

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT  
COMMITTEE

Sixth Special Report

**GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE  
FIFTH REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE,  
SESSION 1997-98: DISAFFECTED CHILDREN**

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*Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed  
23 June 1998*

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LONDON: THE STATIONERY OFFICE

The Education and Employment Committee is appointed under Standing Order No 152 to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Employment and associated public bodies.

The Committee consists of 17 Members. It has a quorum of five. Unless the House otherwise orders, all members nominated to the Committee continue to be members of it for the remainder of the Parliament.

The Committee has power:

- (a) to send for persons, papers and records, to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, and to report from time to time;
- (b) to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference;
- (c) to communicate to any other committee appointed under the same Standing Order, to the Committee of Public Accounts and to the Deregulation Committee its evidence and any other documents relating to matters of common interest;
- (d) to meet concurrently with any other committee appointed under the same Standing Order for the purposes of deliberating, taking evidence, or considering draft reports.

The Committee has power to appoint two sub-committees and to report from time to time the minutes of evidence taken before them and their minutes of proceedings. The sub-committees have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place and to meet concurrently with any committee appointed under the same Standing Order or any sub-committee thereof for the purposes of deliberating or taking evidence. Each sub-committee has a quorum of three.

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The membership of the Committee since its nomination on 14 July 1997 has been as follows:

Ms Candy Atherton	Mr Don Foster
Charlotte Atkins	Mr John Healey
Mr Joe Benton	Ms Margaret Hodge
Mr Graham Brady	Mr Paul Keetch
Yvette Cooper	<i>(added 8.12.97)</i>
Mr Cynog Dafis	Mrs Eleanor Laing
<i>(discharged 8.12.97)</i>	Judy Mallaber
Valerie Davey	Mrs Theresa May
Caroline Flint	Mr Nick St. Aubyn
Rt Hon Derek Foster	Mr Gerry Steinberg

## SIXTH SPECIAL REPORT

**The Education and Employment Committee has agreed to the following Special Report:—**

### **GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE FIFTH REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, SESSION 1997-98: DISAFFECTED CHILDREN**

The Education and Employment Committee reported to the House on Disaffected Children in its Fifth Report of Session 1997-98, published on 6 April 1998 as HC 498. The Government's response to that Report was received on 23 June 1998. It is reproduced as an Annex to this Special Report.

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### ANNEX

#### **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FIFTH REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE, SESSION 1997-98: DISAFFECTED CHILDREN**

**The Government welcomes the Fifth Report of the Education and Employment Select Committee on Disaffected Children, published on 6 April 1998. Tackling disaffection amongst young people, and thereby re-engaging them in education and training, is at the heart of the Government's strategy to tackle social exclusion in this country. Often, those young people who fail to get all they might from their school years end up without the skills needed in order to make a successful transition to adult life. It is these young people who are most likely to become the socially excluded adults of the future. It is therefore heartening to see that the Select Committee shares our commitment to tackling disaffection.**

While this response deals in detail with the committee's recommendations for tackling disaffection among young people aged 14-19, the Government is aware that often by this age it is too late. Young people do not suddenly become disaffected at the age of 14. The problem usually begins long before this. The Government is working to make sure that we prevent disaffection in the future. Through our school improvement programme, our enhancement of links between home and school, our family literacy approach, our out-of school learning plans and our literacy and numeracy strategies, we are putting in place a long-term strategy to prevent disaffection. In addition, in the wake of the Social Exclusion Unit's report, "Truancy and School Exclusion", we have set up a Ministerial Task Force, chaired by Minister for School Standards Stephen Byers, to set about reducing levels of truancy and exclusion by one third by 2002. The Prime Minister has asked this group to review progress in tackling exclusions and truancy, and monitor the follow up to the original report.

Besides measures aimed at preventing disaffection for the future, much is in hand to tackle the problem of young people who are disaffected at the age of 14. We will make sure these young people have every opportunity to achieve their full potential. Much of the rest of this document details the work we are doing to ensure this. We are working to reduce the number of young people dropping out of learning, improve the quality of the provision available, and make the learning options available to these young people more relevant to their needs. We are also working with the Careers and Youth Services to actively re-engage young people who have dropped out of the system, and make sure they all have the information they need to make appropriate choices about their future. We will make sure that all young people, regardless of background, have the skills they need to make the most of their talents.

The following paragraphs set out the Government's detailed response to the Committee's recommendations. The response is grouped by themes as follows:

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NB: Capital letters refer to the ordering of the Recommendations in Annex E of the Select Committee's Report.

