

The Reintegration of Children Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

GHK Consulting, Holden McAllister Partnership and
IPSOS Public Affairs

Research Report

No 598

*The Reintegration of Children Absent,
Excluded or Missing from School*

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IPSOS Public Affairs*

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BEST	Behaviour and Education Support Team
BIP	Behaviour Improvement Programme
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EMAS	Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
EMAG	Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
EMTAG	Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant
EMTAS	Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
EWS	Education Welfare Service
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LAC	Looked After Children
LEA	Local Education Authority
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NSPCC	National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PRS	Pupil Referral Service
PSA	Public Sector Agreement
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RIO	Reintegration Officer
RSO	Reintegration Support Officer
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SSC	Student Support Centre
TES	Traveller Education Service
VCG	Vulnerable Children Grant
YOT	Youth Offending Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a 14 month study undertaken by GHK, the Holden McAllister Partnership and IPSOS Public Affairs examining current and best practice in the reintegration of different pupil groups into the mainstream school setting. The specific objectives of the study included: determining the reintegration strategies and approaches being used and how they differ according to the circumstances of absence and between Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools; examining and identifying the elements that determine successful reintegration; and make recommendations for best practice in reintegration at all levels and for different groups of children.

Reintegration was defined for the purposes of the study as the efforts made by LEAs, schools and other partners to return pupils who are absent, excluded or otherwise missing from mainstream education provision. The study encompassed a series of **pupil groups**, namely:

- Permanently excluded pupils.
- Pupils with persistent unauthorised absences.
- Pupils not attending school, due to medical needs, caring responsibilities (including school age parents) and extended absences (such as term-time holidays).
- Pupils with mobility issues, including: Gypsy/Traveller children, children in local authority care, and asylum seeker and refugee children.

The pupil groups had a range of different reintegration needs, including requiring a change of education delivery, support to maintain their place in school, help to catch-up after interruptions in their education, support after a change in circumstances and to secure a place in school or to access education for the first time (and being more a case of integration rather than reintegration). In practice, children absent from school will rarely have a single set of issues and needs, and many will experience a combination of problems which cause absence from school, or which make absence more likely.

The **study methodology** featured a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, including a postal survey of all 150 English LEAs (featuring responses from 87 LEAs) and case study fieldwork with 14 LEAs, schools, reintegration partners and pupils.

2 National Overview – Findings from the LEA Survey

Chapter 2 describes the findings from the postal survey of LEAs, which although subject to a degree of both under and over-reporting provided a picture of reintegration practices with different pupil groups at the national level.

The survey sought to identify the extent to which LEAs had developed **specific, formalised approaches** to the reintegration of pupils across the different pupil groups. The results suggested that:

- Over 90% of LEAs had formalised approaches for the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils, pupils with medical needs and children in local authority care.
- Between 60 and 80% of LEAs had approaches for Gypsy/Traveller children, pupils with persistent unauthorised absences and asylum seeker and refugee children.
- Formalised approaches for children with caring responsibilities and those taking extended authorised absences were less frequently described (by 57% and below 40% respectively).

LEAs also varied in terms of the number of pupil groups for whom formalised approaches were in place. While the majority of LEAs had approaches for between seven and nine of the pupil groups, the number of formal approaches increased with the size of the individual LEA.

LEAs reported **funding reintegration activities** from a range of sources, with different combinations of funding being used with different pupil groups. Across all pupil groups, mainstream LEA funding was most commonly used (by 97% of LEAs), followed by the Vulnerable Children Grant (82%) and other Standards Fund monies (74%). Over half of the LEAs also described using a range of other resources to support their efforts, including the Children's Fund, Quality Protects monies, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the European Social Fund.

Over three quarters of the LEAs responding to the survey described monitoring **the effectiveness of reintegration approaches** in their areas, using indicators including reintegration and attendance rates, attainment levels and a series of more qualitative variables. However, fewer than half provided data on the numbers of pupils reintegrated and the success of activities, with variable coverage by the different pupil groups. Where information was provided considerable differences in performance were identified both between and within the different pupil groups – in terms of the numbers of pupils considered appropriate for reintegration and the share for whom reintegration was attempted. Although the data did not allow any firm conclusions to be drawn, success rates appeared highest for pupils reintegrated following permanent exclusion, absence due to medical needs or after periods of extended authorised absences. Here there were between 75% and 82% of cases where reintegration was successful, according to the LEAs' own definitions.

The **reintegration approaches** described by the LEAs gave an indication of the range of the different components and interventions used with the different pupil groups. In reintegration activities across all pupil groups, LEAs most commonly described using off-site centres/Pupil Referral Units, on-site centres in schools, home tuition services, externally provided services and mentoring/buddying approaches (each reported by over 80% of LEAs). The LEAs also described the use of multi-agency groups and headteacher and other panels for referral and reintegration planning, while the use of personal education plans and flexible timetabling/curriculum approaches were widespread (used in over 90% of cases).

It was clear that LEAs routinely involve individuals from a range of disciplines in their reintegration activities, including social service professionals, youth workers, educational psychologists and Connexions advisers. In addition, teams with specific responsibilities for certain target groups, such as looked after children, Gypsy/Travellers and asylum seeker and refugee pupils, were also involved in reintegration activities as well as providing other services for these groups.

3 Reintegration in Detail – Case Study Findings

The case studies allowed reintegration practice to be examined in greater detail, and included interviews with LEAs, schools, other reintegration partners, pupils and parents/carers in 14 local authority areas. The case studies identified a series of common **barriers to reintegration**, which were grouped as follows:

- **School-based barriers** – including some schools' reluctance to accept pupils, limited awareness of reintegrating pupils and their needs, insufficient school resources to support reintegration, negative aspects of the school environment itself and the lack of alternative options and inflexibility within the national curriculum.
- **Contact and communication barriers** – including a lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies, ineffective communications between key agencies (including limited information on a child's background/needs) and a lack of continuity of contact.
- **External barriers** – including a lack of support from parents or carers, ineffective assessment processes, poorly planned/timed reintegration and limited access to external services – notably for pupils with multiple needs that cannot be wholly addressed within the school/LEA setting.

Detailed descriptions of the approaches followed with the different pupil groups are provided in Volume 2 of this report, and Chapter 3 provides a summary of the main findings and key components of the approaches followed. A series of important generic components of reintegration approaches were identified, such as effective planning, awareness raising, multi-agency approaches and dedicated staff and key workers, a series of more specific elements were considered as core or effective approaches for different pupil groups. These included:

- **For permanently excluded pupils** – panels for decision making, securing school places and commitment, key worker involvement, the use of interim/alternative provision, phased reintegration and managed moves/negotiated transfers.
- **For pupils with persistent unauthorised absences** – approaches for identifying unauthorised absences, follow-up and diagnostic procedures, flexibility in the curriculum and timetable and the use of combined approaches and strategies.
- **For pupils not attending school** due to:
 - Medical needs – school commitment and maintained contact with teachers and peers, parent/carer involvement and flexible/phased reintegration approaches.

- Caring responsibilities – including specialist reintegration officers, clear responsibilities and procedures, and the involvement of parents/carers.
- Taking extended authorised absences – specific policies on extended absences, contracts and sanctions, providing work to be completed during time away and communication/awareness raising amongst local communities.
- **For pupils with mobility issues**, with key components for different pupil groups including:
 - Gypsy/Traveller children – ensuring access to education, involving mainstream teachers and support during periods of transition.
 - Children in local authority care – identification and tracking systems, specific support for education, multi-agency working and inter-authority co-ordination, minimising school moves and schools admission processes.
 - Asylum seekers and refugees – securing school places, providing interim/alternative provision, availability of appropriate support, targeting resources to needs and awareness raising and support for teachers.

4 Key Success Factors and Good Practice

Chapter 4 describes a series of **key success factors** that were found to contribute to effective reintegration practices, and which formed the underpinning principles for effective reintegration practice. While specific factors were identified for each pupil group, the more generic elements that applied across the groups were divided into 'environmental' and 'practical' factors:

- **Environmental factors** referred to the context and conditions necessary for effective reintegration practice to develop. These included:
 - For LEAs and schools: inclusive school and LEA cultures, the commitment to responding to and meeting pupil needs and ensuring the availability of appropriate support services (including staff).
 - For reintegration partners: effective collaborative approaches, ensuring responsibilities are shared and understood and involving parents/carers and pupils in planning and monitoring reintegration.
- **Practical factors** referred to the actual content and setting of specific approaches and interventions, and included:
 - Effective and informed planning and consultation
 - Effective information collection and monitoring
 - Equitable approaches to securing school places
 - Keeping pupils on roll as far as possible
 - Rapid and individually tailored responses
 - Key worker/single contact points.

A series of **good practice** examples were also identified, on the basis of what LEAs and their partners considered had worked well for them and verified as far as possible in the wider case study interviews.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The final Chapter of the report presents the study conclusions, with a series of recommendations being provided for the Department for Education and Skills, LEAs and schools.

The conclusions consolidate the findings from the different stages of the study, and stress the range and potential complexity of the needs of reintegrating pupils and so the importance of flexible and individually tailored responses to meet their needs. No single approach emerged as a 'blueprint' for reintegration, with LEAs using a plethora of approaches and interventions, drawing on a wide range of resources and working in multi-agency frameworks with a variety of local partners.

Clearly pupils from different groups will pose different challenges, although variations in schools' willingness to accept returning pupils from certain groups were identified. Pupils with poor education or behavioural records were viewed less positively by some schools, while asylum seekers and refugees, pupils returning from extended authorised absences and those with medical needs (with the exception of ongoing mental health needs) were considered the easiest to return.

The limited availability of data on the size of the pupil groups and the performance of the reintegration approaches followed meant that conclusions on the adequacy of coverage could not be drawn. However, the data suggested there were considerable differences between pupil groups in terms of the share of children considered appropriate for reintegration and for whom reintegration was attempted.

Finally, the overriding conclusion at the more strategic level is that effective reintegration is dependant on establishing an environment where a culture of inclusion, commitment to serving the needs of all pupils and availability of appropriate resources (both financial and staff expertise) are in place.

VOLUME 1: MAIN REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This is the final report of a study into the reintegration of children who are absent, excluded or missing from school, undertaken by GHK Consulting, IPSOS Public Affairs and the Holden McAllister Partnership. The report presents the findings from each stage of the study, which included a survey of all 150 English Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and more detailed case study fieldwork with a sample of 14. The study was commissioned in July 2003, with work beginning in August 2003.

The report is presented as two volumes: this document is Volume 1, which presents the main findings of the survey and includes our conclusions and recommendations. Volume 2 provides more detailed summaries of the approaches to the reintegration of children and young people from a range of different target groups.

1.1 Study Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study was to identify best practice in, and make recommendations for, the reintegration of different pupil groups into mainstream school, so that fewer children become disengaged, truant or otherwise 'missing' from the education system. The more specific objectives of the study were to:

- Determine what reintegration strategies and approaches are being used and how they differ according to the circumstances of absence.
- Determine how reintegration practices differ across LEAs and schools, and assess the relative impact and effectiveness of different approaches.
- Examine and identify the elements that determine successful reintegration – to include procedures and protocols, multi-agency operations, time and cost issues and pupil characteristics (including age and reasons for absence).
- Make recommendations for best practice in reintegration at all levels and for different groups of children, including changes to government practice, based on measurable success criteria.

1.2 Coverage – Reintegration and Pupil Groups

For the purpose of this study '**reintegration**' refers to the efforts made by LEAs, schools and other partner agencies to return pupils who are absent, excluded or otherwise missing from school-based mainstream education provision. In adopting this definition, it is recognised that:

- Reintegration into a mainstream school setting may be neither practicable nor desirable for some pupils, where more specialist or alternative provision may be more appropriate. While reference has been made to these potential other destinations, the study focused on reintegration into the school setting.
- For some pupil groups the 'reintegration' process is better seen as 'integration' – for example for pupils moving into new areas (or indeed countries).

- For many practitioners, reintegration is seen as part of wider approaches to pupil, and particularly behaviour, management – and less of a discrete activity in itself.

The research was designed to cover a wide range of potential circumstances of absence from mainstream schooling, and encompassed a series of **pupil groups** as listed below:

- Permanently excluded pupils
- Long-term truants
- Pupils not attending school, due to:
 - ☐ Medical needs
 - ☐ Caring responsibilities (including school age parents)
 - ☐ Extended absences (such as term-time holidays).
- Pupils with mobility issues, including:
 - ☐ Gypsy/Traveller children
 - ☐ Children in local authority care (with foster parents or in residential care)
 - ☐ Asylum seeker and refugee children
 - ☐ Other children missing from education (eg. not on school roll).

1.3 Methodology

The study featured a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, across four stages of activity as follows:

- **Stage 1: Mobilisation** – featuring a literature review, interviews with key stakeholders and reintegration ‘experts’ and the development of the LEA survey questionnaire.
- **Stage 2: LEA Survey** - a postal/email survey of reintegration practice in all 150 English LEAs, which achieved a response rate of 58% with returns from 87 LEAs by the final deadline (an additional three returns were subsequently received, raising the response rate to 60%).
- **Stage 3: Case Study Fieldwork** - featuring visits to and interviews with LEA staff, schools, external services/agencies and pupils in 14 of a target 15 LEA areas.
- **Stage 4: Final Reporting** - comprising the final analysis of the information collected as part of the study, and the production of a draft final report.

In addition, a series of telephone interviews were undertaken with LEAs describing approaches to working with pupils taking extended authorised absences – an area where activity amongst the case study LEAs had been limited.

All of the fieldwork was undertaken on an anonymous basis, to ensure openness amongst both survey respondents and case study interviewees. Each of the study stages are described in more detail below.

1.3.1 Stage 1 Tasks – Project Mobilisation

The main Stage 1 tasks commenced in August 2003, and included:

- **A literature review** – to inform the study team on current thinking and practice in pupil reintegration, and provide an overview of the issues faced by young people across the different target groups.
- **Stakeholder and expert interviews** – to further inform the study, a series of interviews took place with practitioners and other experts in the field of reintegration. Ten telephone interviews were completed with organisations including three LEAs, providers of services for disaffected/at risk young people, a London Connexions service and a representative of the Department of Health Social Care Group.
- **Development of the LEA survey questionnaire** – a questionnaire for the LEA survey was developed and piloted prior to the commencement of Stage 2.

1.3.2 Stage 2 - The LEA Survey

The LEA survey sought to examine the extent to which LEAs had 'specific, formalised approaches' to the reintegration of young people from the different target groups, as well as providing further insights into their practices and procedures. The questionnaire developed for use in the survey is provided as Annex I of this report. From the outset it was recognised that a survey of this nature would not provide a complete picture given the complexity of the issues involved and the potential for over-reporting, and that care would be needed in the interpretation of any resultant findings.

The survey commenced in October 2003, with LEAs being contacted by telephone to identify the most appropriate individual to receive the questionnaire and offer the option of responding by hard copy questionnaire or by email. The first questionnaires were distributed on 13 October, with a return date of 11 November 2003, although revised deadlines were set for 12 December 2003 and finally 26 January 2004. A number of reasons for the limited responses were identified, including: survey fatigue, difficulties in contacting potential respondents (both initially and to chase up returns, although using email proved more effective), the lack of a single contact point in LEAs for reintegration activities and the questionnaire being perceived as lengthy.

In addition to seeking to reduce the burden of questionnaire completion and extending the deadlines for responses, a series of further steps were taken to try to improve the response rate. These included diverting resources to additional follow-up activity with non-respondents, and introducing final follow-up contacts with the option to complete a shortened version of the questionnaire by telephone (an additional nine LEAs completed the short telephone survey).

By the final closing date of 26 January 2004, a total of 87 responses were received, representing 58% of all English LEAs. Following the final deadline a further three returns were received, taking the final response total to 90 (60% of all LEAs). The achieved returns were well completed overall, and considered to be sufficient to allow for subsequent analyses by sub-group, local authority type and region.

As suggested previously, caution was needed in interpreting the findings of the survey. The key issues related to:

- The extent to which individual responses captured the entire range of reintegration activities by pupil group – given the distribution of responsibilities for different groups and services by department and individuals.
- The extent to which activities for individual pupil groups were discrete and specifically tailored, or were part of more global approaches – and so lead to potential over-reporting.
- Conversely, the extent to which LEAs described ‘specific, formalised approaches’ to working with different pupil groups may have led to under-reporting, by excluding more ‘ad hoc’ approaches of those not considered sufficiently ‘formalised’.

1.3.3 **Stage 3 – Case Study Fieldwork**

A series of case studies took place with individual LEAs to examine approaches to the reintegration of pupils from different pupil groups in more detail. Initially 15 case studies were planned, with 14 being achieved in the available timeframe due to the late withdrawal of one LEA. The case study fieldwork commenced in May and completed in mid-July 2004.

The case studies were designed to collect specific examples of reintegration activities, and to provide in-depth perspectives from the stakeholders involved to complement the survey work. The case studies included visits and interviews with LEA staff with specific responsibilities for reintegration, schools, external services and agencies, and a small number of young people and parents/carers.

The case study selection process was never intended to ensure a scientifically representative sample, but was based on a framework to ensure that a reasonable distribution of pupil groups and areas were covered, and that the sample was not wholly unrepresentative. The nine LEAs completing the survey questionnaire by telephone were excluded from the sample development process, as their responses did not contain sufficient detail for their inclusion. The sampling framework drew on the findings of the LEA survey and comprised a series of variables, including:

- The range of **pupil groups covered/specific approaches followed** by each LEA – with a view towards innovative and potential good practice.
- Where LEAs described having **performance data and strategic/planning documents** for reintegration – to allow the case studies to make use of any available performance information, as well as suggesting more formalised approaches.
- Spatial and other characteristics – to ensure a broad distribution by **authority type** (namely London Boroughs, County Councils, Unitary and Metropolitan authorities), **urban and rural** areas, and by **region**.

An initial 25 case studies were proposed for agreement with the study steering group, including a ‘preferred 15’ and a reserve list of 10, to allow for non-participation and for any significant differences identified between survey responses and practice on the ground. In the event the final achieved sample of 14 LEAs was drawn from a

combination of the preferred and reserve lists, with all substitutions being agreed with the Department's project manager. The key characteristics of the case study LEAs are summarised in Chapter 3 of this report, as well as in Volume 2 which contains more detailed case study descriptions by pupil group.

To ensure that the relevant pupil groups were covered across the case study sample, and allow sufficient focus at the pupil group level, the majority of case studies focused on three pupil groups each. In two cases, where single approaches to working across a range of pupil groups were identified, an overview approach was followed.

1.4 Study Context

Recent years have seen changes in the policy context for education, as well as a series of wider developments affecting approaches towards children and young people more widely. The LEA case studies highlighted the fact that the LEA sector is experiencing change and transition, with most having, or being in the process of, reorganising many of their structures and responsibilities with regard to reintegration. Consequently, several of the mechanisms for reintegration of pupils and/or supporting pupils more widely had been relatively recently introduced.

A wide range of developments are affecting the context for reintegration, and creating opportunities for additional resources or new approaches to be applied to the different pupil groups. These include:

- **Changes in the schools sector.** As part of the Government's priority to raise standards, schools have increasingly taken on devolved responsibility for allocating funding and school management, including managing admissions. Key themes for the sector include: increased specialisation at secondary level, additional support for 'failing' schools, initiatives to improve behaviour and attendance, increasing availability of vocationally orientated curriculum options (offering at risk pupils an alternative to academic qualifications), and increased emphasis on schools offering services to their local communities. The increased emphasis on inclusion has been a key theme, with programmes such as Excellence in Cities providing extra funding to inner city schools to support measures such as Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units and initiatives to improve behaviour and attendance, such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme which targets LEAs with high crime and truancy levels.
- **Reorganisation of funding arrangements.** Since April 2003, the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG), with a total value of £84 million for 2003/5, has brought together previously separate funds to support those unable to attend school including activities to support attendance, integration/reintegration into school and additional educational support. As the study identified, the Grant has been used by LEAs to support a range of new and enhanced services across a range of pupil groups. More widely, there has been a trend towards increased delegation of funding to school level, including Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) resources. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have received additional funding through the spending review with the aim of ensuring a comprehensive CAMHS service by 2006. More specifically, the discontinuation of the Pupil Retention Grant has had implications for supporting, and schools' willingness to consider, the reintegration of excluded pupils.

- **Parallel developments in services for children and young people** - perhaps the most wide-ranging of which include the introduction of the Children's Fund (for 5-13 year olds) and the Connexions Service (for 13-19 year olds). Other developments include strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy, and multi-agency arrangements to tackle youth offending, drug and alcohol use and to improve the response to groups such as young runaways. This type of provision tends to fall within the framework of Local Preventative Strategies that local authorities are being asked to develop. The development of Identification, Referral and Tracking systems for at risk groups is a major development, with a focus on multi-agency partnerships to share information on children across a range of services. There has also been an emphasis on parenting and family support, with local authorities developing local parenting support plans.

1.5 Report Structure

The report is presented as two volumes, with a second volume providing detailed summaries of approaches to reintegration for each pupil group based primarily on the case study fieldwork. The remainder of this volume is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 reviews the findings of the postal survey of English LEAs, to provide the national context for reintegration activities for the different pupil groups.
- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the case study characteristics and key findings, drawn from the pupil group reports in Volume 2.
- Chapter 4 sets out examples of key success factors for, and good practice in, the successful reintegration of pupils to mainstream education.
- Chapter 5 presents our conclusions and recommendations.

2 NATIONAL OVERVIEW – FINDINGS FROM THE LEA SURVEY

Key Findings

- Specific, formalised approaches to the reintegration of children to education in mainstream schools were most commonly described for permanently excluded pupils, those with medical needs and children in local authority care. Approaches for young carers and children returning from extended authorised absences were described least.
- LEAs and schools draw on a range of funding to support their reintegration efforts, most commonly mainstream budgets but also the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) and other Standards Fund monies. The introduction of the VCG has led to the introduction of a range of new services, although concerns were expressed over time limited funding more broadly.
- Despite the majority of LEAs describing approaches to monitoring the effectiveness of reintegration in their areas, fewer than half provided data on reintegration performance.
- A range of reintegration approaches were described for the different pupil groups, including dedicated teams and a range of mechanisms including off-site centres/PRUs, externally provided services, multi-agency planning and service provision, personal education plans and flexible approaches to timetables and the curriculum.

This Chapter provides the findings from the survey of LEAs on the coverage and nature of reintegration approaches being followed by LEAs in England. It is intended to provide a national context for the study, although the following points should be considered in its interpretation:

- Responses were received from 87 of the 150 English LEAs (a response rate of 58%, although three later returns were included in the qualitative analysis). While we are satisfied that the returns were sufficiently representative to allow analyses by sub-group, local authority type and region, the response rate should be considered in the context of accurately representing the national picture.
- As described previously, it was acknowledged from the outset that a survey of this nature would not provide a complete picture of the complex processes followed and issues involved. These included:
 - The potential for over-reporting activity - which may have resulted from LEAs, despite the anonymity of the survey, wishing to show themselves in as positive a light as possible, as well as the potential for LEAs to use different definitions of 'specific, formalised approaches' to reintegration.
 - The potential for under-reporting activity – here a number of factors may have contributed to the under-reporting of reintegration activity, including individual responses failing to capture all activities by pupil group (given the wide distribution of responsibilities amongst departments and individuals), and LEAs following too strict a definition of 'specific, formalised approaches' and excluding more 'ad hoc' approaches.

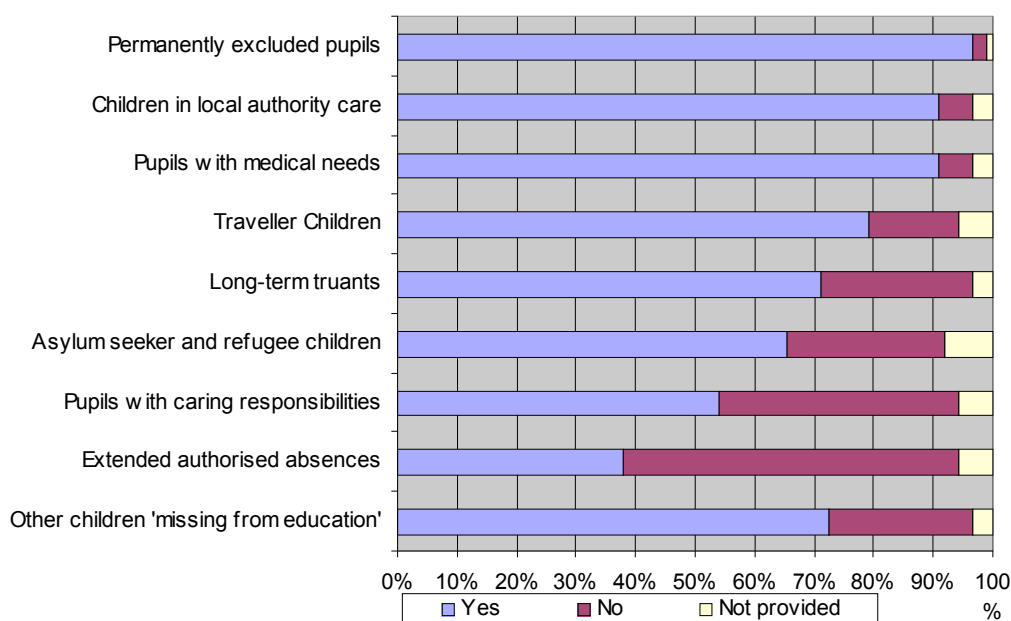
The influence of over and under-reporting is difficult to quantify, although follow-up contact with LEAs as part of the case study engagement process identified examples of approaches to working with additional pupil groups not reported in the survey.

2.1 Coverage of Different Groups by Reintegration Approaches

LEAs were asked to indicate whether they had **specific, formalised approaches** to integrating (or reintegrating) different pupil groups into mainstream schooling or other appropriate provision. The data suggests a 'hierarchy' in terms of the groups covered by formalised reintegration approaches, as shown in Figure 2.1 below. The pattern of LEA responses suggest that:

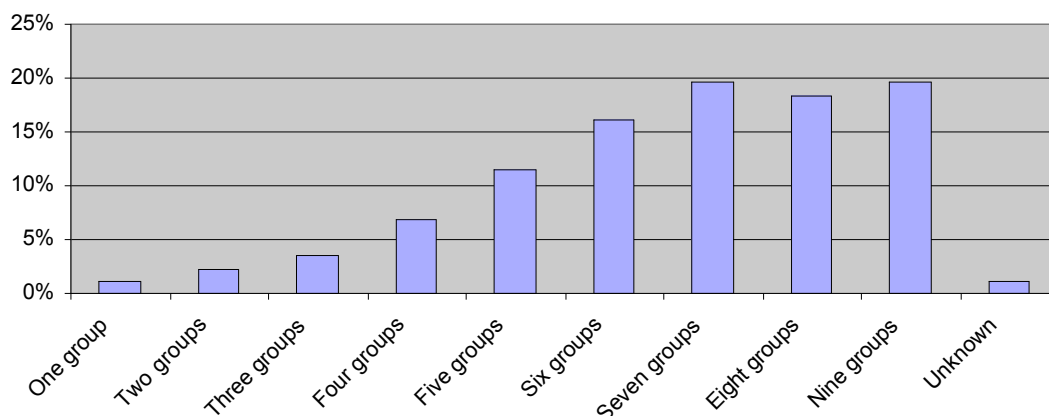
- Permanently excluded pupils, pupils with medical needs and children in local authority care are the groups most commonly addressed by formalised approaches (all reported by over 90% of LEAs).
- Gypsy/Traveller children, long-term truants and asylum seekers and refugee children are covered by formalised approaches in most cases, but less commonly than the above groups (reported by between 60 and 80% of LEAs).
- Children with caring responsibilities and children requiring reintegration after extended authorised absences are covered less frequently by formalised approaches (reported by 57% and under 40% respectively).

Fig 2.1: Proportion of LEAs with specific/formalised approaches towards different groups



The majority of LEAs described reintegration approaches for several groups, as shown in Figure 2.2 below. The average number of groups covered by specific/formalised reintegration approaches is seven, although this figure must be treated with care due to the possibility of under-reporting. The largest LEAs tended to cover more groups on average than their smaller counterparts.

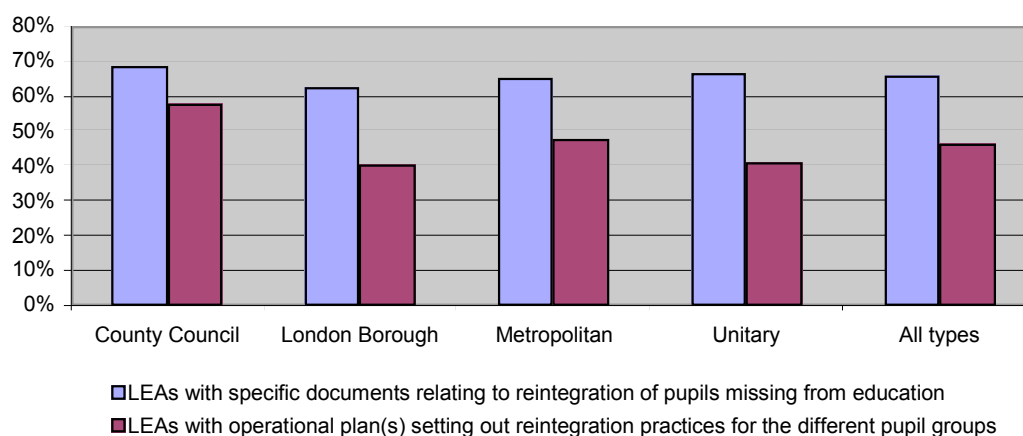
Fig 2.2: LEAs by Number of Groups Covered by Reintegration Approaches



2.2 Policies and Procedures

The majority (two-thirds) of respondent LEAs had specific documents relating to the reintegration of pupils missing from education, but less than half have operational plans setting out reintegration practices for the different pupil groups. Figure 2.3 below describes the distribution of reintegration documents and plans by LEA type.

Fig 2.3: LEAs with Reintegration Documents/Operational Plans by LEA Type



County Councils were most likely to have documented plans. The likelihood of having documented reintegration plans was also found to correlate with the size of Authority: LEAs with greater numbers of pupils being more likely to have operational plans.

At the same time, under half (44%) of LEAs said that they set targets for the reintegration of pupils. Targets were most commonly 'process' rather than numerical, and referred to either statutory guidance or self-set targets for the time taken to reintegrate pupils into schools, or for completion of discrete parts of the assessment

and reintegration process. Where targets were described, LEAs described having a monitoring role in 84% of cases, individual schools in 47% and other agencies in 34%.

2.3 Funding Reintegration

As the following section describes, LEAs reported drawing on a range of funding sources to support their reintegration efforts. These included mainstream funds (most commonly), and Standards Fund resources, including the newly introduced Vulnerable Children Grant. In some cases funding was available on a time-limited basis, which raised issues also identified in the case studies for the continuation of services developed and implemented once funding had ceased. However, as the case studies showed, providing information on the actual 'costs' of reintegration was difficult, as resources are rarely managed as isolated budgets.

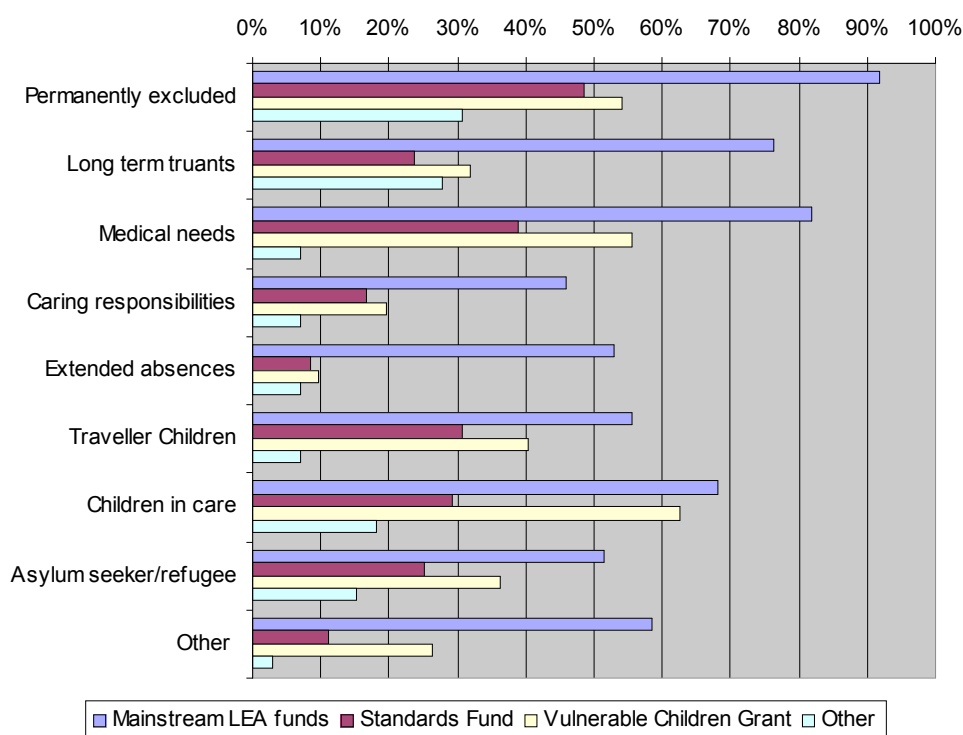
The vast majority of LEAs (97%) used mainstream funding resources for one or more pupil groups. The Vulnerable Children Grant is also used in the majority (82%) of cases, with other Standards Fund resources being applied widely (74%) and over half (51%) of LEAs using 'other' resources to assist reintegration. The most common 'Other' source of resources was Children's Fund, Social Services funding/Quality Protects, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and PSA Target Funds – although a range of special project funding from different sources/agendas was also described.

Most LEAs draw on a number of funding sources to support their reintegration work, as shown in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Funding Sources Used (Mainstream, VCG, Standards Fund and Other)		
	No. of LEAs	%
One source mentioned in relation to any of groups	6	7%
Two sources mentioned in relation to any of groups	12	14%
Three sources mentioned in relation to any of groups	28	32%
Four sources mentioned in relation to any of groups	26	30%
No information	15	17%
Total	87	100%

The use of funding by pupil group is shown in Figure 2.5, with certain patterns emerging.

Fig 2.5: Proportion of LEAs using Different Funding Sources in Relation to Pupil Groups



While the overall impression is that a cocktail of funding is used to support reintegration for each pupil group, it can be seen that:

- Mainstream resources are most often used to support reintegration of permanently excluded pupils (over 90% of authorities), long-term truants, pupils with medical needs and children in local authority care – over 60% in all cases.
- Fewer LEAs used mainstream resources for the reintegration of Gypsy/Traveller children, those with caring responsibilities, those having extended absences or asylum seeker/refugee children.
- The Vulnerable Children Grant is most often used for reintegration approaches for children in local authority care (over 60%). Relatively high proportions of LEAs also use the grant in the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils, children with medical needs, and Gypsy/Traveller children – over 50% in all cases. In addition, the case studies provided examples of where VCG monies were being used to support new services and enhancements to existing ones.

2.4 Monitoring Reintegration Performance

The survey also sought to identify the procedures in place amongst LEAs for monitoring the effectiveness of their reintegration practices, and to provide data on volumes and effectiveness. In addition, LEAs were asked, in the absence of a common national definition, what measures they used to assess effectiveness.

2.4.1 *Monitoring Practices*

As there are no central monitoring requirements for most aspects of reintegration practice, the extent to which LEAs and their partners have established such systems was an important question for the study to address. Initial research and early contacts with LEAs suggested that monitoring approaches were likely to be limited, and that performance data was unlikely to be available in all cases and across all pupil groups.

However, over three-quarters (76%) of LEAs responding to the survey reported that the effectiveness of reintegration approaches in their areas was being monitored. Responsibilities for monitoring varied between LEAs, schools and other partners, with LEAs playing a lead or supporting role in the vast majority of cases (91%). In almost half of all cases (48%) schools also contributed to monitoring efforts, and in almost a quarter of cases (24%) partner agencies also played a role.

Where LEAs were involved in monitoring reintegration effectiveness, they took lead/sole responsibility in 43% of cases, worked with schools in 38% of cases, and with other partners in 7% of cases. In the remaining 12% of cases, monitoring arrangements were described that while LEA led featured a combination of inputs from schools and other partners. The indicators used to measure effectiveness were more output/outcome related, with information being collected on:

- Reintegration rates and subsequent attendance levels - both reported by 71% of monitoring LEAs.
- The attainment levels for reintegrated pupils - 53% of LEAs, with almost one third reporting using attainment levels against previous SATs results/expectations.
- A range of other measures – just under a quarter of LEAs used other sources/types of information, including general reports from receiving schools, comparative data between schools, and individual monitoring approaches via multi-agency panels, pupil tracking or through Behaviour Support Service/reintegration managers.

Few LEAs (44%) set targets in terms of the effectiveness of pupil reintegration, although performance measures were linked to targets in some cases to monitor LEA, rather than pupil, performance. Again these often related to reintegration 'processes', and included having Key Stage 3 plans in place within a set period, or to reduce the average number of days children wait for assessments or planning events.

However, while 76% of the LEAs reported that they were monitoring their reintegration activities, **fewer than half provided data on pupil numbers and success rates** for all groups with the exception of excluded pupils, as described below.

2.4.2 *Defining Successful Reintegration*

As part of the survey, LEAs were asked to describe how long pupils had to remain in school before being considered successfully reintegrated. Less than half of those responding to the survey (48%) provided any information.

Where responses were received, the length of stay in school ranged from as little as one month (2% of LEAs responding) to up to 12 months (19% of LEAs providing a

figure). The most commonly cited length of stay was three months (43% of respondents), with the average time across all LEAs being five months.

2.4.3 Reintegration Performance

LEAs were asked to provide the number of children by pupil group considered appropriate for reintegration, and for whom reintegration was attempted, in 2002/3. They were also asked to provide the percentage of those reintegrated who had remained in school sufficiently long to be considered successfully reintegrated.

Despite 76% of the responding LEAs reporting monitoring the effectiveness of their reintegration work with different groups, fewer than half provided performance information (with the exception of excluded pupils, where just over half provided a response). This suggests that the monitoring of reintegration performance may occur less frequently than reported (a not unexpected finding), and/or respondents had taken monitoring to mean the monitoring of individuals through the reintegration process. The case studies supported this view, with the production of LEA-wide performance information being limited and most commonly to single services.

Figure 2.6 sets out, using the information available, LEA performance against self-defined time-based success measures for primary and secondary pupils. From this it is clear that LEAs have variable success in reintegration of the different pupil groups, although the limited data received formed a poor base on which to measure LEA performance, and did not allow any firm conclusions to be drawn.

It would appear, however, that reintegration is attempted with at least 80% of children for whom it is considered appropriate (although ranges are considerable by LEA and pupil group), with success rates varying considerably as the final column shows. The most frequently successful reintegration would appear to take place with primary pupils (for most groups) and with permanently excluded pupils and those with medical needs – with extended authorised absences appearing successful at the secondary level, but based on a very small sample.

The data on successful reintegration also appears high compared to the limited data identified in the literature review. While also providing similar caveats to our description, rates reported by LEAs in the survey appeared considerably higher than expectation for permanently excluded secondary pupils.

Overall, the survey suggested that the availability of monitoring information on different aspects of reintegration performance is limited, which has a series of implications locally and nationally for planning and identifying effective practice. As described later, the absence of monitoring information also influenced the extent to which the study could report on effectiveness in a quantitative context.

Figure 2.6: Reintegration Performance by Pupil Group – Primary and Secondary					
Pupil Groups	No. LEAs providing data	Average number of pupils considered appropriate for reintegration	% for which reintegration was attempted (range)	Average % for which reintegration was attempted	Average success rates, by LEA definitions
Primary					
Permanently excluded	38	7	23-100%	95%	82%
Long-term truants	6	86	85-100%	97%	56%
Children with medical needs	23	138	25-100%	91%	82%
Young carers	--	--	--	--	--
Extended authorised absences	--	--	--	--	--
Gypsy/Traveller children	9	51	33-100%	87%	65%
Looked-after children	6	46	1-100%	83%	58%
Asylum seekers/refugees	7	122	100%	100%	52%
Secondary					
Permanently excluded	43	22	31-100%	89%	75%
Long-term truants	11	144	41-100%	88%	53%
Children with medical needs	28	164	7-100%	83%	75%
Young carers	5	14	90-100%	98%	56%
Extended authorised absences	5	6	76-100%	95%	78%
Gypsy/Traveller children	12	65	33-100%	80%	56%
Looked-after children	14	35	3-100%	87%	53%
Asylum seekers/refugees	12	50	100%	100%	64%

Source: LEA Survey.

2.5 Reintegration Approaches

The survey suggests that LEAs tend to use a wide range of reintegration approaches and components of approaches, with the average of 12 components being reported by LEAs across all pupil groups. There is some variation between types and size of authority: County Councils indicated the largest number of approaches/components used on average, with the number of approaches increasing with Authority size.

In terms of the use of specific interventions:

- The vast majority (97%) use off-site centres/Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) for one or more pupil group, and 87% use on-site centres in schools.
- Four-fifths (82%) described using externally provided services for children not in school (e.g. contracted provision).
- Multi-agency groups were used for referral, assessing needs and/or decision-making by the majority (89%) of LEAs. Headteacher/pupil referral panels were less common, although were in use in around two-thirds of cases (64%).
- Personal education plans were widely described (97%), as were flexible timetabling/part-time provision and flexible application of the curriculum in a mainstream setting (94%).
- Over two-thirds of respondents (68%) reported using home-school liaison officers and/or home-school partnerships. The vast majority (93%) used home-teaching services, and mentoring/buddying approaches (89%).

In terms of specialist provision for specific groups:

- Four-fifths of respondents (78%) use specialist provision for Gypsy/Traveller children education services.
- The vast majority (90%) said they use additional support for pupils for whom English is not their first language.
- 82% used hospital schools/hospital education services.

Other approaches to reintegration mentioned by LEAs included: support to children from Educational Psychologists and/or Behavioural Support staff; support from Education but staff outside the school team, or professionals with specific responsibility such as corporate parenting managers; Connexions personal adviser or youth worker; community based centres.

Additional services for pupils with specific needs also reported by respondents included: Young Carers' Service/workers; EASL teachers; Missing Pupils Teams; specialist looked after children teams; a BIP-supported crime and truancy officer; and officers/coordinators for teenage pregnancies, a young mothers parenting support group, and teenage pregnancy support workers.

2.6 Reintegration Approaches by Pupil Group

The LEA survey provided an overview of reintegration practices with different pupil groups, the main findings of which are summarised by group below.

2.6.1 *Permanently Excluded Pupils*

All but two LEAs responding to the survey described having specific formal approaches to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils – unsurprising given the policy and financial emphasis placed on this group in recent years. Consequently, considerable detail was available on reintegration approaches for this group, and a wide range of practices and actors described.

1. *Agencies and structures*

The picture is complex, but the following structures tend to be involved:

- **Named LEA staff member(s) or teams** - which could be reintegration officers or other staff members (eg. behaviour and social inclusion officers or Inclusions Managers). These individuals would take the lead role in organising a reintegration plan, making arrangements for reintegration, and setting up a pastoral support programme in liaison with the other key agencies involved such as schools (excluding and receiving) and behaviour support services/PRUs. Some larger LEAs use area-based officers with a caseload (eg. a County Council in the South West).

