

*Care Matters:*  
**Best Practice  
in Schools  
Working Group  
Report**

**Professor Dame Pat Collarbone**

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# Foreword

*Care Matters* set out a vision for ensuring that children and young people in care have the educational opportunities they deserve and need if they are to reach their full potential and lead enjoyable and fulfilling lives. Schools – in partnership with local authorities, voluntary organisations and carers – can play a major part in helping make that happen. Children in care often report that school is a place of consistency and continuity for them and so provides stability. It is an environment in which they should thrive.

We know that, as a group, children in care achieve significantly poorer outcomes than their peers. We must all – teachers, social workers and carers – be as ambitious for children in care as we are for our own children in supporting their education. This report of the Best Practice in Schools Working Group looks at some of the ways in which we can do this to maximum effect.

In responding to our remit, the working group has been acutely aware of the exciting and challenging opportunity provided. We are fully aware of the importance of both the personalisation and extended services agendas in raising standards and helping to meet the social and emotional aspects of a young person's education. These agendas provide schools and local authorities with the scope to remodel services around the child to support children in care. We have been equally mindful of the need not to allow our recommendations to be viewed as additional pressure or needless bureaucracy on either schools or social and other support services. We have focused on developing practical suggestions for children in care, which should be seen as part of a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and needy in our schools. The members of the working group are keen to emphasise that schools and children's services should interpret these recommendations for children in care as part of a wider offer designed to improve the educational, social and emotional experiences of **all** young people, being taken forward through the Every Child Matters programme. Local authorities will need to ensure that the guidance and planning are joined up and reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan, particularly as swift and easy referral mechanisms and targeted youth support unfold over the coming months.

Since starting on this work in December 2006 we have been supported very actively by focus groups and written and oral evidence from a wide range of sources. We were grateful for the useful input from the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG) and I would like to personally thank the schools, local authorities and other partners which gave of their time so readily.

We have drawn upon this expertise in developing our recommendations. As chairperson I have enjoyed working with such talented and expert professionals, all of whom have made a major contribution to the final report. The working group, and myself in particular, are especially grateful for the hard work and expertise of a very able secretariat.

**Professor Dame Pat Collarbone**

# 1 Our process

1. In October 2006, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published *Care Matters*, a Green Paper which set out the Government's ambition to transform the lives of children and young people in care. This group was formed to explore some of the proposals in chapter five of the Green Paper in more detail.
2. *Care Matters* identified a number of problems with and barriers to children in care receiving an excellent education. These begin in the early years – where children in care are less likely to access provision – and continue throughout compulsory education. Many children in care move between care placements and spend substantial amounts of time out of education. Not all schools have the experience to deal with the complex needs which many children in care have. These problems are compounded as children in care do not have an engaged parent who can support them.
3. The statistics about the attainment of children in care are now familiar but are no less stark for that. In 2006, just 12% of children in care achieved five good GCSEs compared to 59% of all children. 37% of children in care do not achieve any passes at GCSE, compared to 2% of all children. Unsurprisingly, given this background, care leavers are more than twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training and only a fifth as likely to be in higher education at age 19 as other young people.
4. *Care Matters* set out a number of proposals on admissions, exclusions and funding, as well as on strengthening the role of the designated teacher and introducing a pilot programme to introduce virtual school heads. It also established four working groups to develop some of the proposals, including this group to look at best practice in schools.
5. In particular, this group was asked to generate a vision of what excellent practice in schools in working with children in care looks like, building on what the best schools already do so effectively, and to consider the roles of responsibilities of all professionals in the system. Our full terms of reference are in appendix 2.
6. The group's work has included wide consultation and engagement with practitioners and a range of stakeholders as well as a number of visits to schools, local authorities and other partners. Dr Roger Morgan, the Children's Rights Director, held a number of consultative events with children in care and submitted a summary of their views to us<sup>1</sup>. We also held focus groups with teachers, head teachers and local authority officers and are very grateful to all those who took the time to contribute to these discussions. We have been impressed by the commitment and energy of everyone we spoke to who is working with children in care.
7. This report sets out the results of that work and offers our vision of what schools need to do if they are to deliver an excellent education for children in care, working with their carers and social workers. It draws on the range of good practice already happening in schools and makes recommendations for how we can spread and strengthen this practice in the future.

1 Quotes and statistics are included throughout our report. Dr. Morgan's full report is available at [http://www.csci.org.uk/PDF/about\\_education.pdf](http://www.csci.org.uk/PDF/about_education.pdf).

## 2 The vision

**8.** In *Every Child Matters*, the Government set out a convincing vision of a society in which every child would have the support they need to:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution; and
- achieve economic well-being.

**9.** We must ensure that everyone shares this ambition for children in care. Too often, professionals in schools and elsewhere use children's previous difficult experiences as an excuse for a lack of ambition. Children in care should have the same opportunities to develop as other children, and should be supported by every part of the system to enable them to do this. We are clear that their voices should be listened to and their views acted upon when required. They should have access to appropriate – and, sometimes, additional – resources.

**10.** In order to make this vision a reality, we need a system which is accountable, with clarity around the roles and responsibilities of those adults engaged with the child or young person and which is more coherent and flexible than that which currently exists. There needs to be a greater emphasis on ensuring placement stability, which we know is central to good outcomes. In particular we need a system:

- where children in care are supported by schools, carers and local authorities to achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes;
- where every school welcomes and is ambitious for children in care and works with other services to support them appropriately;
- where carers and social workers are clear about the importance of education and the role they can play to support it, and work in partnership with each other, schools and other services, centred on the needs of the child; and
- where local authorities are effective corporate parents, transcending boundaries to join up services and working across the system to effectively support children in care.

## 3 Best practice in schools

**11.** Schools can be the most important institutions in the lives of children in care. They can provide a point of stability when other aspects of children's lives are in chaos. They have the potential to transform the life chances of children. The first step to enable this transformation is to establish a culture of ambition and aspiration for children in care. Everyone who works in schools must be clear that children in care can succeed and should do all they can to support and enable them to do so.

### Student voice

*"I would like equality to happen throughout, whether it be to fostered children or to all children in general. But special circumstances must be made for children that are in care or fostered so that the gap does not widen."*

*A young person in care<sup>2</sup>*

**12.** Children in care want to be consulted and involved in their education. The DfES estimates that over 10% of children in care were involved in formal responses to *Care Matters*, and there is a clear sense that young people – and schools – will benefit if they are engaged in the decision-making process. The Education Act 2002 provided for much greater pupil participation, including consulting children and young people on decisions that affected them. Citizenship education – which has been compulsory since 2002 – has reinforced the importance of encouraging active participation of young people in the life of their school and the wider community. The process of developing Personal Education Plans – a requirement for every child in care – is an excellent opportunity for children in care to have a significant input into planning their education, and we encourage social workers and teachers to ensure that this happens.