## 1 SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS AND THE EDUCATION OF EXCLUDED PUPILS

### I SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

#### **Committee Recommendations**

*(B) The key task in tackling disaffection should be to provide challenge, restore motivation and engender key skills. Maximising formal educational achievement for these young people must be at the heart of intervention, whatever the nature of the project concerned. The main principle should be to include not exclude disaffected young people. All interventions should have the aim of reintegrating disaffected young people into mainstream education and training opportunities. However good the project/experience is in the short term, it cannot be regarded as wholly successful if, at the end of it, young people are not able to re-access education, training or employment (paragraph 25).*

*(F) A feature of a good school is a low exclusion rate. Permanent exclusion should be a last resort. Schools should endeavour to create additional support units at the school for pupils who might otherwise face exclusion. We are concerned that permanent exclusions rose almost fivefold between 1991 and 1996. We are even more concerned, however, that those permanently excluded subsequently receive only a basic educational entitlement-which inevitably reduces the possibility of their rejoining mainstream educational pathways alongside their peers. The effect of this on their motivation to re-engage with education can only be profoundly negative. Schools should be encouraged to develop whole school policies which limit disaffection and exclusions. OFSTED should have a duty to carry out a special inspection of schools which show a marked increase in exclusions. LEAs should monitor schools and intervene to ensure that appropriate whole school policies are introduced. These schools should be closely monitored over a four-year period following the inspection (paragraph 41).*

### **Government Response**

1 The Government shares the Committee's concerns both about the worrying increase in the level of permanent exclusion and the limited provision which is too often offered to those who are excluded from school. We have set ambitious targets for reducing the level of exclusion by one third by 2002. To reinforce this, we will be issuing statutory guidance later this year setting out the range of preventative action which schools and LEAs should take before a child is excluded. These steps should be included in schools' Behaviour and Development policies. We agree that OFSTED should inspect schools with serious problems: OFSTED has agreed to inspect schools which have particularly high levels of truancy or exclusion. Finally, we have made a commitment to moving to a full timetable for all excluded pupils by 2002.

2 Intervention should aim to reintegrate disaffected young people into learning. It is also important to start early, to work with potentially disaffected young people in order to prevent them leaving education or training. However, research on the nature of disaffection suggests that for many disaffected young people the formal educational system is seen as the greatest barrier to achievement. Alternative forms of provision which produce achievement recognised by the wider society - including employers - may be the most appropriate way forward.

## **II KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM**

### **Committee Recommendations**

*(V) The National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 is not appropriate to the needs of many disaffected young people. It is counterproductive to push them into studying physics or French to GCSE level. Time needs to be made available for those who have not yet learned key skills to be taught them. High-quality vocational education, including workplace experience, can be of enormous benefit to those who are disaffected with the more "traditional" school curriculum. Some 14 year olds may re-engage more easily in a non-school environment, such as an FE college or the workplace (paragraph 97).*

*(W) We were heartened to learn of the range of imaginative projects, often collaborative, that are being carried out in this field. We recommend that the Government continue to enable schools, and other institutions, to provide tailored programmes, which must be monitored over the long-term. Targeted funding should be made available via the Standards Fund and other sources. This flexible provision should, where possible, be combined with existing elements of the 14-16 curriculum (paragraph 98).*

### **Government Response**

3 The Government welcomes these conclusions and recommendations. We share the Committee's view that vocational and work-related options delivered as part of a broad and balanced education at Key Stage 4 can be especially effective in raising the motivation and attainment of disaffected and under-achieving young people. The White Paper *Excellence in Schools* emphasised the value which we attach to increasing curriculum flexibility and encouraging wider availability of work-related learning. Building on commitments in the White Paper, the Government will shortly be allowing schools to disapply elements of the Key Stage 4 National Curriculum in order to enable individual pupils to pursue work-related options where that better meets their educational needs. One of the aims of the forthcoming review of the National Curriculum will be to make the Key Stage 4 curriculum more flexible. The Schools Standards and Framework Bill currently before Parliament contains provisions to increase the flexibility of work-experience and to make it easier for schools and FE colleges to collaborate.

4 The Government has also been increasing the funding available for work-related learning activity. Locally-devised projects worth at least £5 million will be supported in 1998-99, including through the Standards Fund. By April 1998, we expect these projects to involve pupils in about a quarter of all secondary schools in England. The projects are being rigorously evaluated so that effective practice can be identified and disseminated.

### III WIDENING ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

#### **Committee Recommendation**

*(Y) We are attracted to the idea of encouraging greater pluralism of qualifications in schools at Key Stage 4, linked with our support for a more flexible curricular offer for this age group. We welcome the Government's plans to give schools more opportunities to offer vocational qualifications such as NVQs, but the Government could do more. We would like to see more widespread use of Part One GNVQs and basic skills qualifications in schools. They provide an extra rung on the qualifications ladder and can help prevent disaffection amongst low achieving pupils. However, these qualifications must be rigorously assessed, and gaining them must represent real achievement. We welcome the increasing use of modular courses in schools, including GCSEs, and believe there would be advantage in developing a system for recognising achievement at modular level. (This could perhaps be recorded in each pupil's National Record of Achievement.) Such a change would allow young people to take small steps towards qualifications and would help remove the fear of failure at 16 currently associated with GCSE. (paragraph 111).*

#### **Government Response**

5 The Government shares the Committee's view about the benefits of giving 14 to 16 year olds access to a wider range of qualifications. We have this year extended the Part One GNVQ pilot to cover more schools, and are working towards making the qualification available to pupils in all secondary schools. This will mean that more young people have opportunities to complement their National Curriculum studies with the key skills of communication, application of number and IT (which are an integral part of all GNVQs). We have also approved for use in schools an increased range of vocational qualifications including some NVQs and the IT key skills units, which, together with the Part One GNVQ, provide a wider range of options for disaffected pupils not motivated by traditional academic courses. In addition, for those needing an extra rung on the qualifications ladder, we have approved a range of Entry level qualifications, which facilitate progress to GCSEs, GNVQs or NVQs.