EXAMPLE: County Council in the West Midlands

In this LEA Reintegration Officers (RIOs) were reported to become involved with permanently excluded pupils within three days of the exclusion notice, and liaise with families, schools, social services and any other relevant organisations. The RIOs will remind schools about the setting of work and encourage parents and pupils to ensure work is completed and returned for marking. The exclusion section liaises with the learning and behaviour support service to provide agreed support during the period of reintegration. The Pupil Exclusion and Mediation Officer (who works within the exclusion section) is responsible for assessing the most appropriate reintegration route for individual pupils (direct managed return to school or via PRU provision) based on information gathered from the school as part of the exclusion process.

- **Cross-departmental mechanisms** - often through LEA panels featuring several LEA departments, including EWS, Behaviour Support service, PRUs, SEN and Learning Support services. In some LEAs, individual cases are discussed by a panel, with a reintegration officer being assigned if the decision is made to reintegrate the pupil back into a mainstream school. Other agencies could get involved at this point. Meetings could be convened on a case-by-case basis, or follow a regular programme (e.g. every one/two weeks during term time).
- **Multi-agency groups or panels involving a range of agencies including schools** - several respondents stressed the involvement of staff from other agencies, including Connexions PAs; social services; YOT; Parent Partnership service; police; social workers and other support staff. This approach is therefore an LEA led inter-agency case management approach, with collaborative panels assessing needs, allocating provision, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. The benefits of involving parents/carers in such meetings was emphasised in a number of cases.

EXAMPLE: Unitary Authority in South East

A two stage assessment and planning approach was described, with initial meetings featuring the Director of Education and Community Development, Principal Education Officer - Pupil Services, Senior Education Officer - Access and Inclusion, Headteachers of excluding and receiving schools and teacher in charge of pupil referral unit.

Subsequent meetings included case-appropriate combinations of the following: Senior Education Officer - Access and Inclusion, Headteachers and senior pastoral staff of receiving school, teacher in charge of pupil referral unit, parent(s), carer(s), and education welfare staff. In addition, an individual's social worker, youth offending team worker, crime and disorder worker, police, or staff from private fostering agencies could also attend.

Some multi-agency groups have wide remit – for example in one LEA a Children Causing Concern Group also cover pupils with medical needs, teenage mothers, and pupils with mobility issues as well as long-term truants and excluded pupils.

2. Assessment

Several LEAs considered placement at a PRU (or alternative specialist centre) as their preferred approach, with initial assessments and the development of individualised plans taking place here. Some LEAs have guidelines on time spent in such provision (for example, 10 weeks in a LEA Learning Resource Centre for primary pupils and 6 weeks at a PRU for secondary pupils in one LEA), or requiring reintegration to be considered on a time basis (for example, PRUs review readiness for reintegration on a six weekly basis in an East Midlands County Council). Other services may also be involved in the assessment process – for example the 'Interim tuition service' undertakes assessments in a Metropolitan Authority in Yorkshire and the Humber.

EXAMPLE: London Borough

In this case permanently excluded pupils are provided with an individual education programme by the Pupil Referral Service (PRS), which is adapted according to individual needs and following the National Curriculum. PRS staff then decide on an appropriate programme length to prepare for reintegration. Reintegration planning is based on a range of variables, including previous school history, pupil age, their attitude to reintegration and perceived needs of the pupil in relation to returning to school.

A programme report is presented to the school at the point of reintegration planning and an appropriate reintegration plan is devised. This may include part-time attendance at the PRS, or in some cases, an immediate return to full-time education with support from the PRS staff or on-site behaviour support teams. On-going support is then provided by behaviour support or Connexions staff as appropriate. The LEA Social Inclusion Team support all parties through an individual Reintegration Plan that involves regular parental, pupil and school staff meetings. These are copied to all support agencies involved to aid communication and continuity.

Assessment for reintegration appears to draw on a variety of information, including progress reports, individual assessments, professional judgements and parents and young people's views. Some LEAs use a standardised approach to assessment of reintegration (such as the Jane McSharry Model used in a South East County Council). One Unitary Authority in the North East described developing a 'reintegration readiness scale' that is completed by lead and headteachers of the target school, with a second authority in the same region describing plans to introduce a similar approach.

Only a small minority of permanently excluded pupils appear to be returned direct to mainstream schools. Some LEAs offer work packs organised by schools/learning mentors, or use home tuition services, to help pupils to keep up with their work during time out of mainstream schooling - elsewhere learning mentors and pupil inclusion assistants also perform this role. In other cases LEAs have developed specific services for education other than at school. Issues around the exclusion may be addressed through the PRU, for example, 1:1 counselling and small group work on conflict resolution and anger management.

3. Development of a reintegration plan

The assessment stage tends to be followed by a review, including pupils, parents and the new school, with reintegration plans being drawn up on an individual basis. Some pupils appear to manage the direct transition to full-time schooling, whilst others need more of a stepped/staged approach. This could include a combination of work set from school, home tuition or placement at a PRU. Some LEAs use dual registration agreements, while others use 'trials'. In a Yorkshire and the Humber Metropolitan LEA "10 week trials" are arranged and a behaviour support worker is available, if schools choose to finance this, to work with the pupil and the school for half a day each week.

Mechanisms for engaging schools vary – for example through dedicated reintegration officers, admissions/headteacher panels, or multi-agency panels. Some LEAs have protocols where all schools must accept pupils if they have places, and a handful mentioned the use of dowries or financial incentives for schools (for example £3,000 in a County Council in the North West and £6,000 in a Unitary Authority in the South West). Some LEAs appear to have a structured approach for identifying schools – for example a 'points weighting' system.

Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils and schools also vary, especially in relation to the availability and timescales for support from the LEA. For example:

- In the case of a West Midlands Metropolitan Authority reintegration is operationally facilitated by a reintegration support teacher in the receiving school, with the headteacher of the school and a lead behaviour professional, as well as the pupil and parent/carer.
- In one LEA schools are offered support from the PRU (Teaching Assistant) for the first four weeks of the reintegration - which allows for a handover period from the PRU to the school.

Reintegration officers tend to continue to have a role, but support tends not to be on-going – being reduced on a gradual basis in the case of a Unitary Authority in the North East. In a Unitary Authority in the West Midlands a dedicated team offers outreach for up to 6 weeks once integrated.

In some LEAs on-going support is provided in the form of Behaviour Support Workers, or other key workers, and review meetings with the school. EWOs may also have a role in monitoring and supporting pupils in their new schools (as in a Unitary Authority in the South East), and other agencies may also be involved in supporting pupils (eg. Connexions in a London Borough).

EXAMPLE: Metropolitan Authority in the North West

In this LEA regular review meetings are held in school with support from SENCOs, Mentors, Personal Advisors. Having been assessed for integration via the Inclusion Panel Meetings, reviews take place every 2 weeks during term. Panel Members include: Secondary Headteachers, Team Leader - Pupil Welfare Inclusion, Team Leader - SEN, Senior Officer - Pupil Services, Headteacher PRU and the Inclusion Officer. Appropriate provision is planned and agreed with schools in a Pastoral Support Programme, contributors to which may include staff from the PRU, Inclusion Officer, SEN and other agencies such as Fairbridge and a local Youth Inclusion Project. Reintegration is facilitated by the school and the Inclusion Officer, or the Headteacher from the PRU.

4. Monitoring and review

Again approaches vary. In some cases the approach relies on the LEA/pupil/school relationship, in others the LEA or multi-agency panels continue to have a role. For example, the Pupil Inclusion Panel meets every 3 weeks to discuss progress in one LEA. In other areas, central LEA teams monitor pupils – including central admissions units or the Key Stage 4 co-ordinator in a South West Unitary Authority.

The analysis highlights the fact that a range of structures and agencies may be used at the different stages of the reintegration process. In some cases responsibilities are split between agencies as illustrated by the case of a Metropolitan LEA in the North West - where pupils are assessed within a PRU; Children's Officers lead on the liaison with mainstream provision; Learning Mentors support pupils during and after placement; and the Key Stage 4 Coordinator monitors the placements.

2.6.2 Long-Term Truants**1. Agencies involved**

The agencies involved in reintegration approaches for long-term truants tend to be focused around the Education Welfare Service and schools, although several LEAs which use panels and multi-agency planning groups said these also had a role with truants as well as excluded pupils.

Some LEAs have a school attendance service or team. Other LEA professionals with roles in reintegrating long-term truants include behaviour support services, school counsellors, anti-bullying services, Educational Psychology services etc. Within schools, SENCOs and learning mentors were mentioned as important contributors in several cases. External agencies involved included: social workers or private foster home staff, YOTs, police/magistrates, Connexions and voluntary agencies (including Children's Society and NSPCC) - with involvement being on a case-by-case basis.

2. Approaches/structures

In general terms, as might be expected, the approaches and structures used for long-term truants appear to be less formalised than those for permanently excluded pupils, in that procedures for identifying and targeting interventions are less clear cut. EWSs operate tracking and follow-up of truants in some LEAs (eg. in a Unitary Authority in the South West all pupils out of school for over four weeks are tracked). In other cases, intervention appears to depend on referral from the school or other stakeholders.

EXAMPLE: METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY IN THE NORTH EAST

One LEA described how long-term truants often have histories of poor attendance that result in considerable gaps in their learning. The authority attempts to facilitate a reintegration program supported by a school SENCO, with pupils being assessed on an individual case basis and provision planned via education planning meetings with all key workers. Reintegration is facilitated, via the above meeting with a clear plan of roles and responsibilities. Key staff offer ongoing support where necessary, until an acceptable pattern of attendance is established.

Educational Welfare Services usually have a role in formulating a plan that identifies appropriate school, home or community based/alternative provision. In some cases (eg. a Unitary LEA in the West Midlands) the emphasis is on the educator to discuss options with the parent/pupil (with EWS taking a support role). Reintegration plans with schools commonly include phased returns or flexible/reduced timetables, although some LEAs described how older pupils would be referred to alternative KS4 providers. The short-term use of Learning Support Units with in-built pastoral support was highlighted by some LEAs, with PRUs being mentioned less frequently.

At least one LEA (a London Borough) targets their work with long-term truants on specific groups – with reintegration services not being offered to non-attending pupils unless they have psychiatric difficulties. In a Metropolitan Authority in the West Midlands, where truancy is the result of a medical condition (e.g. psychiatric problems following bullying), referrals are accepted by the local Special School Referrals Team. The individual is then assessed to identify the best provision for them, with options including provision on a part-time basis at home, up to full-time in one of three teaching centres, or in a hospital classroom for extreme cases. Reintegration would then be planned on the basis of a detailed action plan.

Most commonly EWOs are responsible for negotiating reintegration packages, which could include multi-agency support, based on a reintegration plan. There are a range of other mechanisms which could also be brought into play, including School Attendance Policies, home-school contracts, parenting orders, parent prosecution and managed moves.

EXAMPLE: LONDON BOROUGH

This LEA uses multi-agency area planning meetings, with a staged reintegration approach being preferred following liaison with the receiving school Head of Year and EWO. The EWO can accompany the pupil to school for an initial return session, with support in-school featuring meetings with the EWO and/or Head of Year. Recognising the importance of making up for lost study time, additional support with time to catch up with work is available if required.

Targets and timescales are also important tools in reintegration planning and management. Some LEAs mentioned having time limits for providing extra support and outreach – for example one County Council described how support via extra tuition and the reintegration into school for long-term truants is being limited to half a term.

EWOs also commonly have a role in monitoring attendance once pupils are reintegrated into schools. Some LEAs mentioned school attendance services that were devising a range of preventative approaches – such as ‘attendance hero’ medals, annual award ceremonies and the provision of an alternative curriculum.

2.6.3 *Pupils Not Attending School (Due to Medical Needs, Caring Responsibilities and Extended Authorised Absences)*

The LEA survey yielded less information on pupils from the above groups, in part due to approaches for pupils with caring responsibilities and extended absences being least commonly identified. More information was available, however, on approaches for pupils with medical needs.

1. Agencies involved

For pupils with medical needs, home and Hospital Education Services were most commonly mentioned, in partnership with schools. Education Welfare Services and pupil attendance services were also identified. Some LEAs utilise the PRU for children with medical needs, some use home tuition services, and others use services provided by both specialist and generic inclusion teams. One LEA has identified a teacher with special responsibility for pupils' reintegration after illness, with allocated time to work with schools, families and health services on medical plans and their links with continued study and reintegration.

Several LEAs described having young carer services or tutors, others said they used voluntary agencies to support young carers, and the use of PRUs was also described. Some LEAs noted that carer projects for teenage mothers may offer support but not necessarily reintegration. In one LEA pregnant schoolgirls have a liaison teacher and support workers to provide education before and after the birth of the baby, and to assist in the reintegration of the pupil back into mainstream school if appropriate.

2. Approaches/structures

In the case of pupils with medical needs, the main issues are maintaining educational inputs as far as possible during periods of absence, and preparing and managing reintegration to school. Where hospital education services provide education, the importance of tutors maintaining close links with schools was stressed. Where work is provided by home tuition, links with schools are commonly maintained by home tuition staff. In one London Borough pupils are followed up four weeks after re-integration to check that they are attending regularly and coping adequately, to provide advice to the school, and to inform relevant agencies if attendance or other issues arise.

For pupils with caring responsibilities EWO's tend to take lead roles, in liaison with the family and local agencies. Some LEAs made explicit reference to the provision of crèche facilities for teenage mothers.

More generally, survey responses suggested that LEAs tend to draw on the wider range of support mechanisms available to them to offer interim education to the above groups, such as home tuition services, PRU placements, and other types of education outside school provision. Gradual reintegration (small step staged approach) appears to be fairly common for pupils with medical needs and caring responsibilities and due to pregnancy. Several authorities use tailored work packs backed up with support from a specialist or school staff member. Some respondents mentioned support within the mainstream school setting for these groups once reintegration has taken place, such as mentoring.

Centralised approaches to pupils requiring reintegration due to extended authorised absences appear to be uncommon. Responses suggest that strategies tend to be led at school-level, although LEAs may facilitate this. For example one LEA described developing a written contract between schools and parents on dates of return, with work being provided by the school/LEA team to be completed during absence. (The LEA also described a planned visit to establish links with schools in Bangladesh, with the intention of promoting continuing education during extended visits). Other LEAs mentioned penalties for pupils taking extended holidays without prior arrangement – for example in one LEA policy on extended holidays indicates that pupils lose their school place if they do not return within 2 weeks of the agreed date.

Reintegrating Pupils Following Extended Authorised Absences – Metropolitan LEA in Yorkshire and the Humber

In this LEA EWS work with families and schools to plan pupils' return to school after extended holidays. They also work with schools to ensure that Whole School Attendance Policies include reference to welcoming and supporting returns to school after lengthy absences, regardless of the reasons for them. Local parent partnership and transiency projects have also contributed by producing work packs to help reintegration. School mentors and support from the school Learning Support Units also contribute to the majority of re-integration arrangements, irrespective of the circumstances that lead to the lengthy absence from school.

2.6.4 Pupils with Mobility Issues (Gypsy/Traveller Children, Children in Local Authority Care, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children)

1. Agencies involved

A number of LEAs described having dedicated teams to work with minority ethnic groups, Gypsy/Travellers and children in public care, and support teachers for asylum seeker and refugee children (or equality and diversity services encompassing asylum seeker and refugee children). These include some Authorities with externally contracted provision – for example one London Borough has a Gypsy/Travellers' education service and a new arrivals team within the local Learning Trust. In the West Midlands specialist services for Gypsy/Traveller children are run on a consortium basis.

Looked after children's teams could be multi-agency based, with education and social service departments working together, as well as links to private residential homes and foster carers on a case basis. In some LEAs such multi-disciplinary teams have been set up on a special projects basis, with the aims of raising the achievement of children in care in line with national policy. The main differences between LEAs appear to depend on whether there is a dedicated service/team in place or whether responsibility resides in a panel/group process. One County Council in the North West said: *"For looked after children there is no service (and this is a specific decision) but a wide range of flexible multi-agency working is encouraged, using the Personal Education Plan as a tool"*. In a County Council in the South East the reintegration group meets to share information and plan provision, with a key worker being assigned to take responsibility for individual cases and provide support according to their service procedures.

Multi-agency groups are also involved with pupils with mobility issues in a small number of cases, for example in two LEAs in the North East and South West. These

groups appear to have a role in ensuring that particularly vulnerable pupils are supported as most appropriate to their needs.

For refugees and asylum seekers, curriculum language services and/or English as a second language co-ordinators were also frequently mentioned. Other agencies commonly described in working with this group include EWS, behaviour support services and SEN teams as appropriate. Other external agencies referred to as having an involvement included a refugee forum, corporate parenting managers and teams and staff from private fostering agencies.

2. Approaches/structures

Authorities appear to differ in terms of the mechanisms that can be called upon in relation to pupils with mobility issues, in terms of supporting admissions to schools, providing assessments of need, and facilitating any support required to help children cope better with education or catch up with their studies. These issues are discussed below in relation to the different groups.

Admissions

Formalised process for the admission and transition of Gypsy/Travellers and children in local authority care are in place in a number of LEAs, with some authorities prioritising school places for specific groups. One LEA described how children in local authority care are a top priority group for admissions to school, and the LEA directs the admission of these pupils above schools' intake limits. One LEA in the West Midlands, for example, described how Gypsy/Traveller children remain on roll with their original school during periods of absence to facilitate their reintegration. Some LEAs have also set their own targets for the reintegration of certain groups. For example, a County Council in the South East aims for children in local authority care requiring reintegration to be placed in a new school within 20 days.

In other areas the admissions process is based on negotiation with schools, sometimes utilising financial incentives to receiving schools. The process may be facilitated by a specialist officer, or by an EWO as in a Unitary LEA in the South East. Other LEAs use panel approaches to discuss cases referred for all categories of vulnerable pupil not on a school roll. In one case the Panel, which meets fortnightly, approves appropriate provision for individual pupils and where necessary 'assessment' via the Pupil Referral Unit.

Approaches to refugee and asylum seeker children vary depending on the existence of specialist staff. For example, in a Metropolitan Authority in the West Midlands, all incoming families reported to the LEA by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), other agencies or schools are referred to a minority group support service team. Each family is then visited by a 'settlement officer' who, working in collaboration with the Education Admissions Section, explains admission procedures and guides and supports the family through the admission process. In a North West County Council, where there is lower demand for reintegration for refugee and asylum seeker children, the Education Welfare Officer, Admissions Officer and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service get involved when cases arise.

Assessment

In many cases central specialist education staff take the lead on assessment and the development of Personal Education Plans. The mechanisms and resources used vary:

- Some Authorities have developed centres for initial provision and assessment. For example, asylum seeker pupils in one Metropolitan Authority in Yorkshire and the Humber from years 5 to 11 are admitted to a welcome centre, a reception class for a period of assessment and, where necessary, initial English Language instruction. This allows information to be gathered about the educational and pastoral needs of individual students, which can then inform the provision offered by their schools. Integration of these students into a school is then tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Elsewhere Authorities use home visits, or assessment in school by central specialist staff in conjunction with mainstream schools. Others described using PRUs, as in the case of one LEA where children in local authority care are assessed through a report produced by the PRU.

Some respondents referred to approaches to tracking groups of children experiencing mobility issues, and to links to pilot approaches to Identification, Referral and Tracking being established locally. The box below summarises one LEA's approach to monitoring children in local authority care.

EXAMPLE: METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

In this LEA every child in local authority care is tracked on a half termly basis to assess attendance levels and any issues arising in school. Individual support is offered by a specific looked after children team to meet their needs, with support being targeted at Early Years, primary and secondary ages. Referrals can be made to the team by any agency or through the monitoring process. Each child has a social and educational assessment and provision is planned via a multi-agency allocation team. The work is overseen by a joint services group, who consider developments in the area for the education of children in public care. Personal Education plans are used to develop individual education plans and ensure appropriate support is offered by the appropriate agency. These plans are also monitored by the looked after children team.

Support

Approaches to providing support services depend on the extent to which specialist or generic services are in place, and whether central LEA services or schools take the lead. In some areas, there is a mix of approaches - for example, funds for Gypsy/Traveller children may be delegated to schools but looked after children may have a specifically designated education support team, whilst a further team may exist to support refugees and asylum seekers.

Specialist services, where they exist, appear to offer a degree of ongoing support to individual children and groups affected by mobility issues. This tends to be through additional teaching support in and/or outside school. One Metropolitan Authority in Yorkshire and the Humber allocated resources for children in local authority care through support in school, including homework clubs and lunchtime homework sessions in secondary schools.

Many LEAs mentioned the use of peripatetic teachers to provide assistance to Gypsy/Traveller children during periods out of mainstream schooling, and/or distance

learning methods, to support continuity of education and a return to school. In a Metropolitan LEA in the North East contact is maintained with Gypsy/Traveller children by mobile phone, work packs are provided prior to a period of travel, and staff provided for Gypsy/Traveller schools in the region. In a South East County Council learning materials are used which are provided through the national network of Gypsy/Traveller teachers, and an e-learning pilot is being developed. Indeed, the use of ICT and the internet to support distance learning for Gypsy/Travellers seems to be increasingly considered (as is its use for other groups, including those with medical needs during periods of absence).

The monitoring of educational interventions and achievements for Gypsy/Traveller children emerged as an important issue, in particular to help schools to track their progress and needs and respond accordingly. Some LEAs have established procedures for this, as in the example below.

EXAMPLE: Fairground and Circus Travellers (County Council in the North West)

On receiving notification of the arrival of mobile families an Education Access Officer visits the 'site' to obtain information on their proposed length of stay and the educational needs of the children, making teaching visit appointments where appropriate. Most commonly families are short-stay visitors, i.e. for weekly fairs, and have their education supported on site by a Traveller Education Service (TES) teacher. An appointment system is in place which is understood by the majority of families returning on a seasonal basis to the area, and many families now telephone the TES to make their own appointments. Children are offered teaching slots during their week of stay, when a visiting teacher will support those who are usually working with distance learning materials from their base schools. Those children with no work packs will be provided with teaching materials appropriate to their age and ability.

A reporting system, used by the majority of TESs in the North West, has been operating for several years. A number of families now carry the 'Motifax' system, which may be used for recording purposes. A written report of any visit is recorded and a copy retained by the parent and the TES. A third copy is returned to the base school of the individual pupil or the base TES. When collated these reports provide an overview of the support provided and progress made. On return to the base school these reports should facilitate a speedier reintegration, by enabling class teachers to quickly identify individual progress and any learning gaps that may have developed during the period of travel.

Arrangements for work in schools vary between LEAs. For example, in one LEA schools with particular concentrations of ethnic minority pupils have additional (EMTAG funded) staff. Other schools in the area can request help from this peripatetic teaching team, which usually offers half a day support week for two to three terms and for up to 15 pupils. In one London Borough, their Ethnic Minority and Traveller Assistance Service (EMTAS) provide support on a half-termly or termly basis. Where an EMTAS teacher is working in a school, provision for a newly arrived pupil can be planned through timetabling with the teacher, and consultation and collaboration with mainstream staff. Where there is no EMTAS support timetabled in a school, the EMTAG adviser will visit the pupil and in some cases offer short-term support if the pupil is a beginner in English.

In another LEA, each school can call on advice, support and training from MGSS, and is allocated a one-off payment from the Vulnerable Children Grant to buy in additional staffing and other measures to meet pupils' immediate needs. More on-going needs

are supported through the use of EMTAG resources (and, until March 2004, NRF funding for an asylum seekers integration project).

Multi-agency responses are also relevant. The services represented on the Core Placement Panel in one Authority provide on-going support to pupils, including re-integration support into mainstream schooling. Some respondents mentioned the use of various strategies in relation to individual reintegration plans for pupils. These could include part-time attendance, intensive initial support, a reduced curriculum, placement in smaller classes and placement in a different year group (this was rarely followed).

In most cases, involvement of parents and carers in reintegration is facilitated through home visits by specialist or central staff. In a Metropolitan LEA in the North East the Admissions Officer is involved, to facilitate approval for the provision of school uniform and free school meals for the child if appropriate. Refugee and asylum seeker children arriving in some local schools have been provided with English classes on arrival until they obtain a school place, which appears to have been particularly useful during school holidays. An Education Worker, based at the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service team, manages this post and supports the child until they start school.

Finally, specialist services also appear to have an important role in raising awareness of the needs of, and providing training sessions for mainstream staff on working with, Gypsy/Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker children, and vulnerable children more widely.

2.7 Barriers to Reintegration and Potential Solutions

In addition to describing the approaches being followed for the reintegration of different pupil groups, a series of actual and potential barriers to effective reintegration were identified. While examples of the specific barriers experienced with different pupil groups were also described, the most commonly reported generic barriers included:

- **Resources.** Lack of appropriate resources were a barrier mentioned by around a quarter of respondents. Some LEAs highlighted general financial constraints, while others pinpointed a lack of funding to support developments within the system. The application of resources for support in school, especially if pupils are not covered by a SEN, appears to be a key issue.
- **Securing admissions.** The majority of the respondents mentioned schools' reluctance to admit pupils, or different admissions criteria/systems. Some groups face particular issues due to culture or language issues.
- **Curriculum and planning.** The lack of a widely available diverse and differentiated curriculum was also seen as a barrier to reintegration across all age ranges and Key Stages. Other barriers to effective reintegration mentioned include a poor relationship between LEA and schools; lack of records from previous education; and poor monitoring of action plans.
- **Pupils/parents.** Lack of engagement from pupils and/or parents can also undermine reintegration, including issues around the location of schools and pupil/parental perception of them.
- **Teacher training/staffing.** Several respondents felt that many schools are unequipped to deal with pupils with special needs or challenging behaviour.

To counter these barriers, the LEAs proposed the following solutions:

- **Funding and resources.** Suggestions for solutions to this issue focused on ring-fenced funding to support schools and to facilitate alternative provision. Many people felt more funding was needed to support individualised reintegration packages, which may require the provision of longer-term support.
- **Guidelines.** Guidelines to standardise procedures and expectations were welcomed by over a quarter of respondents. Guidelines on the application of funding were seen as particularly important. Most respondents felt that there needs to be a corporate responsibility and strategy for reintegration at the LEA level. Multi-agency commitment was also favoured.
- **Admissions procedures and protocols.** Some respondents felt there was a need for LEAs to have more leverage with schools through legislation/stronger guidelines on admissions. Systems to ensure all schools take a role in provision for reintegration were seen as vital.
- **Culture and ethos.** Several LEAs felt effort should be put into changing the culture and ethos of some schools.
- **Reintegration guidance and support.** Other respondents felt that the solutions to limited school engagement depended on adequate support systems being in place. Suggestions included the application of additional funding for initiatives to schools to take children on-roll. Certain schools may have little experience or small numbers of pupils with reintegration issues, and need extra help from LEAs in terms of guidance and ring-fenced funding in support of inclusive practices. Reintegration funding to follow pupils on admission was generally considered to be an incentive to schools to admit pupils.
- **League tables.** Suggestions focused on encouraging schools to be more welcoming to vulnerable groups through changes in the league tables for attendance and attainment.
- **Curriculum developments.** The need for curriculum development was mentioned by several respondents, at school and/or LEA level and across all ages and Key Stages. Some respondents highlighted the need for more 'social skills' development work with some children and young people, to enable them to operate in a mainstream setting.
- **Awareness and pupil rights.** Raising awareness of the problems of reintegration was also put forward as a means of improving the situation. Some respondents favoured legislation to establish the rights of pupils, especially those who have been excluded.
- **Recruitment to teams/staffing.** Funding to allow staffing increases in both LEA and schools to facilitate reintegration appropriately, especially over the longer term, was considered to be important to overcoming barriers to reintegration.
- **Training.** Training needs reported included managing pupils with challenging behaviour for mainstream and specialist staff.
- **Inclusive practices.** Promoting and supporting best practice was seen as an important issue for the future, especially in terms of sharing good practice

between schools. The need for effective monitoring to support inclusion was also highlighted.

3 REINTEGRATION IN DETAIL – SUMMARY CASE STUDY FINDINGS

Key Findings

- The main detailed findings from the case study fieldwork are provided in Volume 2 of this report, with the main barriers identified and components of effective approaches are described below.
- Common generic barriers to effective reintegration to mainstream school included school-based (e.g. reluctance to accept certain pupils, insufficient support resources and lack of alternative options/inflexibility in the curriculum), contact and communication (e.g. unclear roles and responsibilities and ineffective communications) and external barriers (e.g. lack of parent/carer support, poor assessment and poor reintegration planning).
- Generic factors for effective reintegration across the pupil groups included effective planning and multi-agency working, dedicated staff/key workers and the raising awareness of the needs of different pupil groups.
- A series of 'key components', which were described as essential or effective in the reintegration of the different pupil groups, which formed the basis of the key success factors and good practice examples featuring in the subsequent Chapter.

The case study fieldwork allowed the reintegration approaches outlined in the LEA survey to be examined in more detail, through the review of documentation and a series of interviews with LEA and school staff, local reintegration partners and children and families. This Chapter provides a summary of the case study findings by pupil group, taken from the detailed descriptions in Volume 2 of this report.

3.1 Case Study Approach and the Case Study LEAs

A total of 14 case studies were undertaken in different LEA areas, to identify the practices followed by LEAs, schools and their local partners to reintegrate children into mainstream school. Each case study had participated in the earlier LEA survey, with their responses being central to their selection as well as providing a basis for investigation. Individuals interviewed in the case studies included:

- LEA staff – including individuals with responsibility for policy, strategy and operational aspects of education and reintegration processes.
- School staff – included teachers, Headteachers and Heads of Year, dedicated reintegration staff and other support staff contributing to reintegration efforts.
- 'Reintegration' partners – organisations with an interest or involvement in the reintegration process in the different areas or with different pupil groups.
- Pupils – to identify their experiences of the reintegration process.
- Parents – a small sample, to identify and discuss their role in, and experiences of, the reintegration process.

The LEAs were selected to ensure a cross section of practice by pupil group, as well as a reasonable distribution by LEA characteristics including size (in terms of pupil numbers), local authority type and region. To provide a focus to the case studies, three pupil groups were selected for study in each LEA, with the exception of three LEAs where a combined approach was being followed across a number of pupil groups. In two other cases, four and five pupil groups were examined. The characteristics of the case study LEAs, and the pupil groups covered with each, are summarised as Figure 4.1 below. The table shows that:

- A range of LEAs by local authority type were involved, including six Metropolitan and two Unitary authorities, four County Councils and two London Boroughs. The County Councils included rural areas to ensure a split between rural and urban LEAs.
- Case studies took place in all regions, with the exception of the East Midlands and Eastern.
- The LEAs varied considerably in terms of pupil numbers, with the smallest having 18,000 and the largest 120,000 primary and secondary pupils.

Figure 4.1: Characteristics of the Case Study LEAs.				
LEA	LA Type	Region	Pupil No's 2002/3*	Pupil Groups Covered
1	London Borough	London	32,000	Medical needs, carers, looked after children.
2	Unitary	South East	27,000	Truants, medical needs, looked after children.
3	Metropolitan	West Midlands	42,000	Excluded, truants, looked after children.
4	County Council	South West	76,000	Multiple group coverage.
5	Metropolitan	North West	24,000	Excluded, truants, carers.
6	Metropolitan	North West	64,000	Excluded, truants, looked after children, asylum seekers/refugees.
7	Metropolitan	North West	58,000	Multiple group coverage.
8	Unitary	North East	22,000	Multiple group coverage.
9	London Borough	London	18,000	Excluded, truants, Gypsy/Travellers.
10	County Council	South West	65,000	Medical needs, carers, Gypsy/Travellers, looked after children.
11	Metropolitan	North East	41,000	Medical needs, carers, Gypsy/Travellers, looked after children, asylum seekers and refugees.
12	County Council	South East	120,000	Excluded, truants, Gypsy/Travellers.
13	Metropolitan	Yorks and Humber	47,000	Carers, looked after children, asylum seekers and refugees.
14	County Council	West Midlands	67,000	Excluded, medical needs, looked after children.

**Combined primary and secondary pupils, to nearest 1,000. Source DfES.*

The table also describes the pupil groups covered in each of the case studies, with coverage featuring:

- Permanently excluded pupils – in seven cases.
- Long-term truants – six cases.
- Pupils with medical needs – five cases.
- Young carers – five cases.
- Gypsy/Traveller children – four cases.
- LAC – eight cases.
- Asylum seekers and refugees – four cases.
- Multiple group coverage – three cases.

None of the case study LEAs described having specific, formalised approaches to the reintegration of pupils following extended authorised absences, although several described how they would work with this group to return them to school. Consequently, additional telephone interviews were undertaken with four local authorities to identify their approaches to this specific issue.

3.2 Barriers to Effective Reintegration

Before reviewing the issues faced by, and responses formulated for, the individual pupil groups, the generic barriers to effective reintegration identified across the pupil groups are shown in the box below. The barriers are grouped by school-based, contact/communication and external factors.

Common Generic Barriers to Reintegration (Case Studies)

The barriers to reintegration common across most pupil groups can be grouped as follows:

1 School-based barriers - including:

- **Reluctance of schools to accept pupils** - mentioned by all the case studies, and particularly where acceptance is believed to risk lowering attendance and attainment rates. Negative preconceptions/stereotyping can also influence the support and encouragement received, with a culture of low expectations magnifying difficulties experienced by pupils.
- **Awareness** - if mainstream teaching and support staff are not made aware of reintegrating pupils and their needs, reintegration can be compromised. An inadvertently ill informed comment from a member of staff can undermine progress made.
- **Insufficient school resources to support reintegration** – most commonly insufficient staff to provide the extra support within and outside the mainstream classroom. Some LEAs and schools also reported a lack of physical space that could be used by reintegrating pupils. A lack of staff continuity may compromise commitment to reintegration plans.
- **Funding** – the absence of earmarked or ring-fenced funding, with the extent to which schools funded reintegration activities or dedicated staff often being seen as a function of school cultures and the extent to which they value inclusion.
- **School environment** – less than welcoming school environments can be off-putting, and may relate to both the physical (large anonymous schools can be intimidating) and the

social environment (e.g. if returning pupils are not made to feel welcome by staff and fellow pupils). The lack of good pastoral care systems can also be a barrier.

- **Lack of alternative options and inflexibility within the national curriculum** - were viewed as exacerbating the reintegration challenge, particularly for disengaged pupils and/or those who would benefit from a more vocational education.

2 Contact and communication barriers - including:

- **Unclear roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies** - can hinder reintegration and reduce commitments and efficiency/effectiveness.
- **Ineffective lines of communication between key agencies** – can endanger reintegration and may lead to needs being overlooked. Crucial information on a child's background/needs can be lost if information sharing protocols are not established and adhered to.
- **A lack of continuity of contact** - increased the likelihood of pupil disengagement, at a time when maintaining contact between pupils and school is key. Continued contact is also important in ensuring that schools maintain a sense of ownership of the pupil.

3 External barriers – including:

- **Lack of support from parents or carers** – which may reduce buy-in, and continued negative factors such as parental collusion in unauthorised absences.
- **Ineffective assessment processes** – it was apparent that in a small number of the pupil cases discussed, reintegration may not have been the most appropriate way forward – either due to the scale of problems faced or needs going undetected for some time. In one case example staff were baffled as to why reintegration was failing for a particular pupil. Later the pupil revealed an experience of abuse, influencing her reintegration.
- **Poorly timed reintegration** - if pupils are not ready to be reintegrated the process can fail and cause more damage while, conversely, remaining out of mainstream schooling for too long may also damage reintegration prospects.
- **Limited access to external services** – notably for pupils with multiple needs that cannot be wholly addressed within the school/LEA setting. Pupils with mental health needs were mentioned frequently as growing in numbers, although engagement with CAMHS was often problematic due to resource pressures.

3.3 Summary Findings by Pupil Group

The approaches to reintegration for each pupil group are described in Volume 2 of this report. Again a series of generic issues and approaches to reintegration were identified across the pupil groups, including:

- The importance of effective reintegration planning – through a variety of mechanisms including LEA/headteacher or multi-agency panels, and based a range of information and robust diagnostic and assessment procedures to ensure needs are identified and appropriate responses implemented.
- The need to raise awareness of the needs of different pupil groups - to enable effective reintegration as well as fostering a culture of inclusion and acceptance.

- The use of incentives and disincentives – for LEAs with schools in terms of funding levers to take/not exclude pupils, and pupil-focussed initiatives to promote attendance and achievement amongst the different groups.
- The need for effective multi-agency working – in terms of: identifying pupils and with reintegration needs (especially looked after, and asylum seeker and refugee, children), securing a range of specialist provision for children with combinations of complex needs (which schools cannot address alone), and providing integrated solutions (for example for young carers, through the provision of additional care packages to enable pupils to continue their education).
- The benefits of providing guidance and documentation – in terms of supporting shared understandings, the clear allocation of responsibilities and communication policy and practice steps to parents, carers and partner agencies.
- The importance of dedicated teachers and key workers – in terms of providing specialist support, single points of contact and establishing positive relationships with pupils, parents and carers.

At the individual pupil group level, the case studies identified the issues influencing their reintegration and a series of approaches and components that were essential to, or particularly effective with, each group. The key points for each pupil group are provided in the summaries below.

3.3.1 *Permanently Excluded Pupils*

Formalised approaches to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils were the most commonly identified of all the pupil groups studied in both the LEA survey and the individual case studies. Barriers to the reintegration of this group included the attitudes to and commitment of schools to taking pupils from this group, as well as the complexity of issues individual pupils face and which are often underpinning factors that led to their exclusion in the first instance. As with other groups, LEAs and their partners frequently described preventative steps to prevent or reduce the number of permanent exclusions, often using similar resources to those used to support their reintegration.

The key components identified as essential for or particularly effective in the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils included:

- **Using panel approaches for decision-making** – and as a means for involving and securing commitment to reintegration from schools, as well as providing a forum for decision making and monitoring progress.
- **Securing school places/commitment** – of particular relevance to this group, given the reluctance on the part of some schools to accept pupils and the risk of concentrating reintegrated pupils in a small number of schools. LEAs described a range of approaches to securing school commitment, including awareness raising, providing a 'safety net' of support and secured/reserved school place schemes. In addition, inputs from specialist behaviour management services may be particularly appropriate for this group.

- **The use of key workers** – the allocation of dedicated individuals to support the reintegration of pupils was found to be particularly helpful for this and other pupil groups, providing a single point of contact and support to pupils and families.
- **Interim/alternative education provision** – given the reasons for their absence, and the legal requirements to provide education to excluded pupils, appropriate interim provision is a key part of both the continued education and reintegration processes (either by providing ‘therapeutic’ services or ensuring provision is geared towards reintegration from the outset).
- **Phased reintegration** – staged reintegration approaches can be helpful in allaying both schools’ and pupils’ concerns over the return to school. LEAs described combining attendance at PRUs and other centres with a part-time return to mainstream school. Approaches such as trial placements, and allowing reintegration to proceed at the pace of the pupil, were described, although it was widely agreed that any phased reintegration approaches should not continue for a significant period of time (commonly for between three and eight weeks).
- **Managed moves and negotiated transfers** – were seen by many LEAs as useful preventative measures for pupils at risk of exclusion, allowing them to make a new start without being formally excluded. However, opinions varied between practitioners, with concerns that such approaches could be a means of ‘back door’ exclusion and removing troublesome pupils from schools.

3.3.2 *Persistent Truants/Unauthorised Absences*

Pupils may take unauthorised absences from school for a variety of reasons, including disaffection and disengagement from education, negative school experiences and peer influences, school phobia and a range of home and family circumstances. In addition, pupils may first ‘present’ through unauthorised absences that result from a range of potentially underpinning issues – for example caring for family members where solutions may extend beyond the influence of the school alone.

Barriers identified amongst the case studies to the reintegration of this group included the reluctance of schools to accept pupils with poor attendance records (for similar reasons as the permanently excluded), rigidity in schools timetabling and attendance policies, limited support in school and negative parental influences.

Key components identified as essential for, or particularly effective in, the reintegration of pupils missing education due to persistent unauthorised absences included:

- **Identifying unauthorised absences** – LEAs and schools described different approaches to identifying pupils taking unauthorised absences, including the analysis and review of attendance information, truancy sweeps and approaches to target attentions on both individual pupils and schools.
- **Follow-up and diagnosis procedures** – as described above, unauthorised absences may be an expression of an underlying issue. The role of effective follow-up and diagnostic approaches is therefore key in ensuring that any underlying causes can be addressed and positive progress sustained.
- **Flexibility in the curriculum/timetabling** – as phased approaches to reintegration are also considered to be effective with this group, flexibility in both the curriculum and school timetables is an important component of the

reintegration process. Such flexibility can allow pupils to return on a part-time/reduced attendance basis, including attending for preferred subjects or for pastoral time, as well as allowing extra support to help pupils can catch-up. However, as with the phased reintegration approaches described earlier, flexibility in the curriculum should be time-limited and ideally not followed for more than half a term.

- **Combined strategies** – while flexible curriculum and timetabling should last for less than half a term, it may be that the issues causing absences in the first case need responses that are more lengthy and varied in their intensity. It may be that more ‘holistic’ approaches are required, including making engagement with education as practicable as possible (through set timetables and alternative curriculum or vocational options), addressing any problems continuing to be faced at school, and addressing associated pupil and family needs (including the involvement of a range of agencies).

3.3.3 *Pupils Not Attending School*

This pupil group included children missing from education due to medical needs, caring responsibilities (including school-age parents) and taking extended authorised absences (including term-time holidays). Pupils in this group faced a series of common issues, including needing to catch up after interruptions in their education (e.g. pupils absent due to medical needs, or those taking extended unauthorised absences) and experiencing changes in circumstances (e.g. pregnancy or becoming a teenage parent).

The pupil sub-groups were also found to face a series of more specific issues and barriers to their effective reintegration, which included:

- **Pupils with medical needs** – while in most cases the return to school will be straightforward, more complex and long-term cases may be vulnerable to social and academic exclusion, face frequent and regular absences from school, and potentially face psychosocial and academic problems. The case studies also identified that attitudes could vary between schools to different medical conditions, with individuals with continuing mental health needs reportedly being viewed less favourably.
- **Pupils with caring responsibilities** – this group includes children who have caring responsibilities for their families (not all of which will necessarily influence their education) and school-age parents. The issues facing these children vary:
 - **Home carers** can face difficulties with attendance and completing home/coursework; potential low attainment; bullying, anxiety and stress; and behaviour problems resulting from the inability to perform at school. Barriers to reintegration can include identifying carers whose education is being adversely affected, engaging with carers and families (who may be secretive or over/under-exaggerate the scale of their roles), the often very real concerns of carers for their dependants and potential abuse at school.
 - **School age parents** may face a range of practical, emotional and psychological challenges, and may require support with continuing their studies, preparing for parenthood, support with parenting skills and practical barriers including childcare after the birth. Particular barriers to reintegration identified in the case studies included the variable willingness of schools to

welcome pregnant or school age parents, the potential complexity of young parents' needs, and negative attitudes and perceptions (notably where pupils have been less engaged previously - although LEAs and schools reported that parenthood could lead to the re-engagement with education in some cases for the sake of their child).

- **Pupils taking extended authorised absences** – this group includes children taking extended authorised absences from school for term-time holidays, as well as religious and cultural reasons. While less is known about this group, and in most individual cases reintegration appears straightforward, the scale of time lost to education may be significant. The LEAs who were able to provide estimates considered that extended authorised absences could account for between 15 and 20% of all absences in their areas.