**13.** One concern which many children in care have raised is that information about them might be shared inappropriately. We believe that it is often useful for teachers and other school staff to know when a child is in care, so they are able to offer the appropriate support. However, children should know what information will be shared and why. The nature of the information to be shared – and the number of people who will be involved – will vary for each child. We recommend that:

- **local authorities (through the virtual school head) and schools (through the designated teacher) should ensure that all children and their carers are involved in the planning of their education, particularly through their involvement in developing PEPs; and**
- **working with the child in care, the designated teacher should develop a clear protocol for information sharing for each individual child, taking into account local authority policy and the individual views and needs of each child and their carers.**

<sup>2</sup> This quote, and statistics about the views of children in care throughout this report, are taken from *About Education: a Children's Views Report* by Dr. Roger Morgan, the Children's Rights Director. The full report is available at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet\\_Content/Shared\\_Content/Migration/crd/about\\_education.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Migration/crd/about_education.pdf)

## The designated teacher

*90% of children in care feel they have someone they can go to with their problems.*

**14.** Schools need to have someone who champions children in care and ensures their needs are considered in the life of the school. The importance of this was recognised in *Care Matters* in its discussion of the role of the designated teacher. The designated teacher should champion children in care, alongside the head teacher, and can play a vital role in driving up the attainment of children in care. We welcome the proposal in *Care Matters* that the post should be put on a statutory footing.

**15.** An effective designated teacher needs to work within and beyond their school. Many professionals work with children in care, and the designated teacher has an important role in liaising with them to ensure that the attainment of children in care is raised and the education of the child is considered when decisions about placements and other matters are made. One of the most important relationships will be with the child's social worker. We know that many schools work well with social workers but it is still the case that some do not. We have also heard of cases where social workers have been reluctant to engage appropriately with schools.

**16.** One of the greatest challenges is helping social workers, designated teachers and foster carers to work together effectively, building a shared understanding of one another's particular, but different, roles and the different professional languages which they use. A particularly important interface between the designated teacher and social worker is the development and implementation of the Personal Education Plan (PEP). The social worker has the legal responsibility for initiating the PEP as part of the overall Care Plan. It is essential for the school to ensure that the designated teacher has sufficient resources to work with other staff in the school and those with the immediate care responsibilities for the child to develop the initial PEP. Typically the PEP will include a range of educational and development needs from on-going catch-up support or additional work to stretch gifted children through to providing the support needed to meet young people's long term aspirations. The detail of what a PEP does is set out in the statutory guidance to local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children<sup>3</sup>. This should include the social and emotional aspects of learning, which can often create a barrier for children in care's aspirations and attainment.

**17.** The designated teacher needs to take the lead in working with the social worker to ensure that the PEP is an up-to-date working document which is useful to them both. The PEP is a planning tool which allows the social worker and designated teacher – in conjunction with the young person – to set out what needs to happen to meet the educational needs of the child, including out of school hours learning. Of course, even the best PEP is no substitute for an excellent day-to-day relationship. The social worker and designated teacher must communicate regularly to ensure this process is effective and that an up-to-date PEP is always available to feed in to the overall Care Plan. We therefore recommend that, as part of placing the designated teacher on a statutory footing, the designated teacher:

- **is given a duty to work with social workers, carers and other partners to ensure that every child in care has an effective and high quality PEP that is regularly updated;**

<sup>3</sup> Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, DfES, 2005

- **takes responsibility for ensuring that the school plays a full part in the design and delivery of the PEP to ensure the educational attainment and well-being of the child.**

**18.** If the designated teacher is to represent children in care effectively, they will sometimes need to challenge colleagues within the school and in the local authority. In order to ensure that this can happen, the designated teacher should be a member of the school's senior leadership team and we expect that they will normally be a qualified teacher. However, given that schools have a range of leadership and organisational models, we do not think it is appropriate that the exact details of who should hold the role should be specified in regulations.

**19.** Whilst some administrative tasks can be delegated, in line with the teachers' workforce agreement, and there is a certain amount of flexibility for schools to decide who is best placed to take on the role, we believe it is important that that all schools have a member of staff accountable for raising the attainment of children in care. Equally it is important that there is clarity around the responsibilities of the designated teacher. All designated teachers should:

- **act as a champion for children in care;**
- **maintain an overview of the educational and social and emotional progress of all children in care in the school;**
- **play an active role in the design and delivery of the PEP, ensuring children and young people are involved in the process;**
- **provide a central point of contact for all professionals working with each child;**
- **decide – in conjunction with relevant LA staff and the child – the approach to sharing sensitive information about that child;**
- **be responsible for the induction of children in care into the school;**
- **promote good home/school links, working with children's carers;**
- **liaise with the SENCO if the child has SEN;**
- **help children make the transition to a new school/college;**
- **work in partnership with the virtual school head;**
- **commission whole school planning for children in care;**
- **ensure the speedy transfer of records when children in care transfer between schools; and**
- **through training and development, keep up to date with the latest policies and procedures for children in care.**



## Case Study

The 'Designated Teacher' in **Whitecross High School** in Hereford is their Social Inclusion Manager. She has a wide range of experience with young people, including as an Education Welfare Officer and a youth worker. Her responsibility for social inclusion means that she is the school contact for all local authority agencies and other staff. This has allowed her to develop strong relationships with social workers. Her status in the school allows her to call on tutors, learning mentors and the headteacher when appropriate (e.g. for input to a Personal Education Plan).

The school's latest Ofsted report found that "students in the care of the local authority receive good support, and achieve as well as other learners".

## The student's journey

*67% of children in care say they are likely to stay on in education post 16.*

**20.** We know that succeeding in education and achieving qualifications is strongly linked to more successful outcomes in adult life. Whilst children in care may have faced challenges which other children have not, this does not mean they are not able to achieve highly and gain results and qualifications which are every bit as good as their peers'. Everyone in schools should have the same high aspirations for children in care to achieve their potential as they would for their own children.

**21.** If a child is to feel secure in a school, it is vital that they are made to feel welcome. Before a child starts at a school, the social worker should meet the designated teacher to share information about the child's history and needs and to clarify responsibilities so that the child is able to get off to the best possible start. An important part of this should begin with the PEP. We know that high-quality PEPs can be a driving force for ensuring children progress.

## Case Study

**Millfields Primary School** in Hackney has a well-established procedure for the induction of children in care. Before a child joins, the social worker, designated teacher, learning mentor and a senior manager from the school have two meetings to share information about the child – including records from the last school – and plan appropriate provision. The child is invited to tour the school with their new class council representative and choose after-school clubs and activities.