6 We agree with the Committee that the National Record of Achievement (NRA) also offers potential for recognising a wide range of achievement. Initial evidence from DfEE pilots of new materials (under the name 'progress file'), designed to replace the NRA from 1999, suggests that similar and equally beneficial gains can be made with the new materials. This is being explored further through the pilots, which are now in their final stages.

7 The Government believes that these measures will significantly enhance the range of opportunities open to young people in Key Stage 4 alongside the GCSE system, and we will continue to look for ways of building on and developing them. The Government is fully committed to the GCSE, which is well-established, clearly understood and valued in its present form by schools, pupils, parents and employers alike. It has a central role in encouraging and accrediting achievement across a wide range of subjects at Key Stage 4. We intend to ensure that the GCSE remains relevant so that it continues to play that role effectively.

### IV PASTORAL CARE

#### **Committee Recommendations**

*(D) Pastoral support and discipline are key components of a good school. Clear and consistent whole-school policies on discipline, pastoral support, partnership with parents, attendance and bullying are vital in preventing and tackling disaffection. Partnership with other agencies is also vital, and schools should ensure that these are involved in tackling disaffection. We recommend that all schools adopt policies which incorporate these features (paragraph 34).*

*(X) We recognise the value of effective personal and social education and agree with those witnesses who argued for a more focused PSE curriculum, the effectiveness of which can be measured against clearly defined outcomes. Too much of current PSE lacks structure and direction. If PSE is to be a success, it must amount to more than high-handed waffle. We believe that a clear and strengthened PSE curriculum has an important role to play in re-engaging disaffected young people and developing citizenship. PSE should not be an "add-on" to the*

*curriculum, but integral to the life of the school. The PSE curriculum should focus on life management skills such as family planning, personal finances, employability, using information and avoiding drug and alcohol misuse (paragraph 101).*

### **Government Response**

8 The Government agrees with these recommendations. Circular 8/94 on 'Pupil Behaviour and Discipline', issued to all schools in May 1994, made clear that good behaviour and discipline are key foundations of good education. Without an orderly atmosphere, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. The specific aims of the Circular were to:

- help schools manage pupil behaviour effectively;
- encourage a whole-school approach to behaviour and discipline;
- help schools to promote respect for others amongst young people;
- promote firm action against all forms of bullying;
- reduce the levels of truancy from school; and
- reduce the poor behaviour which can lead to pupils being excluded either fixed-term or permanently.

It also encouraged partnership with parents, making clear that parents and carers have a vital role in fostering good behaviour: they need to co-operate with the school in matters of discipline and reinforce the school's efforts at home.

9 It is encouraging, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has reported, that most schools have clear policies and procedures for dealing with pupil behaviour and discipline, and that most give good attention to pupils' welfare and guidance. They have appropriate and effective systems of rewards and sanctions and make use of carefully organised referral systems to identify and monitor pupils who are giving cause for concern.

10 However, in the light of the Social Exclusion Unit's Report *Truancy and Social Exclusion* (May 1998: Cm 3957), the Government intends to consult in the autumn on revised guidance on behaviour and discipline which will, amongst other things, reinforce and build on Circular 8/94, emphasising the need for schools to have effective whole-school behaviour policies and encourage a multi-agency approach to tackling problems of disaffection.

11 The personal and social development of pupils in schools has become a key Government priority. Estelle Morris and Tessa Jowell, Minister for Public Health, announced the setting up of the Advisory Group on Personal, Social and Health Education on 14 May. The Group has been asked to:

"Provide advice on the aims and purposes of personal, social and health education; clarify and define its terms, to develop a national framework for PSHE in schools, and consider its relationship to other curriculum areas, particularly citizenship and democracy."

The new Group will give initial advice in the summer on a national framework to feed into the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's review of the National Curriculum. It will be co-chaired by both Ministers and supported by an Expert Panel comprising people with experience in a wide range of specialist areas.

## **V INDUCTION YEAR FOR TEACHERS**

### **Committee Recommendation:**

*(E) We believe that the induction year will provide the right opportunity for teachers to develop their skills in behaviour management (paragraph 36).*

**Government Response**

12 We welcome the Committee's endorsement of the Government's policy of giving newly-qualified teachers the opportunity of developing their skills through an induction year.

**VI PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS****Committee Recommendations**

*(I) If Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are to work effectively, they should not be seen as a permanent solution, but as one stage in the process of tackling exclusion. They should work closely with schools, colleges and other bodies, within the framework of the local forums proposed earlier in our Report, so that children do not become further disconnected from the mainstream system as a result of exclusion. As part of this process, it is important that decisions are made at the earliest opportunity about the next step for each child, whether back at school or elsewhere. Children must not be allowed to get stuck, or stagnate, in PRUs (paragraph 45).*

*(J) Many PRUs also fail to provide the quality of teaching needed to make sure that children do not become further disconnected from the mainstream system. Teaching standards in PRUs must be improved. The Government must take the necessary steps to attract high quality staff and put a high quality curriculum in place. Teachers need specific skills for teaching pupils in settings such as PRUs which are additional to those required to teach in mainstream environments. If necessary, the Government should consider offering inducements to attract appropriately skilled staff, including Advanced Skills Teachers, to work in PRUs (paragraph 46).*

**Government Response**

13 We agree that PRUs should not be seen as a permanent solution for the majority of excluded pupils, but that their work should be focused on reintegrating pupils into mainstream education wherever possible. In some cases, however, particularly where a pupil is excluded in Years 10 and 11, reintegration into another mainstream school may not be realistic. In such cases PRUs and other providers of education otherwise than at school should be focused on preparing the young person for further education, training or employment at the age of 16.

