but still it eludes any final description...All definitions of literacy are

located in the system of beliefs of those who use language. Part of everyone's literacy is the history of how they learned to make sense of reading and writing, and why they believe, at any given time, that literacy is important.

(Meek 1991, pp.230-231)

Papen (2001) defined literacy as "reading and writing in social practice." From this perspective it is seen to encompass many different practices rather than one set of technical competencies. It is also viewed as rooted in political relations, ideological practices, symbolic structures and discourses (Papen 2001). This view asserts that literacy depends on the people using it and the social and political context that prevails to influence not only technical skills but also conventional written language.

In his essays on literacy Frank Smith points up the arbitrary nature of distinctive categories of reading, writing, speaking, the comprehension of speech, and the appreciation of literature known in the curriculum as the 'language arts'. This informs his definition of literacy, such that,

Our categories are arbitrary – reading, writing, speaking, and understanding speech. They are useful perhaps in the way we organise our schools, but they are not a reflection of a categorization in the learner's mind. The question is not how the language arts should be brought together in the learner's mind but why they should ever be separated. To a child, language and the word must be indivisible.

(Smith 1983, p.80)

The ways in which the effects of this separation may or may not impinge upon the processes involved in becoming literate are critical. For Smith such arbitrary distinction may endorse a purely technical approach to the development of reading and writing skills. In my view such arbitrary distinction may influence the way in which reading and writing are taught and in turn how the learner may acquire reading and writing skills. The measure of the quality of literacy for the learner must still be the degree to which they, as learners, have developed each of the above categories in scope and function. This in turn will have been affected by the kind of support learners receive at home and in school. Meek (1991) stressed the importance, not of literacy itself but being literate. According to her

... to be literate is to learn to use the technology of our day and to decide, in our own time, what reading and writing are good for.  
(Meek 1991, p.3)

To recap, the term literacy, as argued here has come to cover an increasing range of skills and frame of reference. In this study the definition of literacy stresses the importance of being sufficiently skilled in reading and writing to comprehend and decide what reading and writing are good for while also being aware of and able to use the technology of day (Meek 1991).

According to one major study of literacy and social development the value of literacy has become an undisputed tool of social and economic improvement in the west (Graff 1981). It is not only in the west that literacy is viewed as critical to development but also as part of a global movement which has its roots in Education for All declaration in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. This provided a vision of what constitutes basic, universal education. Goals include the improvement of all aspects of the quality of education and the need to ensure that measurable outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy and numeracy. This goes some way in explaining why it is so important to be literate in society today. Clearly, being literate does matter in society, where for school leavers

....their level of attainment will attest their fitness to belong to, or to be excluded from, the group of powerful literates who dominate the dialogues of others.

(Meek 1991, p.238)

Literacies on their own can exert a powerful influence. Crowther *et al.* (2001) assert that,

In an information – rich world there is an increasing gap between those with access to information and those denied it. Redistributing information and making it accessible to the 'information poor' is an important educational and political task.....Rather than seeing literacy as a tool for organising our knowledge that is consistent with

the economic vision of the global economy, we need other ways of conceptualising literacy that can embody more democratic visions.  
(Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001, p. 3)

Despite a climate of uncertainty and upheaval introduced by legislative changes (Banks 1995) two values in particular continue to figure largely in the framework of both Social Work and Education, namely respect for and empowerment of the individual. Literacy can be viewed as empowering individuals in certain ways. According to Lankshear *et al.*, (1997) to understand “empowerment” is to appreciate the ways it has been used as “an educational buzzword *par excellence*” since the mid-1980`s. They say

At times it seems to name a goal for educational programmes and policies sought on the grounds of social justice, equity, and like ideals. Elsewhere it appears to serve more as a means or principle for enabling learning to take place. But whether it is named as a goal or as a means – which itself is often unclear – “empowerment” is all too rarely given adequate conceptual or theoretical attention by those who set most store by it.

(Lankshear *et al.* 1997, p.63)

In this study “empowerment” is recognised according to the value given to it in Social Work. In Social Work empowerment can be about empowerment with a view to articulating the needs of the individual alone as Stevenson and Parsloe (1993) assert or can it be about assertion of human rights of the individual in broader terms. This is closely linked to respect for the individual. In Social Work the Central Council for Education and Training of Social Workers (CCETSW)

recognises that equal opportunities is something that each individual wants for himself or herself and to which they have a legal right.

Students and candidates therefore will:

accept and respect individual rights and circumstances and understand how these affect the delivery of services for children and adults, families and communities;

Learn how to counter unfair discrimination, racism, poverty, disadvantage and injustice in ways appropriate to the situation and their role.

(CCETSW 1995, p.9)

Literacy is important then because of its empowering role in the lives of young people. So important is literacy that The United Nations Declared 1990 International Year of Literacy. The importance of empowering populations has been underscored by Meek (1991)

There is 'still' a shifting population of approximately six million illiterates in Britain. Children still go to school for the first time, and adolescents leave with different kinds of qualifications which describe new literacy, or lack of it..... It demonstrates that literacy is an issue of human rights.

(Meek 1991, p.231)

Two discourses of rights have been identified, human rights and citizen rights (Delanty 2000). One discourse, human rights, according to Delanty, conveys "basic ethical rights that all individuals enjoy by virtue of their common humanity". Citizenship rights differ in that they are "confined to a particular political community" Delanty claims that

In the last two hundred years or so since the first declarations of human rights, the two discourses have diverged considerably.

(Delanty 2000, p. 68)

Sousa Santos (1999) pinpoints a contemporary picture of this divergence when he argues that

While the first generation of human rights was designed as a struggle of civil society against the state, considered to be the sole violator of human rights, the second and third generations of human rights resort to the state as the guarantor of human rights.

(Sousa Santos 1999, pp. 72-73)

Citizens find themselves in an invidious position living as they do in one "particular political community" while being drawn into a new and as yet undefined global citizenship. This divergence may well have been fostered by attempts to define citizenship within political communities. Citizenship, according to Turner (1993) was also a highly contested term. He regards

The notion of citizenship has been a key aspect of Western political thinking since the formation of classical Greek political culture.....but I would contend that the concept of citizenship is an essentially modern one.

(Turner 1993, p.vii)

Citizenship can also be viewed strategically as a social and political concept (Roche 1992). Intellectually it has attracted the attention of academics resulting in considerable expansion of its meaning as a subject of academic study in the last decade as forms of political and other forms of identity have emerged (Brown *et al.* 1996).

Within this political frame according to Blackburn (1993) the right to vote is central to the notion of citizenship

The right of every citizen to vote and take part in the political process of a state is the foundation of its democracy.

(Blackburn 1993, pp.75-98)

According to Roche, sociological interest in the nature of citizenship in general in modern society has undergone a period of revival, having been taken for granted as referring only to membership of a “politico-legal community” (Roche 1992).

Citizenship does however have a “social dimension” according to (Marshall 1963,1972, 1977,1981,and 1985), such that social citizenship could be interpreted as concerning work, education, health and quality of life Roche (1992). Twine (1994) views social rights associated with this form of citizenship as fundamentally concerned with social relationships between people. In the present study the preferred term is that of “social citizenship” (Marshall 1974, Twine 1994). It is acknowledged that there is a tension between rights associated with “citizenship” as part of a political community and human rights within a global dimension. The importance of participation in the community and in society is emphasised in the field of Human Rights Education according to Lenhart and Savolainen (2002) who say of pedagogy

Among the three p's of child related pedagogy – protection, provision and participation – is the third “p”, participation in productive work.  
(Lenhart and Savolainen 2002, p. 155)

Protection of children from poverty and the negative attitude of society has been the subject of legislation since the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1889. Prior to this Act a child was essentially in legal terms the property of its parents and the law had limited powers of intervention. So strong was opinion about parental rights that it took five years to persuade the Westminster Parliament to introduce the 1889 Act. Since then additional pieces of care legislation have been introduced in England and Wales as well as in Scotland, each influencing the other and preserving the role of charities while demanding “that Local Authorities take on similar duties to protect children if and when they are at risk” (Williams and Gardner 1996).

The Scottish approach diverged from that in England and Wales producing its own unique system to deal with both child protection and juvenile justice, known as the Children's Hearing System. Social policy in Scotland has continued as a social welfare policy for the family. As such its intended function has been to support disadvantaged families in times of crisis, by tackling issues of poverty and the negative attitude in society to children from poor families. The hope that children would be advantaged by this additional support of financial income to the family has not always realised (Kirk and Part 1994). Nor had attempts to alleviate poverty proved successful (Oppenheim 1998). Poverty had been growing and deepening in the two decades preceding 1998 posing a central challenge to government (Oppenheim 1998).

According to Peter Townsend (1979) poverty can be understood and defined objectively in terms of relative deprivation.

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below these commanded by the average individual or family

that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

(Townsend 1979, p.31)

According to Oppenheim (1998) “social exclusion is about processes rather than a static end state.” Dominelli has graphically described the end-state brought about by poverty

Unfortunately, despite the obstacles that severe financial hardship imposes on the growing child, freedom from poverty has not been defined as a basic human right, although the United Nations has encouraged its member states to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000..... Yet, the lack of monetary means has prevented large numbers of the world’s children from becoming all that they can be (see UNDP, 1998 for the latest global figures on poverty and children world wide). Instead, they are compelled to scabble about for a living in the interstices between low-grade technical know- how in the labour market and survival tactics in mean streets.

(Dominelli 1999, p.4)

Poverty will also inhibit the way that government can influence the lives of young people in local authority care. Insufficient resources in public services may hamper the development of young people, in their bid to become literate and the circumstance in which they live.

Legislation initiated in 1990, and implemented as the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, shifted the focus more to the needs of the child. The Act redefined the relationship of children to parents and opened up the possibilities that the views of children mattered and should be heard when decisions were to be made about their future. This built upon the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UN 1990) to which Great Britain signed up in 1991. This guaranteed all rights contained in the Articles of the Convention to the child, with the intention that that the best interests of the child should come first in all considerations. The child has a right to have their voice heeded in matters concerning them. The content of this new legislation was mediated and developed in a process that involved many agencies and professionals.

The Review made specific recommendations regarding transfer of responsibilities in respect of a child's health and education to social work. These were contained in recommendations number 31-39. Specifically this recommendation was made and accepted by the Secretary of State

Local authorities should have a general duty to identify the health and education needs of children in care and to seek to have these met. *This will be achieved for specifying social work employees as responsible for identifying the needs of individual children and the resources required to meet them.* Monitoring will be through care reviews to which reports should be submitted. Attendance by health and education professionals should be discretionary. Explicit duties should be laid on health and education authorities to provide relevant services for children in care.

(Scottish Child Law Centre 1990, p. 11) emphasis added

It was very clear at this time that substantial differences were to be expected as a result of this legislative review. This study focuses on the period of transition between the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the *1995 Act* that resulted from these recommendations. Of significance over the time of the study were the ways in which Local Authorities discharged their duty to and their responsibility for children in their care.

The main impact of the *1995 Act* was the requirement of Local Authorities to act as a corporate parent for children in their care. This relieves social work departments of the sole responsibility to provide services for children. The Chief Executive of the Local Authority is given overall responsibility for the preparation and implementation of children's service plans.

The *1995 Act* applies the law to the education of children looked after by the local authority. Positive action to promote the education of children looked after by Local Authorities is required as follows

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

child local authorities should have regard to continuity of education, take a long-term view of the child's education, provide educational opportunities and support, and promote potential and achievement. (Excerpts from Para 61 and 62, Vol. 2 Regulations and Guidance, 1977 of the Children (Scotland Act 1995)

(Jackson and Sachdev 2000, p.6)

The Scottish Executive recently released the report of an inspection undertaken jointly by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools and the Social Work Services Inspectorate. The report, *Learning With Care*, was concerned with the education of children looked after away from home by Local Authorities. Ten years after the initial childcare law review, it found that Local Authorities were failing to meet their responsibilities in respect of the *1995 Act* (HMI 2001). Inspectors found that Local Authorities were failing to assess the needs of children looked after by them. They were also found to be negligent in monitoring and producing care plans. So, what has gone wrong? Why, despite all efforts does the system appear to fail young people being looked after away from home?

Changes brought about by the *1995 Act* have financial and organisational implications. Some disquiet has been expressed as to the funding of resources to cover the increased demands on Local Authorities (Borland *et al.* 1998). Borland *et al* claim that,

The Children (Scotland) Bill itself laid out a very minimalist, and arguably unrealistic, assessment of resources that would be needed to implement the final Act. Local Authorities facing drastic budget cuts and pressures from all sides, are working with the Children (Scotland) Act at a time of considerable financial crisis for many authorities (particularly urban authorities where there is more disadvantage).

(Borland *et al.* 1998, p.6)

As pointed out by Townsend (1979) access to resources to provide educational advancement is critical. Anything that prevents Local Authorities from providing necessary resources ultimately fosters social exclusion. Where Local Authorities have limited funds provision of resources for children may have to compete against the demands made in other areas.

In terms of organisational change interagency collaboration is costly in terms of staff time, management and logistics. Yet implementation of the *1995 Act* and the policies it generated depend upon such collaboration. Policy was a socially constructed variable, which according to Colebatch (1998) means more than just what a government plans to do. It is about the way different and diverse bodies come together to provide stable and predictable patterns of action. As a process, policy and its implementation demands organized action. Its three characteristics are assumed to be the handing down of policy from government to individuals (hierarchy) through concerted action of participants as a single-minded enterprise (coherence), and the extent to which problems are addressed and solutions found (instrumentality) through funding and resources (Colebatch 1998).

In order to achieve this reorganisation service provision may be required (e.g. relocation of services and personnel). Regrouping of staff, development in new specific projects and response due to the needs of individual children in the community may result, as may interdisciplinary joint work. Internal change within schools may be required as education adjusts to meet its new responsibilities. Management restructuring at middle and senior level in education and social work may also be necessary.

### **Summary**

Literacy concerns the acquisition of language, the written word and its application in life. To be literate is to be confident in reading, writing and the technological skills required to use tools of the information age. How these skills are acquired by an individual matters. The importance of being literate has been outlined. Literacy is a Human Rights issue. It acts as a key to understanding the world and in empowering individuals to become participants in the social world.

When I speak about citizenship I mean “social citizenship” concerning work, education, health and quality of life as major components (Roche 1992) with social relationships (Marshall 1974;Twine1994)

and participation in the community and in society playing an important part (Lenhart and Savolainen 2002).

The impact of the *1995 Act* on policy and how it has been translated into organised action has had significant financial and organisational implications. Limited funds for direct educational material provision and support may have undermined the degree to which legal requirements under the *1995 Act* are met and, thus, threaten to socially exclude the very children and young people it was introduced to help.

Finally, whatever definition preferred by professional researchers and academics, the construction put by the young people themselves determines what being a citizen means to them. It is within this dimension that the young people in the study perceived and maintained their existence, concerning themselves with matters of education, health and the quality of their daily life. The young people were found to be conscious of their human rights in relation to their participation in society and the quality of support they had received while in the care of the Local Authority. This is in keeping with the suggestion made by Turner (1993) that in future human rights might complement rather than replace citizenship rights.

Research that promotes understanding of the views of children, young people and their parents in detail and appreciation of the impact made by policy upon the lives and circumstances of young people in care is lacking in Scotland (Borland *et al.* 1998). This study begins to fill that gap by looking at the policies put in place to help young people and by listening to the experiences of young people in the care system.

### **Organisation of this study**

In Chapter Two the first of three separate reviews of relevant literature covers the support for the education of children looked after by the Local Authority. It builds on the theme of literacy as the key to a better life and the significance of separation in relation to educational success. Research specific to the situation of children attending school from Children's Homes is reviewed separately from research the

findings of which refer exclusively to children in foster care who attend school. The implementation of the *1995 Act* and the changes it was intended to achieve are viewed as important aspects of legislation to be reflected in national and local policy. This is seen as a potentially useful way to determine quality in both Social Work and Education provision in Scotland and in establishing criteria of effectiveness for the delivery of Social Work and Education services.

Chapters Three and Four then define the parameters within which the study was conducted. They explain how I set out to explore ways in which the effectiveness of care and educational services for children might be evaluated. In Chapter Three the development of a conceptual and theoretical framework is undertaken. Chapter Four considers what might constitute criteria of effectiveness and the generation of a model of the system of general provision of support in care and education prior to the introduction of the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995*. Criteria of effectiveness that reflect the principles and intention of public policy in Social Work, Education and Legislation are proposed and their critical points of effectiveness established. These reflect significant changes contained in the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995*, which determine the way in which public policy helps young people to become literate and independent. Key elements of both Education and Social Work systems are analysed and key inter – relationships mapped to create a General Model of Support. The changes in stance following the introduction of the *1995 Act* are reflected in a Model of the support systems of Social Work, Education and Health. The concern is for the delivery of optimum quality care and education.

Chapter Five focuses on methodology and details of the research design. The case study used quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the implementation of the *1995 Act* in three Local Authorities.

The findings are set out in Chapters Six. Local Authority responses varied in terms of services, funding and staff training. Implementation of the *1995 Act* had not as yet affected the experiences of interviewees or those pupils currently attending school from care settings. The experience of support was viewed more positively from a

foster care perspective than from Children's Homes. Additional pressures within the care setting were seen to adversely affect school attendance from Children's Homes. For those who established a regular pattern of going to school, attendance did not necessarily mean successful involvement in the curriculum. Younger pupils displayed an exaggerated sense of independence inappropriate for their years, perceiving themselves to be unsupported in the process of gaining literacy. School-leavers, on the other hand, regretted their former lack of involvement in schoolwork and were now more optimistic about being able to benefit from Further Education. This former lack of involvement in the curriculum could be attributed in some measure to the ability of some to actively resist the assessment process. It may also have exposed something of the life of a school, in that it revealed a kind of gamesmanship to be part of the interaction between pupils and teachers in school.

In Chapter Seven the theme of games continues to exert a powerful force in determining outcomes for interviewees. These young people appear to be denied the keys to citizenship. In the first instance attempts made by interviewees to establish independence in the community appeared to be thwarted by a series of moves which acted to keep them dependent upon support at a time when they should have been independent and exerting more influence over their own futures. They experienced a system that appeared overly powerful and which tended to undermine their sense of individual agency.

Withdrawal of support at critical moments was compounded by lack of financial and social support. The circumstances of some were extremely poor, materially and emotionally. Above all the young people expressed a desire to participate more fully and be included in society. They were acutely aware of their social exclusion. Their social circumstances had deteriorated to the point where destabilisation compromised their personal security and safety. Young people living on their own were in especially unsatisfactory circumstances. Interviewees did not perceive themselves as having been empowered as potential citizens.

The conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study are presented in Chapter Eight. The study concludes that as yet the introduction of the *1995 Act* has failed to impact positively upon the lives of those interviewed. Implications for policy and practice raise issues about the establishment of improved services, which will help assimilate young people leaving care into the wider community. A role has been identified for the Scottish Executive in locating future developments, aimed at assisting young people leaving the care system in Scotland, within the social strategy at the interface between the Children's Hearing System and the Criminal Justice System. Implementation of Human Rights Legislation is recommended as a way of addressing injustices and redressing the ongoing balance of power.

## Chapter 2: Research Review

The following three chapters set the scene. They explain the origins of the study and its realisation. As indicated in Chapter One an initial trawl of literature revealed the absence of a theoretical and conceptual framework, which is sufficiently robust to permit analysis of how the needs of children are identified and met by Social Work and Education. Selection of theoretical viewpoints is undertaken in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four the need to define quality and effectiveness within services for children is addressed and models of the general provision in Scotland and the process of provision introduced by the *1995 Act* are presented. This chapter reviews relevant literature covering the support of education of children looked after by the Local Authority. It has been structured to reflect the theme of literacy as the key to a better life and the significance of separation in relation to educational success.

It has been noted in the past that Social Work and Education have worked independently to produce their response to the needs of the children for whom they are responsible. Each developed separately, embracing different theoretical stances that influenced their professional practice and imposing an artificial boundary between care and education (Parker 1980; Kay 2001 and 2003). Although progress in this area had been made on the continent of Europe,

....the distinction between these two fields is firmly maintained in the United Kingdom, for example in various DES publications.  
(Parker 1980, p.141)

The need to address this distinction between the two fields and to allow a blurring of boundaries between the two professions was evident. A serious division or schism between the two professions that became further highlighted by subsequent specialisation of the differing care arrangements of foster care and residential care was viewed as having an adverse effect upon the care and education of children (Parker 1980). Both embrace to a degree child development theory, but education is founded on theories of learning while Social Work is founded on theories of human existence in its effort to support families and children within a social policy agenda.

These differences affect practice and the way children and families experience support. Of the theories that inform practice in each of the professions none holds sway. Professional autonomy allows discretion as to which theories inform the practice of individual practitioners. No direction has been given as to why one approach should be preferred to another. One consequence of this is that research into the care and education of children in care is repeatedly subject to analysis from a different theoretical standpoint. This results in a certain discontinuity. According to the author of the report 'Caring for separated Children, Plans, procedures and priorities',

We need to understand how parents and children interpret their experiences of professional help if we are to provide assistance and care that they consider appropriate to their needs.

(Parker 1980, p.150)

Parker called for common core training for teachers and social workers in an effort to increase the knowledge and skills of both professions.

We would wish to see fewer distinctions made between education (and its resources) and care services. Some of the best care can assume an educational form; and some of the best education and efficient learning can be attained in what is narrowly regarded as a 'care' setting.

(Parker 1980, p. 142)

Yet, as Jackson pointed out, rarely are care and education discussed together (Jackson 1987 and 1989). One consequent assumption of the notion of a dichotomy or schism between the professions of care and education is that education may be ignored or neglected within care settings and care may be neglected within educational settings. Additionally such a rift may be evident within the communication and administration of care and educational procedures and planning (HMSO 1980; Kendrick and Mapstone 1991).

The Kilbrandon Committee (Kilbrandon 1964) put forward the idea of a continuum of care and educational needs of children. This gave each of the professions a role at each stage of children's development and assumed cooperation between the professions. A proposal by the Committee to formally integrate care and education

services in a new Social Education Department at national and local level was not taken up and according to Bruce

The integration of social work services under the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act had the unfortunate side effect of widening the gap between social work and education.

(Bruce 1983, p.155)

A theoretical view that will potentially provide continuity for research in each of the professions and the possibility of a more systematic approach to research in this area would be of value. In addition a theoretical view that permits the analysis of Social Work and Education together would allow examination of how practice is informed and experienced by respective client groups.

The relationship of theory to practice is a major emphasis of professional training, as is the relationship of policy to practice. The role of research in the development of both theory and policy making also receives attention. What is absent in the literature is a discussion of the relationship between policy and theory. We have a fairly clear idea of how legislation and policy development is achieved in Scotland. Children's legislation in Scotland has evolved through a process of extensive consultation with government and is based on a wide consensus among groups with a vested professional interest in the field (Tisdall 1997). In considering the relationship between the new legislation of the *1995 Act* and Social Work practice it has been argued by Skinner and McCoy (2000) that while legislation may provide a springboard for professional decision-making and imaginative practice, it is not a narrow straightjacket, and as such is always open to interpretation by Local Authorities. Care policy may vary then to some degree from one Local Authority to another.

The expectation remains that legislation informs policy and that research may well influence each. Any important changes arising from new legislation and any new principles they introduce to policy need to be registered and implemented. A high quality of social services for children is considered to be imperative. That quality will turn not only upon the wide ranging responses of individual practitioners but

also upon the degree to which the main tenets of legislation are reflected within policy at national and local level. Research to date has been effective generally in discerning practice both in Social Work and in Education. It has not as yet turned to the examination of whether the tenets of legislation are reflected in policy and moreover, whether or not the experiences of children and young people reflect those tenets of legislation, and which are critical tenets of governance. To that end, beyond the literature reviewed in this chapter, a systematic examination of legislation and key interrelationships between Social Work and Education is undertaken to build a picture of how tenets of legislation and policy effect children and young people.

This study is necessarily concerned with what constitutes quality in both Social Work and Education services in Scotland and with establishing criteria of effectiveness in the delivery of policy in each of the services.

It should be remembered that a child who has been fostered might well also have had experience of living in a Children's Home or Assessment centre prior to any foster placement. Some children may be able to reveal information about their experiences living in different settings and draw comparisons from that.

### **The Support of Education of Children Looked after by the Local Authority**

The focus of this literature review is specific support, in schools and in classrooms, to meet the educational needs of children looked after by the Local Authority, and the policy pursued in Scotland to meet their needs. This is an area that remains relatively unexplored. The primary focus of research has hitherto been the professional and qualitative aspects of care provision, with the relegation of educational needs to secondary, if not, coincidental concern. Within the professional practice of caring, the educational difficulties experienced by young people in care have received lower priority than homelessness, mental disorder and child abuse (Holmes 1977; Fletcher-Campbell and Campbell 1996, Jackson and Sachdev 2001).

In the preceding four decades the focus of care research has shifted from the capacity of the child to achieve in school (Ambinder and Falik 1973; Taylor 1973; and Canning 1974); to the quality and provision of care in different care settings which supports the child in education (Triseliotis and Russell 1984; Aldgate and Hawley 1986; Berridge and Cleaver 1987; Maluccio *et al.*, 1986); and more recently the provision within the education system (Jackson 1988; Fletcher-Campbell 1994 and 1997; Francis *et al.* 1995; and Berridge *et al.* 1997). Little work has been undertaken in Scotland about how children who are looked after in the community fare in the school system. Francis *et al.* (1995) usefully examined the quality of the educational experience of young people in Lothian Region. This was a small-scale piece of research that asked important questions about the quality of the educational experience of 27 children who had been taken into care in Lothian Region. Undertaken over twelve months, its findings raised issues about unsatisfactory record keeping. Records were found over time to be poorly maintained and kept in a manner that was not systematic, coherent and accessible. This made it difficult to trace the progress of a child in care and in education. The way records of Social Work and Education were organised inhibited concerted action. This leads to the conclusion that examination of the Scottish scene may be a fruitful avenue to pursue in an effort to improve the circumstances of children in the care system and of those leaving it.

A trace of changes in the Scottish policy context from the momentous production of the Kilbrandon Report on juvenile justice (1964) reveals significant shifts in both Social Work and Education responses to the care and education of children in care of the Local Authority. The Kilbrandon Report recommended referral to the Children's Hearing on the grounds that a child may be in need of compulsory measures of care. Endorsement of these recommendations in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 marked a distinct departure in legislative form and ensuing policy stances from that of England. Children who had committed offences as well as those who were in need of protection for their own safety were to be dealt with by the new Children's Hearing system. Families were to be supported in bringing up their children through the regulation and guidance offered by lay members of the new system who sought advice

from professional staff who in turn had contact with the child and family.

During 1970's Assessment, Observation and Treatment Centres (AOTC) were introduced in Scotland. Here a residential assessment of care and education could be carried out to assist in the decision-making about children's futures. Social Work care staff and teachers in the centres reported on the development of the child, as did social workers and teachers from guidance systems in schools in the community. Children did not always return home after these residential assessments. Many moved to other residential establishments where education was provided on the campus. Some moved to Children's Homes with a view to attending local schools. Others moved into a residential school system in which treatment was the aim with rehabilitation into the community a longer-term goal. These covered a range of needs across the special needs sector. A separate group of residential schools, designated List 'D' (the fourth in the range of specialist provision) schools, the regimes and responses of which differed from draconian to liberal was registered with the Secretary of State. At its height the demand for residential places in the schools registered was such that by 1979, 26 schools dealt with over 1500 children (McCracken 1992).

It became apparent that there were more routes into care than there were back into the community (Erskine 1980). Also it was easier to take children into residential care than it was to release them from it in the anticipated return home to the community and local schools. From my experience in Scotland at this time the difficulties in returning children and young people to mainstream school appeared insurmountable. Many children returned home but could not or would not go to school (Erskine 1980).

This situation was being echoed in England and Wales during the 1980's where exclusion from school was interpreted to mean exclusion from society. The problem of staffing residential establishments was acknowledged in England and Wales at this time and was described as being neglected by key decision-makers in the public policy agenda (Grimshaw and Berridge 1994).

Moves were certainly afoot to claim the right to a full education for children in care.

The educational experiences of a disproportionately high number of children living in Children's Homes and attending local schools was found to be unsatisfactory (Berridge 1985, Colton 1988). Social Workers in England and Wales were first to respond to the very strong message of Jackson's early work, recognising that

the first of the Bristol papers throws considerable doubt on the ability of institutional care properly to provide for the educational needs of 70.000 or so children.

(Morris 1988, p. 8)

Gradually this message was acknowledged in Scotland. Sonia Jackson's work, although recognising the lack of education within local schools for children in care was just as much about improving the quality of education within residential provision.

Many residential schools had been preparing young people for the world of work through a vocational curriculum. The concern expressed in Scotland at that time was the limitation of literary standards among children in care and the consequent absence of a secondary curriculum in residential establishments (SED 1983). Many children returned from this specialist provision, where treatment had been available and the question remained as to what treatment would be made available, in the community, now that the system had been decimated (Maginnis 1989). The very serious problems facing these children and young people had not gone away. To many who had staffed the older system, the potential of community-based assessment, treatment and support to replace this system had yet to be realised. Its effect upon treatment had yet to be seen and its effect upon the educational opportunities available to children in care was yet untested (Gill and Pickles 1989).

This system of residential schools in Scotland had become the main professional specialist response. One of the reasons for this expanding system was the dual role of the Children's Hearing in dealing both with cases of child protection and juvenile justice. Was the system about protection and/or correction? Protection and correction were carried out simultaneously. Each member of staff faced the dilemma about which

was appropriate in their personal approach to children in their care.

This problem for managers in residential establishments was compounded by the difficulty in finding social workers and teachers of high calibre willing to work with children whose behaviour might be challenging in the extreme. Indeed in the early years the system was in danger of becoming one that was more about correction in form than treatment. This presented Local Authorities with increasing cost of staff training. For teachers and care staff, working together in the management of challenging behaviour, the boundary between care and correction was seen as a stark choice: they tended to see it as a choice of discipline and punishment versus one of indulgence as in giving way to the demands of children (Erskine 1979).

Social work staff had very often been recruited who were not fully trained for their work (Pringle 1975; Jones 1973). The autonomy of staff within institutions provided much scope for the emergence of unorthodox approaches. Much management time had to be given to the examination of informal complaints, which were made in equal number it seemed by children and staff. To set the tone in such establishments was one of the most difficult tasks to achieve on a continuing basis. In the absence of tolerant and benign management, correction rather than treatment and protection would dominate the culture of institutional life.

A headmaster of a residential school, in which the therapy played a large part in the treatment, thus, describes the difficulty in preparing staff for work with disturbed children

I do not subscribe to the notion that quite ordinary and moderately competent workers can be recruited to work in our schools and that, in order that they may survive the pressures involved, a whole system of limiting safeguards has to be devised for their safety.....Staff members who need to be dragged unwillingly into contact with the fantasy world our children inhabit, or whose sense of adventure is so impaired that they cannot connect with the natural, let alone the unnatural surges of adolescence, or whose need for a personal security is so tightly held that they cannot approach a relationship with the unloved and potentially unlovable – these workers are not best suited to our kind of work.

(Dean 1992, p. 119)

In Scotland children could be moved around this specialised system. Attempts to change authoritarian regimes continued with some degree of success. Children could be traced around the system of schools and their progress observed and recorded. Gradually Local Authorities developed responses that allowed the possibility of returning to the community. Many youngsters had learned a trade and left the system at school-leaving age to seek some form of employment. Details of their success in this regard are not available as they became absorbed into the general population.

At its height the children in Scotland's care system were part of a large network of professional care and specialised education in which placements were centrally funded. In 1983 the system suffered a blow in the publication of The Fiddes Report ( SED/ Social Work Services Group 1983), which criticised the educational standards in these residential schools. This heralded the beginning of a contraction of the specialised List 'D' residential care system and a reversal of policy that supported such placements. By 1986 Central Government had withdrawn central funding, administrative support and closed down List 'D'. The number of residential schools registered now offering residential care for children in trouble had been greatly reduced now providing 850 places among them (Tolman 1986; McCracken 1992). In Scotland, the gradual dismantling of the specialist residential sector meant the removal of this curricular option and a new determination to have young people educated in the community.

The late 1980's witnessed increasing difficulties in obtaining funding for such places. It was proving an expensive option. The funding of individual places for children increased as the facilities provided in these independent establishments grew and staff costs soared increasing the cost to Local Authorities (Bates 1986). Also at this time the emergence of Recording of Special Educational Needs demanded that funding be directed towards local schools for the inclusion of more and more children with special educational needs in designated schools within a Local Authority boundary. In addition rising costs of staff training in Social Work and Education at Local Authority level put pressure on budgets that were already over-committed to other emerging responses to child protection placing ever increasing demand upon finances (Hill, Triseliotis and Borland 1993).

The predicament facing Social Work Departments in Local Authorities throughout Scotland was similar, but of more import to authorities responsible for large numbers of children. Peter Bates reported in Tayside that the Department of Social Work did not have an integrated child care strategy and recommended an alternative strategy to residential care including assessment of needs in the community, while the child remained in the family home, with a number of responses provided by the Social Work Department following assessment, namely, Intermediate Treatment (IT) (Bates 1988).

This would involve intensive periods in a day resource centre, with the employment of IT workers, social workers, teachers and specialist help from other disciplines such as psychological services.

The objective would be to rehabilitate the particular child and his/her family back into the mainstream educational system. The primary reason for developing such an alternative strategy would be to considerably reduce the numbers of children and young people who move from the community into the formal residential care system.

(Bates 1988, p. 16)

This reorganisation of child services was an important forerunner of a Youth Strategy, the mainstay of which was to be the Day Resources Centre. According to Pickles (1992) the changes were designed to foster collaborative working practices.

In recognition of the pressure placed on Social Services development of a Youth Strategy became the major response to the contraction of the residential school system, not only in Tayside but also elsewhere. Tayside Region Youth Strategy (TRYST) was eventually launched four years later in 1992. In the intervening years a number of local authorities launched their own Youth Strategies (Kendrick 1993). These varied in scope but each displayed certain responses and mechanisms. The main thrust was to keep children out of residential care; the creation and development of resources in the community, jointly run by Social Work and Education in some instances closely aligned to mainstream education. The provision of services for children who were not receiving full-time education was a strong feature (Pickles 1992; Kendrick (1993). Inter-agency collaboration also figured as a main way of coordinating treatment and

educational arrangements for children and young people (Gill and Pickles 1989).

According to Kendrick (1993)

In Strathclyde Region, by contrast, the youth strategy was set in a broader policy framework, which viewed young people in the wider social context of changing social relationships and deprivation. The youth strategy has been based on a "community development" approach, establishing "Youth Development teams". These bring together agencies working with young people and community representatives to develop a range of opportunities and activities for young people in their area.

(Kendrick 1993, p.139)

As Local Authorities developed their alternative responses as part of their youth in the community local schools were also expected to prepare to receive pupils with Special Educational needs. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems could attend local school from a variety of care settings. Pupils from residential schools were reintroduced to the community. Local Authorities were forced to redefine their priorities in order to manage the ensuing range of problems as those young people returned to the community from the rapidly contracting residential system, and as the reluctance to place them in residential care continued (Gill and Pickles 1989).

Local Authorities that had anticipated the problem worked to provide specialised help within schools and in community based initiatives for disaffected pupils, priding themselves on being proactive. This proactive response also effectively cushioned Authorities from complaint from families and professionals should placements in ordinary schools break down. This change could put proactive policies under pressure and could render an Authority response reactive producing less tolerance and more punitive responses to pupils whose behaviour was described as challenging. It could be said that this significant change in the direction of policy at Local Authority level had initially been fiscally driven. The introduction of the *1995 Act* on the other hand had been research driven, in the main, and aimed at consolidating the position of children through legislative power (Tisdall 1997).

Children and young people reported awareness of being stigmatised, making adjustment to school especially difficult (Fletcher 1993, 1995). Some children were

social isolates at school, their low self-esteem and lack of confidence a major factor. Assuming that the children in this section of the care system have had their care needs identified, the question remains whether or not an educational need for learning support has been identified and assessment undertaken. The system may provide both assessment of, and a response to, need but if the individual child is not in a position to benefit then outcomes will be less than expected. Equally if the system fails to provide assessment and a response then the child cannot benefit.

Evidence suggests that young people in the care system are likely to be emotionally vulnerable in reaction to the painful experiences of grief and loss (Kahan 1985; Fahlberg 1988; Laybourn *et al.*1996), and may not have the capacity to benefit from support when it is available. Looked after children known to have experienced abuse in the early years, do significantly less well educationally, regardless of care setting, even after living in safer circumstances for some time (Essen *et al.*1976; Heath *et al.*1994). The importance of minimising the risk of failure in care and education has been emphasised by Jackson and Sachdev (2001). They identify four main groups of risk factors that can be addressed by Social Work and Education to compensate the child and prevent negative educational outcomes. These are, damaging precare experience; inadequate support for school progress in the care environment; low expectations of social workers and schools; and the failure of Social and Education services to work together.

The development of protective working this area has been taken up by Gilligan (1997; 1998; 2000; 2001) who advocated the study of resilience in children and young people in care as a more positive and potentially protective approach. Such an approach, according to Gilligan can promote self-esteem, self-efficacy and enhance motivation. While Fraser, Richman and Galinsky have viewed protection and resilience as a basis for a future theoretical and conceptual framework for social work. They identify three dimensions

Overcoming the odds- being successful despite exposure to high risk

Sustaining competence under pressure – adapting to high risk

Such work has begun to take root in Social Work and Education; Berridge *et al.* had established valuable insight into the educational environment of some children's homes. Ten years after the initial research it was observed that staff were clearly trying to establish good parenting in an effort to compensate young people for their early disadvantage (Berridge *et al.* 1996). Liaison with school and a determination to improve the educational chances of the young people was evident in the three children's homes evaluated in this study. The commitment of staff to ensuring that young people could complete homework was not in doubt. The rooms were well equipped with desk, reading lamp and bookshelf, however a general lack of resources was evident. A lack of computer technology and lack of expertise on the part of staff was also noted. Berridge and Brodie (1998) found that staff practice to support children's education varied and that many opportunities to enhance children's education were lost.

Lindsay and Foley (1999) have taken up the importance of effective support in getting children into regular schooling. They describe in detail the strong features of one successful Scottish project as inter-professional respect and meaningful teamwork; demonstrable value of each human being on a daily basis; detailed knowledge of the school involved; creation of a culture in which a high value is placed upon education; joint planning; and determination not to be deflected by setbacks.

Children looked after by the Local Authority may share common woes of separation from loved ones, abandonment, social difficulties, poor educational achievement and the poor life chances that are the result of circumstance. A distinctly homogenous group they are not. The circumstances in which children find themselves and the personal experiences they have being looked after by foster carers, or by professional carers in residential homes will differ.

It can be argued that where there is commitment in the form of tangible support to

schools within a Local Authority, each group of children, whether from foster care or residential unit, will be seen to benefit from that provision regardless of the care setting in which they live. The case in question became one of the congruence between the policy of the Local Authority and the experience of the young people served by it in support of education for literacy.

Where a Local Authority has a stated policy of intervention and expressed support for all children, as demanded by legislation and national guidance, it might also be expected that regardless of where a child lives, the school will identify their educational needs, assess them and provide appropriate educational support. It is proposed then to inquire into the experience children have of public policy the avowed purpose of which is to support them in school and at home.

In Scotland, the Scottish Executive publishes Annual Statistical Accounts. This means that the numbers of children who have been assessed as having needs for specialist care and education services are listed annually recorded across a range of provision. From the educational statistics one can discern the range of learning support and special educational provision for children in schools in Scotland, and the staffing levels available to address those needs. Social Work statistics published annually detail the numbers of children in different kinds of care provision, but do not detail educational information. A review, which links the range of educational supports to the care statistics, is suggested. From this individual children in the care system can be identified with specific educational supports. With the development of one manageable audit method others would be possible. The development of a manageable method of audit is undertaken as part of this research project. This would provide data for analysis within and across Local Authorities and illustrate the contemporary context in which young people are being educated.

Children yet to be identified as being in need of specialist help will be assessed by teachers in school or by social workers acting as part of a multi-disciplinary team (SOED 1994a; SOED 1994b). Advice from psychologists for social workers and caregivers in assessing the educational needs of children in care is thought to be crucial

(Heath *et al.* 1994). Social assessment also takes place under the direction of the Children's Hearing system in Scotland. Still to be researched is the identification of the educational need for support in the achievement of fluency in literacy, the level of support provided, and the level of benefit perceived through the experience of such support.

The cumulative effect of identification, assessment of need, and the resulting action through the processes of adjustment and engagement is an increasingly complex and repetitive process in which a circular dynamic is established. This involves professionals being constantly attentive to current difficulties a child experiences, and to the identification of strengths and weaknesses in approaches to learning, and to the development of a resilient and problem-solving approach. Dockrell and McShane (1993) describe the model of intervention to address children's learning difficulties as a repetitive process of identification, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation of improvement in skills developed.

Throughout this process outcomes are experienced as the child benefits from support. The child, looked after by the Local Authority and by the professionals, experiences at each stage repeated evaluation of new skills as progress is discussed. Other interventions are planned as the care and educational status of the child is reviewed. At each review improvement, or lack of improvement, may be noted. Educational outcomes are the resulting effects of inputs. Regularly observed, they are reviewed and recorded as progress or lack of progress. Repetition of this process over years to record growth and development promoted through support is communicated to parents and carers in annual progress reports.

Consideration of educational success should take into account not only the motivation of learners but also the level of their literacy, that is the ability to read fluently, and to write the language fluently. Literacy is the key to a better education and a better life. Acquisition of literacy and literary skills are critical throughout a school career and upon school leaving for all children. The connection between levels of literacy, educational success, educational achievement in the form of

formal credentials and certification among students is a strong one (Jackson and Sachdev 2001). The effort made to ensure literacy, within schools and in the home, is a major factor for all children (Douglas 1964; Douglas, Ross and Simpson 1968). This is especially critical when considering the educational success of children separated from their parents. What matters most is the quality of support available to them at any time (Sharron 1987). This begs two relevant questions.

What support for problems of literacy is available at school?

individual support/paired reading/peer tutoring/classroom support/technology/other?

What support for problems of literacy is available at home?

study bedroom/privacy/advice/tuition/technology/other

Further questions have been identified from the general model of provision. These concern public policy and its translation, via professional staff, into the face-to-face encounter experienced by children as individual clients and they allow the experience of children and young people to be discussed.

## **Summary**

This review was instrumental in the determination of the research. These and further questions formed the basis of research tools.

Main research question: What are young people's experiences of being in and of leaving care ?

Where a Local Authority has a stated policy and a Support for Learning initiative in schools, children in the care of the Local Authority will, regardless of the care setting in which they live have a positive experience of being supported educationally. It has also revealed the need to find ways of establishing criteria by which quality of services to children can be recognised. This was seen to be linked to the way in which policy in Social Work and in Education was translated into the experiences of care and education children and young people.

The implementation of the *1995 Act* and the changes it was intended to achieve were viewed as important tenets to be reflected in national and local policy. This was seen as a potentially useful way to determine quality in both Social Work and Education services in Scotland and in establishing criteria of effectiveness for the delivery of Social Work and Education policy. Chapter Three initiates this quest in the selection of a suitable theoretical point of view.

### **Chapter 3: Theories**

Hoary convention decrees that one look back fondly upon the years spent growing up. The family nest, brimming with affection, symbolised things as they should be: warm, secure, and caring. Such nests surely existed, beyond the conventional generalities, but one suspects that they were not the norm. In the home, or the society that prolongs it, the ideal appears to be less one of harmony than of unity imposed from outside or above. Family relations are adversary relations...the family sheltered less tenderness than tension, suffering, and more or less covert violence.

(Weber 1986, p.xi)

#### **What Do Children Need?**

Much has been written about the quality of care that children should be afforded in modern society. Children who have become separated from their loved ones and who are now looked after by the State deserve the very best quality of care and the very best effort in their education. The prolific writing in this area made it relatively easy to establish a theoretical viewpoint that would infer a standard for optimal care of the children looked after by the State.

The first area to be addressed was the notable absence of a theoretical framework. A synthesis of relevant theory provided a theoretical and conceptual framework. This facilitated analysis of the various components of the complex system within which the needs of children in Scotland would be identified and met. No attempt has been made to provide new theory. Instead a 'middle-range theory' (Merton 1949) was developed to incorporate selected ideas already accepted as part of contemporary care and education approaches.