**22.** There are still too many cases where PEPs are not initiated and developed with the school in a timely fashion. It can sometimes become a 'tick-box' exercise rather than an essential aspect of care planning through which social workers, schools, carers, children and their families work together to improve outcomes for children in care. Statutory guidance on how local authorities should discharge the duty to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after clearly sets out the role of local authorities and social workers in the PEP process. It gives details of who will take the plan forward, specifies timescales for action and review and identifies sources of funding for implementing the PEP.

**23.** The requirement for schools to appoint a designated teacher – as outlined above – will make a significant difference in raising awareness of the roles and responsibilities of all parties. However, more will need to be done to ensure that the PEP is an effective working document which includes the voice of the child. Better links between schools and social workers will help and we outline elsewhere some of the ways in which these could be achieved. There is much that schools are able to do internally.

**24.** Statutory guidance to local authorities says the PEP should be “a record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential.” We agree that effective and high quality PEPs should:

- be an achievement record (educational and otherwise);
- be linked to information in other education plans, including a statement of special educational needs and IEPs;
- identify educational and developmental needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term targets, including progress monitoring against each of the areas identified against development and educational needs; and
- set long term plans and education targets and aspirations (e.g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations).

**25.** These targets and plans should be ambitious. Whilst we know that many children in care will have experienced difficulties which have caused problems for their learning in the past, we must be clear that – with the right support from the school and the corporate parent – they are able to progress and achieve well. We are impressed by the arguments about progression in the recent DfES consultation<sup>4</sup> and see no reason why schools should not be setting as ambitious targets for progression for children in care as other children.

**26.** The virtual school head (or local equivalent) is well placed to play an important role to ensure that schools are developing effective PEPs, in spreading best practice, and in ensuring there is appropriate co-ordination between schools when a child in care moves school.

**27.** Whilst measurable educational attainment is vital and forms the basis for progression and future success, it is becoming increasingly important that all young people acquire ‘soft skills’, such as team-working and problem solving. Parents often play a significant role in helping to develop these skills and so schools may have to provide additional support for children in care, including by engaging and working with foster carers. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme – which provides universal provision and small group work to try to develop ‘soft skills’ – is now in use in over half of primary schools. We believe that this programme can play an important role in developing the social and emotional skills of children in care.

**28.** We welcome the DfES’s publication of a Green Paper to explore ways of raising the compulsory participation age<sup>5</sup>. Children in care and care leavers are disproportionately represented amongst those who are not in education, employment or training at ages 16-18, and

<sup>4</sup> *Making Good Progress*, DfES, 2007

<sup>5</sup> *Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post-16*, DfES, 2007

we are particularly pleased that the Green Paper recognises that some young people need additional guidance and support and proposes to offer “appropriate targeted support for young people who are experiencing particular barriers to participation in learning”. These plans fit well with the proposal in *Care Matters* to pilot a veto for young people in care over any decisions about leaving care before they are 18.

**29.** We know that children in care are much less likely than other children to go on to university. In order to support progression, universities should address the needs of students who enter from care within their widening participation policies. These policies should identify how recruitment will be targeted to increase participation and how mechanisms for retention of such students will be managed. In particular, higher education institutions should address the recommendations within *Going to university from care*<sup>6</sup> and should work to implement procedures for the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark<sup>7</sup>.

**30.** We recommend that:

- **the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should use RAISEonline data to monitor the progress of children in care;**
- **where there are issues of concern regarding a school’s support of a child in care, the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should brief School Improvement Partners (SIPs) on the progress of children in care so the SIP can provide appropriate challenge and support to the school;**
- **the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should monitor whether PEPs for children in care are being developed and delivered appropriately;**
- **the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should ensure schools fulfil their responsibility to pass on PEPs – as part of a wider school record – in a timely fashion when a child moves school;**
- **the Independent Reviewing Officer<sup>8</sup> should place a greater emphasis in the statutory review on any issues concerning the child’s quality of care which present a barrier to the child achieving their educational potential as outlined in the PEP; and**
- **the designated teacher – working with the Children’s Trust – should look at all their services to reduce barriers to learning for children in care.**

## School attendance

**31.** Regular attendance at school is an essential part of achievement. Research suggests that students who miss 25 days of school in a year are half as likely to obtain 5 good GCSEs as students who only miss five days. The corporate parent of children in care has a responsibility to ensure that these children attend school regularly. We know that many local authorities have developed initiatives to promote better school attendance of children in care, but there are still problems with low levels of attendance, particularly amongst children who are placed in children’s homes. School attendance for children in care can also be affected by the fact that they may need access to other services, or attend reviews of their care plan which are frequently held during school hours. We therefore recommend that:

<sup>6</sup> *Going to university from care*, Institute of Education, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Details of the award are available at [http://www.buttletrust.org/quality\\_mark/](http://www.buttletrust.org/quality_mark/).

<sup>8</sup> See glossary for definition.

- **all local authorities should provide specific targeted services to improve the attendance of children in care;**
- **where children in care need to access other services – such as CAMHS – Children’s Trusts should consider commissioning services outside of school hours where this is possible;**
- **the DfES should consider changing regulations so that any child who needs to access other services during school hours is not marked as absent;**
- **the virtual school head should use new pupil level attendance data to challenge schools and carers to improve the attendance of children in care; and**
- **the National Minimum Standards for fostering and children’s homes in respect to education should be strengthened to stress the importance of supporting and ensuring regular school attendance.**

## Case Study

**Sunderland City Council** have developed the Achievement through Choice and Engagement (ACE) Project to improve outcomes of young people who are in foster care or resident in children’s homes. It focuses on academic achievement and positive engagement, leading to progression to further education and employment. There is a particular drive to improve attendance at school and college.

ACE has developed intensive monitoring of the attendance of children in care. This is combined with positive promotion of the importance of school attendance to children, foster carers and staff in children’s homes, and early intervention where necessary. Early results of the project show that ACE has dramatically raised the profile of education with foster carers and staff in children’s homes. This has led to an increase in young people’s school attendance and participation in out of school hours programmes as well as improved collaboration across services.