14 Both OFSTED and DfEE are monitoring the provision of education in PRUs through inspection reports. The early inspections of PRUs indicated that the majority of these units were providing an unacceptably low standard of education. However, HMCI's most recent annual report, based on the inspection of 100 PRUs, indicated that they are successful in improving pupil attendance and stimulating positive attitudes to learning and responsible behaviour but less successful in their assessment of pupils' prior attainments and the monitoring of their academic progress. The quality of teaching was found to be variable but satisfactory in most of the PRUs inspected.

15 High expectations are an important factor in improving achievement, and exchanges between staff working in PRUs and those in mainstream schools are one way of maintaining such expectations. DfEE are funding several pilot projects where mainstream teachers are seconded to PRUs to improve the curriculum provision at the PRU and their own behaviour management skills. These projects are currently being evaluated. So too is good management and the Government will require all PRUs to establish management committees from April 1999. In order that young people do not simply stagnate in PRUs, from September of this year, Careers Services will be providing programmes of careers education to these young people to inform them of the choices available to them.

16 The school teachers' pay system already provides some flexibility to LEAs to employ teachers in PRUs at appropriate rates of pay. Teachers may be rewarded at the LEA's discretion for responsibilities, recruitment and retention considerations, and excellence; and payments are also available as appropriate for special educational needs skills. There is no reason why the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) grade should not be available to PRUs; it will however be for LEAs to decide whether or not to create AST posts in PRUs, having regard to the professional duties of the new grade which include mentoring and developing other teachers.



## 2 WORK WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

### I LOCAL FORUMS

#### ***Committee Recommendations***

*(C) A clear message from our inquiry was that many different agencies are already working to help tackle disaffection among children and young people, and there are many examples of good practice in the work done by statutory and voluntary agencies at the local and national level. However, an equally clear message is that much of this work is carried out on a piecemeal and project-by-project basis. Although some agencies work in collaboration, many do not: there is often an absence of co-ordination of effort at the local level, and those involved may not even be fully aware of what is being done by others in the field. In order to ensure effective, well-targeted provision for disaffected young people, we believe that better local co-ordination is needed. For this reason, we propose the creation of local forums, in which all the agencies involved can work together, exchange best practice and help ensure that disaffected young people do not fall through gaps in the system. These forums would involve all the appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies in each area. They should not be concerned with detailed intervention in local projects, nor should they merely add a layer of bureaucracy to existing relationships. Their role should be to enable and ensure effective intervention. They should identify ways in which mainstream education providers can learn from the work of other agencies. They should promote high quality programmes and ensure that full information on services for young people is available. The forums must listen to the views and concerns of young people and aim to engage them in their work. If they are to be more than talking shops, it is vital that these forums have sufficient authority to enlist the necessary human and financial resources to tackle disaffection. Forums should be responsible for establishing a strategy and an action plan—either as part of the local authority's education development plan or separately—which should form the basis for the allocation of resources. A clear strategy for intervention with individual disaffected young people is essential; its absence is a recipe for confusion both within funding structures and for young people themselves (paragraph 26).*

*(K) Where appropriate, the FEFC, colleges, LEAs and schools should work within the framework of the local forums recommended in paragraph 26 above (recommendation (C)) to provide college education to disaffected young people. Funding should be made available from both the college and school sectors to facilitate this. The key principle is that funding should follow the students, wherever their learning is taking place (paragraph 49).*

*(R) We recognise that the local authority has a responsibility, through a variety of mechanisms, to secure appropriate support and educational provision for disaffected young people. We also agree that there must be better co-ordination of effort at the local level. We have therefore recommended (in paragraph 26, recommendation (c), above) the establishment of local forums which would build on the kinds of partnership model currently being piloted under the New Start initiative. Effective co-ordination of services for the young people in the greatest need should not be left to chance (paragraph 76).*

#### ***Government Response***

17 The Government agrees that there is a need for greater co-ordination of provision and approach to tackling disaffection, both across Whitehall and with external partners working in local communities with disaffected young people. As was mentioned in the Social Exclusion Unit's recent report on Truancy and School Exclusion, some disaffected children may have as many as eight professionals from eight different agencies looking after them, not always communicating with each other. As a result the help needed by these children is often not delivered effectively.