The key components identified as essential for, or particularly effective in, reintegrating pupils from these pupil groups included:

- **For pupils with medical needs:**
 - **School commitment** – as expressed by keeping pupils on roll and maintaining active contact throughout the period of absence and during the return to school. Continued contact allows planning for reintegration to be considered from the outset, based on an expectation of a return to school and informed (with relevant medical advice) by a thorough assessment of the pupil's physical and mental capabilities.
 - **Maintaining contact with pupils and peers** – while continued contact with absent pupils can evidence the commitment of schools, facilitating continued links with their peers can also be beneficial. While contact with schools can focus on providing work to be completed while absent, links with other pupils can support the reintegration process by reducing the risk of social dislocation, while allowing absent pupils' colleagues to prepare for their return.
 - **Role of parents and carers** – across all pupil groups the importance of involving parents and carers in the reintegration process was emphasised, although this may not always be possible or as effective as would be liked. In the case of pupils with medical needs parent/carers involvement is crucial, to allow agreed approaches to be developed and committed to, although this can be particularly challenging in complex cases or at times of grief and readjustment. Nevertheless, even in the most severe cases the ability to report back children's progress, as well as introducing some form of 'normality' through continued education, can have therapeutic as well as educational benefits.
 - **Flexible, phased reintegration** – again the ability to offer flexible and staged reintegration approaches is key, so that strategies can be developed to match pupils' mental and physical energy levels as well as supporting any physical and continued treatment needs. Monitoring is particularly important for this group, so reintegration does not negatively influence recovery, while allowing the intensity of education to increase based on the pupil's ability to participate.

- **Use of ICT for distance learning** – while pupils with medical needs can be supported through a combination of hospital school/tuition, home tuition and staged returns to school, the use of ICT was found to be increasing to provide distance learning approaches across a range of pupil groups. A series of ICT pilots were identified with different pupil groups, and in one case pupils with medical needs were reported as finding the approach useful for maintaining peer relationships and making new friends within a controlled learning network.
- **For young carers and school age parents:**
 - **Specialist reintegration officers** – as with other groups, the role of specialist staff was found to be particularly effective. With school age parents, specialist reintegration staff tended to take a case management role throughout the pregnancy and after the birth, co-ordinating support services and ‘lobbying’ for pupils with schools.
 - **Establishing responsibilities and procedures** – part of the role of reintegration officers was to establish and confirm the responsibilities of schools in both providing continued education for carers and supporting reintegration where necessary. This was particularly key as some schools may tend to ‘off-roll’ pregnant pupils or advise against their return to school, and effectively ‘condone’ absences amongst known carers. In addition, schools also described benefiting from specialist support, notably in providing advice and direction, and services such as childcare or parenting tuition.
 - **Work with parents/carers** – can be key both for young carers and school age parents, although effective involvement can present challenges and may need to be handled with particular sensitivity. Potential issues may include emotional issues, stigmatisation, shame and for school age parents negative parental views and potential rejection.
- **For pupils taking extended authorised absences** – approaches were mainly preventative, with key components including:
 - **Specific policies on extended authorised absence** – often within wider school attendance policies, and setting out the conditions and criteria where extended absences are permitted, their maximum duration and the sanctions available if the return to school is delayed without good reason.
 - **Written contracts between schools and parents** – setting out the conditions of the extended absence and including return dates for pupils, as well as possible sanctions for non-return.
 - **Penalties for taking extended absence without notification/not returning by agreed dates** – including the potential removal from the school roll if pupils do not return by their agreed dates.
 - **Setting work to be completed during periods of absence** (to be submitted and marked on their return) and **additional catch-up lessons** (for those absent for a considerable period of time).
 - **Communication and awareness raising/involving the local community** – the importance of gaining commitment to LEA and school policies on

attended absences was key to their implementation, with several describing working closely with local community groups and religious bodies to stress the value of education and the damage caused by periods away from it.

3.3.4 Pupils with Mobility Issues

This group included Gypsy/Traveller children, children in local authority care and asylum seeker and refugee children whose education, for a variety of reasons, is interrupted by movement and change in their place of residence. The group share similar needs in terms of ensuring education is continued/built on, and access to mainstream education facilitated as best meets their needs. In many cases the task for practitioners may be closer to 'integration' than 'reintegration'.

The pupil sub-groups also face a series of more specific issues and barriers to their engaging with education and their effective reintegration, which include:

- **Gypsy/Travellers** – while this group encompasses a range of communities and lifestyles, Gypsy/Traveller children may face a series of physical, cultural and practical issues in accessing and maintaining education. These include mobility issues (where engagement with education can be sporadic, and limited time spent in different areas), the attitudes of schools, pupils and parents (who may be quick to judge and stereotype Gypsy/Traveller children), Gypsy/Travellers' own attitudes to formal education and previous negative experiences of education in the formal school setting.
- **Children in local authority care** – may face a series of emotional and practical difficulties maintaining their education, the impacts of which on attainment are well documented. Experiences of care, separation from families or a lack of appropriate parental care may mean that some have special needs and present as having problems with behaviour and building relationships. Unstable living conditions or placements can mean frequent changes of school, with other challenges including children's attitudes and coping strategies, ineffective multi-agency co-ordination and different priorities between professionals, and the perception that all looked after children require intensive support and will fail to succeed in school.
- **Asylum seeker and refugee children** – can face a series of emotional and physical barriers to engagement with education, including settling in a different country with a different language and culture; recent experience of trauma, conflict or persecution; absence or limited previous formal education; and potentially racist and discriminatory views of other parents and pupils. Other issues for their reintegration include: the availability of funding at the local level (given the variable distribution/concentration of asylum seeker and refugee families), variable information on new arrivals and schools not always being as welcoming as they could be.

The key components identified as essential for, or particularly effective in, reintegrating pupils from these pupil groups included:

- **For Gypsy/Traveller children:**
 - **Ensuring access to education** – approaches followed here will depend on a range of factors including if the family are mobile or on a fixed site and their attitude to education, with outreach and establishing relationships with

families and communities being a central component of engagement. Approaches to delivery will include distance learning (for pupils on the move, co-ordinated across the national network of Traveller Education Services and between different 'base' schools), tuition on site (for individual or groups of pupils) and placement in schools.

- **Involving mainstream teachers** – securing placements in mainstream school may be difficult given the stereotyping issues described above. The involvement of mainstream teachers helps promote awareness, commitment and ownership of pupils, who may be seen as 'belonging' to the Traveller Education Service.
- **Transition support** – often a difficult stage for many children, and particularly for Gypsy/Traveller pupils who may face additional pressures including the expectation that they will soon be starting work.
- **For children in local authority care:**
 - **Identifying and tracking systems** – to ensure that LEAs are aware when children in local authority care either enter or leave their areas, to allow appropriate responses to be made. Looked after children were often 'flagged' on LEA data systems so issues arising in school could be tracked, although the frequency of tracking and follow-up varied between authorities.
 - **Specific support for education** – the study identified a series of often recent developments including the establishment of dedicated LEA teams to support the education of looked after children in their areas. Their remits included both ensuring access to education but also improving attainment, working on a more proactive basis with other agencies to ensure the educational needs of looked-after pupils are met.
 - **Multi-agency working and inter-authority co-ordination** – the nature of this pupil group makes multi-agency approaches essential, not only in identifying new arrivals and leavers but also in preparing information and offering additional specialist support. Looked after children's needs may be complex and deep-set, and so continued multi-agency inputs may be required if engagement with education is to be successful. As moves of looked after children between local authorities are relatively common, and children can be placed in one authority but attend school in another, liaison processes are essential for both the effective care of the child and their continued education.
 - **In-school support/designated teachers** – as with other pupil groups, the presence of a dedicated teacher/single contact point was beneficial. Here dedicated/specialist teachers allowed support to be maximised and focussed, as well as raising the profile of looked after children and their needs.
 - **Minimising school moves/expedition of school admissions processes** – although moves between placements may be necessary in periods of crisis, LEAs and schools can play a helpful role in ensuring school-related moves (such as exclusions) are considered only as a last resort, and that impacts on education are considered in changes of placement. The provision of support to maintain school places after placement changes, such as the provision of transport and integration support, was also identified. In many areas looked after children are considered priority admissions for schools, and examples of

dowries, protocols and secured placement schemes for looked after children were described. Many LEAs also described having formalised approaches for transition stages, and for moves between schools where they are necessary.

- **For asylum seeker and refugee children:**

- **Securing school places/interim and alternative provision** – the uneven distribution of asylum seeker and refugee families within local authority areas can cause problems in securing school places. The availability and use of interim or alternative provision can help support children until permanent school places can be identified, and can allow early language development and familiarisation sessions to begin.
- **Availability of support** – although their needs will vary dependant on country of origin and previous educational inputs, most asylum seeker and refugee pupils require a degree of support integrating into mainstream schools once places are secured for them. The availability of centralised support may also make schools more willing to accept pupils, by providing a 'safety net' as well as assistance with language development and with catching up with education, as well as providing support with any additional needs which may be identified only once these immediate needs are met.
- **Allocating support to areas of need** – is a particular issue given the distribution of asylum seeker and refugee families within local authority areas. This may place particular pressure on specific schools, with the interim/alternative provision described above helping to alleviate problems until permanent places can be found. The case study LEAs described a range of approaches to allocating resources to schools in these circumstances, including a 'sliding scale' for matching central support provision to schools with the greatest number of newly arrived pupils.
- **Awareness raising and supporting teachers** – each of the case study LEAs described efforts to raise awareness of the characteristics of, issues faced by, and implications for the reintegration of, asylum seeker and refugee children. This was particularly important given the dynamic nature of asylum seeker and refugee populations in many areas, which may require an understanding of many different cultures and different previous education experiences.

4 KEY SUCCESS FACTORS AND GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Key Findings

- A series of key success factors were identified during the study for the effective reintegration of children into mainstream schools, and described as 'environmental' or 'practical' success factors.
- 'Environmental' factors referred to the context and conditions that allow effective practice to develop, and include inclusive LEA and school cultures, responsiveness to needs, ensuring the availability of appropriate support, multi-agency activities and ensuring responsibilities are shared and agreed between partners.
- 'Practical' factors relate to the content and setting of approaches and interventions, and include effective and informed planning for reintegration, retaining pupils on school rolls and maintaining contact, providing individually tailored and flexible responses and dedicated/key worker staff.

This Chapter pulls together the findings of the study regarding the key success factors for, and good practice in, the effective reintegration of pupils across the different target groups. In so doing, findings from the literature review and expert interviews, LEA survey and case study fieldwork are combined, illustrating practical examples that may be of relevance to the development of practice more widely.

A series of key success factors for effective reintegration into mainstream school are described, which form the underpinning principles for generic and more target group specific reintegration practice. Key factors were identified at both 'generic' (across pupil groups) and 'specific' (applying to particular pupil groups) levels, with the key success factors by specific pupil groups being described in Volume 2 of this report. Attentions in this Chapter focus on the generic factors for reintegration success, many of which are widely recognised and form the principles upon which much current reintegration practice is based. Examples of 'good practice' from the case study fieldwork are used to illustrate how the key success factors are being mobilised through practical steps amongst LEAs, schools and their partners. As the verification of 'good practice' was hindered by the absence of quantitative evidence in many cases, the examples may be more accurately referred to as 'promising' practice.

The factors identified can also be split into two broad groups, with inevitable overlaps between them. These are '**environmental**' factors, which represent the context and conditions which allow effective reintegration practice to grow and develop, and '**practical**' factors, which relate more closely to the content and setting of specific approaches and interventions. In many ways, the 'environmental' factors are the most important, as without them the more practical aspects of reintegration will be more difficult to implement and less likely to succeed on an LEA-wide scale.

4.1 Environmental Key Success Factors

'Environmental' success factors of particular relevance to **LEAs and schools** include:

- **Inclusive LEA and school cultures** were found to underpin the development and resourcing of, and commitment to, effective reintegration practices.

Inclusive and open LEAs and schools are more likely to prioritise the resources they need, position services to ensure appropriate education provision for all, and display and spread a commitment to reintegration into the mainstream school setting amongst staff, schools and partners. Evidencing such a culture through welcoming practices, involving pupils and parents in decision making and supporting the reintegration across all pupil groups will also increase the likelihood of success.

- **Responsiveness to needs, and promoting inclusion.** There is much information relating to the desirability of efforts on the part of mainstream schools to proactively respond to the social and emotional needs of pupils, to maintain their engagement and combat disaffection. Generally accepted success factors for reintegration of excluded pupils include:
 - A whole-school commitment to providing appropriate educational opportunities for pupils across all pupil groups.
 - Individual school cultures that are conducive to learning and good behaviour more broadly.
 - Schools receiving children being understanding, welcoming, flexible and forgiving – and offering pupils a fresh start.
 - Schools seeking and implementing creative, flexible and tailored solutions from a pupil-centred perspective – and establishing systems and understandings that allow these approaches to be monitored.

Establishing a Culture of Inclusion – LEA 7 Inclusion Standards

LEA 7 has developed an Inclusion Standard that is considered to represent good practice, and is helping to change attitudes in schools and across the LEA. The standard is bringing together good practice around inclusion, and started as an award but has now much more about promoting a process of continual improvement, with a cycle over two to four terms. The focus is on pupil outcomes rather than process issues - schools may have high standards but the value added might not be high, so there is a need to look much deeper.

A toolkit has been developed to establish pupils' views and give them a voice. Pupils taken in and pupils excluded are part of the assessment of centrally held data in schools. However, the focus is also on how those at risk of marginalisation are performing in schools – through participation and achievement indicators. Schools in the area have to collect data, analyse and engage with it as part of the standard, and set targets for improvement.

Schools are linked in pairs to act as 'critical friends' - a process which must be owned by the whole school rather than just one or two teachers. There is a link with special schools and PRUs as part of the assessment, to help teachers understand the experiences of pupils transferring from these institutions. Special schools are judged on the basis of improving outcomes in the mainstream, such as working with teachers in mainstream schools to prevent permanent exclusion for pupils at risk. Specifically for asylum seekers and refugees there is a pupil voice toolkit, which looks at aspirations, such as pupils being encouraged to use first language at school, improving their education outcomes, taking their views into account, etc.

- **Ensuring the availability of appropriate support services for reintegrating pupils** – either by developing central LEA or school-based services, ensuring access to specialist partner services through multi-agency agreements, and – crucially – providing a ‘safety net’ of central services or the opportunity to review the position should the return to school break down. Support should be made available:
 - For reintegrating/returning pupils – prior to returning to school, during reintegration and afterwards as the pupil settles into their new school. The availability of additional learning support is also essential in some cases, especially where pupils need to catch up with their schooling.
 - For schools – in terms of external and internal support services when preparing for, during and after the reintegration process. The provision of a ‘safety net’ of external support throughout the reintegration process is an important factor in schools’ willingness to consider reintegrating pupils.

Support services included a range of core and interim provision, delivered both on-site and off-site, and with a focus on preparing children for reintegration, supporting their return to school and providing educational support, as the examples below illustrate.

The Use of Support Centres for Interim Education Provision

In **LEA 6**, temporary provision for different Key Stages is offered by four primary and eight secondary student support centres, located on school sites but serving a wider geographic population. Developed with Excellence in Cities funding and now supported with mainstream funds, the centres are designed to provide intensive support to young people not attending school for a range of reasons. The centres were considered by staff and partners to be effective at working with pupils, while recognising that their role may be to stop further disengagement as much as supporting reintegration into school.

Secondary centres generally operate on six-week cycles (corresponding to half terms), taking around ten pupils per cycle, with one space being reserved for permanently excluded pupils. Work in the centres is split between the national curriculum (with a strong focus on numeracy and literacy), and ‘therapeutic activities’ to challenge behavioural problems. The first four weeks are based in the centre, with the final two concentrating on reintegration - which may involve part-time attendance split between the school and the centre. Staff at the centres described maintaining links with school, and their active involvement in the return to school, as key to successful reintegration.

Additional Support for Looked After Children

A key feature of **LEA 14**’s approach to looked after children is to use area based staff members. Each LEA service team member has a geographical patch to look after in the county, and there is a commitment to visit each school every half term on routine basis to look at attendance and have a general discussion about the child with the designated teacher, see the children themselves and pick any issues that might need to be addressed. This approach is designed to provide the basis for more intensive joint work when needed, and to build up a sufficiently good relationship with schools so that discussion can focus on individual children, rather than allowing stereotypes to take hold and remain.

Some LEAs have adopted an approach of drawing on a range of generalised support mechanisms and focuses them on looked after children. In **LEA 2** school based provision

tends to consist of pastoral support built into the pupil's PEP. The (outside) Behaviour Support Service can provide support for a pupil who has been in special education for a period of time back to mainstream school. Home tutors also work in school.

Transitional times are also another potential problem area for looked after children, as with other vulnerable groups. In **LEA 2**, for example, one of the Education Caseworkers runs an integration programme for looked after children moving from primary to secondary. **LEA 13** provides transitional support including holiday clubs.

The Use of Short-Term Programmes – Persistent Unauthorised Absences

Examples of the use of short-term interventions to support the reintegration of persistent unauthorised absences and other non-attenders included:

- In **LEA 2** long-term non-attenders are supported through Attendance Support Programmes (available as an option to local secondary schools). They consist of small group work provision within the PRU, usually over 10 weeks, as a way of extending the range of behavioural approaches available to the school. The focus is on pupils who are at particular risk of social exclusion, due to vulnerability resulting from anxiety related disorders or other mental health issues which affect their ability to attend school.
- **LEA 6** uses a similar approach for pupils at KS3, but offered via Student Support Centres (linked to schools) rather than a PRU. These offer temporary provision on a six week cycle (corresponding to half terms). Work in the centres is split between national curriculum work (with a strong focus on numeracy and literacy) and 'therapeutic work' to challenge behavioural problems (e.g. art therapy, Circle Time, etc). The first four weeks are based in the centre and the final two weeks concentrate on reintegrating the young person back into their school, which may involve part-time attendance at the school and centre. The students follow aspects of the national curriculum (particularly numeracy, literacy and ITC skills) but there is also a focus on the transition to secondary school and the development of strategies for pupils to deal with any problems they may have. The transition process between primary and secondary school is aided by specific transition support staff where appropriate.

Supporting Pupils' Return to School – Permanently Excluded Pupils

In one LEA PRU teaching assistants most commonly work in schools to support pupils' reintegration. Different inputs are required at primary and secondary levels, which may include sitting in class at the primary level, but taking a more distant position at the secondary level. Their role is to provide support, lead on monitoring and management, and deal with any problems arising in the school. There is a review of the progress at the end of each stage of the reintegration plan and at the every end, involving the child's tutor, teaching assistant and other members of the school including headteacher, and the parent and the child.

In **LEA 6** five secondary schools have reintegration support officers (RSOs), with others having Learning Mentors who play a key role in reintegration. The RSOs are present in school every day to provide assistance to reintegrating students and others finding it difficult to engage (such as other vulnerable pupils or pupils experiencing bullying) on a case basis. They deal with any issues that may help reintegration (such as uniform issues, transport problems, personal problems, etc). The RSOs have caseloads of up to 12 pupils, and may provide support in and outside of the classroom, and also work with parents.

Education Support – Looked After Children

Supporting improved attainment amongst children in local authority care is a focus of provision in several LEA areas. Education support in **LEA 2** includes Key Stage/GCSE Task Force booster class programmes, and a Celebration of Achievement event. A wide range of options are offered through a specialist team in **LEA 14**, including: additional teaching support in schools, homework clubs and lunchtime sessions in schools, out of school learning opportunities, and one to one education support, work with children in residential care homes. The LEA recognise, however, the importance of the development of wider social skills, and so actively encourage leisure interests to support confidence raising.

- **Staff skills, attitudes and awareness** – given the important role played by individual staff, most interviewees suggest that support and training should be available to professionals working with challenging pupils. Tackling possible negative staff attitudes towards some pupil groups, and encouraging awareness and understanding of the issues facing reintegrating pupils and cultural differences, was also a key factor in ensuring whole-school approaches.
- **Resources** - the ability to support pupils with additional resources as well as with dedicated staff was also frequently identified as important to success, with funding being available to match pupils' needs. This could include funding for more 1:1 support, small group work, mentoring, counselling and greater therapeutic input during and after the reintegration process. Implicit to the comments of several respondents was, especially for permanently excluded pupils, the use of funding to support both in school and out of school provision, and central LEA teams with a remit for pupils with special needs.

LEAs also described the importance of being able to target resources to areas of immediate or variable need, as the examples below illustrate.

Allocating Resources – Looked After Children

LEA 14 provides direct funding to schools to help them address difficult problems. This is being provided through the LEA funding formula, which reflects the number of looked after children at a school averaged over four years. (A secondary school which has on average 5 looked after children will receive a funding equivalent to £3,000 per pupil, additional to pupil units).

The main benefits of this have been to raise the profile of looked after children in schools, stimulate planning in advance to meet their needs, and providing LEA staff with a degree of leverage in working with schools to establish strategies to support them.

Allocating Resources for Asylum Seekers/Refugees

LEA 13 has developed a 'sliding scale' to allocate provision for asylum seeker and refugee children to individual schools, with a strength of the approach being its ability to meet the needs of different schools at different levels:

- Schools with the most asylum seekers/refugees (15 or more full-time pupils) are allocated additional full time staff support, with the rates and allocations being agreed through a formula.
- Schools with up to 14 full-time equivalent pupils receive support from LEA staff for ½ day each week (around 30% of schools)

- Other schools' needs and allocations are reviewed on a half termly basis, for example schools with one or two asylum seekers and refugees would get support from a home-school liaison team.

- **Access to specialist resources** - access to other, more specialist resources was a key success factor in cases of particular and severe pupil need. These included access to high-level behaviour management support, mental health services, drug counselling, childcare and parenting classes, interpreting services, and teaching resources in home language (e.g. bilingual dictionaries / dual language texts). The option to offer payments for short-term help, such as for school uniform, equipment and bus fares, was also seen as important for certain groups.

Additional Support – Interpreter Services and Drug Education Workers

As a multi-cultural **LEA 7** is able to recruit adults to provide **bi-lingual support** to pupils in schools. EMAS trains and maintains a database of individuals, and acts like an interpreting agency aiming to provide pupils with interpreters within two weeks of entering school. Because of the changing nature of new arrivals there has to be constant recruitment (languages vary). The service regularly advertises for extra staff and recruits through community groups and job centres. Bi-lingual support workers are employed on a supply basis. Many casuals end up full-time, and may be given contracts if there is regular work. There are gaps in Cantonese and Portuguese speakers. It is important to explain to schools what their role is, i.e. not a teaching assistant.

The **drugs co-ordinators** can be a link to those young people who fail to turn up or who arrive under the influence in the afternoons. These may also be the ones at risk of exclusion. The work is preventative and this means it will take longer to show results. Funding is not ring fenced for drugs education and there is an issue of it being swallowed up by schools. It has taken 9 months to find out which schools have a drugs education policy and/or have a good curriculum for drugs and sex/relationships education. The team trains teachers to recognise symptoms, and develop approaches to teaching and learning, e.g. how to deal with disruptions in class to enable others to learn.

'Environmental' success factors of particular relevance to **reintegration partners and stakeholders** include:

- **Ensuring responsibilities for reintegration are appropriately shared, understood and owned by different stakeholders** – success factors include:
 - Understanding across departments about the different services that can be provided. Information should be shared at a strategic level and about individual young people.
 - A nominated individual to drive the process and co-ordinate professional involvement. This named professional is usually allocated to the young person to oversee the integration process, which could involve supporting, monitoring and championing their progress, and providing a link to and organising other professional involvement.
 - Steps to ensure the commitment of schools to the reintegration of pupils, in particular Headteachers and Heads of Year.

Establishing Procedures and Responsibilities – School Age Parents

LEA 13 used the Standards Fund (Teenage Pregnancy) to establish a multi-agency working group to develop procedures for teenage parents owned by all agencies across the authority. The procedures deal with: confidentiality issues, action planning protocols, monitoring and review arrangements and data collection. As well as the guidelines for schools, the LEA is preparing an information leaflet setting out the processes for dealing with pregnancies, and the services provided by the Reintegration Officer.

Schools and other partners appear to have responded well to the formalisation of the process. In schools, Heads of Year/Assistants now take responsibility for pastoral needs and dealing with health and safety issues, and most schools nominate a member of the pastoral staff to take responsibility for the continued education of the young person.

Inter-Agency Co-ordination – Looked After Children

LEA 14 sought to clarify responsibilities and priorities where a child is at school in one authority whilst living in another. The LEA has negotiated support for looked after children at school in other authority areas, including recharge arrangements where teachers have been employed to provide intensive individual support to young people requiring extra assistance but at school in another authority.

- **Documented approaches** - Where respondents had documented strategies and policies for reintegration in place, or where reintegration was explicitly included in wider inclusion documentation, LEAs considered them to be helpful and a means of sharing understandings more widely. The development of cooperation agreements between parties were also considered to be useful. Where possible, policies should address underlying causes of the problems which some pupils face, and as such will inevitably extend beyond the reintegration remit per se. For example, policies should provide guidance on dealing with racist incidents such as name-calling and bullying.

Local Guidance on Attendance Procedures

The School Attendance Service in **LEA 5** have produced an extremely comprehensive guidance document on school attendance provided to all schools (and shared with other relevant practitioners) in their area. The document outlines local policies and strategies, summarises the relevant legislation for attendance by different pupil groups, and describes the LEA's operational structures and processes (in the form of flowcharts). It has a particularly practical focus, including draft letters for parents in different circumstances, checklists to use in interviews and assessments, and protocols for working with different agencies. The document provides a single point of information for teachers and other LEA staff.

Handbook for Corporate Parents

In **LEA 2** a 'handbook for corporate parents' has been produced setting out the legislative framework and the roles and responsibilities of the LEA, schools, Social Care and Health directorates and other partner agencies for providing education for children in local authority care. The handbook also describes the protocols and processes to be followed when a looked after child changes school, is excluded/at risk of exclusion, is absent or moves out of the area.

- **Collaborative approaches and multi-agency working** - collaboration between agencies is highlighted across the board as being essential to adequately

understanding the problems and issues for the pupil groups studied, and in the formulation of effective responses. The good practice examples below describe the importance of multi-agency responses for children in local authority care, as well as co-ordination between authorities.

Multi-agency Responses – Children in Local Authority Care

Multi-agency approaches are probably inevitable for this target group, given their often complex needs. In **LEA 14** LEA staff regularly attend Children's panel meetings (Social Services meetings set up to look at complex cases). The purpose is to monitor and review children coming into social care, and 'trouble shoot' cases where complex situations are beginning to develop. The Children's Review process provides an opportunity for educationalists to contribute and become aware of problems.

In **LEA 2** multi-agency meetings are held as soon as possible after a problem is identified. Often, the links can be quite informal but feedback suggests that multi-agency working on individual cases is very comprehensive and generally effective due to having a central point of reference in the case worker.

In **LEA 10** members of the looked after children team meet regularly with Children's Home staff and can provide tutors to support education and help with coursework, homework, and exam revision. This is considered to have worked well, and appears to have raised the profile/importance of education with looked after children and care staff.

Inter-Agency Co-ordination – Children in Local Authority Care

LEA 14 has sought to clarify responsibilities and priorities where a child is at school in one authority whilst living in another. The LEA has negotiated support for looked after children at school in other authority areas, including recharge arrangements where teachers have been employed to provide intensive individual support to young people requiring extra assistance but at school in another authority.

Links to Other Services – School-Age Pregnancies

School-age parents may be able to access additional support, especially around parenting, from a range of voluntary and community programmes. In **LEA 12** Surestart 'Families Plus' (linked to Barnados) has set up a group for teenage parents, which provides access to health guidance, benefit advice, social groups. As this is specific to teenage parents it is relevant to school-age parents, and is held after school to allow parents to attend school.

Co-ordinating Service for Children in Local Authority Care

In **LEA 6**, a 'virtual school' has been established drawing together and supplementing existing staff and projects which aim to raise the educational attainment of pupils in local authority care, and also contribute to successful reintegration. Supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, all young people looked after by the authority or who have recently left care are classed as pupils of the 'school' – following a school model to help individuals understand their roles and responsibilities and making it easier for funding to be put into place. The 'school' staff include a pupil attendance and education welfare officer, with a pupil support officer responsible for working with pupils at risk of exclusion including measures such as the negotiated transfer system and identifying appropriate educational placements.

- **Ensuring parent and carer commitment** – establishing mechanisms that facilitate the involvement of parents/carers in decision-making and

implementation is an important factor in securing commitment to effective reintegration, as well as offering routes through which negative parent/carer attitudes can be addressed.

Working with Parents – School Age Parents

In **LEA 13** schools are implementing school-level policies on dealing with school age parents, in order to specify their approach to dealing with confidentiality issues. The LEA appreciate the sensitivities around school age pregnancies from both pupils' and parents' perspectives, and most schools encourage girls to tell their parents if they suspect they may be pregnant.

- **Involving children in the planning process, and the use of incentives** – similarly, mechanisms to involve individual children in decision-making and the design of their own reintegration solutions were increasingly emphasised, as a means of gaining commitment. The use of incentives can also help to secure pupil commitment, with an approach to working with unauthorised absences being described below.

Attendance Incentives – Persistent Unauthorised Absences

LEA 5 has a series of incentives aimed at supporting pupil attendance, including attendance awards and badges. The LEA formerly held annual award ceremonies at schools for pupils with 100% attendance records. These now take place on an authority-wide basis, with awards also being given to young people with the most improved attendance. Awards are also given for other 'softer' achievements and to different pupil groups, for example, improved behaviour amongst excluded pupils. The LEA also provides 'attendance hero' badges to primary school pupils, awarded at school assemblies to which pupils and their parents are invited. Parents are also presented with flowers, in recognition of their contribution to their child's success.

Both approaches were considered by the LEA and schools to be useful, and impacting on the attendance levels of some of their pupils. The events also help emphasise the importance of attendance and education to pupils and parents, and that parents have a key role to play. They also emphasised that 'soft' outcomes can be equally valid and praiseworthy - in some cases being the winners' first publicly recognised achievements.

4.2 Practical Key Success Factors

'Practical' key success factors relate more directly to tactical approaches and interventions to reintegrate children into mainstream education, and as such will inevitably overlap with, and be dependant on, the 'environmental' factors above. The relative weight of these factors will vary depending on the pupil groups involved, individual pupil characteristics, and local circumstances and conditions. 'Practical' success factors include:

- **Effective and informed planning and consultation** - interviewees highlighted the importance of effective planning to ensure that the arriving pupil and the school are fully prepared for the reintegration. This requires a planned and co-ordinated approach as well as a comprehensive exchange of information. The use of panel-based approaches was commonly described, included area and age-based as well as wider multi-agency approaches.

Using Panels to Support the Reintegration of Permanently Excluded Pupils

In **LEA 14**, area behaviour management panels are considered to be key to reintegration, featuring headteachers and staff from the LEA and PRU and covered by a service level agreement. Their role is to decide on pupils' immediate destinations on exclusion, and, following the recommendation to reintegrate from the PRU (made in conjunction with parents/carers and children), the schools they should be reintegrated into. The decision to reintegrate is based on pupils' performance on behaviour scales developed by QCA and Birmingham University, with a child being considered suitable for reintegration when they score 80-85% against the 15 criteria on the scale.

'Age Phased Provider Panels' are central to **LEA 6's** approach. These are multi-agency groups involving the LEA, schools, police, Connexions, and other relevant providers, such as local hospitals. Individual cases are discussed at panel meetings with decisions being taken on which services and provision are most important. There are a number of panels that correspond to each of the Key Stages (hence the term 'age phased'), and which meet on a fortnightly basis.

Multi-agency Education Protection Planning Meetings

In **LEA 12** reintegration planning can be through formal Education Protection Planning meetings, which decide if an education supervision order is necessary. Representation includes social services, Health, other appropriate agencies (e.g. outreach, or young carers) and the pupil and parents (including absent parents and extended family). The model was described as being similar to Family Group Conferencing but cheaper as there is no facilitator. The chair will be a senior EWO.

- **Good quality information collection and monitoring** – mechanisms for the collection and exchange of accurate, relevant and timely information on children's needs are essential for:
 - The development of strategies - which are reliant on comprehensive data collection and monitoring, potentially through a database to facilitate tracking
 - The identification of children not participating in education – notably those not on the school roll and newcomers into an area.
 - Responding to pupil needs and supporting reintegration – with good quality and complete information helping ensure responses are appropriate, programmes can be targeted with realistic goals, multi-agency support included where necessary and progress monitored and reviewed.

Use of Registration Data to Identify Absences – Long Term Truants and Others

LEA 5 is a comparatively small LEA, with each of their schools operating the BROMCOM or SIMS electronic registration systems. The LEA attendance team can access and monitor registration data for all schools centrally, which allows them to take a pro-active stance on identifying cases of non-attendance for investigation. On a rolling basis, individual pupil absences can be identified and patterns established. This allows the LEA attendance team to raise individual issues with schools, and stimulate action by providing evidence of a potential issue.

Termly attendance audits also take place in all secondary schools, using attendance and other data to identify patterns in attendance, exclusions, authorised and unauthorised absences etc, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of the schools' attendance policy.

Findings are reviewed with Heads and Governors, with recommendations for actions/directing resources resulting.

Systems for Identifying and Tracking - Looked After Children.

National guidance on provision for looked after children, suggests that systems for monitoring attendance should trigger from 10 days. The development of dedicated teams of staff has meant that more effort can go into the monitoring of looked after children. In **LEA 2**, for example, details of every child in pupil care are held on a database, which includes attendance data ('Care First' model) and is regularly updated with information from schools and EWS. If attendance issues emerge then the looked after children team are alerted and a Development Worker is assigned to the case.

- **Securing school places** and developing similar commitment amongst local schools, in the context of ensuring equitable pupil distribution and potential tensions between the attainment and inclusion agendas.

Securing School Places for Excluded Pupils

LEA 6 has a Secured Places scheme (linked to a negotiated transfer system, and used for a range of groups). Schools are given money in advance to 'secure' a number of places to reintegrate permanently excluded pupil, which is used to employ staff and set up processes to assist in reintegration. There were 150 secured places last year, which can only be filled by a successful placement (i.e. if the transfer fails then the place can be reused for other reintegrating children).

A service level agreement is in place between schools in **LEA3** to promote collective responsibility for reintegration. It specifies the number of pupils that a school has to take in during the academic year, based on its size, the social disadvantage of the catchment area, and the degree of transience of pupils. In general each of the area's 90 secondary schools are allocated 2-3 pupils per year.

Other LEAs have developed systematic processes for selecting and involving schools. In **LEA 12**, a points weighting system is used to select schools to receive reintegrating excluded pupils. The system was developed by the LEA, statisticians and headteachers and uses various indicators of schools' abilities to manage reintegrated children derived from a range of data including the SEN audit and financial data, including levels of free school meals. Schools with the highest points scores are prioritised to receive reintegrating pupils, with points being removed when pupils are admitted. The system supports objective decision-making, although it is not used in isolation to determine individual placements as there may be many reasons why the school identified may not be appropriate. The system relies on getting oversubscribed schools to buy into the model, with the large size of LEA 12 being an advantage as it has schools close enough together to allow students to be spread fairly.

Children in Local Authority Care

Generally children in local authority care are a top priority for admissions to school, and formalised processes for admissions and transitions included **LEA 1**, which has a procedure for prioritising admissions of looked after children that can be combined with their 'Dowry Fund' to help new children settle into the area's primary schools. **LEA 10** is a net 'importer' of looked after children with many private children's homes, and has developed a protocol for admissions of looked after children and an accompanying code of practice.

- **Retaining pupils on school roll** was recognised as a key factor, in terms of helping ensure positive contacts/links were maintained, setting expectations around eventual reintegration and helping contribute to a continued sense of pupil ownership and responsibility by some schools.
- **Maintaining contact between school, pupils and parents** – following the above, the establishment of regular opportunities for contact with, and feedback from, schools as part of the reintegration process was beneficial. Continued contact with schools was particularly important in terms of:
 - Monitoring progress, to keep parents informed of progress and retain their engagement with/commitment to the reintegration process
 - Ensuring continued links with pupils during times away from school, to show pupils they have not been forgotten and reiterate school's responsibility for them.
- **Rapid responses** – both prior to, and during the process of, reintegration to school. Appropriately rapid pupil follow-up is universally recommended, and establishing reintegration objectives as soon as appropriate can help prevent pupils becoming 'entrenched' in alternative placements. In addition, approaches which allow for the rapid identification of issues as they emerge during the reintegration process, and appropriate responses made, are more likely to be successful. Rapid responses can help maintain a structured routine, and give a positive message that the LEA cares about pupils and their education.
- **Providing individually tailored and flexible approaches** - a recurrent theme for successful reintegration was the extent to which LEAs and schools were able to provide individually tailored approaches to meet specific pupil needs. A key element of this tailoring was the ability to work flexibly with individuals, including:
 - Establishing a continuum of appropriate educational provision – on a staged basis and building at the most appropriate pace for the individual pupil.
 - Allowing flexible delivery, in the form of flexible timetabling (including options for part-time study and dual placement) distance learning, and as part of a staged return to mainstream schooling.
 - Allowing flexibility and choice in terms of curriculum options, and the opportunity to follow more vocational routes through school and college provision.
 - Promoting joint agency delivery, for example developing links with colleges to develop and implement progression routes for older pupils, and linking mainstream schools with part-time college provision to access a wider curriculum and help reintegration into appropriate mainstream placements.

Phased Reintegration Approaches – Excluded Pupils

In **LEA 14** individual reintegration plans are drawn up, setting out the pace, methods, key target areas, success criteria and definitions of critical incidents. While many pupils return on a full-time basis, three stages are commonly defined: initial part-time attendance in school within LSU or limited lessons; increased attendance and wider participation in mainstream lessons; and full time attendance. Time limits of one or two weeks are normally set for each phase, with careful monitoring and success criteria being set for

progression to the next phase. This allows for reintegration to 'fail' but be tried again, although a limit of two unsuccessful repetitions is set before the programme is reviewed and a new approach formulated.

In another LEA pupils will automatically be dually registered with the PRU for the first six months, with the PRU continuing to support the pupil for about two hours a week during the first four weeks of entry to their new school. The PRU reintegration coordinator continues to meet with the school and pupil, to ensure reintegration is progressing well and identify and talk through any problems. In **LEA 3**, a system has recently been introduced where pupils spend three weeks attending a PRU and their new school on a part-time basis.

- **Managing pupil mobility** - Innovative approaches to managing pupil mobility have been tested in 50 secondary schools through the "On the Move" project, which began in March 2002. These measures have included introducing induction mentors to the school workforce and developing effective practice to enable pupils to access the curriculum more quickly. The project has revealed that having a dedicated member of the school workforce who specialises in the administration on new arrivals, forges links with family and helps the child settle in can be important. The work could be extended to include all schools.

Other practices associated with pupils with mobility issues include the setting of work to be completed during periods away from school. Approaches to 'distance learning' for Gypsy/Traveller children are particularly well developed, being co-ordinated by a national network of LEA Traveller Education Services. Many of these practices can be transferred to other groups, such as asylum seekers/refugees, pupils with medical needs, looked after children, or children taken out of school for extended holidays or pilgrimages.

Distance Learning Materials – Gypsy/Traveller Pupils

The TES in LEA 10 produce a distance learning folder for Gypsy/Traveller children – either where a local school is a 'base school' or where other children are identified without base schools. The folder acts as an education record, and includes:

- Contact details for Gypsy/Traveller Education Services in the UK (and some EU coverage) – with encouragement for parents to make contact.
- Materials for children to insert photographs of, and text about, themselves, their families and friends, and their likes and dislikes.
- Record sheets for their base school – completed by different schools/TES's as they travel and covering: levels reached in English, maths and science; any particular help needed; summary of work set and a general record of support.
- Parents, helpers, teachers and children are encouraged to provide feedback on the contents of the folder through a summary sheet.

Specific work to be completed, and samples of work as appropriate, are then included in the folder for completion and submission at the next 'stop'. The work provided will vary by age group/ability obviously, but is in line with National Curriculum requirements

- **The need for dedicated support staff/key workers to offer individual support** – perhaps the single most important aspect mentioned by respondents, especially for permanently excluded pupils. Comments from LEAs suggest that

for some groups, such as permanently excluded pupils, two levels of support are desirable which reinforce each other: personal support through a key worker, and in-school support through a key worker or other identified staff member. In many cases the key worker could be a staff member with a specific brief for reintegration, or working a part of a wider specialist reintegration team.

Key Worker Approaches – Permanently Excluded Pupils

The key worker approach is considered critical to success in **LEA3**, in allowing work on reintegration issues on an individual basis and providing continuity for other agencies to work with the student. The approach is considered particularly successful at KS3, where there is a greater focus on reintegration into mainstream. Key worker contact is maintained throughout the reintegration process, including assessment, interim education at a PRU, and through in-school reintegration programmes, and is open-ended depending on individual need. In addition, pupils are also assigned a reintegration teacher (in effect a key worker) in their receiving schools.

Although short term (since February 2004), recent developments in **LEA 11** demonstrate how the creation of a dedicated point of contact for reintegration can help to focus attention on reintegration. The Reintegration Officer role in LEA 11 is to assist with transfers from PRUs to schools – and the schools interviewed reported benefits such as having an ‘honest broker’, and single point of contact, to consider the needs of young people placed in schools. Another benefit has been in promoting collaboration between schools. Schools previously unwilling to accept ‘difficult students’ appear more willing to do so as they can also approach the Reintegration Officer for help with problem students.

Key Worker Approaches - Pregnant Pupils

In **LEA 13** Reintegration Officers have a key role in changing attitudes of schools towards pregnant schoolgirls, following a ‘case management’ approach to young women’s pregnancies and reintegration, rather than delivering education directly. Most pupils remain on their school roll and continue to study subjects agreed with teachers. Backing up reintegration officer are tutors and learning support assistants.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

- The main conclusion of the study is that successful reintegration occurs in an environment where a culture of inclusion, committed schools and the availability of appropriate resources are in place to support it.
- Pupil characteristics and circumstances mean that flexible and individually tailored responses may be necessary, and while for some reintegration may be straightforward others may face a range of complex and interlinked barriers and challenges.
- Coverage of reintegration approaches for the different pupil groups varied, approaches for pupils with caring responsibilities were described less often and may represent an area of unmet need. While approaches for pupils returning from extended authorised absences were also uncommon, the scale of absence reported makes this an area for further study.
- While limited data availability made drawing conclusions on the adequacy of coverage in numerical terms, what was provided suggested that coverage may be unacceptably low in certain areas/for certain groups.

This Chapter presents our conclusions and recommendations, based on the range of research activities and findings described previously.

5.1 Conclusions

Over the course of 12 months the study team have examined a plethora of approaches to the reintegration of young people into the mainstream school setting, and the challenges facing the pupils involved and the agencies working to ensure their effective return to school where considered most appropriate for them. The study identified a wide range of practice both between and within LEAs, and across the different pupil groups. As previous Chapters have shown, a series of common approaches, interventions and principles central to successful reintegration have been identified, although limited performance data across these activities has limited the extent to which effectiveness can be assessed and good practice evidenced.

While the main findings of the report have been included in previous text, this section seeks to draw the key points together by topic area. An overriding conclusion is that the main issue for the promotion of effective reintegration is to **ensure that an environment where the appropriate culture of inclusion, degree of commitment and availability of appropriate resources (both financial and staff expertise) are in place** to support effective reintegration.

5.1.1 *Pupil Characteristics and Needs*

The study sought to examine reintegration practice for a range of pupil groups, including permanently excluded pupils, long-term truants, pupils not attending school (due to medical needs, caring responsibilities and extended authorised absences) and pupils with mobility issues (including Gypsy/Traveller children, those in local authority care and asylum seekers and refugees). In some ways, 'reintegration' is less helpful as a blanket term as it ignores the range of pupil circumstances, and implies pupils

were integrated previously, and in some cases 'integration' may be a more accurate description.