## Exclusions

*“One of the ideas raised in the Green Paper relates to the fact that parents have the right to avail themselves of the appeals process for exclusions, as indeed they do. As a Minister, I know that one of the most fraught areas of educational practice is when schools find it necessary to exclude pupils, particularly permanently, and deeply aggrieved parents go through the appeals process. The Green Paper says that the corporate parent—the social worker—should consider using that process on behalf of the child in care in much the same way as a parent would. We believe that by engaging with the system in this way and taking a much more active role in ensuring that the subsequent education for the child is taken seriously and the best possible placement is made, corporate parents will start to replicate the sorts of conditions that apply to children with parents who are directly acting on their behalf.”*

*Lord Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools<sup>9</sup>*

**32.** Children in care are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers. Whilst we support the right of headteachers to exclude where it is absolutely necessary, we believe that too often exclusions reinforce the sense of rejection which children in care may have

<sup>9</sup> Speaking in the House of Lords debate to introduce Care Matters, 9th October 2006. The debate can be read at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds06/text/61009-0003.htm#06100910000011>.

and can compound their emotional problems. We are clear that excluding a child does not solve the problem; it merely transfers it.

**33.** As in so many other cases, early intervention is important. Earlier interventions for children in care – as part of a wider behaviour management programme – can prevent exclusions from happening in the first place. Where an exclusion is absolutely necessary, there needs to be better planning to support children who have been excluded. No child in care should be excluded from a school without the school taking part in discussions with the local authority to ensure that there is suitable provision elsewhere.

**34.** We recommend that:

- **there should be a general presumption against excluding children in care, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11, but where an exclusion is absolutely necessary, the school should work with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision until alternative educational arrangements can be made; and**
- **local authorities should be required to develop and publish a policy to minimise exclusions of children in care and to ensure that alternative provision is made as rapidly as possible when an exclusion is absolutely necessary. The policy should be included within the local authority’s statutory Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan, to which school governing bodies are required to give consideration.**

### Case Study

North East Lincolnshire Council have promoted “a range of policies, procedures and staff training” in order to prevent bad behaviour and the need for exclusions. Examples of additional measures for those who are at risk could include allocation of a key worker within school or referral to a specific support centre. North East Lincolnshire – and other boroughs – have found that restorative justice and managed moves can prevent the need to exclude, and lead to better outcomes for children. Where an exclusion is being considered, the school must contact the authority’s children in care team to discuss the range of possible options before taking any decision to exclude.

## School governors

**35.** A school’s governing body is uniquely placed to champion the needs of children in care. Governing bodies have a legal duty to promote high standards of achievement at their schools, and should take the lead in fostering a culture of high aspirations and ambition for children in care.

**36.** In 2006, the DfES issued guidance to school governing bodies about how they could support children in care<sup>10</sup>. The guidance clearly explains the responsibilities governors have for children in care, and how their work on setting admissions, curriculum, behaviour and study support policies can make a positive difference. The challenge now is to ensure that all governing bodies know about and act on this guidance.

<sup>10</sup> *Supporting Looked After Learners: A practical guide for school governors, DfES, 2006*

**37.** Governing bodies are corporate bodies, but can delegate particular functions, actions or decisions to committees, to individual governors or to the headteacher. Although decisions may be delegated, the governing body as a whole remain responsible for any decision made under delegation. We believe that this power of delegation has strengthened oversight and raised the profile of children with special educational needs. We want to see governing bodies giving a similar profile to children in care.

**38.** Strong working relationships are at the heart of the work of an effective governing body. These strategic relationships are even more important when there are so many other professionals and agencies involved. The need for more joined-up working has been a constant theme of this report, and this extends to governors. The Green Paper recommended developing “a new, nationally available training module for governors on how schools should cater for children in care”. Given the importance of relationships beyond the governing body and the school, it is essential that this training module be designed to strengthen links between the school and social workers.

**39.** We recommend that:

- **governing bodies should appoint a governor to have specific oversight of the school’s arrangements and provision for meeting the needs of children in care;**
- **governors should ensure that the school inclusion policy and practice makes suitable provision for the education of children in care;**
- **following any new legislation on children in care, the DfES should commission an update of *Supporting Looked After Learners*, including information on the new role of the designated teacher and virtual school head, and changes to the Admissions Code of Practice;**
- **any new publication should be accompanied by a toolkit to facilitate training of governors by local authorities. As far as possible, this training should be held jointly with the designated teacher and social workers; and**
- **the DfES should work with the National Governors’ Association and the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services to promote the new guidance.**

## Extended schools

**40.** Extended services in and around schools and integrated services are already bringing enormous benefits for children, young people and their parents. The latest evaluations show they are also having a significant impact in improving standards. The challenge now is to ensure that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children – including children in care – benefit from the extension of extended schools and their transformation of education over the next few years.

**41.** We recommend that:

- **wherever extended services are being developed or delivered, those who are responsible should ensure that services are effectively supporting children in care; and**
- **those responsible for extended services should report – through their usual accountability procedures – on how effective the services are at supporting children in care.**



## 4 Working beyond the school

**42.** Whilst the focus of our work has been on schools, we know that even the best schools cannot succeed on their own. Over the past few years, we have seen a welcome trend towards greater collaboration between schools in order to ensure that they meet the needs of their students. Given the range of professionals who work with children in care, it is even more important that schools are able to collaborate effectively with a range of people and agencies outside the school.

### School admissions

**43.** Children in care are less likely than their peers to be in high-performing schools. In response to this, the new school admissions code<sup>11</sup> makes it mandatory for all admissions authorities to give top priority to children in care. Recent legislation<sup>12</sup> gave local authorities a new power to direct schools to admit children in care, even when the school is fully subscribed. This applies to all schools, including those – such as voluntary aided faith schools – which are their own admissions authorities and schools which are outside the directing local authority. We are pleased that similar parallel procedures have been developed for Academies. The School Admissions Code sets out the steps which local authorities need to take when using the power. We welcome this as a strong statement about the importance the Government places on ensuring children in care receive a high-quality education.

**44.** We believe that the legislative framework around admissions is now sufficient: the challenge is to make sure that these new powers are used effectively by the corporate parent. In particular, we need to end the assumption – which is still made by some people – that it is inappropriate to place children in care in the top-performing schools because of a belief that they won't fit in, or that a high-achieving school will lack the necessary pastoral support. There is no evidence that there is a negative correlation between a school's academic performance and the quality of its pastoral care, and there is strong evidence that children in care do better in higher performing schools.

**45.** Social workers and carers need to be supported by the rest of the local authority to ensure that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to make decisions about the schooling of children in care based on an accurate assessment of individual needs, rather than general assumptions about their ability. The virtual school head will have an important role to play in this, as will the Director of Children's Services who – in their role as corporate parent – should ensure there are effective links between social workers and education teams. Where a school is consistently judged to be unsuitable for a range of children in care, the local authority – in partnership with the SIP and the school itself – will want to consider how the school can develop its provision appropriately.