18 In an attempt to tackle this problem, a Ministerial Task Force, chaired by Stephen Byers, has been set up exclusively to deal with the issues of Truancy and School Exclusions. This Task Force will consist of Ministers from DfEE, Department of Health, Home Office, DETR and the Treasury, and will play a key part in achieving the targets set by the Social Exclusion Unit of reducing truancy and exclusions by a third by the year 2002. The Prime Minister has asked this group to

review progress in tackling exclusions and truancy, and monitor the follow up to the original report. If progress towards the targets is off track, it will be responsible for looking at additional measures to correct this. It will also be responsible for overseeing the preparation of an evaluation plan. A lot of work is currently in train in the DfEE on ways in which education and training can contribute to broader cross-departmental approaches to social exclusion, and on strengthening the Department's contribution to building a more inclusive society. Certain cross-departmental policies are already in place. For example, the Crime and Disorder Bill currently passing through Parliament will give the Police the right to detain truants. This will require co-operation between the Police, Home Office and DfEE.

19 The Government fully believes in the principle of encouraging partnership and co-operation between sectors. Many local partnerships already exist. The New Start strategy (see paragraphs 29-30) is an example of how partnerships of this kind can be put to good effect. More imaginative collaboration arrangements between relevant sectors, particularly between schools, colleges, training providers and careers companies could pay dividends in allowing young people to settle better in their post 16 learning and thus reduce drop-out. We are currently working with the Local Government Association (LGA), Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and the TEC National Council (TNC) to promote greater collaboration in post-16 education.

20 The Further Education sector will have a role to play in broadening the opportunities available at Key Stage 4. We have introduced provision in the Schools Standards and Framework Bill which will give Further Education Corporations the power to provide secondary education to pupils in Key Stage 4. In total these arrangements will offer a wider range of ways of encouraging and accrediting achievement which complements the skills, knowledge and understanding promoted by GCSEs.

## II VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(M) The disparate nature of disaffection suggests to us a need for considerable flexibility in response and methods of intervention in the lives of disaffected young people. Voluntary agencies are prima facie well placed to provide such a flexible and tailored response. During our inquiry, we learned of much good and innovative work undertaken by such agencies and of ways in which, often acting in partnership with other bodies, they successfully tackled disaffection and helped re-integrate children and young people into education and training. We believe that their work can have valuable lessons for others working in education (paragraph 57).*

### ***Government Response***

21 The Government fully supports and values the work of voluntary youth organisations. In the first year of our stewardship of DfEE grants to National Voluntary Youth Organisations, we have found an extra half a million pounds on top of the £3 million already programmed - including an increase in the grant to the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services of more than 150%. We are currently considering plans for a new grants scheme to run from 1999-2002 which will be targeted on tackling social exclusion and raising youth work standards. The level of resources for the new scheme must await the outcome of the Department's Comprehensive Spending Review which will look at all their spending programmes after 1999.

22 In addition to the grants to Voluntary Organisations direct from central Government, a considerable sum of government money is distributed via TECs to Voluntary Organisations. Last year, the two largest Voluntary Sector recipients of TEC-delivered funds were NACRO and Rathbone, who received £10m and £20m respectively from TECs.

23 The headquarters of sixty-three organisations are being funded to pursue approved national programmes of work to further the planned personal and social education of young people. The scheme targets 13-19 year-olds in particular, and those who are disadvantaged, who come from inner cities and urban housing estates or rural areas, or are from minority ethnic communities, or who are disabled. It also contributes to crime prevention and drugs education and promotes volunteering and partnerships between organisations. In addition, Voluntary Organisations are key partners in the New Start Partnerships tackling disaffection throughout the country.

24 OFSTED have confirmed that the grants have been vital to organisations in helping them develop targeted provision, have helped improve the quality of work and enabled good practice to be spread. They have praised the grants as providing good value for money; they are highly geared and cost-effective and help organisations raise extra support from other sources.

### III MENTORING

#### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(O) We believe that a good mentor can make all the difference to outcomes for disaffected young people. We commend the use of mentoring in work with these young people. Programmes designed to re-integrate young people into the mainstream should involve the use of mentors. Disaffected young people in particular need access to high quality independent advice and guidance on education, training, employability and employment opportunities. This can be provided by those working as mentors with young people (paragraph 61).*

#### ***Government Response***

25 The White Paper *Excellence in Schools* said the Government would support the National Mentoring Network (NMN) and its members to raise the profile and increase the availability of mentoring initiatives to pupils. DfEE has increased its support to the NMN to fund the post of a national co-ordinator to take this forward. The Department is also about to offer £100,000 to fund a mentoring bursary programme, through the NMN.

26 A good mentor can make a huge difference to a young person's life, and it is essential that disaffected young people have "access to high quality, independent advice and guidance". However, not every mentor can provide this. Careers Advisers functioning as mentors could provide "independent advice and guidance". Other mentors might not have this expertise, and would need to refer clients to Careers Services. A new project about to start is to trial peer mentoring by previously disaffected pupils who had successfully graduated from career clubs run by a career company.