The pupil groupings tended to **mask a wide range of needs and circumstances**, and within the categories there is huge variability reflecting the general gamut of pupil characteristics, for example by pupil age/key stage, with the transition between primary and secondary education being a particular time of challenge. In some cases children in one category may share characteristics and be closer to those from other categories, and many will face a combination of problems and issues that cause absence from school.

The focus and emphasis of reintegration activity will vary by pupil group, as well as by individual in trying to meet more specific needs. A central finding, and one stressed as a success factor, is that a single approach to reintegration will not suit all children with seemingly similar characteristics, and that **flexibility and individually tailored responses are key**. Across the groups, reintegration needs (and so responses) can be broadly segmented into pupils who require: a move between schools (due to exclusion or mobility issues); help in maintaining a place in school (for example long-term truants and young carers); help to catch up with study after a period of absence or change in circumstance (a factor across all groups, but particularly children with medical needs, school-age parents and those returning from extended absences); and help in securing a place in a school, perhaps for the first time (such as children not on a school roll and asylum seekers and refugees).

The research identified that schools' attitude and commitment to reintegration was central to its success. Importantly in this context, **attitudes to different pupil groups may vary depending on the extent to which they are perceived as a 'risk'** (defined not only in terms of the perceived probability of successful integration, but also pupils' ability to contribute to school performance and the image of the school). Groups that consistently demonstrate positive motivation and the potential to achieve, such as asylum seekers or pupils returning after medical care, were broadly considered to be the 'easiest' to place in the mainstream. Pupils with a track record of poor performance and behavioural issues, for example some permanently excluded pupils, are considered the 'hardest'. However, **differences in the degree of willingness to attempt reintegration were also found within pupil groups** – for example, for pupils whose medical needs included ongoing mental health issues could be viewed less positively by potential receiving schools.

5.1.2 Coverage by Pupil Group

The LEA survey sought to identify the **coverage by 'specific, formalised approaches'** to reintegration across the different pupil groups, as well as wider issues on the nature of approaches and other variables. Although potential over- and under-reporting was recognised and has been discussed previously, the findings suggest that the vast majority of LEAs (over 90%) had approaches for permanently excluded pupils, children in local authority care and those with medical needs. Less commonly reported were approaches for children returning after extended authorised absences and with caring responsibilities (below 40% and 57% respectively). While the reintegration needs of different pupil groups may be met by more generic approaches or core procedures, approaches for children with caring responsibilities may represent an area of unmet need. In addition, the scale of absences reported relating to extended

authorised absences was reported to be considerable in the four LEAs contacted, and may be an area where additional research could be beneficial.

This hierarchy suggests that the development of approaches for different groups has followed recent policy developments, the case studies also identified many LEAs who had and were undergoing a period of change and development and the **drivers for development** behind them. In addition to policy developments and national moves to provide inclusive approaches in education and wider children's services, other influences such as legislation, specific DfES guidance (notably in terms of time targets for providing education); responses to OFSTED reports; the availability of new funding opportunities; and responses to local factors were also important drivers. The nature of these drivers provides a significant leverage opportunity for the Department to exploit. Determining the **adequacy of coverage** within what emerges as a complicated picture is impossible, not least given the variable information on potential pupil group size, the limited performance data available and coverage of target groups under more generic approaches.

Conclusions on the adequacy of coverage in **numerical terms** within LEAs again cannot be drawn due to the lack of data. However, based on the limited performance data (and associated caveats) provided in the LEA survey, Figure 2.6 showed the considerable range in terms of the share of pupils considered appropriate for reintegration and for whom this was attempted. While care must be taken in interpreting these findings, it would appear that while average 'attempted' rates were above 80% for all groups some of the ranges reported between LEAs were considerable, and may represent unacceptable coverage in some areas.

5.1.3 Approaches to Reintegration

The range of pupil characteristics and needs was matched by the variety of approaches followed to reintegrate them. Both the survey and case studies identified a **wide range of approaches and interventions to support reintegration being followed**, commonly including:

- Specialist and key workers to provide support – provided either centrally by the LEA, placed in schools or as members of school staff, or from other partner agencies.
- Specialist delivery teams – such as Travellers Education Services and, more recently, teams focusing on the needs of school-age parents and looked after children.
- On-site (such as Learning Support Units) and off-site centres (such as PRUs and other facilities) – for example, to facilitate a staged return to school and provide any necessary preparation for reintegration.
- Options for education outside of school – both as part of LEA off-site provision, home or hospital tuition services, or externally contracted provision. Increasingly further education/vocational options are used, notably with older groups to support continued engagement and provide post-16 options.

Clearly the availability of suitable support services are key to success, be they introduced specifically to support reintegration or with a different central remit. In-school support, for example through learning mentors, learning support assistants or

other key worker roles, were found to be making a valuable contribution to reintegration efforts irrespective of their wider remits. The use of BEST resources in an inner-city case study school, for example, showed how resources supported under different funding streams can be effectively marshalled. However, this example also raises the issue of the equitable distribution of such resources.

While some commonality was identified in the interventions followed by pupil group, **no single approach emerged as a blueprint for reintegration**. This conclusion reflects both the variety of potentially complex/multiple needs of the target groups, but also the wider contextual factors which influence reintegration success. An element of this included the background structures and procedures in place to support reintegration efforts, in particular the **use of multi-agency groups and practitioner panels to help identify needs, plan responses, co-ordinate and deliver multi-faceted solutions**.

In addition to, and as a function of, the variety of approaches followed there is a similarly **wide variation in the location of responsibility for reintegration activities within LEA structures**. The research suggests that there has been a degree of recent, and on-going, reconfiguring and consolidation of services and teams. Particularly important drivers here appear to be the requirement to offer speedy provision and the push towards inclusive education, with the creation of multi-function social inclusion teams in a number of authorities with a wide-ranging remit across target groups. As a general rule, LEAs tend not to have specific policies on 'reintegration', with reintegration approaches tending to be included under the general 'inclusion' policies and strategies. The availability of guidance and resource materials which set out clear steps in the reintegration process, however, were found to be useful in establishing shared understandings with LEA staff, schools and partners.

Most LEAs draw on a **mix of funding streams to support their reintegration work**, and while mainstream/core funding is most commonly utilised, a relatively heavy dependence on non-mainstream resources was also identified. Funding streams such as the Vulnerable Children Grant within the Standards Fund have supported the development of new services and structures within the case study LEAs and beyond. However, where **time-limited funding was used (including VCG) concerns were raised over sustainability**, and for the continuation of the services supported.

Targeted funding was also found to be helpful in directing resources towards particular groups. It was apparent that certain pupil groups benefited from a sharper focus on reintegration resulting from such funding, for example Gypsy/Travellers and asylum seekers and refugees under EMTAG funds. The 'ring-fenced' nature of such funding helped to ensure that resources were directed towards their intended pupil targets – an important factor in an environment of considerable demand and competing priorities for funding.

5.1.4 Effectiveness and Key Success Factors

The research identified that **practitioners apply different definitions of 'success'** to their reintegration work – most commonly in terms of returning pupils considered appropriate to school and their continued and improved attendance. Most recognise, correctly, that successful reintegration is not so straightforward – there is little purpose returning a child to the school environment where their presence disrupts the education of others, or where their attendance is not paralleled with their engagement with learning. While quantitative measures of effectiveness around attainment (such as

improved performance over expectation) can provide useful measures of success, a broader view is often more relevant which includes more subjective, qualitative and 'softer' success measures against individualised and often complex baselines.

As described throughout, it has not been possible to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of different approaches and with different pupil groups in a quantitative sense. However, the study identified a series of **key success factors for generic and pupil-group specific reintegration**, which are detailed in previous Chapters. Timescales for reintegration are crucial (to balance the risk of pupils drifting and losing interest in education, and setting the most appropriate pace and staging for the individual), as is the availability of the appropriate range of support services and expertise to be marshalled to provide tailored responses. Many of the key success factors identified in the study are already widely recognised, and underpin or form the basis of many of the approaches currently in place. At the highest level the most significant factors include:

- Culture and ethos - establishing principles of, and demonstrating an environment for, inclusive education in LEAs and schools is a central basis for effective reintegration. This influences both strategic (prioritisation of funding and other resources) and operational levels, so the necessary support infrastructures can be developed and wider commitment to inclusion demonstrated. Driven by the desire to ensure all children can access appropriate educational opportunities, a whole-school philosophy, built on shared staff awareness and understandings, was found to be key.
- Securing school places, and developing similar commitment amongst local schools, in the context of ensuring equitable pupil distribution and potential tensions between the attainment and inclusion agendas.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate support services for reintegrating pupils – either by developing central LEA or school-based services, ensuring access to specialist partner services through multi-agency agreements, and – crucially – providing a 'safety net' of central services or the opportunity to review the position should the return to school break down.
- Securing the commitment and active involvement of parents, carers and young people themselves in reintegration – supported by effective communications and participatory approaches to allow individuals' views to be considered.
- Other success factors of a more practical nature include:
 - Keeping pupils on school roll and/or maintaining contact with them – to create a sense of expectation for a return to education, and of ownership by schools.
 - Effective pupil assessment and reintegration planning from the outset, in a framework where the emphasis given to supported reintegration has equal weight to out of school provision
 - Proactive approaches and attitudes, especially by schools, such as offering named contacts/key workers, providing work while out of school, and facilitating flexible options in terms of curriculum and timetabling

Even when considered appropriate and following effective assessment procedures, **reintegration may fail when the described success factors are absent or negated.**

While the scale of the challenge in more complex cases is considerable, the reintegration process can also be undermined by more specific factors such as insufficient pupil information on which to plan (e.g. due to pupil non-disclosure and limited exchange of information between practitioners); other issues for returning pupils such as bullying or the fear of being bullied, peer group problems and stigmatisation, unaddressed or unidentified learning difficulties and emotional or behavioural problems; and home/family/carers context, such as a dysfunctional home environment, illness or trauma within the family, separation or bereavement.

The main challenges to the continued development of effective reintegration practices centre on LEAs, schools and their partners finding locally appropriate means of support. The good practice section of the report set out examples of the ways in which LEAs are mobilising the key success factors and principles within their own contexts with the resources available to them. To further support development and raise standards, LEAs have much to learn from each other, and demand for sharing effective and emerging practice examples was identified. The recommendations set out below offer a series of suggestions for how standards can continue to be raised.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are provided for DfES, LEAs and schools, although in practice considerable overlaps are inevitable between them and their implications. However, their implementation must be set in an evolving context featuring increasingly preventative approaches to work with children and families (in and through schools, for example via the Children's Fund), and the increased potential to provide increasingly holistic responses to young people's needs.

5.2.1 Recommendations for DfES

- Seek to identify mechanisms for reducing perceived and actual disincentives for schools to reintegrate pupils, in particular those with poor education records or who are perceived as 'high risk'. Potential mechanisms could include:
 - Reducing concerns over the impacts on school league tables by allowing schools' commitment and involvement in reintegration to be factored into their value added scores.
 - Considering approaches for 'fast tracking' pupil-linked funding, to help ensure that resources can be made available as soon as the need to support the reintegration of a pupil is recognised.
 - Extending the coverage of OFSTED inspections to cover reintegration approaches with different pupil groups, and ensure reports promote and celebrate particularly inclusive practice.
 - Allowing schools to be more flexible in the application of the curriculum, to support the tailoring of provision to meet for pupil needs/allowing access to more appropriate provision.
 - Continuing to promote the education inclusion agenda at the national and local levels, and provide examples of success amongst pupil groups who would be considered difficult to reintegrate.
- Encourage the exchange of practice and experience between reintegration practitioners. Approaches could include the establishment of practitioner

networks (on a generic basis or for specific groups, as identified for Gypsy/Traveller support workers), the production of focused practitioner guidance, holding events and workshops and considering more innovative approaches such as via Teachers TV. The provision of advice and guidance on the use of funding streams for reintegration approaches, including resources for a key worker approach.

- Promote training on the reintegration needs of different groups as part of Inset arrangements. Encourage the spread of school level support strategies for pupils who are 'extremes', through behaviour management training. Also, seek to ensure that 'reintegration issues' (including pupil characteristics and needs, and practical approaches to meeting them) feature in initial and beginning teacher training.
- Ensure that LEAs and schools are firmly positioned in policy terms within developing preventative services for children more widely – to minimise the need for reintegration in the first case.
- Finally, the Department should consider requiring schools to evidence the approaches tried to retain pupils prior to permanent exclusion, to ensure exclusion remains a measure of last resort.

5.2.2 Recommendations for LEAs

- Develop a shared definition of inclusion, agreed with schools, encompassing the responsibility for enabling pupils to access mainstream education settings where appropriate. This should include clear principles including the 'ownership' of pupils (for example by keeping on roll) supported by awareness raising, the exchange of practice and training as appropriate.
- Seek to foster an inclusive ethos amongst schools and ensure that take-up of reintegrated pupils is equitably distributed. Approaches that allow schools to over-subscribe, to facilitate the reintegration of pupils, should be considered.
- Consider establishing frameworks for engaging schools more actively in reintegration planning and in developing collective ownership, including protocols with schools, panel based approaches, or quotas. Documenting practical steps in local reintegration processes, through operational plans or more comprehensive resource packs, are a useful means of communicating and establishing shared understandings and expectations.
- In improving the effectiveness of reintegration approaches with different pupil groups, LEAs and their schools may wish to consider establishing monitoring procedures to provide data for planning and continuous improvement purposes. Key data could include mutually agreed 'soft' outcome measures, but should include:
 - ☐ The number of pupils in each group missing from education per period.
 - ☐ The share of the above pupils considered appropriate for reintegration - by different pupil groups.
 - ☐ The number for whom reintegration was attempted - as a measure of efficiency.

- The number for whom reintegration was considered successful - as a measure of effectiveness, based on an agreed definition of 'success' (with time spent in the receiving school being the most straightforward measure).
- At the individual pupil level, take steps to ensure that reintegration assessment and planning is based on comprehensive information from schools and other agencies. Steps could include developing clear and enforceable requirements for the provision pupil information, introducing effective pupil assessment processes and establishing multi-agency protocols. One such approach might be to require schools to provide comprehensive pupil information before any pupil can be excluded.
- Consider the balance between services to support reintegration provision at the LEA and school level – in the context of establishing the most effective balance between school-based and more specialist centralised provision, while ensuring reintegration practitioners are not isolated within existing structures. Depending on local circumstances, there may be opportunities to give schools a greater stake in LEA managed provision, as part of the process of engaging schools and encouraging earlier intervention/prevention, e.g. for non-attenders and pupils at risk of exclusion. Elsewhere economies of scale and variation in demand for specialist services may suggest keeping provision with the LEA.
- Based on the findings of the study, LEAs may also wish to consider the following to enhance the effectiveness of their reintegration approaches:
 - Allocating reintegration responsibilities to specific key workers or team members to oversee the reintegration process and provide pupil inputs if required. There may be potential for a multi-agency approach to key workers for some groups, but this approach would need the reintegration role to be better defined than at present, and multi-agency training for consistency.
 - Providing specific awareness raising and training events for central LEA and school staff dealing with the reintegration of different pupil groups, setting out the challenges facing pupils and the steps in place which can be accessed to meet their needs.
 - Ensuring that schools have access to (and awareness of) 'safety nets' of appropriate support to encourage reintegration, with the option of referring pupils back where attempts to reintegrate them are failing/prove not to be in the pupil's best interest.
 - Ensuring that procedures are in place for identifying, following-up and monitoring pupils missing from education within the emergent IRT data systems, as part of the local preventative strategies.
 - Seeking to ensure that additional planned CAMHS resources are best used to support pupils in schools (reintegrating or otherwise) with mental health issues.

5.2.3 Recommendations for Schools

- Schools should recognise their commitment to their communities and the children they serve, and take steps to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils within or entering their areas. Steps can include:

- Providing a positive welcome to returning pupils and parents/carers, and involve both in planning, monitoring and celebrating success.
- Developing 'whole school' approaches to both inclusion and reintegration – and allocating resources for support as part of this commitment.
- Considering how existing local resources and services can be marshalled to support reintegration – be these services school-based, central LEA services, provided by other partner agencies, or provided by programmes such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme and BEST teams.
- Ensuring that appropriate links exist with behaviour and attendance management services to support effective reintegration – for example in providing specific support to returning pupils (notably where additional needs are identified as part of the reintegration process), and monitoring pupils who have been reintegrated.
- Providing named reintegration contacts in each school – for example following a key worker model. These could be learning mentors, learning support staff etc, and potentially Heads of Year, but ideally not staff with full-time teaching responsibilities.
- Ensuring that the diagnostic and assessment processes followed with pupils not attending school are robust – and consider potential underlying factors in pupil behaviour, for example pupils with caring responsibilities presenting as unauthorised absences or showing poor punctuality.
- Being open to flexibility in current practices to support reintegration – for example offering flexible attendance and participation in the curriculum while pupils are returning to school.
- Adhering to responsibilities agreed under different local arrangements, for example for maintaining contact with pupils prior to their return and monitoring progress.
- Applying the key success factors and good practice principles identified nationally as best fit specific local environments and wider strategic and operational frameworks. The use of individual reintegration and education plans, robust and consistent monitoring and other interventions to meet specific needs should be considered if they are not already in place.

**VOLUME 2: REINTEGRATION IN DETAIL – PUPIL GROUP
SUMMARIES**

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6 INTRODUCTION

Volume 2 of this report provides more detailed information on the approaches followed to the reintegration (or integration) of pupils into the mainstream school setting in the case study LEA areas. The document is structured according to the different pupil groups covered, as follows:

- Permanently excluded pupils
- Long-term truants
- Pupils not attending school, due to:
 - Medical needs
 - Caring responsibilities (including school age parents)
 - Extended absences (such as term-time holidays).
- Pupils with mobility issues, including:
 - Gypsy/Traveller children
 - Children in local authority care (with foster parents or in residential care)
 - Asylum seeker and refugee children

As described previously, the research covered pupils with a variety of reintegration needs, including those: requiring a change of education delivery, needing help to maintain their place in school or to catch up after interruptions in their education, experiencing a change in circumstances, and needing to secure a place in school or to access education for the first time.

6.1 The Case Studies

This volume is based mainly on the findings of the case study fieldwork element of the study. These included visits to 14 LEA areas to identify the practices followed by LEAs, schools and their local partners to reintegrate children into mainstream school. Interviewees included:

- LEA staff – including individuals with responsibility for policy, strategy and operational aspects of education and reintegration processes.
- School staff – included teachers, Headteachers and Heads of Year, dedicated reintegration staff and other support staff contributing to reintegration efforts.
- 'Reintegration' partners – organisations with an interest or involvement in the reintegration process in the different areas or with different pupil groups.
- Pupils – to identify their experiences of the reintegration process.
- Parents – a small sample, to identify and discuss their role in the reintegration process and their experiences of it.

The research was undertaken on an anonymous basis, with the characteristics of the case study LEAs being provided in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Characteristics of the Case Study LEAs.					
LEA	LA Type	Region	Policy or Op Docs	Reported Monitoring	Pupil No's 2002/3*
1	London Borough	London	Op plans	Yes	32,000
2	Unitary	South East	Neither	Yes	27,000
3	Metropolitan	West Midlands	Policy	Yes	42,000
4	County Council	South West	Both	Yes	76,000
5	Metropolitan	North West	Policy	Yes	24,000
6	Metropolitan	North West	Neither	Yes	64,000
7	Metropolitan	North West	Policy	Yes	58,000
8	Unitary	North East	Policy	Yes	22,000
9	London Borough	London	Neither	Yes	18,000
10	County Council	South West	Both	Yes	65,000
11	Metropolitan	North East	Policy	Yes	41,000
12	County Council	South East	Both	Yes	120,000
13	Metropolitan	Yorks and Humber	Both	No	47,000
14	County Council	West Midlands	Neither	Yes	67,000

**Combined primary and secondary pupils, to nearest 1,000. Source DfES.*

To ensure that the relevant pupil groups were covered across the case study sample, and allow sufficient focus at the pupil group level, the majority of case studies focused on three pupil groups each. In three cases, where single approaches to working across a range of pupil groups were identified, an overview approach was followed. The distribution of coverage by pupil group and case study LEA is summarised in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2: Pupil Group Coverage by Case Study	
	Case Studies Featuring Each Pupil Group
Permanently Excluded Pupils	7 cases (LEAs 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12 and 14)
Long Term Truants	6 cases (LEAs 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 12)
Pupils with Medical Needs	5 cases (LEAs 1, 2, 10, 11 and 14)
Children with Caring Responsibilities (incl. school-age parents)	5 cases (LEAs 1, 5, 10, 11 and 13)
Extended Authorised Absences	--
Gypsy/Traveller Children	4 cases (LEAs 9, 10, 11 and 12)
Children in Local Authority Care	8 cases (LEAs 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 14)
Asylum Seekers and Refugees	4 cases (LEAs 6, 7, 11 and 13)
Multiple Group Coverage	3 cases (LEAs 4, 7 and 8)

In the case of pupils taking extended authorised absences, additional telephone interviews were undertaken with four local authorities to identify their approaches to this specific issue.

6.2 Document Structure

This document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Permanently excluded pupils.
- Section 3 – Long-term truants.
- Section 4 – Pupils not attending school – including those with medical needs, young carers (including school age parents), and pupils taking extended authorised absences (such as term-time holidays).
- Section 5 – Pupils with mobility issues, including: Gypsy/Traveller children, children in local authority care and asylum seeker and refugee children.

Each section follows a common structure as far as possible, including a summary of the characteristics, needs and barriers/challenges to reintegration for each group, an overview of the structures and approaches to facilitate reintegration (and specific components which are seen as essential or considered to be working effectively) and key success factors for reintegration success.

7 PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED PUPILS

LEAs are committed to reintegrating all pupils who have been permanently excluded to the most appropriate provision for them, be that into mainstream and special schools, permanent PRU provision, FE college, work based training or work placement options.

Just over 9,200 permanent exclusions were recorded for primary, secondary and special schools during 2002/3, the majority of which (7,960) were at secondary level¹. Exclusions tend to be concentrated in certain areas, with a small number of schools accounting for a disproportionately large share of the total. In 2000/1, for example, 100 secondary schools accounted for 10% of all permanent exclusions.

Exclusion should only be used for serious breaches of a school's discipline policy, and only take place when other strategies have been tried and failed or when the child remaining in school would harm the education or welfare of other pupils. Research suggests that permanent exclusion most commonly occurs when schools experience perceived unacceptable, abusive or violent behaviour². Feedback from teachers suggests that schools have varying standards and different levels of tolerance of pupils' behaviour.

In terms of **characteristics and issues**, permanently excluded pupils form a diverse group, with exclusions resulting from one-off incidents or following histories of long-term underlying problems. Pupils who are disaffected, have emotional and behavioural difficulties, or are involved in drugs or crime are more at risk of exclusion than other pupils. Aggressive and disruptive behaviour may be the result of a range of underlying factors, and some individuals may have several issues that must be addressed simultaneously. Parental care and discipline, and deteriorating home circumstances, are also considered to contribute to exclusion.

Boys make up the majority of excluded pupils, being four times more likely to be excluded than girls. Other pupil groups are disproportionately affected by exclusion. Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Other pupils are four times more likely to be excluded than White pupils, with gypsy/traveller and looked after children also being over-represented in the exclusion figures. Several interviewees stressed a particular problem for pupils in years 8/9, where some start to struggle with their work, and which can lead to behaviour issues and disaffection. The most challenging pupils tend to have verbal reasoning quotient scores (VRQS) of 80-84, i.e. above the level of SEN but below that for accessing the academic curriculum.

Home background and experience can play a key role in how pupils present themselves in schools, especially where there is a background in the family of EBD, lack of parental control and support, or drugs/alcohol issues. The expert interviews highlighted a core group of children and young people who struggle in the mainstream and are at risk of exclusion – as one described “*most (permanently excluded) kids have files starting in primary school*”.

¹ DfES Provisional Figures

² Excluding Primary School Children, Parsons et al, Christ Church College Canterbury, 1994

Excluded pupils have amongst the lowest levels of attempted reintegration into mainstream education, especially at KS 4, where alternative education is more readily available. The range of places at KS4 means that much of the reintegration effort into mainstream schools is at KS3. For the older age group vocational options or early college transfer are considered more appropriate options. However, the case studies suggested that Key Stage 3 pupils are the most difficult to reintegrate due to their developmental age, and as reintegration for them is back to the mainstream compulsory curriculum which could have led to the exclusion in the first place. The most successful groups appear to be KS 1 and 2, with primary headteachers appearing to be more willing to accept pupils back than secondary heads and where pastoral support programmes are more widely available.

A range of barriers to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils were identified during the case studies, as summarised in the box below.

Barriers to Reintegration – Permanently Excluded Pupils

The main barriers to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils identified from the case study fieldwork included:

- Schools' reluctance to take excluded pupils, and a lack of commitment when receiving – for reasons including perceived risk of disruption, damaging school image; and 'inclusion vs. attainment' issues.
- Home and family issues – including the degree of parent/carer interest and support for reintegration and education more widely, the home environment and factors such as illness, family separation or bereavement.
- Late referral/response - where earlier referral may have been beneficial.
- Lack of information exchange between schools/providers – where can mean there is limited information on which to base reintegration plans.
- Limited support in schools – in some areas gaps in provision seem to exist, for example around initial support and Behaviour Support Team inputs.
- Tensions between offering education and reintegration – where interim education providers may become 'holding centres' to prevent disengagement.

Other issues that can make reintegration fail include bullying or fear of being bullied, peer group problems, learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. Importantly, addressing any issues leading to exclusion in the first case is often a precursor to effective reintegration.

7.1 Context and Structures

Permanently excluded pupils have traditionally had the most emphasis in terms of reintegration policy and strategy, and there is a significant body of research into the causes of exclusion and effective provision. It is generally accepted that not all excluded pupils will benefit from a return to mainstream education, with some benefiting more from alternative provision or vocational qualifications. DfES guidance states that excluded primary age pupils should be reintegrated within one term, but recognises that for older pupils a return to mainstream education may not be appropriate. Most LEAs have put in place alternative education at KS4, encompassing

full time PRU places, access to the vocational curriculum, voluntary sector options or early college transfers.

While reintegration may not necessarily be explicitly addressed in discrete strategies and plans, most LEAs make use of dedicated LEA staff member(s) or teams, ie. a reintegration officer/manager, or other staff member such as a behaviour and social inclusion officer, usually working out of or in conjunction with educationalists in PRUs or other identified short term provision. Cross-departmental mechanisms are also usually required (EWS, EPS, Behaviour Support Service, SEN services; Learning Support). In some LEAs, individual cases are discussed by a panel, with a reintegration officer being assigned if the decision is made to reintegrate the pupil back into a mainstream school.

The case studies identified a range of LEA practice, with responsibilities tending to be well defined and concentrated in a specific service or team, sometimes through service level agreements. These teams tend to be responsible for tracking the education of the authority's permanently excluded pupils and delivering many additional services such as out of school teaching, coordinating individual education plans and multi-agency meetings, and providing for additional educational needs.

However LEAs vary in the way reintegration services are configured, and what is included in the 'package' of provision directly offered by their permanently excluded services and teams. The extent to which these teams encompass direct provision of education out of school; behaviour support, education welfare and education psychologist services; admissions procedures and youth service elements under the same service banner varies. Some reintegration teams encompass these functions, while others work with the other LEA departments (and beyond) to offer the range of services required. There are also variations in the extent to which services are centralised or localised: some larger authorities use area based co-ordination teams, others have centralised systems, and others use a mix of central and local provision.

Several case studies stressed the roles of other agencies such as Connexions; social services; YOT; Parent Partnership service; police; social workers/other support staff in their reintegration work. Involvement could be on a case-by-case basis, or via a regular programme of meetings (eg. every one/two weeks during term time). Such approaches could include collaborative panels for assessing needs, allocating provision, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. The involvement of parents/carers in meetings was also widely emphasised. Many of these multi-agency groups had wider remits – for example also covering pupils with medical needs, teenage mothers and pupils with mobility issues.

7.2 Funding and Resourcing

The statutory requirement in relation to the education and reintegration of excluded pupils puts the emphasis on LEAs to fund solutions as part of their core budgets. However, as the LEA survey illustrated, a range of funding sources are used to support reintegration with the different pupil groups. In the case of permanently excluded pupils, while over 90% of LEAs described using mainstream funding to support reintegration, over half also used the Vulnerable Children Grant and almost half other Standards Fund monies, and one third used a range of other funding sources.

The case studies showed a similar distribution of funding sources – each supporting their work through their mainstream budgets, with two describing Standards Fund (and four the Vulnerable Children Grant specifically) as important sources. In at least one LEA Standards Fund and VCG monies were described as being of particular value, and in one case (LEA 8) provided a larger share of funding than their mainstream budget.

The availability of resources is central to proactive involvement in reintegration and offering direct support in and to schools. Several LEAs have continued approaches set through the former Pupil Retention Grant (PRG), which set a precedent for resources being directed to PRUs from capitation when a pupil is excluded, and following the pupil as they return to school. Overall, the discontinuation of the PRG was lamented. While it was not felt to have had a great effect on the reintegration rate overall, since its lapse several authorities noted that exclusions have risen and/or it had become harder to engage schools. Where funding approaches similar to that under the PRG had been continued, LEAs were following a ‘penalty and dowry’ approach with examples of the scale of funding that may be available being shown below.

Figure 7.1: Examples of Funding ‘Penalties and Dowries’ for Reintegrating Permanently Excluded Pupils		
LEA	‘Penalty’	‘Dowry’
3	£3,500	£3,000
4	£5,000	£4,000
6	N/A	Key Stage 1: £1,809 Key Stage 2: £1,757 Key Stage 3: £2,264 Key Stage 4: £3,054
9	£2,000 (Secondary)	PRS get £100 per week from the £2,000 penalty payment for interim support and the balance goes to the receiving school (Secondary)

Other resources to support reintegration could be accessed via the SEN process, and in one Authority reintegration sat within the SEN team. In some cases reintegration services were responsible for managing the statementing process for pupils with special needs, in order to draw resources or assess progression to special education. While schools may lack the capacity and resources to manage this process themselves, or consider they are able to meet SEN support needs already, this can have an effect if pupils change schools without a statement.

The funding issue illustrates the problems associated with resourcing reintegration across the range of pupil groups. A key issue is to configure the money in such a way as it follows the pupil – as described above in terms of continued PRG approaches. These can be used to purchase in-school support (for example teaching support assistant or supervisor time), and other resource to support individualised reintegration programmes. A key problem is tailoring the resources to the individual, as their needs can be varied and unpredictable, the resources available to and in schools will differ, and different timescales will apply between cases.

Several LEAs are starting to move towards an approach where Headteachers have more delegated powers over the funding of the provision for excluded pupils, especially the PRUs. This is part of the shift towards a more preventative approach. For example, LEA 14 has put a lot of resource into provision for excluded pupils (£3.5 million total

budget, and 110 staff at 4 centres). The PRU is keen to delegate behaviour management funding to Heads to take the lead on whether spending money reactively is better than preventive approaches and better behaviour management systems.

7.3 Approaches/Delivery Models

While the general approach to reintegrating excluded pupils encompassed similar core elements of planning and support across the case studies, a considerable degree of variation existed between them in terms of how the services are structured and where decisions on reintegration plans are made. The following provides a brief summary of the general approach to provision in the case study LEAs, although in practice approaches might vary according to specific individual needs.

Key Features of Case Study LEA Approaches for Permanently Excluded Pupils

LEA 3. The Head of SEN leads in working with schools to make arrangements for excluded pupils, or to prevent their exclusion. Schools can purchase places in a Key Stage (KS) 3 PRU for at risk pupils. A SEN placement panel monitors progress on a fortnightly basis. The return to school is facilitated by a reintegration support teacher in the PRU, linking with behaviour support professionals and an identified reintegration teacher in the receiving school.

LEA 4. The Reintegration Service, with the status of a school establishment, has brought together: an education other than at school (EOTAS) team, with three PRUs offering alternative provision at KS4 and six area teams with local bases offering time-limited provision for primary and secondary pupils. Reintegration into school is facilitated by the area managers, with the support of tutors and assistants in the school.

LEA 5. A protocol has recently been agreed with secondary school headteachers for reintegrating permanently excluded pupils, where the LEA follows an Area Partnership and Integrated Services approach. On exclusion risk assessments are undertaken (although most permanent excludees will already have one), and the decision made whether to reintegrate into school, special provision, KS4 options (including vocational) or a combination of school and vocational. Schools are contacted and asked to take pupils, and are supported by both funding and a service level agreement with the behaviour support team. All pupils have reintegration plans, supported on the basis of need from internal services. Any support package is developed with the school, pupil and parents/carers – with monitoring and support continuing on an individualised basis.

LEA 8. The Pupil Inclusion Officer facilitates the overall reintegration process, although a Referral and Reintegration Panel will oversee the process from Autumn 2004. An EOTAS team undertake assessment and pupil profiling, with 'managed transitions' usually taking place with pupils remaining on roll and being gradually introduced into the new school timetable. Options are also available for internal mentoring and external educational support. If reintegration is successful pupils are formally placed on the school roll after up to two terms.

LEA 6. Lead responsibility is with the Provision and Reintegration Service (PARS), part of the Social Inclusion Team, which encompasses four PRUs and a home tuition service. The service includes an Intermediate Provision Observation and Reintegration service, comprising two centres that assess and gather information on pupils and direct them into the area's PRU provision or back into mainstream school. An exclusions forum (working under the umbrella of a series of provider panels) meets weekly to oversee cases, and involves Headteachers and LEA officers. The LEA employs five reintegration support officers, located in five different secondary schools, who operationally support reintegration. Use is also made of twelve student support centres (eight Secondary and four Primary), which are co-located on school sites but serve a wider catchment area.

LEA 8. Here the Social Inclusion Team has overall responsibility, with a permanent exclusion panel developing reintegration approaches for secondary pupils. These could include a period of PRU provision, with support from members of the central Social Inclusion Team for both the pupil and the receiving school.

LEA 12. The Behaviour and Social Inclusion Team provide advice to schools and parents on permanent exclusions. There are four area-based multi-agency teams, and nine PRUs in the area. Reintegration into mainstream schools is focused on year 9 and below, with an EOTAS co-ordinator organising interim education which could include time-limited attendance at a PRU. Each PRU has an Inclusion and Reintegration teacher, who oversees and supports the reintegration of pupils into their new schools.

LEA 14. Reintegration is organised through area behaviour management panels. Once the child is excluded, they are referred to the panel who then make a decision about the referral to the PRU. The decision to reintegrate is made by PRU staff, parents and the child, with the panel deciding (considering the wishes of parents and children) which school the child should go to. The structure is a way of instigating corporate responsibility between the LEA, other agencies and schools for reintegration.

7.4 Key Components

Within the overall approaches summarised above, a series of components were considered central or to be working particularly well in supporting the effective reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. While varying with the specific environment and context, and wider approaches to pupil exclusion, behaviour management and inclusive practice more widely, a series of common elements emerged. These are described below.

1. Using panels for decision making and involving schools

A variety of approaches were reported to ensure effective decision-making and secure buy-in and commitment to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. Involving schools in collective decision-making is generally considered to be beneficial for obvious reasons, most commonly through panels incorporating headteachers. The panel structure can be an effective way of instigating corporate responsibility between the LEA, other agencies and schools – although there are probably as many variations of panel mechanism as there are authorities. The coverage of panels also varied - some focussing solely on excluded pupils, but others that also considered the needs of pupils across the range of target and vulnerable groups.

Using Panels to Support the Reintegration of Permanently Excluded Pupils

In LEA 8, a permanent exclusions panel comprises headteachers (on a rotational basis), PRU and Social Inclusion Team. Information is obtained from the excluding school including factual information and recommendations in terms of the most appropriate provision. The panel decides, on the basis of the information, which school the young person should return to. Reintegration is always attempted, and even in year 11 it is very rare that a pupil does not return to mainstream schooling at some point. Headteachers have generally accepted panel decisions, which are binding for all schools.

In LEA 14, area behaviour management panels are considered to be key to reintegration, featuring headteachers and staff from the LEA and PRU and covered by a service level agreement. Their role is to decide on pupils' immediate destinations on exclusion, and, following the recommendation to reintegrate from the PRU (made in conjunction with parents/carers and children), the schools they should be reintegrated into.

'Age Phased Provider Panels' are central to LEA 6's approach. These are multi-agency groups involving the LEA, schools, police, Connexions, and other relevant providers, such as local hospitals. Individual cases are discussed at panel meetings with decisions being taken on which services and provision are most important. There are a number of panels that correspond to each of the Key Stages (hence the term 'age phased'), and which meet on a fortnightly basis.

The alternative to decision-making through panels is to plan and monitor provision based on **internal discussions within reintegration services**, for example through weekly team meetings. This appears to be particularly common where reintegration services are part of a package of provision to excluded pupils and other groups.

The promotion of a community of interest and 'collegiate' approaches to involving schools in the reintegration process were considered key, but an outstanding challenge in many areas and between different schools. The absence of such conditions means the risk of a highly skewed pattern of reintegration, with reintegrated pupils being concentrated in a small number of (potentially 'sink') schools. Interviews with schools and partners in some case study areas identified that this was, to a limited extent, happening with the unequal and inequitable distribution of schools prepared to take permanently excluded pupils.

2. Securing school places

Options for reintegration are affected by the availability of, and access to, mainstream school places, including the scope for pupil/parent choice of establishment. Securing school places was the most commonly expressed barrier to reintegration, and LEAs may face particular challenges in gaining agreements from schools to admit pupils – in particular amongst the permanently excluded. This not only limits reintegration opportunities to schools with vacancies, but can also lead to the concentration of pupils with a track record of exclusion in a small number of schools as described above.

In addition to fostering commitment through involvement in decision-making, a number of other approaches were also described amongst the LEAs and schools. LEAs described a range of approaches to helping ensure commitment, including awareness raising, financial incentives/disincentives and providing on-going support (as described below), with the provision of a 'safety net' being particularly important in the case of the permanently excluded. Attempts to encourage schools to reserve places for the reintegration of a range of pupil groups were also described – not all of which were found to be successful. One LEA (5) described their experience of getting schools to keep two places per year open for reintegration, and found compliance to be limited. At the time of interview they were considering if they could allow schools to take a set number of reintegrated pupils above their admission ceilings, to enforce the more equitable distribution of pupils.

Examples of approaches for securing places considered to be working effectively are provided in the box below.

Securing School Places for Excluded Pupils

LEA 6 has a Secured Places scheme (linked to the Negotiated Transfer system, and used for a range of groups). Schools are given money in advance to 'secure' a number of places that the LEA can then use to reintegrate permanently excluded pupils. The schools use this allocated money to employ staff and set up schemes to assist in reintegration issues. There were 150

secured places last year and these can only be filled by a successful placement (ie if the transfer fails then the place can be reused for other reintegrating children).

A service level agreement is in place between schools in LEA3 to promote collective responsibility for reintegration. It specifies the number of pupils that a school has to take in during the academic year, based on its size, the social disadvantage of the catchment area, and the degree of transience of pupils. In general each of the area's 90 secondary schools are allocated 2-3 pupils per year.

Other LEAs have developed systematic processes for selecting and involving schools. In LEA 12, a points weighting system is used to select schools to receive reintegrating excluded pupils. The system has been in place for four years, and was developed by the LEA, statisticians and headteachers. The weighting system uses various indicators of schools' abilities to manage reintegrated children, derived from a range of data including the SEN audit and financial data including levels of free school meals. Schools with the highest points scores are prioritised to receive reintegrating pupils, with points being removed when pupils are admitted (with 25 points being removed for taking a permanently excluded pupil). Over fifty Headteachers have agreed to the system and about nine schools are net importers of permanently excluded pupils. The system supports objective decision-making, although it is not used in isolation to determine individual placements - there may be many reasons why the school identified through the system may not be appropriate. While an interesting approach, the system may not be universally transferable. It relies on getting oversubscribed schools to buy into the model, which may be difficult in smaller LEAs. The large size of the LEA is an advantage, as it is large enough to have a number of schools close enough together to allow students to be spread fairly.

3. Key worker approach

The use of dedicated LEA staff member(s) or teams can help to set up conditions where reintegration can take place. In most cases an identified lead is necessary in order to organise a reintegration plan, make arrangements for reintegration, and set up a pastoral support programme in liaison with schools and the potential range of agencies that could be involved. In some of the larger LEAs area-based officers were used, working on a caseload basis.

Whilst the precise arrangements might vary, the case studies suggested that field officers are an invaluable resource from the point of view of outreach with pupils and families, co-ordination of interventions, and in some cases direct provision of support or education to pupils including support in schools. By providing schools with a single point of contact, in particular where problems are experienced during or after the process of returning to school, key workers were found to contribute to increasing schools' propensity to reintegrate pupils, in particular the permanently excluded. Examples of key worker approaches are provided in the box below.

Key Worker Approach to Reintegrating Excluded Pupils

The key worker approach is considered critical to success in LEA3, in allowing work on reintegration issues on an individual basis and providing continuity for other agencies to work with the student. The approach is considered particularly successful at KS3, where there is a greater focus on reintegration into mainstream. Key worker contact is maintained throughout the reintegration process, including assessment, interim education at a PRU, and through in-school reintegration programmes, and is open-ended depending on individual need. In addition, pupils are also assigned a reintegration teacher (in effect a key worker) in their receiving schools.

Although short-term (since February 2004), recent developments in LEA 11 demonstrate how the creation of a dedicated point of contact for reintegration can help to focus attention on

reintegration. The Reintegration Officer role in LEA 11 is to assist with transfers from PRUs to schools – and the schools interviewed reported benefits such as having an ‘honest broker’, and single point of contact, to consider the needs of young people placed in schools. Another benefit has been in promoting collaboration between schools. Schools which previously tried to present barriers to reintegration by not accepting ‘difficult students’ appear more willing to accept pupils as they can also approach the Reintegration Officer to help re-school some of their problem students (although so far this is based on informal rather than formal arrangements).

Other approaches to the key worker approach could also be envisaged depending on the nature of local partnerships and linkages. For example, LEA 7 is increasingly moving towards a key worker system, with all at risk young people having an identified, designated person from a key agency to negotiate action plans and track progress. This worker would not be confined to the LEA teams but would be from the most appropriate lead agency, for example a Connexions Personal Adviser who would support pupils in their transition to further education or training as part of a strategic partnerships approach. However, the effectiveness of this kind of arrangement in supporting successful reintegration has yet to be tested.

4. Arrangements for interim education provision

As might be expected, most LEAs use PRUs or equivalent provision in the reintegration of excluded pupils. However there are differences in that some Authorities have made the distinction between units providing ongoing education and pupils on short-term programmes (in others PRUs may do both).

The requirement to provide full time education to excluded pupils by the 16th day of exclusion (best Value Performance Indicator 159) has meant that considerable resources have been directed to ensuring that education delivery can be deployed swiftly, in the context of raising standards of out of school provision. Some authorities (such as LEA 4) have established reintegration provision in such a way that the service itself has school status. Examples of different approaches are illustrated below.