<sup>11</sup> School Admissions Code, DfES, 2007 (available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sacode/>)

<sup>12</sup> Education and Inspections Act 2006

46. We recommend that:

- **the DfES publishes a short, practical guide to school admissions for social workers and foster carers which:**
  - **helps them understand the process;**
  - **sets out a shared expectation of high aspirations for children in care; and**
  - **raises their awareness of their role in the process, including advice on how to choose the best school to meet the child's assessed needs.**
- **local authorities should provide training on admissions for social workers and foster carers;**
- **admission forums should monitor and report annually on whether schools are accepting children in care on to their roll sufficiently quickly; and**
- **each admission forum should publish a report on admissions to all local schools, including statistical data about admissions of children in care.**

## Improving co-ordination between schools and social workers

*55% of children in care say they get no help with their education from social workers.*

47. A constant theme of our work has been the importance of good working relationships between schools and children's services. Local authorities have brought together education and children's social care functions into one department, headed by a Director of Children's Services, but this merger of structures is recent in most areas and has not yet always been reflected in closer working relationships on the ground. We have already considered how schools – through the designated teacher – can work more effectively with social workers in the planning process. Whilst important, this will not be sufficient and local authorities need to do more to ensure that working practices reflect the joined-up rhetoric and aspirations of the Every Child Matters agenda.

48. As we have already said, school staff and social workers often speak different professional languages. Schools may feel that social workers do not always respond quickly enough to the immediate problems which a child can present, and can be frustrated by frequent changes to the social worker with whom they are dealing. Social workers may not understand the context in which schools are operating and the different pressures they face.

49. We believe that improving the understanding between these groups of professionals is a long-term process. The best relationships depend on trust, which takes a great deal of time to build. We believe that joint training is an essential part of this process. This should start while professionals are being initially trained and continue throughout their careers. This will help to raise awareness of other professionals' jobs, ways of working and the pressures they face, and allow professionals to begin to build personal relationships which can be so important, particularly at moments of stress or crisis.



**50.** The Government's children's workforce strategy is already implementing many of the steps necessary to integrate nationally the training of different professional groups working with children in care, through the development of a common core of skills and knowledge, an integrated qualifications framework, and the development of new flexible training routes. Local authority workforce development plans should encourage shared training courses for staff from different professional backgrounds, and, in particular, where new CPD requirements are identified in the White Paper the relevant training should be organised and delivered on a multi-professional basis.

**51.** Structures are also important. Clarity of roles and responsibilities can facilitate good working relationships and improve accountability. We believe that the reform of the designated teacher model and the introduction of the virtual school head will improve the structure and co-ordination of professionals. Some local authorities have developed an agreement which clearly sets out the roles, responsibilities and expected level of performance of all professionals who work with children in care.

**52.** We recommend that:

- **the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Training & Development Agency for Schools (TDA) should jointly review the occupational standards required by all relevant professionals involved in supporting the education of children in care (including social workers, teachers, teaching assistants, the designated teacher, virtual school heads, foster carers, and residential social workers), consistent with the emerging Integrated Qualifications Framework, and develop a programme for ensuring that these standards are met within the workforces for which they are responsible;**
- **local authorities – through the virtual school head or by other means – should encourage the delivery of shared training events between designated teachers, designated governors, and relevant social work staff, utilising sample training materials provided by CWDC or TDA; and**
- **local authorities should further develop links between social care and education professionals by, for example, facilitating surgeries between senior managers from social care and headteachers or other senior school staff.**

## Improving co-ordination between schools, social workers and foster carers

*62% of children in care say they get a lot of help from their carers, though 12% say they get none at all.*

*42% of children in children's homes don't have anyone to attend their parents' evenings.*

**53.** *Care Matters* recognises the important role of foster carers, and proposes measures to improve their recruitment and retention. We know that good foster care – with a secure attachment between children and their foster carers – can help children overcome early disadvantage and achieve well at schools. However, there is evidence that not all foster carers are sufficiently ambitious for the educational achievement of children in their care. This is compounded by the fact that foster carers can be unsure of the role they should play in children's education, and how they can best work with schools. Whilst it is clear in education law that foster carers have the same status as parents and are entitled to be treated, informed and engaged in the same way, the Fostering Network reports that "this is not the day-to-day experience of foster carers"<sup>13</sup>.

**54.** Many of the proposals which we have considered above also apply to facilitating good working between schools and foster carers. There needs to be a general culture shift to emphasise achieving educational success. The designated teacher has an important role in working with foster carers to support children in care. As elsewhere, joint training can help to develop a clearer understanding of professionals' roles and responsibilities and start the process of building better relationships.

**55.** We recommend that:

- **schools ensure that foster carers are encouraged to play a full and active role in their children's education;**
- **local authorities organise joint training for foster carers, designated teachers and social workers; and**
- **the DfES updates the guidance document *Who Does What: How social workers and carers can support the education of looked after children*.**

## 5 Making the system work for children in care

**56.** Whilst crucial, good working relationships between schools and other partners will be insufficient on their own. We need to ensure that the system provides the right incentives for all professionals to support children in care more effectively, and that all parts of the system are clearly accountable for their actions.

### Funding

**57.** The funding formula for schools already recognises the importance of making provision for children with additional needs. However, there are also administrative processes necessary to support children in care which have resource implications for schools and local authorities. For example, schools will need to arrange review meetings with the designated teacher and have regular meetings with the child's social workers and foster carers. Schools' experience shows that it may also be useful to arrange mentoring or support for the transition to and from secondary school. We believe that these costs should be met through an allocation from the central local authority grant. This money would allow schools to plan their support for children in care more effectively, and should link into the planning processes for the PEP.

**58.** We welcome the proposal in *Care Matters* to provide a personalised budget of around £500 per child per year to support the education of children in care. It is important, however, to be clear that this funding is provided in addition to what a local authority should already be spending as a corporate parent to support education. It is also essential that this funding should not be seen by schools as a reason to reallocate any of their general personalisation budget towards other groups of children.

**59.** This funding should be directed towards buying non-school support for learning, such as home tutoring, music lessons or support for out-of-school activities which support learning, linked to the assessed needs of the young person, as identified in their personal education plan. The group felt that £1,000 would be a more appropriate amount for children of secondary school age.

**60.** These funds should be held as close as possible to the child, to ensure that the child's voice can be heard and that bureaucracy does not get in the way of quick and easy access to these funds. Allocating the funds to individual social workers (or the foster carer where the placement was stable and the carer was fully engaged in promoting educational achievement) would achieve this. However, given the high turnover of social workers – and their already high workload – it is felt that it would be more practical and easier to manage if the budget was held by the virtual school head (or local equivalent). This would allow more flexibility in targeting the resource based on assessed need, recognising that in any one year some children are likely to require more or less than the average amount. Whilst there will need to be appropriate accountability procedures, these should be as light-touch as possible to minimise bureaucracy.