Theory plays a useful part in expanding our knowledge and increasing our understanding of the subject. Existing theory was reconsidered and certain relevant strands of theoretical knowledge selected. The aim was to put forward another way of viewing the problem facing professionals in public service as well as families and carers. Theory is also regarded as an aid to professional development and is

developed within this study as a tool to promote understanding. I worked steadily towards providing a theoretical synthesis using the work of a group of theorists that would enable the work of professionals from both Social Work and Education to be viewed and analysed. Reliance was placed upon previously established lines of thought, widely accepted in the field of child development, interrelationships and professional intervention.

To this end concentration upon theoretical stances that allowed strategic elements of policy implementation in care and education to be analysed were given priority. The aim was to create a theoretical framework capable of supporting analysis of a broad range of policy issues relevant to the childcare and education experience. Such an overarching framework permitted analysis of, but was not confined to, the study of factors affecting the support and development of literacy. The quality of policy implementation and its impact upon the experience of young people could then be emphasised. Future research could be undertaken in various areas affecting children and young people who become subject to public care.

Considered and discounted at an early stage were certain theorists whose work focused in detail upon areas, which although of interest and significance, failed to address the broader scope of the study in policy and its impact on the experience of children and young people.

The development theory of Erikson (1963) contributes to the field of psychology and deals with self and identity formation. Erikson put forward the idea that humans continue to develop their identity and personality throughout the lifespan passing through eight psychosocial stages. The in-depth nature of the theory in each stage, especially that of adolescence, (Erikson 1968) provided insight into the development of the self and the crises of confidence that might occur. While useful, in my view, Erikson's development theory was more applicable to analysis of personal developmental histories rather than the experience of policy.

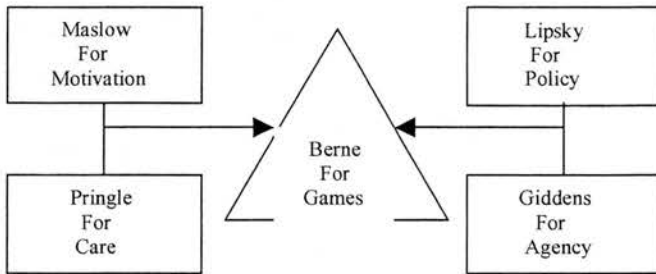
The work of Piaget in illuminating the processes in cognition was explored but ultimately set to one side (Cohen 1983). Piaget was interested in how children think and in how it changes as they develop. There are two main aspects to his theory, the process through which children come to know and the stages children pass through in learning to think (Piaget 1952; 1969). He also was concerned with how they adapted to the environment. Although he deals with child development and learning processes, Piaget does not account adequately for the care setting or for the interaction between adult and child. That is, it is not about nurture. Theorists who deal with the nurturing process and its implication for growth and fuller development of self seemed to be the most appropriate and profitable line of inquiry.

The extensive work of Bowlby, a well-recognised exponent of childcare and personality development was considered (Bowlby 1969; 1973; and 1980). Bowlby (1969) placed emphasis on the kind of attachment forged between infant and parents in the early weeks of life. From this attachment stems the child's working models of relationships that predispose the child to understand the world in certain terms. His work focused upon attachment, the effect of separation and loss of significant relations within the family (Bowlby 1973) and the sadness and depression that may ensue (Bowlby 1980). A singularly important the field and its insight into the importance of relations in infancy, attachment theory with its concentration upon the personal condition of the child was deemed less relevant to this inquiry. Added to this was the need to understand more clearly how children interrelate with adults, both within intimate nurturing relations and within the professional structure of Social Work and Education. Included within this theoretical model is discussion about the needs of children, the professional intervention made on their behalf, and the nature of educational support that they require.

There have been many theories about human behaviour and human development. None however link the overall aims of care and education together. What is needed here is a theoretical framework that allows consideration of the emotional development of children, their capacity to learn, their educability and their aspirations to have a good life.

## The Framework

The generation of this theoretical framework allows the various elements of the care and education processes to be analysed systematically (Figure 3.1). Each of the theories employed in the figure are given equal weight in providing quality care and education for separated children.



**Figure 3.1: Linkages in Theory**

Pringle confirms that high quality care, which meets the child's, need for love, affection and stability can pave the way to social adjustment and educational success (Pringle 1975). Pringle's work in the field of psychology covers the early years of childhood, child development, growth and development through childhood and into adolescence. This lays a sound foundation for care and education of children at home and away from home. An understanding of the way issues of safety and emotional security within care settings can undermine social and educational development of a child is provided by the inclusion of Maslow's theory of motivation. This has significance for the way separated children might interact within the alternative care settings provided for them. Whether or not a child thrives and experiences well being when separated from families is of the utmost importance (Maslow 1987).

This also lays the foundation for an integrated continuum of care and education viewed as essential in the Kilbrandon report (Kilbrandon 1964) when it

recommended the integration of various services for children in Scotland into a Social Education Department within Local Authorities (Bruce, 1983). This recommendation was never taken up. According to Bruce

The integration of social work services under the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act had the unfortunate side effect of widening the gap between social work and education.

(Bruce 1983, pp. 155)

The inclusion of Pringle and Maslow together affirm integration of care and education within any analysis of whether the needs of children are met and conditions set for the achievement of personal potential.

The purpose of professional intervention is to compensate for any prior shortcomings in a child's care by making improved arrangements. The quality of professional intervention becomes a critical factor in determining positive change in the life of a separated child. The nature of the relationship between children and the staff of the public services serves to influence the progress, or lack of progress, a child makes in responding to change. The inclusion of Berne's work on the games and how they are played lends insight into how change might be experienced by children and managed at a professional level. In his work on the psychology of human relationships Berne (1961 and 1964) has provided a theory of social intercourse and an analysis of the 'games' human beings play out in order to live with one another and with themselves. Berne catalogues the psychological theatricals that human beings play over and over again (Berne 1964). According to Berne

...games are quite deliberately initiated by young children. After they become fixed patterns of stimulus and response, their origins become lost in the mists of time and their ulterior nature becomes obscured by social fogs.

(Berne 1964, p.54)

Most importantly there will be a payoff for the main player at each stage of the game

Hence games are both necessary and desirable, and the only problem at issue is whether the games played offer the best yield for him (the player). In this connection it should be remembered that the essential feature of a game is its culmination, or the payoff. The principal function of the preliminary moves is to set up the situation for this payoff, but they are always designed to harvest the maximum permissible satisfaction at each step as a secondary product.

(Berne 1964, p.55)

Only when the child is able to recognise his/her behaviour and appreciate its function will s/he be able to relinquish what may be an unfortunate behavioural trait with negative, if not tragic consequences in favour of a more positive life adventure (Berne 1964). Professional work with children and young people 'looked after' and cared for by Local Authorities experience separation from the familiar adults responsible for them to face new sets of adults, children and young people, who are strangers to them and with whom they will spend a considerable amount of time. The social interaction, treatment, and the games that are played all become central to that new existence. The introduction of Berne's approach provides a valuable psychological dimension. The dynamic of triangular interrelations has been highlighted to illustrate the vulnerability of separated children who on being brought into care become immediately dependent upon strangers. In this way Berne's theory links the care and motivational aspects of the theoretical framework to the professional agencies that work to support children in the community (Berne 1964).

The quality of that professional intervention and the extent to which it reflects policy is critical. Together the work of Lipsky (Lipsky 1968) and Giddens (Giddens 1979) point up two relevant roles taken by professional staff. Lipsky draws attention to the nature of the relationship between professional staff and their client. Professional staff deliver public policy and regulate the constitutional relationship between individuals and government, namely a dimension of citizenship. They convey the policies of the institutions and street bureaucracies for whom they work and are deemed to be autonomous.

Known as the theory of street-level bureaucracy the way in which professionals react to the dilemmas they face in making decisions and how they dispense benefits and sanctions, provides a useful dimension to the conceptual framework. Public service agencies that employ a significant number of street-level bureaucrats in proportion to their workforce are called street-level bureaucracies. Lipsky's work is therefore appropriate in this context in that the operation of large departments of Social Work, Education within Local Authorities can each be analysed. Each child or young person who experiences assistance from public service agencies has had direct contact with teachers, social workers, and others who act as agents for street-level bureaucracies. This will be reflected in their experience of the support they have received. When allied to the role of action and agency in professional Social Work, pointed up by Giddens a powerful analytical tool emerges by which to determine the extent to which policy is evident in the interaction between professionals and clients.

The application of this theoretical and conceptual framework to specific key interrelationships, and how consequent analysis leads to the development of an idealised model of the system is undertaken in Chapter Four. First of all an explication is given of how the work of the theorists listed above informs the theoretical framework and its application.

### **The Theoretical Framework for meeting Children's Needs**

Taken together, the two distinctly different theories of Pringle and Maslow provide succinct exposition of the child's need for emotional security, a love of learning, pursuit of goals and personal achievement. The needs of children as defined by Pringle suit the purpose in part. She identifies four basic emotional needs of the growing child

There are four basic emotional needs, which have to be met from the very beginning of life to enable a child to grow from helpless infancy to mature adulthood. These are: the need for love and security; for new experiences; for praise and recognition; and for responsibility. Their relative importance changes, of course, during the different stages of growth, as do the ways in which they are met.

(Pringle 1975, p.148)

This widely accepted definition of children's needs and forms the concept of basic need to which we refer throughout the study. She identifies the positive effect upon the child when the need for love and affection is met. Children need to experience from birth onwards a stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with parents or with permanent parent-substitutes. Through this the child can form a personal identity and sense of worth, a healthy personality and the ability to respond to affection. This will help them become in turn a loving parent in adulthood.

The all-pervasive nature of parental love is its unconditional nature and its greatest affect is on the development of the child. It is given freely without expectation of gratitude through relations with the child. Through this the parent also sets limits for acceptable behaviour, disciplines without cause for resentment. Introduction to the social world is a vital element of this love. Approval and acceptance by people other than the parents are necessary for the development of self-approval and self-acceptance. On this depends whether the child will become constructive or destructive in attitude towards him/herself in the first instance and then towards others.

When the need for love and security is not sufficiently met the consequence at later stage in life can be disastrous both for the individual and for society.

Anger, hate, lack of concern for others and an inability to make mutually satisfactory relationships are common reactions to having been unloved and rejected

(Pringle 1975, p.152)

Pringle and Fiddes (1970) have termed as "able misfits" those individuals within the population of prisons, mental homes and among the chronic unemployed who lacked consistent, continuous and concerned care or were unloved and rejected. The more uneventful and dull life is the more boredom and dissatisfaction with life set in. On the need for new experiences Pringle notes

New experiences facilitate learning of one of the most important lessons of early life: learning how to learn; and learning that mastery brings joy and a sense of achievement. Educability depends not only on inborn capacity, but as much – if not more – on environmental opportunity and encouragement. The emotional and cultural climate of the home, as well as parental involvement in aspirations, can foster, limit or impair mental growth.

(Pringle 1975, p.149)

Only if new experiences are provided will a child's intelligence develop. The opportunity to play and the development of language form the foundations of intellectual discovery and food for the mind. The child explores the world and learns to think. Going to school brings with it a wealth of opportunities to learn new things. Teachers play an important role in this and their attitude will “powerfully influence” a child's progress.

Closely linked to joy of learning about the world is the need for praise and recognition for effort as well as achievement and the need for responsibility. The child will model him/herself on the performance of influential adults. Strong incentive can be gained through the praise and recognition given by such adults in the home and socially. Pringle makes the point that such strong incentive is required to support the child in the difficulties, conflicts and setbacks that inevitably accompany growing up. Encouragement, praise and recognition are vital to sustain effort and make demands emotionally, socially and intellectually. Without this failure to develop personal independence is inevitable.

Personal independence is attained through a framework of guidance and limits set by parents. Through this children come to know what is expected, what is permitted and what the rules are. They learn the reasoning behind the rules and what is in their interest and what is not. They learn gradually to be responsible for themselves first and then for others.

It requires a delicate balance between giving information and advice on the one hand and, on the other, leaving the making of decisions and coping with their consequences to the young person while yet being prepared to step in and help if things go badly wrong.

(Pringle 1975, p.151)

Parenting, then, is an extremely skilled business and the impact of less than satisfactory arrangements for the child rearing upon the potential success of children and young people can have disastrous consequences for the way they will feel about themselves and the world about them. This is the responsibility of those who become interim carers of children separated from their parents.

Importantly Pringle considers the impact of separation of children from their parents in relation to the basic needs children have in the areas outlined above. Adequate physical care alone is not enough to provide emotional, social and intellectual growth. Separation from parents over a prolonged period can be harmful if basic needs are not adequately met. The relative importance of the needs changes over time. At different stages in the growth and development of the child the way in which these needs are met will also differ. At first sight, Pringle's work marks an important stage in the development of my theoretical standpoint. It satisfies only in part, however. What is needed is a holistic approach to the question of how children are sustained and supported in life, as well as in education.

For this we turn to the motivational theory first put forward by Maslow in 1954. This lends insight to the motivational drives that may be at work. Maslow offers a theory of human growth and development. This process is life-long and according to Maslow consists of a hierarchy of human need. Maslow describes the properties of two distinct groups of human needs which, taken together, are a part of human nature.

The basic needs arrange themselves in a fairly definite hierarchy on the basis of the principle of relative potency. Thus, the safety need is stronger than the love need, because it dominates the organism in various demonstrable ways when both needs are frustrated. In this sense, the physiological needs, which are stronger than the love needs,

which in turn are stronger than the esteem needs, which are stronger than those idiosyncratic needs we have called the need for 'self-actualisation'.

(Maslow 1987, p. 56-59)

Self-actualisation may be equated with achieving one's own potential. Appreciation of a hierarchical view of human needs, which considers capacity to learn, is of significance, especially given the effects of separation upon a child. What separation does is to heighten the safety need. The effect of this is that the child has to devote energy and determination towards the safety need, at the expense of nurturing higher needs. As Maslow explains:-

Lower needs, when satisfied, give way, become subdued and less apparent while the child satisfies urges for autonomy, independence, and achievement. The need to be respected and be praised motivate behaviour in addition to safety and parental love.

(Maslow 1987, pp. 56-59)

The higher needs lead, if conditions and opportunity allow, to self-actualisation.

The higher the need, the less imperative it is for sheer survival, the longer gratification can be postponed, and the easier it is for the need to disappear permanently. Higher needs have less ability to dominate, organise, and press into their service the autonomic reactions and other capacities of the organism (e.g., it is easier to be single-minded, monomaniac and desperate about safety than about respect). Deprivation of higher needs does not produce so desperate a defence, and emergency reaction, as is produced by lower deprivations. Respect is a dispensable luxury when compared with food or safety.

(Maslow 1987, p. 57)

The appeal of including Maslow's hierarchy of human need as part of the theoretical standpoint lies in the possibilities it creates for a fuller understanding of motivational drives and also the pace of intellectual development. My early experience working with separated children provided opportunity to develop insight into the erratic nature of children's behaviour even on the shortest of separations (i.e., staying overnight in an Assessment, Treatment and Observation Centre proved traumatic for many). On my appointment to that establishment nothing had prepared me for the intellectual and social resourcefulness of the young people concerned, despite the

fact that many could barely read or write. It was brought home to me very early in my teaching experience with separated children that the young people regarded themselves as highly intelligent and resourceful. It was the teachers who failed to appreciate this - "Just because I cannae read disna mean I'm stupid", as one girl put it.

In that establishment in the 1970's, helping children to advance their literary skills was a major task, regardless of the age of the young people. Their ages ranged from 5 years to 12 years in one Centre, and from 12 years to 17 years in another. Most were struggling with problems of handling reading and writing and many were having serious problems in coping with the curriculum at school. Maslow's theory helps us explain the variable motivational responses of these children. Many would make great strides for a certain amount of time if they stayed on with us, and then, due to upset, concerns of family, something dramatic happening in their lives, all would be suspended and the safety need engaged. During those periods, often for a week or two, sometimes for months on end, little educational progress could be made, as the youngster had become desperately worried and preoccupied about family circumstances, over which they felt they had little or no control. This anxiety was greatest when they did not know what was happening to their family members. The love needs, the safety needs, became paramount. Teachers working in such Centres became sensitive to those periods during which sadness predominated for the young people. Periods of such disruption were commonplace.

Maslow also assists us by defining human needs in a relation to one another, bringing yet another dimension to our view of behaviour. Consideration of what is motivating action at any time lends insight to another range of problems, which thwart educational success, (e.g. wanting to learn, and interest in the world beyond the living room). So we gain some appreciation of Maslow's hierarchy of human need. In my view, acceptance of both Pringle and Maslow combines to lead us to an 'ideal model' of care and education. I use ideal in the Weberian sense (Weber 1947) to denote the abstraction of ideas that represent as accurately and in the purest form possible the nature of care and education a child needs to receive to thrive



emotionally and intellectually. It follows that no matter where a child is living, be it at home or elsewhere, when needs are met the child can grow and achieve, commensurate with emotional capacity and intellectual ability. Development of the whole child is the ideal aim. Development of the social and the intellectual self gives way to development of cultural interest, consideration of philosophical and psychological matters, the evolution of a moral conscience and the spiritual soul. If the trend towards low educational achievement of children who are looked after by the Local Authorities is to be resisted, it is in the attention given to continually meeting all the needs of children. A holistic view of a child's development is essential. The view adopted here concurs with that of Lawrence Kubie, as reported by Maslow

Lawrence Kubie, in 'The Forgotten Man in Education,' some time ago made the point that, one ultimate goal of education is to help the person become a human being, as fully human as he can possibly be. Especially with adults we are not in a position in which we have nothing to work with. We already have a start; we already have capacities, talents, directions, missions, callings. The job is, if we are to take this model seriously, to help them be more perfectly what they already are, to be more 'full', more actualising, more realising, in fact, what they are in potentiality.

(Maslow 1971, p. 55)

Maslow's theory, according to Tomlinson (1981), would be difficult to assess because of its scope. Tomlinson advises that teachers

...might do well to take note, not only of the multiplicity of human motives and their likely interrelations, but also of Maslow's more general point that in current Western culture there seems to be under-valuation of needs beyond the physical level, and a taboo on their expression and even their recognition by adults. Children, however, especially younger children, are more in touch with and responsive to such needs (as for example, for warm relationships), which should be remembered if one wishes to instruct and motivate children optimally.

(Tomlinson 1981, p. 153)

Work with the mature children and young people will take this into account, providing warm relationships wherever possible within a well-established stable and caring environment.

The professional task for those working with children becomes one of helping them realise their capacities, their talents, and to find a direction and purpose in life. If, at 16, young people are still being helped to find a place to stay because they are homeless, aimless and perhaps jobless, then it must be acknowledged that a struggle to meet the basic needs continues, and may do so repeatedly throughout life. In such circumstances the self-actualising process described by Abraham Maslow may also flounder repeatedly, only to be pursued during periods when the drive to meet basic needs is less dominant, and conditions optimum for a period of personal growth and development.

This tendency for the self-actualising process to be subject to interruption at intervals given adverse change in personal and social conditions reveals a valuable clue as to the potential vulnerability of the children and young people looked after by Local Authorities. Children and young people may flounder as a result of such interruption to their attempts to strive. The difficulties facing adults in providing stable arrangements for the care of children and young people is evident. Attempts to help young people develop to the best of their ability can be thwarted and undermined by such fluctuations in confidence. Serious and frequent lapses in drive and motivation simply denote increased vulnerability and reflect the need for increased support. Providing for vulnerable young people demands that professional staff from Social Work and Education recognise the significance of establishing good supportive relations with the children and young people with whom they are concerned. The kind of interaction and the maintenance of good relations are of the essence. This, as readers with experience of working with children and young people in care will know, can be the most difficult element of care to sustain. To run the gambit of emotions from dawn to dusk with teenagers in care is demanding and requires professional training, back-up and support for all concerned.

It has to be acknowledged that under consideration here are the care and educational needs of some of the most vulnerable, and perhaps disturbed and damaged children and young people in Scotland. To take account of this, included in this theoretical perspective is one aspect of Eric Berne's contribution in the field of psychiatry, the place of games in social interaction (Berne 1964). This allows analysis of the more difficult to manage children in relation to the study.

Working with young people can be difficult and many of the behaviours exhibited may be unusual and alien to inexperienced professionals working in the area. As Berne puts it

Games are passed on from generation to generation. The favoured game of any individual can be traced back to his parents and grandparents, and forward to his children: they in turn, unless there is a successful intervention, will teach them to his grandchildren.  
(Berne 1964, p. 151)

By definition games are transactions with ulterior motives, which progress to a well-defined predictable outcome. There is a recurring set of transactions that are superficially plausible so motives can be concealed. The ulterior motivation and the pay-off for the main players distinguish them from pastimes, rituals and procedures. Of interest here are the games children play and the games adults and children may play together when they become involved in planning and intervention, as well as treatment plans. It is possible to avoid being drawn into such "games" only when the gamesmanship possibilities are recognised and made explicit. Berne asserts that games have a historical, cultural and social and personal significance. Of cultural importance is "Raising children is primarily a matter of teaching them what games to play." (Berne 1964, p. 151)

At a personal level

...everybody who is anybody in a given social circle (aristocracy, juvenile gang, social club, college campus etc.) behaves in a way which may seem quite foreign to members of a different social circle. Conversely, any member of a social circle who changes his games will

tend to be extruded, but he will find himself welcome at some other social circle. That is the personal significance of games.

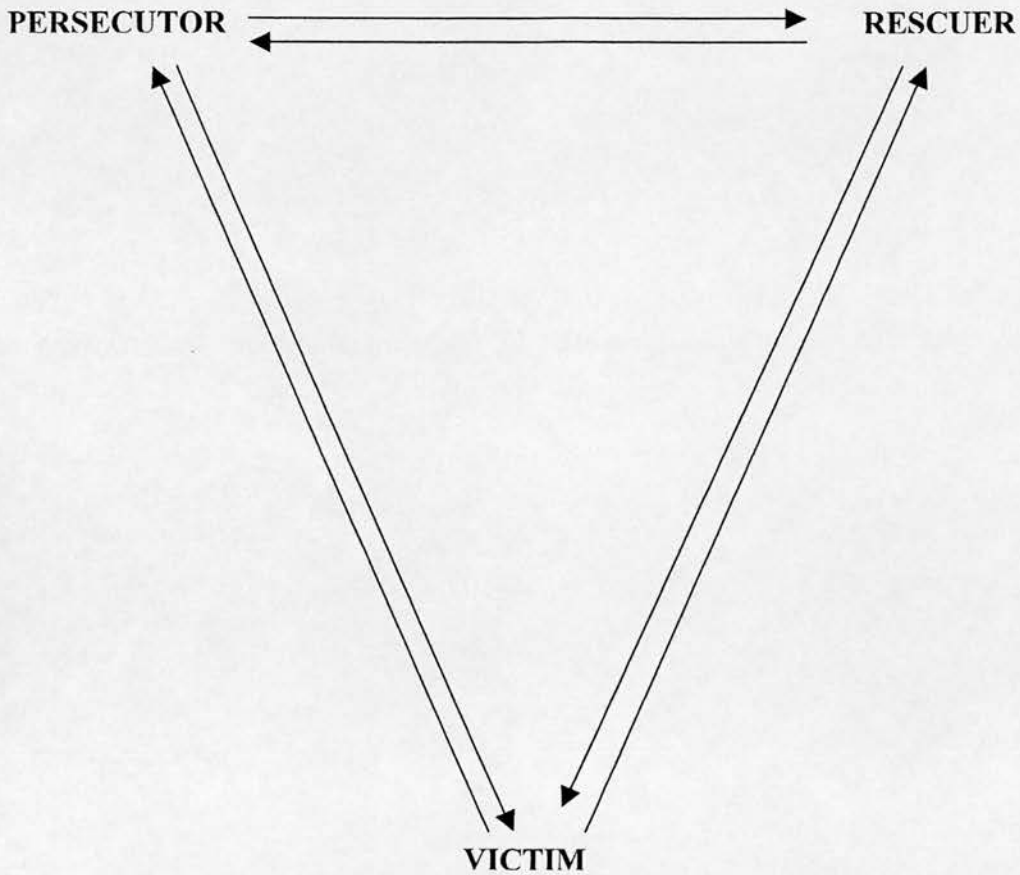
(Berne 1964, p. 152)

The culture in which children and young people are cared for influences which games they play and with whom. At a personal level real personal change, as a result of professional intervention, may demand that new games be learned, and regular but unhelpful ones abandoned, with the attendant risk of social exclusion.

Berne's interest in Karpman's three handed positions (Berne 1972) also provides a useful contribution towards the theoretical framework. The triangular relationship between the family (including the child), Social Work and Education is a key element in the provision of professional assistance. The child becomes a full member in the triangle when, although still a dependent, s/he interacts independently with a teacher on the one hand and a social worker on the other. The children occupy one of the three positions in the triangular relation with teacher and social worker, or with a teacher and carer when resident in a place other than the parental home. Indeed, many triangular relationships evolve during professional intervention. They may or may not be games in the sense that Berne describes, but it is very important to recognise when the games in the serious sense that Berne describes are in play. According to Berne three handed positions, offer the possibility for the greatest number of games.

The family may also find itself part of a three-handed position with education and social work. Berne also considers the players of games as a reminder to us that many of these games are played most intensely by disturbed people (Berne 1964).

The three handed position Karpman details involves a drama triangle (See Fig. 3.2 below)



**Figure 3.2: The Drama Triangle (Karpman 1968)**

The significance of the roles, and what prompts a switch of roles has been described as follows

Each hero in a drama or in life (the protagonist) starts off in one of the three main roles: Rescuer, Persecutor, or Victim, with the other principle player (the antagonist) in one of the other roles. *When crisis occurs, the two players move around the triangle, thus switching roles...in fact, all struggles in life are struggles to move around the triangle in accordance with the demands of the script.* Thus the

criminal persecutes his victims; the victim then files a complaint, and becomes the plaintiff, or persecutor, with the criminal now the victim.  
(Berne 1972, pp.186-187 *emphasis added*)

Although Berne refers here to adults, he also alludes to the story of Little Red Riding Hood to demonstrate the scenario when children are involved with adults. The Wolf begins as persecutor, Little Red Riding Hood, the victim. After a sequence of moves the Wolf becomes the victim, with Little Red Riding Hood the persecutor. These moves may take place over years during which contact between the players may be continuous or intermittent.

All games do not necessarily end badly (Berne 1962). There are good games in which each person involved by the game-player may gain social experience and in which outcomes may be positive. Players may also work hard within games to free themselves from manoeuvres that manipulate them into uncomfortable and untenable positions. The for example *switch* is pulled when the game-player uses some phrase which changes the direction of the transaction

Working with unhappy, displaced, separated and disturbed children demands much of social workers and teachers. Professional staff may be frequently involved in steering a child safely through crises. Crisis management is an important part of their responsibility. Where children are involved, the games are no less real. Berne's Game Theory as part of transactional analysis provide a way of understanding some of the more complex ways in which children engage with adults. For our purposes the realisation of games and the complexity they represent, provides another important strand to the theoretical perspective.

A child arriving in care may for example start the game in the position of victim with a social work representative fulfilling the role of rescuer. Education may or may not fill role of persecutor, which has yet to be determined by the game-player. The victim feels abandoned, hopeless and powerless, until discovering the reality of the situation, which may improve matters. If not the role of victim will be retained. Rescuers appear nice and helpful. Persecutors can make the child feel bad.

Professional intervention is often about change. Many children separated from their families have been separated because of their difficult behaviour at home, at school, and in the community. Professional intervention attempts to change such behaviours. And a theoretical perspective without Berne's games, especially the three-handed position, would make it difficult to establish how difficult the care task is. One may provide the highest quality of care and education but when real games are in play they have to be made explicit and named and the behaviours re-learned, or abandoned, before learning new ones. This aspect of intervention in the lives of young children in care is rarely discussed openly, although it may well be high on the agenda of professional care workers and health workers. The chances of success in reintegrating young people into the community after they leave care relies on careful assessment of the way in which they have responded to the demands of the care process. It is to be hoped that some of the more serious games which children may play with adults, in which the 'pay-off' is lack of success all round, are abandoned and a successful engagement with the world on leaving care is made possible.

This strand also helps take account of a different kind of disruption in the lives of young people. The disruption is not all about being separate; it is also about how young people deal with the effects of separation. Becoming literate, becoming independent, when your needs are met, these are all part of growing up in care.

While the games Berne speaks about are carried out more at a personal level, culturally they overlap into the area of professional intervention as described above, and it is to that professional intervention and the development of a suitable theoretical perspective that I now turn.

### **The Theoretical Framework for Professional Intervention**

Our theoretical perspective cannot be completed until a stance that reflects the organisation of how children and families are assisted is developed. Professional assistance and support can be arranged for a child by social workers, teachers and

others. Support by means of professional intervention is a key element of policy implementation at local level. Each system has its bureaucracy.

For the purpose of this thesis bureaucracy will be defined as it relates to the individual in society. Bureaucracy is recognised as a legitimising authority, operating without force in organisations of all kinds (Weber 1947). The kind of bureaucracy operating within schools is relevant. Many formal educational support arrangements for individual children take place in schools. Because of the complexity of schools as institutions and the sensitivity of dealing with children schools are said to have “soft bureaucracies” (Litwak 1967). The resulting relative inefficiency of school bureaucracies has been acknowledged and these more refined and inefficient forms of bureaucracies named “loose bureaucracies” (Bidwell 1965). Social workers and teachers are the bureaucrats who meet the child and the family, in their professional capacity. They represent the organisations in which they work. They deliver the policy. In order to take account of this the theory of Michael Lipsky is included in the framework. He named this bureaucracy power as “Street Level Bureaucracy”. Lipsky’s interest was in the way people experience public policies.

According to Lipsky the professional working at the interface with the client in modern bureaucratic organisations determines the action taken in respect of implementation of policy at local level on a day-to-day basis. Regarded typically as street-level bureaucrats are the policemen, social workers, teachers and workers in other agencies whose work brings them into direct contact with the client.

Citizens directly experience government through them, and their actions are the policies provided by government in important respects.  
(Lipsky 1968, p. xvi)

In this enquiry the child and parent are the client. The decisions made by the professional, the routines established by them, the devices invented by them as street-level bureaucrats to help cope with the uncertainties and pressures of work,

cumulatively become in actuality the public policy as implemented. The child or client experience of professional workers is the experience of being governed.

Within this interpretation, Lipsky regards the role of professionals as critical to the delivery of policy. They are seen to not only dispense the benefits that a service has to offer but also they have the power over the way sanctions are employed within the structure of a system. Street-level bureaucrats, according to Lipsky, delimit people's lives and opportunities.

As he points out, any discussion or debate about scope and function of public services is really about the scope and function of the professionals who have direct contact with the population competing for benefits within a state welfare system (Lipsky 1968).

In addition, he says that:

...street-level bureaucrats have considerable impact upon people's lives. This impact may be of several kinds. They socialise citizens to expectations of government services and a place in the political community. They determine the eligibility of citizens for government benefits and sanctions. They oversee the treatment (the service) citizens receive in those programs. Thus, in a sense, street-level bureaucrats implicitly mediate aspects of the constitutional relationship of citizens to the state. In short, they hold the keys to a dimension of citizenship.

(Lipsky 1968, p. 4)

For the purpose of the study, the services to meet the needs of children and all that they entail in benefit and sanction are so mediated by the professionals who come into contact with children and their parents. This mediation takes place regardless of policy-making decisions at a more senior level. The professionals face dilemmas daily, and perceive themselves as doing the best they can within permitted resources. They develop strategies to cope with problems in recognised ways; rendering practice routine to limit demand; maximizing the use of available resources; seeking solution through modifying objectives; advocating for the child as best they can, and

in short, deliver a version of policy rather than the ideal one (Lipsky 1968). For those interested in what is really happening to children this is a critical issue into which Lipsky offers insight into the reality rather than the rhetoric of policy. What services are employed? Who benefits? Of particular interest is the tendency towards rationing of benefits that takes place by means of the administrative role and function of the professional as street-level bureaucrat.

For a broader view of policy and how it reaches people through a process of implementation through the action of professionals, I turned to an analysis of recognised problems in the implementation of policy. Giddens (1979) refers to such action in social theory as “agency”, when it refers to a “continuous flow of conduct”. Agency includes the conceptualisation of acts, intentions, purposes, and reasons, usually analysed by philosophers in their treatment of “action”. The concern here is with professional action as it is deployed to support children looked after by the Local Authority in their education, as well as in their care arrangements. Professionals act to remedy situations and improve circumstance. The concept of agency, according to Giddens, also involves “intervention”, so it is wholly appropriate for the purpose here. Giddens perceives the intentions of professional staff as equally relevant to this continuous flow to the unintended consequence that may arise out of professional conduct (Giddens 1979). At the professional level individuals within a structure may act intentionally but with unintentional consequences. How then can anyone be sure about what happens as a result of professional intervention? What, ultimately, is the child’s experience of professional intervention?

Within a structure, for example a policy structure, such as that of education policy and social work policy, the same applies. As Giddens points out, the power-relationship within a structure works two ways, up and down.

Power is expressed in the capabilities of actors to make certain ‘accounts count’ and to enact or resist sanctioning processes; but these capabilities draw upon modes of domination, structured into social systems... By ‘interpretative schemes’, I mean standardised elements of stocks of knowledge, applied by actors in the production of

interaction, interpretative schemes form the core of the mutual knowledge whereby an accountable universe of meaning is sustained through and in processes of action.

(Giddens 1979, p.83)

Social Work and Education policy stem from the law, and from official guidance, rules and regulations emanating from legislation. Children, as clients of Social Work and pupils in Education experience policy after it has been translated into practice. Children may not experience the principles and values encapsulated in policy in their contact with the professionals who help them. This should be borne in mind in the analysis of the experience children have of any system. What is of interest is what version of policy each individual receives.

Problems in the translation of policy into practice are known to occur. There can be a considerable difference between the rhetoric of policy guidelines and the reality of the experience of children. Children in care have made their views on this known through the movement 'Who Cares?' and through enquiries into the experiences of childcare that address the perspectives of children, parents and care-givers.

(National Children's Bureau 1978; Whittaker et al. 1989)

For this reason it seemed important that together Lipsky and Giddens provide the theoretical framework for the analysis of professional decision-making and the process of human agency through which 'policy infiltrates practice'. This theory also could then take account of the place of power in the processes between professional worker and client. Of interest to me was the extent to which issues of change in the power structure of society affected the relationship between professional and child while a child is being supported. To this end an examination of all areas affecting the relationship of public policy and the child seemed the best way to proceed. A thorough re-examination of key elements and interrelationships of the general system of provision would reveal the way in which the system operates and the thorny question of what might constitute quality within such a system could be asked. These discoveries are presented in Chapter Four.

## **Chapter 4: Models**

This Chapter first of all offers an account how criteria of effectiveness were established. This involved examining the pattern of triangular relationships around the child (Fig.4.1) and raising a typology of need to establish critical points of effectiveness held by the family, Social Work and Education (Table 4.1). Issues preceding and following the *1995 Act* were then researched by plotting the essence of the relationship of the child to the family, to Social Work and to Education. Both are central to the General Model of Support. The chapter then describes the way in which other key elements of the General Model of Support (Fig. 4.2) were put in place before the introduction of the *1995 Act* was researched and created.

The legal responsibilities of Social Work, Education and Health were analysed to reveal that they overlap in some respects. This was followed by an examination of the professional values held by Social Work and Education. Subsequently a second model demonstrating the process of provision within the General Model of Process and Provision with the introduction of the *1995 Act* is presented (Fig.4.4). This shows the resulting change in the relationship of the child in care to the family and society through the Social Work and Education systems and the resulting process of communication. The views of the child assume a more equal role in the decision-making processes. Over time as the child grows and ultimately assumes adult status, a more independent role within the decision-making process is consolidated.

This chapter begins with the ideas that informed the choice to employ models. Having selected a certain theoretical stance decisions about how to apply this to the general system of Social Work and Educational provision had to be made. Recognition of the positive effects of the application of models to bring increased understanding of the Education system led me, as a practitioner whose work with children had involved encounters with both systems, to attempt a model that would embrace both Social Work and Education. A holistic dimension was established at the beginning.

Holism is a theory in which a whole cannot be analysed without attention to all of its constituent parts. A holistic view is an all-encompassing one that adheres to the principle of the theory and emphasises the organic or functional relation between parts or 'wholes'.

(Webster's Dictionary, 1993 p.1080)

This concept is prevalently used within the education system. Whole school policies are developed to meet the needs of the "whole child". It is used here to indicate the need for a model of the whole area that affected children separated from its parents and of the context in which they learn. For example, of the education system alone it is said

In order that educational development may be consciously coordinated, its systematic nature must be made explicit; that is to say, we need a model of the system that abstracts the key inter-relationships between the most important components.

(Armitage, Smith and Alper 1969, p.2)

The authors' express intention was to create the kind of model to aid decision-making in Education. To do this they recommended that models in education be developed from abstract concepts marking a departure from reliance upon decision-making based upon models developed from statistical criteria and mathematical calculation. Abstract models such as those recommended by Armitage, Smith and Alper (1969) above have more recently been recommended to address the theory and practice of education rather than decision-making (Milbourne, Macrae and Maguire 2003), and to identify different forms of inter-agency working in work with young people at risk in the community (Lloyd, Stead and Kendrick 2001). Models have many strengths and are put to multiple use. The way this model was developed and applied in this study confirmed the critical points of effectiveness as being central in qualifying successful implementation of policy for children and families.

It soon became apparent that a holistic model would of necessity include more than Social Work and Education together, but a sum of the parts of the general system of provision before the introduction of the *1995 Act* and also an holistic model capable of representing the change and any the shift in responsibilities contained in the 1995 Act. The significance of the change from one legislative framework to another appeared to be momentous and worth charting. It was hoped that in this way the implementation of the *1995 Act* would be rendered more discernible during the years it would take to establish its principles in terms of policy and practice.

In addition such a model could contribute in other important ways. It would help return the needs of children to the forefront of social work care following the policy emphasis on child protection in the late nineteen eighties and early nineteen nineties (Hill, Triseliotis and Borland 1993). It would also direct attention to a positive analysis of how to provide and sustain safety for children in different care settings. An issue raised both in the 1993 review of residential care (HMSO 1993), and again in the 1997 Children's Safeguards Review

It is a sad fact that it is easier to obtain clear definitions of abuse than of safety. Yet an atmosphere of safety is essential to allow children to develop their potential as human beings, quite apart from allowing them to recover from any damage that may have been caused by their past experiences. Children who feel safe are more confident, assured and hopeful, with a positive attitude to life and a feeling of self-possession. They are able to trust others.

(Kent 1997, p.7)

Emphasis on the more negative aspects of caring for children and their consequences may well have been instrumental in shifting the focus away from what constitutes positive care practice. This re-examination of the General System of Support and all its elements will hopefully help fill that gap. It has also been acknowledged that "keeping children and young people at the centre of children's services is consistently difficult" (Tisdall 1997). The development of this General Model of Support will hopefully help locate children and young people in relation to policies of both Social Work and Education.

The model generated here involves the Care System and the Education System in Scotland. Key relationships within these two systems link the child and family to government policy. Included are the elements of statutory requirement and legal responsibility placed upon Social Work and Education predominantly, but also upon Health by government. The implementation of policy, the provision of services and the process through which help is secured, are each explored. A holistic model of the key inter-relationships involved in these two systems is required.

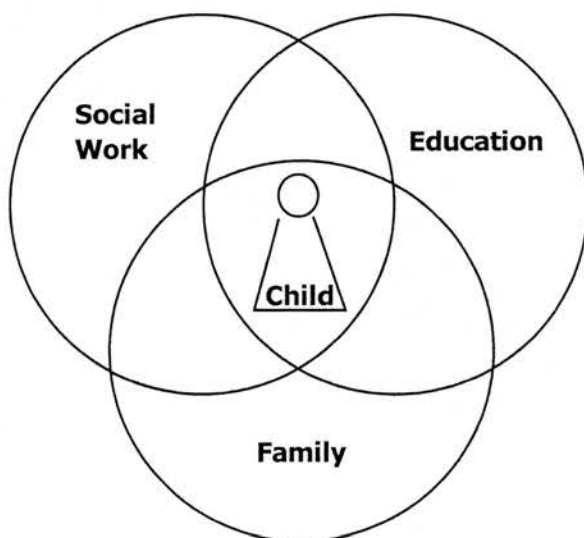
A model is not, of course, the real system, but only an abstract idealisation of it. The wealth of detail in the educational system is virtually inexhaustible and not only are many different models possible, but the construction of any model involves a deliberate selection of the real features which are considered to be important. This selection can only be made on the basis and purposes for which the model is to be used. For different purposes, different details and different degrees of detail which be judged appropriate. The model will always be a simplification of reality because of this reduction of detail by selection.

(Armitage, Smith and Alper 1969, p.2)

Subsequently detailed consideration of the system of care and education and its complex inter-relationships is undertaken. These include Issues preceding and following the introduction of the *1995 Act*; the responsibilities of Social Work, Education, how these overlap and relate to the responsibilities of the Health Board; the professional values of the professions of Social Work and Education and how these inform practice within the professions of Social Work and Education. The first key element is quality and the criteria of effectiveness by which it might be measured. It leads on to the typology of need (Table 4.1) developed to affirm the critical points of effectiveness when the child and family are involved with Social Work and Education. It also establishes a critical point of effectiveness for what constitutes successful intervention on the part of parents.

## Criteria of Effectiveness

Children for whom Social Work Departments have ongoing responsibility become surrounded by assistance. Social Work involvement with a family produces a three-way relationship around the child (Fig.4.1).



**Figure 4.1: Triangular relationships and the child**

The needs of the child should be addressed within this triangular relationship. The family whose child is looked after away from home enters a dialogue with Social Work. The family concerns about social development and health are the responsibility of Social Work. The family may engage with both Social Work and Education when concerns about learning or social behaviour are raised in school. Discussions should centre upon the needs of the child and how they are to be met. It seems essential to understand how each participant in this triangular relationship interprets needs and how they tend to address them.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements made to address both the care and educational needs of the child a typology of need was developed (see Table 4.1). This typology includes an idealised interpretation of definition of the needs of children; the ways of meeting those needs; and critical points of effectiveness and policy. The perspective of the family, each of the public services, Social Work and Education are represented.

<b>TYOLOGY OF NEED</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORK</b>	<b>FAMILY</b>
Interpretation of definition of need	Learning difficulty	Social Skills	Problems of development and/or control
Ways of meeting need	Process of adjustment	Process of engagement	Guidance and influence
Critical point of effectiveness	Identification, assessment and response	Needs identified and met	Problem reduced
Policy	Quality and effectiveness	Duty towards child	Balance between rights and responsibilities

**Table 4.1: A Typology of Need**

The Table above reveals different ways Social Work and Education interpret their tasks and define their role and responsibilities towards individual children. The relationship of parents to the system and their role and responsibility, as defined for them by legislation, is illustrated.

In Education, teachers involve the child in processes of adjustment to reduce problems caused by learning difficulties. National policy expects each Local Authority to develop a system within their own geographical area that benefits each child who has educational needs. The overall aim nationally is for a service of high

quality and effectiveness in the identification of educational needs (HMI 1978 and 1994; SOED 1994; Scottish Executive 2000b; Scottish Executive 2001a).

The critical point of effectiveness within Education requires that learning difficulties are identified and that the range of responses identified and acted upon corresponds with plans and policy.

While in Social Work a process of engagement promotes change and the development of social skills. The main policy stance emphasises the duty of a Social Worker to guide and advise the child. The critical point of effectiveness turns on whether or not social needs are identified. Action taken has to be seen to be beneficial to the child.

Parental responsibility to the child under legislation involves a duty to guide and direct the child. When problems in school, at home or in the community come to the attention of public services support and assistance is available. The aim of legislation is to achieve a balance between the rights of the child and the responsibility of parents. The critical point of effectiveness indicated is that parents perceive a reduction in the problems raised at the outset while the child benefits from the support process.

