

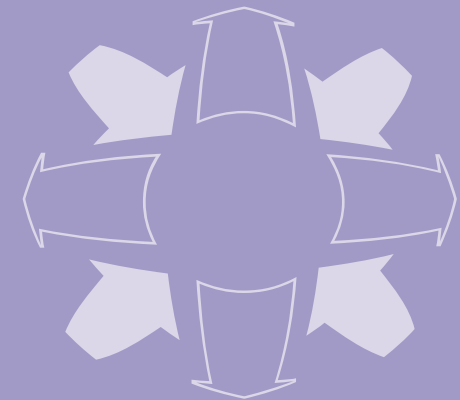
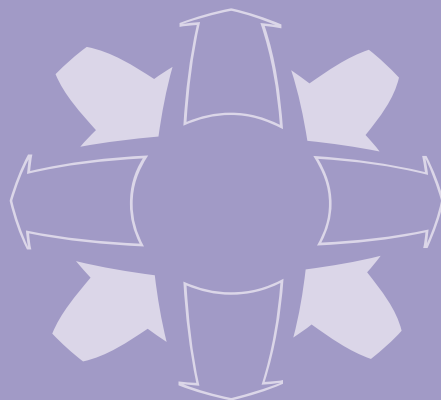
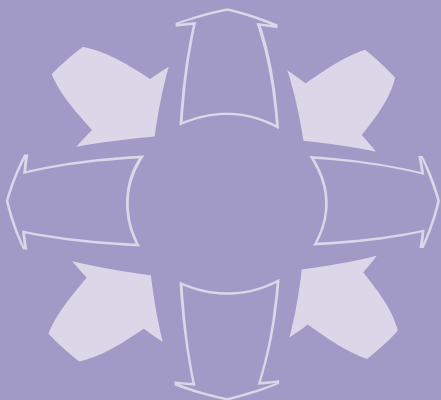
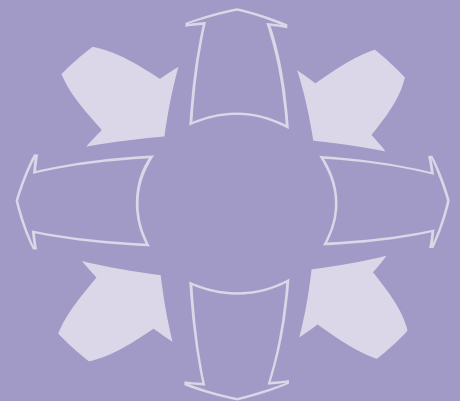
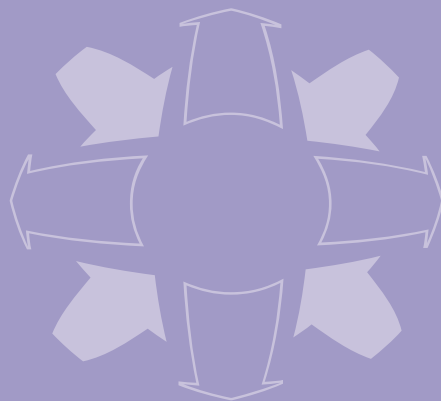
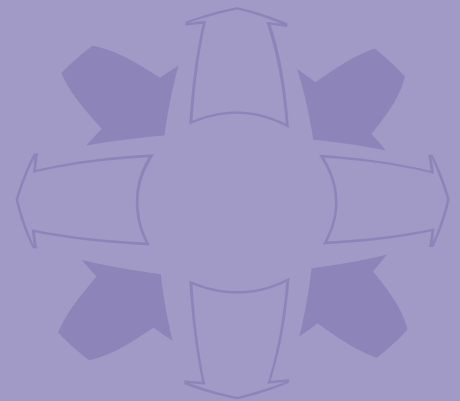
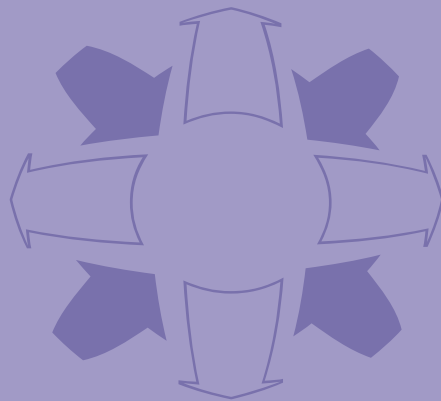
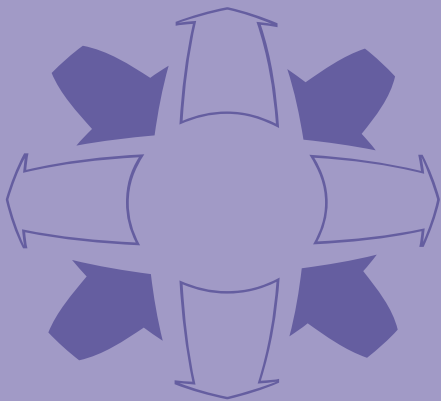
SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

THE VIEWS OF HARDER TO REACH GROUPS

Additional consultation exercise gathering the views of young people, parents / carers who are 'harder to reach' and agencies which advocate on their behalf.