The Use of Interim Alternative Education Provision with Excluded Pupils

In **LEA 4**, efforts have gone into ensuring geographically focused quality education for people out of school at KS3 through a network of local centres. They focus on offering a broad and balanced education, helping people to achieve their potential and raising self-confidence and the motivation to learn. Most pupils are on GCSE programmes, and individual tuition can also be provided. All pupils attending the centres or with individual tuition have an exit strategy – which could include placement in a special school, PRU or mainstream school, or other option. A local target is set for reintegration within 12 weeks, and this period is used as for both formal and informal extended assessments.

In **LEA 6** temporary provision for different key stages is offered by four primary and eight Secondary Student Support Centres (SSCs), with an emphasis on KS3. SSCs are located on-site in particular schools, but serve a wider geographic area than the school where they are located. Secondary SSCs generally operate on six-week cycles (corresponding to half terms), generally taking ten pupils in each centre per cycle, with one space being reserved for permanently excluded pupils. Work in the centres is split between the national curriculum (with a strong focus on numeracy and literacy) and ‘therapeutic activities’ to challenge behavioural problems. The first four weeks are based in the centre, and the final two concentrate on reintegrating the young person back into their school. This may involve part-time attendance split between the school and the centre.

As part of the LEA 6 case study, a series of pupils using the student support centres were interviewed. Pupil X represented a particular success story, having had a history of disruptive

and violent behaviour that led to seven internal suspensions during his first four weeks at school. This pattern continued, with fourteen detentions and short-term exclusions following problems mainly with female staff. Following intensive work with one of the SSCs he was eventually reintegrated back into school. Since then his attendance has been 95%, and although there have been occasional episodes of disruption there is now almost complete absence of violent behaviour. Pupil X finished Year 7 without any further exclusions and with a much-improved academic report, and has continued to progress through Year 8 without further exclusions.

5. Effective reintegration planning

Many LEAs were found to use fairly informal processes, based on the judgements of staff members and information collected from the excluding school, to decide if pupils are appropriate for reintegration into mainstream schools. Some examples of more formalised approaches were also found. For example, in LEA 14 the decision to reintegrate is based on pupils' performance on behaviour scales developed by QCA and Birmingham University. The child is considered suitable for reintegration when they score 80-85% against the 15 criteria on the scale.

Reintegration plans are usually co-designed with schools. Designated PRU tutors or reintegration officers would usually discuss options with the school, involving the pupil and the parents, and making adjustments if need be. Across the case studies, reintegration appeared to work best when:

- Schools maintain contact with the young person whilst they are outside the school, with pupils being kept 'on roll' as far as possible to emphasise continued school ownership.
- A structured approach and clear processes for reintegration from entry to the exit are in place and understood by all – supported by effective monitoring and communication procedures. One LEA described having a highly structured interview at the start of the process (when a pupil is transferred to a PRU), clear target setting, a four week assessment process, individual pupil plans which are formally monitored and agreed, and a review at the end of each term with parents. Other LEAs described similar approaches as being helpful for schools, parents and pupils themselves.
- Time planned for out of school education is time-limited and regularly reviewed – with expectations for duration being set at the outset. Timings varied between LEAs (for example 12 weeks in LEA 4), although in practice were reliant on the availability of school places and other factors.

Most LEAs have worked hard in recent years to develop a range of alternative options for excluded pupils, or those at risk of disengagement from learning. In many cases PRUs or interim provision are part of a transition to another non-mainstream option.

Finally, a few LEAs described providing specific packs of information that would help in planning the return to school and early stages thereafter. These could be designed to be of use to both the receiving school and the pupil themselves, for example:

- In one LEA a reintegration readiness pack is drawn up including a frank account of the child's behaviour and academic performance. Packs include background information from professionals working with the pupil during their time away from

school, including invaluable information on how the pupil behaved in the PRU, specific issues for the pupil and the type of teacher they might best respond to.

- In LEA 6 booklets are produced outlining strategies that seem to work with the young person, with targets and other information that the young person can take back to their school. The booklets can detail strategies for both the school and the pupil on dealing with problems after reintegration (for example, if I am about to lose my temper I will...).

6. Phased reintegration

Phased reintegration to mainstream education can be a positive way of allaying schools' concerns and inducing confidence in the child – with pupils combining attendance at PRUs and other centres with a return to school on a part-time basis. Important considerations for the success of phased approaches appeared to include the capacity/commitment of receiving schools, and the availability of on-site services such as Learning Support Units (LSUs) and other key staff to support the process.

Phased reintegration approaches were commonly used, either as a standard approach or as part of a combined strategy, depending in individual pupil needs. For example:

- In LEA 14 individual reintegration plans are drawn up, setting out the pace, methods, key target areas, success criteria and definitions of critical incidents. While many pupils return on a full-time basis, three stages are commonly defined: initial part-time attendance in school within LSU or limited lessons; increased attendance and wider participation in mainstream lessons; and full time attendance. Time limits of one or two weeks are normally set for each phase, with careful monitoring and success criteria being set for progression to the next phase. This allows for reintegration to 'fail' but be tried again, although a limit of two unsuccessful repetitions is set before the programme is reviewed and a new approach formulated.
- In another LEA pupils will automatically be dually registered with the PRU for the first six months, with the PRU continuing to support the pupil for about two hours a week during the first four weeks of entry to their new school. The PRU reintegration coordinator continues to meet with the school and pupil, to ensure reintegration is progressing well and identify and talk through any problems. In LEA 3, a system has recently been introduced where pupils spend three weeks attending a PRU and their new school on a part-time basis.

Placements in school were also undertaken on a trial basis, which where followed were considered beneficial in further reducing actual and perceived risks for schools (so encouraging them to consider pupils in the first case), and in motivating pupils to work harder at school (as in the pupil case example in the box below).

Pupil Case Example – Trial Reintegration to School

Pupil X was excluded in Year 8 and after a short time at a local support centre was given a trial placement at a new school. The school had a Learning Support Unit (LSU), and its manager met with the LEA reintegration officer and the child to plan their reintegration. Pupil X was described as being “bright” but also “manipulative”, and a person who sometimes found it hard to follow rules. The pupil started at school on a trial basis without support, as they did not want to be seen to be in need of it and the school considered they would be able to cope.

The school was in discussion with the reintegration team at the time of interview, and had decided to extend the trial for a further four weeks rather than putting the pupil on roll. Although it is likely that Pupil X will secure a permanent place, the school feels an extended trial will help the pupil better appreciate the opportunity he is being given. The school preferred the idea of a trial to a permanent placement, as although there is no incentive associated with the reintegration there is no financial implication if the placement fails.

The LSU manager commented that there were still concerns about Pupil X’s behaviour. They considered that if the placement fails it will do so quickly - the best approach as if problems continue for too long they could damage the pupil’s longer-term prospects.

Importantly, most interviewees agreed that it was bad practice for phased reintegration and attendance between school and other providers to continue for a significant length of time. Views varied on the most appropriate duration of phasing, with between three and eight weeks being the most commonly preferred timescale. However, this was not set and not always achievable – in practice variable pupil needs, failed part-time reintegration in a school and capacity and placement issues were also influential.

7. Support to pupils in school

LEAs were usually able to deploy resources in a flexible way to offer a degree of initial support in the early stages of reintegration in schools, often on a time-limited basis or subject to regular review (frequently on a half-termly basis). As described previously, the availability of support during and immediately following a pupil’s return to school was highly valued by schools, and provided a ‘safety net’ most effectively facilitated by a key worker approach. As one LEA interviewee commented: *“school liaison is the beauty of our success: people are not just dumped in schools. There is consistency of approach and schools know who to ring”*.

A range of different agents may be involved in supporting the return to school, with different approaches being followed by LEA, school and individual pupil need – with two examples being provided in the box below.

Supporting Pupils’ Return to School – Permanently Excluded Pupils

In one LEA PRU teaching assistants most commonly work in schools to support pupils’ return to school reintegration. Different inputs are required at primary and secondary levels, which may include sitting in class at the primary level, but taking a more distant position at the secondary level. Their role is to provide support, lead on monitoring and management, and deal with any problems arising in the school. There is a review of the progress at the end of each stage of the reintegration plan and at the very end, involving the child’s tutor, teaching assistant and other members of the school including headteacher, and the parent and the child.

Elsewhere a large South West secondary school had recently accepted an excluded pupil on a trial basis. They described allocating a learning support worker to help the pupil become

acclimatised during the first four weeks. The pupil described being able to cope with the educational aspects in their new environment, but felt that they had benefited from help in getting organised and finding their way around in a large secondary school.

LEAs draw on a range of individuals to provide support, including central LEA staff, tutors and teaching assistants, and reintegration officers or other key workers. Access to teaching assistants and reintegration tutors in schools can be particularly helpful. Learning Support Units (LSUs) also support reintegration by making schools more able to take on a new pupil with specific problems, and appeared to provide obvious points of contact for reintegration and resources to provide support for challenging pupils in particular. The effectiveness of LSUs in supporting reintegration, however, seems to depend on how LSU provision is integrated into the school and complements mainstream classes. While providing an important resource as part of the reintegration process, there is a danger that pupils may become stuck within the LSU set-up.

An interesting development identified amongst some LEAs was an increased delegation of support for reintegrating pupils from the LEA to the school level. In LEA 6, for example, five secondary schools have reintegration support officers (RSOs), with others having learning mentors who play a key role in reintegration. The RSOs are present in school every day to provide assistance to reintegrating students and others finding it difficult to engage (such as other vulnerable pupils or pupils experiencing bullying) on a case basis. They deal with any issues that may help reintegration (such as uniform issues, transport problems, personal problems, etc). The RSOs have caseloads of up to 12 pupils, and may provide support in and outside of the classroom, and also work with parents.

The provision of support in the return to school can also have additional benefits, including helping at times of crisis for pupils (not necessarily directly related to their reintegration) and providing intelligence on or addressing previously unidentified needs. For example, support staff in LEA 4 described cases of undiagnosed special needs, illiteracy and medical and eyesight problems, as well as unidentified gifted and talented pupils.

Even with the best efforts in preparing for the return to school and support on arrival, reintegration will not necessarily be successful. The box below describes three examples taken from interviews with excluded pupils and the individuals working most closely with them – one illustrating the depth of involvement that may be necessary, one describing a reintegration that is not considered capable of being sustained, and a particular success story.

Examples of Supporting Permanently Excluded Pupils to Return to School

Case 1

Pupil 1 had been receiving education at a reintegration centre during Year 8. After a school place was secured he worked full time with a learning support worker (LSW) at the centre, in the knowledge that they would support the pupil's return to and in their new school. As the new school place started in September, the LSW kept in contact with the pupil during the summer holidays, making sure his mother had got his uniform ready, could collect the pupil from school and had familiarised herself with the school timetable.

On Pupil 1's return to school, the LSW provided in-school support on a full-time basis for the first week, spending almost every moment with the pupil for the first week, with support reducing to

half of the time in the second week. As the pupil was statemented he was entitled to a LSW in school, so both LSWs worked collaboratively to ensure an effective handover. This meant that the pupil had double support for a short period, before the LSW from the centre withdrew. The school was considered to have a positive approach to school inclusion, and its own LSW support, and had made considerable efforts to make the reintegration a success. It was also important in this case that someone known to the pupil stayed with him in the early stages, and that an effective exchange between LSWs could be facilitated.

Case 2

Pupil 2 was also permanently excluded in Year 8, and went into a reintegration centre. A place was found at a nearby school with a fresh start policy. Meetings took place with the school, reintegration officers and parents. The school LSU manager had a key worker role, and described how “we worked from day one with (Pupil 2), and when felt it was appropriate we looked to put him back into school”. Pupil 2 came from a particularly troubled background and had little parental support. While it was suspected that the pupil would have problems in a large school, the receiving school agreed to take him with support being provided initially by the school reintegration worker. After 2-3 weeks Pupil 2 said he no longer needed support and an individual education plan was prepared, although he has also received an internal support plan, performance against which will be reviewed on the evidence of teacher feedback.

The school meets with the LEA reintegration officer for four-weekly reviews, and has kept in contact on a weekly basis even though the pupil is now on the school roll. The reintegration officer feels that if the placement does not work (which was considered likely) the pupil will be referred back, so are unwilling to take the support away. The longer-term prospects for Pupil 2 are expected to include time in a PRU - as the school LSU manager commented: “(Pupil 2) will stay for at best a year (in school), but he can’t really cope in the mainstream so we would not be doing him any favours by keeping him any longer than that”.

Case 3

Pupil 3 in LEA 6 was permanently excluded at the start of Year 11, following a history of aggressive behaviour to other pupils throughout his school career and culminating in a serious assault on another pupil. He was offered an alternative education provider, but his parents expressed the wish for a place in mainstream school where he could access a range of GCSEs.

The pupil was placed in a school with a dedicated reintegration support officer, where he received support and counselling on a regular and ongoing basis. Despite the initial concerns of all parties involved, the pupil is now on the permanent roll of his new school - a success attributed to the support received after returning to school. The pupil has been entered for 8 GCSEs, and is expected to achieve 5+ A-C grades.

8. Behaviour management approaches

The connection between work with excluded pupils and interventions around behaviour support is well accepted – indeed a pre-requisite for reintegration is that the behavioural issues that led to exclusion, and their potentially deep-rooted causes, have at least begun to be addressed prior to any return to the mainstream school setting. The case study LEAs broadly considered a systematised understanding of behaviour management in schools to be a key factor in the reintegration of excluded pupils, with the KS3 behaviour strand being cited as a particularly welcome development.

Interviews with schools confirmed their main concerns in reintegrating permanently excluded pupils to be around potential disruption due to behaviour problems, and their influence on (and potential risks for) other pupils. From their perspective class-based

teaching assistant support was considered important from a whole class perspective (rather than just for the reintegrated pupil). In many cases change is ongoing in terms of the provision of specific behaviour support services, for example in the box below.

Changes to Behaviour Support Provision

As part of changes currently taking place in LEA 14, behaviour support services previously provided by the PRU are being phased out. Provision will be the responsibility of the behaviour support service, with behaviour support teachers operating in schools as part of in-class support. Each behaviour support teacher will have an allocated number of hours for each school, and liaise with the school SENCO as necessary.

In addition, classroom assistants are used to support reintegrating pupils, and will work with the behaviour support teachers to provide a more holistic approach. Individual schools will be able to decide on which pupils should be prioritised for support, and what is most relevant for their needs.

Not all teachers can cope equally well with certain types of pupils and their behaviour, and it was widely considered that many could benefit from an extra teacher or support worker in the class to help 'contain the aftermath' of disruptive events and promote continuity. Several interviewees identified additional training requirements for teachers on how to manage 'difficult and challenging' pupils and implement strategies for them, and a number of individuals with reintegration responsibilities would welcome more time for training and to assemble support and training packages for schools in their areas. While this is part of the wider behaviour management agenda, such developments would have clear implications for both reintegration and preventing exclusions.

9. Incentives and disincentives

Many LEAs have made attempts to provide incentives to school involvement in reintegration (and/or put in place disincentives to exclusion). No standard approach was found, and some examples of different approaches to financial incentives and disincentives were provided in the previous section on funding.

There is little evidence that financial rewards in themselves are effective incentives for schools to consider reintegrating excluded pupils – although extra resources are always well received and may serve to reduce concerns by contributing to a perceived 'safety net' and reduce potential negative impacts. Rather, it is the services that extra funds can provide which are more influential, although this relies on pupils needs being met by discrete inputs that can be mobilised at short notice, and the availability of such inputs locally.

Systems of financial penalties appear to offer a means of securing extra resources for targeting the needs of excluded pupils, and may have a role to play in LEAs which rely on contributions from schools towards funding of the centralised PRU provision and reintegration services. However, financial penalties can cause resentment between LEAs and schools, especially for schools who feel they have worked hard to do everything possible to avoid a permanent exclusion. Penalties could also put managed move arrangements at risk, for example by undermining relationships in cases where schools agree to give a pupil at risk of exclusion a 'fresh start', and are then penalised if the move is unsuccessful.

As described previously, many interviewees lamented the discontinuation of the Pupil Retention Grant that provided a framework for the support of excluded pupils. However whilst systems of incentives and disincentives can provide additional resources to ‘oil the wheels’ of reintegration, they are often a fairly crude way of allocating resources at the individual level. This is not solely because individual needs are likely to be different in each case, but also because the resources and frameworks available in each school context are also different. Some reintegrating pupils require short-term, low cost support, whilst others have ongoing and/or more costly needs. The availability of flexible, tailored provision to meet individual needs, available at short notice if necessary, is a more important factor than the resources with which such provision can be secured.

10. Managed moves and negotiated transfers

Finally, managed moves and negotiated transfers are preventative measures that, if used well, can help prevent permanent exclusion amongst at risk pupils. It was apparent from the case studies and supporting research that such measures were becoming increasingly popular, in particular as preventative measures and as part of inclusion practice more widely.

Views on their appropriateness and effectiveness varied amongst both LEAs and schools – from being an extremely useful means of preventing exclusions by giving pupils a ‘new start’ away from an environment that had not worked for them, to being a means of removing ‘troublesome’ pupils and excluding pupils in all but name. Where such approaches have been in operation for some time, a series of success factors could be identified, including:

- Moves being proposed with the interests of the pupil at heart, and based on positive new opportunities rather than escaping problematic situations.
- The pupil must consciously decide to make a fresh start, and be committed to adopting behaviour patterns that will help them to fit in. The close involvement, and the maturity, of the pupil are therefore essential.
- Moves need to be carefully planned and handled – one of the main reasons for failure is when the pupils are transferred to schools where they are already known. This does not provide the intended fresh start, and the pupil can quickly fall in with the wrong pupil clique and problems begin again.

The box below describes the experience of one LEA operating a formalised negotiated transfer system for over four years, and which illustrates both the strengths and potential weaknesses of the approach.

Example of a Negotiated Transfer System

Negotiated Transfers (NT's) are a key element of LEA 6's Secondary education system, having been introduced in 2000. The approach is currently being revised to cope with some problems that have begun to emerge. The approach is aimed at children who are in danger of permanent exclusion or disengagement, and can be used as a bridge between PRUs and new schools when pupils have already been excluded. However it is also being used for a wide variety of cases, including the movement of children from one part of the area to another and beyond. Unsuccessful Transfers are relatively common (around half of the total), even though some pupils do not achieve on-roll status at the new school, experience of another school can help

them to settle on return to their previous school (“the grass isn’t always greener...” as one headteacher noted).

Schools particularly like the ‘safety net’ of accepting a pupil with the option of returning them to their original school if problems emerge. The NT system has been widely used as a replacement to the normal ‘in-year transfer’ system.

Overall the LEA considers that the NT approach has been effective in both preventing exclusions and contributing to reintegration efforts. They are mindful of the potential for misuse, which the current revisions are intended to address.

7.5 Key Success Factors

Finally, a series of key success factors were identified for the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. These include:

- Speed of response - crucial to keeping pupils in a structured routine, and sends a positive message that the LEA cares about their education and about them.
- Basing reintegration on a genuine new start - with excluded pupils being treated like any other student. Reintegrating pupils at natural breaks e.g. at the start of a new term, are useful, so entry is more natural and fewer questions are asked.
- Mechanisms to listen closely to schools and involve them in decision-making - likely to depend on a range of formal and informal arrangements for two-way communication between schools and the LEA.
- Exclusions panels involving head-teachers can help promote school ownership.
- Effective partnership working – based on good communication, often including informal communication.
- The reintegration teachers are a central resource. Key to success is staff working with young people on an individual basis.
- Ensuring the engagement of the pupil, and securing and maintaining parental/carers support.

8 LONG TERM TRUANTS

Truancy is defined as “absence from school for no legitimate reason”. Unauthorised absence from school was recorded for almost 1.2 million children in 2002/3, with the average number of half days missed being eight at primary and 15 at secondary levels. However, there are differences in how schools define and record unauthorised absences, and research with pupils has suggested that some truancy is unknown to schools.

Pupils with persistent periods of unauthorised absence from school form a particularly diverse group and a particularly difficult one to categorise. Their non-attendance may be the result of a variety of factors, including general disaffection and disengagement from education, negative school experiences (such as bullying, stigmatisation and the inability to cope with school work), negative peer and parental influences, school phobia and a range of personal, home and family problems that can disrupt education. Parent condoned absence is also a problem, with some parents preferring to keep their children at home as they either do not value education or the child has family or caring responsibilities. The influence of friends and peers, and relationships with teachers which are seen as lacking respect of fairness, have also been identified as reasons why pupils become non-attenders. The unsuitability of the national curriculum for certain groups has also been linked to falling attendance amongst 15 to 16 year olds. The case studies, in focussing not only on long-term truants but other groups such as young carers, have illustrated the range and complexity of underpinning issues for pupils who first ‘present’ through their non-attendance at school – and the challenges facing practitioners in diagnosing and responding to the needs of individual pupils.

Some school age children not attending school could be ‘off roll’ (i.e. not registered at any educational establishment), as some schools may choose to deregister a ‘problem’ child (a form of back door exclusion), or because parents fail to obtain a school place. Under current arrangements in most LEAs parents are responsible for applying directly to schools to secure education for their children. If an application is rejected or the school is over-subscribed and has a waiting list, some parents may prefer to keep their child out of school rather than send them to one that is not their preferred option. It was suggested during interviews with LEA staff that some children could be out of education for up to a year for this reason.

The traditional focus has been on pupils who are not attending school due to disaffection or as disengagement from learning. In many cases the same strategies have been, and continue to be, applied to truants as for disruptive and excluded pupils, in recognition of the link between behaviour, truancy and exclusion. Increasingly, however, there is an emphasis on the factors other than disaffection that may cause children to truant.

Success is generally measured in terms of sustained improvements in attendance (but this may never reach 100% attendance). However, work with non-attenders is clearly located as an inclusion as well as a participation issue. Most LEAs also take account of ‘softer’ indicators such as the child re-engaging in education, participating and socialising more/better.

An increasing problem for some LEAs, especially the large metropolitan areas, is pupils not attending school becoming 'lost to the system', having been deregistered from school, or not having secured a school place. Some LEAs, including the case study LEAs 5 and 7, have set up databases to collate information on children not attending school that are known to the LEA or its partners. In areas of high population mobility the LEA may be out of contact with these families. One LEA also identified a persistent problem in relation to Year 6-7 transition, where a significant number of pupils do not present themselves to secondary schools in Year 7.

A range of barriers to the reintegration of long-term truants were identified during the case studies, as summarised in the box below.

Barriers to Reintegration – Long-Term Truants

The main barriers identified in the case studies to the reintegration of this group can include:

- Reluctance of schools to accept long-term truants – as for permanently excluded pupils, including concerns over disruption, poor behaviour, and impacts on attendance targets.
- Limited flexibility in some schools – for example having rigid timetables, which can limit options for staged returns and flexible attendance as part of reintegration strategies.
- Lack of support for students when reintegrated – combined with potentially limited EWS and other school-based resources and competing demands for their time.
- Parents may see EWS and other services as enforcement agencies – with striking the appropriate balance between supportive and productive relationships and enforcement roles being a particular challenge.
- Parental views and commitment - parents may be barriers in different ways, including attaching little value to education and to school attendance, and disagreeing with pupil assessments (e.g. of SEN needs) and reintegration proposals. Cultural factors can play a role, and other parents may prefer to have the child at home if they are working or have caring responsibilities.

8.1 Context and Structure

The management of pupil attendance has fallen within an increasingly legalistic framework. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act gave police the powers to pick up truants found in public places and return them to school or another place designated by the LEA. Recent measures include sanctioning parents not fulfilling their responsibilities to send their children to school, including prison sentences in extreme cases.

Attendance Teams/Education Welfare Services have tended to take the lead in relation to non-attendance issues. These are also the enforcement arm of the LEA (which may both help and hinder their work), although the case studies focused on the work with pupils outside of the prosecution route.

EWS generally also play a role in linking pupils to other services where required, such as CAMHS and Social Services. Increasingly EWOs are linking with LEA services for inclusion and reintegration, and some LEAs have brought these services within the LEA structure. Some LEAs (such as LEA 6) have integrated reintegration provision for different pupil groups and this has brought together workers with different specialisms, designed to increase the accessibility of services and provide a more

holistic approach. In other areas EWOs work alongside reintegration services and draw on the wider provision for non-attenders. In LEA 5, the School Attendance Service has the lead role, working alongside newly formed multi-agency Local Area Inclusion Partnership, other agencies in depth (eg. social services) as appropriate, schools, parents and pupils. (A potential danger highlighted for the latter approach is that priority for places is given to excluded pupils. This means non-attenders may be prevented from accessing provision if there are no places).

In many areas, especially at secondary level, non-attenders are also dealt with by reintegration support officers/INCOs in schools. Most schools nominate staff to track attendance, and some larger secondary schools have dedicated Attendance Officers. LEA 5 have access to the electronic registration systems of the schools in their area, and so can identify patterns of non-attendance and take a proactive position with their schools. In addition, many other pupil-support positions in schools can and were being brought to bear for non-attenders, such as SENCOs for pastoral support plans, and learning/behaviour support workers for pupils returning to school.

Many non-attenders will be returned to the original school (if they have a school place), and schools generally retain responsibility for the pupil during the reintegration process. If a prosecution route is taken then the LEA is responsible. It is the LEA's role to monitor and remind schools of their responsibilities, but schools tend to lead on arranging meetings, getting individuals together and undertaking reviews and administration. This is common for non-attenders across all pupil groups.

As identified previously, pupils may have a range of needs and it is likely that support services offered by other agencies can be accessed: for example, family therapy through CAMHS, outreach services through Connexions, other services (such as drugs support) through the LEA or voluntary sector provision.

8.2 Funding and Resourcing

Attendance and welfare services are generally part of the mainstream LEA functions, although there were several examples of how the work of these teams was being supplemented by non-mainstream sources. LEA 12, for example, made two bids for PSA money from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Another had set up a student support centre to provide short-term provision to non-attenders in a local secondary school using ESF monies. A key issue was the time-limited nature of these sources.

Some LEAs, especially those with poor levels of overall attainment and attendance, described facing resource pressures. One, LEA 8, which is amongst the poorest performing on attendance measures nationally, appeared to be particularly stretched with senior staff taking on main grade EWO work due to pressure on the team. Another case study LEA described prioritising their work with long-term truants to those with accompanying psychiatric problems, due to resource pressures.

Generally, schools would have delegated power over much of the budget available for work with non-attenders in schools. Schools do not have earmarked funds for supporting the reintegration of long-term truants, with the perception being that its use and often the focus on vulnerable or excluded groups will depend on the ethos and inclusivity of the school. Several interviewees in LEAs and schools suggested that there had been a noticeable reduction over the last few years in the numbers of in-school Inclusion Co-ordinators, due to resource issues.

Feedback from school level highlighted the problems faced by Inclusion Co-ordinators in schools. Whilst much good work is evidently going on in schools, the perception at school level is that non-teaching and support staff who might provide a resource for reintegrating pupils do not generate extra funding, and that therefore reintegration is a drain on the school budget.

8.3 Approaches/Delivery Models

A key principle of services for non-attenders across the board is early intervention and returning the young person to education as soon as possible, whilst recognising that non-attendance may be due to a range of underlying factors, and that if these are not addressed a lasting, positive solution is unlikely. Therefore EWS usually have to balance a dual role – getting children back into education (including prosecution if necessary) and helping to address any 'core' problems that are affecting attendance.

LEAs have taken differing broad approaches to interventions with non-attenders:

- Some areas have targeted resources via a multi-disciplinary team on schools with the highest levels of non attendance. For example, in LEA 12, two EWOs, two social workers, and two youth workers have formed a new team (Inclusion and Attainment Team), working with six secondary schools, with the remaining schools being covered by EWOs. The added value is considered to be the social worker/youth worker link and the additional EWO hours.
- Some have allocated EWO time to schools based on attendance figures, numbers of pupils on roll, numbers of pupils on free school meals, etc. In LEA 8, for example, each school receives around 2 days per week.
- Other areas (such as LEA 5) have put the emphasis on monitoring of non-attendance, and interventions tailored to the individuals and schools most affected on a week-by-week basis.

8.4 Key Components

In reintegrating long-term non-attenders, a series of elements were identified with the LEAs and other practitioners that were considered key or to be working well. A series of common components emerged, as described below.

1. Identifying non-attenders

Different approaches were described in identifying non-attenders, including monitoring attendance information and truancy sweeps to more proactive targeting of attentions on both pupils and schools. Where efforts are targeted at specific schools in LEA 12, non-attenders are identified through regular truancy sweeps and targeting individuals flagged up by attendance records (children with under 85% attendance will be offered mentoring). In another case study LEA, for example, the EWS follows a similar approach, mainly taking referrals from schools of poor attenders with a threshold for referral being set at 80% attendance.

The most comprehensive approach to identifying non-attenders was provided by LEA 5, which used a combination of identification by schools and the LEA on a rolling basis, as well as through termly 'attendance audits', as described below.

Use of Registration Data to Identify Absences – Long Term Truants and Others

LEA 5 is a comparatively small LEA, with each of their schools operating the BROMCOM or SIMS electronic registration systems. The LEA attendance team can access and monitor registration data for all schools centrally, which allows them to take a pro-active stance on identifying cases of non-attendance for investigation.

On a rolling basis, individual pupil absences can be identified and patterns established. This allows the LEA attendance team to raise individual issues with schools, and stimulate action by providing evidence of a potential issue.

More strategically, termly attendance audits also take place in all secondary schools. These use attendance and other data to identify patterns in attendance, exclusion rates, authorised and unauthorised absences etc, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of the schools' attendance policy. Findings are reviewed with Heads and Governors, which lead to recommendations for actions/directing resources.

2. Follow-up and diagnosis

It is usually the role of the EWO to meet with the parents and pupil, and assess the pupil's needs. Other agencies working with the pupil would also be contacted. Home visits were considered important in order that an accurate picture can be built up of the pupil's background, including their home and family situation. Home visits can also encourage positive relations and establish trust with the pupil and their parents/carers.

In most cases, assessment approaches depend on individual workers making subjective judgements, rather than being based on specific criteria. Some LEAs however have more formal approaches. LEA 12, for example, has adapted the Department of Health life events questionnaire for use in education, and this is used with the parents to assess parenting capacity and environmental factors.

Diagnosis is particularly crucial for non-attenders not only due to the multiplicity of potential causes, but also as decisions may have to be made whether or not to follow a prosecution route. LEA 5 uses a 'traffic light' grading system to define next steps – from Red (statutory process/legal action) through Amber (allocation to School Attendance Service for 6 week input) to Green (where potential problem identified and more info requested).

3. Reintegration planning

Planning is usually based on liaison with the pupil, parents and the school, and the case study LEAs varied in the extent to which formal processes were in place, and the degree to which they were always followed. Formal processes have proved successful where multi-agency work is involved – such as in 'education protection planning' meetings in LEA 12.

Education Protection Planning Meetings

In LEA 12 reintegration planning can be through formal Education Protection Planning meetings, one of the aims of which is to decide if an education supervision order is necessary. Representation includes social services, Health, other appropriate agencies (e.g. outreach, or young carers) and the pupil and parents (including absent parents and extended family). The model was described as being similar to Family Group Conferencing but cheaper as there is no facilitator. The chair will be a senior EWO.

Information is shared among the different parties and the parent is invited to outline any difficulties. The child's strengths are also drawn out and they are asked what their goals are (sometimes as simple as getting on better with their parents). Everyone present is asked what they could do to help the pupil achieve their goals (for example the SENCO might outline what they could do to help them make friends). It is also emphasised that the pupils themselves have a key role to play, and that support is available to them if they come to school. At the end of the meetings the goals, and what each service will offer, are typed up. If the plan then fails an education supervision order is threatened. The meetings are very powerful as there are clear consequences and boundaries. The only time a plan is not formulated tends to be when the child fails to turn up for the meeting.

4. Guidance on structures and processes

The availability of clear guidance on processes to be followed at the local level were found to be helpful in sharing understandings between practitioners, where they were available. Where most effective these documents had a firmly practical focus, and set out processes and procedures to be followed in the case of pupil non-attendance, as well as what central or localised services were available to support pupil returns/reintegration. LEA 5 had developed a particularly comprehensive document, as described below.

Local Guidance on Attendance Procedures – Long Term Truants

LEA 5's School Attendance Service have produced an extremely comprehensive guidance document on school attendance which is provided to all schools (and shared with other relevant practitioners) in their area. The document outlines local policies and strategies, summarises the relevant legislation for attendance by different pupil groups, and describes the LEA's operational structures and processes (in the form of flowcharts).

The document has a particularly practical focus, and includes a series of draft letters to be sent to parents in different circumstances, checklists to use in interviews and assessments, and protocols for working with different agencies. The document provides a single point of information for teachers and other LEA staff.

5. Flexibility in the curriculum

Flexibility in the curriculum can support pupils who have problems attending on a full-time basis by allowing for reduced attendance in the early stages of reintegration (most commonly a staggered return to school through a part-time timetable). Pupils were found to start with as little as one lesson, usually in a favourite subject, although one LEA preferred to start with non-academic periods to reduce any risk of academic pressures. This deviation from full-time is time-limited however, and the case studies considered that part-time timetables should be followed for no more than half a term.

Flexibility in the curriculum is also a key factor in allowing pupils who have missed a lot of education to focus on core subjects, and to catch-up.

Case Example

One pupil interviewed had been supported back to school having been a victim of domestic violence, which had been a highly mobile and turbulent period in her life. On settling and returning to education in Year 10, her home LEA identified that she had missed a lot of education, especially in IT.

The receiving school followed a flexible timetabling approach to reintegrating non-attenders, and recognised the importance of IT-literacy. The teacher responsible for 'buddying' the pupil then arranged a timetable in which the pupil missed certain subjects for additional support that helped her to catch up with her IT. The teacher considered that this approach not only helped the pupil catch up, but helped firm her commitment to attending school through a subject she found that she enjoyed.

6. Mix of strategies

For some children, a long-term commitment to supporting reintegration and continued attendance at school may be needed, which may involve a range of approaches and mix of strategies over time. Strategies are generally designed to manage a pupil's non-attendance, and address any underlying issues – and so in some cases the need for flexibility and a mix of strategies is paramount. As one LEA described, what is often required is an *“individual approach – person centred – and forget following a format”*.

It is common practice for EWOs to escort pupils into school in the early stages of reintegration, and other support can be particularly intensive. Other strategies designed to manage attendance included:

- Changes to the school day – such as a reduced timetable, vocational options and work experience (which can provide an incentive for improving attendance levels, as well as a route for non-academic pupils). Alternative curriculum options are particularly common from year 10, such as work experience and college placements. One school interviewed was offering specific vocational courses for long-term non-attenders, which are held on school premises and included health and beauty and vehicle maintenance.
- Addressing problems faced in school – such as help and support to address bullying and stigmatisation, and handling changes in tutor groups. The use of buddies or friends to provide both formal and informal support was common, as was the use of mentors and, to a lesser extent, nurture groups.
- Addressing pupils' associated needs – clearly highly variable depending on individual circumstances and needs, and including both a range of LEA/school pupil support services and those from outside agencies. Support delivered by the case study LEAs included help with self-esteem, referrals to CAMHS, or pastoral support plans – involving the SENCO, home/school liaison, in-school behaviour support and formalised individual support through a mentor.

Other options may exist depending on the nature of partnership and linkages, for example, having youth workers on the school site, the involvement of Connexions PAs and inputs from a range of voluntary organisations. The importance of having a range of services to draw on, allowing a mix of strategies to be followed, was exemplified in the pupil case studies below.

Case Example – Long-Term-Truants

Pupil 1

Pupil 1 was a poor attender at his junior school and had missed a lot of education due to poor health. The SENCO would have to pick him up for school and often he would still be in bed. He was on edge, would refuse to co-operate and would often run away from school and hide. He

was not unable - teachers found him average in the ability range. However, he was found to have untreated ADHD. He was from a large family, and issues of domestic violence were identified within the household. Pupil 1 had also been excluded on a fixed term basis from junior school, was in trouble with the police following an arson incident, and was part of a gang with older teenagers with a track record of being in trouble with the police.

The school worked with Pupil 1's parents, educational psychologist and the school doctor. He was reintegrated following personal reintegration and education plans, with additional support from the behaviour management team. Initially he was brought back to school on half timetable, and with support for 12 hours a week. Medication helped to control his ADHD. A phased reintegration strategy for his return to school was followed – attending initially every morning until 1pm, then to 2pm, etc until he was attending full-time in Year 6. The reintegration process did not always run smoothly, and on several occasions Pupil 1 received a fixed term exclusion of a day or half-day as his behaviour could not be managed. The school had the full support from Pupil 1's mother who came into school regularly. Although his mother initially did not want him to go to a behaviour unit, he spent a short period there in conjunction with the plans and targets set to get him back to school.

As well as drawing on a range of services, the school had to devise various strategies to support Pupil 1. For example, he had problems relating to other children and joining in at play times. The school therefore encouraged him to stay in and play with another friend at break times. He also got involved in a break time reading club two days a week. Encouraging Pupil 1 to have positive experiences, and giving him positive feedback, helped to improve his behaviour in class.

Pupil 1's reintegration was assisted by the existence of an interagency network of professionals who met to discuss cases on a half-termly basis. The group share information on local families, providing the school with greater and highly valuable insights into Pupil 1's circumstances.

The final outcome for Pupil 1 was positive, he progressed smoothly on to a local high school and, if he continues to attend regularly, could perform to a good academic level. The primary school also helped with the transition to high school, which included taking him on advance visits so he would know the adults and be familiar with the set up. Currently Pupil 1 is attending regularly at his new school, and although his behaviour can on occasions be challenging it is being managed through the school.

Pupil 2

Pupil 2 experienced problems in Year 7, after his parents were divorced and his mother left home, and became a frequent non-attender. The reintegration service provided a tutor to support him in school, where he also received counselling. Pupil 2's reintegration took place over 12 months, and with considerable support from his father who risked his job to collect him from school in the afternoons. Support was provided initially in school in the inclusion unit and then in classes. Pupil 2 was assessed as 'short-term dysfunctional' - and was not disaffected or behaving badly at school.

An approach was followed where the boy's tutor told the father if he had done well – setting up a cycle of praise from the father as well as the tutor. The father also received short periods of counselling from his son's tutor when he collected his son, and as well as being kept informed of progress received advice/tips on supporting his son's efforts. A key issue, however, was that Pupil 2 was able to manipulate his father, who was himself trying to compensate for his mother leaving. Pupil 2's behaviour could include refusing to attend school on an unsupported day, although eventually the father 'got tough' and took appropriate action. This was a turning point, although there were still some 'rocky weeks'. Support from the reintegration tutor decreased over time, although the father keeps in touch with the tutor and reports that his son is doing well.

In describing the case, it was clear that the Tutor also contributed considerably to establishing the relationship between father and son at a time of considerable pressure for them both. The

tips and support provided were key – which towards the end of the process included giving Pupil 2 tips on how he could best help his dad. However the input from the reintegration service kept the emphasis on reintegration into school as a goal - as the tutor described “...we are *not* a psychological sticking plaster”.

7. Support in schools

The options open to non-attenders, including school phobics, will depend on the provision available in schools. A considerable diversity of practice was identified in the use of learning support units and learning mentors. Schools not restricting LSU's to work with SEN children may be better able to cope with school phobics and other returners by offering a 'sheltered' environment in the initial stages. Feedback from EWOs suggested that schools without a LSU may struggle to retain pupils returning straight to a mainstream classroom, without the option of 'gentle reintegration' in the early stages.

It was generally believed that the reintegration of non-attenders benefits from Inclusion Co-ordinators in secondary schools. These staff members help develop and deliver creative solutions at the individual school level, and have a focus and professional commitment to reintegration. As the previous case examples suggest, commitment is a key factor for providers of support to returning pupils. Examples were also identified of work out-of-hours, for example INCOs being prepared to contact families of truants before and after the school day.

One school, for example, found that their approach to reintegration was successful as they provide individual support through their student support centre, and operate a “gentle” approach to returns to the mainstream setting. Personal mentoring through a team of dedicated staff is also available if required, and the comparatively small size of the school is felt to help reintegrating children feel more at home. Pastoral care is also considered to be very good within the school.

8. Short-term programmes

Where pupils are facing particular challenges and experiencing difficulties, the provision of short-term interventions to address specific issues may be appropriate and useful. In some LEAs, EWOs have been able to access alternative provision on a time-limited basis for pupils who have been out of education for a significant time.

The Use of Short-Term Programmes – Long-Term Truants

Examples of the use of short-term interventions to support reintegration of non-attenders and long-term truants are provided below.

LEA 2

One of the main methods by which long-term non-attenders are supported in the LEA is through Attendance Support Programmes (available as an option to local secondary schools). They consist of small group work provision within the PRU, usually over 10 weeks, as a way of extending the range of behavioural approaches available to the school. The focus is on pupils who are at particular risk of social exclusion, due to vulnerability resulting from anxiety related disorders or other mental health issues which affects their ability to attend school.

LEA 6

LEA 6 uses a similar approach for pupils at KS3, but the service is offered via Student Support Centres (linked to schools) rather than a PRU. These offer temporary provision on a six week cycle (corresponding to half-terms). Work in the centres is split between national curriculum work (with a strong focus on numeracy and literacy) and 'therapeutic work' to challenge behavioural problems (eg art therapy, Circle Time, etc). The first four weeks are based in the centre and the final two weeks concentrate on reintegrating the young person back into their school, which may involve part-time attendance at the school and centre. The students follow aspects of the national curriculum (particularly numeracy, literacy and ITC skills) but there is also a focus on covering issues that may occur at secondary school and the development of strategies for pupils to deal with any problems that they have. The transition process between primary and secondary school is aided by specific transition support staff where appropriate.

9. Pupil rewards and incentives

Finally, the use of various awards and incentives to support reintegration and improved attendance more broadly was commonly described.

Attendance Incentives – Long Term Truants/Attendance

LEA 5 have a series of incentives aimed at supporting attendance amongst pupils in the area, including attendance awards and badges for primary school pupils. In the past the LEA would have a series of annual award ceremonies at schools, where the Mayor would present awards to pupils with 100% attendance records. The award ceremonies now take place on a District-wide basis at a single event, with attendance awards also being given to young people showing the greatest improvement in their attendance over the year. Awards are also given for other 'softer' areas of achievement and to different pupil groups, for example improved behaviour amongst excluded pupils.

The LEA also provides 'attendance hero' badges to primary school pupils, which are awarded at special school assemblies which pupils and their parents are invited to attend. Three levels of award are provided – bronze, silver and gold – and presented by a local dignitary who visits the schools and meets the pupils. Previous guests have included members of the local football team. Parents attending the events are also presented with flowers, in recognition of their contribution to their child's success.

Both approaches were considered by the LEA and the schools interviewed to be useful, and impacting on the attendance levels of some of their pupils. Both helped to emphasise the importance of attendance and education to pupils and parents, and that parents have a key role to play in ensuring success in both areas. They also emphasised that 'soft' outcomes are equally valid and praiseworthy - and in some cases were the winners' first publicly recognised achievements.

8.5 Key Success Factors

The key success factors for reintegrating non-attenders from the case studies included:

- Raising issues with schools on a pro-active basis – for example using attendance data to raise issues of non-attendance, so prompting schools to take action if necessary. Intervening at an early stage before the problem escalates was generally considered critical to getting a good result.
- Multi-agency working – including bringing together the right people, and having time to work through the pupil's problems. For reintegration to work well there must be good communication between all parties and a common understanding of procedures and what is going to happen. Smaller LEAs, and those with combined teams, generally appeared to find communication easier.