In the early years of the study Public Child Care Law in Scotland was in transition. A public debate followed the 1990 Child Care Law Review the publication of the Government White Paper, 'Scotland's Children: Proposals for Child Care Policy and Law' (HMSO 1993, Cm.2286). The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 was being gradually introduced in Scotland. All provisions of the Act, together with regulations, rules and guidance applied from 1 April 1997. These changes were intended to impact upon the way Education and Social Work provide for children and account of this has been taken in the critical points of effectiveness within the typology of need.

The processes of adjustment in Education and involvement of Social Workers in the social development process involve the child in another significant three way

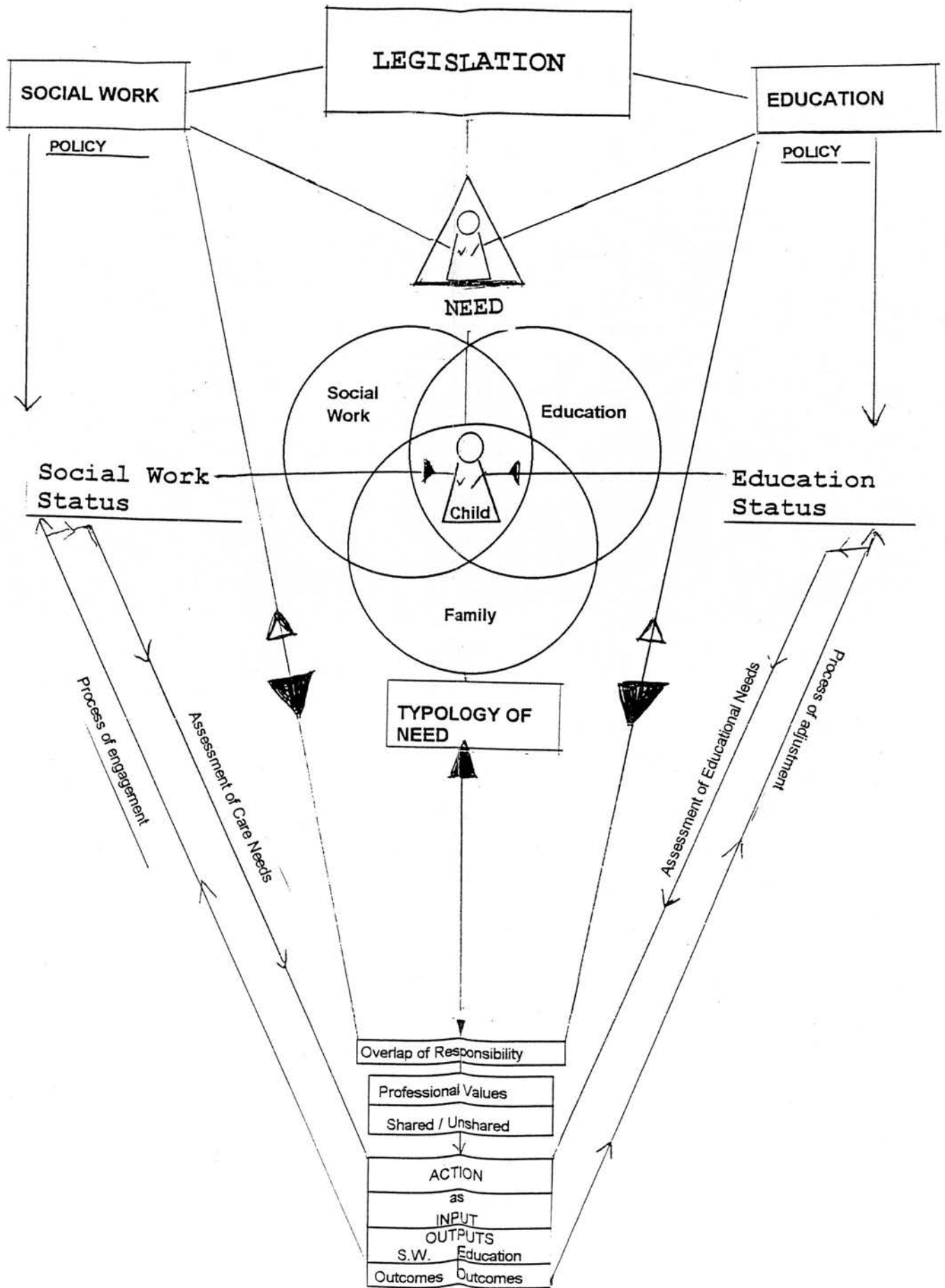
relationship, that of the child, teacher and social worker. A child looked after by the Local Authority will experience public policy through the relationship with teachers and social workers with whom they interact. The processes of adjustment in Education and engagement in Social Work come into play when the child's needs are being addressed. The study focused on how children separated from their natural parents experience policy in the interaction with the professional staff who provide support. Is the quality and effectiveness advocated in national policy evident at the interface between the child and professionals? How are the criteria of effectiveness met in practice for looked-after children? How are we to determine the effectiveness of this delivery of policy? These are vital questions.

The criteria of effectiveness for the delivery of public policy turns on the critical point of the identification of needs by each of the services. Are learning difficulties assessed and identified? What is the quality and effectiveness of this process? How is the duty of Social Work towards the child discharged? How strong or weak is it? And for parents, whose child is being looked after, are the problems identified by Social Work reduced? Are they satisfied with the outcomes for their children? How positive are children and parents about their experience? The criteria of effectiveness and the typology formed the core of the proposed model and are situated at its heart (Fig.4.2). Findings revealed that birth parents felt that little attention was paid to their views and wishes. Presenting problems, which had precipitated the professional intervention, remained unresolved in some cases. Their accounts of events were often not accepted leaving them feeling upset for years to come. This revealed an important rift in the process of accountability that may warrant further study. It was also evident that young people similarly felt themselves to be discounted within meetings when faced with the more powerful triumvirate of Social Work, Education and familial representation.

As indicated above the development of this holistic model involved identification of key elements and interrelationships and include selected features from the Education and Social Work child-care systems. Each was then researched and appraised in

relation to the theoretical constructs identified in Chapter Three. This model appears overleaf.

**Figure 4.2: GENERAL MODEL OF SUPPORT**



In this case, to understand the problem, it was first necessary to understand the two systems involved. Used as a descriptive tool, models facilitate understanding of complex systems and subjects. They represent more simply in visual forms what may be complex and elaborate in text. They capture the complex visually. Comparisons are more easily made as a result. Models may be used to illustrate differences in practice and process. Differences in structure of systems can be represented. In this case key inter-relationships are represented within the model. Clarity of shared goals and values also formed part of the explication of the contemporary Scottish Child Care and Education, and the relationship of the child and family to them.

Illustrated above are the key elements of the two systems of Care and Education that come to bear upon the circumstance of the separated child. The central elements of the triangular relationship of family, Social Work and Education which surrounds the child; the typology of needs put forward earlier to identify criteria of effectiveness; important parts of which are the processes of engagement in Social Work and adjustment in Education which contribute to the care status and education status of the child being officially defined and endorsed.

The chapter continues to research and analyse other elements and key interrelationships within the model. Issues prompting legislative reform of Child Law and the expected post legislative problems in implementation of policy are reviewed next. Clarification of the responsibilities of Social Work and Education follows. This establishes the legal responsibility of each service. The responsibilities of Social Work and Education are seen to overlap, giving an element of responsibility for health matters. The inter-relationship of Social Work and Education to Health Boards, which are not the responsibility of Local Authorities, is examined. The implication of this for the research into care and education issues in the lives of separated children is considered. Subsequently the significance of shared professional values in Education and Social work is examined. The overall aim of the model was to establish critical points of effectiveness across the range of provision.

## Legislative Change

Legislation provides the structural framework within which support is provided for children and young people in difficulty and in need. As can be seen from the General Model of Support (Fig. 4.2). Dialogue at legislative level is about establishing standards in society and about what happens to people if they fail to provide good care for children. The need to define more clearly what constitutes good care has been made earlier (Kent 1997). A view shared by this researcher that there is a need for all professional and lay people concerned to know more about positive care and what that involves. Having identified children's needs a clear view about how best to meet them would greatly help parents and professionals in dealing with the problems in supporting children and young people. The General Model of Support has legislation at the top of its structure in the hope that the relationship between the law, child and support can be made more explicit and help show what constitutes good care under the *1995 Act*. Issues preceding that Act and its implementation are discussed next.

### *Issues Preceding the Children (Scotland) Act 1995*

The issues leading up to the point of new child care legislation in Scotland concerned distribution of power in decision-making, the need for specialist resources, and the right of children to be heard. The distribution of power in decision-making is discussed first before turning to the problem of resources and children's rights.

The Scottish system of "Children's Hearings" (established under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968), still in force and strengthened under the 1995 legislation, provides a unique forum in which the problems of children and families may be discussed. Guidance and support is then offered to parents and children, and, importantly, monitored through a process of regular review.

Professional representatives from all disciplines currently responsible for providing services to children are involved at each stage to provide evidence on the safety of children in the community. The philosophy, which informs the Scottish system, is

child-centred. It turns on the belief that children who are in the process of developing differ from adults in terms of their degree of responsibility. They should, therefore be treated in a way commensurate with their age and level of development in terms, of maturity, intellectual capacity and ability to understand proceedings. Professional representatives report upon the development of the child in question to provide information from which a judgement can be made about the child's development by members of the Children's Hearing. The panel members are volunteers and, therefore, the Children's Hearing system provides a citizens' forum designed to serve the community as well as support children and families, and to act as protector of the child as and when necessary (Thomson 1991). A Reporter to the Children's Hearing, who represents legal authority chairs proceedings and is administrator to the system, communicating directly with children, and also with their family members. Three main institutions are responsible for services to each child and family, they are Social Work, Education and the Health Board.

The legal system of which Children's Hearings are part has been subject to criticism mainly with regard to the operation of place of safety orders, as the Clyde Report of the Orkney inquiry revealed (HMSO 1993). Rules regarding the emergency protection of children through removal from the parental home have been reviewed. New rules for the operation of Children's Hearings came into force in April 1997. The role, function and accountability of the Reporter have also been reviewed. A new tier of authority assumed senior responsibility. A Sheriff may make decisions in cases of dispute. The power to overrule previous decisions is invested in the Sheriff Court and a Sheriff can, if deemed necessary, substitute his/her own disposal for that of a Children's Hearing (Children (Scotland) Act 1995).

Following the 1994 reorganisation of Local Government in Scotland, the Reporter service is now national rather than regional and is known as the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. Matters of resources were considered a serious problem. The resource issue involved the availability at local level of specialist resources for children. A lack of provision of specialist resources providing care and education for seriously disturbed children was and remains a main issue (HMSO 1994).

The geographical spread of specialist provision demanded that certain children were looked after far away from their locality, contrary to local policy recommendation. In some areas it was not clear whether or not residential care and education remained an option for children. The place of residential care was reaffirmed as a necessary and complementary part of a range of specialist provision needed in Scotland (Lockyer 1988; Kendrick 1995; Lloyd 1991). The route to such provision appeared to be unclear, as did the point at which children were seen to require such specialist provision. Why did they receive it? Which children benefited from it? Entry to residential care with education was regulated at local level. Financial arrangements determined the capacity of a local area to provide places in residential schools. Closely linked to this were problems of sufficient and adequate resources for children in the community.

Lastly, there was increasing awareness that the rights of children should be given a central place within the legal system of reference. A tension existed between the application of the principles of “welfare”, and “child-centeredness”. The proposed introduction of the concept of “paramourcy” on the other hand would demand that at all times decisions made by adults in the system on behalf of children are made in the best interest of the child. Children had indicated their strong feelings at being unable to influence decisions made about them in “Speaking Out” (HMSO 1994) published as part of the Government’s White Paper on Child Care Law and Policy. This movement towards respecting the rights of children has prompted serious consideration of the status of the child, especially when they live in Local Authority care (Thomson 1991; Tisdall 1997; Ruegger 2001).

This confirmed the need for the legislation to set a framework in which the rights of children to have their wishes acknowledged had a place. This marked a significant shift in how legal judgements would be made as to whether or not the law had been contravened. Parents who come to the attention of the Reporter to the Children’s Hearing and Children’s Panel members for allegedly mistreating their children would now have to justify reasonable grounds for the means used by them to discipline a

child. The relationship between child and parent, and discipline in the home and in the community might be discussed. The child who had come to the attention of the Reporter to the Children's Hearing was to become more involved in decisions about arrangements made for them. This was predictably a difficult shift to make in a system of childcare experienced in making arbitrary decisions about children, particularly in response to delinquent behaviour. Early indications are that this legislation was pretty difficult to implement, marking as it does a major change in family law.

### *Post Implementation Issues*

Social Work and Education have separate legislation in Scotland. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 attempted to unify public care law, adoption law and private family law (Cleland 1995). Scottish Child Care Law had been reformed to take account of the changes in Children Act 1989 (c.41) in force in England, Ireland and Wales, and also to take account of the United Kingdom's international obligations following the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child by the British Government on December 16, 1991 (Children's Rights Development Unit 1992).

The legislation itself dealt with the pre-legislative issues of decision-making and power distribution, both in the administration of the law and between child and parents. It remains to be seen whether it has done so successfully. Legislation was introduced over time to professional staff through dissemination of information and training across professional disciplines. Social workers in post and newly trained graduates were made conversant with the new system. Implementation was always likely to proceed at different rates in different areas. The legislative process has been significantly altered. Successful implementation relies upon skilled and informed legal practice if the interests of children are to be properly served. According to Lockyer and Stone (1998)

The future of the children's hearings system will depend in the first instance on how participating actors (reporters, social workers, panel members, sheriffs, and, in some measure, family members) choose to exercise the discretion which the legislation permits, and in the second, in what support there continues to be from politicians and the public for the welfare approach to children in trouble.

(Lockyer and Stone 1998, p. 253)

New concepts were introduced together with new terminology. Part I of the Children (Scotland) Act (1995) clarified the law of guardianship in which the conceptualisation of the relationship between child and parents within the family shifts significantly from the rights of the parent towards the rights of the child. Parents are given rights inasmuch as they require them to exercise responsibility towards the child in ensuring control, direction and guidance. Parental rights and responsibilities detailed in Section I come to an end when the child is sixteen. The responsibility of the parent to give guidance lasts till the child is eighteen.

This now applies in court proceedings in which residence of the child is at issue and decisions have to be made. According to Sheriff Norrie (1995a, 1995b) two main problems undermined the philosophy of the new Act in this respect

Firstly, the shift from parental rights to parental responsibilities cannot be taken seriously so long as a third of all fathers (namely the unmarried ones) are expressly absolved of their responsibilities. Secondly, the (correct) presumption that a Children's Hearing is a far more appropriate forum than a court to make long-term decisions in relation to children in need of supervision is undermined by the new power of the Sheriff to substitute his own disposal for that of the Children's Hearing.

(Norrie 1995a, p.36-5)

Apart from philosophical problems, the introduction of new terminology required detailed attention, pointing up as it did the changing status of children in Scottish society. This empowerment was of significance if children were to be heard and their desires respected more clearly within the systems designed to support them (Cleland and Sutherland 1996; Davie et al. 1996; CRDU 1994; Children in Scotland 1995).

A balance between the rights of the child and the responsibilities of birth parents is now sought in all matters of judgement and decision-making about their care. As Norrie pointed out in an article to inform solicitors in Scotland

From a practitioners point of view the most immediately noticeable change brought about by Part I (of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) is the scrapping of the concepts of custody and access as parental rights and their replacement with court orders that can regulate the child's residence and the contact that the child may have with other people. It would be a fundamental error to see an equivalence between custody and residence, or between access and contact, for the design of Part I makes a conscious, and on the whole successful, effort to change entirely the way the law looks at the relationship of parent and child.

(Norrie 1995b, p. 340)

When considering the residence of a child the court will continue to take into account the best interest of the child (i.e. paramountcy of welfare; interference by the court was to be kept to a minimum; and thirdly, that the child's view would be sought, heard and taken into account in court proceedings). The emphasis in court proceedings about children has been substantially changed. For practitioners issues of residence, while affecting a child, will also affect the relationship with authorities concerned with the child.

In Part II of the Act the duties of the Local Authority towards children in their care were clarified and updated. By far the longest section of the Act, it applies to the law regulating responsibilities of Local Authorities and children.

Chapter 1 of Part II, Sections 16 to 38 sets out the various types of support and assistance which local authorities should make available to children and their families in their area who require help.

(Cleland 1995 p.17)

The new concept of being "in need" has been introduced. The Local Authorities have a duty to identify and meet care needs. Various new means have been put at their disposal. Child protection powers are strengthened under Section 55(1) by the introduction of Child Assessment order, which allows the assessment of a child's health and development, or of the way a child is being treated (Cleland 1995).

The application is now made to a Sheriff, who in effect will, given sufficient grounds, empower the Local Authority to make an assessment of a child's immediate need for care and protection. Should specific needs be identified, the authority has a duty to make arrangements, which meet those needs identified. The Local Authority also has a duty to provide a range and level of services to meet children's needs and to support parents in the discharge of their responsibilities, its duty under the new legislation, however, is primarily to children.

To sum up implementation of the principles underpinning the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 has now been in place for about seven years. Dissemination of information about the new Act, and its assimilation into policy and practice has inevitably placed additional demands on all parts of the service and developments proceeded at different rates. The shift in balance between the rights of the child and the responsibility of the parents, for example, were communicated in contact with services and the law. This has affected all communications and decision-making in Social Work and in Education. Any dialogue with a family and child should now involve the child wherever possible, and encourage positive involvement of the child and young person in decisions made about them.

This redefinition in care status has been reflected in new terminology. Definitions of various responsibilities stated in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and its terminology have been applied throughout this study.

First, the responsibilities of parents are stated in paragraph 1 (a) to (d).

“Parental responsibilities:

- (a) to safeguard and promote the child's health, development and welfare:
- (b) to provide, in a manner appropriate to the stage of development of the child -
  - (i) direction;
  - (ii) Guidance,  
to the child;
- (c) If the child is not living with the parent, to maintain personal relations and direct contact with the child on a regular basis; and

- (d) to act as the child's legal representative, but only as far as compliance with this section is practicable and in the interests of the child"(Section 1 (1) (a)).

Direction as in section (i) above is to be given until the child is sixteen, while guidance as in section (ii) above is to be given until the child is eighteen. The responsibilities above are known as "parental responsibilities".

The use of the term "child" in law until the child is eighteen years of age is an interesting one, introducing as it does a balance between the right of a child to be involved in decisions made about them, while acknowledging that the need for guidance from parents may last longer. A realistic balance is to be struck between the autonomy of a teenager and their capacity to make responsible decisions on their own account. This study has applied the title of young people to those in secondary education and beyond, reserving the title child for those under twelve, in deference to teenagers above twelve years old who no longer perceive themselves as children.

In the legislation new terminology has been introduced as has responsibility surrounding the definition of "need". In the legislation children are defined as being "in need" according to the welfare principle raises concern that the child is seen to be in need of care and attention.

Section 93(4) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states:

"(4) Any reference in the Part of this Act to a child's-

(a) being 'in need', is to his being in need of care of care and attention because-

(i) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development unless these are provided for him, under or by virtue of this Part, services by a Local Authority;

(ii) his health or development is likely significantly to be impaired, or further impaired, unless such services are so provided;

(iii) he is disabled; or

(iv) he is affected adversely by the disability of any other person in his family;"

(Section 94(a))

The duty of the Local Authority is defined in terms of “looking after” children when they are identified as being “in need” whether or not the child is “resident” in the parental home. The Local Authority has a duty to provide “accommodation” for children when they cannot stay with their parents in the parental home (Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Sections 17(6) and 26 respectively). Local Authorities are also now required by law to make public a Child Care Plan for their area, and are expected to provide a range of services to meet the needs of children in the locality.

The powers of the Children’s Hearing system to provide supervision and protection for children have been strengthened, with provision of child assessment orders. Obtainable only on the authority of a Sheriff, these allow the Local Authority to assess the physical or emotional well being of children. The child can be removed to another place of residence if required, while this assessment is being made.

Child protection orders, obtainable in the same way, from the Sheriff replace place of safety orders, and exclusion orders, to exclude a named person from a child’s home. The court can also make parental responsibilities orders, which replace the power of the Local Authority to assume parental rights and powers.

One significant change has been that the Children Act 1995 locates Local Authority responsibility in both Social Work and Education, not solely to the Social Work Department as before. Where children “looked after” by the Local Authority have educational needs they will require having these needs assessed and met by the Education Department whose responsibility is to provide education of all children. The Education (Scotland) Acts 1968 and 1981 apply together with additional Special Educational Needs legislation and regulations.

Education legislation defines the individual needs of children in a different way from Social Work legislation. Primarily concerned with learning difficulties and barriers to learning legislation places responsibility upon the authority to identify and assess those children who have “special educational needs”, and to provide appropriately for them in the education system. In education a child is perceived independently of the adults

responsible for him or her and is regarded as an independent individual able to learn about the world at large and to learn to participate in the social world that is the school, that is until this is shown to be otherwise.

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational provision to be made, or if they have a learning difficulty that is significantly greater than the majority of children or young person of their age (*Education (Scotland) Act 1981, Section 3 -1 (c)*). If they have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools, within the area of the Local Educational Authority concerned they are deemed to have special educational needs. A child is not to be taken as having a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which they are, or will be, taught is different from a language (or form of language) which has at any time been spoken in their home (*Education (Scotland) Act 1891, Section 3 -1(d)*).

The special educational need is interpreted as a learning difficulty that interferes with learning in school or a disability, which acts as a barrier to learning in school. This is what Education Departments are required to identify and assess. In contrast the Social Work Department is required to identify and assess care needs which concern the child in relation to the care and support provided by those upon whom the child is dependent for survival in the first instance and for stimulation essential to successful development. The network of emotional support is one focus, the standard of basic care, including the supportive relationships which parents and siblings provide, is another. Both are vital in understanding the development of the child and assessing the quality of care the child receives. These are the responsibility of Social Work and remain the central issue. Care issues in a child's life affect other areas, being pervasive and affective, they can be "taken into school" where they may impinge upon the child's ability to learn and to sustain education. A child in this position may not have a learning difficulty *per se*, but may underachieve in education, and may be identified as having learning difficulties at some point when they begin to fail to access the curriculum competently. The difficulties may be assessed as being temporary or long-term.

Both Social Work and Education have a statutory duty to assess the needs of children and report on them. Within the General Model of Support (Fig.4.2) the link between legislation and professional action are drawn with larger and bolder arrows to demonstrate this dominant relationship and the way it dramatically affects policy and practice. Weaker arrows indicating a more tenuous relationship represent the continuous processes of assessment and engagement in Social Work; and assessment and adjustment in Education. This is especially during periods of uncertainty when assessment and re-assessment is made and before the care status and education status of a child are finalised.

So the role and responsibility of Social Work and Education departments differ even although the 1995 Act charges the Local Authorities with corporate responsibility for the care of children. The intention was to provide a more coherent approach in which the two departments are seen to collaborate. The question of most concern to the study will be how has this affected the identification, assessment and support of the educational needs of looked after children? Consequently, does this mean that the identification and assessment of the care needs and educational needs of a child are to be undertaken together? Or does it mean that decisions about care needs that result in professional action (outcomes) take into account implications and consequences (intended or unintended) for the child's educational needs or vice versa?

Legislation by its nature is absolute. Children will experience legislative power and policies, designed to protect them and support their education in the professional practice and the values that underpin that practice at the interface between children and professional practice. Systems provide input, process and outcome within the General Model of Support. It is the input, process and outcome for looked after children that will be studied, both at the level of professional practice and as they have informed the educational experience of a group of young persons who have been looked after by Local Authorities and who also have experience of being supported in Education.

Changes in legislation should affect the way services are delivered during this period of uncertainty and reorientation. Tisdall (1997) commented

Implementation of the Act at this time represents both a challenge (in that resources are precious and under threat) and an opportunity (for example, to set up new ways of working that better meet the needs of children). Those who are charged with implementing the Act shoulder the responsibility of translating this opportunity into meaningful changes to services.

(Tisdall 1997, p.3)

The way in which professional staff have responded to these opportunities depends to an extent upon how professional values have complemented this process. A closer examination of the responsibilities of Social Work and Education was warranted before considering their respective professional values.

### **The Responsibilities of Social Work , Education and Health**

Social Work and Education both have had a legal obligation towards the child and family, as does Health. The legal responsibilities of the Social Work and Education Departments and Health in relation to the child revealed certain overlaps. Only Social Work and Education are placed within the Local Authority structure. Differences between the two services are often emphasised. Their responsibilities have been referred to as if they were distinctly separate. The terminology used to describe the relationship is one of demarcation, with phrases i.e. the “interface between the professions”, “integration of (different) ‘services’ ”, “across the boundaries” (HMSO 1983; Bruce 1983; Kendrick 1995). In fact the responsibilities of Social Work and Education for a child’s health, education and care overlap to some extent. Each has to some degree responsibility for overseeing and providing for the health, education and care of the child. This overlap is positioned within the General Model of Support above professional action. This emphasises the importance of clear boundaries and understanding of the responsibilities of all involved when different departments and agencies discuss individual children. The responsibility might differ in degree and in kind, but it can be termed conjoint nevertheless. The way this conjoint responsibility is defined influences the way it is discharged.

The responsibilities of each of the services can be detailed as follows. With regard to Education, Local Education Authorities are required to provide in their local area

adequate and efficient provision of school education (Education (Scotland) Act 1980, s. 135(1)). In Scotland “public schools” are provided by the Local Authority Education Department. Parents are responsible for their children attending school regularly and for ensuring that their children receive efficient education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude, that is

Children do not have to go to school, but parents have a duty to educate them. Parents may fulfil the duty to educate their children by other means than by sending them to school.

(Marr and Marr 1995, p.1)

Where parental responsibilities have been assumed by the Social Work Department, full parental responsibility is held by that Social Work Department.

Each Unitary Authority or “council” as constituted under the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 is also designated an Education Authority. In law an Education Authority must provide adequate education appropriate to the needs of pupils attending its schools, having regard to their age, ability and aptitude Education (Scotland) Act 1980, s. 1(1) and (5). Where a child shows exceptional ability the education authority is required to provide the education appropriate to the child’s needs. This may mean additional and advanced work or it may imply personal tuition over and above that already provided.

In respect of Education it is the responsibility of the Local Education Authority to provide the service for the child, but it is the responsibility of parents and/or Social Work at Local Authority level to ensure that the child attends educational provision available. How much a child benefits from education remains the responsibility of the parent regardless of where the child is resident. That responsibility falls to Social Work when the Local Authority Social Work Department has applied to the Law Courts for parental rights to be taken from the natural parents and invested in them.

The Law also requires that Education Authorities provide a psychological service.

“Amongst the functions which that service requires to perform are:

- (a) The study of children with special educational needs.
- (b) Giving advice to parents and teachers as to the appropriate methods of teaching for such children.
- (c) Where appropriate, providing for the special educational needs of such children in clinics.
- (d) Giving advice to the social work authority regarding the assessment of the needs of any child for any purpose required by law” Education (Scotland) Act 1980, s.4 as amended by the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and representation) Act 1986, s. 14(2).

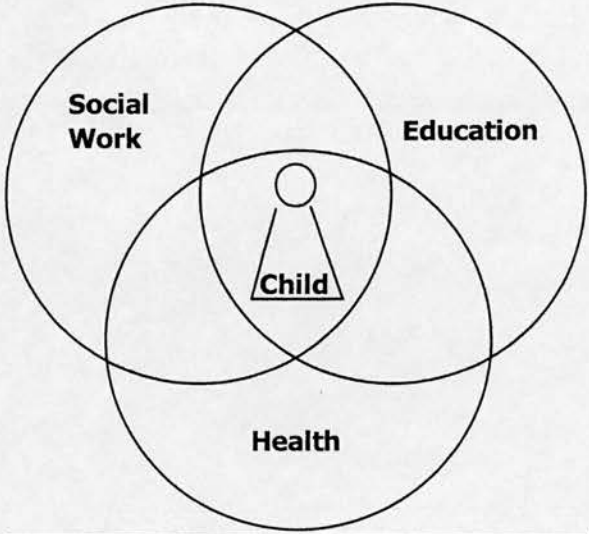
This service attends to the psycho-educational dimension of the educational processes. Note the role of the Local Authority Educational psychologist is to give advice in respect of assessment of needs when requested by a Children’s Hearing. The focus of such advice may be upon the psychosocial development of the child as well as on any learning difficulties they may be experiencing.

We turn now to the responsibility of the Health Board and health matters. Both the Health Boards and Social Work Departments have a responsibility for the health of children in care. Social Work departments are responsible for the health and welfare of the children in their care (The Children (Scotland) Act 1995,s.22 (1) -Subs. (1).

The vulnerability of a child may lead a family, the Social Work Department or the child’s doctor to recommend the involvement of health services. Child psychiatric services may provide assessment and support. Clinical psychologists employed by a Health service may contribute to an assessment and to an ongoing treatment plan.

The Local Educational Authority also has responsibility for health related matters, dental care and general health, hygiene and routine health matters. A school health service attends to matters of cleanliness and general health. A Medical Officer is designated the supervisory role for each school. Their responsibility is to prevent the spread of disease among children. The protection of children from physical neglect is also a main priority. A Local Authority may prosecute parents in cases where extreme neglect is evident (The Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 (S.1. 1975 No. 1175 & Education (Scotland) Act 1980, s. 58).

Both departments share their responsibilities for the child with the Health Board. In Scotland the Secretary of State has a duty to provide school dental and medical services to schools (National Health Service Scotland Act, 1978, s.39 amended by the 1988 Act, s.10). Health Board legislation controls provision of specialist services held by Health Boards (i.e. Clinical psychology, child psychiatry). In certain circumstances Health Boards may provide specialist care services and education in hospitals and in specialist resources for young people.



**Figure 4.3 : The Overlapping Responsibilities of Social Work, Education and Health**

The primary responsibility of Education is the development of the intellect of the child. The primary responsibility of Social Work is the social development of the child. Each has a secondary responsibility for health matters. Social Work has responsibility for the intellectual development of the separated child. Education has responsibility for the social development of the child in school. Their respective responsibilities overlap and differ in degree, and according to Borland *et al.* (1998), with the introduction of new legislation they also sometimes conflict.

Education services will be in the odd position of paying attention to the rights of 'looked after' children – to their welfare, to their views, to their religion etc – which they do not have to do for other children.

(Borland *et. al.* 1998, p.20)

Legislation introduced since the *1995 Act* in Scotland acts to minimise such potential conflict and emphasises the improvement in educational standards required to meet the needs of all children including those 'looked after' by local authorities (Scottish Office 1998a). Guidance has been issued on procedures surrounding the exclusion of children from school (Scottish Office 1998b). The role of parents in the school education of their children is to be enhanced (Scottish Office 1998c). The Scottish Executive has continued this trend towards improvement in services with the determination to improve the lives of 'looked after' children (Scottish Executive 2000d). A concerted effort by the Inspectorates of Education and Social Work resulted in joint inspections (Scottish Executive 2001a). Nevertheless, the services, of Education, Social Work and Health do overlap in specific respects.

The responsibility of the Health Board is the primarily health and well being of children. It shares with Social Work and Education a secondary responsibility for social development of the child. The Department of Health also has responsibilities for education welfare in schools about which it relates to both Education and Social Work Departments.

When a child is being looked after by the Social Work Department any concerns raised are examined initially within the Local Authority. Potential tension between the two departments of Social Work and Education within one local council is possible. Clarity about conjoint responsibility, particularly with regard to care and education of children being looked after is particularly relevant. The two Departments may act together on behalf of that council. It is a matter of principle that this will also be corporate action on behalf of children.

Responsibility for the care (formerly welfare), health and development of children looked after by the Local Authority lies with Social Work when a child is being

“looked after”. However, when a child is in school the Local Education Authority bears a responsibility for looking after that child. “A general duty of care” is placed upon the education authority in respect of the day care of children attending schools in their area (The Schools (Safety and Supervision of Pupils) (Scotland) Regulations 1990 (S.I. 1990 No. 295)).

This general duty is one of welfare. How far schools interpret this responsibility in terms of the personal development of the child is not quantifiable. Responsibility for meeting basic care needs remains with carers while a child is at school. Powers are delegated temporarily in trust that due care will be taken of the child and that learning will take place while the child attends school. Responsibility for the care of the child remains with the parent and is shared on a temporary basis by both the services of Social Work and Education when their responsibility towards the child is discharged. When a child does not reside in the family home the responsibility of the parents towards the child does not change unless parental rights have been conferred upon the Social Work Department.

The responsibility of Social Work remains the same when a child resides outwith the family home and the form assistance takes may be given from a range of services to children (e.g. from supervision to alternative care). Education may provide residential schooling for children looked after by the Social Work department as well as a range of educational provision in the community, but their responsibility to provide education does not change in law.

Analysis of the position of the two Departments in terms of their responsibility to provide educational support that is effective turns on the delineation of their responsibility as defined above and the capacity to meet the criteria established in the theoretical framework outlined earlier. What has been of interest in terms of the theoretical stance taken is that care and welfare were only one aspect of care. The responsibility for development of children has also to be considered. Where does responsibility for this lie, when the child is being ‘looked after’ by a Local Authority,

and when the child is at school? Unless parental responsibilities have been given to the Local Authority this responsibility remains with the birth parents.

When children have been separated from their parents the important aspects of development beyond the social are shared temporarily between parents and alternative carers. Carers share the responsibilities of care and development that actually remain with the parents of the child. The development of the whole child (i.e. the emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual development) is an enormous responsibility. Meeting the basic needs of children is a prerequisite to the potential gratification of higher needs. Attention to meeting basic needs for emotional security etc., regardless of where the child lives would seem to be a vital part of successful caring. The social worker specifically bears the responsibility for the management of the care (and development) plan. Is the standard of basic care sufficient to set conditions that facilitate self-actualising people. Are conditions set beyond those of basic need to allow gratification of higher needs?

The professional task remains one of action, that is, to act on behalf of the child to secure the optimum conditions for personal growth and development. When it is evident that a child is in difficulty and or has social or intellectual problems it is the responsibility of both departments to secure assessment of these and to implement plans accordingly. A multi-disciplinary assessment may or may not include the Health Board.

An identification of the child's needs is made informally, by social workers and teachers, until decisions are made to enlist the advice of the psychological services at an informal level. This may or may not lead to a formal assessment of needs. In the case of social work, the Children's Hearing may request an assessment, and in education a Record of Needs may be opened. Where a Record of Needs is not recommended, parents, social worker and school may arrange to meet identified needs informally. The social worker works to influence and change situations, while in Education if there is a learning difficulty learning support and behavioural support may be available. In this way care and educational needs are met and the processes of social

engagement and educational adjustment raised previously in the typology of need are so initiated. Here too the psychological services of the Local Educational Authority may advise both Social Work and Education (Education (Scotland) Act 1981 s. 3-4).

As street-level bureaucrats, social workers and teachers are responsible for support of the child. They also determine with parents and other colleagues whether or not formal assessment is to be recommended. The Social Work Department also bears the responsibility of gaining a child's cooperation in assessment of their own (the child's) needs and cooperation in care plans made for them. Similarly teachers work directly with the child to secure cooperation in the education process.

We see then that the responsibility for educational support lies mainly with Social Work, and with teachers for specific support for learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties when these are evidently causing difficulties for the child in school. The responsibility for educational support is conjoint but not equally distributed between the two Departments. A child is dependent upon the action of social workers and teachers for the identification of care and educational needs and for any support that may subsequently be recommended in the processes of adjustment in education. The statutory responsibility of social workers requires them to ensure on behalf of the child that educational arrangements complement care arrangements and vice versa.

How is this conjoint responsibility discharged by Social Work and by Education? We are interested in whether or not professionals are clear about the differing responsibilities of the departments and in the roles they play to provide educational support of looked after children for educational support and in a description of how they proceed. The importance of inputs within the model of general provision begs the questions - What action is taken by professionals to secure support for children looked after by the Local Authority? How are the care and educational needs of children looked after by the authority assessed? To what extent are the services of educational psychologists involved in advising the two departments at all levels about children looked after by the Local Authority? To what extent are the specialist services of Health, clinical psychology and child psychiatry sought for looked after children?

It was found that both Departments interpreted their statutory duties in a narrower dimension than conveyed to them in the legislation. Although the education system had invested in developing support bases in secondary schools as part of a special response to the problems of children looked after by the local authority younger people still in school today reported that they felt singled out for negative rather than positive attention in classes. They felt that teachers should be kinder to them because they had problems. Instead they felt that teachers thought they were bad when they heard they were in a home. The caring element of education was seen to be lacking in practice.

Of their experience in children's homes the same groups reported that little support was available to assist them in learning to read and write. Social Work staff appeared to view their role as one of caring rather than developing the educational talents of the children looked after by them. They had interpreted the view that learning was the sole responsibility of the children alone, although most of those concerned had some form of educational delay and were badly in need of attention and support in this area of their development at a critical time in their lives. Resources available to children also reflected an emphasis on leisure pursuits and the promotion of social skills. This independence afforded the children could be linked to a degree of over empowerment discussed later in this chapter.

### **Professional Values**

Not only do the Departments of Social Work and Education have conjoint responsibility within the corporate responsibility of Local Authorities in Scotland, which has resulted in an overlap of legal responsibility for educational development and health related matters, but also both departments share a goal of supporting the development of the child for whom they are responsible. These are located underneath overlapping responsibilities in the General Model of Support (Fig.4.2) as professional values shared/unshared. These values bring a tremendous influence to bear upon professional action. The professions have adopted different "means" to achieve those

professional “ends” as revealed in the typology of need generated. Those professional actions have been identified as inputs differing as they do from actions associated with outputs or outcomes, although the aims or intended “ends” may coincide.

This section asks if a degree of congruence in values can be realistically expected in action from the two professions? It has been claimed that the two professions do not share the same values coming as they do from “widely different cultures (Bruce 1983; Kendrick 1995).

It has also been observed that

There is very often a theoretical/philosophical divide among services. Different services from their statutory responsibilities, training and experience may take different approaches to young people and their families based on departmental or professional assumptions or convictions.

(McKay 1994, p.6)

The means by which each department achieves the ends may differ, and the judgements of individual professionals may differ from those of the agency they represent, but the concept of conjoint responsibility infers that a degree of congruence between the two professions is to be achieved. Congruence between the professions and the consequences of lack of it for quality of service experienced by children make the values held by the professions a key element in the model of general provision. Professional values and their transmission through practice into the experience of the children who are supported are now considered.

On the importance of shared values in practice Stevenson and Parsloe note that

... the attitudes expected of workers and the policies which they are asked to follow must be congruent. The workers concept of his or her individual purpose must reflect the agency’s concept of its purpose well enough for workers, managers and committee members to feel they are engaged in the same enterprise.

(Stevenson and Parsloe 1993, p.10)

Within agencies congruence between the views of the professionals is critical to the successful implementation of agency policy. Of interest is the congruence, if any, between the professional values of teachers and social workers in the first instance, and secondly how it may manifest in the interaction with a child. How will such congruence, between agencies, be reflected in the conjoint responsibility of the agencies they represent?

The theoretical/philosophical divide arises in the professional orientation of the collective profession. This professional orientation results from a variety of influences from initial professional training subsequently, honed on joining the profession, and refined in practice. Whether or not individuals share, at a personal level, the values of a profession they are expected in their professional actions to espouse the values of the professions to which they belong. Conflict between collective values held by a profession and the private views held by professionals is certainly possible and is seen as unhelpful, if not unwelcome (Bruce 1983; Stevenson and Parsloe 1993). Conflicting values are viewed as barriers to collaboration (Lishman 1983; Tett, Crowther and O'Hara 2003). How then are two different professions to reconcile the professional values held by each of them and what do they transmit to children? The values, which are not shared by the professions, will also be transmitted into practice and experience of children. The consistency in values between policy and practice is essential for congruence, commonality and sharing.

By professional values I mean the professional value base of each of the professions. This is to be found in literature about professional training and in policy discussion documents of the two professions. Social work "values" in the professional context, according to Banks;

seems frequently to be used to mean: a set of fundamental/moral principles to which social workers are/should be committed. According to the Central Council for Education and training in Social Work (CCETSW 1989,p15) such values include a commitment to 'the value and dignity of individuals' and 'the right to respect, privacy and confidentiality' for example.

(Banks 1995, p. 4)

This is the definition of values preferred here. The adoption of certain values within the professions promotes what is viewed humanely to be “good” rather than “bad”, and morally it puts professionals in the “right” rather than the “wrong” in their professional dealings with children and families. In short the quality of professional practice is influenced by the values evinced. The experience that the child and family have of the public services will be affected by the values underpinning professional practice. Shared values will bind the professions together, but what are they? And what happens to children when the values reflected in the practice of different professionals working with a child do not coincide? Values not shared by the professions may be seen in conflict during the decision-making process, in contact with children and young people. Report writing may reflect bias or a reluctance to support the child fully. Worse still ambivalence about anti- social behaviour of the child or young person concerned may result in two versions of the truth, one conveyed face to face with the child or young person, and one for the professional discussion about the child. Examples of this were revealed in the findings in Chapter Seven where staff ostensibly supporting one interviewee, Sharon, allowed her to go on believing that her position was tenable, while reporting to other professionals that it patently was not.

Despite a climate of uncertainty and upheaval introduced by legislative changes (Banks 1995), two values in particular continue to figure largely in the framework of both Social Work and Education, namely respect for and empowerment of the individual. These two values proved vital during the analysis of data. They are related in the findings in Chapters Six and Seven, and in the concluding chapter. Interviews also viewed them as values important in their experience.

Respect for the individual is represented in the professional value base of each of the professions. In Social Work the Central Council for Education and Training of Social Workers recognised the significance of equal opportunities impressing upon students and candidates for Social Work Training the need to respect individual rights and circumstances and how these affect delivery of services to children and families. There is an expectation that students will be willing to learn how to counter discrimination,

racism, poverty, disadvantage and injustice appropriately in their role as social workers (CCETSW 1995).

Meanwhile in Education the Scottish Council for the Curriculum in Scotland discussed the place of values in Education. They identified the appreciation of learning, respect and caring for self, and respect and caring for others (SCCC 1991).

The SCCC commitment to helping learners to develop respect and caring for others includes

- recognising that every person is a unique and worthwhile individual
- valuing racial, ethnic and religious diversity
- learning and appreciating the skills and sensitivities through which respect and care are expressed

(SCCC 1991, p.7)

It has already been argued that the two professions place emphasis upon influencing the individual. Reference has been made in the typology of need to the two distinctly differing processes in which Social Work and Education professionals become involved during the support process of a child, namely, engagement in Social Work and adjustment in Education. A social worker usually deals with children individually, and only in groups when planned. The teacher interacts with individual children usually while in the presence of other children, in class, or small groups. Children and families will experience “being respected” and being “empowered” by social workers and teachers. The culture of school and classroom demands that a teacher views the children as a collective class group, thus creating a dual system of personal support as well as classroom expectation.

The value system of the wider school community concern amongst other things expected codes of social behaviour. These “codes of conduct” act as guides to acceptable behaviour and are about conforming to the rules of a school and sharing and accepting the school values. To this end;

The Council commends to education authorities and managers the following strategies for clarifying values and enhancing responsibility.

This cannot be achieved through classroom teaching alone. This is a task in which the educational community should engage. All those involved, managers, school staff, parents, pupils and others should

consciously seek to make their values more explicit  
to this end engage in a process of preparing a statement of values  
appropriate to the community of the school  
seek to make practices congruent with these values  
keep values issues and statements under continuous critical review  
(SCCC 1991, p.10)

The study of values in Scottish education (see Downie 1990; ROVE 1992; and Gatherer 1994) opened debate about professional values. The critical relationship between values held and acceptance of authority by individuals in schools has been pointed up by Bridges and Scrimshaw who claim

...the choice for the teacher or intending teacher is not whether or not to allow his moral values to affect his teaching; but rather which moral values he chooses to give a direction to, and justification for, the kind of person he becomes and consequently the kind of teaching he provides.  
(Bridges and Scrimshaw 1975, p. 2)

The emergence of empowerment in the rhetoric of the care and education of children is of special interest since it has also been an influence in the development of professional values in Social Work. Stevenson and Parsloe (1993) consider empowerment in relation to articulation of need by the client. They ask of Social Work:

What precisely is the ideal to which we aspire? 'Participation', 'partnership', 'consumerism', 'empowerment', are all current terms to used to describe a movement towards greater equality of the parties who relate to each other in community care. Are the party's consumers, customers, clients, users or citizens?  
(Stevenson and Parsloe 1993, p.6)

In questioning this terminology Stevenson and Parsloe consider that participation is too vague a term and that the use of the term partnership is misleading in that it conveys an equality that is rarely possible when working with clients. They regard as inappropriate the consumerist metaphor in that the nature of the work undertaken in Social Work is to help the user of community take more power. Instead they choose to refer to the ideal

as that of “empowerment” in term of process and goal. Social Workers act to empower the client. The result of their contact will be a shift in the balance of power between them as the client assumes a more powerful and independent position. Their intention is not to imply a political dimension but empowerment of the client in relation to their articulation and the meeting of their needs.