### IV ROLE OF THE YOUTH SERVICE

#### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(P) The Government has announced that it intends to "put the Youth Service on a stronger statutory footing". The Government is also keen to explore ways in which voluntary youth networks and local authorities can work more closely together "to provide for young people in an imaginative way". We welcome this commitment by the Government, which we hope will include encouraging schools to make greater use of wider youth services, particularly in providing appropriate support to disaffected young people (paragraph 63).*

#### ***Government Response***

27 The audit of youth service provision in local authorities in England and the forthcoming consultation document on the future of the Youth Service will inform the Department's strategy for involving the Youth Service in the Government's wider policies for disaffected pupils and young people. The Youth Service is already a partner in New Start and voluntary youth organisations are featuring strongly in areas such as New Deal and Millennium Volunteers. The new duty for LEAs to set out their arrangements for pupils with behavioural difficulties in a behaviour support plan should result in the Youth Service being more involved in the planning of such provision and making schools and parents more aware of the services on offer. Grant 16 of The Standards Fund encourages local authority youth services and schools to work together in the field of drug education.

28 The Government is also looking to the Youth Service to work closely with Careers Services. Youth services should be making contact with disaffected young people who are not in touch with the "system", and referring them to Careers Advisers. This will encourage the very disaffected to re-engage in training.

## V NEW START

### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(Q) The New Start strategy has only been in place for a few months. However, once the pilot projects have bedded down, we would like to see the principles underlying the New Start pilots implemented nation-wide. This is vital both to establish the true extent of disaffection and to encourage the bringing together of many existing initiatives, and creating the impetus for new ones to be formed (paragraph 74).*

### ***Government Response***

29 The Government welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the New Start initiative which is a key strand of its Investing in Young People strategy.

30 DfEE is currently directly funding 17 partnership projects, involving Local Authorities, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), Careers Service, Youth Service, schools, Further Education colleges and voluntary organisations. Projects have been asked to identify the scale and nature of disaffection in their area; the effectiveness of local learning provision; the scope to strengthen existing or introduce new provision and to develop a strategy and an action plan based on this research. DfEE is also offering support under New Start to many other local partnerships aimed at tackling disaffection amongst young people through regional networking activities, expert consultancy advice and the dissemination of good practice via the New Start Journal and other publications. The 17 directly funded projects are now nearing the end of, or have completed, their research phase and are drawing up action plans for the implementation phase. The Government proposes to extend the principles and the good practice of the New Start strategy as far as possible within available resources.

## 3 LOOKED-AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE

### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(T) There has been an abject failure to provide effective educational opportunities for the most vulnerable children who are looked after. The fact that a disproportionate number of looked-after children are disaffected and are likely to truant or be excluded, and that 75 per cent of them leave school without any qualifications, is unacceptable. There is considerable educational under-achievement, despite significant investment of public money; a widespread lack of collaboration between different branches of the local authority; but also some encouraging signs of effective partnership between agencies, which need to be encouraged (paragraph 90).*

### ***Government Response***

31 As the Secretary of State reported to the joint meeting of the Health and Education Select Committees on 18 February, DfEE set up earlier this year a national inter-agency forum for promoting the education and attainment of these young people, including representatives of the leading statutory and voluntary agencies. It will advise Ministers on the range of actions central government needs to undertake, in collaboration with these agencies, to promote significant improvements in educational provision for looked-after children and in their attainment. As the Secretary of State indicated to the Select Committees, the Government is considering a range of issues, including:

- whether existing non-statutory guidance to local authorities and schools should be replaced by statutory guidelines;
- how to secure better information on educational outcomes for looked-after children;
- how to stimulate more targeted teacher support to young people outside of school or seeking to reintegrate in mainstream schooling;
- new improvements in arrangements for education in secure units; and
- wider support for young people who have left care.

32 As indicated in the Social Exclusion Unit report *Truancy and School Exclusion* (paragraph 5.21), the Government intends to set targets for the educational attainment of looked-after children. These will need underpinning by closer collaborative working between services and by the improved information to which we refer above. We recognise that there are promising signs of progress in some authorities and aim both to encourage and build upon this work.

33 Sir William Utting was asked, in June 1996 by the previous Government, to undertake a review of child protection safeguards for children living away from home in England and Wales. His report was published in November 1997. Its recommendations covered the protection from abuse of children in all settings where they live away from their families (children's homes, boarding schools, foster care, hospitals and the penal system). Consultation with a wide variety of outside agencies has shown his recommendations to have widespread support.

34 A Ministerial Task Force has been established to drive forward the implementation of the report. This Task force is chaired by the Secretary of State for Health, with Ministers from DfEE, Welsh and Scottish Offices, DETR, Office of Public Service, Home Office, the Treasury and the Lord Chancellor's Department. The Solicitor General is also a member of the group. The Task Force has met four times to date. It is expected that, at its next meeting in July meeting, it will be discussing the Government's response to the report and its recommendations.