- Getting the involvement of schools - formalising arrangements for dealing with attendance issues and returning pupils to school were found to be helpful here. In LEA 12, for example, schools have to sign up to an agreement. However, ultimately the issue is one of getting schools to take ownership of the reintegration process.
- Setting challenging yet achievable targets for pupils to work towards, and rewarding progress - evidently for some non-attenders a long-term commitment may be required before the results of efforts will be realised.
- Creating the climate in which reintegration can take place - for example, to ensure pupils are welcomed back into the school (which may require briefing by the reintegration teacher/senior school staff). A simple point was ensuring there is someone to meet pupils on their return to school, to show they are aware of and showing an interest in the pupil.
- Involving parents/carers and pupils at all stages of the process and encouraging them to attend meetings – a key factor given the importance of home background and influence, although this can be challenging and initially counter-productive. Parents/carers may also be consulted about what lessons are most viable for the pupil, and should be kept informed/engaged by regular contact.
- The attitude of the pupil is critical – as one LEA said “There needs to be a conscious decision on the part of the young person to start again by adopting behaviour patterns that will help them to fit in”.
- The relationship developed with a key member of staff is critical – and described in several cases as the most important catalyst to successful reintegration.
- Communication about the reintegration package to all staff within schools and whole school policies – awareness of both pupil needs and the processes to address them are key. For example, in one school regular emails are sent to classroom tutors with progress on pupils’ reintegration plans, so positive developments are not lost by teachers making uninformed comments.
- The individual schools vary in their recognition of the need for support when the child returns to school. Some will have a member of senior staff who will meet them and take them back into the classroom. Some will go straight to the learning support team.
- EWOs following up through a regular process of reviews. In LEA2, an Individual Attendance Plan or an Individual Behaviour Plan are implemented and these are mostly reviewed termly but sometimes more often depending on the students’ issues. Administration Support workers keep daily checks on attendance and report concerns to EWO and Heads of Years. In LEA 12, pupils are systematically reviewed every 6 weeks.
- Ensuring that a range of interventions and strategies are available for reintegrating and meeting the needs of long-term truants, and that support is available in the school (or elsewhere in more complex cases) for problems and issues arising while pupils settle in.

9 PUPILS NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

This section describes the approaches to the reintegration of pupils not attending mainstream education for a range of reasons, but who may share a common need for help in catching up with their education. The grouping includes children and young people missing education due to:

- Medical needs
- Caring responsibilities (including school age parents)
- Extended absences (such as term-time holidays).

The summaries below illustrate many of the difficulties faced by pupils in these groups and the steps identified amongst the case study LEAs to support their reintegration after a period of absence from school.

As described previously, additional interviews were undertaken with LEAs identified in the survey as having specific approaches to working with pupils following extended authorised absences. Formalised approaches to working with this group were described the least frequently of all pupil groups, and so more targeted follow-up was undertaken. Consequently, the summary for extended authorised absences is presented in a different format, and in our view may represent a 'latent' issue where further research is required.

9.1 Children with Medical Needs

In any given year there are some 100,000 children who require education outside of school due to illness or injury. In addition, it is estimated that up to 10% of 5 to 15 year olds have clinically defined mental health needs, and many (with more serious needs) will be educated outside mainstream schools. Other data show that in 2000/1 over 500,000 children were admitted to hospital. Increasingly, relatively few have long-term stays in hospital, with developments in treatment reducing the average length of stay from 9.6 days in 1967 to 2.5 for boys and 3.4 for girls in 2000/1. This has had implications for the provision of education at home or elsewhere prior to returning to full-time mainstream schooling.

Children with medical needs include those with short-term illnesses/injuries requiring short but frequent absences, single/one-off medium to long-term absences, the chronically/terminally sick, and those with mental illness and other recurrent conditions. The length of time spent in hospital schools or home tuition services varies considerably, from a few days to long-term care and those unlikely to return to mainstream school. Issues faced in accessing education may include:

- Vulnerability to social and academic exclusion – missing out on peer contacts and social aspects of school as well as falling behind with their studies.
- Regular and frequent absences from school – leading to disenfranchisement and alienation from both learning and social networks.

- Those with chronic conditions being at greater risk of developing psychosocial and academic problems – by a factor of two, although still only applying to a small share of children experiencing chronic illness.

Specific issues in returning to education can include: difficulties arising from their physical needs, continuing need for treatment and medication, reduced ability to sustain physical and mental effort, and feelings of dislocation (even when contact with schools has been maintained). Changes in physical appearance, for example, may lead to bullying, so planning to meet returning pupils' needs should be a shared exercise including teachers, parents, fellow pupils, specialist/medical personnel and the pupils themselves.

The case study fieldwork identified a number of additional issues, including:

- Different attitudes between schools to different medical conditions – based on notions of 'visibility' and 'closure', with individuals recovering from physical conditions being viewed more favourably than those with continuing mental health needs.
- Inaccurate diagnosis/bracketing – in some cases parental influence can affect the diagnosis of medical conditions by family doctors and so children's access to education. One LEA also described a tendency for pupils to be placed in the 'medical needs category' because they do not fit in at school.
- Scale/pupil volumes – the number of pupils identified varied by LEA size but not directly, ranging in 2002/3 from 70 in LEA 14 to 350 in LEA 10, both of whom had similar overall pupil numbers. Importantly also, the LEAs and schools described how the majority of pupils with medical needs (up to 70% in one area) had mental health issues – which were acknowledged as the most challenging to deal with.
- ME was identified as an emerging and increasing issue in two LEAs, both in terms of continuing to meet the needs of children with the condition in their areas, but also in ensuring that diagnoses received from medical practitioners are accurate. ME was considered to be an area where parental pressure could have an undue influence on diagnosis, and so time away from school.

Barriers to Reintegration – Children with Medical Needs

The main barriers identified in the case studies to the reintegration of this group can include:

- Balancing priorities for individual children – where medical needs overshadow the importance of education, such as the terminally ill and cases of severe mental illness. Views of parents are key – days out for recovering children may be seen as having equal/greater value than education.
- School attitudes – while most schools are happy to reintegrate medical needs pupils, some may be more open to receiving pupils recovering from single, physical than from long-term or recurrent conditions, especially mental health issues. This reluctance was linked to the concept of closure, and the risk of further disruption.
- Working with medical specialists – here barriers include: LEAs having to work with several Primary Care Trusts, each with different services/practices making consultation and

reaching agreement difficult; potentially subjective and parent-influenced assessments by GPs (some LEAs now require reports from specialists to confirm certain conditions).

- Access to specific support for pupils with mental health needs – either as a direct condition or as a result of a previous medical condition. Variable involvement/capacity of CAMHS was a frequently reported issue.
- The development of dependencies – potentially between pupils and support providers and vice versa through the establishment of emotional ties, and emphasising the importance of keeping pupils on school rolls.

9.1.1 Context and Structure

The main statutory guidance for England provides minimum standards for the education of children unable to attend school due to medical needs, highlighting the roles of LEAs and schools and stressing the importance of partnership/multi-agency approaches. Reintegration into mainstream schooling is advocated wherever possible, based on an assessment of pupils' needs and capabilities. Specific LEA responsibilities include: ensuring children are not at home without education for over 15 working days, those requiring long or recurrent periods of absence have access to education (as far as possible) from day one, and receive a similar quality of education to school and a broad and balanced curriculum. Schools responsibilities include: having a named individual responsible for children on medical absence, ensuring absent pupils are kept informed and able to participate in school social events and other activities, and taking an active role in monitoring progress and the reintegration of the pupil back into school. The development of individually tailored reintegration plans prior to any return to school are particularly important in many cases, which can feature multi-agency inputs including medical experts and tuition services.

Across the case study LEAs the overriding principle was to return children to education as soon as their conditions allowed, to ensure momentum is maintained and helping pupils keep up with their studies. The LEAs also stressed the importance of schools maintaining contact with pupils during periods of absence, and supporting continued relationships with peers at school. The importance of establishing a context of normality, particularly in the case of the chronically sick but across other pupil groups, was also widely emphasised.

Different 'combinations' of providers and provision were identified, based on the needs of individual pupils and also wider factors such as tradition, availability and quality of previous provision, availability of resources to provide required weekly teaching hours, and the tendency for pupils to spend less time in hospital so needing additional tuition at home. Combinations of hospital schools/education services, home teaching or integrated hospital/home education services were identified, with key actors and their roles including:

- LEAs – with services being delivered either by wider inclusion support teams, education other than at school (EOTAS) or specific home/hospital/medical tuition services
- Hospitals – through hospital tuition services, providing tuition services in wards or specific hospital schools/tuition centres

- Schools – through the provision of coursework for hospital/at home, maintaining contact with pupils to reinforce school links, and supporting reintegration process on their return to school.

Examples of lead actors and associated responsibilities are provided below.

Pupils with Medical Needs – Examples of Actors and Responsibilities

As described above, responsibilities for and actors involved in the reintegration of pupils with medical needs varied between LEAs. Two examples provided below:

- LEA 11 – since September 2003 responsibility lies with the LEA Home and Hospital Unit, part of the Achievement and Participation Team whose responsibilities include the reintegration of a range of pupil groups. The Unit provides home tuition using casual staff, but is moving towards establishing short-term contracts for home tutors. It offers limited tuition in hospital, although this is rarely used as children tend to spend less time in hospital. Schools also have key role in the reintegration process, including offering places in protective units (e.g. student support centres), which are available in most secondary schools in the area.
- LEA 10 – since April 2003 responsibility has rested with the LEA's medical tuition service (MTS), which comprises 12 FTE teachers, a co-ordinator and reserve bank of tutors. The MTS works alongside the local hospital tuition service, which operates from two sites in the County with a lead teacher providing tuition either on ward or in hospitals' own tuition units. One lesson from previous experience concerned the use of casual or supply teachers for home tuition. As they were paid for contact time only, there was little time for additional planning or to establish relationship with pupils – considered a key success factor in their reintegration.

In other areas responsibilities were divided between EWS, EOTAS services and individuals in schools.

9.1.2 Funding and Resourcing

The LEA survey identified that the reintegration of children with medical needs was supported most commonly by mainstream budgets (in over 80% of responses), although the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) was also used by over half of the LEAs and other Standards Fund monies in over two thirds.

This pattern was reflected in the case study LEAs, with a combination of mainstream and VCG funding being most commonly used to support their efforts. In LEAs 11 and 10 VCG monies accounted for half or more of their annual service budgets (50% and 100% respectively), although elsewhere the VCG represented a considerably smaller share of resources and was spent on specific (often developmental) items. For example, LEA 2 used the VCG to employ an Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) co-ordinator to meet the requirement for more teaching hours. However, while VCG had allowed services to be developed/enhanced, concerns were raised about their sustainability. In LEA 10, where the VCG had been used to fund a pilot using ICT to support pupils with medical needs, the LEA hoped to use mainstream funding to extend the approach based on the findings of an ongoing evaluation.

9.1.3 **Approaches/Delivery Models**

The approaches to reintegrating pupils with medical needs are summarised below.

Approaches to the Reintegration of Pupils with Medical Needs – Case Study LEAs

The key features of approaches to reintegrating children with medical needs in each of the case study LEAs are summarised below.

LEA 1 – once a pupil with medical needs has been identified, multi-agency meetings are held involving parents/carers (and children if appropriate), school staff, ESW/SW as appropriate, with others if the case is particularly complex. The LEA's tuition service (which includes over 40 tutors, and also supports a range of other pupils in the area) then review the child's timetable, determine the level of support needed (an average of a day and a half a week per pupil) and develop reintegration plans on an individual level. The LEA aim to reintegrate pupils into mainstream within a term, although this is reviewed on a 3-4 week basis against individual reintegration plans.

LEA 2 – here the LEA EOTAS team are responsible for the management of tuition services while pupils are out of school, and for arranging their reintegration. However, services for pupils with medical needs in the area are in a period of development, which includes the audit of existing provision, reference to evidence-based good practice and the development of an increasingly integrated approach. Currently referrals are made to the EOTAS service, which are reviewed in terms of suitability for home tuition. Reintegration plans are developed with inputs from parents and a multi-agency group which sets clear roles for each agency, and in addition to tuition can include counselling services, home/school liaison work, phased reintegration/subject 'tasters' and an alternative education option.

LEA 10 – here a new medical tuition service was introduced in April 2003, with 22 permanent dedicated tutors (12 FTEs) and a reserve bank of tutors, in place of the supply teachers used previously. The service works with schools, parents and hospital tuition services as appropriate, with all referrals now being directed to the service. Once a referral is received and health professional opinion taken, a tutor arranges provision, including in hospital if in for three days or more. Schools should set and mark work and undertake reviews on a half term basis, but often the tuition service have to fulfil the role. Decisions to reintegrate are based on the medical situation, half-termly reviews and progress against personal education plans – although interviewees acknowledged there is an element of subjective/professional judgement. Many pupil-based reintegration options - including a direct return to school or more planned/stepped approaches; one to one or cluster/group work; and return to school on a part-time/phased basis. The tuition service supports the return to school, providing tuition in school if necessary, which diminishes as the school takes over (learning support assistants can play a key role here). Once the pupil has returned to school for 10 hours per week tuition support service withdraws, although they can be re-engaged if necessary.

LEA 11 – pupils with medical needs are dealt with by the LEA's 'home and hospital' unit within their wider achievement and participation team. Home tuition is provided by the LEA on a casual basis, with staff being contracted on hourly rates to meet the national minimum requirement of five hours per week with a target of providing at least 10 hours in Autumn 2004. There is a plan to use short-term contracts to provide a core delivery team, topped up by the use of casual tutors as previously. The LEA tuition service also provide tuition in hospitals, although this is comparatively rare as children are rarely required to stay in hospital for lengthy periods of time. The tuition service also manage the reintegration process, where they are assisted by student support centres and other 'protective' units which most schools in the area have. As in other LEAs, 'return strategies' are individualised, and may feature part-time returns building to full-time at a pace that suits the pupil's ability.

LEA 14 – here the LEA EOTAS service play a key role, taking referrals from schools and elsewhere, gathering information and taking decisions on these referrals, and developing a programme of tuition based on the child's abilities and needs. Decisions to reintegrate are taken in review meetings and on a consensus basis, reintegration plans developed, and the transition of responsibility from tuition service to school begins. The pupil's school and family background are considered and involved in the reintegration process, as the LEA have found that issues can remain/develop from periods of absence for more severe medical conditions.

While the case study LEAs described approaches with similar core elements, they also described a number of common practical issues, including:

- Compliance with agreed procedures by schools – in some cases schools (and other actors, e.g. CAMHS) do not always fulfil their agreed responsibilities and tuition services must extend their roles. This was a concern given the acknowledged importance of maintaining pupil contact, and included the setting of work and undertaking pupil reviews. In addition, not all pupils requiring support were found to have personal education plans.
- Meeting national requirements – the requirement to provide a minimum of five hours of education per week for pupils outside school has been a driver of change for some LEAs, and has represented a challenge for some. In addition, the case studies identified issues in being able to respond to needs within the required timetable – especially where medical opinion and/or specialist assessments are needed which can take time to arrange.
- Providing home tuition services – commonly home tuition staff are on at best temporary contracts and are often paid on an hourly basis for their teaching inputs. This means they are not paid for lesson planning and providing any additional non-teaching/out of teaching hours support. While this practice is changing, most case study LEAs still relied to some extent on 'supply' provision, around a core of permanent staff.
- Rural and urban issues - the preparatory research for the study suggested that differences may exist between urban and rural areas, with urban areas being more likely to have hospital schools, while rural areas were more likely to have provision integrated with wider LEA support services. This was reflected in the practices of the case study LEAs, where physical dispersal was an influence as well as tradition and other factors.

9.1.4 Key Components

A series of components were identified in the LEA case studies that were considered to be central to the reintegration of children with medical needs, or had been found to be working well in different areas. These are described below:

1 School commitment to returning pupils to school

Schools maintaining and evidencing a continued commitment to the education of pupils absent due to medical needs was a key element in both their educational success and their effective return to school. Keeping pupils on roll allows this commitment to be illustrated, and schools can help develop the expectation that pupils will return to school from the outset, allow for practical changes such as adaptations to meet pupils' needs, and introduce a 'normality' into what can be particularly difficult circumstances.

Many examples of schools' commitment to their pupils were identified, from allocating resources to making physical modifications to allow wheelchair access etc, to providing support over and above educational inputs. The box below illustrates the efforts that some schools were able to describe in ensuring inclusiveness and supporting both siblings and families.

Case Example – Continued School Ownership and Support

In one school an 8 year old pupil received severe injuries in a house fire in which one of his siblings died. During early recovery the child was found to have suffered considerable brain damage, which made a return to his previous school unlikely.

Following the tragedy the school actively retained ownership of the pupil, which included maintaining close contact with the parents and providing support to his surviving siblings who continued to attend the school. This included providing grief counselling, helping them understand their brother's condition, and explaining the role they could play in his recovery/return to school - which extended far beyond educational support. The school were closely involved in the required statementing process, monitored his progress through the rehabilitation/specialist education provision stages, and then supported his reintegration back into the school.

The boy was successfully returned to his former school, where he progresses well given the challenges he faced and continues to face. The support received from the school, his brothers and peers has been key to his successful return. Continued school ownership and commitment, even when it appeared likely that the pupil would need to be educated elsewhere, was also a key underpinning factor, which led to positive benefits for the child, his brothers and family, and the teaching staff.

2 Maintaining contact with pupils and with their peers

As the above example suggests, maintaining commitment to pupils can be a key factor in effective reintegration. As part of this, maintaining contact with pupils while they are in hospital or recovering at home provides practical support – be it in confirming expectations for return or providing continued educational or pastoral support to ensure the pupil does not fall too far behind with their studies. The setting, marking and return of work is a common means of maintaining contact, which also allows the importance of continued education to be stressed to parents and carers.

In addition, schools can be effective conduits for maintaining contact between absent pupils and their peers in school. This also eases the reintegration process, reducing the social exclusion that pupils spending time away from school can face and reinforcing the expectation of a return to school. This also allows other pupils to prepare for their classmate's return, including any differences in their appearance or ability that may have resulted.

3 Multi-agency working and co-ordination

Given the nature of the target group and their specific needs, the availability of a range of specialist inputs was considered to be key in providing effective approaches to reintegration for pupils with a wider range of medical needs. These included:

- Support with diagnosing needs and formulating appropriate responses – in particular where parents views (with the best of intentions) do not tally with the educational needs of their children.

- Advice and support in terms of developing reintegration strategies to meet individual pupils' capabilities – given the importance of not exceeding energy levels or in any way damaging their recovery.
- Advising on any long-term or recurrent needs – with specialists briefing staff in schools in one LEA around particularly challenging cases.

4 Role of parents/carers and parents

The involvement of parents/carers and wider family groups in the reintegration process is vital, although often a difficult area in severe and complex cases, and where families themselves are going through a period of grief or readjustment. Keeping families informed of progress with reintegration can have positive benefits – as one school described they can provide much needed positive news for parents and indicate that their child is beginning to recover and capable of functioning at school.

Being mindful of sensitivities is key here – parents may consider that a day out for their child may aid their recovery more than time at school or with a tutor, and in some cases they may be correct. However, keeping families aware of the importance of education, and seeking to instil a return to 'normality' through continued education, can have therapeutic as well as educational benefits. One LEA described how they try to ensure that chronically and terminally ill children continue to receive education for this reason.

5 Flexible, staged reintegration plans

On a practical basis, the use of flexible, staged or phased reintegration plans with this group are particularly important – as is the need for periodic review and changes if necessary. Any tuition or reintegration plans must consider the ability of the pupils to participate in them, in terms of their mental and physical energy as well as matching the stage of their recovery and the need for any continued treatment being received.

Often with more severe cases plans must be sufficiently flexible and well monitored to allow for increases/decreases in the pace of learning, against improved recovery and any setbacks respectively.

6 Use of ICT for distance learning

A final component, which was being trialled in one case study LEA but used more widely nationally, was the use of ICT to provide distance learning approaches to pupils out of school for medical reasons. The pilot is considered to be of potential relevance to other pupil groups, and while initial findings are positive, a series of issues remain. Other LEAs in the national survey referred to similar approaches – one describing how pupils with facial disfigurements could communicate without fear of stigmatisation via the internet in the early stages of their recovery. ICT approaches also offer the opportunity for pupils to retain active contact with peers at school – a recognised factor for effective return. The pilot identified amongst the case study LEAs was in LEA 10, as described in the box below.

The Virtual Classroom Project – LEA 10

LEA 10 was piloting a VCG-funded project that provides tuition via ICT, and also supports peer relations for children isolated at home or in hospital. The pilot is being delivered to six children, with the ultimate vision that all children out of school would receive lessons via ICT.

The Virtual Classroom is an internet based service, with each child being given a laptop and connecting to the Learnlink service (with security protocols to avoid risks associated with open internet access). Pupils log on to the service at certain times, where teachers run lessons on-line with opportunities for pupil interaction. While the teacher's voice can be heard via headphones, pupils can also speak back although most communications are text based. Follow-up work is also set, to be completed by the pupils and emailed back for marking. Assignments often include web-links so pupils can research further information. Each pupil has a baseline assessment of their ICT skills prior to starting, and full technical support is available via the LEA. The LEA also pay the pupil's telephone costs for the internet services accessed, although this could be problematic if the family's telephone is cut off.

Emerging findings from the pilot to date are positive. Uptake is good amongst the young people involved – only one child 'logged themselves out' of science lessons, but was encouraged to rejoin them. Another child, with a severe facial disfigurement, has started to form good peer relationships, and often stays on-line after lessons for a chat with his new friends – and increasingly pupils log on early to chat before lesson time. Feedback from tutors is equally positive, with enhanced self-esteem being reported amongst users. The approach is also considered to be particularly cost effective in terms of reduced travel time, allowing more pupils to be covered, and is considered to have the potential to become a core LEA service.

The LEA is considering how the approach could be rolled out to other pupil groups, such as the permanently excluded and looked after children. In the case of LAC, the LEA are looking at using internet cafes to help children get out of their residential homes. The approach could be followed with home tuition more broadly – for example offering five hours of face-to-face contact and five hours online a week. There are, however, a number of issues before the approach can be extended, including:

- The development of criteria for referral, recognising it will not suit/be practicable for all.
- The need to train tutors, as different skills are required to prepare/deliver lessons on line.
- Developing protocols and procedures for the loss of laptops on loan to pupils.
- How the approach fits with current services – i.e. to replace or complement.
- Protocols and procedures for when excessive telephone bills are reported, or telephones are disconnected due to families' inability to pay bills.

9.1.5 Key Success Factors

A series of key success factors were identified for the reintegration of pupils with medical needs, including:

- Stressing and maintaining ownership of pupils by mainstream schools – through continued contact and involvement.
- Flexible and staged reintegration plans – to match pupils' ability to participate and their energy levels.
- Maintaining pupil involvement – through exchange of information and via social links with peers.

- Working with parents and pupils – providing information on progress and available support, and ensuring full involvement in the decision-making process.
- Collaborative working – providing an effective continuum between hospital, home and mainstream provision, and a stepped approach to reintegration where mainstream ownership is stressed.
- School involvement – here to ensure links to school and peers not lost, school having full understanding of issues and implications for reintegration and their longer-term education. LEA 11, for example, includes teachers from home schools to provide home tuition in some cases.
- Appropriate diagnosis of medical needs at the start of the process.
- Ability to deal with the whole environment in which the child is in, especially the degree to which parents/carers and other family members support their reintegration.
- Ensuring the hand-over of responsibility from tuition service to school is as smooth/effective as possible.
- Ensuring child is ready to return (mentally and physically) – pushing too fast can be counter productive.

9.2 Pupils with Caring Responsibilities – including School Age Parents

There are no exact figures on the number of young carers nationally, with estimates of those providing regular and substantial care to another family member ranging from 19,000 to 51,000³. NSPCC research found that 4% of 18-24 year olds had been regularly involved in caring for ill or disabled relatives during their childhood, and other studies have estimated that up to 10% of school absence is due to 'home (included care related) responsibilities'. Caring responsibilities are often kept secret for a variety of reasons, and may only be identified via any difficulties that result from them. School age parents form a sub-set of the young carer population, and teenage pregnancy rates in England are amongst the highest in Western Europe. Young carers have received increasing attention under programmes designed to intervene with at risk groups - although the LEA survey identified that formalised reintegration approaches for pupils with caring responsibilities were amongst the least frequently identified (57% of LEAs responding).

Young carers can come from a range of backgrounds, although in general the likelihood of children having caring responsibilities increases with age and girls are more likely to be involved in caring than boys. However, not all carers will experience educational difficulties, or will do so to varying degrees, and their problems are likely to be on a continuum of difficulty from severe to no impact.

Where caring has a recognised negative impact on young carers, issues can include:

- Difficulties with punctuality, attendance and completing homework and coursework – due to distractions and the inability to focus on study above family issues.
- The inability to participate in extra-curricula activities – which can damage both education and social aspects associated with participation in school, again due to responsibilities elsewhere.
- Low attainment, anxiety and stress, restricted peer networks and behaviour problems – resulting from an inability to perform both academically and socially at school.

Bullying is also slightly higher among young carers than the average school population⁴, and there is also evidence that self-exclusion due to caring responsibilities may in some cases include collusion from school staff. Particular barriers to the reintegration of young carers included:

- Identification of carers where caring roles are affecting their education.
- Engaging with carers and their families – as carers and parents may either over or under-exaggerate the scale of their caring roles.
- Dealing with the very real concerns of children for their dependants, especially at times of recurrent illness, and providing flexible solutions to allow their continued participation at school.

³ ONS

⁴ Young Carers and Education, C Deardon and S Becker, Carers UK 2002

- Stigmatisation and verbal abuse at school – particularly when directed towards family members of chronically ill relatives.

Similarly, **school age parents** include pupils with a range of characteristics. As most are in Key Stage 4, reintegration into the mainstream school system may be less realistic, as found with other Key Stage 4 pupils who may return to education through different routes. Teenage parents are likely to face different practical, emotional and psychological issues during and after pregnancy, and can require support with continuing studies, preparing for parenthood, support with parenting skills, and practical barriers such as childcare after the birth. In some cases interventions may begin quite late due to delays in recognising or reporting the pregnancy. There is evidence that a large share of young women disengage from education prior to pregnancy. However, feedback from the case studies suggests that many who are doing well with their education at the point of pregnancy will continue to do so, while for others pregnancy can stimulate a renewed motivation to succeed for the sake of their child. The key issues identified for school age parents included:

- Allowing pupils to be able to participate comfortably at school when pregnant, including dealing with health concerns, altering attendance patterns or participation in specific lessons, and lenience in uniform regulations.
- Removing practical barriers, such as getting to and from school when pregnant, especially towards the end of the pregnancy, and the need for childcare following the birth.
- Dealing with the emotional and psychological effects generally associated with parenthood, especially for the most vulnerable pupils who may also be experiencing trauma or family breakdown.
- Allowing access to other services to address barriers to participation – including transportation, counselling (including substance abuse counselling and treatment) and housing and economic assistance.

Particular barriers to the reintegration of school age parents identified as part of the case studies included:

- The variable willingness of schools to deal with pregnant girls - with anecdotal examples being reported of some schools telling pregnant young women they should not attend school on health and safety grounds. In this context, procedures and processes can help to raise awareness of schools' responsibilities, and ensure that there is a good standard of service offered to all pregnant teenagers.
- Negative attitudes and perceptions – amongst both teachers and pupils. One of the other biggest barriers for teenage mothers is the perception that they have 'failed'. Some schools may be less inclined to be wholly supportive if the pupil has a record of low achievement and poor attendance, and a number of reintegration officers saw their main function as "Believing that they can still achieve and advocating for them in schools".
- Lack of co-operation/variable commitment from schools – a key issue as schools will usually be responsible for setting programmes of work, providing materials and resources, and marking assignments. This can be due to limited resources, identifying a person in school to take on the role, and available teacher time.

- The potential complexity of the needs of school age parents – which include emotional needs, pressures and stresses, bereavement and family breakdown, or being in care.

9.2.1 Context and Structures

Interventions with young carers tend to focus on the issues of ensuring appropriate support is provided and preventing disengagement. As described previously, young carers have received increasing attention under programmes designed to intervene with at risk groups, such as the Children's Fund, as well as developments at national level such as the Carers UK organisation. Young carers and their families can receive additional help from both local and health authorities. Where a child is providing a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for a parent, the child will be entitled to an assessment of their ability to care under section 1 of the Carers Act 1995 which must be considered in deciding what community care services are provided for parents. In addition, consideration must be given as to whether a young carer is a child in need under the Children Act 1989.

The reintegration of teenage parents has also received increasing attention, particularly following the 1999 Social Exclusion Unit report on teenage pregnancy. Traditionally the options open to this group have included attendance at specialist units or a PRU, home tuition, or tuition in mainstream school. In 2000 the Standards Fund Grant Teenage Pregnancy was launched in 48 LEAs, with the aim of helping reintegrate pregnant young women and teenage mothers back into education. The grant was extended to an additional 41 LEAs, and from April 2003 was subsumed in the Vulnerable Children Grant. The increased national policy focus on, and extra resources for, this group has led to a reconfiguration of services. These commonly include the appointment of specialist teenage pregnancy reintegration officers through the Standards Fund (Teenage Pregnancies), and the establishment of specialist services for teenage parents, including workers to promote continuity of education and links with schools from the point of pregnancy onwards. In addition, the LEA survey suggested that a wider range of approaches continue to be used, including alternative provision, PRUs and the involvement of voluntary and community sector organisations in enhancing support networks and services.

The location of services for carers and teenage parents within the case study LEAs varies, with one having a reintegration and mentoring tutor within an integrated Young People's Services approach. The tutor offered support to pupils both in-school and during periods of alternative provision, and was responsible for developing alternative provision. Another LEA made a distinction between an in school support role and an alternative provision role, with two separate departments being involved. In one case carers services were provided by a social service led 'project' team, whose remit included ensuring children were able to access education and providing any practicable inputs to facilitate this.

9.2.2 Funding and Resourcing

The LEA survey identified that services to reintegrate young carers and school age parents were supported primarily from mainstream funding, although Standards Fund, VCG and other sources also made important contributions. This picture was reflected across the LEAs, with the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy launched in 1999 and the allocation of Standards Fund and VCG monies being reported as particularly influential in developing approaches for working with school age parents. Importantly these

developments made it possible for LEAs to resource full-time teenage pregnancy workers, and as elsewhere concerns were expressed about the shift in resources away from dedicated funds, although there was evidence of posts being mainstreamed and VCG being used to provide continuation resources.

Funding for welfare aspects allows for some of the barriers to education to be eased, in particular to ease the burden of childcare for pupils and their families who may already be stretched and struggling to cope (for example, funding for childcare and transportation being applied to under 16's under the Care to Learn scheme from August 2004). Similarly, where family caring responsibilities are identified as impeding pupils' education, the availability of alternative sources of support can be used to support families in their homes.

9.2.3 Approaches and Delivery Models

Approaches to the reintegration of young carers and school age parents identified in the case studies are summarised below.

Young Carers

The LEA survey found that young carers were amongst the least likely pupil groups to have formalised approaches to their reintegration. Of the five case studies where services for young carers were examined, LEA attentions had focussed mainly on school age pregnancies given the drivers described previously. Services for more 'generic' carers focused on supporting continued education and preventing disengagement, reflecting the barriers to reintegration cited previously and including:

- Identifying children with caring responsibilities – many carers may present initially through non-attendance, poor punctuality, physical and mental exhaustion and inconsistent behaviour. Consequently, identifying what lies behind these initial issues is crucial.
- Providing supporting services and ensuring health, education and social services work together – as all may be needed to meet the needs of both young carers and their families. This requires adult and children's services within social service departments to work closely together, and combine resources to meet carer and family needs.
- Developing flexible solutions – with schools allowing pupils to start late or leave early to meet caring responsibilities, and take managed periods away at times of recurrent illness or particular need. Other important practical factors include encouraging schools to nominate a key workers/link person to be responsible for links with social services, specialist providers etc.
- Promoting awareness of young carers issues, for example via PSHE, and enhancing counselling services to promote their independence. This includes an appreciation of potential sensitivities – for a range of reasons carers may keep their caring roles secret, or not realise their lives are materially different from their peers at school.

Support services include: dedicated young carer service teams or tutors, the use of voluntary and community sector agencies, and the use of PRUs in cases of disengagement or exclusion - very much the exception rather than the rule. For pupils

with caring responsibilities EWO's tend to take lead roles, in liaison with the family and local agencies.

School Age Parents

Approaches to working with school age parents appeared to be more developed amongst the case study LEAs. An important distinction was drawn here, with services being offered to support continuing education in a range of settings, but not necessarily reintegration to mainstream school due to the age/stage of education of the mother. The services provided are summarised in the box below.

Overview of Approaches for School Age Parents

Services to reintegrate young carers and school age parents were examined in detail in four LEAs, whose approaches are summarised below.

LEA 1 – a multi-agency assessment, planning and delivery approach is followed, featuring LEA, school, SEN and social service representation. Parents/carers and pupils are involved as much as possible, through planning meetings and pre-meetings for complex cases. School age parents can attend a local staff development centre for tuition and childcare, which is often over-subscribed, and the LEA has found that pupils prefer to be with others in the same situation to avoid stigmatisation and provide mutual support. A dedicated 'young mum's' teacher is also available to support tuition and arrange work placements, as well as a dedicated Connexions representative to provide careers advice. A pregnancy advisory support worker is also available to help pupils access funding for college.

LEA 10 – here the LEA seek to continue education throughout the pregnancy and after the birth, with pupils remaining on their school roll. The LEA has a Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and a Teenage Pregnancy Group, and as soon as the pupil stops attending school tuition is provided by the authority's medical tuition service either at home, another location, or as part of a cluster group. While all pupils are expected to return to school after the birth, the LEA can also purchase college places or involve Connexions PAs. One local college provides 'mum to be' courses, which follow a set 13 week programme, and the LEA are continually looking for, or seeking to develop, more appropriate placements for pupils. Few schools in the area have facilities for young babies, and while the LEA can fund some childcare provision there is an expectation that family members will provide support. In planning their provision, the LEA uses live delivery statistics at ward level for under and over-16's. This has shown that the numbers of pregnancies dealt with each year represent a small share of the total, and suggest that many other school age mothers are either not accessing education or forming a 'hidden' group.

LEA 11 – two approaches are followed, with pupils being given the option of remaining in mainstream provision or moving to a specialist unit for on-site tuition. Most prefer to remain in the mainstream (as pupils consider it reduces stigma, offers a better quality of education and allows them to remain with their peers), where a specialist worker, funded under VCG and part of the School Improvement Service, offers support. A minority choose to go to the specialist unit, which caters for an average of six pupils at a time, and receive tuition for three days (soon to be raised to five). Pupils can join the unit at any time up to and after delivery, and as most are in Key Stage 4 reintegration to school is less realistic. The unit is staffed by a teacher and a classroom assistant, and is co-located with a unit for post-16 mothers so crèche facilities can be shared. However, the LEA recognise that the unit does not provide an ideal learning environment and a more suitable site is being sought.

LEA 13 – here an approach has been developed through a multi-agency forum to support pupils from the earliest stages of pregnancy to support after the birth. The procedure includes: pupils informing school staff of a possible pregnancy, testing and counselling; the allocation of responsibility for continued education being allocated to a member of the pastoral support team,

involvement of reintegration and mentoring tutors and home visits. A multi-agency planning meeting then produces a support plan by week 20 wherever possible, with support for education in and out of school being available. Reintegration begins with the production of a reintegration plan around 6 weeks after the birth, with support from the school, the reintegration and mentoring tutors and family services team throughout.

9.2.4 Key Components

Across the case study LEAs a series of components were found to be central to the reintegration of young carers and school-age parents, or were considered to be working effectively by the LEAs and their partners.

1 Specialist Reintegration Officers

The role played by specialist reintegration officers has been recognised in the case of pregnant teenagers and mothers, due to the particular barriers to education this group faces. They can have a key role in changing attitudes of schools towards school age parents – partly by reminding schools of their responsibilities as well as offering specialist expertise and support to help fulfil them. As with other groups, this reflects the feedback that schools need to be reassured that they are not being left with a problem that they are uncomfortable coping with alone.

Role of Reintegration Officers – LEA 13

Reintegration Officers have a key role in changing attitudes of schools towards pregnant school girls. Reintegration Officers tend to have a role in the 'case management' of young women's pregnancy and reintegration, rather than taking on the role of education delivery. Most pupils will remain on role of their school and will continue to study the subjects agreed with teachers. Backing up reintegration officer are tutors and learning support assistants.

One of the key roles of Reintegration Officer has been to focus on what schools should be doing, rather than the person being forced out of school and into home or alternative provision. As one described *"...we need to build up the relationships so that when pregnancy happens schools know how to respond appropriately"*.

Reintegration Officers tend to have a role in the 'case management' of young women's pregnancy and reintegration, rather than taking the role of education delivery. Most pupils remain on the school roll and continue to study subjects agreed with teachers.

Case Example

XXX's pregnancy presented a complicated set of issues, including being under a care order and subject to a cross-authority placement. She had a poor record of school attendance, and child protection was a major concern for social services. On becoming pregnant in Year 8 the best option appeared to be individual tuition in the local library. The LEA reintegration officer arranged a school place locally, with the school providing work and a link tutor. Although education provision was limited to six hours per week at first, more intensive inputs risked being counterproductive given the other issues facing the pupil.

Following the birth a meeting was held in hospital, called by social services. XXX needed considerable support to return to school, which seemed at first a daunting prospect. Individual tuition was re-established, with the tutor taking her on familiarisation visits into school, and a place was secured for the baby at a local childcare provider. Integration into classes was gradual and worked alongside childcare arrangements, with the tutor gradually withdrawing. The school played a key role in identifying Key Stage 4 options, including GNVQ health and social care, with

GCSE Maths, English, Science and Technology. The package was agreed with the pupil who now feels well motivated and that her education offers her good prospects for the future.

The reintegration officer has kept a watch over the process, and currently meets the pupil weekly in school. The officer has played a key support role through difficult times following the birth, including periods of depression, and has monitored progress calling on additional support if necessary. The pupil appears settled and has made several new friends, and she now looks forward to going to school. She described how having a single point of contact, and a person who was “*on my side*” had been vital in supporting her throughout her pregnancy and return to education.

2 Establishing responsibilities and procedures

One of the key roles of Reintegration Officers has been to focus on what schools should be doing, rather than carers being forced out of school and into home or alternative provision. An immediate reaction of some schools could be to ‘off-roll’ a pregnant pupil or to say they should not be in school on health and safety grounds, and effectively ‘condone’ absences amongst known carers.

At the same time, there is still a need to focus on what schools ought to be doing. One issue emerging through the case studies was the potential for schools to feel ‘out of their depth’ on becoming aware of a pregnant pupil, especially if there is no recent precedent to draw on. This can lead to a reaction to want the pupil to be catered for out of school.

Establishing Procedures and Responsibilities – School Age Parents

LEA 13 used the Standards Fund (Teenage Pregnancy) to establish a multi-agency working group to develop procedures for teenage parents owned by all agencies across the authority, an approach continued with funds from various sources including VCG. The procedures deal with: confidentiality issues, action planning protocols, monitoring and review arrangements and data collection. As well as the guidelines for schools, the LEA is preparing an information leaflet for general distribution setting out the processes for dealing with pregnancies, and the services provided by the Reintegration Officer.

The procedure in place to respond to teenage pregnancy appears to be broadly modelled on general pastoral support plan processes. They are similar to the processes of dealing with children with medical needs, although most professionals prefer not to associate pregnancy with illness. The broad framework follows DfES guidelines: including the use of individual education plans, reviews at 20 weeks, stopping school at 29th week, and returning six weeks after birth.

Schools in the area appear to have responded well to the formalisation of the process. Head of Year/Assistants now take responsibility for pastoral needs and dealing with health and safety issues, and most schools nominate a member of the pastoral staff to take responsibility for the continued education of the young person. Education Welfare also have a part to play, although the extent of their involvement sometimes depends on whether the pupil was showing signs for concern prior to pregnancy.

3 Work with the parents of young carers and school age parents

The parents of young carers and school age parents can play key roles in continuing their education, although with both groups issues of considerable sensitivity can be encountered which must be handled appropriately. Potential issues may include

emotional issues, stigmatisation, shame and for school age parents negative parental views and potential rejection.

Working with Parents – School Age Parents

In LEA 13 schools are putting in place school-level policies on dealing with teenage mothers, in order to specify the approach to dealing with confidentiality issues. The LEA appreciate the sensitivities around school age pregnancies from both pupils' and parents' perspectives. Most schools encourage girls to tell their parents if they suspect they may be pregnant.

Usually when schools inform the reintegration and mentoring tutor of a pregnancy, a home visit is arranged. Parents of the teenage mother may play different roles, and may be supportive to continuing education, including care for baby, transport and so on. However, some parents can create barriers to education for young mothers, for example by encouraging the pupil to stay at home. This can be a particular factor for some parents of school age mothers, who do not accept nursery care for their children's babies. Family relationships are complex and are difficult to generalise – in other cases parents are relieved that education continues and that external childcare is available.

4 Valuing different types of education provision

Experience has shown that many pregnant girls can cope well in the mainstream, and often may need only minor adjustments on behalf of their school. Maintaining education during pregnancy can be as simple as providing transport, schools making changes to the tuition programmes, allowing exemptions to school uniform rules during pregnancy, or taking time out for medical checkups.

Reintegration services have tended to provide different options, including education at the mainstream school during pregnancy (with the option of returning after the birth) or education in a specialist unit. Some girls have stayed in school the whole term, whilst others have moved to a specialist unit towards the end of their pregnancy. In addition, the case study LEAs described offering a range of options for pupils in Year 10 and 11, including the view to continued education post-Year 11 through college or vocational options. For the most part, school age parents elect to remain in mainstream education, because this is considered to reduce the social stigma and allows girls to receive a better education. Alternative provision in special units can have the advantage of providing a protected environment (e.g. pupils do not have to carry books around the centre, tutors are better able to cope with problems associated with pregnancy and there is a choice about what to teach and what catch-up may be needed).

Some interviewees suggested that pregnant girls respond well in group situations – otherwise pregnancy can be very isolating. The social aspects are important to this group, and sharing information and experiences (for example on claiming benefits and grants, involving midwives and on other aspects of new parenthood).

Case Example

Pupil XX found she was four and a half months pregnant in her final year of school, after feeling unwell and going for tests. She informed her Head of Year, who involved the LEA Reintegration Officer. The baby's maternal and paternal grandparents, and wider family, have been very supportive.

XX continued in school until April, before beginning part-time education at the LEA specialist centre. School was becoming difficult, and XX was increasingly taking days off and having to cope with comments from some other pupils. She is currently revising for GCSE exams using books supplied by school, enjoys one to one support from tutors, and considers she is learning more than at school. The centre facilities are good, provide a quieter and less tiring environment, and are felt to be *"much better than school"*.

XX is determined to complete her education and is hoping to sit all her GCSEs. The reintegration officer has worked with the school to plan for sitting exams, with a separate room being provided in the school. The pupil is apprehensive as her due date falls on the day of one of her exams, but says she will sit them in hospital if necessary. She is confident that she will get good qualifications, and plans to go to college in a year to study to become a midwife or health visitor.

5 Multi-agency working and additional resources

Both 'family' carers and pregnant pupils may benefit from multi-disciplinary and multi-agency support, given the range of specialist support that these groups may require. As the LEA survey suggested, and the case studies confirmed, multi-agency inputs are vital components in the reintegration of pupils in the carer group.