A distinction must be drawn here in that “empowerment” appears in both professional value constructs, but in different forms. In Education, the term “empowerment” is used to convey increasing responsibility given to pupils for their own learning, commitment to study, and consequent level of achievement. The pupil-centred approaches in education and the discourse of empowerment in Social Work may resonate with one another, but the theme of empowerment in education has emerged, as empowerment of the learner rather than empowerment of the child. Indeed, researchers note that the special educational needs system in Education disempowers individuals, parents and pupils alike (Tomlinson 1990; Allan 1996) in denying them the opportunity to express and assert their views.

As indicated in Chapter One, in Social Work empowerment can be about empowerment with a view to articulating the needs of the individual alone as Stevenson and Parsloe (1993) assert or can it be about assertion of human rights of the individual in broader terms.

Shared values may assist the professional task undertaken on behalf of children for whom social workers and teachers share a responsibility. I accept that attitudes and values influence judgements and decision-making, which in turn inform actions taken on behalf of children. What are the implications for the way needs are assessed and met, the way services are delivered and how children experience being supported?

To sum up, the shared values that inform Education and Social Work reach children may be transmitted from policy through practice into the interaction between children and professionals who help them, or they may not. The experience that children have of

public services will be coloured by the values they do experience. These may or may not be those espoused in the rhetoric of policy.

The values of the professions and the values of national policies that guide practice coincide in principle. They are transmitted in practice and may or may not be reflected by the professionals at the interface between child and professional. They may or may be part of the experience of being supported. These values may or may not be evident in the way needs are met through processes of adjustment in education and engagement in social work. They may not be part of educational support. It is interesting that the findings confirm that for the interviewees concerned there was a failure within Social Work support to empower them. The young people felt disempowered to the point of personal betrayal. They felt actively discouraged from displaying signs of personal power to the point of frustration and powerlessness. A condition brought about by lack of respect for them as they approach adulthood. Within Education in contrast the older interviewees expressed some degree of empowerment in that they had aspirations that formed personal educational goals.

It is to be preferred that conjoint responses to meet the needs of children and young people do espouse the values of the professions. The conjoint responses to care and educational needs will demonstrate the values of respect and empowerment discussed above. Conjoint responsibility within a multi-disciplinary system will be reflected in conjoint approaches to the identification of needs of care and education. According to Lyon (2002) Social Work in relation to schools is a demanding and specialised area of work

Social workers in this field need a general orientation to the idea that education is or can be an empowering experience and that all children and young people have an entitlement to the best that can be offered. As in other settings, it is sometimes the responsibility of social work to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

(Lyons 2002, p. 212)

If the professional values of Social Work and Education are evident in policy, they will be evident in practice and in the experience of those benefiting from support.

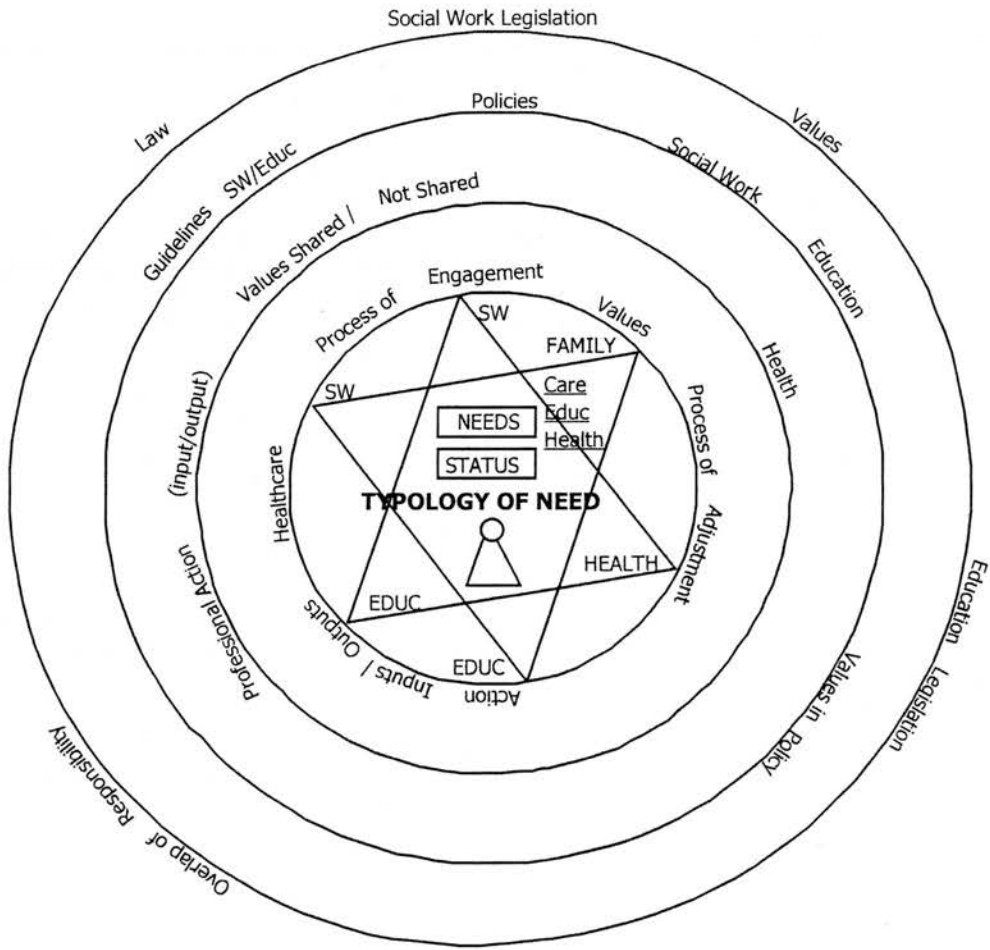
The important question to be addressed arising from this examination of professional values is, how is the conjoint responsibility for the identification of care and educational needs discharged by Social Work and Education? The extent to the values discussed above are reflected in the experience of young people will be of interest. For example are children and young people empowered as intended in the professional values of Social Work and Education or not? What is the educational and care experience of young persons looked after by the Local Authority? Does this differ from the educational and care experience of those who have never been looked after by a Local Authority?

The previous question relating to professional values, “How is the conjoint responsibility for the identification of care and educational needs discharged by Social Work and Education?” applies not only to professional values but the quality and effectiveness of conjoint services.

As previously established this General Model of Support represents the system in operation following the Child Care Law Review in 1990 and before the introduction of the new legislation of the 1995 Act. It provides a synthesis between legislation, policy and practice. Despite its tendency to reductionism we are able to track key elements of policy between those who plan the system, changes in the Law and the personal experiences of children and young people who may or may not experience the ideal intent of policy, either in school or when they are being looked after by Local Authorities. Creation of the general model of provision above had taken a considerable time. Legislation was upon us and the new reality heralded by it became tangible in practice at the interface between Local Authorities and children and their families. The legislation and its significant intent to redefine the relationship of the child within the family and in society can be illustrated in a way that shows the process of communication that takes place within the general system of provision and support (see Fig.4.4). Now the legislation is in place, policies

drawn up and practice evincing the principles of policy the newly enhanced status of the child or young person can be seen at the heart of communication and decision-making.

# GENERAL MODEL AND PROCESS OF PROVISION



**Figure 4.4: General Model and Process of Provision**

This model represents figuratively a dynamic of the communication system into which a child or young person in need of support enters when professional intervention is initiated. The key elements and interrelationships involved are plotted around the child. This system of Communication and process is best understood as a three-dimensional state. At the centre are the two triangular relationships that surround the child. First, is the triangular relationship of Social Work, Education and the family? The typology of need and the criteria of effectiveness for Social Work, Education and family operate at the core. Does the child or young person engage with social workers, adjust to the demands of the classroom and the curriculum in Education and does the family (parent and child) consider the presenting problem to be reduced?

Second, the overlapping responsibilities of Social Work, Education and Health are located here in close relationship to the child. The support they each offer differs in kind. This model shows the lines of communication possible ideally when assessment of needs, and support is discussed and organised. Professionals communicate about the child or young person by telephone, letter, or face-to-face discussion. The model shows clearly how easy it is for this communication to take place around the child or young person rather than with them.

Ideally, this system acts to establish equilibrium and stability that allows the child, family and professionals to participate fully in the process. The opportunity exists within this model for the promotion of positive care practice in the family and in different care settings. The nature of communications is critical in reversing the culture in which children are raised from the more negative, corrective and penalising past to a more positive and nurturing one.

The complexity of the communication system is evident. Much may happen as child welfare and educational issues are discussed in casework. Under this legislation the view of the child is to be taken into account and increasingly as the child grows older more responsibility can be given to the young person as they gradually assume increasing responsibility for presenting their own point of view. This will in

principle reduce the likelihood of exploitation and victimisation as defined by the game of three's. Scotland has been committed to this important shift in raising the status of children in society.

The elements and key interrelationships above are in the main the same as those of the general model of provision that preceded the 1995 Act. The common theme of empowerment of children by both Social Work and Education, and the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child serve to strengthen the arm of policy makers.

Tempting as it has been to explore many areas raised by the creation of the general Model of Provision or the Model of communication processes, it was unrealistic. The purpose of the models has been to help trace elements of stability and change. The decision was made to explore the hypothesis that reflected the educational dimension of care. Here as a reminder, are the questions to be pursued:

Main research question: What are young people's experiences of being in and of leaving care? This led to a subset of key variables that shaped the inquiry and were the basis of interview questions.

Stage one covered the background and context in which Local Authorities were operating. It also involved consideration of local policy statements and the intention of the Local Authority to provide support for all children for whom they are responsible. According to Giddens (1979) systems of social support manifest first in the form of action, leading to agency are instrumental in professional translation of policy into practice at the interface between policy and the client. The intentions of policy may be realised through professional action, agency and power, translation of policy may not be simple and can result in unintended consequence. Lipsky (1968) says that the professional discretion of the street-level bureaucrats, the teachers and carers may act to facilitate or to limit provision of such supports. The structure and system set out within a Local Authority will bear witness to intention of policy. To complete the background picture portrayed in Stage One, questions into the explicit system and structure of

policy initiatives within an authority, as conveyed to the Local Authority and to the public they serve are examined.

Stage Two subsequently examined the experience young people had of being supported in their education. It was anticipated that a fair degree of congruence would be found between policy and these experiences. The decision to research the experiences that young people have had of educational assessment for problems of literacy development arose from examination of research literature in care and education. How children experience support and the benefits accrued by them would also appear to have a significant bearing on their capacity to gain independence on leaving care. Public policy in relation to the experience of being supported in this vital area of literacy development was felt to be profitable line of enquiry.

The value of children's views was recognised by the Who Care's? Trust (1993, 1996 and 1998), a Non-Governmental Organisation run by people who have been in care, is devoted to the support of children and young people in care. The Trust originated in the 1980's and has developed with the incorporation of young people who have been in care on its staff. It has been instrumental in raising awareness of the views held by children and young people who are being looked after in the United Kingdom. From my point of view as a researcher, earlier work had convinced me that gender issues were worth pursuing within all research projects if at all possible (Erskine 1992). In the key study 'Not Just a Name' confirmed the issue that girls felt treated differently in school both by teachers and other pupils when they were attending from a residential setting (Who Cares? Trust, 1993).

It was important at this stage to realise research projects that Local Authorities would be willing to embrace and be able to support. The size and the scope of the study in terms of the Research Questions had to be rendered manageable. It was decided that researching the experience of young people with no experience of Local Authority care could not be achieved, due to the difficulty of recruitment. It was decided to treat that as a separate and future line of inquiry. Research tools to enable data collection for individual research questions were devised. A Learning Support

Inventory was created in the form of various research schedules (Appendices 1 to 10). Their construction is described now before the methodology is detailed in Chapter Five.

### **The Research Schedules**

It was recognised that Local Authorities would appreciate knowing what has been happening to young people in their care and how the system is meeting their educational needs, especially in terms of support. I am grateful to Philip Seed for his advice (see Seed and Montgomery 1989). As an experienced interviewer of young people, his advice proved invaluable in helping me realise that some people “can only tell you the whole story”. The predominant use of open questions during interview allowed interviewees to express themselves and I was prepared to listen. At this stage I had been considering social network analysis, often used by Philip Seed, in helping to determine what may or may not have been happening to young people in terms of their contact and support. Although I did not take up this idea it proved an extremely useful one in the development of the research schedules. The schedule dedicated to individual young people who have now left the system was designed to allow their perceptions, views and feelings to emerge.

A second factor in the design was a matter of time. In many ways the schedules for professional people were designed to gain many pieces of information of quite a small size and short interview times from many people. Rather as in the making up of a jigsaw. The Research Schedules for the Principal Teachers of Learning Support allowed me to get some information across a number of different questions in the same telephone call. I thought this would help the Local Authorities in their willingness to allow the study to proceed in their area as time is of the essence for a professional system under pressure. The schedules also provide a guide that can be used in the future.

The research schedules were also designed to allow a minimum of intrusion into the way the system is operating and the way people may be feeling. The questions

provided a difficult problem, who to gain the information from and how to ask it? I did feel at this stage that some questions might need a second investigation as, for example, in the case of professional managers, and this proved so. They were always willing to come back and discuss again certain issues as the study progressed. Wherever possible, intrusion was minimised by employing telephone interviews.

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork the research schedules were piloted in another Local Authority. The assessed the adequacy of the research tools. Viewed as an essential part of any investigation its purpose is to address specific questions about whether respondents understand the questions; if appropriate language is used; how long does the process take; do respondents show signs impatience and what is the best order for the questions (Wilson 1996)? The face-to-face interviews of about one hour in length were conducted with young people who had experience of the care system, professional managers, and informal contacts that were prepared to be interviewed as carers and birth parents. As a result of this no changes were made to the Research Schedules, however as we will see in the multi-perspective case studies, the way in which the interview was conducted was altered accordingly. It soon became clear that young people found it easier to discuss their present situation, then to reflect on the past experience. When that had been explored the discussion then returned to the present. Information about future plans and aspirations concluded the interview. Many small pieces of information in many shades and complexities were to be elicited from multiple sources. An Audit matrix was devised to help track this process (see Table 4.2).

<p><b>Main Research Question:</b> What are young people's experiences of being in and of leaving care?</p>			
<p>Interview Questions for key variables: Provision and Support available</p>	<p>Research Tools Instrument</p>	<p>Data</p>	<p>Mode of Analysis &amp; Style of Presentation</p>
<p>Q1 What support for problems of literacy is available in school?</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Part 1 - by telephone interview</p>	<p>From PT learning support of the range and type of learning support available to each of two secondary schools in each of three local authorities</p>	<p>Table Summary of range of learning support available to pupils</p>
<p>Q2 What support for problems of literacy is available at home?</p>	<p>Learning Support at Home Inventory Part 2 – by telephone interview</p>	<p>From Managers of the Residential Units providing details about the range and type of additional support available to young people going to school from the Residential Units/Homes</p>	
<p>Q3 Are the educational needs of the child identified?</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Parts 1 &amp; 2 - by telephone interview</p>	<p>From PT of Learning Support in each secondary school and Managers of Residential Units</p>	<p>An overview of the educational needs of children looked after by each Local Authority</p>
<p>Q 4 How are the children identified as in need of support?</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Part 1 - by telephone</p>	<p>From PTs of Learning Support in each secondary school</p>	<p>Table Source of identification of learning difficulties</p>
<p>Interview Questions for key variable: The role of professional staff and specialist services in the identification and assessment of needs.</p>			

<p><b>Q5</b> Who (which professionals) are involved in the assessment of education and care needs of children in (a) foster care (b) residential care</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Part 3 - by telephone Learning Support Inventory Part 1 - by telephone</p>	<p>From a manager of the Care Review teams in each Local Authority details of range of professionals involved re children in categories (a) and (b)</p>	<p>Range of professionals involved in identification of educational and care needs of children (ie, from Social Work/Education, and from Health)</p>
<p><b>Q6</b> What possibility is there for children to miss the assessment process?</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Part 4 - by telephone</p>	<p>From PTs of Guidance details about all children attending each secondary school from Residential Units/Foster Care who do not receive support from Learning Support Department</p>	
<p><b>Q7</b> Is there any provision aimed at overcoming possible omissions specifically for children looked after by the local authority?</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory LSI – Parts 1-5</p>	<p>From PTs Learning Support, Managers of Residential Units, Managers of Care Review teams, and PTs of Guidance</p>	<p>In text</p>
<p><b>Q8</b> How is the conjoint responsibility for the identification of care and educational needs discharged by social work and education?</p>	<p>Background reading of Local Authority Policies, use of review schedules Interview Schedule 1 – face-to-face with Senior Manager in Social Work and Education</p>	<p>From Managers in Social Work and Education, details of post-legislative change and organisation</p>	<p>Descriptions of Local Authority position</p>

<p>RQ9 What action is taken by professionals in social work and education to secure educational support for children in Foster Care/Residential Care?</p> <p>Interview Questions for the multi-perspective case studies.</p>	<p>Learning Support Inventory Parts 1 &amp; 5</p>	<p>From PT's Learning Support, teachers and social workers, details about what action they take</p>	<p>Text</p>
<p>Q10 How is educational support provided in care settings when it is not available in school? Q11 How were special their needs met? Q12 How were their learning difficulties addressed?</p>	<p>For carers/parents For social workers</p>	<p>Young people , Birth Parents and carers and all other sources</p>	<p>Text</p>
<p>Q13 What is the educational experience of young people who have been in the care of the local authority ? Q14 Is there a gender difference?</p>	<p>Individual Young People Interview Schedule for School Leavers Focus Group/Care Interview Schedule for School Leavers Focus Group</p>		<p>Text</p>

Finally:  
Report findings related to main research question  
Report comparisons between each Local Authority  
Report the experiences of young people from different care backgrounds  
Report any significance difference in the experiences of young men and women  
Questions found to warrant further study

**Table 4.2: Research Summary**

## **Chapter 5: Method**

### **Researching The Problem**

Completion of the research schedules described at the end of Chapter Four culminated in the verification of design and methods and production of the audit matrix. This Chapter explains how the research was conducted. The design of the study, the data collection and how the data was analysed are covered in turn.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

One aim was to present the data of the research in a way that would explicate rather than simply report on the experience of young people. How young people experience the policies that are put in place to support them was a main concern of the study. It was important to reflect the uniqueness of this experience as personal to individuals and at the same time provide a description of multiple situations.

Another aim was to provide a rounded picture of the way children, looked after by the Local Authority in different care settings, experienced support for their learning, with specific reference to the development of their literary skills, their reading and writing skills. Inextricably linked to this was the experience young people had of the policies set in place to assist them and their families, as well as the support they received from professionals with whom they came into contact.

### **The Design of this Study**

Interview questions were intended to elicit a combination of data, prompting mixed design. The information needed to respond to questions 2-5 covered context and background, current practice and policy issues at institutional /macro level. The information required in answering questions 6-9 concern individual/micro level inquiries. The responses needed to answer the main research question were contained in all other questions. The experience of young people within each of the three Local Authorities could be set against the policy positions undertaken.

Initial analysis demanded that a selection of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies be considered. It was decided to consider the use various methods. The information needed to answer the research questions varied. Those that addressed the context and background in which Local Authorities operated required some statistical elements. Others that addressed personal experience and sociological observation to in order generate a more accurate description of social phenomena and process demanded a purely qualitative approach (Table 4.2).

This contradicted the application of experimental method in which the researcher

...attempts to discover causal relationships between phenomena by intervening in the natural setting and controlling all the relevant variables.

(Scott in Scott and Usher 1996 p.52)

The intention to investigate in depth the experiences young people had of public policy and to gather information about the context and background of each of the three Local Authorities indicated the application of a predominantly interpretive and meaning-based research strategy albeit with a quantitative dimension. The study of any difference between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of experience demanded that factual evidence be sought and the context in which that experience took place be analysed. The application of case study method was explored as a matter of course.

As pointed out by Cheetam (Cheetam *et al.* 1992)

The case study, a term that is used somewhat imprecisely in social research, may serve a number of functions and be useful in a range of contexts.

(Cheetam *et al.* 1992, p.29)

Emphasis is put on the uniqueness of the 'case' to be examined. Case study variables are not tightly controlled or rendered abstract. Changes or developments in the course of a study are themselves viewed as valuable data rather than

`contaminating` factors, and numbers are not necessary crucial (Bassey 1999; Cheetam *et al.* 1992).

According to Hammersley and Gomm (2000), in some sense all research is case study research in that there is always some unit or set of units about which data is collected and/or analysed. Hammersley (1992) has described the case study as study of a phenomenon (located in space/time) about which data are collected and /or analysed. Cases may range from micro to macro, from one individual to institutional level. While according to Stake (1998) not all case studies are qualitative.

Bassey has argued that there are at least three categories of educational case study. First he talked of theory-seeking and theory-testing case study. Then he defined story-telling and picture-drawing case study and thirdly he outlined evaluative case study (Bassey 1999). Evaluation, he argued, may be formative or summative.

Insights into the processes of evaluation can be gained through consideration of a train journey.

Summative evaluation is carried out at the end of the journey. The evaluator meets the passengers at the terminus and asks questions as they (the passengers) come off the train.

(Bassey 1999, p.110)

If the evaluation is summative and is carried out in a positivist perspective the evaluator notes punctuality and counts passengers. A questionnaire would be sufficient to find out whether passengers agree/disagree/don't know to the statement. The railway company reviews the report and may use it as a basis for closing the line, changing schedules, or spending more time on advertising. If, however, the summative evaluation is carried out from an interpretive perspective the researcher asks about the experiences of the journey- what view the individual passengers saw, whom they met and whether or not facilities were adequate in their view. Then the railway company could use the report for the purposes of improving the facilities for passengers, and it may also be published in a travel magazine because of its general interest to travellers.

According to Bassey (1999) the formative evaluator needs to travel on the train for the task is different from that above, the concern is with the success of the journey. Similar questions may be asked but the immediate concern is with conditions currently experienced by passengers. Of the three case study positions outlined above is that of summative evaluation carried out from an interpretive perspective best describes the design of this research study.

Hammersley (1985) also describes and classifies case study research into three styles. In the first the researcher studies typical cases, which represent a larger whole. In the second style researchers use case studies to test theories. More and more cases are studied until researchers are satisfied that the theory is held. By contrast in the third style the uniqueness of the case is preserved. The concern of the researcher is not with representation but with how the working of particular processes is revealed in each case (Hammersley 1985). This clarifies the way that the study of cases is undertaken in this study. The main concern here is not with representation, but with how processes work to further the implementation of the *1995 Act* for the benefit of young people.

In exploring the appropriateness of case study research in this study it was important to recognise

that our choice of case selection strategy should be determined by our judgement of the resulting gains and losses in the light of particular goals and circumstances of our research, including the resources available.

(Hammersley 1992, p.185)

Reported strengths of the case study approach are based on the premise that people and situations are complex and that with case study method processes and meanings held in specific contexts can be explored (Edwards 1990). They can be used to illustrate information gained in surveys already completed. Also they are viewed as a way of understanding how individuals make sense of situations and contexts e.g. an institution engaged in a period of change (Hammersley 1985, Edwards 1990).

Case studies may stand alone as one example of a phenomenon or several case studies may be incorporated so that comparative analysis of cases may occur (Edwards 1990). Moreover Edwards report as a major advantage

Case studies allow you to find out how others make sense of their worlds, how and why some changes work and others don't. They ensure that data are therefore not limited to the questions you first thought of asking.

(Edwards 1990, p.11)

Additionally Adelman *et al.* (1980) describe the possible advantages of a case study approach as strong in reality; recognition of the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths; a 'step to action' able to be directly interpreted and put to use; for formative evaluation and policy making. They also view the case study as able to serve multiple audiences; making the research process itself more accessible; and perhaps contributing towards the 'democratisation' of decision-making (and knowledge itself).

Potential weakness in case study research turns on problems of justification. These problems are not confined to case studies but are a matter of all research (Kemmis 1980). According to Kemmis (1980) two kinds of justification preoccupy consumers of research. Those are justification the 'truth-status' of findings and those concerned with accountability of researchers for the conduct of the research. He suggested that the status of understandings arrived at through case study has been in doubt within the research community.

because case studies speak about a world we know about at a commonsense level, they often leave the reader in doubt about how much the truths they tell are commonsense and how much scientific. Because case studies are usually the product of an intense involvement by one or a few individuals with their subject-matter, they are sometimes dismissed as purely 'subjective' and are regarded with suspicion, even hostility, by some social scientists. And because questions of social science theory and practice (and matters of truth in science in general) are always controversial, case studies are sometimes rejected on purely doctrinaire grounds.

(Kemmis 1980, p.99)

One such ground is often that of generalisability of the findings. As Hammersley (1992) has pointed out

A potential weakness of the case study is that its findings may be unrepresentative of a larger population in which we are interested.  
(Hammersley 1992 p.188)

For example comparison is often made between research in which statistical generalisation has been viewed as more conclusive than the analytical generalisation more commonly associated with case study (Yin 1994). Rather the proportion that our sample represents can be more important than the absolute magnitude of any sample (Hammersley 1992). It cannot be assumed when using case study research that the findings are not generalisable, or that generalisation cannot be established, if not at the time of the case study but at some time in the future as a result of further investigation (Hammersley 1992).

Closely allied to matters of truth and scientific proof are the standards researchers have set themselves in the execution of their work. In quantitative research, the standards most frequently used are validity and reliability. Validity relates to the accuracy of the findings. Internal validity addresses the authenticity of the observations and measurements. External validity has to do with how well representations can be compared across groups (Cohen and Manion 1994).

Reliability is concerned with replication of findings. External reliability refers to whether or not other researchers would discover the same findings. Internal reliability is concerned with whether or not other researchers, given a particular set of constructs would match them with data in the same way as the original researcher (Sapsford and Jupp 1996). According to Rubin and Rubin (1995)

Most indicators of validity and reliability do not fit qualitative research. Trying to apply these indicators to qualitative work distracts more than it clarifies. Instead, researchers judge the credibility of qualitative work by its transparency, consistency, coherence, and communicability; they design the interviewing to achieve these standards.

(Rubin and Rubin 1995, p.185)

To this end a multi-site and multi-perspective case study design was developed. The type of case study envisaged was not typical of the long-term observational case study, which is predominantly qualitative in design and unique in nature never to be repeated. It has been noted by Campbell that;

The degree of certainty or consensus that the scientific community is able to achieve will usually be less in out of doors social science, due to the lesser degree of plausibility-reduction of rival hypothesis that are likely to be achieved. The inability to replicate at will (and with various designed to rule out specific rivals) – is part of the problem. We should use these single event case studies (which can never be replicated) to their fullest, but we should also be alert for opportunities to do intentionally replicated case studies.

(Campbell 1984, p.8)

The opportunity to create such a case study presented itself in this case. The intention was to create a case study that could describe and explain in kind and the method of which could be replicated to test the main research question in Local Authorities in another country, e.g. England or Wales where the findings might differ. Strategies for analysis were to be by pattern making, and explanation building. The case, including the main research question, was examined in each of three Local Authorities in Scotland. It aimed to provide a background description of each authority, a review of the kind of support which young people receive at the present time; the intention was to study the case in relation to the experience of young people by means of an independent multi-perspective case study within each authority. This would be made up of individual case studies of the experience of young people. Comparison could then be made within and across schools; within and across care settings; and within and across Local Authorities.

## **The Selection of Local Authorities**

Having established the design for the study the selection of Local Authorities proceeded as follows. An audit was conducted to determine a population of young people in care. A request for information was sent to each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities, 23 responded providing a response of 74% (Appendix 11). A map of Scotland and its authorities appears on the next page.

Figure 5.1: Map of Local Authorities in Scotland

Current Local Authorities  
(since 1996)



(Smith 2001, p.x)

The main criteria were set for the selection of a sample representative of Local Authorities. From the information received a sampling frame was prepared (Table 5.1). This allowed the selection to be made that was representative of Local Authorities in Scotland. Five Local Authorities were subsequently invited to take part in the study (Appendix 12), three accepted.

Residential Unit	Fostering Provision	School Leaver Population	Classification Of Local Authority	Care Population 0-18 years	Local Authority
	B		R	70	The Borders
A			D	148	East Lothian
A	B		D	79	Perth & Kinross
	B		D	115	W Dunbartonshire
A	B		D	217	Fife
	B		D	43	S Ayrshire
A	B		D	32	E Dunbartonshire
A	B	C	D	50	E Ayrshire
A	B		R	27	Orkney
A	B		D	93	Angus
A	B	C	U	301	Dundee City
A	B	C	R	78	Argyle & Bute
A	B	C	U	224	Falkirk
A	B		D	162	S Lanarkshire
	B		D	62	Clackmannanshire
A	B	C	U	118	Renfrewshire
A	B	C	U	256	Aberdeen
A	B	C	R	26	Highland
A	B	C	U	604	Edinburgh
	B		D	64	Midlothian
A	B	C	D	230	N Lanarkshire
	B	C	U	141	E Renfrewshire
A	B	C	D	113	N Ayrshire
<b>Total Population</b>				<b>3442</b>	

**Table 5.1: Audit of Care Provision by Local Authority**

The criteria represented above were (A) the availability of residential units within the authority, (B) existing fostering provision, (C) the availability of a population of school leavers and the presence of an established group of young people who have experience of being looked after. This, it was thought, could facilitate access to a population of school leavers with experience of the care system.

Eleven Local Authorities met these criteria and were then classified according to whether they could be geographically classed as Rural (R), Urban (U) or of mixed

Eleven Local Authorities met these criteria and were then classified according to whether they could be geographically classed as Rural (R), Urban (U) or of mixed geographical composition – that is, Diverse (D), having within their geographical boundaries both townships and rural areas.

Finally one rural authority, two urban authorities and two diverse authorities were identified as being possible contributors to the study. Where possible the care population remained between the numbers 20 and 100 in order to preserve a manageable sample of the care population whilst, at the same time, allowing a meaningful proportion of the national care population to be included.

Five authorities were approached (see Appendix 12), two declined. The reason given in one case was that other research projects had placed demands on staff in the authority and no new work was being undertaken. In the other case one senior official within that authority gave permission, which was later, revoked on the departure of that staff member. The four interviews given in the meantime, three with a senior manager in Social Work and one with a member of middle management in Social Work proved extremely useful in identifying the issues of concern in that area. The three Local Authorities that volunteered to co-operate with the study when approached were designated *Rurality*, *Urbanity* and *Diversity* to preserve anonymity. These were spread geographically across the country, in the Central Belt, the South West and North East. The main research was undertaken with each of these three Local Authorities. Background information was continuously collected about each Authority and about the particular context in which service provision took place. In this way the Learning Support Inventory allowed me to collect a valuable amount of data from many people to provide the contextual background for the Local Authority and to answer the main research question. Individual case studies provided in-depth information about the different experiences of young people. Data was collected in 93 interviews conducted with, young people, parents and carers and professional staff (see Table 5.2).

		Diversity	Rurality	Urbanity	Total
Young People	Male	2	1	1	4
	Female	2	2	1	5
Young People	By Group	1	1	1	3
School Pupils	By Group	1	1	1	3
Parents	Mothers	2	2	2	6
Parents	Fathers	2	2	1	5
Carers	Foster	2	3	0	5
Carers	Residential	2	0	1	3
Senior Managers	Education	1	1	1	3
Senior Managers	Social Work	1	1	1	3
Key Facilitators	Education	2	2	2	6
Key Facilitators	Social Work	2	2	2	6
Case Review Officers		3	2	4	9
Social Workers		4	3	2	9
Principal Teachers		7	2	14	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>= 93</b>

**Table 5.2: Number of interviews with Young People, Parents, Carers and Staff**

## **Interviews with Senior Management**

At an early stage of the research in each authority senior professionals with responsibility for Education and Social work respectively were interviewed at their offices about the problems facing the Local Authority in making provision following the new Children (Scotland) Act 1995. These face-to-face interviews lasted about an hour, and covered the themes listed in the schedule for Local Authority Managers, which appears as (Appendix 10).

Senior managers raised current problems and issues and how they were to be tackled. They also gave a professional appraisal of the progress and implementation of the new Children Scotland Act. It has been argued (Scott and Usher 1996) that structure have fleeting substance in the reasons actors have for their actions. This is substantiated by Giddens, who argues that,

study of the structural properties of social systems cannot be successfully carried on, or its results interpreted, without reference to the knowledgeability of the relevant agents.

(Giddens 1984, p.329)

Senior managers play a role of agents of policy within the structure of Local Authorities. Data from these interviews recorded a valuable part of the background and context to each Local Authority.

## **Policy Documents**

Local Authority officials provided policy documents relevant to the current guidelines under which staff were working in the district. An important source of data, these were subjected to content analysis in the first instance. Policy themes emerging from Social Work and Education data were collected with the schedule for Policy Positions (Appendix 9). Data was then compared and contrasted with the issues and themes arising from school-based data and data collected from Social Work staff. This provided additional data, which contributed to the context an

appreciation of the contemporary context in which Social Work and Education were working.

## **Content Analysis**

Local Authorities provided copies of their Service Plans for Children and any Education Policy statements considered relevant to their implementation of the *1995 Act*. Some detailed intended progress to be made over a three-year period; others were subject to annual updating. All had been subject to scrutiny and approval of the relevant Local Authority Committees and circulated to staff in each of the services concerned. Analysis revealed a consistency across authorities. They were judged to be proactive in their approach to the implementation. Each had indeed produced documentation to deal with the imminent changes required under the *1995 Act* and those documents revealed evidence of the following aims in their stated intentions. Social Work documents revealed the intention to educate children and young people living in different care settings in the ordinary school. They also showed preparedness to liaise with education staff in securing and keep school places. There was evidence of commitment to keep children in the community through the provision of Resource centres, Children's Centres and Assessment centres. There was a commitment to foster care and to negotiating placements for children and young people outwith the geographical boundary of the Local Authority if placements were no longer available locally.

Education policy documents in each of the Local Authorities revealed intention to provide effective teaching and learning for all pupils, regardless of the circumstances facing the child. There was a firm commitment to staff development and training in recognition of the difficulties in implementing policies of social inclusion. There was a commitment to fund developments. Provision of designated learning support bases within each secondary school was a strong feature, as was the willingness to be flexible in providing support for secondary schools with a view to facilitating learning support teachers who could work with subject teachers to adapt curriculum materials when appropriate. Documents also endorsed the education of pupils with

emotional and behavioural problems in local schools, and suggest that Local Authorities were in the process of developing alternative responses in an effort to reduce the numbers of children excluded from school. Willingness to work with the Social Work Department, as appropriate, was also a stated objective.

## **Background Information**

Certain staff employed in key positions within middle management had been identified by senior managers as key facilitators within an authority. They had responsibility for the overview of all casework for the Local Authority. They were also interviewed with the interview schedule for case review officers (Appendix 3) as a source for information needed to address a number of the questions. Sometimes this member of staff held other responsibilities, (e.g., for fostering and for adoption,) therefore the young people whose histories we were examining were well known to this professional. Although we were a long time in establishing the key facilitator in each of the authorities, once established this was the person who could provide information sought about young people in the authority. They provided statistical data after prior consultation. In this way information came to light about all the young people being looked after at the time. It was also possible to look at the differences in status as far as special needs and records of needs were concerned.

In one case, a facilitator conducted an internal review in the presence of the researcher. This provided insight into the way the authority reviewed children's casework. Discussions proved helpful in identifying issues for families as well as the young people themselves. It also allowed the Local Authorities awareness of the assessment processes, children with Records of Needs, and the role of professional assessment, for example, Psychological Services. It was quite clear from casework, whether or not young people were benefiting from the support put in place.

## **Group Interviews**

Group interviews were conducted with school leavers who had experience of the system but who had left up to three years previously (Appendix 7). Group interviews were also undertaken with young people who had experience of the care system and were in their first or second year of education at Secondary school (Appendix 8).

Prearranged group interviews created a forum in which discussion of a range of issues that concerned young people can take place. As Watts and Erbutt (1987) explained, despite the one disadvantage that the dynamic of groups can prohibit exchange of a personal matter group interviews may be useful where members of the group have circumstances in common and can share them. Such interviews could also be arranged with minimum level of disruption to the lives of the young people. Although the main focus of the group was educational issues the meetings were easier to arrange out of school hours for the younger group of interviewees. These interviews were conducted in Local Authority offices and Community centres. Together these enquiries provided background information about how the system of Education and Social Work was currently providing support for young people

## **School Staff**

The process of deciding what information was required to address the questions, and how it could be obtained was part of that important stage occupying most of the pre-design period called “foreshadowing the problem” by Malinowski (1922). While face-to-face interviews had been considered appropriate in the research of policy issues and personal experiences they are time consuming. The application of telephone interviews using to gather data relevant to the background and context was deemed a more viable option. According to Wilson

The telephone interview is used increasingly as an effective and economic way of collecting data. It is a variant on the face-to-face interview, but holds much in common with it. There is an absence of observation of body language, but that apart personal and social contact between researcher and respondent is similar to that of the face-to-face interview.

(Wilson in Sapford and Jupp, 1996, p94)

Telephone interviews, in this case, could preclude extensive travel across the country and in the three geographical areas to be visited, making them less time consuming. They were also thought to be less disruptive and intrusive for the professional working situations found in schools and offices. Schedules were prepared accordingly.

Part one of the Learning Support Inventory addressed the range of supports available to pupils in each of the secondary schools in each authority. This was obtained through contact with principal teachers of learning support in each of the schools concerned. Principal teachers of learning support in each of the secondary schools in the districts were interviewed. The information they provided was needed to answer more than one question (Appendix 1). Contact was made by telephone. A schedule was prepared for interviews with Principal Teachers of Guidance in schools (Appendix 4).

### **Residential Care Managers**

Information about the additional supports for literacy available in the residential units of each of the authorities was received by telephone interview from care managers of residential units in each authority (Appendix 2). It was hoped to provide a summary of the range of additional support available for children in the residential settings. The ways in which young people were contacted and how their case studies were conducted are described next.

## Facilitation

As indicated above each Local Authority identified a key worker or facilitator who worked with the researcher to help contact young people in the area. The case studies required interviews with the young people, their immediate carers if possible and one professional who they named. The young people nominated those persons that they thought would be willing to speak to their history and would be willing to contribute to the study. However, it should be noted that despite the help of many of the authorities – it didn't matter how helpful the authorities were – sometimes it was difficult to contact young people. In one authority particularly, urbanity, young people were difficult to contact despite all the efforts of the Local Authority.

Most notable was the rapid mobility of the young people in Urbanity. Although there are many young people on the lists they were very difficult to find. Many were becoming homeless. Sometimes an interview was arranged, but by the next day when I had gone to meet the young person, they had been arrested and put in prison. Many had no address, many were living in bed and breakfast accommodation, and many were not availing themselves of the support on offer at local drop-in centres manned by Social Work staff.

Those young people who did participate in the study were contacted via Social Work departments and reputational sampling within each Authority. Their willingness to participate in group interviews as a first step helped establish initial contact. Some, but not all, considered continuing and agreed to give individual interviews. Some offered key contact with young people who might be willing to participate. This helped build up a group of young people in each area who were able and willing to detailed accounts of their experiences. Every effort was made at this stage in the study to have a gender balance across the categories. It was useful to have young women and young men commenting equally on the range of care settings that they

had experienced, and every effort was made within each authority to provide gender balance of this kind.

When contact had been made with some young people they referred other young people to me. Sometimes I was invited to their homes rather than to interview them in Local Authority premises. The quality of these interviews, particularly with regard to the social situations in which the young persons found themselves, was high and the data particularly illuminating. These interviews differed markedly from the more distant and more official view the young people gave when interviewed in Social Work premises. The data itself was extremely useful in pinpointing some of the important issues. These issues emerge as strong themes in the findings. The instrumental role played by Local Authority staff as gatekeepers is amplified in a research note to illustrate the protracted nature of this process and the reasoning behind it (Appendix 13).

### **Multi-Perspective Case Studies**

Data collected in the twelve multi-perspective case studies provided the information to answer questions 10-14. The research schedules were designed to cover certain themes in the young persons experienced of reading and writing; the key contributors in the development of the processes of literacy. A research schedule was created to allow me to guide the interviews with individual young people in the multi-perspective case study, and to question subsequently any carers or birth parents (Appendix 6).

Finally, a research schedule was drawn up for social workers and teachers (Appendix 5). When the young people had named a social worker or a teacher as a supporter in the multi-perspective case studies Appendix 6 was also employed.

As indicated the face-to-face interviews benefited from the notes taken in the piloting of the materials. The decision to cover the current situation of the young person's life early in the interview, allowed the interview to proceed more smoothly.

The young people were asked about their present life; what was happening, how they used reading matter, what they felt about their reading skills, and their application of these in everyday life. Ongoing support in respect of literacy was explored next. Their plans for the future sometimes emerged spontaneously at this stage in the conversation. Where this happened it was allowed. The perceptions, attitudes and feelings as well as ideas were recorded separately.

The second major part of the interview involved reflection on their personal history and on learning to read. This covered domestic situations as well as school. It also frequently covered key persons and significant others who had been instrumental in supporting the educational aspirations of the young people.

Many of the young people were able to comment about more than one care setting. Most had had experience of being in care temporarily, in a children's home prior to being fostered, and some had gone on to experience adoption. This proved a very rich resource. Far from one young person commenting on one experience, perhaps in a children's home, I discovered that these young people had moved around the system, and had experience of many helpers in developing their literacy skills. They were also able to draw comparisons about their experiences in one setting as opposed to another. During the interviews not everyone was able to keep to the theme of literacy questions about their current situation, the position they were placed in regarding employment, their future education – all was inextricably intertwined with the social arrangements for their daily living. It was from these interviews that some of the richest data was collected.

Another major part of the multi-perspective case studies was the interview of adults connected with individual young people. This constituted a process of triangulation of the data in which information was sought from three sources. This meant that the extent to which each source corroborated the information about the experience of the young person determined the weight given to information received. As I have said, the young people referred the adult's concerned to me. Some were interviewed in their homes, some over the telephone, whichever was most suitable for them. What

was really interesting in the study is that some young people referred being reunited with birth parents and named them as the person whom they would prefer to be interviewed as part of the triangulation process. Sometimes it was a carer with whom they had been fostered many years before was the named adult. Some young people had no one, and in this case the key worker, the facilitator in the authority, was prepared to speak to the social work history of that young person and to any contact in the last few years. Some of the adult interviews were staff in children's homes, who had known the young person one or two years before, perhaps during a short stay and sometimes over many years. The interest carers still had in the young person, even though contact with them had broken years before. The triangulation process proved valuable in the analysis.

The poor circumstance of many of the young people was unexpected. Parents, carers and staff nominated by interviewees corroborated stories of grief, sadness and unhappiness. The absence of fathers, either named as correspondents or present in the young person's life, was notable. The fathers proved tentative and wary about becoming involved. Some were extremely negative about the young person. This was particularly sad when the young person concerned had invested a great deal of energy and enthusiasm in trying to involve the father in the project.

It had been my intention to interview young people who had had no experience of the care system. This proved much more difficult than at first anticipated and had to be abandoned. These findings will therefore report only on the multi perspective case studies of the young people who had experience of care. The young people who did volunteer are introduced next.

## **The Young People**

### **MARGARET (19)**

Margaret has spent most of her life in and out temporary foster care since the separation of her parents when she was three years old. The longest foster care arrangement lasted two and a half years. She has also spent some time in respite care

arrangements in a Children's Home. Throughout she attended the same local Primary School, before transferring to Secondary School in the same area. She found school life difficult. She has not yet learned to read and her behavioural problems in Secondary school were serious, resulting in frequent removal from subject classes. Margaret described her relations with most teachers as reasonable. Since leaving school she earns money by knitting sweaters with complex patterns, as part of the tourist trade. She would like to become a beautician and is exploring options at the local college. Margaret lives in her own semi-detached house rented from the Council. Her father has recently returned to the area. She visits with her mother and her father in their respective homes regularly.