**61.** Schools will also receive £990 million over three years to support personalised learning within school for all children. *Care Matters* stressed the importance of schools prioritising the needs of children in care when deciding how to spend this money. We considered how best to encourage schools to do this. As this budget is designed to be personalised for individual children and reflect the range of needs which they have, we do not believe that it is appropriate to set a target figure for the amount schools should be spending on children in care. However, it is important that we strengthen the accountability mechanisms to ensure children in care are helped appropriately and we consider this below.

**62.** We recommend that:

- **school funding regulations should be amended to allow there to be an extra allowance attached to children in care, which would follow them should they change school, to reflect the additional costs of effectively planning and delivering services for them;**
- **the personalised annual budget should be £500 for children of primary school age and £1,000 per year for children of secondary school age;**
- **the personalised annual budget should be centrally held and managed by the virtual school head (or local equivalent) to allow resources to be targeted most effectively to meet assessed needs; and**
- **the annual report to governing bodies about children in care should include details of the support provided through the personalisation budget and the outcomes achieved because of that support.**

**63.** The Children Act 1989 firmly established the principle that a local authority should retain responsibility for social care provision for the children it looks after in order to ensure continuity of care and responsibility.

**64.** Around 30% of children in care are placed outside their 'home' local authority. This may be because they have particular needs which cannot be met in their 'home' local authority, because of child protection issues which can only be addressed through a remote placement, or because there is a shortage of accommodation or foster carers with the appropriate expertise. Wherever placements are made out of the 'home' authority, there is the possibility of disconnection between the care and education placements made by the 'home' authority and the monitoring arrangements it makes. This is exacerbated when the placement is in a distant local authority, when social workers from the local authority looking after the child may spend a great deal of their valuable time travelling to and from the child's location. Money for that child's education automatically moves with the child<sup>14</sup> but there is no such provision for money for social care.

**65.** The majority of children in care who are placed outside their home local authority stay in their region. Some regions – such as the East Midlands – have developed a regional protocol for children in care which clearly sets out the duties and expectations on both authorities. We believe that more can be done to ensure that local authorities and schools in a region work well together to ensure that children in care receive the maximum continuity of education and social care through sharing services.

14 Through the Pupil Level Annual School Census

**66.** There is a particular challenge where children are placed some distance from their 'home' local authority. Local authorities should be given the strongest encouragement to consider how they can best provide more targeted support for these children through commissioning and funding agreements. Any new system must not allow local authorities to transfer responsibility for the child, or provide an incentive for local authorities to try to unnecessarily place their most difficult children out of the borough.

**67.** Where the local authority cannot provide services directly and makes provision in the area of another local authority, we recommend that:

- **local authorities within a region – in collaboration with Government Offices – should develop regional commissioning to ensure efficiency of operation and joined-up education and care provision, whilst ensuring that the 'home' local authority retains overall responsibility; and**
- **for remote placements, local authorities should commission the 'receiving' local authority to provide both social care and educational support through the virtual school head (or local equivalent) whilst ensuring that the 'home' local authority retains overall responsibility.**

## Accountability

**68.** We propose that wherever the work of schools is being held to account, schools should report on, or be inspected against, what is being done to support children in care and the effectiveness of these actions. Similarly, we recommend that local authorities should also be held to account for how they have supported schools and others in making things better for children in care.

**69.** Whilst Ofsted inspections provide an important lever to improve school performance, we believe there are other areas of the accountability framework which can also provide more support to children in care. This begins at school level with the governing body being required to take a closer interest in the achievement of children in care at their school. Local authorities have the statutory responsibility for improving educational outcomes for children in care in all schools and colleges, and it is important that all parts of the authority – starting with the DCS – are held to account for securing improvements.

**70.** We recommend that:

- **governing bodies should be required to receive an annual report which gives an overview of the educational needs and progress of children in care in relation to their peers. The report should include information on how the resources – including those for personalised learning – have been allocated to match priorities;**
- **the actions taken by the school to support children in care and the outcomes of these actions should be recorded in the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF);**
- **School Improvement Partners should focus part of their activities on the outcomes for vulnerable groups, and children in care should be made a specific part of this work, with reports made back to the Director of Children's Services;**

- **the Lead Member for Children’s Services in each local authority should make an annual report to the full Council, as the corporate parent, on the actions taken during the previous year to improve outcomes for children in care and their effectiveness;**
- **Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments, and replacement assessment and inspection arrangements from 2009 outlined in the recent Local Government White Paper<sup>15</sup>, should include consideration of local authorities’ actions to improve outcomes for children in care and their effectiveness;**
- **the new national indicators against which all local areas will have to report to Government on their performance after April 2008 should include key attainment outcomes for children in care and all new local area agreements should include improvement targets for the educational attainment of children in care;**
- **the DfES should consider whether the financial reporting regime for local authorities can be changed to allow spending by local authorities and schools on work to improve outcomes for children in care to be recorded, published and benchmarked; and**
- **the DfES should commission regular thematic inspections on the education of children in care from Ofsted (including an assessment of the work of schools, LAs, children’s homes, and foster carers) in order to keep national and local progress under review.**

**71.** The above provisions should, where appropriate, apply equally to the Learning and Skills Council (a statutory partner of local authorities under the 2004 Children Act) and further education colleges to the extent that they make provision in a local authority area for young people up to the age of 18, or older where they have special needs.

## The virtual school head

**72.** We welcome the proposal to pilot the role of a virtual school head. We believe that it is important that a senior professional working in the local authority should have the responsibility of looking strategically at the attainment and progress of all children in care as if they were in one school, regardless of the authority which looks after them. In order for this work to be carried out effectively the virtual school head requires appropriate data tools. We know that if the virtual school head is to operate to maximum effect in making a step change in improved outcomes for children in care it is essential that the data systems in place are robust and accessible and that they are able to identify children in care.

**73.** The strategic nature of the post means that the virtual school head will be well placed to lead a number of the significant changes which are needed to transform the educational attainment of children in care. We have stressed the importance of clear roles and responsibilities and believe the virtual school head should work with colleagues in schools and the local authority to develop procedures to ensure that this is the case for all professionals who work with children in care. National and regional networks of virtual school heads will lead to better working relationships between local authorities.

<sup>15</sup> *Strong and prosperous communities – the Local Government White Paper*, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006

74. We recommend that:

- **RAISEonline identify children in care in order to ensure that the virtual school head (or local equivalent) has the necessary data to perform their role to maximum effect.**

### Case Study

Nottinghamshire appointed a virtual school head in 2000. She has been able to take the lead in developing relationships between different services to improve outcomes for children in care. An important part of this has been establishing and publishing a Corporate Parenting Agreement, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the 'Designated Teacher', head teachers, education officers in the LA, social workers and other professionals for children in care. The Agreement includes clear performance standards so that all parties are able to hold each other to account.