Teenage parents may have a particular need for an inter-agency approach to meet their personal support needs in addition to their educational needs. For example, this could include parenting support, care planning, health advice, psycho-social development, life skills and economic self sufficiency. Approaches to allow 'family' carers to continue to participate in education may also rely on the family receiving support either at home or on a respite basis, to reduce the burden of responsibility on the young person and allow them to spend time at school knowing that their dependants are being cared for.

The Use of Additional Resources – Surestart Plus to support School Age Parents

In some areas, Surestart Plus will provide a key opportunity for teenage parents to access additional support, especially around parenting. Surestart Plus programmes, due to their operational priorities, are well placed to implement strategies that link with school based programmes.

In LEA 11 Surestart Plus resources were being used to support Barnardos 'Young Families Plus' programme, which provides teenage parents with access to health guidance, benefit advice and social groups. As it is specific to teenage parents, it is held after school to allow parents to continue to attend. However attendance is not compulsory, there are few checks and only a proportion of young women attend regularly. Because Surestart Plus services are only available in certain geographical areas, the involvement of pupils can present access problems.

Crucially, LEA and school support workers should be able to arrange and fund childcare and other support where appropriate, commonly providing transportation to support continued access to school. Other 'school level' adaptations, such as changes to timetables, the relaxation of uniform rules and support to help pupils manage morning sickness and breastfeeding, should also be considered.

9.2.5 Key Success Factors

Finally, a series of key success factors were identified for the effective reintegration of young carers and school age parents, including:

- Identification and diagnostic approaches – to identify both carers who may present initially through non-attendance, poor punctuality and other forms of disengagement with education.
- Sensitive approaches – applying equally to carers and school age parents, in terms of stigma and emotional and psychological stresses.
- Access to multi-agency services – to help support carers to allow continued education, and provide a range of support and progression options for school age parents. Access to childcare for school age parents is an important factor – although only a handful of LEAs responding to the LEA survey mentioned that crèche provision was available in their areas.
- Having procedures in place and rapid responses – to respond to late-identified pregnancies, and arrange the provision of support for carers at crisis points.
- Having staff dedicated to supporting carer education – for example dedicated reintegration officers to ensuring approaches are well planned and delivered, and being a point of contact for parents and providers, as well as ensuring communications between parties are effective.
- Flexible timetabling and ‘creative’ option choices – in terms of allowing variable attendance patterns so carers can continue their caring roles, and offering a range of options for school age parents who are less likely to return to school (such as continuing education in FE or via a work based route later).
- Commitment and support from schools and teachers - including personal support, a welcoming environment and the avoidance of stigmatisation.
- Maintaining peer relationships – to make it easier for teenage mothers to reintegrate, with reintegration officers encouraging girls to retain links with their friends at school.
- Continuing to emphasise the value of education and stimulating pupil motivation – although carers and school age parents will have other issues to consider. Emphasising the importance of education and its role in improving the life chances of pupils and their families can lead to enhanced reintegration success and positive performance.

9.3 Extended Authorised Absences

Little information is currently available on either the scale of pupil absence from school due to extended authorised absences, or the issues which absences of this nature pose for pupils and their education. Clearly any significant absence will mean learning time is lost and may risk the onset of disengagement from education, although little appears to be known on the specific impacts of extended periods of absence on pupils. Three of the LEAs consulted were able to estimate the impact of extended authorised absence on attendance figures, which accounted for between 15% and 20% of all absences from school in their areas.

A perception exists that extended authorised absences are most commonly associated with pupils from ethnic minority and mixed heritage groups, with absences being related to religious visits or trips to see family in the home country. While anecdotal evidence supports this to some extent, one LEA in an area with a significant minority ethnic population described their local Roman Catholic girls school as having the highest frequency of authorised extended absences.

Extended authorised absences may be taken for a variety of reasons, ranging from taking short holidays in term time (often to make savings by travelling at less expensive times of the year) to taking longer vacations or periods away to visit family in pupils' home countries or as part of religious observation/pilgrimage. In the latter case, there are clear benefits to be had from enhancing links with families and the experience of different cultures – although these must be balanced against any damage to educational progress that may result.

The LEA survey and case studies identified few formal approaches to the reintegration of pupils following extended authorised absences – indeed this pupil group were the least commonly reported in the LEA survey. As a result of this, targeted follow-up telephone calls were made to four LEAs who reported having approaches in place in the LEA survey, and one that was a recognised good practice example in DfES literature. Consequently, the summary for extended authorised absences is presented in a different format, and in our view may represent a 'latent' issue where further research is required.

9.3.1 Overview of Approaches – LEA Survey and LEA Case Studies

Fewer than 40% of LEAs described having formalised approaches to the reintegration of pupils returning to schools following periods of extended authorised absence, with the case studies also suggesting that approaches for reintegrating this specific pupil group were rare. Where approaches were described, they appeared to be at the individual school level, although LEAs may play a facilitating role in setting policies on attendance and sanctions when the conditions of extended authorised absences are not adhered to.

The **LEA survey**, as reported in Volume 1 of this report, identified a series of examples of activities in this area, which included:

- Developing written contracts between schools and parents - setting out the conditions under which extended authorised absences were permitted, and including dates of return.

- Setting work to be completed during the period of absence – to be marked on the pupil's return to school.
- Penalties for pupils taking extended holidays without prior arrangement – for example in one LEA policy on extended holidays indicates that pupils can lose their school place if they do not return within two weeks of the agreed date.
- One LEA (also a case study) describe how they had visited an area of Bangladesh where many new arrivals to their area came from, to establish links with Bangladeshi schools to support the continued education for pupils on home visits, as well as the effective reintegration of new pupils into schools in GB.

One LEA described how the Education Welfare Service help families and schools to prepare for periods of absence and the return to school, as summarised below.

Reintegrating Pupils Following Extended Authorised Absences – Metropolitan LEA in Yorkshire and the Humber

In this LEA EWS work with families and schools to plan pupils' return to school after extended holidays. They also work with schools to ensure that Whole School Attendance Policies include reference to welcoming and supporting returns to school after lengthy absences, regardless of the reasons for them.

Local parent partnership and transiency projects have contributed by producing work packs to help reintegration. School mentors and support from the school Learning Support Units also contribute to the majority of reintegration arrangements, irrespective of the circumstances that lead to the lengthy absence from school.

The survey also identified that, where in place, approaches to reintegration were funded primarily from LEAs' and schools' mainstream budgets, although in a few cases other funding sources were used.

In the **case study LEAs** broad responses to pupils returning after extended absences appeared to be either their straightforward return to school, or where complexities were identified or absences had been long-term more 'formal' reintegration approaches were followed.

In these cases approaches followed were variants of those followed with long-term truants, although they would vary depending on the nature of the individual issues faced. It was apparent, however, that in most cases the actual reintegration of this group to school was considered straightforward, with the majority of pupils returning to school without difficulty and the main issue being to ensure that any lost study time was caught-up.

9.3.2 A Focus on Prevention - Findings from Other LEAs

The additional contacts with other LEAs recognised as having specific interests and experience in this area were particularly helpful in providing examples of both issues faced and approaches to address the issue of extended authorised absence. However, they represent a small sample and the findings from the consultations should be treated as indicative and a potential area for further investigation.

All four of the LEAs contacted described following a **preventative** approach to the issue of extended authorised absences from school, and while the actual reintegration

back into school was often straightforward, making up for lost time was less so. The key issues for these LEAs was how to ensure that any term-time absences were taken only in extreme circumstances, through a combination of policy measures, practical steps to study while absent and awareness raising. All four described:

- Having, or continuing to develop, policies on extended authorised absence - as part of wider school attendance policies, and which set conditions for periods away from school.
- Working with parents and local community or religious representatives to raise awareness of the importance of education and the damage that extended absences can cause to progress.
- Encouraging and supporting schools to provide appropriate study materials – to maintain some form of educational activity during periods away.

Examples of these approaches are provided below.

1 Policies on extended absences

The level of extended authorised absences were a cause of concern in each of the four LEA areas, based either on the collection and analysis of data on authorised absences or more anecdotally. Each described attempting to use measures to manage the use of authorised absences, although these were not always successful.

While the content of LEA policies differed, they commonly included reference to:

- Background on the dangers of missing education to children's academic and social development, while acknowledging that periods of experience in other nations and cultures can be beneficial.
- The legal and national context for taking absences in term time – based on the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, and referring to DfES Circular 10/99 which states that schools can only allow authorised absences of 10 days or more in exceptional circumstances.
- LEA advice and recommendations to schools – in terms of periods of absence considered allowable and the conditions under which absences can be considered, processes in terms of setting work and agreeing return dates, and procedures to be followed if pupils do not return by agreed dates.
- How extended absences should be recorded on attendance registers – both during periods of agreed absence and when these agreed periods are exceeded.

LEAs can, however, only provide recommendations and give advice to schools in how they deal with extended absences, with the approval of individual absences being the responsibility of individual schools.

The actual content of policies in terms of the duration of absences allowed, and the conditions under which permission could be agreed, varied between the LEAs. Broadly, DfES guidance was adhered to, with absences over 10 days duration being supported only in exceptional circumstances and sanctions for non-return being imposed for pupils not returning within 10 days of the agreed date. The maximum

allowed time away varied considerably for exceptional cases – from a whole term in one LEA to up to 10 days maximum in another.

Considerations set out in assessing applications for extended absence included:

- The age of the child.
- The time of year when the absence was requested – in particular seeking to avoid SATs and exam periods, as well as transition stages.
- The nature and purpose of the trip.
- Family circumstances and parental wishes.
- The duration of absence proposed.
- The pupil's wider attendance record and progress at school.

The extent to which attendance policies were effective in managing the scale of extended absences varied in the view of the LEAs. One described how they had attempted to control absence in this way, by reducing the amount of time allowed under exceptional circumstances from six to four weeks in previous policies. When these had not been as influential as hoped, the LEA introduced a 'zero tolerance' policy when **any** absence during term time must be for proven exceptional circumstances.

LEA A – Moving towards a Zero Tolerance Approach

The LEA described introducing a new policy on extended authorised absences for 2003/4, based on their experience of previous attempts to manage extended absences and pressures to improve the position following an OfSTED inspection and DfES interest. The authority had previously allowed pupils to take six, then reduced to four, weeks of authorised absence per year, although this was not found to be effective and many extended these periods or took multiple breaks per year.

The new policy is in effect a 'zero tolerance' approach, with up to ten school days absence being allowed in an academic year *only* in exceptional circumstances (more restrictive than current DfES guidance which allows absences of *over* 10 days only in exceptional conditions). Two conditions are applied and rigidly applied in any applications for absence:

- Is the absence for truly exceptional reasons? – with the test being if the reason is one proposed frequently.
- Must the absence be taken in term time? – instead of during school holiday periods.

If pupils do not return by the agreed deadlines they may be removed from the school roll after 21 days – a real threat given the shortage of pupil places in local schools and one that the LEA is prepared to instigate. Parents are also informed that they may be subject to prosecution for keeping their children away without extenuating circumstances.

The impact of the new policy has been considerable, with extended absences dropping dramatically to date. The apparent success of the new policy is also due to the way it was developed and communicated to parents and across community networks.

The LEAs also described a series of 'risks' or disincentives to addressing the issue of extended absences, not least in terms of damaging relationships with pupils and

families of different religious beliefs and cultures, but also in terms of the effect any steps may have on their overall attendance figures. A key concern was that policies to constrain the taking of extended absences will not actually lead to any behavioural change in parents, and so lead to significant increases in unauthorised absence and damage schools' positions in performance tables. However, in the case of LEA A above, their revised policy had not led to a significant increase in unauthorised absence and a considerable increase in attendance levels in the first year at least.

2 Communicating the value of education and the impact of time away

Each of the LEAs acknowledged the key role that communicating the value of education, and the negative impacts of time away from it, to parents and the wider community so that behaviour can be influenced.

In LEA A, the 'zero tolerance' approach is considered to have been effective due primarily to the efforts made by the LEA, to involving LEA and school staff, parents and community groups in its communication and implementation. These efforts included:

- **Developing an information/evidence base** – including surveying schools to identify the scale, frequency and duration of extended absences; and research into the impact of time away from school on pupil performance at GCSE level.
- **Involvement in development and implementation** – as extended absences in the area were often for religious and cultural reasons, involving community representatives and the local mosque was key in both developing and securing commitment to the policy. In schools, the active involvement of school staff and governors was also key to the adoption and success of the policy, with briefing and training being provided to EWOs and other frontline staff in each school in the area.
- **Communications** – to stress the value of education, the problems of taking time away from school, and the new policy being implemented. In some cases parents did not consider that taking time away was a problem (a common issue across the LEAs, particularly with Primary pupils), so the LEA stressed the potential difficulties including having to get their children back into former or new schools if they did not return by agreed dates, or took absences and were away for over 21 days without permission. Steps to communicate and embed the policy also included media promotion (e.g. via Ramadan radio and the local press) and by providing all pupils with calendars to take home showing school holiday periods clearly. The reinforcement of the new policy via the mosque and community leaders ensured its profile was maintained.

In the other LEAs the role of local community and religious representatives was also described, including in LEA B the use of a development worker based in the local mosque to undertake outreach work with families to inform them of the importance of education and the need to minimise time away. This and the LEA's wider promotion efforts were considered to be having a positive impact, as the example below shows.

Influencing Short Term Absences

LEA B described how engaging with local community representatives had influenced even short-term absences for religious observation. The LEA set out their expectations in terms of school attendance for the observation of Eid, following previous incidents when up to five days absence

had been taken by local pupils. Having established a two-day period of absence, subsequent truancy sweeps identified fewer examples of condoned absence beyond this two day limit, which when brought to the parents attention caused none of the upset reported previously.

3 Encouraging schools to set work

When pupils are taking extended absences from school, it appears to be common practice for work to be set for completion during their time away. However, the extent to which all schools provide suitable work and review assignments completed was likely to vary, as was the extent to which work was completed by pupils during their periods of absence. It was acknowledged that without some type of formalised study programme pupils may be easily diverted from their studies during holiday periods.

In LEA C a 'learning pack' system has been introduced, including materials tailored to individual pupil age and stage of progress. This is seen as part of a range of positive factors that can limit the damage to educational progress from extended absences. Other factors included parental attitude (to education broadly, but also to continued study whilst away), children's abilities and the ability of schools to provide appropriate materials in advance.

9.3.3 Key Success Factors

Although based on a limited sample base, key success factors for the management of extended unauthorised absences would appear to include:

- Having clear LEA policies in place on extended authorised absences from school, covering the conditions where such absences can be allowed, their maximum duration, and processes for establishing return dates and sanctions for non-compliance.
- Ensuring that schools 'buy-in' to these policies, and that they are complied with by schools across the LEA, while considering individual cases sensitively and with a view to the full background to the application. The involvement of appropriate LEA and school staff, and community 'influencers', in policy development and implementation also appears to be a key factor.
- Communicate attendance policies well – using appropriate local channels and 'influencers' from religious, cultural and wider community networks.
- Providing messages on a continuing basis to pupils and parents on the value of education, and the damage time away can cause to pupils' studies and exam performance.
- If absences in term time are taken, ensuring that schools provide study materials and work to be undertaken while away. Importantly, schools should also ensure that work provided is completed, returned and marked - to emphasise the importance placed on education and school's commitment to it.

It was also stressed that in many cases LEAs may not be aware of the scale of extended authorised absences in their areas, and that efforts to assess the scale and characteristics of pupils missing education for this reason are a good starting point for developing appropriate responses.

10 PUPILS WITH MOBILITY ISSUES

This broad pupil grouping refers to children and young people whose education, for a variety of reasons, is interrupted by movement and change in their place of residence. The grouping includes:

- Gypsy/Traveller children.
- Children in local authority care.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children.

As the summaries below describe, these different sub-groupings will face different issues both between and within them. However, they share similar needs in terms of ensuring any educational input is sustained and built on in future, and access to mainstream education is facilitated as best meets their needs. Indeed, for many in this group the task for practitioners is closer to 'integration' than 'reintegration' – although this can be a continuing process with Gypsy/Traveller and looked after children who may commonly leave and re-enter education on a frequent basis.

10.1 Gypsy/Traveller Children

Following the OFSTED definition, the generic term 'Traveller' includes Gypsy Travellers, fairground families and showpeople, circus families, New Travellers, and barges and other boat dwellers, each of whom have their own lifestyles and varying patterns of travelling/settling. Gypsy/Travellers form diverse communities and the case studies captured those based on permanent and unofficial sites, following set patterns of movement and mobile on a more random basis.

Consequently estimates of the number of children in this group are difficult to establish, with the number of Gypsy/Traveller children under 16 years of age being estimated to be as high as 50,000, with over 26,000 being aged between 5-16. According to the School Census there were 10,300 children of Traveller Irish or Gypsy/Roma heritage in schools in England in 2003, just under 3,000 of whom were at secondary schools.

One case study area had a particularly settled Gypsy/Traveller population, and another was a traditional 'stop' on the circus/fairground circuit and has a high proportion of New Travellers. A third LEA reported having 1,500 Gypsy/Traveller children in their area last year, with about 700 on roll (in school or with 'base' schools in the area).

The Gypsy/Traveller lifestyle can make it difficult for children to maintain regular education in a school. It is generally accepted that there is a significant number of Gypsy/Traveller children who do not attend school, especially at secondary level. In addition, a disproportionate number of Gypsy/Traveller children become excluded.

The range of individuals covered by the term 'Gypsy/Travellers' illustrates the diversity of issues Gypsy/Traveller children may face in maintaining education, including:

- Physical and practical barriers – such as accessing and regularly attending schools due to transport problems or dressing children in suitable school uniform.

- Culture and lifestyle issues – such as viewing the National Curriculum as irrelevant or even harmful, problems adjusting to an indoor environment and calendar clashes between the travelling and the academic years.
- Issues in accessing education – including limited access to early years provision and issues of parental illiteracy. In addition, schools may not be as welcoming as they could be, and Gypsy/Traveller parents often find it difficult to engage with schools and LEAs.
- Problems adjusting to the school environment – including children having limited experience of mixing with other groups, not engaging with the settled community, and experiences of racism and bullying at previous/current schools.

Staff considered that their role was often more about ensuring education provision rather than focusing on reintegration per se, with different approaches being followed to ensure continuing educational inputs through work setting and links between different areas and 'base' schools.

Barriers to Reintegration – Gypsy/Traveller Children

The main barriers to the reintegration of Gypsy/Traveller children identified in the case studies include:

- Mobility issues – as described above, engagement with education may be sporadic unless work is set for periods of travelling, and variable time spent in single areas may limit opportunities for engagement.
- Attitudes of schools, pupils and parents - schools and others can be quick to judge and stereotype Gypsy/Traveller children, and be reluctant to welcome those considering a short-term placement due to concerns of disruption, value to Gypsy/Traveller pupils and concerns that once integrated they may stay longer than proposed.
- Gypsy/Traveller attitudes to education – including limited appreciation of its value and relevance, concerns over the dilution of Gypsy/Traveller culture and practice, the content and coverage of the national curriculum (for example, regarding sex education) and parents' own negative experiences of school.
- Experiences of racism, bullying and stereotyping in the formal school setting (although this can work both ways so heighten tensions further) – and an inability/unwillingness to provide necessary support in settling pupils and meeting their specific needs.

10.1.1 Context and Structures

Within the LEA the integration of Gypsy/Traveller children is generally the responsibility of the Traveller Education Service. TES teams were found to comprise commonly of EWOs with particular responsibility for Gypsy/Travellers - in one area these were known as Field Officers who support Gypsy/Travellers in a similar way to EWOs, but do not have EWO qualifications or carry out court work. Their role is to follow-up Gypsy/Traveller children who are out of school, identify any issues or barriers they may face and secure a school placement for them.

Teams also commonly comprise specialist Gypsy/Traveller teachers, who will provide input if schools have a particular issue which they cannot solve themselves. Teams could also include non-teaching assistants, for example, in one case study Learning Support Assistants who are managed by the Gypsy/Traveller teachers. In another area

the team form part of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), but its role and composition is similar to the other case studies.

TES staff work across all school and pre-school stages, and work to develop programmes of support with school staff. This entails initial assessment, developing programmes of intervention, providing support and reviewing progress. Home/school links are also established, and distance-learning supported through links with other TES's nationally. The service also works to improve awareness of Gypsy/Traveller needs and issues, build capacity within schools through in-service training, and raise interest in education amongst the Gypsy/Traveller communities they serve. In one area the TES has Service Level Agreements with schools and at the beginning of each term the role of the schools and the TES will be set out.

10.1.2 Funding

The literature review highlighted that most LEAs drew on the former Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant, which was generally considered to be inadequate in terms of the amount of funding available. The funding situation within the case studies was found to be somewhat different now.

TESs were found to have developed through a combination of the EMAG, EMAS and Travellers Standards Fund monies. Much activity is now funded through the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) and mainstream resources. The balance between mainstream funds and VCG monies was found to vary among case studies, with one area funding most activity through VCG and another mostly through ring-fenced mainstream LEA funds. The VCG had been used in one area to only fund specific projects (for example an environmental awareness project which produced a work-pack for Gypsy/Travellers which they then piloted, and an ICT out-of-school project for secondary school Gypsy/Traveller pupils). In at least one area there is a commitment from the LEA to top up levels should the VCG fall below a certain level. However in some cases the bulk of Traveller services are funded from non-core monies and/or time-limited sources, which has implications for the sustainability of services and staff. It can also reduce the range of 'options' for Gypsy/Traveller children as illustrated below:

Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Integration

The TES identified the need to change school cultures with regard to the integration of Gypsy/Traveller children, as well as make links and forge friendships between Gypsy/Traveller children and the locals. The LEA supported a project that involved a programme of outdoor activities around building wooden structures, cooking etc in the open air. Sessions were held on a 6 weekly basis for mixed groups of Traveller and non-Traveller children. They were found to be extremely effective in terms of developing friendships, supporting natural leaders, and helping all participants find areas of previously unrecognised strength.

Reduced resources means that the programme can no longer be supported from central LEA funds. While it still operates it would now need to be 'bought in', which is less likely to happen unless schools are suffering from specific problems (by which time the intervention may be less useful anyway).

Additional resources that allow for separate staff for classroom assistants, mentors, and outreach workers were felt to be crucial (in some LEAs with smaller budgets EMTAS/TES have to take on all these roles themselves).

10.1.3 Approaches/Delivery Models

As highlighted above the overall approach followed with Gypsy/Traveller pupils is based on ensuring that they have access to appropriate education, and/or support in maximising the effectiveness of the education available to them. The role of the TES in relation to reintegration can be seen to have three strands:

- **Securing placements for, and supporting, those entering the area.** Pupils may be entirely new to an area or be returning to a base school following a period of travelling. Details of new families are made available through the National Association of Traveller Teachers, the family directly or contacts within the local community. The TES and Gypsy/Traveller families may link up through a range of formal and informal referral routes – but the most effective are by recommendation from other Gypsy/Travellers and family links. The TES in one case study area undertake a range of outreach activities, take referrals from other professionals or organisations, and carry out initial assessments on-site. In another area the assessment takes place within the school setting. This was criticised as potentially taking a long time to be completed, during which time the pupil continues to remain out of school.
- **Making contact with pupils on-roll but with patchy attendance, to encourage and facilitate their reintegration.** Where areas have many settled Gypsy/Travellers, integration may be on-going as non-attenders are identified and encouraged/supported to return to education. Commonly EWOs will initially be alerted to absences by the schools themselves. In one area attendance is tracked and in the case of an absence a site visit will take place on the same day. In cases of absence and truanting the EWOs will visit the sites directly. Court warnings are used to encourage parents to send their children to school, and while these can be successful it was noted that pupils may often only return to school for a few days.
- **Securing placements and facilitating the entry into mainstream education for pupils absent from education for some considerable time.** Here the TES will apply directly to schools for placements, and if the school is full they will go through the LEA placement services. Most schools have an (official or unofficial) Traveller co-ordinator who is often the Head of SEN or Year Head, who acts as a key contact point with the TES.

While the ways in which pupils are identified and supported prior to (re)entry into a mainstream setting may differ according to the circumstance of absence, but **support provided within schools** appears to be fairly generic across the case studies.

Traveller teachers will offer varying levels of support in schools, with the number of hours provided varying dependant on what is deemed appropriate for individual pupils and the number of hours the teacher is able to provide.

TES/EMTAS also offer training in awareness of Gypsy/Traveller culture, and help classroom teachers incorporate Gypsy/Traveller materials into the curriculum. Whether training was mandatory for mainstream teachers varied across the case-studies - in one area Traveller teachers would approach their mainstream colleagues, offer them support and design work materials for them. One member of a TES team suggested that attendance at training events should be compulsory.

Other activities and services which may be provided or organised by TES teams include accompanying pupils to the school on their first day and a range of buddying and socialising schemes.

The availability and effective implementation of **distance learning** approaches are an important element of maintaining educational inputs with mobile groups. TES teams will often be involved in producing distance learning materials and IT initiatives to encourage educational engagement. Currently a national ICT for Travellers project is developing and piloting the use of ICT, including providing pupils with laptops to enable them to access the curriculum while travelling.

Distance Learning Materials – Gypsy/Traveller Pupils

The TES in LEA 10 produce a distance learning folder for Gypsy/Traveller children – either where a local school is a ‘base school’ or where other children are identified without base schools. The folder acts as an education record, and includes:

- Contact details for Traveller Education Services in the UK (and some EU coverage) – with encouragement for parents to make contact.
- Materials for children to insert photographs of, and text about, themselves, their families and friends, and their likes and dislikes.
- Record sheets for their base school – completed by different schools/TES’s as they travel and covering: levels reached in English, maths and science; any particular help needed; summary of work set and a general record of support.
- Parents, helpers, teachers and children are encouraged to provide feedback on the contents of the folder through a summary sheet.

Specific work to be completed, and samples of work as appropriate, are then included in the folder for completion and submission at the next ‘stop’. The work provided will vary by age group/ability obviously, but is in line with National Curriculum requirements.

Measures of ‘success’ for the reintegration of Gypsy/Traveller children amongst the case study LEAs were largely informal, for example assessing if a child is happy in school through indicators such as their involvement in clubs, invitations to birthday parties, etc. Judgements on successful reintegration are frequently formed by consultation with the pupil, their parents and their class teacher.

10.1.4 Key Components

A number of components were considered to be particularly effective by practitioners working with Gypsy/Traveller children, set in the individual contexts within which they were operating, and including:

- Involving mainstream teachers in the process of integration in order that they are engaged, knowledgeable and feel an ownership towards the child is crucial. All too often Gypsy/Traveller children are seen as “belonging” to the Traveller Education Service or equivalent.
- In one case study area the Traveller teacher details activities carried out with the pupil in the school through a daily record sheet. Copies of these are then given to the class teachers every half term. This gives the class teacher an opportunity to input into the content and focus of the work with a particular child.

- The transition to secondary has been identified as being a particularly vulnerable time for children. One area has decided therefore to reallocate resources and come off timetable so that intensive support can be offered to pupils at this time. New year 7's are now seen every day by the TES for the first two weeks. This policy was introduced because attendance was falling in these first two weeks. Induction days are held for all new year 7 pupils in their new schools. Pre-induction days for Gypsy/Traveller children are also going to be run four weeks earlier to boost children's self-esteem and to provide them with an opportunity to meet the teachers. This will also be used as an opportunity to point out the fun elements of school.
- One LEA identified in the postal survey reported being particularly successful in relation to secondary retention. This was believed to stem from a willingness on the part of schools in the area to integrate Gypsy/Traveller culture into the curriculum, and a good understanding and a flexible attitude towards the fact that attendance will drop off as children get older and start going out to work.
- It was reported that court warnings are only effective if they are delivered appropriately and with a 'light-touch'. Many families will be reluctant to "get the EWO into trouble" and will be cooperative for that reason. On occasion they may not even realise that their children should have been in school as their awareness of times and timetables may be different.
- Good practice however appears to be shared effectively among TES's and through conferences, which focus on specific subject areas such as legal issues and raising achievement. For example, events run by the National Association of Teachers for Travellers have provided TESs with the opportunity to network with other practitioners, and regional networking groups were also identified which facilitate information sharing.

The experience of a Gypsy/Traveller child was explored in detail with the pupil, her mother and the EWO who provided assistance with her reintegration, and illustrates some of the challenges, efforts and sometimes shortcomings working with even settled Gypsy/Traveller children.

Example of Successful Reintegration of a Gypsy/Traveller pupil

Sarah (not her real name) had been attending school regularly and mixing with non-Traveller children until year 10, when another Gypsy/Traveller child joined the school. The two were friends and began to spend time together. Sarah was then shunned by the settled community and suffered racial abuse. The other child had severe attendance issues and Sarah herself began to disengage from school, with her attendance falling until she was completely out of school for four months. Sarah's mother was keen for her to attend school and in particular wanted her to sit her GCSE's. She was prepared to pay for home tuition, but had been unsuccessful as home tutors in the area are only available for permanently excluded pupils and those with medical needs. There is a private tutor service, but they are reluctant to come out and educate Gypsy/Traveller pupils.

During Sarah's absence from school several meetings were held with the parent, pupil, Field Officer and EWO. Often Sarah would return to school only for a couple of days, and it would often take a long time for her Field Officer to be informed that she was out of school again.

Sarah would like to do a health and beauty course, and is 16 in October. A Connexions PA will discuss opportunities in this area. The Field Officer in this case played a crucial role in facilitating discussion between Sarah and her mother and persuading Sarah to return to school at least until

her sixteenth birthday. It is hoped by this time they will be able to persuade her to then stay on until January, when she will be able to enter the local college and complete her GCSE course.

Sarah's mother praised the work of the Field Officer without whom she believed Sarah would not have returned to school. She would like however to see more support for her daughter within school, so that she has individual support to enable her to cope, and to have been offered extra home tuition. The school Head of Year has been extremely supportive in this case, and contacted Sarah's mother at home to discuss her reintegration. At first he did not believe it was a good idea to have Sarah back full-time, but the Field Officer and the mother believed it was best to seize the opportunity when Sarah agreed. Her form teacher was also felt to be extremely supportive and intolerant of racism.

10.1.5 Key Success Factors

A series of key success factors were identified for the (re)integration of Gypsy/Traveller pupils as part of the case studies, which included:

- Recognising Gypsy/Traveller children within a school equal opportunities policy and School Development Plan.
- Providing a named member of staff/key worker in schools to represent Gypsy/Traveller interests and needs, and involve mainstream teachers in the process of reintegration.
- Supporting and facilitating information flow between schools and the TES, and with children's base schools.
- Encouraging schools to keep places open for Gypsy/Traveller children who are travelling for short periods of time, especially when they have established patterns of movement and a record of returning to education.
- Using facilities on Gypsy/Traveller sites to support phased integration into local schools (or provide education on-site).
- Fostering links between mainstream schools and Gypsy/Traveller communities.
- Follow flexible approaches to timetabling to take account of Gypsy/Traveller cultural events and mobility patterns.
- Develop awareness of, and sensitivities to, Gypsy/Traveller culture through amongst school staff through in-service training by TES.
- Raise awareness of and sensitivity to possible literacy and numeracy issues when working with parents.
- Pay particular attention to secondary school transition issues.

10.2 Children in Local Authority Care/Looked After Children

The Children's Act 1989 defined the term 'looked after' to include children who are subject to care orders and those who are accommodated. Some 60,800 young people under 18 years of age were being looked after by local authorities in England at 31 March 2003. In September 2003, there were 35,100 children of school age in England who had been looked after for at least 12 months (27% with statements of SEN, 1% having been permanently excluded, and 12% having missed at least 25 days schooling)⁵. Looked after children may be living in foster placements (the majority, 82%), residential accommodation or with their families with social worker support – and many also return to their families after long or short periods in care.

Case Example

XX is a Year 10 pupil who is a looked after child. She lives with her mother who has special needs and has a history of poor attendance. Various agencies including Social and Education Welfare Services have been involved with the family on a consistent basis. XX had not attended school for over a year. A negotiated transfer was arranged and she started in her new single sex school as a Year 9 pupil. With support from a dedicated learning mentor XX quickly settled in her new school, where she has a 98% record of attendance and has chosen her options for GCSE. As a measure of the success of the reintegration, XX was accepted on roll a month ago.

Children in Local Authority care are likely to face both emotional and practical difficulties in maintaining their education, the impacts of which on their educational attainment are well documented. Only 8.7% of 16 year olds spending at least one year in care in 2003 achieved five A* - C grades at GCSE, compared to 53% of all young people. However, not all looked after children will be in crisis, and as a group they are no less capable of academic achievement – indeed the case study interviewees suggested that the majority of looked after pupils are managing in mainstream or specialist provision.

Looked after children are as diverse as their mainstream cohorts, although their experience of care and separation from their families, or lack of parental care and security, may mean that some have special needs and problems building relationships or with behaviour. Some may be disruptive, attention seeking, angry or resentful, while others may be inward-looking and lack motivation and self-esteem. Children in care are much more likely than average to have a statement of SEN, and are 10 times more likely to be excluded for misbehaviour.

Unstable living conditions or frequent changes in placement may mean children end up going to several different schools. Some 15% of looked after children had three or more placements in the year to end March 2003, and there is a risk that education may become disjointed or fail to build on previous achievements. Other problems include: social workers giving education a low priority compared to other immediate risks to the child, negative experiences of education, poor experiences of contact with professionals and agencies, teachers paying insufficient attention to the child's social network and engagement with the school, carers lacking skills and time to provide educational support, and a culture of low expectations from professionals.

⁵ DfES – for children who have been permanently excluded more than once in a school year, each exclusion is counted.

Other children who are involved with Social Services departments, although not looked after, may also have reintegration needs. For example, children in families of domestic violence may have moved into sheltered accommodation in an area away from home, or from another Authority. These children will need to be placed in new schools at a time of considerable turbulence in their lives.

Barriers to Reintegration – Children in Local Authority Care

The main barriers to the reintegration of children in local authority care include:

- Children's attitudes and coping strategies – for example refusing to participate in education and rebelling against adults.
- Weak or poorly developed multi-agency approaches – with integrated education and social service provision being seen as a particular strength.
- Practical issues – such as reintegration teams not being informed of children entering or leaving their areas (notably an issue in private residential provision), limited or poor communications and misleading information on new arrivals.
- Different priorities between professionals – for example different perceived priorities between education and social work staff.
- Staff issues – including limited knowledge of the education system and high staff turnover rates amongst social care staff influencing both support to individual children and multi-agency work more widely.
- Perception that all children in local authority care have complex and resource-costly needs – and that will influence the effectiveness of their reintegration. This links with schools' concerns that their poor education attainment will damage their position in school performance tables.
- Continuing instability in care placements – which may necessitate continued moves between schools or transportation issues where a new placement is some way from pupils' current schools.

10.2.1 Context and Structures

A number of models of overall practice at local authority level emerged throughout the research. However provision generally tends to be fairly 'discrete', in that responsibility is concentrated within a particular LEA service. This group of professionals tend to be responsible not only for tracking the education of the authority's looked after pupils, but also ensure many of the additional services in terms of out of school teaching, individual education plan coordination, coordination of multi-agency meetings and provision for additional educational needs.

Education of children looked after by the local authority is a requirement that has received increasing attention, with targets being set for their attendance and attainment. To some extent, the approach taken in authorities towards looked after children is a target driven one – i.e. to prevent more than 25 days absence in a year, and to secure educational placements within 20 days. DfES and DoH guidance materials were widely used amongst the practitioners interviewed and considered useful. Government materials were considered a helpful 'lever' for influencing schools

and highlighting priority groups (notably work undertaken by the Social Exclusion Unit⁶ and the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* produced in September 2003).

The main differences between LEAs appear to depend on whether there is a dedicated service/team in place that makes decisions on provision, as well as providing services, or whether responsibility resides in another mechanism, such as a panel or other form of group decision-making process. In some LEAs there has been an emphasis on establishing dedicated education support teams for looked after children, which may be multi-agency based and usually between education and social services. Multi-disciplinary teams are usually set up with the aims of raising achievement of children in care, some are on a 'special projects basis' or time-limited funding basis. Some of these teams may also deal with reintegration – and in LEA 1 the looked after children team are funded by social services rather than education.

10.2.2 Funding and Resourcing

At the national level, the LEA survey showed that around two-thirds of LEAs use mainstream resources to support the reintegration of children in local authority care, reflecting the priority given to this group on the national and local policy agenda. Formal partnerships between Education and Social Services, where they exist, have probably served to increase the overall level of resources available for reintegration of looked after children.

At the same time, there is a high degree of reliance on short term funding. The survey suggests that nationally over 60% of LEAs also use the Vulnerable Children Grant to support the reintegration of looked after children, and around one fifth use other Standards Fund monies. In at least one case study LEA provision is currently funded completely by the Vulnerable Children Grant. In another the post of Development Officer for looked after children is currently funded by the Standards Fund. Despite the degree of use of time-limited funding, it is clear that LEAs are making a long-term and substantial commitment to this target group. There are clearly issues of sustainability in the long-term, and each case study LEA is likely to face particular issues depending on the structure of their services, and the balance between discrete LAC provision and more generalised provision through tuition services, behaviour support services, etc.

Some LEAs have been creative in their attempts to attract additional resources to their work with looked after children. For example, in LEA 1 additional funds are made available from the Local Public Service Agreement if a looked after pupil seems likely to miss more than 25% of school in a year. The LEA has also been able to access funds from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. In LEA 13 a Connexions personal adviser has been secured as a core part of the looked after children team.

Local capacity also varies in terms of the availability of care placements and the options for special schools for pupils with extreme needs. Several LEAs described how children with complex needs would routinely be placed out of area (or, in one case, brought into the area as a net importer). However, sending looked after children outside of the authority area to access education is generally expensive, and interviewees considered that resources could be saved by diverting funding into supporting their integration into local schools.

⁶ A Better Education for Children in Care, Social Exclusion Unit, 2003

Given the central role of schools in reintegrating looked after children, getting resources to school level is obviously a key issue. However, very different approaches were in place across the case study LEAs, including: bursary schemes (e.g. Primary pupils in LEA 1); by formula funding (e.g. LEA 14); the use of dedicated looked after children team resources and budgets (e.g. LEA 13); and the utilisation of general LEA additional education needs support services and funds. The ability of LEAs to support schools through training, consultation and general support is also crucial, and in most cases central services play a key role. As one interviewee described, *“Schools are the key and that’s where the focus should be. Reintegration needs flexibility of resources, well trained teachers, mentors, and ability to problem solve, training, provision, capacity, and choice”*.

10.2.3 Approaches/Delivery Models

Specialist educational support services for looked after children, where funded, aim to meet the requirements of the Children Act 1989. The range of these services varied across the case study LEAs, but commonly included support for foster parents and residential and field social workers, ensuring children have personal education plans (PEPs) which are reviewed regularly, keeping teachers informed of changes in children’s circumstances, and providing specialist support workers for in and after-school support. A common theme is also encouraging young people to value education, where school can be an important source of feelings of stability, continuity and belonging for children in both short and long-term care.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that some LEAs have made a decision not to distinguish support for looked after children from existing procedures and processes. For example, a County Council in the North West said: *“For looked after children, there is no service (and this is a specific decision) but a wide range of flexible multi-agency working is encouraged, using the Personal Education Plan as a tool”*.

In addition, some authorities follow a hybrid approach. For example, in a South East LEA a reintegration group meets to share information and plan provision, with a key worker being assigned who will own the case and provide support according to their service procedures. In other LEAs, specialist support staff with a focus on looked after children concentrate on interventions to raising attainment and general support, with reintegration, particularly following exclusion, dealt with through the general mechanisms for excluded pupils. The broad approaches followed in the case study LEAs are summarised in the box below.

Approaches to the Reintegration of Pupils in Local Authority Care – Case Study LEAs

LEA 1 – here a looked after children team is funded by social services, with the longer term view of merging social service and education services within the borough. The team is expanding and currently has three education caseworkers, although staff are stretched, and each school in the area has a dedicated LAC teacher. LAC entering the area have priority admission, a dowry fund to help them settle, and PEPs for all children of statutory school age. The LAC team’s role in the reintegration process also includes: advising on admissions and placements; providing support including 1:1 support, mentoring and extra/catch-up study programmes; monitoring the educational progress of all LAC in the borough; providing primary/secondary transition support where needed and providing internal training and awareness raising courses.

LEA 2 have a menu of approaches for integrating new children to the area and for LAC who are excluded or not attending school regularly. A multi-agency approach is considered crucial, with

designated LAC teachers, EWO, CAMHS, Connexions and carers being involved in decision making and planning. Options include in school support; home tuition and external inputs such as behaviour support services; alternative education provision; and college placements and work experience for older pupils. Each child has a PEP, and support is provided for as long as needed and is not time limited.

LEA 3 – here the LEA manages the reintegration process, which includes assessment and support for both children and schools. The provision of central support was considered key in persuading some schools to take LAC, which can include funding teaching assistants for half a term to work with pupils in schools. Part time returns, where time is divided between schools and the PRU, are also followed. Years 9,10 and 11 can also benefit from a raising attainment programme, where pupils receive rewards for meeting targets set for behaviour, attendance, and attainment.

In **LEA 6** a 'virtual school' for LAC has been developed, which while focusing on improving attainment also plays a role in pupil reintegration. Support for LAC's can be marshalled from the LEAs support services for all pupil groups, including a panel approach, support centres in schools, the negotiated transfer system etc, developed and supported under a range of funding including Excellence in Cities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

LEA 10 has a number of private children's homes in its area, and so is a 'net importer' of LAC. For the previous 12 months a LAC case work group has operated, focusing on complex cases or where barriers to reintegration have been experienced, operating alongside a specific LAC multi-agency panel and inputs from education and social work specialists. While many LAC arriving in the area are treated as straightforward admissions, it is estimated that around 10% of new children will account for the majority of support required. Services available include support teachers to work in residential homes, key workers in schools and social services

LEA 11 have established a small LAC team within the LEA's achievement and participation team, which provides training for carers and designated teachers in schools, attend case conferences and assist with care placements, and link with educational officers in each local residential home. Personal education plans were considered to be key in clarifying the roles of the school, carers, social service staff etc. One of the key aims of the team is to ensure that arrangements for education are prioritised when placements are considered, rather than being sorted out later when the risk of gaps or disengagement is greater.

LEA 13 have a dedicated multi-disciplinary LAC team based within the LEA exclusion and alternative learning service, which includes specialist tutors and a (Connexions) personal adviser for older pupils. New referrals are discussed on a weekly basis, where support packages are agreed and a 'key worker' from the team allocated to each case. Importantly, the young person is consulted on both their willingness to be supported and what the support might include, after which an action plan is prepared and monitored on a weekly basis. Support is offered for a 3 month period initially, with the option to extend where necessary, and can include assisted transport, support in lessons and throughout the school day, help with homework and coursework, and careers advice (with Connexions) and attendance promotion (with EWO).

LEA 14 described how their main issues are more about maintaining integration within mainstream provision for LAC rather than their reintegration as such. As such, the LEA seeks to help schools deploy all the possible strategies to maintain pupils in school, with a change of school only being considered as a last resort. Key reintegration partners include the LEA looked after children team, schools and social services. Schools lead the reintegration process, marshalling resources with guidance and specialist support from the LEA LAC team. This team has grown from one to four staff in the last 12 months, funded wholly under VCG, with staff members having a geographical remit across four areas of the county.

Issues of capacity and resourcing were raised frequently amongst the case study LEAs, even where dedicated teams for looked after children were in place, and interviewees described often not being able to offer a universal service. Consequently referral criteria and procedures for allocation of resources are key. In LEA 13, for example, Referral Forms are completed by schools or social workers, with referrals being discussed by the looked after children team via a Monday morning team meeting. A team member would then be allocated to support the child or young person in relation to their specific needs.