#### LINDA (20)

Linda has been in and out of care since the age of six, when her mother died of a drugs overdose. Until then, because of their chaotic existence she and her two little brothers survived as they could. Linda was not enrolled in school until she was fostered after her mother's death. She was fostered with her brothers before being separated from them in another foster arrangement. She then spent two years in a Children's Home before a new family fostered her with a view to adoption. Adoption with this family subsequently broke down in her adolescence, but contact with foster parents has continued. She had school difficulties and behavioural problems at Secondary school. Despite this she enjoyed the curriculum of Foundation subjects, naming Physical Education, Home Economics, Music, in which she was especially gifted, playing the drums and singing classical pieces solo at concerts. At one stage she took singing lessons, and took part in the school musical productions. Linda now lives in a hostel for single mothers with her eight month old son. She has regular contact with her adoptive parents, who are supportive in helping her bring up her son. She still has some contact with her brothers. She plans to take up her education at the local college again when possible.

#### BILLY (18)

Billy is in a flat of his own. He has been in care since relationships with his mother and stepfather broke down in his early teens. He has lived in a succession of

Children's Units since then and has also experienced Independent living arrangements. His behaviour at school had been a serious problem in primary and secondary, and he had changed schools four times. Billy did not enjoy his education and has no educational qualifications, never having sat any of the examinations. He would like to study at College and is participating in a scheme, which will reintroduce him to a suitable Educational programme. He considers himself talented in art and design work and is always drawing. Billy has been involved in the Princes Trust Scheme and is seen by staff to have potential as a leader. At the time of interview, Billy was spending much of his time alone, except for occasional outings with friends and visits to his mother. His mother, however, is planning to move away and Billy realises that this link may well soon be lost.

#### SARAH (17)

Sarah had one foster placement, which lasted a year, when she was at Primary school, and frequent short stays Children's Homes. She remained at the Local Primary and Secondary schools throughout. She has enjoyed education and has had no obvious problems. She has no O Grades, but would like to study Child Care and First Aid. Sarah is sensitive and feels strongly about the way she feels she and her family have been the object of bad feeling (i.e., stigmatised at school and in the community), something which she deeply resents. This has spoiled her experience of school and this was worse when she was fostered locally, because everyone knew she was not living at home any more. At the time of interview Sarah was living with her mother. She has now moved away and has set up home with her boyfriend. Contact with her family is diminishing.

#### JOSEPH (17)

Since the age of nine Joseph has experienced short and long term stays in Children's Homes and the Regional Assessment Centre. His stays in care have been successful and he is very much seen as likeable and sociable. Nevertheless Joseph has had severe behavioural difficulties in school since his start in Primary One. He still does not read fluently, and has never sat any examinations. Joseph was expelled from Secondary school when he was fifteen, and describes himself as rarely attending

before then due to interruptions in care arrangements. His stays in alternative care and educational settings have resulted in him becoming competent and skilled in practical subjects. He would like to become a painter and decorator. He also has considered the army as a career. He received help from a Government Training Scheme, which addresses his literacy problems. He is positive about this. Since the interview Joseph spent a few months in prison, before returning to live with his mother.

#### SHARON (19)

Sharon has been in care from early childhood in a succession of Children's Homes, and in foster care for eighteen months when she was 10 years old. She has had changes of Primary and Secondary School. Primary education was positive, but two years of Secondary education were lost due to turmoil and non-attendance during a stay in one Children's Home. She is viewed as an extremely intelligent girl, with considerable potential as yet unrealised. She has five Standard Grades in English, Maths, Science, Art and Geography. She is working hard to regain custody of her son, now fostered with a local family. Sharon now has her own tenancy of a flat and has employment as a clerical assistant in an office. Ideally she would like to be a paramedic and does not rule out a return to education in a few years, if possible. She has no contact with natural parents, but visits her maternal grandmother regularly.

#### GEORGE (19)

George was fostered for three years at the age of two when his parents separated. He returned to his father and stepmother until relationships broke down when he was ten. He then spent time in Children's Homes, and in residential school as a teenager. He has had few educational difficulties, but was not happy either in Children's Homes or in residential school. He enjoyed school in the community. His Standard Grade passes are in Maths, English, Science, Physical Education, Geography and Craft and Design. George has a flat and lives alone. He plans to attend College and hopes to have a career in garden design. He has no contact with his mother, who lives in the area and has a new family. He continues to see his father, but only occasionally. His brothers keep regular contact with him.

#### LAURA (17)

Laura, her sister and brother were taken into care when she was five. Plans for the foster family to adopt all three children were discussed then abandoned when her brother refused to consider it. Her primary education was stable and unproblematic. At secondary school she excelled in Computing and Business studies and is confident of gaining employment. Gradually, in her adolescence, her relationship with the foster parents deteriorated. By the age of sixteen the situation had irretrievably broken down. Laura then moved in with her mother who had returned to the area and set up home. The day after our interview Laura had a successful interview for a job in a Call Centre. She still lives with her mother. Both are in employment. Her father had also returned to the area and contact had been re-established. All three children now had contact with both parents.

#### BRIAN (18)

Brian has lived in Children's Homes and residential schools since the age of twelve. Serious educational and behavioural difficulties emerged early in his Primary school career. His mother sought help from the Social Work Department for difficulties experienced at home. Brian has been diagnosed as Dyslexic. His lack of achievement educationally reflected this. He has been dependent upon his family to guide him through correspondence. He is qualified in First Aid and took pride in this. Brian has his own tenancy. He visits his parents regularly and relies on friends in the neighbourhood for company and support. Friends often stayed over at his flat. He is actively seeking work.

In *Urbanity* two young people were not recruited to the study for the following reasons. One young woman agreed to take part and withdrew later, before a meeting could be arranged. The other, a young man, was contacted and an interview arranged. He did not arrive. On inquiry it was established that he had been arrested earlier in the day and was being held on remand.

In *Diversity* a young woman who had vacated her lodgings in a bed and breakfast establishment could not be traced. It was thought that she was sleeping rough.

### **How the Young People contributed**

In the early stages of the study, it became clear that a stance should be taken as to the position of the young people being asked about their experience. I had been engaged in researching with women their origins in education and linking those origins to their position in the world today (Mansfield & Erskine 1998). That work alerted me to the danger of exploiting contributors who were revealing essentially personal information in the interest of the research. In that study the work of Ramazanoglu (1989 and 1992) guided the approach taken and helped myself and my co-researcher refrain from exploiting the women in that study. I thought that the same principles applied to the research in hand.

The issues likely to be raised when asking about experience were more than likely to be subjective and emotive. I was concerned to validate the meaning of the experiences of the young people concerned. Ramazanoglu had faced a similar problem and asserted that “different “windows” on reality” may be equally valid and should be made explicit in any research process. She points to the

...significance of gender, subjectivity, emotion and power in the production of any sociological knowledge.

(Ramazanoglu 1989, p.427)

A significance I did not wish to deny in exploring the experience of young people. During the writing up of that research (Mansfield & Erskine 1998) for publication I realised that these young people should not be treated as the “researched” – rather they should be seen as active participants in the process as co-researchers. In other words, this research was not “on the children and young people” but that any sociological knowledge arising from the study was “for the children and young people”. This became an important turning point for the study.

When that point was made to the Local Authorities I found that access was given more readily. Similarly when key facilitators were informed, contact with young people was made much easier. Firstly, it made it easier for key facilitators to introduce the research and to make approaches to young people on my behalf, and secondly, it helped me to explain myself on meeting young people. The young people became participant observers in the realisation of the study. The participant observer explanation was used subsequently in approaches to professionals, parents and carers.

Individual interviews with the young people were focused upon their experience. The focused interview differs from other types of research interview e.g. the therapeutic interview as advocated by Carl Rogers in which the respondent and clinician are involved in therapy (Rogers 1992). In contrast the focused interview is non-directive, interviewees are known to have experienced particular situations, the researcher is deemed to have previously analysed certain elements of that situation. Using this analysis as a basis an interview guide or schedule has identified the main lines of enquiry and the interview then focuses upon the subjective experience of people who have been involved in similar situations (Merton and Kendall 1946). How young people experienced policy in their own area, how they experienced support and how they became literate, was revealed gradually as data was collected.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was carried out throughout the data collection process, after the earliest interviews. Analytical memos were produced throughout the study. These denoted information giving, reflection on information received, observation and reflection on the context in each local authority. These notebooks provide much of the background in the analysis.

In the initial stages the notes taken from each interview were carefully read and re-read. Specific issues were recorded. Notes pertaining to each local authority were gathered to portray three individual and discrete case studies. Issues were listed and

cross-referred against those raised by each group of respondents within each local authority. These were then categorised according to emerging themes to be plotted on a chart showing the themes and their source of origin within each local authority. The views from each group of respondents could be charted clearly and differing views drawn.

In this way the data from policy documents, service plans, senior managers, key facilitators, group interviews, school staff, residential care managers, were compared and contrasted at intervals throughout the process of data analysis. This data provided the valuable background and contextual material needed to appraise progression of the *1995 Act*.

Data informing the individual multi-perspective case studies of care leavers provided both the personal account of how support had been experienced by them. Handwritten notes were taken of issues that corresponded among cases and of those that differed ready for transfer to the method of documentation described below before data was compared and contrasted across the three local authorities. Once again discretion was maintained between data from different groups of respondents. Similarly data explaining the current background and context of local authorities were recorded separately from that from the multi-perspective case studies that reflected the experiences of young people.

### **Categories and Themes**

According to Constan (1992) categories do not really emerge from the data, rather the categories are named by the researcher and in so doing the researcher imposes a perspective on the data. The researcher develops categories, or codes, and chooses how to interpret the results (Constas 1992; Webb 1997; Howe and Eisenhart 1990). Therefore, researcher bias, perspectives and assumptions that influence the analysis throughout can be documented (See Table 5.2: Constan's table). The application of this table also acts as a basis for communicating to other researchers a history of the decision-making process surrounding the development of categories and themes.

This makes it extremely useful for the purpose of replication of qualitative research projects. According to Weston *et al.*, (1999) who used this method of recording in a long-term study

Constas' framework has proven to be a useful convention for documenting many of the decisions made during the development of our coding system, that were not previously documented. It prompted us to consider (retrospectively) sources of origin, verification, and nomination, and reminds us to consider such sources in the future.

(Weston *et al.* 1999, p.7)

**COMPONENT OF CATEGORISATION                      TEMPORAL DESIGNATION**

<b>COMPONENT OF CATEGORISATION</b>	<b>TEMPORAL DESIGNATION</b>		
	A priori	A posteriori	Iterative
<b>Organisation:</b> Where does the authority for Creating categories reside?			
- participants			
- programs			
- investigative			
- literature			
- interpretative			
<b>Verification:</b> On what grounds can one Justify a given category?			
- rational			
- referential			
-external			
- empirical			
- technical			
- participative			
<b>Nomination:</b> What is the source of the name Used to describe a category?			
- participants			
- programs			
- investigative			
- literature			
- interpretive			

Category Label Key:

Data Source Key:

**Table 5.3: Constas' (1992) Documentation Table for the Development of Categories**

The two-dimensional framework created by Conostas (1992) provided a tool which allowed me, as researcher, to document the development procedures of categorisation. As can be seen from Conostas' Table, the first dimension contains components of categorisation, researcher's documentation and the origination of those, as well as where the authority for creating the categories resides. Verification or validation of the grounds upon which a given category can be justified and the nomination or source of the name used to describe that category are also designated in the Table. These components are then further defined by a number of subordinate descriptors. These prompt the researcher to consider particular sources of origination, verification and nomination.

One of the most useful elements of Conostas' Table is the temporal designation. This allowed me, as researcher, to document the time when decisions were made about categories. For example, those categories, which emerged before data collection, indeed were part of the theoretical framework, would be designated 'a priori'. Categories, which emerged 'posteriori', or after the data collection, can also be denoted. The subordinate descriptors also allowed for an 'iterative' classification, which indicates that those categories were created at various points during the research process. Not only did this allow me, as researcher, to track the categorisation of the categories and subsequent themes emerged across all interview material and all documentation, including the analytic notebooks, but it also allowed for anyone wishing to replicate the study later to understand much more fully the methods of analysis employed. This allowed me, as researcher, also to provide sufficient descriptive information about how the data were aggregated and interpreted, so that they could be verified. A call for clearer documentation and reporting of analyses of interview data and other qualitative data has been put persuasively (Myles and Huberman 1994; Weston *et al.* 1999).

On data collection the categories and themes raised at each level in the multi-site study were compared across authorities after they had been compared within an authority. Categories and themes raised by senior professionals within an authority

were compared with those raised in individual and group interviews. Categories and themes were also checked out against issues raised in the telephone interviews. Many categories and themes also emerged in the multi-perspective case studies. These were compared within an authority so that the policies issues raised could be cross-checked. Policy issues were raised by staff in schools and Social Work, and by all interviewees. In this way it was possible to track issues raised with the issues emerging during implementation of the *1995 Act*. As noted before, transition from one legal framework to another takes time and one would expect the issues to emerge at different times, depending on rate of implementation.

This showed up especially clearly in *Rurality*. When I was researching the public Minutes of Social Work and Education Committees, it was encouraging to find that some of the issues raised with me a year before by young people in that area were now coming to Committee for proper and serious consideration and in some cases financial support. In this way it was possible to track through the politics of Social Work and Education links between issues raised in the study and action in the community.

As the study progressed it became clear that the young people who had left the system were experiencing current policies for which they were unprepared. Major issues of homelessness and waiting for support, problems of social administration of the system emerged clearly as stumbling blocks for young people currently trying to make their way in the world. Literacy, seen as a key to a better life, had not been perceived as a major problem. Many had become reasonably literate and regarded themselves as either employable or able for Further Education. But the major issues raised across the board of homelessness and financial poverty coupled with abandonment of the Social Work care system compounded the situation for young adults. At a certain point in the study it was decided to depart from the three Local Authorities and pursue some of these issues with those who work with homeless young people in the inner cities and in other parts of the country. In this way the major themes and analysis of them were clearly revealed as the study progressed.

Each issue, category and theme was reframed using the relevant element of the theoretical and conceptual framework for final analysis.

### **Contributions of the Study**

The study contributes to research, policy and practice. By creating the theoretical and conceptual framework it has afforded the analysis of the agency and structure of public policy systems together as education and care are examined together inter-relationally. This approach, and the need for it, was originally advocated by Sharp and Green (1975). Case study methods are employed as evaluation. The study has been designed with replication of research methods in mind, as advocated by Campbell, the potential of which is re-discussed by Yin (1994). The study allows us to take account of the complexity of the systems involved and to chart the progress of policy through the experience of young people within the system. Not only do we find out how young people experience and have experienced policy, we have been able to note in researching the potential for literacy to be the key to a better life for young people, and in doing so have found that there is a growing confidence in the young people concerned that literacy is not the main problem in their lives and certainly not a stumbling block. Instead, the main preoccupations of the young people have been the way they have been treated socially within the system and in many ways they are denied the Keys to Citizenship.

With regard to practice, the professional agency employed within the system is amply analysed within the study and its relationship to the structure confirmed. Policy implementation is charted at an important moment in time when one piece of legislation is being introduced and the former system adapted. Not only do we have a record of the previous system, pre-1995, we also have an indication of the difficulties in the implementation of the *1995 Act*. The study allows us to consider the changes that have been made and has some success in charting, in small measure, the success of policy changes during this period of transition. While acknowledging the exploratory nature and small scale of the research young people reveal underlying patterns and power structures that underpin educational processes and what it means to be separated from families, living in care.

The findings reflect commonalities between foster care and Children's Homes. Serious questions are raised about the quality of services to children and young people at the point where public policy is delivered. There are implications for the training of teachers, social workers and other public servants.

The young people who participated appreciated the opportunity to discuss their situations and their progress in life. Some returned to renew contact with foster parents and carers with whom they had lost touch. Some requested a second meeting with the researcher to discuss further issues that had come to mind.

Lastly, the study provides a Scottish perspective on leaving care and complements work undertaken in England by Broad (1998). The situation in other UK countries is relevant, although not examined here. Future developments will hopefully involve sharing information and strategies across the United Kingdom as Scotland takes initiative to support more effectively young people leaving the care system.

## **Chapter 6: Qualifying Success**

The findings reported in Chapters Six and Seven are discussed with reference to the conceptual and theoretical framework generated in Chapters Two and Three.

Chapter Six begins with broad comparison of the implementation of the *1995 Act* by Local Authorities. The experience of interviewees is then reported in two stages; first, through the experiences of interviewees from each Local Authority and then through their experiences of different care settings. This includes educational provision and the support available within each Local Authority; the role of professional and specialist services in the identification of children's needs; and the conjoint response of Local Authorities in the arrangements for young people in the care system within each Local Authority is reported last.

### **Comparisons Between each Local Authority**

Policy documents subjected to content analysis revealed excellent guidance for staff, both in Education and Social Work Departments in each of the Local Authorities. There were marked differences in rates of implementation of the *1995 Act* in the authorities.

The managers in each Local Authority, especially social work managers, were positive about implementation of the *1995 Act*. In general across the authorities senior management in Education, provided clear evidence that the Learning Support and Guidance services within their schools were developing in accordance with current educational trends and policy initiatives. Through their Advisory services many new arrangements were being put into place. Current problems related to raising awareness and sensitivity to the problems of young people in care, and doing so without putting the young people in invidious positions. The development of a range of support services for Learning Support was a major target in each of the three authorities.

For Colebatch (1998) the link between the policy and its implementation is dependent upon strategy and coherence of policy and the way it is articulated through hierarchical communication systems and realised in practice through the provision of services. The authorities varied in progress made in these three areas.

In *Diversity* the policy documentation was well developed and a strategy established to include other departments across the authority structure. Preparation for the introduction of the *1995 Act* as described as well established, as were the services for looked after children. Senior managers praised the experienced and long-serving staff in this area. The authority considered itself fortunate to have staff with expertise in working with adolescents.

The articulation of policy was perceived by managers to be well underway with joint training for social work and education staff at the planning stage. Service provision suffered, however, as the development of supported living arrangements was proving expensive in terms of staffing, bed and breakfast accommodation and the maintenance of day centre provision for young people.

In *Urbanity* major changes in the way care services for young people were to be organised had recently been planned. Policy statements were in preparation. The broad thrust of a social inclusion policy had been announced following consultation throughout the authority. Senior managers were experienced and confident that resulting services would benefit children and young people would benefit as a result. They considered that there was still a long way to go and the authority was facing an uphill struggle. The articulation of policy was in its infancy, despite the fact that meeting the needs of young people was seen to be urgent. The emphasis within the authority centred on social inclusion in schools through the implementation of a Support for Learning policy. The articulation of this area was seen to be well in hand.

At an instrumental level the progress in schools was well advanced. By comparison services for young people looked after by the authority were in flux. Previously

established approaches and services for adolescents had been replaced by an approach that favoured integration of individual youngsters as citizens within the community. The benefits of this approach were not expected for some considerable time. New drop-in centres for young people were located within shopping areas to provide a link in the community. However, services for young people were no longer staffed by a team of social workers dedicated to specialised work with adolescents. Such a service had benefited in the past from an experienced and highly trained team that had now been dispersed throughout the region and held a caseload of clients from across the spectrum of the community. This was viewed by some middle managers as a great loss to certain areas in which a large number of young people needed assistance. In *Urbanity* the Local Authority was implementing a change of policy in which specialist services for adolescents had been put aside.

It was noticeable that young people in this authority rarely met each other. There were no facilities where young people could meet. Recent attempts to provide a drop-in centre had not as yet proved effective. Young persons did, however, telephone when they were desperate for accommodation on being made homeless, and staff's job had become predominantly one of making emergency arrangements for overnight stays.

Young people were dispersed throughout this region, many living in hostels or in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Short-term independent accommodation was provided on a small scale and Bed and Breakfast accommodation on a wider scale. Although the policies aimed to be proactive, the actual service being provided was reactive in that the young people were required to initiate contact. The dissolution of services for adolescents as a group had apparently led to a policy of "divide and lose". Implementation of the *1995 Act* was limited overall in *Urbanity*. A cautious start had been made. Provision of a coherent social strategy and its articulation would take time.

Only in *Rurality* was there evidence that a strategy with coherent policies were being matched by real action in terms of provision for the group of young people now

revealed congruence between the objectives and the actions in the Local Authority. The introduction of 'Best Value' contributed to funding development in this Authority. The articulation of policy was progressing in a concerted attempt to develop embryonic services throughout the region.

Cooperative work between Education and Social Work was proving effective. The need to keep children in the community took precedence. Schools were viewed as central to this. Investment in specialist learning support services was being given top priority. The provision of new children's centres in the community was seen to be successful. These provided assessment, respite care and long-term provision where required. Staff at local level were given a fair degree of autonomy and felt they could positively influence the development of policy and the regional children's plan. Long serving staff knew young people and their parents well. The fostering of positive relations with families was given a high priority. This provided stability not evident in the other authorities. Implementation of the *1995 Act*, was seen to be well underway in terms of coherent policy, articulation and the resulting provision.

Implementation of the Children Act 1989 in England has proved difficult (Moona-Mitha 1999). Despite progress in implementation in terms of policy and provision relationships with natural parents were neglected. Changes in policy and service provision failed to impact upon relations with the parents of looked after children. The finding, therefore, that positive relations with children and their families were being maintained in *Rurality* was most encouraging.

### *Aspirations and Empowerment*

Issues about support for literacy and context are reported first. The range of supports available to pupils currently in those schools can be extensive (see, Table 6.1).

	Individual Support	Paired Reading	Peer Tutoring	Co-operative Teaching	Technology	Other
<b>Rurality:</b>						
Most	•	•	•	•	•	
Least	•			•	•	
<b>Diversity:</b>						
Most	•	•	•	•	•	+5
Least	•	•		•	•	
<b>Urbanity:</b>						
Most	•	•	•	•	•	+1
Least	•	•	•	•		

**Table 6.1: The range of support available for literacy development in any one school within each Local Authority**

Schools in each of the areas differed in the way they responded to pupils learning difficulties. A considerable range of Learning Support responses was available to pupils, but not in every school. Table 6.1 shows the range offered in two schools in each area. The widest range offered by any school in each area is represented as “Most” and the narrowest range of supports offered by any school in the area is represented as “Least”.

A main consideration for Principal Teachers of Learning Support was whether or not to extract young people from class and provide individual or group teaching in a Learning Support base. For some this decision was easy because staffing limitations predicted the outcome, but for many Principal Teachers, co-operative teaching, that is having a Learning Support Teacher working alongside the Subject Specialist Teacher in class, was the major way of approaching learning support in that school. Peer tutoring was seen by one or two to be highly dubious as sixth formers are asked to volunteer and success depends on their willingness and availability. Limitation of resources was remarked upon in each of the authorities by at least two schools. In *Urbanity* one school reported having no technological support. Two schools, one in *Rurality* and one in *Diversity*, reported the benefits of homework clubs.

Of special interest was the school in *Diversity* which reported five additional areas in which support for learning difficulties could be given to pupils. The Principal Teacher of Learning Support reported a significantly wider range of support than any other interviewee. These were the library, deployment of existing auxiliary staff. Parents became involved in school and at home, and homework club provided additional supports. A strategy had been developed to address pupils' problems in literacy.

This was applied consistently for pupils from first to fifth year of Secondary schooling. It involved auxiliary staff as part of the Learning Support Team. The Principal Teacher reported that when Care Assistants were employed in respect of an individual pupil with Special Educational Needs, they provided a reassuring adult presence when that pupil was part of a working study group. This was viewed by staff as especially valuable in helping pupils learn to study on their own and cope with the demands of class work. With liaison across subject departments this strategy also involved the school librarian. The Library was, as a result, resourced with suitably graded reading material at all levels of literacy across the range of subjects taught. Vast amounts of material had been accrued and according to the Principal Teacher concerned the Library had become a hub of activity for pupils receiving Learning Support. This was viewed as a most valuable asset for pupils mainly because project work of learning support pupils was judged by staff in various subjects departments to have improved.

The Principal Teacher was confident that the very wide diagnosis employed by the department when children arrived into S1, first year, allowed appropriate assessment of the young people's needs. Group extraction was provided throughout S1 and S2 for pupils who were seen to be struggling with specialist subjects. The identification of these young people took place in the co-operative teaching session, but group extraction, would take place for two periods per week, although demand for this varied. In S3 and S4 this would be increased to four periods per week. This seemed to be the only strategic plan reported across the three authorities. It stood out in

contrast to the other schools where Learning Support was concentrated upon pupils in S1 and S2, but less available in S3 and S4.

Interviewees in *Diversity* reported positive experience of Learning Support. The main issue for them was whether or not to spend time in the Learning Support base. Some young people would like to spend a lot more time in the base, while others favoured anonymity and preferred staying in class. Any extraction for them was not to be entertained as “it makes you too different”. This view was also expressed among the younger pupils (S1 and S2) during group interview.

Certain pupils preferred support in class, others found the Learning Support base more conducive to their needs. Co-operative teaching was seen by some pupils in the group interviews to allow some pupils in care to remain anonymously in the class, while for others it was seen as a threatening experience. Extraction from the subject classroom on the other hand offered individual attention and was a much more productive option. It also allowed supervision of tasks, access to a computer and time to communicate with teachers and other pupils about personal as well as social circumstances and problems.

### **The Experiences of Young People in Different Care Settings**

Data from the multi-perspective case studies indicated that individual experiences varied tremendously. This held true for support both in foster care and in residential units. It was also reflected in each of the Local Authorities visited. Some young people described very positive experiences and some very negative. Interviewees had been in school, in and out of care, over the ten-year period of transition since the publication of the Child Care Law Review in Scotland (HMSO 1990), forerunner of the Children (Scotland) 1995 Act. Each recounted their aspirations, their past, their present and their future, and each was prepared to speak frankly about their educational experience as well as their care experiences.

Fostering was viewed by most as a happy interlude, especially when there had been many changes of care during their lives. Sharon reported that an eighteen-month stay with her foster family educational achievement was unproblematic. Her Social Worker and Foster mother confirmed that there had been no problems in school during her stay with the family. She coped well, was highly literate, and settled down very well, and, according to the foster mum “it was a delight to have her staying with us”. She showed a lot of interest, read well and her school reports were always positive. She had displayed great interest in what was going on in the world. Sharon continued to still visit her foster family on a regular basis and sought advice from them. She acknowledged the stability her foster mum had brought to her life.

In contrast, some young people found that the aspirations of foster parents did not coincide with their own. Learning to read in one foster family was given such intense priority that Linda recalled that it was “always tears before bed-time with the reading”. She recounted being unable to read or count when she started school “two years later than every body else”. She started school at aged six due to family traumas. According to her the foster parents attempts to try to teach her to read were counter-productive and unsuccessful and made her extremely unhappy.

George told of the great efforts made by foster parents to help him learn to read and prepare him for going to school when he was five years old. He also remembered the positive experience on returning to his father, to live with him and a new family. Now nineteen, he feels he has been educationally successful, and viewed the foster family of his pre – school years as very positive and making him extremely happy. The catalyst for his educational success, he thought, was his natural father. According to him,

Ma faither didn`t do as well as he wanted at school. He didn`t use the opportunities and he encouraged all of us. He took an interest in all our reports and they were always good. We all did well.

Like other young people, fostering also included regular contact with families. George attended primary school while still living with his father and “new mum”.

Towards the end of his primary school career things at home broke down completely, and he was admitted to a Children's Home. He said how much he had loved the foster parents who helped him start school, and they him. He was reconsidering how to get back in touch with the original foster parents. At the time of interview he was about to start a garden design course at college. Staff confirmed that this was a realistic and suitable career choice for him.

Laura indicated that her early experience with foster parents had been very positive. They took education seriously and she enjoyed her primary school experience. She commented that being fostered by those parents had not helped her at primary school, because everyone knew that they were not her real parents. She described being made to feel very different in school and actually regarded her foster parents an embarrassment. "Everybody sees you as being different, it's not a secret that you are fostered."

Laura was now a confident nineteen year old. When she was in her early teens her work began to slide. She did feel that she was being pushed into becoming a very serious student, and when she went to Secondary school she became socially involved with her peer group, her behaviour changed, and she threw herself into adolescent life. The situation actually broke down very early in her secondary school career. She admitted to dabbling in drugs temporarily. This brought about a significant change in the relationship with her foster parents, whom she regarded as "too old" to look after adolescents, and very traditional in their ways. She felt treated differently by them when she went to high school, and they were always trying to communicate in a very uncomfortable way. Ultimately the foster parents expressed a lot of anger and dissatisfaction with her as a person.

For Laura success in school, becoming literate, and articulate, being exceptionally good at her work and having excellent reports all helped the foster situation progress smoothly. When the foster situation broke down and became inadequate in terms of support, she received help in school from class teachers and Guidance teachers, and from her Social Worker, whom she described as "wonderful and very supportive".

Sarah, in contrast, was quite sure that if she had not been with her foster family she might never have succeeded in learning to read at all. Her positive experience of fostering lent insight the critical nature of fostering in respect to literacy. She had given up trying before she was placed with her foster family. She started to learn to read again because another girl, also fostered with the family encouraged her. As a result she wrote stories, enjoyed her writing and always had enough to enjoy everything during the day. This way she mastered reading and writing. She also commented that the foster family understood her problems.

I couldn't rely on my own family and I was always keeping everything bottled up. The foster parents realised what was going on when I got home visits. I was able to explain to them that I was very worried about my spelling.

As a result great effort was made to help improve spelling at that time. This situation was interesting in that while with foster parents Sarah remained at the same school. Because of the negative attention focused upon her natural family, she felt persecuted at school. She reports always being picked on and shouted at. Despite her foster parents approach to the school the situation was not improved. Her attempts to gain support from teachers failed because "The teacher (Guidance) always just kept saying 'leave it....if it gets any worse...come back'".

These accounts are indicative of the difficulties the young people in foster care experienced in keeping their lives going. The juggling of natural family, foster parents, and the complexity of sustaining school life, all had contributed to very sharp and clear retrospective accounts. Each of the young people interviewed were able to explain in great detail the differences between living at home with natural parents, the kind of support they got there, what it was like during fostering, both short and long term.

Interestingly, positive accounts of the care experience in foster care did not necessarily mean that the young people learned to read or were supported in their education while they were living there. In *Rurality* Margaret and Joe both talked

positively about the support they received from foster carers. Joe regarded himself as dyslexic and thought misguidedly that he had been formally assessed. This was not officially confirmed. Margaret declared that she had never been assessed but was quite sure she was dyslexic, and that everyone had missed it.

Experiences of life in Children's Homes were not, in the main, remembered fondly. Accounts of support were more negative than not. Only two young people described a positive response to their reading in the children's homes. Linda described herself as unable to read on arrival at the Children's Home, but due to the careful attention of one member of staff, who taught her to read, she made some progress. She was extremely grateful for the help during that time, but she was aware of shortcomings and commented that she never really became as fluent as she would have wished. George was very grateful to staff in one children's home. He said "There was always somebody to give you hand. If you communicated and got interested in staff you got staff on your side". He was equally able to recount, in dramatic terms, what it means to go to a Children's Home. So traumatic had this experience been that it was recounted twice within the same interview, at a twenty minute interval, as follows

Everything was fine [in my life] until I went into care...it fell apart...mostly fright...but once into care I got over the fear and got back into my stride quickly. I stayed at the same school and kept all my subjects going.

And later on, in the same interview, he explains further

When [ever] I had a care change it was a different life. The very next day I was treated differently at school. It was a loss of status and I didn't get any support. I was very sensitive and I just hated it, being in care, in that Children's Home. One teacher...a woman...at secondary school...she taught English and she treated me differently...she showed me some kindness. When I was in care I kept going to school and I quite enjoyed it. It was wonderful for me to be there.

The dramatic nature of this change in life was echoed by Billy in his interview “As soon as you are in a home, you’re warped, in a different world.”

Both George and Billy were recounting vividly incidents that had perhaps happened some time ago, in one case nine years ago. Sharon described what, for her, was unacceptable in the Children’s Home in terms of her education. Sharon was reportedly intelligent, highly articulate and an excellent reader. She explained that the children’s homes were not really “private” because others [meaning other young people] were always “taking a flaky”, “running about screaming and shouting or whatever”. Also there was evidence that the aspirations of children were not in coincidence with those of staff. She also found attending school extremely difficult to sustain

Teachers came and asked why I wasn’t attending from the children’s home. Staff tried at first to get you to go, but after a while they didn’t even get me up in the mornings...nobody bothered really...now I look back I wish I had stuck in and was better qualified now...I wanted to be a paramedic.

later in the interview she commented that

It’s really been about my lifestyle, and I suppose this sounds big-headed but...if I had come from a normal family I would have been at university.

Whether or not staff were able to influence the young people mattered a lot. Billy described it this way

I went into care after a fight with my step-dad. We didn’t get along in the first place...the staff were good...some got close to you...but others....you just think...why am I listening to them...it’s just their job.

He admitted refusing to go to school from his Children’s Home. He said that you could see people refusing to go and lying about in the children’s home all day, living

the good life, and you wanted that, so you just refused to go. "Education was the big issue...but they could only push you so far..."

And at another point in his interview he remarked, "They did have books, but nothing educational like Shakespeare or that".

Like Sharon he regretted his inattention to education. He put it this way

I wasn't a dumb boy, I was smart...and I took advantage of that power. I used my head the wrong way.

He was referring both to school behaviour and to behaviour in the Children's Home. He was willing to acknowledge that now he is much older he appreciates how great the loss has been. At the time of the interview he had not been entered for any examinations in school, and was hoping to start an educational programme in the near future. It was his intention to try and pass exams in the future. He enjoyed reading the papers and spent a lot of time in the local library.

Despite the desperate tone of these vivid accounts, young people remained in the main philosophical and optimistic about their loss of educational opportunity. Each had aspirations. Each had plans, whether these would be realised or not. They did have a distinct sense of the future, regardless of which Local Authority they lived in. Even the young people in the rural areas, who were regarded as illiterate, saw opportunities. Margaret, for example, planned to design jumpers and have her own business. She was hoping to follow her first dream, to be a beautician and train at the local college. Only Sharon was in employment of a permanent kind. She realised that her current situation as well beneath her potential. Social Work staff and foster parents confirmed this. She believed that study at university might be an option in the future. Empowerment of the learner, as evidenced in the professional values held in Education had become internalised to become an intrinsic value held by interviewees themselves. School leavers interviewed in the multi-perspective case studies evidently now felt empowered to further their educational aspirations and expressed intention to take responsibility for their own learning in future.

In contrast data from Secondary school pupils attending school in years S1 and S2 from care settings who participated in the group interviews did not reveal aspirations. Secondary pupils reported low aspirations in each of the Local Authorities.

Data from group interviews of children currently attending school while being looked after revealed a number of concerns. Pupils in *Rurality* were mostly concerned with the behaviour and attitude of individual subject teachers who were perceived as being hostile towards them. For one girl being moved from a top group to a lower group in Maths had been a humiliating experience. Her entry into residential care was marked by demotion in most subjects during the months that followed. She remarked on loss of ability to concentrate on what the teachers were saying and found school boring now. She reported having lost weight and had seen the psychologist twice in recent months. This setback affected her plans for the future, which included attendance at the local College of Further Education.

Boys in the group expressed dismay at the way teaching staff remarked on the way they behaved out of school as well as in school. Discipline issues dominated the discussion. Teachers were perceived as strict, humourless, nosey and experts in giving 'public put downs', and insisting you wait behind at the end of the school day. This negative approach towards them was resented and the group agreed that they needed positive encouragement. A new scheme had been introduced. If pupils worked very hard they received a note of praise to take home. One boy admitted to having a few of these 'praise slips', and remarked that this was better than being given a 'punny' (a punitive exercise), which he described as laborious, repetitive and a waste of time.

One boy considered a future for himself in the army and was determined to make the most of what school had to offer. Subject choices for next year were important to support his ambition to become a mechanical engineer. He had joined the local cadet troop. This aspiration to become a soldier had been ridiculed by one teacher who

told him publicly that he would get a shock when he was in the army. The youngster concluded that since that teacher had never been in the army he was in no position to know anything about it.

The group of school leavers in *Rurality* raised similar issues. Again the opportunities presented by the Armed forces in the area were seen to be attractive to boys. Here it would be possible to make up for educational opportunities lost. Members of the group swapped advice and the need to avoid criminal charges for a certain period of time was discussed. The discussion then focused on support for education in the various care setting experienced by them. They reported that too much time had been spent sorting out behavioural issues in the residential settings. Two of the group reported being very poor readers. Both had difficulty tackling and completing school subject work. Help had not been readily available and literacy problems had never been addressed satisfactorily. Both reported feeling embarrassed about revealing the extent of their difficulties. Both had become dependent upon close relatives for support.

Another feature of this group was the extent to which they knew and understood each other, having been part of a local group coming through the care and school system at the same time for a few years. This group was worried about immediate difficulties in finding work. They had come to rely heavily on staff within the Children`s Homes with whom they had longstanding relationships to steer them through the next stage of growing up. They reported that the key workers were the main source of information and support. Each was exploring options for education and training with a planned approach.

Of foster care the view was positive. They accepted that periods of time spent with other families were accepted as a necessary part of helping their own mother by `giving her a break`. The benefit was that they also got a break from the family. They described short term fostering as providing respite when `things got out of hand` at home. One girl reported that one of the best things about her foster

placement was 'going home at lunchtime'. This was enjoyable and took her away from school and any difficulties that might crop up.

The young people discussed the way foster families provided assistance. They were seen as helpful with homework, and were able to sort out school problems with ease. The view was put forward that this was because they had done it before with their own children, and were very good at it. This group also described the foster families they had known as reliable and willing to help should they be needed if problems flared up again. They discussed the role of local foster families in providing a home for many children over the years. On the whole this group reflected a mature outlook on their own predicaments, problems and how to resolve them.

The groups in *Diversity* raised similar concerns about how they were treated in school. Support for education in care settings was also discussed, but was given less emphasis in the main. The group interview with a group of pupils in Secondary school, (S1 and S2), revealed a degree of anxiety about current problems in school and at home. These concerns covered discipline and behavioural problems and being suspended from school and not allowed back. Some youngsters expressed no view as to their future, and conveyed powerlessness as to how to remedy the situation. This implied that they were "living in limbo", in a kind of suspended alienation from society, having been excluded from school and having little interest in returning. Some bravado was expressed about alienation in school and attempted to make of it what they could, while being kept grounded in the Children's Home during the day. School refusal, which was also an issue for this group, and school exclusion, appeared to be interrelated

This group in *Diversity* also revealed an apparent schism between their real lives and their temporary care arrangements. Children appeared compelled to talk about themselves and others in the group with whose circumstance they were familiar. Family circumstances predominated, with difficulties in school rendered to second place.

Children used the group to talk about family, confirming family ties “at home” speaking in terms of their original family and previous existence rather than their present situation. Reluctance to discuss school related issues was manifested in intermittent silences, broken at intervals by the researcher. This was also noticeable in the group of school leavers. While potentially limiting this also provided insight into the strain of residential living.

In *Diversity* a number of familiar issues emerged in the group of younger pupils in S1 and S2. These confirmed feelings of stigmatisation from teachers in school. Children were easily offended when singled out for attention in class. Children were sensitive to comments made about them in class by teachers. Teacher comments about children’s work was found to be offensive provoking general annoyance. Discipline problems were discussed, with schools perceived as strict and teachers as “taking advantage of their authority”. “They expect respect and give you none”, said one girl “no-one takes your side”. The deference expected by adults caused problems. Youngsters felt “picked on” by teachers and given rows “for the way you speak”.

Difficulties in sustaining work in class and in producing homework were also discussed at length. Some confident youngsters enjoyed some subjects better than other and tackled homework with enthusiasm. It was agreed that if they liked the subject the process seemed a lot easier and they were more motivated to complete tasks. The need for more help in the residential setting was put forward, as was the desire to use computers in the way you can use them in school, to produce project work.

One school pupil, currently excluded from school in *Diversity* admitted to staying in the Children’s Home when a certain member of staff was on duty, because she was his favourite. He remarked that it was the only way to get any real attention. He didn’t like being in school and remarked, “Anyway, teachers know if you are in care and you are in trouble, then they think that you’re bad”. Others shared this

perception. More positively, the young people had a strong view about what would make a difference to them.

Having a befriender was rated extremely important, as was having a family to visit. But the young people didn't think that Alan would ever get a befriender because there weren't any around. "He'll always be waiting...but it'll never happen". Although he had learned to ignore the jibe in the group he confirmed privately the view that they would not find someone to befriend him. He showed awareness that he would have something to talk about if he had a befriender and life would be more interesting at home and in school because, he would have things to talk about then.

For one fourteen year old girl the great outlet in her life was having a friend with parents who accepted her as a companion for their daughter. She could reap the benefits of a family life. She was going on holiday with the family and went out with them on a regular basis at weekends. "This", she said, "makes my life worthwhile".

Contact with natural families was seen to be of great value to children attending school from residential care settings. Mothers were portrayed as always interested in the reports and one girl, who had recently been in trouble and disciplined by being "grounded" (not allowed out in the evenings) for a month at the Children's Home, was extremely worried whether her dad and granddad would find out. They would both be very angry about her behaviour. She revealed that she was hoping they wouldn't find out.

It was the general view of each of the groups of younger people that it was very hard going to school when you are living in a Children's Home. It was the view that school should be much more relaxed and teachers should be "nicer to us". Some remained in the Children's Home and resisted attendance at school, while others actively sought refuge in the education process.

It is to be remembered that those attending school from residential units were experiencing relatively new developments. Each of the residential units had been refurbished to a high standard. The survey of resources and support available for young people in residential units revealed difficulties in encouraging and establishing educational activity. Reports confirmed that little educational support was on offer for young people in the residential units in each of the authorities. Where technology was available, for example, it consisted of one computer available for games only. The development of study bedrooms was non-existent. The young people complained about lack of privacy. The residential units left one room aside, which doubled as a games room and a quiet room. Although, in the main the standard of refurbishment was high, and there were provision of board games and games to develop social skills, it appeared that there was some confusion between learning for leisure and learning to read for serious educational purpose. One social work manager explained that advice on educational matters would only be given on request, and that no tuition was given for reading. As one first year pupil and member of an interview group in *Diversity* put it,

It just happens, reading. You don't know how...one day you just know the words...and it happens...it's magic...it's not what you go to school for...it's not what teachers are for...you do it by yourself, reading!

At one level he has realised that learning to read is entirely up to him. And so the evidence proved. Those who spoke of their experiences in Children's Homes were indeed learning alone in respect of reading. Yet they needed to improve their reading, writing and spelling skills. Care staff in Children's Homes had many care tasks and duties and expressed the view that it was up to the children to prepare their own homework, although in *Rurality* it was stated that children could seek staff out if they needed assistance. Reading and homework did not emerge as something staff were responsible for, or saw as part of their role. The children appeared to bear full responsibility for their learning.

This may explain how education and learning has not become a significant as part of the culture within Children's Homes. Children were left too much to their own

devices in that, within the care setting, they appeared to be given total responsibility for improving their literacy skills. This left the children without guidance about how to tackle their learning. In this respect it appeared that they were treated as independent learners at too early a stage in the development of their literary skills and educational development in general. This could be described as a laissez-faire approach to literacy. It revealed a weakness in the parental role of carers in the residential units. When learning to read and write is still a major task to be undertaken by the child and has become a matter of urgency the problem might be better addressed by provision of practical support that tackles literacy issues in a systematic and strategic way within the care setting. This would mirror the kind of support available from parents in a stable and loving home. Carers might view this role in the development of literary skills as one in which they compensate for shortcomings in a child's life prior to coming into care.

The group of school leavers in *Diversity* brought up issues of care and control within residential units. Complaints were made about the lack of calm and high level of disruptive behaviour that made it difficult to study. Living in residential units and Children's Homes as adolescents had been reportedly unsettling and chaotic. A certain degree of frustration was expressed. Local schools also came in for a certain amount of criticism. This centred upon the negative attention given to arrival in school from a residential setting. There was a discussion about the problems in returning to the same school after being removed from home and being enrolled in a new school during term time. The group described both situations as difficult and daunting.