## 6 Conclusion

**75.** From our work and consultation, we know that there is a huge commitment in all parts of the system to ensuring that children in care receive the support they need to make a success of their education. There is a shared understanding of the difficulties which some children in care have, and how current procedures fail to help – and in some cases, exacerbate – their problems.

**76.** We believe this report offers a clear set of proposals which will help to share and develop existing best practice in schools and local authorities. We have been inspired by some of the work we have seen, where teachers, social workers, foster carers and other partners have worked together to support children in care. This successful work can only happen if all partners have high aspirations and expectations for children in care. We hope this report will be a useful contribution to the ongoing efforts to dramatically improve the education of children in care.



# Appendix 1 – Summary of recommendations

We recommend that:

## Student voice

- local authorities (through the virtual school head) and schools (through the designated teacher) should ensure that all children and their carers are involved in the planning of their education, particularly through their involvement in developing PEPs; and
- working with the child in care, the designated teacher should develop a clear policy for information sharing for each individual child, taking into account local authority policy and the individual views and needs of each child and their carers.

## The designated teacher

As part of placing the designated teacher on a statutory footing, the designated teacher:

- is given a duty to work with social workers, carers and other partners to ensure that every child in care has an effective and high quality PEP that is regularly updated;
- takes responsibility for ensuring that the school plays a full part in the delivery of the PEP to ensure the educational attainment and well-being of the child.

## The student's journey

- the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should use RAISEonline data to monitor the progress of children in care;
- where there are issues of concern regarding a school's support of a child in care, the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should brief School Improvement Partners (SIPs) on the progress of children in care so the SIP can provide appropriate challenge and support to the school;
- the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should monitor whether PEPs for children in care are being developed and delivered appropriately;
- the virtual school head (or local equivalent) should ensure schools fulfil their responsibility to pass on PEPs – as part of a wider school record – in a timely fashion when a child moves school;
- the Independent Reviewing Officer should place a greater emphasis in the statutory review on any issues concerning the child's quality of care which present a barrier to the child achieving their educational potential as outlined in the PEP; and
- the designated teacher – working with the Children's Trust – should look at all their services to reduce barriers to learning for children in care.

## School attendance

- all local authorities should provide specific targeted services to improve the attendance of children in care;
- where children in care need to access other services – such as CAMHS – Children’s Trusts should consider commissioning services outside of school hours where this is possible;
- the DfES should consider changing regulations so that any child who needs to access other services during school hours is not marked as absent;
- the virtual school head should use new pupil level attendance data to challenge schools and carers to improve the attendance of children in care; and
- the National Minimum Standards for fostering and children’s homes in respect to education should be strengthened to stress the importance of supporting and ensuring regular school attendance.

## Exclusions

- there should be a general presumption against excluding children in care, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11, but where an exclusion is absolutely necessary, the school should work with the local authority to ensure continuity of provision until alternative educational arrangements can be made; and
- local authorities should be required to develop and publish a policy to minimise exclusions of children in care and to ensure that alternative provision is made as rapidly as possible when an exclusion is absolutely necessary. The policy should be included within the local authority’s statutory Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan, to which school governing bodies are required to give consideration.

## School governors

- governing bodies should appoint a governor to have specific oversight of the school’s arrangements and provision for meeting the needs of children in care;
- governors should ensure that the school inclusion policy and practice makes suitable provision for the education of children in care;
- following any new legislation on children in care, the DfES should commission an update of *Supporting Looked After Learners*, including information on the new role of the designated teacher and virtual school head, and changes to the admissions Code of Practice;
- any new publication should be accompanied by a toolkit to facilitate training of governors by local authorities. As far as possible, this training should be held jointly with the designated teacher and social workers; and
- the DfES should work with the National Governors’ Association and the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services to promote the new guidance.

## Extended schools

- wherever extended services are being developed or delivered, those who are responsible should ensure that services are effectively supporting children in care; and
- those responsible for extended services should report – through their usual accountability procedures– on how effective the services are at supporting children in care.

## School admissions

- the DfES publishes a short, practical guide to school admissions for social workers and foster carers which:
  - helps them understand the process;
  - sets out a shared expectation of high aspirations for children in care; and
  - raises their awareness of their role in the process, including advice on how to choose the best school to meet the child's assessed needs.
- local authorities should provide training on admissions for social workers and foster carers;
- admission forums should monitor and report annually on whether schools are accepting children in care on to their roll sufficiently quickly; and
- each admission forum should publish a report on admissions to all local schools, including statistical data about admissions of children in care.

## Improving co-ordination between schools and social workers

- the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Training & Development Agency for Schools (TDA) should jointly review the occupational standards required by all relevant professionals involved in supporting the education of children in care (including social workers, teachers, teaching assistants, the designated teacher, virtual school heads, foster carers, and residential social workers), consistent with the emerging Integrated Qualifications Framework, and develop a programme for ensuring that these standards are met within the workforces for which they are responsible;
- local authorities – through the virtual school head or by other means – should encourage the delivery of shared training events between designated teachers, designated governors, and relevant social work staff, utilising sample training materials provided by CWDC or TDA; and
- local authorities should further develop links between social care and education professionals by, for example, facilitating surgeries between senior managers from social care and headteachers or other senior school staff.

## Improving co-ordination between schools, social workers and foster carers

- schools ensure that foster carers are encouraged to play a full and active role in their children's education;
- local authorities organise joint training for foster carers, designated teachers and social workers; and
- the DfES updates the guidance document *Who Does What: How social workers and carers can support the education of looked after children*.

## Funding

- school funding regulations should be amended to allow there to be an extra allowance attached to children in care, which would follow them should they change school, to reflect the additional costs of effectively planning and delivering services for them;
- the personalised annual budget should be £500 for children of primary school age and £1,000 per year for children of secondary school age;
- the personalised annual budget should be centrally held and managed by the virtual school head (or local equivalent) to allow resources to be targeted most effectively to meet assessed needs;
- the annual report to governing bodies about children in care should include details of the support provided through the personalisation budget and the outcomes achieved because of that support;
- local authorities within a region – in collaboration with Government Offices – should develop regional commissioning to ensure efficiency of operation and joined-up education and care provision, whilst ensuring that the 'home' local authority retains overall responsibility; and
- for remote placements, local authorities should commission the 'receiving' local authority to provide both social care and educational support through the virtual school head (or local equivalent), whilst ensuring that the 'home' local authority retains overall responsibility.