Exit strategies also have an impact on capacity and resources, and no standard approach was found across the case study LEAs. In LEA 2, for example, reintegration support is provided for as long as it is deemed necessary and is not time limited. In LEA 13, however, support is usually offered for up to three months, with any extension of this needing to be agreed with the school, social worker, carer and looked after children team prior to the end of support.

10.2.4 Key Components

A considerable amount of guidance and information has been provided in recent years from DfES and DoH, and many sources have highlighted examples of effective and potentially good practice. However, in most of the case study authorities their approaches to reintegrating looked after children have only recently been put in place, and tend to have been operating for a year at most. A number of components were, however, considered to be either key to, or particularly effective in, working to reintegrate children in local authority care.

1 Identification and tracking systems

National guidance on provision for looked after children suggests that systems for monitoring attendance should trigger from 10 days, and the development of dedicated teams has meant that more effort can go into monitoring efforts. In LEA 2, for example, details of every child in public care are held on a database, which includes attendance data (the 'Care First' model) and is regularly updated with information from schools and EWS. If attendance issues emerge, the looked after children team are alerted and a development worker is assigned to the case.

However, the frequency of tracking and follow-up varies between authorities. In some areas, data systems are used to track children on a half-termly basis. In others, a referral system is used, while others are involved in piloting Individual Referral and Tracking (IRT) systems.

2 Focusing on identifying needs and planning provision

In the case of looked after children, a key opportunity exists in respect of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and the PEP review process. As might be expected, most LEAs appear to have dovetailed reintegration planning and educational support for looked after children (or Individual Education Plans, IEPs) into the PEP process.

Use of Personal Education Plans in Reintegration Planning

In LEA 13, for example, agreements have been reached to ensure the looked after children team receive copies of PEPs from Social Services as a matter of course. This has led to improved information flows between Departments in the short period since they were introduced.

Moreover, planning and support for education is becoming streamlined into the wider looked after children support mechanisms, by holding, wherever possible, PEP review meetings in conjunction with Child Panel meetings. This approach enables professionals to establish closer links, has proven helpful in promoting the involvement of young people and carers, and ensures that education is set in the context of the wider issues facing the pupil.

Most interviewees considered that the PEP is a useful tool for reintegration, especially as it can include pastoral support from school. Responsibilities for the PEP process, however, appear to vary, commonly between centralised LEA teams and staff in individual schools. In some LEAs monitoring of all children in public care takes place through the PEP system, ideally on a termly basis. However, communication and sharing of information with social services remain key issues. Several authorities were trying to develop systems for monitoring PEPs more effectively.

3 Maximising 'in-school' support

Guidance published in May 2000 states that '*schools should designate a teacher to act as a resource and advocate for children and young people in public care*', although this is not a statutory requirement. While such provision provides an opportunity to maximise in-school reintegration support, most interviewees felt that this role is often still being developed. Most looked after children teams were supporting designated teachers through training events, as well as one to one liaison on specific cases. The main benefit of designated teachers has been to focus attention and raise the profile of looked after children as a group with specific needs.

Maximising In-School Support – Looked After Children

LEA 14 provides direct funding to schools to support them in addressing any difficult problems. This is being provided through the LEA funding formula, which reflects the number of looked after children at a school averaged over four years. (A secondary school which has on average 5 looked after children will receive a funding equivalent to £3,000 per pupil, additional to pupil units).

The main benefits of this have been to raise the profile of looked after children in schools, stimulate planning in advance to meet their needs, and providing LEA staff with a degree of leverage in working with schools to establish strategies to support them.

4 Expedition of school admissions processes

The Code of Practice on School Admissions (2003) requires all admissions authorities to give top priority to looked after children in their oversubscription criteria. The Code requires admissions forums to discuss and, where possible, agree protocols for the allocation of looked after children to schools when they arrive in an area outside the normal admission round, as well as encouraging the involvement of Social Services staff when considering such cases. Generally children in local authority care were found to be a priority for admissions to school in the case study areas, and formalised processes regarding admissions and transitions were established or under development in some LEAs. Examples of these approaches are described below.

Expedition of School Admissions Processes – Looked After Children

Formalised approaches to school admissions for looked after children included:

- LEA 1 – which has a procedure for prioritising admissions of looked after children, which can be combined with their 'Dowry Fund' to help children new to the local care system to settle into the area's primary schools.
- LEA 10, which is a net 'importer' of looked after children with many private children's homes, has developed a protocol for admissions of looked after children and an accompanying code of practice, which is being reviewed in Autumn 2004.
- LEA 6 has a secured place scheme, which is followed with children in local authority care within the area.

In addition, one LEA described in their survey response how they direct the admission of looked after children above schools' intake limits, if this is required.

5 Multi-agency responses

Some form of multi-agency approach is essential for this group, given the need for information exchange and any requirement for multi-faceted interventions to address their often complex needs. The Education Officer in one LEA commented: *"Most of the work undertaken by the Casework Officer and Primary Support Teacher (in 2002-03) has focused on a small number of children who have presented us with significant difficulties in meeting their needs and securing appropriate educational provision. The answers to these problems have often been as complicated as the needs of the children, involving a wide range of professionals and agencies working together in a truly 'corporate' fashion".*

In most areas there is a growing awareness that **looked after children can have special needs and should be given special priority**, leading to an increasingly routine cross-referencing between different services. LEA 10, for example, has set up a looked after children casework group, which brings different representatives/services/perspectives together, as well as a Complex Case Panel for more complex and complicated cases. In some areas (e.g. LEA 14) LEA staff regularly attend Children's Panel meetings (which are Social Services meetings set up to look at complex cases). The purpose of these is to monitor and review children coming into social care, and 'trouble-shoot' cases where complex situations are beginning to develop. The Children's Review process provides an opportunity for educationalists to contribute and become aware of problems.

Some cases will require interventions from a wide range of services, as the case example below illustrates. Particular issues are raised in relation to looked after children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, given the importance of reaching agreement that reintegration into the mainstream is the correct way forward by all those involved.

Case Example

X was attending school only sporadically when he entered Local Authority Care at the start of Year 11. Upon becoming Looked After he stopped speaking entirely, becoming socially isolated and fearful of groups of people.

X was referred to the looked after children team to provide a suitable programme of education whilst in his first foster care placement. The team liaised with the Education Tuition Service who

provided him with four sessions a week of English, Maths and PSHE tuition from November 2002 until February 2003.

During this time his Social Worker and CAMHS were consulted and it was decided that he would benefit from a return to the school environment. His previous school was approached by the Education Caseworker to find out if they would accept him back. The school agreed and it was arranged with the LAC teacher that X would return to school initially for two days per week (to Travel and Tourism class). In class support was provided by the Education Caseworker and a home tuition tutor from February 2003 until the end of the academic year and X returned to school full time in September 2003 until June 2004, taking part in a GNVQ Intermediate Travel and Tourism course and GCSE English programme. During this time he received in class support from the Education Caseworker (3.5 hours per week) in addition to constant monitoring and liaison with the school and foster carers. This person also benefited from a change of foster care to a more supportive placement.

X recently sat his GCSE English (his first attempt at a formal examination). His communication has improved and he is now more relaxed in group situations and with peers. His concentration and confidence have increased and this summer he is enrolling on an entry to employment (E2E) course arranged through the SEN Connexions PA. He also intends to begin a vocation course in September this year.

In view of the differing structures and mechanisms in place in different LEAs, the **means of and mechanisms for multi-agency working** can differ. Where they exist, panels play a role in co-ordinating multi-agency decision-making and the inputs of the different agencies (for examples, the Children Looked After Casework Panel in LEA 10). As might be expected, development workers or case workers have a key role in multi-agency co-ordination. In complex cases, once a 'crisis' develops, a LAC team member takes responsibility for linking with other professionals. In LEA 2, for example, multi-agency meetings are held as soon as possible after any problem is identified. Often, the links can be quite informal, but feedback suggests that multi-agency working on individual cases is generally very comprehensive and effective due to having a central point of reference in the case worker.

Work with agencies in the care system is a day-to-day part of many looked after children teams, and a key part of their general approaches. In LEAs 10 and 13 for example, LAC team members meet regularly with Children's Home staff and can provide tutors to give education and help with coursework, homework and exam revision. This is considered to have worked well, and appears to have raised the profile/importance of education with LAC and care staff. Some LEAs and Social Services Departments also have regular fora for private care homes, to inform them of current/new practice, review practice, and provide information on other relevant developments affecting looked after children's education.

6 Minimising school moves

As already identified, many looked after children may experience chaotic living arrangements and frequent moves whilst in public care – including between public care and their families in some cases. As one person commented: *"Looked after children often differ from other children in that school is frequently the only stable part of their life and background"*. While 'care-related' movement may make continued attendance at current schools impossible, a clear message was that wherever possible the importance of continuity in education be considered in any decision to move a child.

Dedicated support staff for pupils in local authority care also play an important advocacy role by attempting to minimise school moves in cases where pupils are being considered for permanent exclusion or facing a particular crisis which may influence their school place. They can also play an important role in ensuring social services make education arrangements a key criteria in identifying a suitable placement.

In LEA 13, team members felt they had played a particularly important role in persuading schools of the responsibility not to disrupt education through exclusion of children in care, given that they are facing disadvantage already. The approach fits in with the team's general work to maximise good practice and in-school support offered by dedicated teachers through training sessions for dedicated teachers.

The research also suggests that transport is the main enabler to children maintaining their place at school when they move placement. Some LEAs (e.g. LEAs 10 and 13) have secured funding for transport of looked after children to school, with a division of costs between education and social services. Moreover, transport is usually required to maintain a place at school when a pupil moves away from the immediate area, but schools also have to be willing to keep the pupil.

The problem of school location is a particular issue in rural areas with sparse population and scattered education provision. In rural areas the problem is often one of a lack of choice of options within any specific vicinity, and this affects the reintegration of excluded pupils. In LEA 10, an 8 year old pupil who was in care and was excluded had an hour and a half journey to attend their new school. Unsurprisingly the pupil's attendance was poor and he was excluded again, whereas maintaining a place locally could have avoided this type of problem.

7 Inter-authority co-ordination

As moves of looked after children between authorities are fairly common, liaison arrangements can benefit the reintegration process. If a pupil is attending a local school but is a looked after child from an outside authority the school might rely on resources provided by the outside authority. Other issues where close liaison can be beneficial include the early notification of children moving to/from an area, the ability to play and co-ordinate across authorities, and joint support arrangements.

Inter-Agency Co-ordination – Looked After Children

LEA 14 has sought to clarify responsibilities and priorities where a child is at school in one authority whilst living in another. The LEA has negotiated support for looked after children at school in other authority areas, including recharge arrangements where teachers have been employed to provide intensive individual support to young people requiring extra assistance but at school in another authority.

8 Education support

Specialist services for looked after children, where they exist, are usually designed to offer ongoing support to individual children and groups, usually through additional teaching support in and/or outside school. This reflects the development of LEA approaches to supporting the education attainment of this target group – with examples being provided in the box below.

Education Support – Looked After Children

Support to promote educational attainment amongst looked after children included:

- In LEA 2 education support includes SATS/GCSE Task Force booster class programmes, and a Celebration of Achievement event.
- In LEA 14 a range of options are offered, including: additional teaching support in schools, homework clubs and lunchtime sessions in schools, out of school learning opportunities, one to one education support, work with children in residential care homes. An approach is being developed of using teachers or EOTAS tutors to provide additional tuition in individual cases. Effort is also put into encouragement of leisure interests and confidence raising.

The development of dedicated teams to support looked after children means that the potential exists to be more proactive than previously, and identify and focus on potential problem areas. For example, looked after children in residential units are particularly vulnerable, and social workers may need to be alert to ensure inputs from schools are delivered. In residential units in LEA 3, the LEA offers some home tuition to top up the time spent in school, especially for looked after children who have achieved only partial reintegration into mainstream school.

9 Other support

A key feature of LEA 14's approach to looked after children is the use of area based staff members. Each team member covers a geographical patch in the county, and there is a commitment to routinely visit each school every half term. These visits allow attendance to be reviewed, a general discussion held about individual children with designated teachers, meet the children themselves and identify any issues that may need to be addressed. This approach is designed to provide the basis for more intensive joint work if and when needed, and to build up a sufficiently good relationship with schools so that discussion can focus on individual children, rather than allowing stereotypes to take hold and remain.

Some LEAs have adopted an approach of drawing on a range of generic support mechanisms and focus them on looked after children. For example, in LEA 2, school based provision tends to consist of pastoral support built into the pupil's PEP. The (outside) Behaviour Support Service can provide support for pupils in special education for a period of time while back in mainstream school, and Home tutors may also provide continued support in schools.

Transitional times are also potential problem areas. In LEA 1, for example, an Education Caseworker runs an integration programme for looked after children moving from primary to secondary. LEA 13 also provides transitional support, including holiday clubs. Personal adviser, careers advice and planning inputs, often provided by the Connexions service targeted at teenagers and year 11 students were also found.

Case Example

One case study school had a number of looked after children in KS3, and a need was identified for someone to work with them in a preventative capacity. Additional support of 3.5 hours was funded under the VCG, the teacher's brief being to support creative literacy through group work. The intervention was very successful as it could respond to the pupil's moods, and customise a

package of support and respite for them. The focus was on prevention, as most of the pupils accessing it were above the threshold for additional support and were all good attenders.

There was a strong belief that this kind of work needs to happen in other schools to prevent the need for more intensive reintegration packages of support. For many LAC school is the one constant in their lives.

10 Guidance and materials

In common with other pupil groups, approaches which are underpinned by clear guidance materials and protocols appear to have better chances of success. LEA 2, for example, has produced a 'handbook for corporate parents', including information on the legislative framework, the roles and responsibilities of the LEA and schools, Social Care and Health directorate and other agencies including the YOT and Connexions. Importantly the handbook also sets out protocols for what should happen in particular circumstances such as when a pupil changes schools, is at risk of exclusion or excluded, is absent or moves out of the authority.

10.2.5 Key Success Factors

Key success factors for the reintegration of children in local authority care included:

- Minimising moves/maintaining school places where possible – including reintegrating into former schools where possible, or preventing the need to reintegrate by supporting transport to former school.
- Integrated education and social service provision – through multi-agency working arrangements to ensure information exchange and the ability to marshal resources to meet what can be particularly complex needs.
- Extent for the scope for individualisation and tailoring of packages of support is extremely relevant given the diversity of the target group. This is particularly true in cases where children are displaying challenging behaviour.
- Welcoming schools – in terms of commitment to include a vulnerable child into the school 'family', and loss and rejection issues for LAC meaning that finding a sense and belonging within school is therefore vitally important.
- Key workers/dedicated teachers in schools for looked after children – generally considered a welcome move, to be developed through liaison and training from looked after children teams.
- Support of parents/carers is highlighted, with local authorities' 'corporate parent' responsibilities offering a unique opportunity. Foster carers are crucial ensuring children attend school and promoting a culture of learning. Ensuring foster parents/carers have a positive influence of children's views of education, and provide appropriate structures, was generally considered a key success factor.
- Involvement of the child in the decision making process is important for looked after children. Several people stressed the importance of communicating what is happening to pupils.

10.3 Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children

In conjunction with the increase in the number of refugees/asylum seekers entering the UK throughout the 1990s, the number of children of asylum seekers and refugees has increased in most areas since 1998. The national distribution of asylum seeker and refugee families means that the scale of (re)integration needs will vary considerably between LEAs. Particular concentrations of asylum seeker and refugee families are found in areas subject to dispersal arrangements (such as metropolitan areas), and areas that have historically been host to culturally diverse communities. Research in 2000 found that 31% of LEAs responding estimated that they had over 49 refugees/asylum seekers of statutory school age⁷.

The pattern of dispersal within LEA areas can also vary. In one case study LEA, for example, a large group of children from the same area of origin were concentrated in one area of the city, while the other LEAs had a much more varied pattern. The dynamic nature of asylum requests means that children from different countries of origin will require access to education.

Asylum seekers of compulsory school age face many emotional and physical barriers to schooling, including:

- Coping with being in a different country, with a different culture and language, and an unfamiliar school system and organisation.
- Recent experience of conflict or persecution in their home country, and dealing with personal tragedy and trauma.
- Language difficulties and learning to learn in English - the most commonly cited initial barrier to participation in education for asylum seeker children by the case study LEAs.
- The potential absence, or limited experience, of any previous formal schooling.
- The discriminatory and racist views of some parents of other pupils and of some pupils themselves.

In addition, asylum seeker and refugee children can face the same issues and challenges as other pupils, which may only be identified once initial language and familiarisation issues have been addressed.

Case Example

Pupil X was from an asylum seeker family who came to England and started school in Year 9. He found it hard to develop new relationships and find new friends, was the victim of bullying, and had concerns about travelling to and from school. A bi-lingual support worker was allocated to the pupil for one day a week over two terms, working on a one to one basis until the pupil was able to communicate sufficiently well with his teachers and peers.

A key issue emerging for the school system, and LEAs in relation to this group, is when children and young people arrive at different times in the academic year. Experience has shown that schools with spare places may be those that are struggling to cope

⁷ Mott, G (2000), Refugees and Asylum Seekers: The Role of LEAs, NfER/EMIE

with relatively high levels of existing needs. The intake of extra pupils, with specific support needs, can put an extra burden on schools, although there are opportunities to draw down funding. The biggest problems seems to occur where there is pressure on one or a small number of schools when large numbers of asylum seeker families are housed in the same area.

Barriers to Reintegration – Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children

The main barriers to the reintegration of asylum seeker and refugee children identified from the case study fieldwork included:

- The availability of appropriate funding - especially in LEAs with relatively small numbers of asylum seekers/refugees. Pressure to devolve EMAG to schools means that fewer resources are available centrally, while demand for such resources (e.g. in terms of work with other groups, such as looked after children) is growing. Several of the approaches identified in the case studies were supported by time-limited and short-term funding.
- Patterns of asylum seeker/refugee family concentration – both nationally/regionally and at the local level, where emergency housing provided for incoming families can be in areas where schools are full.
- Information on children and families entering an area – in particular, those who are technically dispersed via the National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS), but who fail to arrive in an LEA area. The importance of private providers working with other agencies was also stressed, to avoid instances where children present at schools without any prior assessment of their needs, language skills and so on. Issues around sustaining education may also arise when pupils move between local authority boundaries, and contact with them is lost.
- Later stage learners – Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils arriving in the country pose particular challenges, compared to those who have been in the school system for several years and have got over their language needs.
- Welcoming schools – in terms of variable welcomes offered by schools and teachers, as well as potential stigmatisation and racism from pupils and their parents.

10.3.1 Context and Structures

In most cases the LEA teams dealing with asylum seekers and refugees have grown out of additional education provision services, reflecting the recognition that most asylum seekers/refugees can have additional language and learning needs. The focus on ethnic minority groups through the ethnic minority achievement services existing in many authorities has brought together the specialist expertise within one service. Each of the four case study LEAs where approaches for asylum seeker and refugees were examined had Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) teams who were central to the provision of services for this group. Commonly, arrangements for asylum seeker and refugee children also included services for Gypsy/Traveller children and other pupils with English as an additional language.

For example, LEA 13 has closely located their EMAS team within the School Improvement work area (*“raising achievement and giving support and valuing diversity go hand in hand”*). Current provision is based on a vision to improve the service, with revised arrangements being in place since February following a restructuring to ensure the sustainability of interventions for ethnic minority and EAL groups. In LEA 11 provision emerged from part-time teachers being drafted in – and they now have two

full-time education workers. This team focused initially on admissions, but they are now helping to retain and raise the profile of asylum seekers.

10.3.2 Funding and Resourcing

Approaches to the (re)integration of refugee and asylum seeker children were found to be funded from a range of sources in the LEA survey. The case studies confirmed that funding for (re)integration is closely associated with funding available for ethnic minority pupils through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG, administered by the DfES within the Standards Fund) and the Vulnerable Children Grant. The case studies also suggested that the EMAG and VCG have allowed services to be expanded to include all ethnic minorities (and Gypsy/Travellers in some LEAs) in their areas.

EMAG resources are devolved to schools under a locally agreed formula and following DfES guidance. On the ground, various arrangements have been put in place to try to match resources to needs. In LEA 7, for example, some schools with large numbers of ethnic minority pupils have retained the grant (and directly employ additional teachers and/or bi-lingual support workers), while schools with fewer ethnic minority pupils have pooled the resources into the LEA central provision. Each school receives support from EMA workers when they receive asylum seeker and refugee children, and central staff are deployed on a district and city wide basis. LEA 13 follows a similar approach, with devolved funding being pooled to offer a range of services and a mechanism being developed for allocating support on the basis of need.

In LEA 11, schools dealing with the majority of pupils with language needs are supported directly by a central ESOL team, with the remainder arranging their own provision. This is made possible by the LEA following a partnership approach with schools, and a steering group deciding on the criteria and mechanisms by which funding would be devolved and establishing appropriate service level agreements.

10.3.3 Approaches/Delivery Models

There are no 'set' procedures for dealing with asylum seeker/refugee education, and LEAs have put in place different approaches depending on the levels of need in their areas. Moreover, there are differences in the procedures in place to deal with asylum seekers and refugees in general, including people and families receiving accommodation or subsistence support, or on a programme of dispersal through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). For example, in case study LEA 6 families entering the area are dealt with by a range of agencies, whereas in LEA 7 a co-ordinated approach had been developed within a network of agencies.

Some Authorities have developed centres for initial provision and assessment of asylum seeker/refugee children and young people coming into the education system. For example, the LEA survey identified how all new asylum seeker pupils in one Metropolitan Authority in Yorkshire and the Humber (from Year 5 to Year 11) are admitted to a specific 'welcome' centre, a reception class for a period of assessment and, where necessary, for initial English Language instruction. This allows information to be gathered about the educational and pastoral needs of individual students that can then inform the provision offered by their schools. Integration of these students into a school is then tailored to the needs of the individual. Elsewhere other Authorities use home visits, or assessment in school by central staff in conjunction with mainstream

schools. The key features of approaches identified amongst the case study LEAs are summarised below.

Overview of Approaches for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children

In **LEA 6** the EMAS service includes a dedicated team to work with asylum seeker and refugee families, providing advice on school admissions, issues that arise after admission and support to schools in meeting the emotional and psychological needs of newcomers. Their work involves providing advice and training for schools; pastoral support for pupils, parents and teachers; assessing newly settled pupils and supporting teachers in the target setting process; curriculum support and development of pupil and family learning initiatives to promote integration.

LEA 7 is a dispersal area for refugee and asylum seeker families, and schools have learnt that if pupils are given appropriate support they can perform extremely well. The LEA has recently reorganised its provision, with the EMAS team joining with behaviour support services to provide more coherent support for individuals and schools and to follow a multi-discipline/multi-agency approach. EMAS are responsible for getting children into schools, supporting schools with assessment processes and providing guidance and resources for use in class. Bilingual support is made available for both assessments and to provide 30 hours of support to all children new to the country, spread one morning a week for a term. A small central team of specialist teachers are also available, in addition to EMAS staff in several schools. The LEA also works closely with a local Children's Fund project, which provides outreach services, and can direct children and families to a range of ESOL options at local colleges.

In **LEA 11** the ESOL team of the LEA achievement and participation team lead on supporting asylum seeker and refugee children, having taken over responsibility from the PRU 12 months previously. Provision has expanded from a number of part-time teachers drafted in to provide support to a team consisting of two full-time education support workers, who are mainly involved with admissions but are increasingly focusing on retaining pupils in schools and raising the profile of asylum seekers and their needs more widely. An early problem for the service was the location of asylum seeker families in an area where local schools were full. This caused placement problems, and one primary school used Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies to develop an on-site 'nurturing unit'. This however caused problems later, when families were moved to permanent accommodation elsewhere in the city and pupils needed to be integrated into new schools.

In **LEA 13** the EMA team has lead responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee education provision (who focus on schools and teaching), working with a community liaison team (supported with contributions from Surestart) who focus on outreach and home-school liaison services. The service also has a wider remit of promoting equality and diversity across the local authority. The focus of activity with pupils is described as "*providing a supporting function*", which includes monitoring asylum seeker and refugee arrivals, and co-ordinating support once a child is admitted to school. Resources are devolved to schools following the formula described previously, with options including in-school support for new arrivals, home-school liaison work (including interpreter and language support) and a special project to provide intensive support to Year 10 and 11 pupils.

Establishing an appropriate balance between school and LEA responses emerged as a key issue amongst the case studies, with a tension existing between empowering schools to do their own assessments and make arrangements for provision, and doing it for them centrally. Most LEAs have been keen to empower teachers to directly support the reintegration of asylum seekers, particularly in areas with relatively high numbers – as one LEA described "*...support is offered, not dependency*".

The case studies suggested that asylum seeker and refugee children of primary school age are generally able to secure a school place fairly quickly. However, at Secondary level, securing places can be more problematic and interim provision is often needed. Such alternative provision for asylum seekers and refugees has been driven in the main by a lack of school places, but also the recognition that school might not be best for young people in Years 10 and 11 who have experienced personal trauma and may have special support needs.

LEAs described how there generally appears to have been a positive change in schools' attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees, and how they have broadly become more welcoming to them. This followed the realisation that asylum seekers and refugees are generally keen to succeed and will work hard, so becoming an asset to the school. In some cases the citizenship curriculum was also considered to be influential in this change, and initiatives like Healthy Schools Initiatives and Community Links (Extended Schools Initiative) are helping to focus attentions on what schools are doing for vulnerable children including asylum seeker and refugees.

10.3.4 Key Components

The case studies identified a series of components considered by LEAs and their partners to be either key to, or particularly effective in, working with asylum seeker and refugee children. These are summarised below.

1 Securing school places.

Asylum seeker and refugee populations are unevenly distributed both on a national and local basis. Differing concentrations of populations within LEA areas can pose problems in securing school places, notably where schools are already full or are facing difficulties dealing with the pupils currently on roll.

In several LEA areas a range of interim provision can be made available to children until permanent places can be found. Elsewhere, for example LEA 6, the EMA service works alongside LEA mainstream provision in relation to integration issues and securing school places, with approaches including the use of Negotiated Transfers and Secured Places schemes. LEAs also described instances where they and their schools had found solutions to temporary location problems through the use of emergency accommodation.

Schools increasingly see asylum seeker and refugee children as positive reintegration targets, following the principles of inclusion and social justice. In addition, those working with asylum seeker and refugee children identify their potential and commitment to attain well in the mainstream. Nevertheless examples were cited where some schools were not as welcoming as they could be, so continued efforts to raise awareness and offer appropriate support will remain central to distributing new pupils equitably.

2 Availability of support.

Providing appropriate support to schools, and offering a 'safety net' should difficulties arise, was as important for this pupil group as they have been found to be across the pupil groups studied. Pupils may present a series of challenges to integration, from immediate language and placement needs to catching-up with the curriculum. Like all

pupils, asylum seeker and refugee children can have a range of additional needs that may only be identified once their immediate needs are met.

Bi-lingual Support Workers.

As LEA 7 is a multi-cultural area the LEA is able to recruit adults to provide bi-lingual support to pupils in schools. EMAS trains and maintains a database of available interpreters, and act like an agency with a target of supplying individuals within a fortnight. Because of the changing nature of the new arrivals there has to be constant recruitment (languages vary). The service regularly advertises for new interpreters, and often recruits through community groups and job centres. Bi-lingual support workers are employed on a supply basis, although many casual staff end up with full-time positions and are given contracts. There are gaps in Cantonese and Portuguese speakers. The training programme is very important to the success.

Later stage learners can also pose particular challenges, as time will be limited to identify and address their additional needs, and some LEAs described enhanced or 'booster' provision for Year 10 or 11 pupils. In LEA 7, for example, schools that are concerned about later stage learners can approach the LEA's support services for help. A number of services are available, including direct support for individual pupils (often for advanced literacy and numeracy) and also workshops for teachers on supporting language acquisition and improving attainment.

In most cases, LEAs worked with a range of different agencies in their reintegration efforts, and different agencies were considered to be better placed than others for certain tasks. As the example below illustrates, partnerships with the voluntary and community sector can be effective in identifying new arrivals to areas and making initial contact with them, through the use of community-level networks.

Voluntary Statutory Partnerships

In LEA 7 a voluntary sector Children's Fund project helps families to access education. Family workers visit new families accompanied by interpreters, and help families secure school places as well as advising on housing, benefit and a range of other issues.

The LEA EMAS team worked with the Children's Fund partnership to set up the project, placing it in the voluntary sector to build on existing community networks and emphasising the outreach/relationship development aspects. The project is considered to have extended the in-depth support available to families, and has meant a co-ordinated city-wide system could be put in place.

3 Allocating support to areas of need.

As asylum seeker and refugee populations are unevenly distributed both nationally and locally, difficulties may be faced not only in finding school places but also in appropriately allocating support on the basis of need. While the extent to which this was an issue varied between the case study LEAs, a variety of approaches to allocating support provision were described, as described in the previous section on funding. One of the most formalised approaches was described by LEA 13, which is summarised below.

Allocating Resources for Asylum Seekers/Refugees

LEA 13 has developed a 'sliding scale' to allocate provision for asylum seeker and refugee children to individual schools in their area:

- Schools with the most asylum seekers/refugees (15 or more full-time pupils) are allocated additional full time staff support, with the rates and allocations being agreed through a formula. The LEA employs staff who are deployed to schools, with school management teams being involved in interviews (currently covers 8% of schools in the area).
- Schools with up to 14 full-time equivalent pupils receive support from LEA staff for ½ day each week (around 30% of schools)
- Other schools' needs and allocations are reviewed on a half termly basis. Schools with one or two asylum seekers and refugees would get support from a home-school liaison team, help with translation, peripatetic teachers if required for induction etc. Usually support is for at least one term, although it is renewable. Frequently support is required for over two terms, and the school can call for particular types of support for extra arrivals. (Usually around 13-25% of schools are being supported at any one time)

A strength of the approach is its ability to meet the needs of different schools at different levels. Four years ago there were only 11 schools with asylum seeker/refugee pupils, now there are between 50 and 60 requiring support at any one time. Another important factor was the LEA finding the resources to maintain staffing despite cuts in funding – the team has expanded to four full-time permanent and one FTE temporary members, from two teachers in 2002.

4 Availability of interim and alternative provision.

Given the issues of securing school places close to places of temporary residence, several LEAs described needing to supply some form of interim/temporary provision until permanent places could be found. This provision would commonly include initial language development, and LEAs had developed formalised interim provision to different degrees. In addition, LEAs have developed alternative provision to meet the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees, frequently for later stage/Year 10 and 11 learners.

Interim Provision

In LEA 11 emergency housing for asylum seekers and refugees was located in an area where the local school was full to capacity. This caused problems in placing the young people and integrating them into school. To address this issue, a local Primary school used Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies to develop a 'nurturing unit'. Children from all age groups formed a single class, with the aim of helping new arrivals to integrate into mainstream schooling, as well as providing initial peer contacts of different ages.

Additional support was provided by the ESOL team to help with language issues. However, some difficulties were experienced later when pupils placed in this temporary provision (particularly Secondary pupils) had to be re-located and reintegrated into permanent accommodation across the City.

Alternative Provision

LEA 7 found that it needs to make alternative provision available for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 in particular. A city centre venue is used, and provision focuses on

English, maths and basic skills. The provision also includes an introduction to the city and help in securing a school place.

Children can attend for three mornings a week, and there is also the option of attending the ESOL department of a local college. The LEA also supports up to 30 places at KS4 with VCG funding, where pupils can take English at basic and up to GCSE and NVQ levels.

In LEA 13 new arrivals in Years 10 and 11 faced the challenge of settling into a new area and a new education system in a short period of time. An integration project was established to provide one and a half years of language and tailored training provision to pupils not in education, including those not finding school places or considered particularly vulnerable. Provision is delivered through a school site, and although pupils must wear uniform they are on the LEA, rather than the school, roll. Some reintegration into the mainstream may take place, but others may attend for a few months before progressing to a college place.

In addition, extra-curricula programmes can also support the integration process. In one LEA a variety of activities are available, including: dance, badminton, science, ICT and 'lunchtime drop in' clubs. Clubs take place at lunchtime and after school, and weekend visits to the theatre, sporting events, and a half term 'Dance Academy' have recently been introduced.

5 Welcome/induction materials.

The production of 'welcome' materials for new arrivals, and in particular those arriving in mid or towards the end of term, may help the young person to settle and develop language skills. Such information packs may also be useful for parents, in relation to education for their children but also on a wider basis.

Information/Welcome Materials for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

Materials tailored to schools can help the young person to settle and understand and develop language skills. For example, EMAS staff in LEA 7 have completed a project in a High School to create a welcome booklet, designed to give information and to be the basis of language acquisition in the early stages for learners.

The contents were developed by peer mentors and teachers in the school, and covers school routines and expectations. It also provides a chance for pupils to build up their language skills. If children want to ask questions there are photos and headings that can be used. This is a good point of reference, and otherwise it is hard for pupils with little English to have a discussion even with a sympathetic member of staff.

The booklet is taken home to help parents who are in the same position as the child, and hopefully will allow them to be more supportive. There is practical advice on uniform and where to buy it, forms for meals etc. The booklet can be used by the EMA teacher in the first weeks as a focus for language development. It covers immediate language needs, asking questions, days of the week, times, clothing items (PE kit) etc.

6 Awareness raising and supporting teachers.

Efforts to raise awareness of the issues facing asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and provide insights into different cultures and their implications for schools, were described across all of the case study LEAs. This can be particularly helpful where the nature of the refugee/asylum seeker population is particularly dynamic, and includes individuals from different nations and cultures. Examples included:

- In LEA 7 there are a range of activities between central EMAS staff and schools to help teachers to plan and develop curriculum. For example, when a number of Somali refugees were integrated into a cluster of three schools with small numbers of asylum seeker pupils, awareness-raising sessions took place with teachers and staff. The service also develops specific curriculum resources, and advises on ways of making the school more welcoming, including to parents.
- In LEA 11 the majority of new entrant pupils came from an area of Bangladesh, and the LEA ESOL team visited the area to try to establish links with local schools. The intention was to work with local schools to support pupils in transition between education systems, improve the effectiveness of their integration into the GB system and review opportunities for continuing pupil education while on visits to the area. While establishing useful links proved to be impossible, the visit provided useful insights into the Bangladeshi education system and the challenges facing children on their arrival in the UK.

In some areas raising awareness of the needs and issues for reintegrating refugee and asylum seeker children has been linked to the establishment of equal opportunity and race equality policies and guidelines for schools.

Race Equality in Schools:

In LEA 13 a framework for a model race equality policy has been developed and promoted in schools. The framework was developed through a working group including six schools, and aims to ensure that race equality is an explicit element of schools' policy development and planning processes.

The policy is not solely concerned with possible racist incidents in schools, but with ensuring that pupils from all racial backgrounds are included in activities, and have full access to the curriculum. It places the emphasis on schools informing Governors and the LEA if any issues arise, and promotes the training needs of staff and governors on race in education issues.

10.3.5 Key Success Factors

Finally, a series of key success factors were identified for the effective reintegration of asylum seeker and refugee children, including:

- The ability to respond quickly to the needs of asylum seeker and refugee children – which includes being aware of their arrival (through referral routes such as NASS and local community networks) and having the resources to be deployed rapidly.
- Tailoring responses to specific needs – as a wide range of needs and circumstances can be envisaged, tailoring will be necessary in terms of modes of delivery (e.g. small group or one-to-one and support, the use of teaching assistants) and content.
- Pooling resources and bringing services together to mainstream equalities – the pooling of resources can allow specialist expertise to be built up centrally, before being offered out to schools where needs may be variable. Similarly marshalling other pupil services may also be necessary for new entrants with additional reintegration or wider support needs.

- Ensuring the appropriate balance between school and LEA responsibilities - a particular issue for this group, as schools will have differing needs depending on the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers numbers and their previous experience of dealing with the group. At the same time, having specialist staff who are able to work with pupils on an on-going basis, and who are 'owned' by schools, may be most appropriate depending on local circumstances.
- Supporting teachers to embed good practice – the case studies showed that support from LEA staff in schools was at different levels, and sometimes included simple reassurance and knowing there were specialists to contact.
- Linking EAL services to the general curriculum - including having strategies in line with Key Stage 3 teaching methods etc, such as encouraging a literacy curriculum that is supportive of EAL pupils. LEA's can offer advice to schools on how to engage and involve asylum seekers/refugees in recommended literacy for ESOL.

ANNEX I – LEA POSTAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire and return it to Ipsos UK in the pre-paid envelope provided. The results will be used to help the DfES to identify good practice amongst LEAs in this area, as well as the barriers and challenges that are faced.

Your response will be treated in the strictest confidence and we will not be identifying individual LEAs in any reporting to the DfES.

Please tick one box per question only, unless directed otherwise.

If you feel that you personally cannot answer a specific question(s), but that someone else in the LEA can provide the appropriate information, then we would be grateful if you could pass the questionnaire onto them.

The closing date for the return of all questionnaires is 11th November 2003.

If you have any queries, please contact James Morris, Senior Research Executive at IPSOS UK on 020 8861 8067 or e-mail james.morris@ipsos.com

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

1. Does your LEA have specific, formalised approaches to reintegrating (or integrating) the following pupil groups into mainstream schooling or other appropriate provision?

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Permanently excluded pupils

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (1)	No <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(b) Long term truants

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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Pupils not attending school:

(c) - Due to medical needs (including pregnancy)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(d) - Due to caring responsibilities (including school age parents)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(e) - Due to extended absences (e.g. term-time holidays)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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Pupils with mobility issues:

(f) - Traveller children

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(g) - Children in local authority care (with foster parents or in residential care)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
------------------------------	------------------------------

(h) - Asylum seeker and refugee children

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(i) Other children 'missing from education' (e.g. not on school roll, etc)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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2. Does your LEA have . . .

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Specific policy documents relating to the reintegration of pupils missing from education?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (1)	No <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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(b) An operational plan or plans setting out reintegration practices for the different pupil groups? (If Yes, please provide copies)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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3. Who is involved in planning and facilitating the reintegration/integration to mainstream school of the different pupil groups (i.e. individual schools, LEA departments, social services, parents/carers, young people themselves etc)?

Pupil Groups

Organisations/Individuals Involved (Please detail below)

(a) Permanently excluded pupils

(b) Long-term truants

(c) Pupils not attending school, due to:

- Medical needs
- Caring responsibilities
- Extended absences

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

(d) Pupils with mobility issues:

- Traveller children
- Children in local authority care
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Other children 'missing from education'

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4. Please describe any specific, formalised approaches to the reintegration/integration of the pupil groups below. Feel free to attach extra sheets as necessary, and include:

- steps to help ensure pupils keep up with their school work
- how pupils are assessed as appropriate for reintegration
- how appropriate provision is planned
- how reintegration is facilitated
- any on-going support provided

(a) **Permanently excluded pupils**

(b) **Long-term truants**

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

- (c) Pupils not attending school (due to medical needs, caring responsibilities or extended absences such as term time holidays)

- (d) Pupils with mobility issues (including traveller children, children in local authority care, asylum seeker and refugee children and others 'missing from education')

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

5. In your work to reintegrate/integrate pupils into mainstream school, which of the following approaches/structures are used:

Please tick as appropriate

	Yes	No
(a) Head teacher/pupil referral panels	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(b) Multi-agency groups for referral, assessing needs and decision making	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(c) External provision of services for children not in mainstream school – e.g. contracted out services, alternative education initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(d) Hospital schools/hospital education services	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(e) On-site centres in schools	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(f) Off-site centres/PRUs	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(g) Home teaching services	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(h) Home-school liaison officers/home school partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(i) Personal education plans for pupils	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(j) Flexible timetabling/part-time provision	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(k) Flexible application of the curriculum in a mainstream setting	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(l) Mentoring/buddying approaches	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(m) Specialist provision for traveller children/traveller education services	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(n) Additional support for pupils for whom English is not first language	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
(o) Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

6. In the 2002/2003 academic year, how many pupils were considered appropriate for reintegration/integration into mainstream school, and for how many was reintegration /integration attempted?

Please write the number of pupils into the boxes below where you have this information.

Pupils appropriate for reintegration		Pupils where reintegration attempted	
Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary

(a) Permanently excluded pupils

(b) Long term truants

Pupils not attending school, due to:

(c) - Medical needs

(d) - Caring responsibilities

(e) - Extended absences

Pupils with mobility issues:

(f) - Traveller children

(g) - Children in local authority care

(h) - Asylum seeker/refugee children

(i) Other children 'missing education'

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

7. What is the source of funding for reintegration approaches?

	Mainstream LEA funds	Standards Fund	Vulnerable Children Grant	Other, such as EiC, EAZ, SRB, ESF	Please specify other type of funding
(a) Permanently excluded pupils	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(b) Long term truants	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	

Pupils not attending school, due to:

(c) - Medical needs	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(d) - Caring responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(e) - Extended absences	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	

Pupils with mobility issues:

(f) - Traveller children	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(g) - Children in local authority care	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(h) - Asylum seeker/refugee children	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	
(i) Other children 'missing education'	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)	

8. Does the LEA set targets for pupil reintegration?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (1)	No <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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9. Is the effectiveness of the LEA reintegration approaches monitored?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (1)	No <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
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10. If answered yes to Question 9 - What measures are used?

Please tick as many as appropriate

Retention rates for reintegrated pupils	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)
Attendance levels	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)
Attainment levels	<input type="checkbox"/> (3)
Attainment levels against previous SATs results/expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> (4)
Other measures (Please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/> (5)

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

11. *If answered yes to Question 9 - Who is responsible for monitoring effectiveness?*

Please tick as many as appropriate

The LEA

☐ (1)

Individual schools

☐ (2)

Other (Please specify below)

☐ (3)

12. *If answered yes to Question 9 - How long must pupils remain in school to be considered successfully reintegrated/integrated?*

Please enter length of time in months

13. What percentage of the pupils integrated/reintegrated in 2002/2003 remained in school for this period at the end of the academic year, by pupil group?

Please write the percentage of pupils integrated/reintegrated into the boxes below where you have this information.

	Primary %	Secondary %
(a) Permanently excluded pupils		
(b) Long term truants		
Pupils not attending school, due to:		
(c) - Medical needs		
(d) - Caring responsibilities		
(e) - Extended absences		
Pupils with mobility issues:		
(f) - Traveller children		
(g) - Children in local authority care		
(h) - Asylum seeker/refugee children		
(i) Other children 'missing education'		

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

14. Which aspects of your approaches to the reintegration/integration of different pupil groups do you consider to have worked particularly well? What are key success factors for effective reintegration? **Please describe below.**

15. What are the key barriers to the effective reintegration/integration of pupils to mainstream school, and what could be done to address them? Have you found any significant variation in engaging different types of school (e.g. single /mixed sex schools, religious schools) with the reintegration of the different pupil groups?

Please describe below.

Reintegration of Pupils Absent, Excluded or Missing from School

16. What do you consider to be the key resources essential for effective reintegration approaches? (e.g. – key staff skills, infrastructure, etc.) ***Please describe below.***

17. In working to reintegrate different pupil groups, what could Government do to support the activities of LEAs and others? (e.g. providing guidance, ring fenced funding, new legislation, more training, etc.)

Please describe below

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return your questionnaire to Ipsos UK in the prepaid envelope provided.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact James Morris at IPSOS UK on 020 8861 8067 or e-mail james.morris@ipsos.com

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