Support within foster care settings were viewed as of benefit. The group agreed that they found foster parents supportive and during such stays, which were regarded as temporary, youngsters could settle down and do well in school for a short while at least. They reported taking advantage of outings and trying out new activities. According to some the best support in fostering often came from other children living in the family, especially if they attended the same school. They described

having others to talk to as very reassuring after a day in school. Foster families were described as interested in the homework and progress in general.

This perception was echoed in the group interviews in *Urbanity* where school leavers and younger pupils both reported enjoying attending primary school from foster care situations. The younger group discussed the support gained in school with enthusiasm. Of more interest was their enthusiasm for sport and youth club activities after school, where support was available in the community. Life centred as much on the local community and leisure centre as on school and in the care settings. This group seemed less concerned about education support and exhibited a strong interest in their social and personal development not apparent in the other areas.

They were unhappy about having to wear uniforms, because of the financial burden placed upon their birth families. Generally it was thought that schools made too much of this, by making a fuss about how you looked. Apart from that they found school acceptable but were reluctant to discuss in more detail their own situation, leaving the reporting to one or two more dominant speakers in the group who were positive about their own educational progress, and had not needed extra help in school with problems.

In contrast care leavers in the group interview in *Urbanity* complained about a general lack of support for their educational difficulties. Problems in managing written work in school had not been resolved. Residential care came in for specific criticism with one or two individual care workers singled out for praise, in that, their response had been positive and in complete contrast to the attitude of other staff. It was agreed that you could tell very quickly who the supportive staff were. Young people admitted their dependence upon such special staff and the problems when you had to leave them. The focus on behaviour and social problems had, they said, taken over everything. They expressed relief at having left the school system behind. College they thought would be better and they were willing to concentrate on gaining employment eventually because living on benefits was terrible and boring.

Of significance, when considering the situation past and present in Children's Homes, was the perpetuation of a culture that appeared unable to support the needs of young people in the development of their literacy. On balance living with foster parents was reported, by all groups and individual children, as being a much more productive experience educationally. This concludes the section covering findings in relation to the educational provision and support available in the Local Authority.

### *Assessment: Past and Present*

With regard to the role of professional staff and specialist services in the identification and assessment of children's needs evidence from interviewees revealed that most of the young adults had no recollection of their needs being assessed. Not all were prepared to admit that they had any learning difficulties. Some were extremely competent. Of those interviewed, only one young person had a Record of Needs. Others were prepared to admit that they did have difficulties, but did not want them assessed, and explained carefully how assessment had been avoided. Linda had made a point of avoiding the learning support services. She recounted

They thought I was just trying to be disruptive. They didn't realise it was a reading problem. I kept the need to learn to read hidden. I didn't want anyone to know. I kept it from my friends, they might make a fool of me, and I didn't want to risk losing them. You had too much to lose. I kept this up for years...in fact, they still don't know to this day, and they are still friends.

Linda didn't only keep the fact that she was having severe problems with reading from her friends, she also managed to keep it from staff and other pupils. For example, at reviews they always wanted to find out about her behaviour. "That's all that was talked about, because I would make sure that learning problems weren't brought up. I was very difficult in class." She describes feeling stupid most of the time going on to describe an incident when she was asked to read out loud in front of a class.

People shouted , Awe, she cannae read , she cannae read...it was humiliating, I walked out in the huff, and was taken to the Principal Teacher of English.....I stayed out of classes for ages, and then eventually the Rector spoke to me and he got the truth out of me. The Rector understood a lot of my family problems...emotional problems. He took time. He was interested and supportive.

Subsequent referral to Educational Psychology for behavioural problems still failed to reveal the extent of the difficulty Linda had with reading. When offered a place in a group to discuss problems she just told everyone that she wasn't doing that, and it was accepted. "Mind you...I said it in a much more horrible way...and the psychologist...she accepted that". Nor as a result of coming to the attention of the Rector in S3 was Linda's reading difficulty assessed. Many schools do not offer Learning Support beyond first and second year. The incident was still interpreted as a discipline issue to be resolved between Linda and the class teacher concerned. The teacher was advised not to ask her to read aloud. Given this assurance Linda returned to class and behaved.

The use of disruption as an avoidance tactic was also familiar to Billy, whose behaviour in school had been extraordinarily difficult for many years. As his mother explains, "I was never out of there (the school). I was always being sent for".

Billy, by his own admission, had never taken the educational process seriously. By 'acting up' and 'playing the fool' he had avoided it. In turn, his educational needs had never been assessed, and he maintains that's because "there weren't really educational problems for me...I really was very bright...but I never ever did the course work".

Each of these young persons regretted bitterly the waste of their time in education, and each acknowledged that they were instrumental in that. As Sharon said, "It's been a waste, because I know in fact I'm better...and not operating at full potential...nothing like it".

These avoidance strategies had been employed by these young people in each of the care settings experienced by them over the years. Linda had spent time in and out of children's homes, foster care and adoption, which subsequently broke down. Billy had been living at home and at times in Children's Home accommodation. The strategy they used in school had not varied with those changes. Nor had problems presented initially necessarily been resolved. The lesson being that you may have all the system response in the world but if the young person wishes to avoid it, it can be done.

This was of real interest in exploring the situation for young people today. The groups of youngsters from S1 and S2 appeared to disregard assessment as a real or serious option for them. Evidence suggested that they were willing to deny that they had any difficulties.

It emerged clearly that Principal Teachers of Learning Support did not necessarily know whether or not pupils coming to their department came from a foster care background or from a residential unit. The personal circumstances of pupils remained largely the responsibility of Guidance Teachers. One or two Principal Teachers did name one or two pupils whom they knew had a care background, but as one teacher put it

We wouldn't necessarily know where the young people are coming from. Guidance tell us that on a "need to know basis" only.

This made the task of finding out if the educational needs of children are identified extremely difficult. Where a Record of Needs has been opened Principal Teachers seemed more aware of the child's circumstances and condition because of the formality of the process in which they had been involved. Where young people receive Learning Support on an informal basis, this proves much more difficult. The details of that Learning Support are a matter for individual pupils and their families only. This held true across the three Local Authorities.

Information from Social Work Managers indicated that information about youngsters' education was held with the "key worker". Key workers responsible for individual children in the residential setting communicate with the school and share information about education and day-to-day care with others. Whether they initiate communication or respond on request was not clear from study data. Social workers may rely upon Annual School Reports for information about Educational progress of children for whom they are responsible. These reports can be obtained on request if a formal arrangement between Education and Social Work Departments does not exist to ensure that annual reports are forwarded to the Social Work Department automatically. If the child is fostered Educational reports are sent directly to foster parents from the school. Social workers can request reports and forward them to absent birth parents.

Principal Teachers of Learning Support appeared confident that every child coming to their department is subject to an Individual Educational Plan, which was extremely detailed in nature. It was noted that this plan very often remains within the Learning Support Department, and is not necessarily part of the official Pupil Profile Record, nor is it necessarily shared with Social Workers. Nor were there any indications that it was shared with the child who might be empowered as a learner. Indeed, Principal Teachers of Learning Support identify children in need of support by a wide range of methods (see Table 6.2 below for the sources of identification of learning difficulties).

	Primary School	Secondary School S1	Diagnostic Testing	Shadowing S1	Referral: Staff	Self-Referral
<b>Rurality:</b> Most Least	•	• •	•	•	• •	
<b>Diversity:</b> Most Least	•	• •	• •	•	•	•
<b>Urbanity:</b> Most Least	• •	• •	• •	• •	•	

**Table 6.2: Range of assessment techniques employed in assessing learning difficulties**

The range of assessment techniques employed did not vary much across Local Authorities. Within authorities, however, it does vary noticeably. Disparities were evident at the point of transition from Primary to Secondary school. Some Principal Teachers noted that most of the pupils had been assessed prior to their arrival in Secondary school. The individual Pupil Profile Record, providing information by which continuity may be achieved between schools, is accepted by many Principal Teachers who may establish links with the Primary schools in their area months before the youngster's arrival in school.

Some Principal Teachers, however, insisted that re-assessment was important on arrival in secondary school regardless of previous notes. Reasons given were recognised difficulties in the transition between Primary and Secondary school in general. These were, awareness of the kind of adjustment required by pupils to cope with the greater scope of Secondary school in terms of space, larger numbers of pupils, movement between classes and the demands of personal organisation for a first year. These Principal Teachers applied the range of assessment techniques as a way of monitoring progress during first year and, in a few schools, throughout the school career. This was facilitated by strong, specialist subject teacher support. Referral by subject teachers at each stage of a specialised course was regarded as an important way of monitoring the progress of individual pupils, subject by subject. Re-evaluation at the start of each school session was a strong feature of this

approach, since it demanded extensive redeployment of Learning Support staff on a regular basis. One Principal Teacher reported his own approach as an effective and well-proven strategy

We have a culture of high expectation, with high achievers and good examination passes. The subject teachers assess the child's progress, and we provide the support.

Another Principal Teacher described "screening" in the first year of the secondary school as essential when considering the application of diagnostic tests in school

We give them [S1 pupils] a reading test to assess their levels of competence. Where there is a low reading age, for example, 2-3 years behind their chronological age, we target them specifically and assess them in more detail. The learning support department then provides co-operative teaching in subject classes for those pupils.

Another two Principal Teachers, but only two, one in *Rurality* and one in *Urbanity*, screened pupils for specific signs of dyslexia on arrival in first year. Each of these Principal Teachers had a special qualification and regarded this screening as an extremely important way of detecting trouble. Margaret, Joe and Brian declared themselves to be dyslexic, although only Brian had been formally assessed, and that assessment had taken place in Primary 7. Joe has a Special Record of Needs which he maintains is for his dyslexia, but it is in fact for his Behavioural Difficulties. Each had major behavioural difficulties throughout their school careers. Each is now dependent on members of their family to translate written material and letters. And the young woman concerned was regarded as needing a lot of support and as her father put it, "Margaret has a lot of growing up to do."

Evidence, both from interviewees who had left the care system, and from the Principal Teachers of Learning Support in each of the authorities, showed clearly that we just cannot be sure whether or not the educational needs of children are appropriately identified in schools today. We do know how the needs of children can be identified, as the range of techniques showed. The link between individual

children in foster care and the kind of knowledge needed to help them was, however, notably absent.

On balance young people coming to school from residential units had a higher profile in school than their peers in foster care. Arrangements to facilitate the return to school tended to be conspicuous in certain ways, so that any plans for a return to school after a care arrangement which required special responses for an individual could be detected within a Learning Support base and could therefore be detected by children and staff well before the youngster appeared. Children coming to school from a foster care situation on the other hand appeared to experience a much more discreet entry to school, almost to the point of anonymity. Presumably because they were more likely seen to return to a full curriculum attending all classes until such times as difficulties in those classes were detected or not as the case might be. And it is to be questioned as to how effective this was in identifying their educational needs. The development of a comprehensive school strategy that screens all pupils; considers dyslexia; picks up on behavioural problems and allows this to be repeated at every stage from S1 to S4, is more likely to be effective. Here, the disparity within authorities of the minimal range of identification was not a useful one for youngsters coming from foster care or from residential units. Nor was there an assurance that pupils arriving in schools at times other than the start of a school year had their need for learning support reappraised on arrival.

A sense of urgency emerged in discussion with Principal Teachers of Learning Support. Teachers cannot be pro-active in respect of foster children who are very likely to have educational and cognitive delay, if they do not know that they are fostered. There is a need to establish an honest dialogue between home and school about the details of the levels of reading and writing processes of which a child is capable. It was reported that the information is around in the system, but perhaps not being shared, and not acted upon.

On a positive note, two young people participating in the case studies, outlined their strategy for success in education. Evidently it was better if you never needed

educational needs assessed. For Sharon, her foster mum was very clear that “it didn’t matter what changes happened, she always caught up after absences and changes. Her intelligence saw her through. Reports were always excellent and she was a delight and no trouble at school.” George had a similar approach. “I threw myself into my school work, and kept all my subjects going, no matter what was happening to me at home.” The secret of keeping everything going was an important one, because it seemed that the young people were describing awareness that falling behind in schoolwork exacerbated any problems. And the further you fell behind, the worse it got.

This implied that it would be prudent to concentrate in school on the slightest delay, and target effectively, in school and in the care setting, all educational matters. It became clear that each school operated a distinct level at which support would be given. If a child was not been recognised by the school as in need of assistance then the school regarded the responsibility for any assistance needed to help that child keep up with school work as lying with the parents and carers in foster and in residential settings.

A lack of confidence and sensitivity make a great deal of difference, as Linda explained, “I felt stupid most of the time in classes. They were all much more cleverer, and I was just stupid”.

Care plans are also about educational plans. And there appeared to be quite a gap between home and school, which was emerging, both for the young people who have left the system, and for those starting out their Secondary school careers. It seems ironic that the detailed Individual Education Plans spoken about by Principal Teachers of Learning Support as the most effective way of proceeding to fill gaps in educational knowledge, could not be part of a care plan. Social Work departments are under pressure to provide detailed care plans which include an educational component, and it is the marrying of the two systems and the great detail held on to by each of the departments, Social Work and Education, that matter. Staff who are looking after children on a day-to-day basis, and all carers, need to communicate

about all matters educational. Empowering the learner and addressing the small problems before they become major would seem to be a very important factor.

A double irony is that children looked after by the Local Authorities are subject to regular review, and their needs are actually assessed by various people at different times in the system. The young people in the case studies identified certain important professional figures who had helped them at different stages in their school career. One or two young people in *Rurality* spoke about long, supportive and helpful relationships with Psychologists. Young people from each authority expressed appreciation about good, sometimes long-term relationships with, social workers and teachers. Not all felt positively about being assessed in Reviews situation, and the range of professionals involved in identification of educational and care needs from Social Work, Education and Health, revealed differences in the way Local Authorities organised this at local level.

Interviewees gave the Assessment and Review processes mixed reviews. They did not express interest in who had attended or who had been involved in the meetings, but rather were very much involved in the experience itself and how they felt at the time. The young people themselves showed a certain ambivalence about attendance at such meetings. George described his participation, “You’d give them a look when you didn’t think what they were saying was correct”. This brought a mixed reaction from adult participants in the meeting. Some modified their response but others just looked and did nothing. George made a point of saying that he didn’t speak during the meetings. He went in to listen. And sometimes he chose not to go in to listen, remaining nearby until the results of the meeting were relayed to him immediately afterwards by one person to whom he was willing to listen.

Brian explained that meetings could go very well sometimes. Sometimes they were well managed, as “When I was in the children’s home it was ok....Mum and Dad sat down with me afterwards and went over the whole thing in a café...we had a coffee an` that.” Later, when Brian was living in a different care setting, his view was that the meetings there were very badly handled. He put it this way

Even when 'Who Cares' was in...they would just say...Brian, just you go and sit out there for ten to fifteen minutes and we'll call you back in.....then they would take much longer than ten to fifteen minutes, then ask you in when the meeting was finished, and tell you the decision they've made about you.

George and Brian did not feel part of the process. These views echo the findings of Farmer (1993) and Fletcher (1993) who found that young people felt excluded from decision – making processes. In Farmer's study of decision-making, intervention and outcome in child protection work conducted with Morag Owen of Bristol University

Both parents and children spoke of being swept along by the investigation without being consulted or, in some cases, informed about what would happen next.

(Farmer 1993, p.43)

Fletcher found that 61% of young people in residential care had experienced not being consulted before plans to move them were made. She reported

Comments from boys and girls in residential care who had not been asked before plans to move them to another placement had been made reveal a worrying lack of consultation and preparation

One time I got five minutes notice – it was scary stuff I can tell you  
(Sixteen year old)

It happened at night – I didn't know anything about it (Fifteen year old)

(Fletcher 1993, pp58-59)

The pupils in the group interviews expressed similar views and the same dilemma about how to handle meetings. It was apparent that they were unaware of what was being assessed, and didn't really understand what the Assessment process was about. Information from Social Work staff and Principal Teachers of Learning Support held that responsibility for the Assessment of care needs resided predominantly with Social Work staff, who initiate Case Reviews that are multi-disciplinary meetings. Social Work staff involved professionals from Health and Education. School staff

were invited at the discretion of the Social Worker. The views of the young person were taken into account when the attendance of school staff was being considered. Schools also reviewed pupil progress with meetings in schools at regular intervals. Progress was constantly being re-assessed and reviewed. The range of professionals involved varied virtually from school to school across each of the authorities.

Nevertheless, some interesting organisational difficulties emerged in securing the attendance of certain professionals at these meetings. Health professionals were “flagged” when a Case Review was planned, and came only when they perceived a role for themselves. Some schools explained that the health professionals attended when the child had a disability, or a sensory need, such as deafness, but not for other needs. In only one school did a school nurse play a key role in liaison with other health professionals. Only in one school was it noted that a local doctor made an effective contribution in helping identify needs. This weak link between schools and health professionals caused a certain degree of frustration, as one Principal Teacher of Learning Support reported

Let me put it this way. They (health professionals) seldom come....they don't come when we want them, or they come when they are not needed.

Few schools reported regular involvement of an Educational Psychologist in the Assessment process. Educational psychologists were noted as being involved “at another level” (i.e., a joint assessment team forum). Meetings such as this involve experienced managerial staff and review, usually fortnightly, the educational and care needs of a number of children who have been referred in the interim. Such meetings did include Health, Social Work and Education Managers, whose time commitment could be guaranteed. Educational Psychologists were more involved in this blanket approach than in school - based Educational Reviews for individual pupils.

The statutory role of Educational Psychologists in the Record of Needs process demanded that their time and commitment be given mainly to that. One way to involve a psychologist in the assessment process, then, was to “push for” a Record

of Needs to be opened for individual children. In this way, the attention and involvement of an Educational Psychologist might just be secured.

Equally difficult to involve in the assessment of individual young people were basic grade teachers. School-based reviews were more likely to involve Principal Teachers of Learning Support, or Guidance, and Assistant Head Teachers. One effective strategy gave responsibility for calling school-based meetings to the relevant Assistant Head Teacher for the year group in which the pupil attended. This Assistant Head Teacher then chaired the meeting and brought a report from each subject teacher that the pupil had met during the week. In this way, the accuracy of progress in subjects could be gauged much more easily.

However, the omission within this organisational approach of Learning Support and access to the Individual Educational Plan so vital to a reasonably accurate assessment of any difficulties a pupil may be experiencing, had potentially serious implications. Access to details in the Individual Education Plan may be temporarily ignored or lost completely. In this way it can be seen how easily information about pupil progress in each school subject and Learning Support can become divorced from the information and planning process. Information about progress in each or both may also be divorced from the social work process in which the youngster is involved at the same time. This is so whether the youngster lives in foster care, or in a residential situation. Social workers rely upon information from schools, as do parents and carers if they are to fulfil the expectation that they support children living with them at home to the best of their ability.

Managers in Social Work expressed concern about the difficulties faced in trying to obtain detailed educational reports other than the annual report. And yet, it was noted by some schools that social workers did not always manage to attend meetings arranged by the school, where hopefully such a detailed plan would be forthcoming. Social Work staff need to know the detail of the Individual Educational Plan, this is the plan that has to be discussed with pupils themselves. Nor were Social Work staff from residential units cited as being involved in school-based assessments and

reviews of progress. Although clearly, the real information about education resides with the school in a complex system which social workers must find extremely difficult to penetrate, in order to elicit the information they need. The absence of educational content in care plans, which have been a statutory requirement since 1997, may in some part be explained by the evidence here (Scottish Executive 2001).

The significance of the educational based review is that it could take place at intervals throughout the year. It involved parents and carers, staff and sometimes, but not always, the pupil. One notable difference in the experience here was that S1 and S2 pupils reported feeling involved in these assessment processes. They did not report experiencing the degree of fear and alienation expressed by the older young people who have left the system. Implementation of the *1995 Act* augurs some improvement for young people today in the care system.

Principal Teachers of Learning Support were confident that their systems were effective and thorough, but not all the young people in residential and foster care were receiving learning support. This was not supported by the data. This, it was expressed by the groups of young people from S1 and S2, was “the hardest thing in the world”. “Keeping all these new subjects going was a nightmare.” Somehow the children from the care settings were not benefiting from supports available in school for pupils in general. The answer to this may be, in part, that many clever children in foster care experience only minor delay. They are not “very far behind”, as considered earlier. This means that the kind of educational support and the degree of educational support needed may be minimal and therefore differs from that on offer in Learning Support bases. When co-operative teaching is provided in subject classes the youngster in foster care, or residential care, may benefit. But, of course, the youngster has to be in class. Not just on the premises, but in class and managing a certain amount of class work.

It seems very easy for children from the care system to “miss out” on the very extensive developments within Education. So, it is not just about learning to read, it

is about learning to apply the literacy. And it may be that Social Work departments in future will be able to justify to themselves the provision of serious educational support and development for the young people in their care, as well as the willingness to ensure that when a youngster is attending school successfully, the quality and the appropriateness of the educational support is acceptable.

As seen from the case studies, although there were only a few young people, five at least had avoided having their needs assessed by one means or another. Teachers in the system today were extremely confident. Principal Teachers of Learning Support had faith in their own system, and yet we have seen from the evidence gathered, that the distribution of methods for finding out about the difficulties that young people might have were extremely varied and patchy within the same authority. This is something that would need to be addressed. A much more uniform and consistent way of approaching Learning Support for children in care is needed. Social Work staff too had misplaced trust in the system in that the amount and kind of information gathered by them was not necessarily seen as useful when it came to improving standards of literacy among the children in their care.

Provision specifically aimed at overcoming these possible omissions for children looked after by the Local Authority would seem to be a vital imperative for the future. In the three authorities visited, there was little evidence that staff, either in schools or in Social Work, knew of initiatives designed to help young people who were in care. That did not mean that there was no provision in those authorities, but it does mean that it was invisible to those in schools and Social Work staff interviewed. This concludes the report of Assessment issues. Evidence covering the conjoint relationship of Local Authorities is reported now.

It was found that much was being done at managerial level that was conjoint, but not at the level at which the children were living on a daily basis. Staff in Social Work and Education described in detail their efforts to influence the system to secure further resources. Social workers sought resources for individual children and clients. Social workers described writing letters, in an attempt to bring pressure to

bear at meetings, on behalf of their youngster or client. Phone calls, letters, meetings, and reports, formal and informal, to influence the system, all they reported fell on deaf ears.

Principal Teachers of Learning Support requested staff and resources. Continuous efforts were made to deploy staff more effectively within their own school. Funding and resourcing within the Education system was seen as vital. Some Principal Teachers had just given up writing to request additional resources, because the system was now so effectively managed from the centre within their authority. Experience told them that they were unlikely to get anything they asked for; rather someone would visit to tell them what they were going to get.

In *Diversity* an annual review and audit of Education staff took place every June. During the session Principal Teachers were invited to make bids to the authority for additional resources. At the end of each teaching session they were informed if their bids had been successful. These situations were described as very difficult and increases in staff were unlikely. Some regarded the resourcing as “generous” in terms of both staff and resources. Others were hopeful of staffing increases. Overall, Principal Teachers expressed satisfaction that the educational needs of pupils in their own school were being met.

In contrast, in *Rurality* Principal Teachers reported that additional resources were “always negotiable”. In addition, there was an exceptional needs budget, currently deployed to help the development of services for autistic children. Each expressed satisfaction with this system, and regarded it as successful. The Local Authority was described as “always willing to invest in the development of the department (of Learning Support)”.

Principal Teachers within *Urbanity* reported a very effective Head of Service, and excellent leadership. The Local Authority was currently investing in a Social Inclusion programme, at the centre of which were Learning Support bases within all secondary schools. This initiative was generously funded. This gave Principal

Teachers opportunity to develop their resources. Along with this generous funding came increased demands to take more difficult children. One Principal Teacher expressed concern about the development of a new inclusion policy in this area, declaring the new social inclusion policy to be unrealistic in that it would place many demands on one or two schools (especially the one she worked in) stretching the place to the limit, while other schools in *Urbanity* which were situated in areas of better housing would play a lesser role. She expressed the view that each school had a part to play in making this policy work. Some schools were, in her opinion, making a greater contribution than others in their willingness to accept pupils with a wide range of difficulties while others were selective. The authority was perceived to condone this.

Another Principal Teacher declared that she did not know of any initiatives aimed at ensuring that children who have learning difficulties do not miss out on the assessment of their needs. She cited the relationship the school had forged with parents and carers as a vital one. In her experience, where parents were encouraged to signal that their youngster was in need of some kind of assistance helped pre-empt more serious problems. This response, although it could be described as reactive rather than proactive raised the profile of pupils in relation to the family view of their educational needs, and lent insight into problems with homework and class work. "This", she said, "was the most effective way of detecting the educational needs of all children." This response fostered relations with parents, carers and Social Workers and given time and attention helped the parents to help their child more effectively. It also had the potential to relieve future burdens on teaching staff when minor problems became serious enough to warrant individual support. In this Principal Teacher's view that,

You couldn't have a perfect world in which children did not slip through the net. What you had to do was put in position as many safeguards as possible, and always be responding to the changing situation.

In this school limited resources were not perceived as a big issue. The quality of the staff and the quality of the teaching and learning was deemed most important. The

aim was to raise the standards across the board. Again, the very effective leadership from the Local Authority, a good relationship with the Senior Management team within the school, dedicated Learning Support staff and Senior Teachers made her job easier.

Signs were that despite developments in Education, especially within the Learning Support bases, interviewees were not necessarily benefiting from those services, either in the Learning Support bases, or in the classrooms. There was evidently a need for schools to develop a range of responses that allowed the educational problems of children looked after by each of these Local Authorities to be approached in a more flexible way.

In summary the introduction of policies that are proactive, even with a determined effort to introduce the *1995 Act*, have not as yet realised benefits for the young interviewees in the study. For them little change was evident. Nor was there sufficient evidence of improvements for the pupils of Secondary 1 and 2 attending school from care settings currently. Responses of Local Authorities varied. Services for young people leaving care appeared to be scaling down rather than up. Only in one Local Authority was there tangible sign of planning, funding and staff training to further the implementation of the *1995 Act*. Confidence of senior managers across the three authorities was not supported in the field.

The experience of interviewees from different care settings revealed that foster care was viewed as a more amenable setting in which to receive support for education and literacy. Children's Homes were given a poor rating in this regard. Interviewees, now having left school expressed regret at the loss of important educational benefits. All young people and pupils aspired to greater things in the future, but did not necessarily value their educational experience. Younger pupils displayed an exaggerated sense of independence inappropriate to their years. They showed signs of defensiveness and resistance and felt they had been going it alone. Findings reveal that it is one thing to be present in a classroom and quite another to be involved in the curriculum. Those attending from Children's Homes did not necessarily share

the relative success of those attending from foster care settings. Attendance at school from Children's Homes appeared fraught. Interviewees described how they would not or could not attend for reasons of pressure and influences in the care setting.

Assessment of interviewees' educational needs was affected adversely by certain factors. Interviewees were sometimes unsure of their own status; others had consciously resisted circumventing the assessment process and detection of their need for help in developing further their literacy skills. Education staff embraced the concept of a safety net through which young people could be prevented from falling. This presupposed that a fine net cast broadly could reduce the chance of children falling through. This confidence in the range of assessment techniques to highlight educational difficulties early in secondary was challenged in the finding that pupils actively engaged in resistance, displayed as a combination of bravado and brinkmanship, and aimed at avoiding detection of needs. Reasons given for this were awareness of the social ramifications of being found out by friends and ridiculed by other pupils. Such resistance may not be to the advantage of young people. If their needs are not detected they are unlikely to be met. They do reveal the kind of interaction to which teachers might be alerted. They reveal also the kind of gamesmanship that is part of the interactive life of a school, i.e. the games children and teachers might play in schools.

In Chapter Seven the importance of games theory is again revealed by interviewees in their attempts to establish themselves as independent agents in society. As indicated earlier, many enthused about plans. Only Sharon, however, was engaged in full time activity in a new job at a local college. The young people concerned did not perceive poor employment prospects as a serious stumbling block. Of much more importance was the difficulty they were having keeping a roof over their heads.

## Chapter 7: Theory Re-examined

Findings revealed a distinct absence of individual agency and lack of empowerment among the young people now striving for independence. The data suggested that poor educational achievement and lower levels of literacy were factors, but not the major factor in determining whether or not young people achieved independence. The young people interviewed were gaining places in Training Schemes and at Colleges of Further Education, and were optimistic about their capacity to be employed or to continue in education. The major factor affecting independence was the way in which the young people experienced professional assistance and support in their personal lives. The quest to become literate and benefit from the empowerment it affords (Meek 1991; Lankshear et al. 1997; Castleton 2001; Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001; Papen 2001) continued for interviewees. Full participation as social citizens, independent and established adults, had not as yet been achieved. Young people were able to explain what had been happening to them and discussed the support they had received. It appears that the keys to citizenship were difficult to achieve for these young people in their bid for independence. This happened in different and complex ways, which can be outlined as follows.

- Revelation of the switch in the context of the experience of young people presented a glimpse of processes at work at the interface between stability and uncertainty.
- The individual agency of interviewees was consistently undermined, rendering them vulnerable on leaving care.
- This denial of individual agency was identified as a first step in the process of victimisation defined here as a state powerlessness imposed on an individual through domination by the decisions and actions of other people.

- This process of victimisation was further linked to what might be termed the incrimination of young people.

## **The “Switch”**

Within this context the switch is defined as the employment of a transaction the consequence of which cannot be foreseen and goes unnoticed at the time, but is identified in retrospect through subsequent actions and events. As can be seen from accounts in interview the degree of dishonesty, deceit and malicious intent appeared to vary. Opinions of young people and those who verified their accounts did not. The impact of the switch in the lives of these few young people had proved devastating, however, and further research in this area is warranted.

The importance of the switch in the context of care and education is that where professional staff have been involved to any extent, trust between young people and those who provide of care and protection is undermined, as are the care and education systems. The resultant rejection renders the young person more open to an uncertain future. Significant relationships may or may not withstand changing circumstances. The young person is prevented from taking control in their own life and loses status and redefinition of their character in the process. In this way the powerful agency of professional structure is endorsed at the expense of the individual agency of the young person involved.

As Giddens (1979) noted, the repeated actions of professional workers, which he calls professional agency, lends to its power and ability to define reality of situations. It follows that professional agency in the form of repetitive actions of staff may powerfully influence any game of threes that is employed (Berne 1964). The switch was revealed as a mechanism that prompted a chain of events involving victimisation. This was in certain cases by a process of incrimination that led to the transition from victim to villain.

To recap, the switch - the *switch* is pulled when the game-player uses some phrase that changes the direction of the transaction.

Berne (1962) insists that only psychiatrists are in a position to hear from patients the full story and are, therefore, the only people in a position to identify and analyse the meaning of life's games. The popularisation of his work, however, has seen it used to help understanding in areas well outside the field of psychoanalysis or even social science (e.g. in management training and in conflict resolution). Berne's work has led to a wider appreciation of the nature of games when they are in play and of how to avoid being drawn into potentially disastrous game-playing. Laura's story provides an example of how Berne's 'games' might help in understanding the situations faced by many of the young people in this study.

Laura, her sister and brother were removed from the care of their mother and received into foster care because of a family crisis. Social Work began as rescuer, introducing Laura to foster carers, who were also rescuers. Laura reported feeling under the spotlight in school and was embarrassed to be seen with her foster parents, whom she regarded as too old. Education might, therefore, be cast as a persecutor. When Laura and her family began their relationship triangle with Social Work and Education, Laura was the victim, hopeless, helpless, and powerless, insisting on keeping the memory of her mother alive.

During her years at primary school Laura made requests to see her mother on a regular basis. However, she failed to gain access to her mother and reported feeling ignored. This would have the effect of confirming dependency and the sense that she was unable to influence her situation as she would have wished. Throughout her period in foster care her independence was never acknowledged nor consolidated.

For a time Laura believed she would never see her mother again. She was happy in the foster home for a while and welcomed the offer of adoption with the family when it came. So did her older sister. Her younger brother, however, would not consent and the attempt by the foster parents to adopt the three children failed. Laura reported

feeling angry with her brother and disappointed, at the time. A few years later she was relieved that the adoption had not gone ahead when relations between herself and the foster parents deteriorated after her transition to secondary school. Problems in school caused friction at home and the foster parents accused her of not working hard enough. They also accused her of being too interested in her friends and they rejected her school friends. Her behaviour deteriorated dramatically at school and in the community. Laura began to challenge Social Work because her requests to see her mother were ignored. Laura continued to attend the local secondary school and took a job working some evenings and at weekends, which she enjoyed, not least because it took her out of the foster home and introduced her to a new group of teenagers. This also offered her some independence. Relations in the foster home, however, continued to deteriorate.

Relations between Social Work, Education and the child they assist can be affected by exchanges that take place outside their sphere, in the community. One particularly unpleasant incident put additional pressure and strain on Laura's relationship with her foster parents. She recounted going to a party and being sexually assaulted by the boy who had invited her and a group of his friends. At the time of interview a court case was pending and Laura could now say "I know for a fact I was set up". In Laura's view the foster family could not cope with this incident, partly because it was of a sexual nature. They did not believe her story and refused act upon it. It was not until her arrival at school on the Monday that she obtained assistance.

The refusal of the foster parents to believe her caused a breach of trust that prompted the breakdown of the foster placement. The incident had raised issues about personal freedom. For some time she was not allowed out at all and, thereafter, experienced great difficulty in coping. There was an absence of honest communication and no dialogue within the foster home. She also felt that in her case the foster parents were elderly and traditional and unable to cope with the whole episode. Of importance to her was the support she received from teachers at school, one in particular, and from her social worker throughout the months that followed. Not only did she have to be domiciled elsewhere during this period, she also had difficulty continuing at school,

and had to face a gruelling court appearance. Contact with the foster parents was severed and Laura left the foster home. She had now been separated from her brother and sister. Some time later, her mother returned to set up home in the area and Laura moved in with her. Laura now had the support of her mother during this difficult time.

The crisis that prompted the breakdown of relations within this foster family was caused by one incident in the community. The significance of the foster parents pulling the switch in Laura's case can be seen in the catalogue of negative consequences that ensued from the breach of trust between Laura and her foster parents. As a result of one incident, external to the triangular relationship between Laura, her birth family, Social Work and Education, relations among them all were dramatically changed. On return to school a teacher assumed the rescuer position, so did the social worker. Foster parents were persuaded to continue as rescuers until that placement was eventually abandoned. Significantly Laura had lost out on her bid for independence in that she did not return to the place of work. She was not allowed social freedom for some time. She suffered the insecurity of not knowing what would happen to her when the foster placement broke down. Relationships with her brother and sister were badly affected by the bad feelings expressed on all sides and the tension this created.

The arrival of her mother in the area had pleased Laura. She was looking for work when interviewed and was positive about the future. For her there had been a pay-off in positive terms. She was reunited with her mother. She felt her life status had been enhanced. She was pleased not to be associated with the foster parents and could have her own identity back. She reported being more confident than ever and had no intention of ever claiming social benefits, intending, like her mother, to make her own way in life. In reality, however, Laura had entered her mother's care and was still in regular contact with her Social Worker. She had once again, as at the beginning of her story, been rescued at a point of crisis, this time by her mother. Her bid for independence and control over her own life had not quite been realised. The situation had not fully empowered her to control her life and act independently. The

incident in which Laura became the victim had been traumatic, but she did recover sufficiently with support from professional staff in Education and Social Work to make a new start. She also wanted to make up for all the time spent in foster care and not with her mother.

The original relationship triangle involving Social Work and Education that began when Laura came into care had ended with Education and Social Work both assuming the role of rescuer and Laura still as victim. The chaos caused by crises was apparent. Positive management of a crisis, especially if it is due to external influences over which Social Work and Education have little or no control would seem to be vital for the young person involved in preventing the kind of experience Laura had reported.

Examples of the switch being pulled were evident in Brian and Sharon's cases. Brian's feeling of betrayal when he discovered from a potential employer that his Social Worker had passed on certain confidential information about his family life that ensured that he would never be employed there was justified. Sharon on the other hand remained unaware that the fraud of which she had been charged rested more on administrative blunder and poor record keeping and poor communication than her intent to cheat the system.

These incidents typify the experience of young men and women who participated in the study. Their full and frank exchanges were considerably moving and indeed harrowing at times. Other interviewees dwelt on moments that, to them, were moments of betrayal. Although they did go on to work successfully with staff to integrate their lives as best they could, they were in no doubt that in large measure their current predicaments were due to these difficult moments, which were seen as major setbacks at the time. Their experience of trying to receive support at the interface between themselves and the social system had been frustrating. They remained preoccupied with issues about their survival, how they were supported, how they received benefits, how sanctions employed by the professionals (i.e., the street-level bureaucrats) they met affected their survival. For these interviewees professional care, fell short of the basic standard required to meet their need for

stability, care and affection from which they could develop socially and intellectually.

Other reports revealed elements of transactions that lend more insight into kind of support experienced by young people. Staff reported one unusual occurrence in Urbanity. The relationship between one young man and his Social Worker broke down completely when the weekly financial allowance due to be given to the young man was withheld at his Social Worker's instigation as a form of punishment for not meeting expectations in the previous week's negotiations. Following the youngster's complaint staff had been unable to influence the Social Worker's decision and the young man was left without rent for his flat of money for food supplies.

This presented an example of how the switch was pulled at a moment of crisis in the area of dispensing benefits and sanctioning that constitute the role of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1979). The Social Worker had, in the researcher's view demonstrated an extreme reaction in facing a dilemma about how to sanction the young man and chose to sanction him by withholding a real financial benefit to which the young man was entitled. Discussion among colleagues confirmed their view of the inappropriateness of this move, in their belief that monies should not be withheld as punishment. They believed that young man was entitled to receive his benefit, and that another way of working with the young man should have been found. According to the staff involved this was a good illustration of the problems created when staff, who lacked specialist interest, training and experience in working with adolescents were given adolescents on their caseload.

Findings related to circumstances affecting individual agency are addressed next. The relationship between victimisation and incrimination is then described. The way in which the individual agency of interviewees was consistently undermined, rendering them vulnerable on leaving care, is described. This had the effect of consistently relegating their status and position to that of the excluded in the community. It also put them in a position of repeatedly trying to work their way back into society. They repeatedly had to cover the same ground as they struggled to

become citizens in the fuller sense with the result that steps towards independence were made increasingly difficult to take (Roche 1992; Meek 1991).

Analysis of data drew out various themes outlined below. One important theme arose from the qualitative data and became iterative in that after it had been raised initially in negotiation of access arrangements it re-emerged at intervals in incoming data. This theme was that of victimisation, and double victimisation, of young people was revealed by the reluctance of staff within one Local Authority in informing the young people about the research project, thereby denying them the opportunity to decide whether or not to volunteer for interview. This, it was explained, arose from an intention to protect vulnerable young people from any further exposure to trauma. This may have protected, but it also prevented young people asserting themselves as individual agents. This denial of individual agency was identified as a first step in the process of victimisation.

The process of victimisation was noted in *Urbanity and Diversity*. In the procession young people became exposed to the possibility of young people being sexually exploited. The theme re-emerged in interviews and was confirmed by interviewees. This was also corroborated by birth parents and, on occasion, by social workers. In *Urbanity and Diversity* this process of victimisation was further linked to what might be termed the incrimination of young people. As interviews progressed young people reported lack of support by individuals that had upset and confused them. Interviewees described the actions of others as affecting them adversely, with sometimes terrible consequences. This could be described as their being victimised by other individuals (staff and other young people) in interludes that left them open to allegations of law breaking and violent exchanges. In some cases it became increasingly connected with incrimination of the young person.

### **Individual Agency**

Senior Managers of Social Work also identified many of the difficulties facing young people as problems. A remarkably similar picture emerged across the three

authorities. These were homelessness, poverty and the problem of poor standards of accommodation for young people leaving care. The problem of accommodation was the major issue in each of the Local Authorities. In *Diversity* this was described as being at crisis level.

Each Local Authority described the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 as a major current initiative. Services were deemed to be embryonic in *Rurality*. Local managers agreed that there was some advantage in this. Although the authority had previously lacked community-based responses to the difficulties facing young people in care, in planning implementation of the *1995 Act* at corporate level an opportunity had been seized to develop community services for the young population in general from which young people in care could also benefit. In addition managers had inherited a stable fostering service able to cope with short-term respite care. Upon this new specialist services within care for support in school, and support for young people leaving care were being pioneered. This authority could now begin to build trust between the professions of Education and Social Work, and address the significant failure of children attending school from different care settings. Within this authority Minutes of Education and Social Work Committees revealed spending and commitment of Local Authority to developing the initiatives discussed in interview with the Senior Manager of Social Work.

The crisis in homelessness and accommodation found in *Diversity* and the poverty and homelessness within *Urbanity* were not being significantly addressed in Local Government initiatives to any significant extent. Each authority thought that developments would have to take place over a five to ten year period to alleviate these serious problems. Where young people had been allocated accommodation of their own, such as a house or a flat, they were found to be living in extremely poor conditions. Brian, for example, possessed little furniture. His bedroom was as yet unfurnished and he slept, in a sleeping bag, on a couch in the living room. In another instance the structure of the council house of which Margaret had tenancy was insecure. There were signs of violence where panels in the front door had been kicked in. There were broken panes of glass in downstairs windows.

For others, Bed and Breakfast accommodation was extensively used, especially within *Urbanity* and in *Diversity*. Staff described this accommodation as unsatisfactory. There were reported difficulties for those living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The lack of freedom and the need to vacate the room during the day caused difficulties. Not only did it put the young person on the street, it also exposed them to risk. Rules about visitors in rooms in Bed & Breakfast led to problems. Contravention of rules resulted in young people being given notice to leave. They could be made homeless at a stroke. Indeed, some young people in the study had been made homeless and were living in hostels.

The different kinds of hostels are worth noting. Specialist hostels such as a mother and baby unit appeared to be the safest option. Some young people had rooms in hostels and were living fairly lonely isolated lives. Not all hostels were perceived as safe places, especially for the women. My visits to Local Authority offices revealed accounts of young women who had allegedly been raped in hostels and in bed and breakfast establishments. In one authority, for example, a young woman, who as a result of such a rape, was now expecting a child. Another young woman had given birth to a baby following a rape and the baby had been given up for adoption. Complaints such as these were often difficult to prosecute because of the lack of witnesses and/or evidence. Local Authority staff expressed disquiet, but felt powerless. Young men also perceived themselves to be at risk.

Brian had been attacked on his own doorstep, the lock on his door had been forced and it had still to be repaired. He had friends staying over as often as possible to help him feel more secure. He was too afraid to take his rubbish downstairs to the communal area behind his flat. Fracas were reported in *Rurality*, but were not regarded as life threatening. They were described as upsets in relationships that resulted in disturbances and quarrels.

As Maslow's theory of motivation stresses the importance of establishing physical safety and security as a basis on which for all other development can develop

(Maslow 1971 and 1987). Where physical safety and security are compromised the conditions set override emotional attachment and social development disturbing the basis for growth and development. Interviewees described being repeatedly brought down to basic fear for their personal safety. This has the affect of suspending all other needs and drives while young people reorient their resources to dealing with crises. Little or no progress can be expected at such times. What they need more help and support, not less.

This highlighted one significant gender difference. Interviewees in *Urbanity* and *Diversity* reported experience of serious violence in their recent past. For the young women being forced to have sex was a real threat. Young men feared being beaten up or killed. Billy had spent eight months in hospital after being badly beaten following his departure from independent living. He now went out accompanied by a friend who comes to pick him up and acts as his minder.

The violent and sexual nature of the reported crises indicate that Social Work Departments needed to give more attention to the social context in which young people are placed. As the experiences of interviewees revealed, the application of Maslow's theory of learning and motivation in analysing the life experience of children in care should take account of the powerful personal influences at work in their lives. Reappraisal of the place of sexual development and sexual experiences within Maslow's theory of motivation is merited. Not only is it an important stage of physical development it appears in the experience of interviewees as a powerful agent capable of destabilising relationships and care arrangements. The lack of understanding and trust between adults and children when incidents of a sexual nature are reported can precipitate a crisis. This illustrates the sensitive nature of professional intervention when working with children in care at home and in school. Encouragingly, the ability of interviewees to address problems openly indicated that for them the subject was not taboo.