## Accountability

- governing bodies should be required to receive an annual report which gives an overview of the educational needs and progress of children in care in relation to their peers. The report should include information on how the resources – including those for personalised learning – have been allocated to match priorities;
- the actions taken by the school to support children in care and the outcomes of these actions should be recorded in the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF).
- School Improvement Partners should focus part of their activities on the outcomes for vulnerable groups, and children in care should be made a specific part of this work, with reports made back to the Director of Children's Services;
- the Lead Member for Children's Services in each local authority should make an annual report to the full Council, as the corporate parent, on the actions taken during the previous year to improve outcomes for children in care and their effectiveness.

- Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments, and replacement assessment and inspection arrangements from 2009 outlined in the recent Local Government White Paper, should include consideration of local authorities' actions to improve outcomes for children in care and their effectiveness;
- the new national indicators against which all local areas will have to report to Government on their performance after April 2008 should include key attainment outcomes for children in care and all new local area agreements should include improvement targets for the educational attainment of children in care;
- the DfES should consider whether the financial reporting regime for local authorities can be changed to allow spending by local authorities and schools on work to improve outcomes for children in care to be recorded, published and benchmarked; and
- the DfES should commission regular thematic inspections on the education of children in care from Ofsted (including an assessment of the work of schools, LAs, children's homes, and foster carers) in order to keep national and local progress under review.

## The Virtual School Head

- RAISEonline identify children in care in order to ensure that the virtual school head (or local equivalent) has the necessary data to perform their role to maximum effect.

# Appendix 2 – Terms of reference

- To generate a vision of what excellent practice in schools in working with children in care looks like.
- To consider the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, governors, and the chair of governors, head teachers, class teachers, designated teachers and pastoral support staff in working with children in care.
- To explore how schools can work most effectively with social workers, carers and other professionals.
- To consider how we ensure the new admissions powers in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 will operate effectively and secure places for children in care in high performing schools.
- To review how we can generate a culture of ambition and aspiration for children in care in schools.
- To report and make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in spring 2007.

# Appendix 3 – Best practice in schools working group

## **Review group members**

Professor Dame Pat Collarbone (Chair)

Tom Bewick – Chief Executive, Creative and Cultural Industries Skills Council

Sue Dean – Corporate Parenting Consultant, Nottinghamshire County Council

Paul Ennals – Chief Executive, National Children’s Bureau

Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer, Hertfordshire County Council

Audrey Ford – Marlowe Academy, Kent

John Freeman – Director of Children’s Services, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Christine Grice – Head of Pupil Services, London Borough of Lewisham

Dame Anna Hassan – Headteacher, Millfields Community School, Hackney

Avril Head – Foster carer

Matthew Huggins – former care leaver and Head of Knowledge Services, Care and Health

Jean McEntire – Chief Executive Officer, National Governors’ Association

Lindsay Pepper – Looked After Children Education Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council

Jude Ragan – Headteacher, Queensmill Special School, Hammersmith and Fulham

Professor Richard Rose – Northampton University College

*Secretariat:* Peter Walsh (DfES)

# Appendix 4 – Glossary

This glossary is based on a fuller glossary in *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*.

**Care** – For the purposes of this document, a ‘child in care’ includes all children being looked after by a local authority, including those subject to care orders under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and those looked after on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents.

**Care plan** – Following an assessment that a child needs to enter care, the social worker must ensure that the child’s needs (and the services to meet those needs) are set out in a care plan. A care plan should be drawn up before the child becomes looked after, or in the case of an emergency entry to care, within 14 days. The care plan should be the basis of the plan presented to a court in cases where a local authority applies for a care order. The care plan includes key documents, such as the health plan and the personal education plan. In this document ‘care plan’ refers also to the ongoing plan for meeting the child’s needs which is maintained while they are in care.

**Children’s trust** – Children’s trusts bring together all services for children and young people in an area, underpinned by the Children Act 2004 duty to co-operate, to focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people.

**Commissioning** – Commissioning is the systematic process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet identified and prioritised needs, including both immediate and anticipated needs.

**Corporate parent** – The concept of corporate parenting was introduced when the Government launched its Quality Protects initiative in 1998. In broad terms, the principle is quite simple: that as the corporate parent of children in care, a local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would provide for their own children. In other words, the local authority must do at least what a good parent would do. Corporate parenting also emphasises that it is the local authority as a whole, not just its social services department, which has responsibility for that child.

**Dedicated Schools Grant** – The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant from the Department for Education and Skills to local authorities to cover funding delegated to individual schools, and other provision for pupils made by the local authority (such as early years provision in private, voluntary and independent settings).

**Designated Teacher** – Joint guidance issued by the Department of Health and Department for Education and Employment in 2000 first recommended that all schools should appoint a designated teacher responsible for co-ordinating all of the school’s services and its approach for children in care.



**Director of Children's Services** – Every top tier local authority in England is required to appoint a Director of Children's Services under section 18 of the Children Act 2004. Directors are responsible for discharging local authority functions that relate to children in respect of education, social services and children leaving care.

**Extended schools** – Extended schools offer a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of children and young people, their families and the wider community. Possible examples of extended school activities include support for family learning; access to ICT equipment and software outside school hours for adults and pupils; and breakfast and after school clubs. These extended services include swift and easy referral, which should improve partnership working between schools and other services for children and young people (including local authority services).

**Foster care** – Foster care refers to a type of placement in which the child lives with an individual in their family home. Foster carers must be approved by fostering services registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

**Independent Reviewing Officer** – Independent reviewing officers are registered social workers who are independent of the management of the cases of children in care that they review. From September 2004, independent reviewing officers have been required to chair all statutory review meetings for children in care, from which position they can identify any problems in the child's care and any lack of clarity in the care plan.

**National Minimum Standards** – The National Minimum Standards set out the minimum that is expected of providers of specific services, such as fostering services and children's homes. They are supported by regulations made under the Care Standards Act 2000.

**Ofsted** – The new Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – continuing to be known as Ofsted – was created on 1st April 2007 under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Established as a non-ministerial government department, it brings together the remit of the former Ofsted together with that of the Adult Learning Inspectorate, children's work from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, and the Children and Family Courts Advisory Service inspection work from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration. It inspects a range of services in England: early years provision; out of school care; adoption and fostering agencies; residential schools, family centres and homes for children; all state maintained schools and some independent schools; pupil referral units; the Children and Family Courts Advisory Service; the overall level of services for children in local authority areas (along with the Healthcare Commission, Audit Commission and other relevant inspectorates); further education, initial teacher training; and publicly funded adult skills and employment based training.

**Personal Education Plan** – An individual plan for children in care developed in partnership with the child's school and which focuses on their educational needs and is reviewed alongside the child's care plan.

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