#### **4 EXTENSION OF THE NEW DEAL**

##### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(L) We are very concerned that the New Deal does not cover 16 and 17 year olds. Given the failure of TECs to meet the youth training guarantee there is urgent need for a lead from Government to tackle non-participation amongst this age group. We welcome the fact that the DfEE recognises this potential problem, and has undertaken to monitor the potential negative impact of the New Deal on 16 and 17 year olds. However, if our fears prove to be well-founded, we believe that the Government should in due course consider extending the New Deal to 16 and 17 year olds. In the first instance, this extension of the New Deal should give priority to the most vulnerable categories, such as young people who have been looked after by local authorities (paragraph 52).*

##### ***Government Response***

35 The primary goal of the New Deal has been to reduce the numbers of long-term unemployed young people aged 18-24. This goal is rather different to that for 16 and 17 year olds. For this lower age group, the Government's primary aim is to increase levels of participation and attainment in learning. Moreover, many of the New Deal options are already available for 16 and 17 year olds. They are guaranteed vocational training, and the FEFC has a duty to fund college courses for them. The most well-known New Deal option, a job, is not on its own appropriate for 16 and 17 year olds. Any employment options for this age group should include appropriate training. This is the principle behind the introduction in the Teaching and Higher Education Bill of the right for working 16 and 17 year olds, with the support of their employer, to have reasonable time off for study or training during the normal working week. The Government's strategy to tackle disaffection and under-achievement among 16 and 17 year olds is Investing in Young People. This approach to widening participation (the scale of which will depend on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review) is designed to maximise the number of young people gaining the skills they will need for lifelong employability. We will be carefully monitoring the impact of New Deal and the National Minimum Wage on the employment prospects of 16 and 17 year olds.

36. However, while the short term goals for 16 and 17 year olds are distinct from those of over 18s, the long term goal for all young people is the same: that they should have the skills and qualifications to maintain their employability throughout their working lives. Consequently, there are lessons which can be learnt from the early success of the New Deal for 18-24 year olds. The New Deal Gateway, which provides up to four months of advice and guidance, has proved to be both popular and successful in dealing with the many barriers which can prevent young people from finding employment. The Gateway concentrates on social and personal barriers, such as

substance abuse and basic skills training. This approach has obvious relevance to disaffected 16 and 17 year olds who, for a variety of reasons, are unwilling or unable to engage in education and training. When the result of the Comprehensive Spending Review is known, we will look at adapting aspects of this approach for use with a younger age group.

## 5 RESOURCES TO TACKLE DISAFFECTION

### *Committee Recommendations*

*(G) Wherever possible, schools should retain responsibility for excluded pupils. For as long as they continue to receive funding for an excluded pupil, they have an obligation to allocate a proportion of those resources to that pupil for whatever alternative provision is made for them, wherever it takes place. Where schools do not retain responsibility, a similar proportion of the funding should be withdrawn from the school and made available to those taking on responsibility for the education of these young people (paragraph 42).*

*(H) We also believe that schools which achieve success with previously excluded pupils should be rewarded. They could, for instance, receive a financial bonus for each of these pupils who gains a Level 2 qualification (paragraph 43).*

*(S) The current funding available for tackling disaffection is fragmented and poorly targeted-in short it is a mess. The Government needs to identify as soon as possible how much central government money is currently being spent on services for disaffected young people, which budget it comes from, whether it is being used effectively and efficiently and whether it is being directed towards areas of greatest need. Government departments should set the lead by improving the co-ordination of their resources, possibly through the Social Exclusion Unit. We have emphasised the need for effective co-ordination of activity. There is equally a need for effective co-ordination and targeting of funding. We believe that the local forums we have recommended would have a role to play in ensuring that money is effectively allocated (paragraph 81).*

*(U) We urge all those responsible-including those working in the Social Exclusion Unit-urgently to review the effectiveness of current services and spending and to prepare new, better integrated and co-ordinated action which is focused on the needs of the child and which will give a better start in life to these vulnerable young people (paragraph 90).*

### *Government Response*

37 The Government welcomes the Committee's commitment to the idea that we must target resources on disaffection and social exclusion. The Government is reviewing the funding available for work with disaffected pupils in the light both of the Committee's recommendations and the work of the Social Exclusion Unit on truancy and exclusion. The aim is to examine DfEE funding programmes with a view to:

- identifying any overlap;
- ensuring that funding is used to best effect, in particular ensuring that projects do not repeat developmental work already carried out in other areas;
- sharing dissemination structures wherever possible;
- utilising the Government Office network where appropriate to further regional activity.

38 Direct, practical help is already given to locally-devised projects to tackle truancy under the "Improving Attendance and Behaviour" component of the Standards Fund programme - supporting, in 1998-99, projects to a total value of £22m in 119 English LEAs. Such projects typically involve:

- the appointment of additional Education Welfare Officers to work with schools;
- support for the installation of information technology systems to help improve monitoring of attendance;
- mentoring schemes for pupils with attendance problems;

- support for working parents and the community.

39 We agree that the school should retain responsibility for a pupil for as long as it continues to be funded for that pupil, i.e. while the various appeal processes are being carried out. New guidance will re-emphasise that point. Under existing legislation once an exclusion is finalised the funding for that pupil transfers with the pupil to the new provider. Although we do not consider it would be practical for schools to retain responsibility for the education of excluded pupils beyond this point, we are looking at whether changes can be made to the procedures for calculating the performance tables to ensure that the exam performance of pupils excluded in their last two years of compulsory education is counted in the figures of the excluding school.

40 We agree that school funding arrangements should support both schools which retain pupils at risk of exclusion and those schools which admit pupils excluded from other schools. As set out in the report of the Social Exclusion Unit, *Truancy and School Exclusion*, we are working up proposals for consultation for targeting funds on schools for preventative work with children at risk of exclusion and schools that receive excluded pupils.