Young people identified difficulties in their face-to-face encounters with professionals. The right to govern their own life appeared to be denied by a process

that continued to hold the individual responsible for what was happening in their life, yet refused to acknowledge their individual agency. In short, the young people were rarely the hero/heroine in their own life drama for any length of time, and certainly not long enough to consolidate that position. Therefore they remained vulnerable and were consistently relegated to a dependent role, which reinforced vulnerability and dependency. Some showed awareness of this dependency. As Billy explained, "I don't know if I am ready to become a fully committed adult, I mean, being ready to do everything for myself".

He recounted how he was given a flat for independent living, with Social Work staff "who look in to see how you are doing". He thought this was going well. However, an incident took place, which resulted in an investigation. During the investigation, it was clear that the efforts of this young man to impress his innocence upon his Social worker had failed dramatically.

...my social worker didn't believe me...anyway they put me out, on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday with my stuff. They shouldn't have done that should they?.....I had to look for flats...and I went on a bender...getting drunk an' that." "...you don't see 16 year olds with houses...it's too early...I wasn't ready...all other 16 year olds still live with family.

The professional support and professional agency upon which Billy had come to rely let him down when the Social Worker assigned to him was unable to support him. And it is in many ways a social worker's job to resist sanctioning if they can. The accounts of these young people confirmed that care itself, the care process, the looking after process, was used to sanction and regulate their behaviour.

What happened to Billy was the withholding of benefits as a sanction, thus avoiding any dilemma for the professional (Lipsky 1979) concerned. He seemed well aware of this. He was also aware of how he had been pressured into the situation, which resulted in his eviction. And this involved him, his social worker and those who ran the independent living unit.

This young man denied involvement in the incidents that prompted his removal from care and saw them as fabrications. And it is of interest to note that where sex was a factor in the minds of people, whether real or not, it prompted dramatic responses, which resulted in the breakdown of trust and relationships. In Billy's scenario he had been drawn into a difficult situation that he was unable to control in the living arrangements. The response of Social Work seemed unnecessarily brutal to him. Not only was he made homeless in his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. He faced charges as a result of the incident. The relationship between himself and education had ended on school leaving, and his relationship with Social Work crumbled when his Social Worker stopped supporting him (pulled the switch) by refusing to steer him through the crisis. His position at the end of the long association with Education and Social Work remained as it was when he was received into care that of the victim. So ended his period of being looked after by the Local Authority. He was convicted and spent eighteen months in prison This is an example of how , having been drawn into one game that went badly (with the girl in the independent living accommodation) led Billy into another game that, instead of being able to reverse the direction towards disaster, compounded the negative elements through Social Work abandoning the role of rescuer for that of persecutor leaving Billy in the least powerful position yet again.

This traumatic experience was evidently still affecting Billy, a turbulent and unhappy period of desperation followed his departure from the supported placement. True, rules had been broken in the independent living environment, but the suddenness of the decision to terminate his care order, and his lack of preparedness, left him in a state of shock. He still protests his innocence as regards the incident that prompted his removal. In his view someone told lies about him. "I don't know why Mary did that?". What essentially had happened to Billy was that he had become the victim of a "switch" as detailed in Berne's (1964) game of threes. It was notable in the study that this young man was well aware of the mechanism that had been employed, and he knew that it was to be reported.

The situation had stabilised when I met him. A key worker described him as a potential leader and competent young man with considerable talent still to be developed. Currently they were working together to help him to be able to trust adults more. This, it was acknowledged, would take some time. Nevertheless, the matter-of-fact acceptance of some scenarios, about which the young people had a right to be angry, was disconcerting. Young people experienced policies designed to help them as moves, which undermined, rather than facilitated, the development of individual agency.

### **Victimisation and incrimination**

Not every young person was aware that they were being victimised, and few were aware when they were doubly victimised. This can be illustrated in the life of Sharon who was, at the time of our meeting, trying to negotiate access arrangements to see her son, who was being looked after by foster parents. The care worker who knew the history of the case was still expressing concerns that the Sheriff had removed the child from this young woman's care a few years before, and in his summing up had said that since the young woman had had a history of being in care, she was unlikely to be able to care for her baby, and therefore he did not allow the baby to be returned to her. The caseworker was fairly sure that the Sheriff had disregarded the social work recommendation. The logic behind the Sheriff's conclusion did not equate with the kind of care and life experience Sharon had had. Her care experience had in fact been with foster parents, who she still visits weekly when she goes round for her tea. Her foster mum was very willing to talk about the potential of this girl whom she had looked after for many years. Certainly there had been periods of care in other institutions and there had been difficulties in school. The professionals concerned were really naming the first victimisation.

At the time of interview Sharon was facing a tribunal at which she had made an appeal after being accused of defrauding the benefits system. She had received excess money in her payments of benefit, not realising, she told me, that this was more than she was entitled to, she spent the money. When the administrative

mistake was discovered, she was unable to pay any of this money back because, being in poverty, she had actually needed it, regarded it as a windfall, and spent it. Subsequently, she was charged with fraud and was now in a position of having to defend herself. She did in fact receive community service for this offence. Not only had she been victimised again by the system, that is rather than face up or admit to the incompetence of the administration, in misadministration of the monies concerned, by sending her more than that to which she was entitled, "the switch" was that she was charged with defrauding the system. The system was not examined for its incompetence. Therefore she was doubly victimised and the result was her incrimination. She was made a criminal by the benefit system as a result of its administration. We have no way of knowing whether this failure in the administration was ever addressed, but it provided a very good illustration of how, when the system decides to victimise, it is so powerful that it can do so without challenge.

One of the most unfortunate consequences of this, it was thought privately a key worker, was that it might influence how the return of Sharon's son would be viewed

I have a wee boy. He doesn't stay with me. I'm in the process of trying to set up access package and see what happens. The reviews, the panels, everybody is working together for me....he is five, he starts school in 2000, I haven't seen much of him...not through my choice. I hope in the near future I might get him back.

While from Sharon's point of view she was being well-supported and looked after, and she felt that everyone was working towards helping her get her son back, the fact that she had now criminal charges proven against her would perhaps prolong the process and introduced future uncertainty. Staff who spoke on her behalf were very much aware that this incrimination had changed things. In this case none of the persons interviewed in connection with Sharon showed any awareness that the system might be unfair. They remained oblivious to the notion of victimisation or of incrimination. They believed that this was fraud, and endorsed the incrimination process, while ostensibly supporting her. Sharon is now living in her own tenancy

for the first time, she is known to be competent and is in employment, after successfully completing a college course in office management.

Brian also had a very clear view of the way in which his rights had been infringed. Having secured employment, as he thought, subject to a reference from his Social worker, he was unnerved to discover that the resulting reference held a lot of information which he objected being given to this potential employer, who subsequently refused to employ him. Of the social worker he said "He had no right to tell them all that stuff about me...that was all in the past".

What was significant in this study was that these "moments of betrayal" signalled a breakdown in care arrangements. In other words, they were followed by a breakdown in relationships and in the care arrangements of the young people. And this was important to them. From being "looked after" young people moved very quickly to not being "looked after". This recurrent theme of being unable to trust the system to look after them was significant in all of the accounts. The breakdown in care arrangements happened in one or two important ways. First of all, the trust and reliance upon the system broke down significantly, usually over an incident. These incidents were often of a sexual nature. The theoretical stance put forward by Berne (1964) at the beginning of study proved most useful in identifying the way the young people quite suddenly became victimised within their circumstance. Sometimes they became doubly victimised, moving swiftly from one problem to another without gaining equilibrium. They showed clear awareness of this, and could pinpoint circumstances and the people concerned. Most significant was the way in which the "switch" was employed to repeatedly put them in vulnerable positions.

Findings indicate that young people remained "locked in" to a system, which either did not let them go, or put them out too soon, before they were ready. Either way, without "the keys to citizenship", they were unable to effect an exit successfully and they could do little about it. In the absence of trust and the specific support that makes a difference in each personal life, they remained dependent upon support from

the local administration, and from the social administration, despite repeated attempts to free themselves from the system.

Of note was the way in which this happened both in children's home situations, independent living situations and when young people were in the care of foster carers or adoptive carers. The involvement of professional support during these episodes did not necessarily prevent the breakdown of these living arrangements. Indeed, sometimes they were exacerbated, or triggered even, by professional support. The young people complain about being unable to make "their accounts count", as Giddens (1979) put it when he spoke about "professional agency".

Findings indicated that the professional agency of the support given to young people was more powerful than the individual agency of the young person concerned. We are talking then about issues of power within the structure of the system which, according to Giddens

.... is expressed in the capabilities of actors to make certain 'accounts count', and to enact or resist 'sanctioning processes', that these capabilities draw upon modes of domination structured into social systems.

(Giddens 1979, p. 83)

## **Qualifying Success**

The typology of needs (Table 4.1) raised in Chapter Four established criteria of effectiveness through which the success of professional support may be gauged. In this the view held by parents of children of the quality of care and education received by the child when separated from them held particular significance. The views of children and young people themselves has now to be taken into account in all matters relating to children and young people looked after by local authorities. Were the presenting problems addressed? Was improvement made? Were the needs of the children and young people in the study met? The processes of engagement in social work and adjustment in education identified in the general Model of Support (Fig. 4.2) were pivotal in securing progress.

Views of the natural parents interviewed and the issues they raise are presented here. The way in which the individual agency of interviewees was undermined was recognised by some interviewees and their families. Awareness that the points of view and opinions of young people could be discounted was the burning issue for some. Brian insisted, "That's the whole point, my view was never heard." His mother later agreed and described years of "fighting with Social Work" as a drain on all their lives. His father felt that his family had "nearly been torn apart over all the trouble". Difficult relations within the families were not denied.

In the home, or the society that prolongs it, the ideal appears to be less one of harmony than of unity imposed from outside or above. Family relations are adversary relations....the family sheltered less tenderness than tension, suffering, and more or less covert violence.

(Weber 1987, p. xi)

Interviewees did speak of adversarial relations and of more or less covert violence within their natural families. They had in some measure come to terms with these relations at this stage in their lives.

Retention of family ties was very important to all the young people in the study. Parents did not always share this concern. For Billy, for example, his mother's imminent departure with his stepfather four hundred miles away was of concern. Clearly, when a youngster's wish to maintain contact with birth parents is ignored it keeps them totally dependent on the decision-making process about them to a point at which they discounted the system altogether and no longer believed in it. Sometimes the consequence of this was extremely serious. This was especially evident in *Urbanity and Diversity*.

Retaining family ties was not easy. Young people reported being frustrated in their attempts to maintain contact with their separated parent(s). Parents reported being alienated by social work. The circumstances of two interviewees, Laura and Margaret, who had been re-united with their parents after long-term foster care serve to illustrate the issues raised. As pointed out above, the feelings of the natural

parents were of some import in gauging the critical point of effectiveness by which Social Work and the implementation of the *1995 Act* is to be judged. Birth parents who had been reunited expressed dissatisfaction about the way their young people had been looked after in the interim and expressed dismay at the way they, as parents, had personally had been treated during the periods of separation. This has import once again for the way in which social work departments relate to birth parents when they act *in loco parentis*. Margaret's father had strong, but typical, views:

If I had thought all those years ago that this was what was going to happen to her, I would never have left her here.

His comment followed a fourteen-year separation from his daughter, who had been taken into care on the separation of her parents. Now back living in the area he saw his daughter daily and commented on how much growing up she still had to do and how concerned he was about her.

For Laura and her mother the long-term separation had been fraught with serious difficulties from the outset. The problem here was one of failed attempts to be reunited over many years. Laura reported that her desire for contact with her mother in particular, had been ignored while her mother reported that her efforts to rehabilitate herself had been dismissed as insufficient to re-establish parenting her children. Mother and daughter now share a house. As Laura put it

It seemed as if my mother was never good enough....they were always putting her down....they never believed that she had changed.

From her mother there was a harrowing account of failed attempts to be reunited with three children. She described the situation as agony and she said "they just forgot whose children they were...I thought I was never going to see them again."

Referral back to the typology of need and to the critical points of effectiveness within that shows how the intervention of Social Work in the lives of children and families, especially with regard to fostering, was seen to be valuable by some birth parents.

When original problems had been reduced and the situation for their child and themselves had been improved they expressed satisfaction. Clearly in the case of Margaret and Laura problems had become exacerbated and the level of dissatisfaction was high. The study shows, however, that this need not always be the case. Preoccupation on the part of social workers with original reasons for care and their reluctance over time to reappraise situation and circumstances of separated parents could prejudice the chances of children ever being reunited with parents. This was seen as a major problem when short-term became long-term fostering.

In terms of critical points of effectiveness of Education and in Social Work reservations have to be expressed, as the findings in this study suggest that the processes of adjustment in school and the processes of engagement within Social Work have not been productive for children in foster care or in residential units.

Interviewees did not perceive themselves as being empowered as learners, or as potential citizens. The values of each of the professions in respect of empowerment would appear not to be making an impact, either for the young people now left the system, or those trying to free themselves from the system, nor for the young people starting out on their secondary education. Policy documents in each of the authorities certainly revealed the intention to empower. Considerable investment has been made in the Education System, although children, especially children from Children's Homes, did not appear to benefit from those developments. Within Social Work the evidence suggests that the young people have had difficulty in asserting themselves and in exerting more control of their lives.

The perceptions of these young people matter. If policies are perceived as not reaching the individual then they are invisible to them. Public policies have to be seen to be delivered and it appears that the quality of that delivery also counts. As the research revealed the young people might remained "locked in" to the system, which either did not let them go, or was in danger of putting them out too soon, before they were ready. Either way without "the keys to citizenship", as dispensed by professional staff, these young people were unable to effect an exit from care

successfully and an entry to society as adults. It also appeared that they could do very little about this. So they remained dependent upon support from the Social Administration despite repeated attempts to free themselves successfully from the system. Having set out to examine the problems facing children becoming literate, because literacy has been seen as the key to a better life, the research has indicated that it is not literacy as a key that was the main problem, it was the fact that these young people may have been denied the keys to citizenship, in a process which interrupted the delivery of public policy. In some cases it became increasingly connected with incrimination of the young person.

To sum up, in this chapter data from interviews revealed the way in which the erosion of the individual agency of young people had been played out in their experience of support. They revealed how their position in the community was consistently undermined. Some could identify their betrayal at the hands and actions of those with whom they came into contact through victimisation, incrimination as their social status was relegated as they fell victim to “the switch”. This had the effect of preventing their full participation in the community by precipitating poverty and homelessness, and leaving them open to exploitation. On the withdrawal of protection from social work they had become necessarily preoccupied with their survival. This state of preoccupation well illustrated Maslow’s (1971 and 1987) explanation of a hierarchy of needs which emphasises the capacity of the more basic and urgent need for to dominate when security and survival are put at risk. Young people interviewees displayed such concerns. This confirmed the role this plays in the processes of social inclusion and exclusion. The relationship between victimisation and incrimination was then described showing the very serious nature of what it means to be socially excluded at the interface between interviewees and the criminal justice system. These summed up the way in which the individual agency of interviewees was consistently undermined rendering them vulnerable on leaving care.

This had the effect of consistently relegating their status and position to that of the excluded in the community. Findings indicated that they remained “locked in” to a

system that either did not let them go, or put them out too soon, before they were ready. Either way, they were unable to leave care with dignity and self-respect. In the absence of trust and specific support in their personal lives, essential according to Pringle (1975) they remained dependent upon support from the local administration, despite repeated attempts to free themselves successfully from the system.

Young people experienced policies designed to help them as a series of moves that undermined rather than facilitated the development of individual agency. Young people identified difficulties in their face-to-face encounters with professionals. Therefore they remained vulnerable and were consistently relegated to a dependent role, which reinforced vulnerability and dependency. Some showed awareness of this dependency. The right to govern their own life appeared to be denied by a process that continues to hold the individual responsible for what happens in their life, yet refused to acknowledge the right of the individual to have individual agency in their own life. In short, interviewees were rarely the hero/heroine in their own life drama for any length of time, and certainly not long enough to consolidate that position. This put them in a position of repeatedly having to work their way back into society. They repeatedly had to cover the same ground as they struggle to become citizens in the fuller sense. These steps towards independence were made increasingly difficult.

Interviewees admitted to adversarial relations and of more or less covert violence within their natural families. This, however, was accepted and tensions had to some degree been resolved. Retention of family ties during separation had not been easy. Birth parents who sought to be reunited and were rejected described how painful the whole experience had been. Young people had found this equally distressing. Those birth parents who had successfully been reunited expressed dissatisfaction about the way their children had been looked after in the interim. They were also unhappy about the way they personally had been treated by professional staff during the periods of separation. All said they would welcome improvement. Some gave this as the reason they had volunteered to participate in the study that is to help others in the

future receive better treatment. Overwhelmingly they expressed the view that substitute care should be of a higher quality.

The children and young people whose fostering develops into a long-term arrangement would appear to be most at risk of becoming homeless in the community if not reunited with birth parents in their teens. All expressed the view that more effort could have been made to reunite parents and children. The introduction of extended family was also welcomed and would seem to be a valuable course of action as young people approach the time when they must leave care. Such contacts would need to have been encouraged throughout the time they were looked after to give the relationships time to mature into positive possibilities. This would reduce the numbers of young people who leave care to live alone in a position of social exclusion. Social inclusion should be viewed as something to be achieved at every stage of the growing up process. Local Authorities hold the care of these children in trust for their parents.

*On Separation*

*Though blind  
I should still see you  
Though deaf  
I should still hear you  
I can hold you in my heart  
As in my arms  
Without feet  
I should come to you  
Though blows fall on me  
I should carry you  
In my blood*

## Chapter 8: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the findings of the research, then draws conclusions about the implementation of policy, its delivery and how this has affected the quality of services for young people leaving care in their struggle for independent status. It then considers several implications for the care and education systems. Implications for the delivery of policy in future and for the improvement in the quality of services are then discussed. Finally, recommendations are made which might improve the situation for young people in future.

### Summary of findings

#### *Implementation of the 1995 Act*

The research revealed that :-

- An imbalance in power relations was evident. Victimisation sometimes led to incrimination for a few, reduced the status of young people rendering them poorer financially, precipitating them into homeless and social exclusion
- Findings indicated that the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 has failed to impact positively upon the lives of the young people in this study as they struggled to achieve independent adult status.
- A willingness on the part of young people to accept responsibility for their own learning, but their educational aspirations had not yet been realised.

Thus affected dramatically the quality and effectiveness of services available to them. The way in which the individual agency of young people was denied provided insight into processes at work between professional staff and young people as well as between young people themselves. The cost of this social exclusion was withdrawal

of participation in the community as social citizens. This also exposed them to exploitation and left them prey to violence.

Having set out to discover the quality of care within education, the discovery that young people experienced a poorer quality of care as they approached adulthood presented a bleak picture. Parents also expressed concern, not only about the quality of care received by their children, but also about how they were treated. Issues raised covered the quality of support in care, frustration at not being able to maintain contact with family and failure of the system to recognise and appreciate significant changes in the way separated parents had improved their own lives. Both young people and parents reported their dissatisfaction at having their wishes about being reunited ignored.

The research was carried out against a backdrop of the arrival of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Rates of progress in implementation of the *1995 Act* in terms of structural, financial and organisational changes differed across authorities. Problems facing authorities *Urbanity* and *Diversity* differed in scope and response in terms of policy, the way it was communicated and the investment in services for children. In *Urbanity* and *Diversity* a long history of large-scale provision prevailed. Both authorities welcomed the opportunity to improve services presented by the introduction of the Act. In *Rurality* services for children and young people while considered embryonic, presented an opportunity to create fresh community responses to the needs of children, which was welcomed by senior managers.

The problems to be addressed had concerned the education of children in care and the importance of literacy as the key to better life chances for young people in the care system. Not all the young people were regarded as literate, nor for the most part were they managing to establish independent lives with any degree of success, indeed, many were in poor circumstances. Poverty and safety were disclosed as major issues. The current preoccupations of the young people interviewed revealed acute anxiety about the future and about their capacity to be fully involved in society. Despite this they reported some satisfaction with their experience in education to

date. In many ways their difficulties were related to supporting themselves. It was found that they were not “being looked after” any more. Interviewees seemed philosophical about loss of educational opportunity and did not exhibit the “pervasive regret” found by Kufeldt et al. (2000) among young adults who had been brought up in Canada.

### *The educational provision and support available in Local Authorities*

The research found that :-

- There were marked differences in rates of implementation among the three Local Authorities visited.
- Optimism among social work managers that policies operated in practice was not justified.
- Development work to provide support for learning in education was advanced but not targeted sufficiently towards children in care.

Findings relating to provision and support showed that on the whole the educational response to young people was deemed to be satisfactory by interviewees and their families. It was seen to empower young people and the care experience within schools was seen by interviewees to have afforded them a supportive experience within education at least. Although they were not without complaint, they reported a certain resilient attitude towards the behaviour of staff in schools. The support of education within the care experience was deemed weak in comparison and the support within care was not viewed as satisfactory by interviewees and their families.

Certain research contradicts the more negative aspects found in the present study. Schofield (2003) reveals how many adults have been dramatically helped by long-term foster care. She interviewed 40 young adults charting the various paths taken

throughout their lives. Foster parents continued their care and interest to become interested and supportive grandparents. The analysis drew on development and attachment theories that permitted a sensitive approach.

In an earlier study (Schofield 2000) identified that the social workers tended to underestimate the educational difficulties experienced by children in foster care. Jackson and Darshan (2000) note that children in care feel that teachers assume that they are less able than children who are not in care. Thus some children in care can experience negative expectations in school and in care settings.

One study presented a “systematic account of the nature and extent” (Cheung and Heath 1994, p.361) of the difficulties young people leaving care in the 1960’s and 70’s were facing in the labour market in the early 1990’s suggested a pattern. Adults who had been received into care and returned home before the age of one went on to have career paths that resembled closely the national average. This meant that there was no apparent sign of disadvantage, educationally or occupationally. In contrast adults who had left care at later stages were found to have levels of educational attainment well below the national average for their peers who had never been in care. Although they were not alone in this given that others in the peer group who had never been in care were similarly endowed, the negative effect upon their employability was major. This reinforces the need to help young people to gain qualifications that equip them for employability.

### *The Role of staff in the Identification and Assessment of needs*

The research found that:-

- There was little evidence of formal identification and assessment of educational needs of young people. Most identification took place informally in school.

- The results of informal assessments were not necessarily shared with the young person, residential carers to assist in planning of educational support available in the care setting. Nor is there any obligation for teachers to make this information available to inform the educational content of Individual Care Plans that social workers now have a statutory duty to prepare.
- There was an absence of special initiatives aimed at coordinating educational support for children living away from home each of the Local Authorities visited.
- Formal annual educational reports were given to foster parents and forwarded to social workers. Birth parents of separated children relied upon social workers for information about their child's progress.
- It was possible to miss out on assessment altogether. Some young people admitted to being adept at avoiding educational assessment in school through disruptive and challenging behaviour.
- Continuity in assessment during transition from Primary to Secondary education was interrupted in some schools that insisted on a giving the child a fresh start in which previous information could be disregarded. The argument given took account of the greater scope in Secondary school in terms of space, larger number of pupils, movement between classes, and the perception that the demands of personal organisation were greater than in primary schools.
- The range of assessment techniques in Secondary school varied significantly from school to school within the Local Authorities.
- Young people attending school from Children's Homes had a higher profile in school than those attending daily from foster care. The arrangements made

for children in foster care were seen to be more discreet, even to the point of anonymity, where teachers did not know the care status of the child.

- Arrival in school at times other than the start of term could be problematic in that screening for difficulties in class took place during the first few weeks at the start of the school year. Pupils arriving mid-term were not guaranteed individual assessment of their educational needs. Since reception into care does not always happen in school holidays this finding has potentially serious consequences for young people intending to attend a range of subjects.
- Young people expressed concerns about the difficulty in managing the secondary school curriculum. Successful young people had managed school subject work satisfactorily and knew the dangers of avoid falling behind in classwork.

### *The Corporate response of Local Authorities*

The research found that:-

- On the whole each authority provided a new corporate strategy with annual regional plans for provision.
- The main area of weakness across authorities was the extent to which the tenets of policy initiatives made an impact in the lives of young people.
- A severe lack of accommodation was identified early on by each authority as a main stumbling block in providing appropriate assistance for young adults.
- Failure as yet to capitalise on strong policy and planning was compounded by an absence of complementary service provision at grass roots level in each case. This was particularly problematic in *Urbanity*, and less so in *Diversity* and *Rurality*.

- The role of various professionals involved in reviewing educational, health and social difficulties in school was not well established and therefore could not be relied upon.
- The processes of identification of assessment of needs reflected disconcerted action among the various departments that under the *1995 Act* share corporate responsibility for children in care. A high standard in the identification and assessment of children's educational and care needs will precede appropriate supports.

Walker (1994) emphasised the interdependence of the objectives that Care and Education hold in providing strategic and sensitive support for young people in care. The strategy in Manchester involves The Manchester Teaching Service for children in care. In recognising that young people in care have been largely ignored by public service planners Manchester has provided a more thorough and all encompassing approach. A strategic approach in Fife involving care and Education (Lindsay and Foley 1999) is based on the development of good practice in residential care coupled with a care led initiative to return young people in care to school and help them maintain their education. Both these initiatives demonstrate corporate planning in practice.

The study had taken six years of part – time study. Not only had the world appeared to change about me, but my own view of the world too had been influenced over time. Tension between research findings and the ideal intention of public policy was evident. Problems of young people dropping out of society had preoccupied the final year of the study. Not only did I begin to observe and speak to vendors of the *Big Issue* on the streets, but I also wanted to test the reality that some of the young people leaving care were dropping out and living on the streets in Scotland's cities.

When the analysis of the data was complete and the conclusions of the research were consolidated I was keen to test them out against what was happening somewhere else in Scotland. The opportunity arose to be introduced to the work of the Edinburgh Streetwork project. Their research into the population they assist (Owen and Hendry 2001) and the efforts currently made in Scotland provided another view and corroborated the findings. Young people leaving care do constitute part of the street population in the city. The breakdown of personal relationships was reported as one of the main problems and precipitating factor, which had led to individuals losing accommodation and becoming homeless.

Discussions addressed the current debate about social inclusion in Scotland. According to Tam Hendry, Director of Edinburgh Street Project (ESP), Social Inclusion is best viewed as a process which project staff work with those sleeping rough to actively reverse circumstances. Relationships are forged and every effort made to provide the practical, legal and social support needed to rehabilitate individuals and help them achieve independent status. The pilot study undertaken by staff (Owen and Hendry 2001) based on data collected between April and October 1999 described the rough sleeping population in central Edinburgh; highlighted issues for rough sleepers and gaps to feed onto strategic planning and future funding initiatives; and provided data for quantitative and qualitative funding targets. Young people who have left care are undoubtedly among this street population. The sterling work being undertaken brought reassurance at a time when the findings of the study were themselves making an emotional impact. It was encouraging to find that there was still a mechanism in place that might assist those known to have been in care now homeless.

The problem can also be viewed from another perspective. Data from the Scottish Young People's Survey (SYPS) was analysed by Jones (1995) who examined the type of accommodation of some 4000 young people. 65 per cent of the young people were still living at home at 19 years of age. The group of care leavers amounted to 6 percent including those living with friends and relatives. This study has examined closely the experiences of a small group of care leavers. The negative findings may

well have been different, had different young people been involved. As Jackson (1995) has pointed out, each young person's story is unique. In the researcher's view the study lent insight into the way relationships and placements break down and has revealed some of the less salutary experiences of young people in public care are denied the care they have been promised. Berridge and Cleaver (1997) similarly tackled the unpalatable circumstance of how foster placements break down in an effort to discover how to interrupt the process and establish better practice in future. Kendrick (1997) faced the same dilemma in researching the more negative aspects of abuse and harm in order to provide an exposition on how best to proceed in future in the Children's Safeguards Review in Scotland (Kendrick 1997). This has been the process at work here. As conclusions are drawn, implications discussed and recommendations made the challenge will be for those who can turn the findings to future advantage in supporting young people in care.

## **Conclusions**

There is a need for Local Authorities to redress the imbalance of power detected in the findings. A main conclusion is that professional accounts have held sway in the lives of these young people. Mediation of the relationship between the individual young person and the State has acted to the detriment of individuals in the study, rendering them more vulnerable and continually dependent upon the State's assistance. Young persons' views about their rights and their feelings of being discounted, indicating a condition of powerlessness in face of an overly powerful administration. This then was their experience of being governed. Their resulting vulnerability may be viewed as a continuum of dependency. Varying levels of vulnerability exist. These homeless young people and those returning to the community after periods spent in prison appreciate that this is the way public policy has impacted upon their personal life and social situation. Vulnerable groups experience differentiated access to the benefit system and social agencies. When individuals become socially excluded there is a risk that they will become increasingly separated from society and from the system or agency of government, which might be able to assist them in promoting their reintegration.

In his research into the supportive work of specialised Leaving Care Projects for young people leaving care in England after the introduction of the Children Act 1989, Broad (1998) categorised the above problems as requiring a specialised response in leaving care work. He described the detail of this kind of response in terms of a social justice, social welfare and technical assistance model of support provided by specialist care workers. According to Broad

These elements offer contrasting representations of the relationship between the individual – that is, young people leaving care – and the state, and the subsequent rights and responsibilities that follow.

(Broad 1998, pp. 258-9)

His model draws on the social justice model put forward by (Harvey 1973), the social welfare (Marshall 1965), put forward in Chapter One, and the technical assistance approach that prepares young people with social and practical skills for the world of work (Thomas 1983). Broad concludes that the weakest area of work with young people leaving care resides in the area of technical assistance, an area requiring development and funding. He advocates collective action on the part of young people to be undertaken purposefully but sensitively if their disadvantage and disenfranchisement is to be reversed with more access to decision-making and influence so that they become included in society.

Social inclusion turns on the balance of the relationship between the rights and responsibilities of governments, the human rights of individuals and their responsibilities as citizens. Any citizen, vulnerable or otherwise, will experience being governed at the interface between the citizen and government agencies. It is here that the powerfulness of a government's public institutions and services can be gauged. For the young people in the study, at a time when increasing independence is sought, their experience appears to be one of loss of benefits to which they feel entitled. For all citizens who remain to some degree dependent upon public services, whether they benefit or not from these services seems critical. Professional staff mediate aspects of the constitutional relationship between these young people and

government. It is important to remember that the purpose of policy guidelines for professional staff is to ensure the delivery of policy first and foremost. Another purpose is to keep the system intact and to protect it at both local and national level from unwelcome criticism. The study revealed that policy guidelines were working more in favour of the government and the system than in favour of the individual young people interviewed. Any improvement in the quality and effectiveness of services for young people leaving care will depend upon the capacity of policies to redress this imbalance of power.

The consistent relegation of these young people to a state of dependency upon the State compromises their status. Their fear of homelessness is real; their experience of abject poverty is a matter of some urgency. This does not make sense, given the considerable investment in their future to date, in terms of care and education support. It simply does not make sense to abandon them at this stage when holding on for a few more years would make all the difference to their chances of assimilation into society and their chances of a better life.

Study findings indicate that the system failed at this point in their lives to attend to matters of social citizenship and human rights. Development of anti-oppressive practice at the micro (personal) level has been pointed up as one of the more critical issues facing Social Work today (Dominelli 1998). As Barnes and Hugman put it

Competing discourses within the (Social Work) profession are cited as being instrumental in prompting vigorous debates among social workers over goals, methods of practice and associated underpinnings.  
(Barnes and Hugman 2002, p.277)

Howe (1987) has defined four main paradigms of Social Work practice arguing that one main debate within Social Work questions the main goal as social change i.e. social regulation or social intervention. He points out that each may be in operation at both societal (macro) level and at personal (micro) level.

While to understand citizenship is to understand more fully the rights and responsibility of government for the rights and responsibility of individual citizens, it is also important to recognise the dual effect of Social Work involvement with young people in care as potentially overly intrusive and instrumental in regulation rather than in promoting social inclusion. Inclusion places much emphasis upon civic responsibility, that is the responsibility of the “citizen” towards the State, and not enough emphasis upon the human right of the individual to be responsible for his/her own life.

The emphasis by government upon civic responsibility requires that citizens be law abiding, participate and make a contribution to society (in labour and taxes and making a social contribution). This implies that to be part of a society one has to be in work, paying taxes and putting something back into society. This is “civic responsibility” as manifest in contemporary Scottish society through “action in the community” and “community service”. The civic responsibility of a citizen in a democracy also involves voting for who they would prefer “to be in office”. In the personal life of citizens the responsibility of the individual is towards fellow human beings, whether the nature of that relationship is of “kith, kin or stranger”. Civic responsibility towards fellow human beings and towards government is more likely to develop in citizens who already exercise responsibility in their personal lives. The frustration of young people in the study on this point was evident.

This frustration was shared by birth parents in the study for which the criteria of effectiveness were also unmet. Far from experiencing a reduction, or resolution of the problems they faced in their interaction with Social Work departments. The majority view was that their problems had been exacerbated. Nor had the initial difficulties necessarily been resolved. In adolescence many young people were still experiencing the same or more serious difficulties than experienced at the outset of their relationship with social work, indicating that their experience had not been a positive one. Significant changes in the relationship between birth parents and Social Work services, as desired by the introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, were notably absent in those interviewed for the study. Birth parents experienced

being marginalized and ignored. The preservation of a continuing and dynamic relationship with their children, as part of the package of assistance and help on offer from social work services, was notably lacking. This indicated a need for important shifts in focus of the professional services relation to children and the way in which the relationship with birth parents is sustained during periods of separation. Most importantly, the promise of independence and the promise of adult citizenship was prized by young people, birth parents and professionals alike. The difficulty simply lay in how best to achieve it.

These disappointments could be reframed as follows. The struggle for citizen status can be viewed as symptomatic of changing responses in society to structural change, and resulting fundamental changes in patterns of primary and secondary employment (Young, 1999). According to Young the difficulties and differences facing Western societies are a result of the “rapid unravelling” of social fabric of formerly industrialised nations, the rapid rise of individualism and demands for social equalities which have “emerged on the back of market forces that have permeated and transformed every nook and cranny of social life” (Young, 1999, p.vi). Consequent “material insecurity” and “ontological precariousness” foster judgementalism, moralism and create ideal conditions for social exclusion. Vulnerable sections of community suffer accordingly, as blame (for the leap in crime and incivilities experienced by society) is apportioned to various “underclasses” in turn such as single mothers, or new age travellers.

The young people in this study appeared to be at risk of such social labelling and relegation as they attempt to negotiate adult status. Efforts to establish a socially acceptable identity demanded recognition of status, and rights, and a sense of belonging. Fear of fragmentation in society does not sit happily with notions of plural identities (Isin *et al.*, 1999). Isin and colleagues delineate the many different forms of citizenship and group-rights. They confront conceptual difficulties and do not raise “false hopes for a promised land where citizenship and identity are forever reconciled” (Isin *et al.*, 1999, p.vii). Rather they advocate citizenship as a process through which different groups within society may claim rights with a view of

expanding their social status and thus successfully gaining inclusion within society. This is in keeping with the “Who Cares? Trust movement” upon whom so many young people in care in the United Kingdom have relied, to inform them about their rights and responsibilities and their right to protection under the law.

The problem facing the young people interviewed in the study was their imminent departure from group status and their desired assimilation into society as socially accepted individual citizens. Their awareness of their individual rights was a refreshing indication of intrinsic values held, as was their request for much needed change in status and positive treatment as aspiring citizens. Such a positive approach will help them withstand negative circumstances. With limited educational collateral they are doubly disadvantaged. They remained unprepared for the labour market, but will hopefully continue in further education of their choice. Their difficulties have been compounded by the mediation of professional staff, whose decision - making has undermined rather than supported the desire for independent status.

Citizenship, as asserted in Chapter One, is fundamentally concerned with social relationships between people (Twine, 1994). Twine took this to its ultimate importance

Social rights are thus concerned with establishing the material and cultural conditions for social inclusion and participation such that the “social self” may develop. Forms of social exclusion therefore pose major threat to the development of the “social self”.

(Twine 1994, p.11)

To recap further, Townsend (1979) in Chapter One pointed out that participation in terms of access to material conditions for well-being marks an important pre-condition for freedom in society to function as an independent human being.

In addition, the efforts of the young people in the study to avoid becoming the victims of crime, or becoming involved in criminal activity, the latter resulting in their disenfranchisement, caused distress. This marked the true nature of their struggle for citizen status. The boundary between the Children’s Hearing System and

the Criminal Justice System is a stark one, which threw into sharp relief the tension and discontinuity between the frameworks. Respect for children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been a feature of the Children's Hearing System. The need for further review and research on how young people aged 16-21 years of age are dealt with during this transition between the two systems was made clearly in 1990 by the Scottish Childcare Law Review. Evidence from this study would indicate that this is now a matter of urgency. This is confirmed by Kelly (1996), who suggested that 16 and 17 year old offenders could be dealt with by Children's Reporters and Children's Hearings, upgraded to children's courts with a children's Judge, assisted by two members of the Children's Panel. Clearly, there is a need for singular determination on the part of the authorities to continue to support individual young people leaving the care system and to respect the rights of young people as a group at the same time.

The need to reverse this apparently heartless approach to young people faced with the Criminal Justice System and gaol terms would help introduce trust into the system for young people and to redress the imbalance of power noted at the outset of this chapter. There is a need to recognise the range of difficulties facing all young people leaving care, while at the same time being able to assess individually the circumstances of each young person concerned, particularly at times when they come to the attention of the Criminal Justice System. Corporate policies promoted within Local Authorities, it may be concluded, were not affecting or influencing the Criminal Justice System in the way it deals with vulnerable young people leaving the care system, most of whom are well known to the Children's Hearing System. Implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 will be of no avail if these young people are not assisted in a much more constructive way in their attempts to gain adult citizenship.

The *1995 Act* requires that critical points of effectiveness in Education and in Social Work are met in the processes of adjustment in Education and engagement in Social Work. It can also be concluded that the poor quality of the experiences of the young people in the study was due, at least in part, to the absence of qualitative factors at

casework level. Critical points of effectiveness set out in Chapter Three do not appear to have been met in the experience of the young people. There was little evidence that the principles contained in the *1995 Act* affected the young people's experience. This suggests that new policy initiatives were not being implemented during this period of transition between one Children's Act and another. Nor were there signs that the recent introduction of the Human Rights Act was impacting positively on the experiences of these young people.

Policy guidelines are produced at senior management level to inform all staff. Policies, then, have informed professionals, who may or may not pass them on. Reasons for this will vary. The professional values of staff may or may not coincide with the value norms held by their profession. At moments of crisis, therefore, important principles of policy may be abandoned. Professional staff may well openly disagree with proposed management plans and proceed according to their own personally held views of child management as opposed to the professionally held views of childcare. Public services rely upon the professionalism of staff. Issues of accountability are relevant here. The recurring questions have to be has policy been delivered and in what manner? Have criteria of effectiveness been met?

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that considerable confusion surrounds the professional value of empowerment. This was more evident within Social Work and care settings than in Education. Within Education the empowerment of individual learners, which means that learners accept more responsibility for their own attention to study and learning, appeared to be much in evidence, especially in the early stages of secondary education. Young people, starting out on their secondary education, felt empowered within the residential setting. On the other hand they appeared to have been given inappropriate autonomy in the area of basic literacy, to the point that they felt left to their own devices. This response seemed inadequate in addressing problems in an area that really required much attention from staff and a considerable degree of personal support. Lack of resources was a feature, but it was not the main problem. Young people within residential care appeared to have been given too much

responsibility for their own learning at a time when they appeared to need assistance from adults.

The need to foster improved relations between families and the public services has been apparent. Confusion abounded over the degree to which young people could and should be empowered. This was more prevalent within Social Work than in Education where promises of benefits could still be realised in the sphere of Further Education.

This was in marked contrast to the tendency to disempower the older young people interviewed in the study. These young people, on the brink of adulthood, found repeatedly that their attempts to claim personal power over their own lives was undermined. This is an area that requires serious attention in future. The tendency in Social Work to overly sanction young people was in conflict with the need to give them increasing opportunities to exercise responsibility. One conclusion to be drawn here was that for certain young people any positive experience of empowerment gained in school and at home during earlier years appeared to unravel at the onset of adulthood.

There was little evidence that the young people in the case studies were participating fully in the decision-making processes about their own lives. No matter how long or short the intervention, it should take account of the need to increase the power given to young people with regard to decision - making and independent skills. The confusion about empowerment is indicative of the tendency to focus upon structure rather than agency. As we have seen the structure of the system, and the agency of professionals within it, acted as an extremely powerful mechanism. This reluctance to empower young people has its roots in a lack of awareness of the process of adolescence. Attention to this in future would seem a profitable avenue for addressing the way the experience of the young people has been limited. Not only is there a need to resist sanctioning in the way described by the young people in the study, but it would also appear that professional staff need support to help them resist

sanctioning and review important decisions about when support is appropriate and when it is not. This, after all, is at the heart of the *1995 Act*.

## **Implications**

Implications that arise affect management, practice and policy-making.

### *Management*

The foregoing conclusions raise serious implications for senior managers across the public sector. The young people evidently need to be looked after in a much better way and for longer than at present. There would seem to be a need for managers to re-focus upon the issues highlighted in the study. The qualitative factor so notably absent in the experiences of the young people will need to be delivered at the interface between young people and professionals across all public sectors. There is a need for managers at senior and middle level to take cognisance of all the implications raised. This needs to be done at corporate level, across Local Authority structures, to address the serious issues of the Criminal Justice System. It also needs to take place within a Local Authority and the need to review case work and training for all professional staff would seem to be a matter of urgency. Local Authorities have a responsibility to implement the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. There is therefore a need for senior managers to be more aware of the experiences of the young people for whom they provide within their own Local Authority. Attention to detail with regard to the human exchange that takes place around young people and professional staff, whatever their role, would be a necessary agent for change. This is desirable if young people are to assume an increasing responsibility and increasing involvement in the decision-making process.

There are implications for the supervision and management of casework in Social Work that would require more attention to be paid to the quality of care and action taken on behalf of young people leaving care and for the need for specialist services for adolescents. The casework undertaken, both in Social Work and Education require attention. For policies to be delivered the social workers and teachers must

take responsibility for delivering the policy, and there was little evidence from the young people concerned that this was happening. More professional guidance is needed to break this tendency for the Social Work Department to delimit the lives of the young people in their care more than they provide the benefits. Professional staff will need support and training to help them resist the tendency to sanction young people. One unconfirmed report indicating that the financial benefits due to one young man were withheld by his social worker, as a sanction for failing to meet social expectations was an unwelcome illustration of how deep seated this problem might have become. This is an area meriting further research. The young people in the study were desperately in need of all the benefits to which they were entitled, battling as they were against poverty. Serious attention has to be given to keeping these young people “on board” at a time when it is too easy for them to detach themselves from society and find themselves on their own with feelings of abandonment. The movement of young people in and out of care, in and out of accommodation, dropping in to day centres and dropping out of sight, was a worrying feature of the study. It was a regular feature in each of the Local Authorities. Initiatives could be taken in providing services that relocate rather than dislocate young people in the community.

Another area in which there appeared to be some confusion is that of parental responsibility. It was clear from the findings that Social Work staff, in their capacity as parental substitute, did not appear to take responsibility for helping young people become literate. This seemed especially so in the residential settings. The responsibility of Social Work for children’s development in reading and writing was not translated into action. It may be that the temporary nature of placements reinforced this apparent lack of awareness. Or it may be that Social Work staff did not perceive the support needed in this area to be part of their professional remit. Either way its absence is critical and should be addressed.

Where a Social Work Department has assumed parental rights, full responsibility for all aspects of the child’s development including their education and literacy rests with Social Work. In this situation the responsibility is clear, and that responsibility

is delegated. The role of foster carers in the development of literacy of the children in their care appeared to be more clearly understood. Indeed, for some, poor literacy was of great concern and viewed as a central task. Where the Social Work Department has not assumed parental rights the relationship of the young person to their own parents would seem to be a matter that has been much neglected. There is a need for clarity about the parenting role in Social Work and its place in the training of social workers. The role of the Social Work Department as parent appeared not to be fully understood or appreciated in the ordinary every day lives of the young people who were being looked after. Birth parents could be described as “sidelined” and “much maligned” in a process reluctant to reunite families. A few birth parents were determined enough to struggle to be reunited with their children.