## 6 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

### I NEED FOR ROBUST FIGURES ON THE TARGET GROUP

#### **Committee Recommendations:**

(A) *We have noted the wide range of estimates of this group of young people. If the estimates of persistent non-attendance at Key Stage 4 are taken together with the estimates for non-participation between 16 and 19 years old, we can conclude that at any one time there are at least 100,000 14-19 year olds not in education, training or employment or, taking a higher estimate, as many as 220,000 non-participants. Whatever estimate is adopted, it is obvious that disaffected young people form a significant cohort within the 14-19 age group, and re-integrating them into the mainstream of education, training and work must form an integral part of the Government's educational and social policy. The problem is that no figures are kept that can be quoted with rigour. More accurate information is vital if we are to grasp the true nature and extent of the problem. We recommend that the Government carries out an audit of the scale, nature and causes of disaffection amongst young people in order to inform policy in this area (paragraph 19).*

(N) *What matters most is longer-term effectiveness, however measured: where are the young people a year, or two years, after the intervention? An important characteristic of successful intervention will therefore be that effective tracking measures are in place. We expect projects supported by public funds to adopt such measures (paragraph 59).*

#### **Government Response**

41 We agree that disaffected young people form a significant group within 14-19 year olds. Our assessment of the situation is that there are approximately 160,000 16-18 year olds in England who are not in education, training or employment. In addition, we estimate from the Youth Cohort Study that 26,000 year 11 pupils in schools (excluding special schools) in England in 1994/5 were persistent truants. While these figures are in themselves reliable, we shall of course wish to consider further with the Social Exclusion Unit the scope of the information available to the Department, to examine how other measures might be used to provide a more comprehensive picture.

42 We note the Committee's recommendation that Government carries out an audit of the scale, nature and causes of disaffection. This is a very broad area, where, in conjunction with the Social Exclusion Unit, the DfEE is actively reviewing the information and research available, and will conduct further research in areas where our information base could be strengthened. A number of specific, relevant exercises are already underway.

43 For example, a key element of the partnership projects under New Start is to gather local

information about the scale and nature of disaffection. We will shortly be publishing an evaluation of the research findings from the initial phase of the 17 New Start projects, which will include an analysis of the causes of disaffection among 14 - 17. In addition, as part of its review of 16-19 student support, the Department has commissioned research by the University of Newcastle to improve our understanding of non-participants in learning, in particular of a number of specific groups who are not taking part in any form of structured education or training due in whole or in part to their financial circumstances. This will report in the Autumn.

44 We agree that measures to track the destinations of those young people ending compulsory schooling are vital to measure the success of any interventions carried out by central Government. The Annual Careers Service Activity Survey shows what Year 11 students are doing 6 months after they leave compulsory education. For 1998, the Survey will provide more detailed information on those not in full-time learning or jobs, many of whom will be classed as disaffected. Around the country, many careers companies and their local partners are developing local tracking systems to better exchange information on the whereabouts and learning status of 16-19 year olds. The DfEE is supporting these initiatives through targeted funding and dissemination of lessons and best practice.

45 In addition to these local initiatives, the Department (in collaboration with its education and training partners) is planning to develop a national "14-21 database", following a successful consultation exercise last year. This will be a statistical database containing a single record for each young person in England showing their history of participation in education and training, their qualification achievements and (as far as possible) labour market experience. These longitudinal records will be derived by collating information already held centrally, but in several separate unconnected data sets. Information from the database will be made available to education and training agencies and providers (nationally and locally), and to research organisations - subject in all cases to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. We will shortly be inviting tenders for an in-depth technical assessment of the feasibility of creating such a database. Subject to the outcome of this assessment, we expect development of the substantive database to commence early next year.

## II SCHOOL PERFORMANCE TABLES

### ***Committee Recommendation***

*(Z) Like the Government, we believe that the school performance tables should be revised to reflect more accurately what schools and their pupils achieve. We therefore support the Government's proposals to include an average points score and a progress measure in the performance tables (paragraph 112).*

*(AA) We recommend that the school performance tables be amended to show the number and proportion of pupils who leave without sitting examinations and the number and proportion who gain no qualifications (paragraph 113).*

### ***Government Response***

46 School performance tables already enable readers to see the percentage of pupils in each secondary school reaching the end of compulsory schooling with no GCSEs or GNVQs - the principal measure of attainment for the vast majority of pupils of school leaving age.

47 We are always willing to look at proposals to provide further data in the tables, but this must be balanced against the need to avoid increasing the bureaucratic burden on teachers and schools. Currently, GCSE and GNVQ results are obtained by the DfEE from the Examining Boards and put to schools for checking prior to publication. No central data are, however, held on the full range of qualifications or units of qualifications available to pupils in schools, some of which are accredited by individual LEAs or other local organisations. The additional data recommended by the Select Committee could only be acquired by asking schools themselves to provide them. This would be a significant additional burden on teachers. Additionally, data on pupils leaving school without sitting exams, or leaving with no qualifications at all, could only be obtained by asking every school to provide them. The data are not available centrally.



48 We have recently consulted on new National Targets for Education and Training, and are considering whether to set a target in relation to low-achieving pupils.

Department for Education and Employment  
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