Birth parents may provide important experiences for their own children, especially at a time when the young people are growing up and need them even more. According to interviewees reunited parents not only offered protection, advice and stability, they were also able in some cases to make up for what they had been unable to offer previously during times of separation. It appears that this may be a much-neglected area and one worth pursuing. The main issues then remain those of separation and reunification. This pre-supposes appreciation and understanding of the personal change in parents during periods of separation, and perhaps more willingness to prepare risk assessments on the potential costs and benefits in reuniting children with their families.

### *Practice*

The secondary issue remains one of responsibility for the children’s learning, the support that they need regardless of where they are living. There would seem to be a need for the Social Work Department to review its position as parent/educator of the young people for whom they are responsible. This would involve reappraisal of the role of Social Workers in supporting the educational development of their clients wherever the children are placed and with whom they are placed. Closely aligned to this is the issue of motivation and purpose, much lacking in the younger children

interviewed at the outset of their secondary careers. For the older young people in the case studies there were indications that later on they were keener than ever to make up for lost time in education. It would seem to be important that at this time when their motivation is high, the facilities and the encouragement is also there to support their current initiative.

One implication is that young people did not accidentally slip through a gap in any net, as previously assumed. Instead they actively determined to circumvent and steer clear of the assessment process. A strong feature of such avoidance strategies was the repertoire of challenging behaviours brought into play. This has implications for staff and policy-makers. The street-wise nature of the young people and their capacity to bluff will need to be taken into account when assessing reading skills and other educational needs. Some young people deliberately avoided assessment of their educational needs. The social ramifications were viewed as too great a price to pay as Laura showed in her determination to conceal her poor reading skills from her friends in case she would lose status and in turn their friendship.

The contemporary context within Local Authorities demonstrated that very few of the young people interviewed had had their educational needs assessed at other than informal levels within the departments of learning support secondary school. Their competence in literacy determined the extent of participation in the range of subject courses at secondary level. A lack of fluency militated against participation. Any strategy for the development of the educational standards for children looked after by Local Authorities will require that not only are the young people literate much earlier in primary school, but that their confidence to tackle the curriculum within a secondary school is addressed. The resistance to classroom teaching in secondary education was a worrying finding of the study. Even if young people admitted to enjoying classes, they also admitted to having serious difficulties in managing course work. This would seem to be an area that requires much attention.

Also of note in this area were the marginalization of the young people, and the masking of their difficulties. Few had had the services of an educational

psychologist. It may well be that it is the Social Work Department who needs to employ Educational Psychologists in order to ensure that the assessment of the young people looked after by them is much more carefully attended to in future. Strategies for teaching and learning as a parent would most certainly be the province of the Educational Psychologist.

As has been pointed out if a youngster has been given attention within a Learning Support Department, full and useful detailed information will be held there. The Social Work Department, as parent, could access much more usefully this kind of information, which would help them draw up their educational plan. The educational component of the care plan would seem to be a neglected area. It may well be that Social Work staff have been unable as yet to find the right kind of information upon which to make such plans. It would appear that current levels of contact between teachers and families are insufficient. It would also seem to be especially important that Social Work staff gain from the school much more information about a youngster's educational status than hitherto. I shall go on to consider the implications of these conclusions in more detail.

### *Policy Making*

The main implications for policy makers, managers and practitioners are that any strategy, national or local, to improve the effectiveness of the education of children and young people looked after away from home must be designed to improve the quality of support available to young people. It must aim to deliver support that young people will be able to speak more positively in future, in both the Education and the care systems. The potential effectiveness of the shift in policy is evident. It is its implementation that is problematic, both in care and in the Education systems.

At the corporate level responsibility for the assimilation of young people into society, on leaving care, will focus first and foremost upon their safety and security, the financial means by which they are to survive, their housing, and the way in which they are treated at the interface with public services. There is no doubt that much is and has been done to address the problems facing young people leaving the care

system. That this has been ineffective to date demands that a national strategy be adopted, led from the top. This strategy would initiate careful monitoring of the transition from childhood to independence, for all children and young people. The proposed appointment of a Children's Commissioner will go some way in meeting the expectations of this strategy. How it dovetails, however, with the implementation of Scotland's social inclusion strategy and any initiatives for youth training and careers, will depend upon the willingness of Scottish society to invest continually in the care of young people leaving the care system.

Issues of personal safety, the way young people fall prey to sexual advances and vice, their brushes with the law and their appearance in court all need to be addressed. Their entitlement to benefits, financial and otherwise, all imply that the problems faced by the young people in the study fall within the remit of many government offices. One implication is that in future the co-ordination and communication across departments should be developed in a more informed and sympathetic way, in what has seemed for the researcher, a heartless business.

This implies that trust between young people, the professionals who support them, and the system, will need to be rebuilt. This also implies a shift in focus away from the overly powerful investment in the preservation and protection of the system, and towards individual young people themselves. Their personal experience of the system has been a poor one, a situation to be reversed. Discreet observation of the period of transition to adulthood would appear to be merited, with a follow up at yearly intervals. The main purpose would be to provide the kind of support that furthers the aims and purposes of policy and the spirit of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

There may well be implications for the way social workers are trained. A more explicit appreciation of the role of best practice in parenting would be a critical component of any campaign to address the literacy needs of young people in care. The diagnosis of reading difficulties and an awareness that individual young people's potential need to be placed squarely within the care process. They also need to be

viewed as a greater and weightier element within social care. The more positive and dynamic these processes are, the more likely it is that we will see improved levels of literacy among the care population. Support for literacy within foster care and residential care is ripe for substantial development.

There are also implications for teacher training, within which understanding of the position of separated children has little or no place presently. Such a component merits consideration. This would allow for clarity in roles and responsibilities of each of the professions and would move the system on to a more enlightened approach.

The corporate responsibility placed upon all Local Authority services endorses a hitherto unspoken fact, that all children are to be treasured, protected, by all of us as citizens. One of the implications of the conclusions drawn is that the young people I met were “no longer looked after”, and were ill equipped to deal with that. In reality this was never “the deal” into which they entered on coming into care and becoming separated from their families. These young people were acutely aware of that.

Within Local Authorities there was a sense of optimism about the kind of changes indicated by this research. The delivery of policy introduced by the *1995 Act* turns not on resources, although they matter, but upon meeting the critical points of effectiveness in both Education and Social Work. Delivery of a high quality professional system in education and care requires not only that these critical points of effectiveness are experienced by young people and their parents, but much more than that. Individual professionals determine the level of personal care in professional behaviour and in the quality of interaction between themselves and young people. As such, it costs nothing. Where it is present it is worth its weight in gold. It is the way that the young people are treated in care and in Education that really matters to them, and it should matter to us. Attention to this in the ongoing professional development of teachers and social workers would provide a vehicle for change.

By implication there is also a need to listen to what young people have to say about their own lives and experience of support. Retention of a generic service for adolescence would seem to be advisable. Such services develop local information networks so necessary to appreciating what might actually be going on in young people's lives. The young people gain support, network and learn from each other. The absence of such services severely hampers the professional task. Such generic services can actively promote communication. Rather than waiting for young people to initiate contact when they are desperately in need of help, a more proactive response would actively monitor current issues and anticipate difficulties and potential risks.

Finally, the lack of uniformity throughout the country must be a potentially significant factor. The range in variation of support for learning between schools within the same Authority was a disturbing feature of this study. Local Authorities have some way to go in preparing the Education Service so that it will be able to play a full role in social inclusion policies. This has to be viewed as a seriously weak area, one that Local Authorities would do well to address as a matter of urgency. Schools play a critical role in the lives of young people looked after away from home. Attendance at school, the continual participation in the social life of the school, is an area that could usefully be addressed to help sustain young people who are living away from home in the communities. The tendency for young people to withdraw from the school setting and to retreat to the safety of the children's home is a worrying factor. Regardless of how the child is managing in school the capacity of the Local Authority to keep up educational activity, whether the youngster is attending school or not at any moment in time, would seem to be critical in preventing young people falling too far behind in their work, and, therefore, justifying their continued retreat to safety.

## Recommendations

Local Authorities are urged to adapt their responses to the needs of children in care in recognition of the interplay between positive supports and lack of support that can potentially place young people at risk of serious harm. Discussion of the implications raised focused upon the perceived need to redress the balance of power between the system and the individual young person. Issues of structure and agency and the powerfulness of the professional system within Social Work and within Education was seen to promote the lack of independence experienced by the young people in the study. These issues confirmed a lack of focus upon learning support aimed specifically to help young people develop and increase their levels of achievement in education. These recommendations are aimed at actively combating the processes of social exclusion witnessed in the study. In so doing they would aim to promote positively the social inclusion of young people in future. The development of a more positive climate is of the essence.

Recommendations include the development of a more open complaints procedure for young people in care. The establishment of formal complaints procedures have been recommended to Local Authorities in Scotland (Kent 1997) and in England and Wales (Utting 1997). The purpose being to provide a forum in which allegations of child physical and/or sexual abuse may be properly investigated and the results of the inquiry conveyed to the child and family who reported it in the first place. Utting (1997) goes further in commending to Local Authorities that

There should be a faster and less formal procedure for airing grievances. Local and departmental managers should establish a culture in which minor problems can be sorted out on the spot.  
(Utting 1997, p.181, para 18.16)

This wider and less formal approach is would help empower young people elicit support. The establishment of such a culture of openness and action in Care within the Local Authority that can focus more appropriately upon

...the importance that children and young people gain a positive, individualised experience of care.

(Kendrick in Kent 1997, p.255)

The development of this approach in Education is recommended. This would go some way in achieving an approach within Local Authorities at practice level that consolidates corporate responsibility at senior management level with its translation into concerted action.

This can be widened to take in other departments who are critical in assisting young people in care with housing, financial and material support when they leave the care system. The need to prevent hardship and poverty was evident in the poor material circumstance of those young people trying to survive in independent accommodation and supported accommodation. If they have become part of the homeless population continue to need looked after but in a less formal and subtle way that empowers rather than constrains.

A bolder approach to the implementation of policy and its principles will help take the system forward in future. Continuing investigation of the struggle these young people have in becoming literate is indicated. In addition, it is important that the system through its professionals, mediates the constitutional relationship between the young people and the state. In future it would be possible, not only to replicate the study with a view to searching for improvements over time, but it would also be important to investigate further issues surrounding the way this mediation of the constitutional relationship can go awry (producing negative as well as positive outcomes). The more negative aspects of this mediation process have been amply demonstrated in the study. Of interest in future will be the way in which professional staffs act to promote the positive dimensions of policy in their practice. Further exploration of the relationship between professional autonomy and professional

values (shared and unshared) and how this influences policy implementation is merited.

Improving the support of children who are looked after away from home require that we become more aware of the professional involvement with them and give a commitment to supporting middle management in their difficult task in implementing the principles and the spirit of the *1995 Act*. The poor experiences of young people in the study simply showed that the quality of their experience with professionals was unsatisfactory.

There is also a role for the Scottish Executive in locating developments within the Social Strategy at the interface between the Criminal Justice system and Human Rights Legislation in order to redress the imbalance of power illustrated in the findings. There are signs that the government has plans to improve the situation. The government hope that all our young people leaving Local Authority care in Scotland will have achieved at least English and Maths at Standard Grade, and have access to appropriate housing options (Scottish Office, 2000). In its Social Justice Report...a Scotland where everyone matters, Annual Report 2000, giving indicators of progress, definitions, data, baseline and trends information, the Scottish Executive has committed itself to starting a new collection of data on Local Authority aftercare, from which it is hoped information on care leavers, the level of their education, and their housing options, will all be collected.

The problems facing the young people leaving care are quite properly situated in this report among the problems facing all 16-19 year olds in Scotland. A comprehensive inspection undertaken in 1999-2000 by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools (HMI), and the Social Work Services Inspectorate (SWSI) found that children looked after away from home are more at risk of exclusion and are generally unsupported within the education system (Scottish Executive 2001a). The report says that children in care account for 13% of all school exclusions while representing only 1% of the classroom population (Scottish Executive 2001a, p.21, para 4.8). Local Authorities have been aware for some time of the failings and difficulties surrounding the

problems of educating separated children. Education Minister, Jack McConnell, expressed concerns about the findings (Bartlett 2001). Local Authorities have been instructed to carry out a range of improvements over the next six months to one year. The situation was described as unacceptable. Only eight out of twenty - five young people in the sample studied obtained the national average of seven Standard Grade awards (Scottish Executive 2001a, p. 22, para 5.4). It is to be hoped that continued investigation into some of the findings of this study would help reduce these more negative aspects over time.

Of considerable importance will be the work of the Beattie Report on Social Inclusion and its subsequent Committee work still to be undertaken. The production of the Newsletter "Implementing Inclusiveness" confirms commitment of government to continue to consolidate the view that social inclusion is a process that to be endorsed by the development of services appropriate to meeting the needs of the more vulnerable of Scotland's community. The Piloting of Educational Psychological services for 16-24 year olds is under discussion. Three National Development Officers have been appointed. Their remit is to draw up the specification for a post – school psychological service. The support of Inclusiveness projects, work in Colleges of Further Education Colleges and Training provision are all under consideration (Scottish Executive 2001b, p.2).

It is further recommended that the Scottish Executive locate services for young people leaving the care system within the Social Strategy, implement the Human Rights Act and tackle issues that arise at the interface between the Children's Hearing system and the Criminal Justice system. This would go some way to address the imbalance of power that frustrated young people and their families.

If, in ten to fifteen years, this study is replicated, we would hope to find improved standards of literacy and independence for the young people concerned. Hopefully they will no longer be facing such horrendous social problems as seen today, but they may well be facing new, as yet unforeseen, problems. If, however, the shift in focus recommended here has been effectively implemented, young people will be more

literate and report happier experiences of the support they received growing up away from home. Literacy and its promise of a better quality of life for young people looked after by Local Authorities will be more achievable and the keys to citizenship more attainable. At the heart of this study is the message that not only has public policy to be seen to be delivered, it is the quality of that delivery that matters.

This chapter has drawn the conclusion that for the young people interviewed the *1995 Act* has not affected positively their experience of public policy. Instead shown up in stark relief has been the dominance of professional accounts over the struggle of young people to assert autonomy in their own lives. This frustrated attempts by young people to establish themselves securely in society as citizens of the future. Problems faced on entry to care did not appear to have been ameliorated with time spent in care of Local Authorities. Birth parents and young people expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which their children had grown up and criteria of effectiveness were not met.

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# Inventory

## Appendix 1

### Stage One Audit

Part One			
School Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
Principal Teacher of Learning Support		Name	

by Telephone Interview

#### Question 1

What support for problems of literacy is available at school ?  
individual support/paired reading/peer tutoring/classroom support/technology/other ?

#### Question 3

Which children supported in your department have a formal record of needs ?  
Foster Care :Name and Code

Residential Care :Name and Code

Which children supported in your department have learning difficulties identified on an informal basis ?

Foster Care: Name and Code

Residential Care: Name and Code

**Question 4**

Source of Identification of Learning difficulties

Prim sch/ Sec- LS Dept / by Testing/ by Shadowing/ referral

Foster Care  
Name and Code

Residential Care  
Name and Code

**Question 5**

About sample group who reside in the parental home and who receive learning support

Which professional are involved in the identification of the educational needs of the parental home sample ( by individual case )

	<b>dept of Educ/ man. /PT/T/psych</b>	<b>social work/ sw/resW/other</b>	<b>health GP/Psychiatry/other</b>
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**Name and Code...**

**Question 7**

Do you know of any initiatives aimed at ensuring that children who have learning difficulties do not miss out on assessment of educational needs ?

Is there any one person whose post carries a special responsibility for the education of children looked after by the Local Authority ?

How can we be sure that children do not slip through the net ?

**Question 9**

In your role as Principal Teacher what is your remit ?

Within your remit what action(s) can you take to ensure your pupil/client receives optimum educational and Learning Support.

What does that involve?

How do you do that?.....write letters/phone/apply pressure /manage conferencing/other

**Issues**

Have you met with any difficulties or problems when trying to secure additional support for your pupil/client?

How were these overcome ?

**Effectiveness**

How satisfied are you the educational interests of your pupils are being met?

How can you help ensure that your pupil/client benefits from education available and support offered ?

**Departmental Guidance**

In what way do the guidelines of your authority assist?

# Inventory

## Appendix 2

### Stage One Audit

#### Part two

Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
Manager Residential Unit in social work		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Questions 2, 3 and 7

by Telephone Interview

#### Question 2

What support for problems of literacy is available at home ?  
study bedroom/privacy/advice/tuition/technology/other

#### Question 3

Which children in your unit have a formal record of needs ? Name and code

Which children in your unit have learning difficulties as informally identified at school ?  
Name and Code

Do all of these children receive learning support ? Name and Code

How are children who have problems in reading and writing supported in the Unit ?

**Question 7**

Do you know of any initiatives aimed at ensuring that children who have learning difficulties do not miss out on assessment of educational needs ?

Is there any one person whose post carries a special responsibility for the education of children looked after by the Local Authority ?

How can we be sure that children do not slip through the net ?

# LS Inventory

## Appendix 3

### Stage One Audit

Part Three			
Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
Social Work Care Review officer		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Questions 3 and 5 and 7

by Telephone Interview

#### Question 3

Which foster children in the sample have a formal record of needs ? Name and code

Which foster children in the sample have learning difficulties as informally identified at school ?

Name and Code

Do all of these foster children receive learning support ?

How are foster children who have problems in reading and writing supported in their domestic situation ?

Name and Code

**Question 5**

Which professionals are involved in the identification of care and educational needs of the foster care sample ( by individual case )

	<b>dept of Educ/ man. /PT/T/psych</b>	<b>social work/ sw/resW/other</b>	<b>health GP/Psychiatry/other</b>
<b>Name and Code...</b>			

Which professionals are involved in the identification of care and educational needs of the residential care sample ( by individual case )

	<b>dept of Educ/ man. /PT/T/psych</b>	<b>social work/ sw/resW/other</b>	<b>health GP/Psychiatry/other</b>
<b>Name and Code...</b>			

**Question 7**

Do you know of any initiatives aimed at ensuring that children who have learning difficulties do not miss out on assessment of educational needs ?

Is there any one person whose post carries a special responsibility for the education of children looked after by the Local Authority ?

How can we be sure that children do not slip through the net ?

# Inventory

## Appendix 4

### Stage One Audit

#### Part Four

Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
Principal Teacher of Guidance		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Question 6 and 7

by Telephone Interview

Follows on from response in research question 4

#### Question 6

To pursue details of children about the educational progress of children attending this school from a foster placement and .....residential unit who are not at the moment receiving support in the Learning Support department.

What possibility for children to slip through the net of identification of educational needs and learning difficulties ?

Discuss individual cases in detail a) foster b) residential

Are these individual children coping with the literary demands of the curriculum ?  
Are they perhaps experiencing difficulties, in certain subjects ?

Which children have never had learning difficulties and are successfully coping in the curriculum, with a view to achieving credentials at O grade / Higher level ?

**Question 7**

Do you know of any initiatives aimed at ensuring that children who have learning difficulties do not miss out on assessment of educational needs ?

Is there any one whose post carries a special responsibility for the education of children looked after by the Local Authority ?

How can we be sure that children do not slip through the net ?

# Inventory

## Appendix 5

### Stage One Audit

Part Five			
Details		Telephone	
		Email	
		Dates	
Teacher/Social worker		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Question No 9

by Telephone Interview

#### Individual cases

.....receives support in .....school.

In your role as teacher/socialworker how are you involved in supporting .....(your pupil/client).

What is your remit ?

Within your remit what action(s) can you take to ensure your pupil/client receives optimum educational and Learning Support.

What action have you taken regards.....

What did that involve?

How did you do that?.....write letters/ phone/apply pressure /manage conferencing/other

**Issues**

Have you met with any difficulties or problems when trying to secure additional support for your pupil/client?

How were these overcome ?

**Effectiveness**

How satisfied are you the educational interests of your pupil/ client are being met?

How can you help ensure that your pupil/client benefits from education available and support offered ?

**Departmental Guidance**

In what way do the guidelines of your authority assist?

# Young People

## Appendix 6

### Stage Two

Interview Schedule for Individual School Leavers

Interview Schedule for Individual School Leavers			
Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Questions 10 to 14

by Interview

#### Record of themes discussed

- Educational experience to date in reading/ writing
- Key contributors in the development processes of literacy: parents/carers/teachers/social workers/health professionals
- Range of support experienced in education and in care (see audit)
- Involvement of multidisciplinary team approaches
- Experience of support in specific settings

#### Current situation

Reading Skills application in every day life - reading matter- utilisation

Writing Skills application in every day life/ spelling/ written tasks

Ongoing action in respect of literacy Support

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

### **Future plans involving literacy**

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

### **History of Support in Education**

In the classroom

Range of supports received

Learning support defined- what kind of assistance?

What was most effective ?

Record of needs or not?

Psychologist involvement or not ?

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

Teaching- as in Learning Support

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

Technology availability and usage

## **History of Support in domestic living situation (inc care settings)**

Kinds of help received

Technology availability and usage

Privacy

Personal support

Effectiveness

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

# Inventory

## Appendix 7

### Stage Two: Group Interview for School Leavers

Stage Two: Group Interview for School Leavers			
Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Questions 10 to 14

by Focus group

#### Record of topics explored -ie Perceptions/attitudes/feelings/ideas sought on

- Confidence in Reading and Writing
- Provision of Support received in school
- Provision of Support received in domestic living arrangement
- Benefits gained
- Future in consequence of experience of support to date

#### Reading and writing

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

**Provision of Support**

About School NOTE  
Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

About Home: NOTE  
Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

**Benefits gained**

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

Where negative response given explore problem areas of attendance issues/ support issues in school and at home/

**Future as result**

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

# Inventory

## Appendix 8

### Stage Two: Group Interview for Pupils in S1 and S2

School Details			
		Telephone	
		Dates	
		Name	

#### Data collection for Research Questions 10 to 14

by Group Interview

#### Record of topics explored -ie Perceptions/attitudes/feelings/ideas sought on

- Confidence in Reading and Writing
- Provision of Support received in school
- Provision of Support received in domestic living arrangement
- Benefits gained
- Future in consequence of experience of support to date

#### Reading and writing

NOTE

Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

**Provision of Support**

In School....  
Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

At Home:  
Perceptions

Attitudes

Feelings

Ideas

**Benefits gained**

Perceptions

Attitudes...

Feelings

Ideas

**Future as a result**

# **RSPP POLICY**

## **Appendix 9**

### **Stage One Audit**

#### Research Schedule for Policy Positions

##### **Part One**

<b>Details of Local Authority</b>		<b>Telephone</b>	
		<b>Dates</b>	
		<b>Name</b>	

##### **Background to Audit**

by reading/analysis of policy statements in Education and Social Work

##### **Education of children**

##### **Legislation and responsibility**

##### **Fostering**

##### **Residential care**

##### **Professional response**

OTHER

# ISM MANAGERS

## Appendix 10

### Stage One Audit

#### Interview Schedule for Local Authority Managers

Interview Schedule for Local Authority Managers			
Details		Telephone	
		Dates	
		Name	

by face to face Interview

#### Themes covered- POLICY and Responsibilities/ educ benefits for children/ ensuring attendance

- Foundations of policy/ educational assessment/ residential settings/ the Children`s Hearing System
- Key contributions in the development of initiatives to support education
- Parental involvement
- Development conjoint work within multidisciplinary team approaches
- Expectations of future developments

#### Legislation Policy Changes

Discuss LA response to Act

Discuss changes made to policy as a direct result of the introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995

What changes have been made at policy level ?

Re Implementation of 1995 Act

.....retrospective look at last five years of development prior to introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act

.....What Progress to date?

.....What is planned ?

**POLICIES**

details for discussion

Does Social Work policy cover in education- y/n  
if Yes what reference is made to Education

re Cooperation between departments to discharge responsibilities under the Act  
What joint arrangements exist, or are planned ?

**Departmental Responsibility - to ensure that children benefit from education available to them**

Where is responsibility to ensure education situated policy and implementation during this period of transition?

Clear perception held of educational progress made by children for whom responsibility is held

Clear perception held of current issues addressed by departments of Education and Social Work

Ensuring children receive education

Identify problem areas

Appendix 11

16 June 1997

Chief Executive  
Moray House Institute of Education  
Holyrood Campus  
Edinburgh

Dear

**Re Children and Young People Looked After by Local Authority: Nature of Care Provision**

A research project concerning support through the education system for young people is planned in part fulfilment of a higher degree at Moray House Institute of Education. The study aims to consider educational experiences of young people looked after by local authorities following implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

I write to ask if your local authority is in a position to provide information for the preliminary stages of this study and, if so, answers to the questions overleaf regards the nature of care provision would be appreciated.

The information will be compiled to provide an overall national picture of current provision and will help define the base criteria for sampling.

Please forward your response to me at 3 Shore Row, East Haven, by Carnoustie, Angus DD7 6LT.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sheena Erskine  
Post Graduate Research Student

## QUESTIONS

Children and Young People Looked After by the Local Authority:  
Nature of Care Provision

1. In which kind(s) of care provision does your authority place children and young people?
2. How many children\* have you in such placements currently?
3. How many young people\* have you in such placements currently?
4. How many residential units\*\* are there within your authority's geographical boundary?
5. How many young people for whom you are responsible are placed outwith the geographical boundary of your authority?

\* Please state the age range of children, and of young people, to whom you refer.

\*\* Note: not residential schools

Thank you for giving this your attention.

## Appendix 12

Your Ref

### **Children and Young People Looked After by the Local Authority: Nature of Care Provision**

I write both to thank you for responding to the questionnaire 'Children and Young People Looked After by the Local Authority: Nature of Care Provision', sent to you earlier this year, and to ask if your authority would be willing to participate in a national study of the educational supports available to young people. The comparative study aims to examine five cases of local authority provision for children in and out of care.

I enclose a study outline for your information.

Yours sincerely

Sheena Erskine, Mrs.

## Appendix 13

### A Note on the Role of Gate keeping

Each Local Authority was approached formally with a copy of the research outline. Access to young people was requested at this stage. A meeting was set up first of all with the senior official who responded to the correspondence. It was agreed at this stage how to proceed into access and contact arrangements.

The plan was that each participant would be contacted using a key contact approach, that is, one contact leading onto another and so on. This was only possible if the local authority could first of all provide details of young people who could then be approached to start the process. Sometimes the first group interview set up for school leavers led to further contacts. In two authorities, the first two, this process worked well. Notably, however, in the Local Authority, which had large conurbation areas in its catchment, this method of contact appeared to fail. Three to four years into the study and still there was no contact allowed, even to make official and initial approaches. Frustrating as this was at the beginning, it actually proved one of the most useful breakthroughs into what was happening to young people in this area in particular.

In this authority three or four meetings with research officers within the authority failed to elicit any names of young people. When meetings took place with myself children were named but seen as potential victims of being researched. It was put to me that these young people were traumatised, too traumatised, things in their life were too difficult, and that exposing them, even asking them about the research, whether they would volunteer or not, giving them an opportunity was seen as out of the question. To begin with I largely accepted these explanations. However, over time I began to realise that this was perhaps a serious gate-keeping ploy, and that perhaps there was a serious intention to deny access altogether. This delay was later explained as being due to the lack of social workers with a specialised knowledge of young people and school leavers who were being prepared for independent living. In this authority each social worker held a caseload of a variety of kinds of problems. The

implications of this were that no one person within research and development had an overview of the young people in this district.

Awareness grew that this process of doubly victimising the young people by naming them as victims too vulnerable to participate in the research and it became quite clear to me that this was very much part of the game of threes, outlined in the theoretical framework by Berne (1968). It also occurred to me that within a local authority under the new Children Scotland Act the alignment between adults has to be much more benign and proactive in the interests of the child, and it denies authorities the role of victimising any youngster. This alerted me to the fact that in this authority particularly the principles of the new Act were still not filtering through to the professionals who were implementing the legislation and the policies. Having realised the seriousness of this double victimisation, I began to look for further evidence within all data, and this proved a key point in the analysis, which emerged.

I was very grateful, later on, to professionals who were willing to explain to me that the significance of the lack of generic casework within this authority, which was a matter of policy, did not help the young people that I was interested in. One of the problems was that the children and young people could not be identified as a group, nor did they ever meet up as a group, and more importantly their problems could not be seen across the board because information was never collected from each social worker about the teenagers in their casework. It was also put to me that the young people too had difficulty in identifying whom they could turn to when a problem between themselves and their social worker could not be resolved. There appeared to be no development of a team in which they could put their trust and who could specialise in the kinds of issues that needed to be addressed. This proved to be a key point for this local authority. The policies were in place, professionals were confident, and yet when it came to meeting and providing support for young people there was an absence of coordination. Not only did these leave social workers in a quandary about how to deal with young people and how to develop an expertise, it also put the young people in limbo. In this limbo the young person couldn't tell who was doing what, and it was put to me that this was very confusing for any client, but it was seen to offer privacy and discretion for young people and no one public person could be identified publicly, and it would spread diffusion. While that may have had

benefits for the professionals it stopped comparison across teams and also it blurred performance. Young people could do very little about how they were being treated, as they had no one to turn to.

There was no doubt that the policies within this city local authority were proactive. The guidelines produced had good intentions. The Children Scotland Act 1995 was being implemented. For the young people in the study the absence of a key facilitator who knew the casework of all young people prevented contact. When eventually towards the end of the study a key facilitator was identified, those young people were no longer known to the Social Work Department. This was four years into the investigation and within this authority they had shown interest within the first months, four years before.

In contrast with other local authorities, where a key facilitator was available who had an overview of casework, contact proceeded in a much more straightforward way. Part of the reason for this was that group interviews could be arranged early on in the study, premises were available for young people to meet, key contact following group interviews was easy to arrange, and happened quite naturally. The young people were also aware of each other's problems – they had developed support groups within the structure. I noticed that communication within the authorities that did not follow a generic pattern of social work was much easier. Staff too gave each other support and had developed considerable expertise and confidence in dealing with young people from the care system. In these authorities this was regarded as a highly specialised area of social work.

Inadvertently then the gate keeping mechanism within this authority, which protected young people from being researched, was instrumental in alerting me, as researcher, to a major stumbling block. This covered three areas. First of all, having declared a proactive approach in policy statements the authority had become exposed to potential criticism if their intentions were not realised. Expectations had been raised. Secondly, it had also alerted me to the fact that this authority was not moving in principle towards the spirit of the legislation in which young people are given space to make their own decisions, be empowered, treated with respect and have the right to make their own way in life. And thirdly, the real problem facing Local Authorities in

having staff with the expertise and the communication skills, the sensitivity and the willingness to work with these young people was really a key factor in whether or not the system worked.

In the two Local Authorities, Rurality and Diversity, key facilitators had been more easily identified responsibility and authority had been invested in them, and the study progressed steadily. But the absence of the specialised team in Urbanity had resulted in access granted by senior management being inhibited. There was a connection between the access and the confidence, or lack of it, in the work that they were doing. In the final year of the study this large authority did develop a centre for young people. The young people, however, were most reluctant to use it. Once again it was a place from which individuals might come and go. It was not a facility, which fostered group work or offered social contact with other young people for individual clients. This authority appeared to be operating what could be described as a “divide and lose” system. They had opted in principle for discretion at all cost, the young people were largely invisible to the population at large, and indeed, largely invisible to each other. This in some way safeguarded their rights to privacy, but denied them at the same time opportunities to meet, be gregarious and gain the inevitable support that they really needed from a system which understood them, was staffed by professionals who understood them, and who had the skills and humanity to accommodate groups of young people together.

Finally, as the study drew to a close it was obvious that the remark about confusion for the client, separation from real support and the client being unable to know what was being done on their behalf and who to trust suddenly became much more important as the theme of trust emerged at various levels throughout the interviewing taking place in the study. Trust and absence of it emerged as a major theme and once again much had come from this gate keeping mechanism within this very large authority. What this authority also revealed, and is dealt with more in the study, is the rapid turnover of cases and the speed with which young people came out of care, but no-one could say where they went and what happened to them. This is dealt with more in the main body of the study.

Many young people were being discharged from care. As cases were closed contact between the social work department and young people was severed. This meant that they could be named as possible contributors to the research project, but unable to contact having moved on without a forwarding address. For young people for whom local bed and breakfast places had been arranged they could be available to the researcher one day and rendered homeless the next. In many ways the declaration that the authority considered itself to be proactive held good in principle but it did not emerge in the practice at the interface between young people and their Social Workers.

Young people's experience of policy within this authority was very different from that within the other two.

I am especially grateful to Social Work staff that was willing to discuss casework and practice. Many of these conversations came coincidentally and were very much part of the background context of this conurbation. Social Workers admitted to feeling powerless in the face of this approach and unhappy at the problems facing young people. The professionals I met within this authority also had the courage to admit that the dilemmas they faced day to day in their work was hard to tolerate. The sanctioning, the giving of good benefits for young people and the sudden termination of their cases was hard to bear. And certainly, having waited a long time to meet with the young people in this particular authority, the subsequent interviews with them could be described as harrowing.

## **Appendix 14**

Comparative Education Society in Europe  
BOLOGNA Italy 3-7 September 2000  
Paper presented in Section 4. New technologies and problems of educational communication

Sheena Erskine, Post-graduate student  
Department of Education and Society, University of Edinburgh.

### **GENERATING MODELS: CARE, EDUCATION AND VIRTUAL REALITY**

#### Abstract

This paper traces the generation of a model of national provision which is central to establishing criteria of effectiveness of public services in identifying the care and educational needs of children, and in turn their effectiveness in meeting those needs. It communicates some of the work undertaken in an ongoing dissertation. First, a general model of national provision of Care (Social Work or Welfare) and Education for Children and Young people is introduced. This model includes selected features from the child care and education systems and maps out key interrelationships among them. A synthesis of relevant theory, which permits analysis of the various components of the complex systems within which the needs of children are identified and met, has been put forward. Both theory and model are viewed as prerequisite to the establishment of criteria of effectiveness in the area of public services for children. The process by which criteria of effectiveness become established in terms of the legal responsibility of Care and Education services in Scotland is illustrated. Finally attention is given to the role new technologies might play in relation to generating models in comparative research.

#### Introduction

This paper traces the generation of a model of national provision which is central to establishing criteria of effectiveness of public services in identifying the care and educational needs of children, and in turn their effectiveness in meeting those needs. It communicates some of the work undertaken in an ongoing dissertation. First, a general model of national provision of Care (Social Work or Welfare) and Education for Children and Young people is introduced. This model includes selected features from the child care and education systems and maps out key interrelationships among them. A synthesis of relevant theory which permits analysis of the various components of the complex systems within which the needs of children are identified and met, has been put forward. This theoretical framework brings together the work of Mia Kellmer Pringle, Albert Maslow and Eric Berne to provide a key to understanding the care and educational needs of children. A key to appreciating more clearly how professional

assistance works for children and young people is provided by selected elements of the work of Michael Lipksy and Anthony Giddens. Both theory and model are viewed as prerequisite to the establishment of criteria of effectiveness in the area of public services for children. This general model of national provision, refers to Scotland, but is replicable in relation to other countries.

The design of the multi-site comparative study includes quantitative and qualitative research methods.

## **CARE AND EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND**

Interest in this subject stems from the researchers teaching experience which involves contact with children separated from their families. During periods of separation when care and education were provided by the Local Authority in a residential setting the confidence of children grew. Many of the children evinced renewed enthusiasm for learning.

Despite apparent gains returning to school from the residential setting was fraught with difficulty for some. Reasons for this were rarely clear.

Today the assistance offered to children looked after by Local Authorities when they and their families are in need continues to give rise for concern. The contemporary context differs, systems of support within care and education are substantially developed.

In a Review of Scottish Child Care Law in Scotland (HMSO 1990), the Committee reported to the Secretary of State for Scotland: -

Helping some children and families is difficult. Responsibility for providing assistance is placed upon those who provide care, education and health services.

If we are concerned with the educational achievement of children looked after by the Local Authorities in Scotland, we will focus not only upon the needs of children, but also upon the educational support available to them, its nature and form, and the criteria used to determine the effectiveness of that support.

Following the publication of the Scottish Review of Child Care law debate about the effectiveness of services to children and young people is quite properly in the public domain.

10.1 Services provided by health and education authorities are essential components in the range of provision required by children in care. There is increasing evidence through research

that children in care experience significant disadvantage, compared with children living with their own families. In particular they are likely to have a history of greater ill health and lower educational achievement compared with the wider population. These differences cannot be entirely explained by their experiences prior to coming into care. The evidence available appears to indicate increasing disadvantage with the length of time a child is in care. A recent study by the Children's Panel Chairman's Group indicated recurrent problems in obtaining resources for children with specialised requirements for care and education (HMSO, 1990:18, Para 10.1).

In order to address the problem of how to establish criteria of effectiveness a mid theory was selected. What was required was the generation of theory widely accepted by professionals in practice in both care and education which could address how effectively the care and educational needs of children are being met and at the same time how the effectiveness of professional support might be established. The generation of a theoretical framework and the model together took place over eighteen months part-time study from 1996-1998.

### **TRACING THE GENERATION OF THIS MODEL**

In order to do justice to questions posed full detailed consideration of the system and its complex interrelationships is advised. Generation of a holistic model to include selected features from the education and child care systems denoting key interrelationships is proposed. A general model of national provision of Care (Social Work or Welfare) and Education for Children and Young people was seen to be crucial.

Of the education system alone it is said :-

“In order that educational development may be consciously coordinated, its systematic nature must be made explicit; that is to say, we need a model of the system which abstracts the key inter-relationships between the most important components”. (Armitage, Smith & Alper, 1969:2) emphasis in text

The model to which they refer aids decision-making in education. The model generated here involves the Care system and the Education system in Scotland. Key relationships within these two systems link the child and family with government policy. Involved are the elements of statutory requirement and legal responsibility placed upon Social Work and

Education predominantly, but also upon Health by Government; the implementation of policy, the provision of services and the process through which help is offered. A holistic model of the key interrelationships involved in these two systems is required.

“A model is not, of course, the real system but only an abstract idealization of it. The wealth of detail in the educational system is virtually inexhaustible and not only are many different models possible, but the construction of any model involves a deliberate selection of the real features which are considered to be important. This selection can only be made on the basis and purposes for which the model is to be used. For different purposes, different details and different degrees of detail will be judged appropriate. The model will always be a simplification of reality because of this reduction of detail by selection.”

(Armitage, Smith & Alper, 1969:2)

Justification for the use of a model can be made:

Models have many strengths and are put to multiple use. In this case, in order to understand the problem it is first necessary to understand the systems involved. Used as a descriptive tool models facilitate understanding of complex systems and subjects. They represent more simply in visual form what may be complex and elaborate in text. They capture the complex in visual form. Comparisons are more easily made. They are used to illustrate differences in practice and processes. Differences in structure of systems can be represented. In this case key interrelationships will be represented in the model. Clarity of shared goals and values will also form part of the explication of the contemporary Scottish Child Care and Education and the relationship of child and family to it.

A holistic dimension is established at this stage as part of the theoretical framework: -

“Holism is a theory in which a whole cannot be analysed without attention to all of its constituent parts.

A holistic view is an all encompassing one which adheres to the principle of the theory and emphasises the organic or functional relation between parts or wholes”. (Webster’s Dictionary)

This concept is one which used prevalently within the education system where the whole child is taught within institutions which operate whole school policies. Before returning to the question of a model we consider the establishment of theoretical principles.

The most difficult decisions in the early stages were about the critical elements of such a

model. These had to be identified and captured in text as well as by diagram. Over two academic sessions this tussle went on. Piece by piece important relationships were considered in supervision and subsequent essays on each discrete element produced. Clarity of focus and unerring belief in the importance of the task drove the study on and the model took shape. Some of the essays demanded additional diagrams.

We now take a look in detail at the process by which criteria of effectiveness become established in terms of the legal responsibility of Care and Education services in Scotland can be illustrated so that analysis of the various components of the systems within which the needs of children are identified and met reveals not only the parameters within which professional tasks are undertaken but also the critical point which denotes positive outcomes.

The needs of children were considered first. This was followed by consideration as to how one could allow for the traumatic behaviour and emotional difficulties associated with children who have been separated from their family members. The model was drawn only after it had been written up. Analysis was carried out by constantly referring back to the Theoretical constructs and it will become clear how this was achieved.

The application of theory in this case expands knowledge and increases our understanding of the subject. As stated earlier a theoretical stance is relevant only in relation to a model of general provision and awareness of the support processes in both Social Work and Education. This addressed the question of what might constitute success in this area. To answer this we consider now the criteria used to determine the effectiveness of the system in meeting both the care needs and the educational needs of children. Each element of the general model of child care and education was analysed by measuring it against the appropriate theoretical stance taken at the outset.

## **ESTABLISHING CRITERIA OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The effectiveness of support for children looked after by local authorities, the processes of adjustment and engagement in support of the educational have been of concern and the subject of research in the field of care for a long time. Until now they have not been subject to critical review within a theoretical and conceptual framework that includes care and education.

By way of illustration we turn now to question of the effectiveness of policy and practice. We begin by demonstrating how the problem of how to identify criteria of effectiveness as far as the relationship between the child and family, the social worker, and the school are concerned.

The history has been one of a changing relationship. From one of separateness, i.e. socialisation at home and education in school it has evolved into one of partnership (Bourmina, 1995:143). Children for whom a Social Work Department have ongoing responsibility become surrounded by assistance when Social Work involvement with a family produces a three-way relationship around the child.

The needs of the child will be met within this triangular relationship and responsibilities it represents. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements made to meet both the care and educational needs of the child a typology of need was developed as presented here.

This includes an ideal interpretation of definition of the needs of children; the ways in which those needs are met; the critical points of effectiveness and policy. The perspective of the family, each of the public services, Social Work and Education are represented, Services provide support for the child and the family while solutions to problems are sought. The criteria of effectiveness remain ideal. The relationship between professional action and policy implementation is clear. The policies in place provide structure and administrative support, while the service representatives involve the child in processes of adjustment in Education, and engagement in social work. Criteria for effectiveness are drawn from stated policy at national level. The processes of adjustment in education and engagement in the social development process with social work involve the child in another significant three-way relationship, that of the child, teacher and social worker. A child looked after by the local authority will experience public policy in the relationship with the teachers and social workers with whom they interact in the processes of adjustment and engagement when needs are being met. The study will focus upon how children in care experience policy at the interface between child and professionals. Is the quality and effectiveness advocated in national policy evident at this interface ? How are the criteria of effectiveness met in practice for looked after children?

Only when a theoretical framework is so employed can the problems evident in the system be reviewed.

We went on to review the relationship of

- a) The child and family to the services in education and social work and
- b) A typology of need have been presented as the first of the key relationships upon which

educational support depends. To follow: -

- c) The overlapping responsibility for education of social work and education and the relationship of these to responsibility of Health Boards.
- d) Legal Definition of Statutory responsibilities
- e) The significance of shared professional values in education and social work
- f) Relevant research in the field of care and education was critically analysed within the theoretical framework.

Finally attention is given to the role new technologies might play in relation to generating models in comparative research. In this study application of computerized method was considered at different stages and sometimes rejected. For example the drawing of the model was drawn by hand. The benefits of this are considerable. As the key relationships were explored one after the other they were drawn in to the diagram of the model. Gradually the final representation took shape after several attempts. For example the criteria of effectiveness for each key relationship within had to be established before it could be added to the picture of model.

The diagram proved an adequate aid, up to the point where data was collected and analysis revealed important shared experiences. Here a three dimensional representation would be useful to allow the dynamics of a situation to be seen more clearly. This was especially noticeable in the relationships between young people, Social Work and the family, where a visual representation of relationships would be useful in explicating the experience the young people have.

## **SUMMARY**

Although the model was generated to represent more simply a complex system of relationships, clearly, at a later stage after data had been collected and analysis begun the nature of the findings was such that immediately a more dynamic and graphic modelling technique was thought to be useful. The application of programmes and aids in Architecture and Graphic Design was seen to be relevant and could facilitate more clearly representation of the experience young people have of the relationships.

The creative process demanded that the qualitative data drives the selection of modelling process and not the other way round. In this way the conceptualisation of findings can be made more explicit when accompanied by some text.

In the future the research community will undoubtedly turn more and more to the creative uses of the computer. The development of more specialised computer graphic skills, all well beyond word processing.

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