On behalf of Pupil Support and Inclusion, Scottish Executive Education Department.

By The TASC Agency and Caskie.Co - January 2004



The views expressed in this report are those of contributors to the study and the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SEED or Ministers.



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1 Introduction to the study

This study into the views of 'harder to reach groups' was commissioned by the Pupil Support and Inclusion Division of the Scottish Executive Education Department to inform the National Review of Guidance in Schools. The aims of the consultations were to gather the views of young people and their parents or carers about their experiences of support in school, particularly their views on:

- the current support available in the school system, its strengths and weaknesses, what works and how it could be improved
- what should be provided to meet the needs of young people
- who is best placed to provide it
- how well guidance, learning support and behaviour support work together

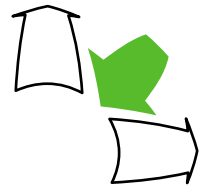
Three linked studies have been brought together to compile the views of groups as to what sort of support should be provided in school to enable achievement of potential for all young people. The TASC Agency (Colin Morrison/Theresa Casey) consulted young people from harder to reach groups and CaskieCo (Sandra Macaskill) spoke to parents and carers of harder to reach young people. Both teams also engaged with number of agencies who advocate on behalf of young people and parents/carers.

The young people who participated, or whose parents / carers participated included those with the following characteristics or backgrounds:

- Those excluded from school or persistent truants
- Young offenders
- Those from black/ethnic minority communities, including gypsy travellers
- Disabled young people, either in mainstream or special school settings
- Young carers
- Those experiencing mental health problems or chronic ill-health
- Those receiving support for other reasons e.g. pregnant young women, LGBT pupils, children with parents in prison
- Those attending alternative educational bases or with special attendance arrangements.

All the views of those consulted have been distilled into this document, which gives an insight into the range of different needs of young people in relation to support at school.

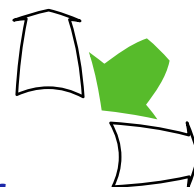
This study is fully hyperlinked throughout the document



Scope of the consultation and the approach taken

2.1 Timescale

The consultation was carried out between July and October 2003 and took the form of individual interviews, focus groups or online questionnaires. All the findings have been drawn together in this document to inform consultation on the National Review of Guidance in Schools.



Scope of the consultation and the approach taken

2.2 About the approach: Qualitative research and the voice of the child

There are two important aspects to this study which require some explanation – the first is the approach which might be described as ‘qualitative’, the second is why, in the context of the National Review of Guidance, the voice of children and young people should be heard. Two questions might be fairly put: Does the approach and the data gathered have value? How do we understand and explain what a qualitative approach might mean in relation to this study?

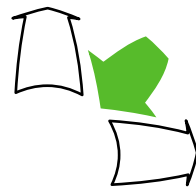
Much has been written about what the term ‘qualitative research’ actually means, in order to help understand the nature of this study we would suggest a good starting point is the definition offered by Denzin and Lincoln who attempt to give a general definition as follows:

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (ref 1)

So qualitative research is about people, and it is about working with people in ways which are resource intensive and about deepening our understanding of their views and experiences through helping them describe them. As opposed to quantitative research, which might focus on responses from large numbers of participants, the numbers of people involved in qualitative research might be smaller. In the context of this study what we have been seeking to gather is the views of those young people who we might consider the most vulnerable or most in need of support in school. They are not representatives of harder to reach groups of young people as such, but their views and experiences are representative of children and young people in these circumstances.

But why are their voices important? What value is there in listening to the voice of the child?

The UK Government, and the Scottish Executive as the devolved arm of government, is committed to implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 of the UNCRC states that: **“State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child...”** (ref 2). In addition there is a growing sense that policy makers and service providers need to hear the views of service users, that in order to develop effective and efficient services those at the receiving end of those services will have a useful insight on them.



The Carnegie Young People's Initiative recognises this shift when it states: "There is an increasing expectation and demand that young people be involved in shaping decisions about the planning, delivery and assessment of services..." (ref 6)

Indeed it is now argued that:

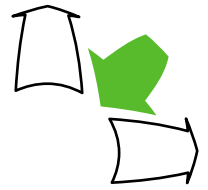
"Respect for children's insights involves questioning the belief that professional academic knowledge is always superior to lay knowledge, feeling and experience." (ref 4)

Undoubtedly challenges remain, particularly for policy makers and adults involved in service delivery. For children and young people, who must feel their views are taken seriously, it is argued that:

"Participation involves much more than consultation; it assumes an ability to influence and change. It provides children with the opportunity to think for themselves, to express views, and to expect that these ideas will be listened to and taken seriously. It entails working effectively with others, and interacting in a positive way. Above all, it is an inclusive process that encourages the active engagement of all children, regardless of background or identity." (ref 3)

And finally that: "Participation means children, young people and adults working together to find solutions and initiate change." (ref. 5) because: "Being asked their views is insufficient without action." (ref. 6)

Link to references



Scope of the consultation and the approach taken

2.3 Who participated

Participants were identified through a range of agencies. Those consulted can be broken down as follows:

Young people:

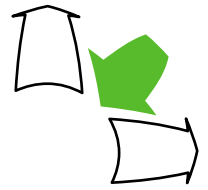
- 100 young people participated in face to face interviews or small focus groups
- 55 were male and 63 were female
- 18 young people completed an online questionnaire
- age range was 8 to 21 with the majority of those interviewed 13-16 years

Parents or carers:

- 32 parents or carers were interviewed in face to face or in small focus groups
- 19 parents or carers completed an online questionnaire
- parents/carers represented the experiences of a further 98 young people

Agencies:

- 10 agencies were interviewed face to face
- 19 responded to an online questionnaire

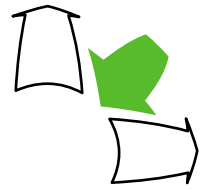


Scope of the consultation and the approach taken

2.4 Geographical spread

Young people, parents/carers involved in the face to face interviews or groups came from 18 different local authority areas.

These were: Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, City of Edinburgh, City of Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, Highlands, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian and the Western Isles (Comhairle Nan Siar).



Views on the strengths of current practice

3.1 Behaviour Support

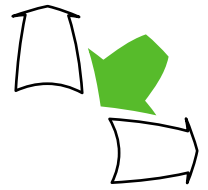
Behaviour support bases and the teaching staff who work to support children and young people with behaviour were highlighted positively by some young people. There was a sense that these teachers were different from the norm.

Having somewhere to go within the school, a base or unit, which offered 'time out' and someone to speak to was seen as valuable support. Young people attending behaviour support units were also conscious of the view that being out of classes might be perceived as being a reward for bad behaviour, however they felt such a view was based on misunderstanding of the purpose of such bases.

Parents valued an approach to behaviour support characterised by a sense of partnership, quick and early identification of problems and a commitment to their child's potential rather than deficits.

In respect of children or young people excluded from school one specialist agency highlighted: **"advocacy and negotiation as working well to enable all parties to shift their positions, this is particularly effective when provision is independent i.e. not social work or education funded"** (Agency 1A)

Link to associated quotes



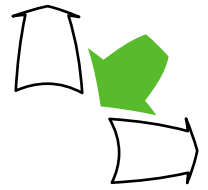
Views on the strengths of current practice

3.2 Learning Support

Young people who engaged with learning support staff frequently spoke about them positively. One young person was of the view that staff were “sound” (girl, 15 int. 3) others identified that learning support teachers explained things clearly and were easier to speak to. The one to one support offered by staff was appreciated by several young people, and there was a sense that learning support teachers had patience with young people with learning support needs that perhaps other staff did not have. As one young person commented **“they’re not like other teachers that just punish you.”** (boy, 14 int.5). One young man was so impressed by the support staff had given him that he was of the view that **“a school should be full of learning support teachers.”** (boy, 17 int.44).

Support from specialist learning support staff, working with children whose first language is not English, was also highlighted positively by asylum seeking and refugee children. Much of their initial support in Scottish schools had come from such staff. While some of these children’s experiences has been difficult they were full of praise for learning support staff:

Link to associated quotes



Views on the strengths of current practice

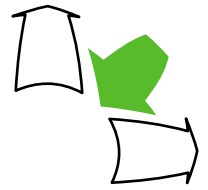
3.3 Links between home and school

Parents valued regular contact based on positives about their child's experiences as well as problematic issues. Written information was appreciated, although some identified concerns where parents literacy or use of English might make this problematic.

Home/school support or link workers were highly valued by parents with the view that **"they can act as a catalyst to bring about change"** (parent 5F). In one group discussion parents talked about how much they had valued that a parent's support group, with crèche, had helped to prepare them for children starting school, it had given them information about what would happen and how they could be prepared to deal with it.

In one group of parents it was reported that a 6 week evening course had prepared them for the transition of SEN as it covered a wide range of different needs. The local 'access to work' project had also been helpful in supporting young people to get jobs.

In respect of children or young people excluded from school one respondent was of the view that parents matter in this equation, and that support works best in school when **"parents support their child in school"** (on-line respondent)



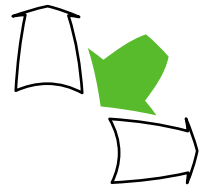
Views on the strengths of current practice

3.4 Young people with disabilities

There were some positive aspects of the support offered to young disabled people attending mainstream schools. Practical help was identified, such as a buddy to help carry things between classes or passes to allow pupils to go to the toilet without having to ask for permission. Having a support assistant in class was seen as initially drawing attention to the individual pupil, however this attention passed and their support was valued. In two settings where young disabled people reported on mainstream schooling, the support found in after school support groups for disabled pupils was important. When asked what helps one young person answered: **“Clubs like this one, chances to get together, have fun, chances to learn and get to know each other”**. (girl, 12 int.15)

Participating agencies highlighted that when a school is effective at meeting the needs of disabled pupils this was a great strength. Meeting disabled pupils needs meant that a school provided adequate levels of learning support, that there was a willingness to identify who needed such support and the provision of effective careers advice to pupils. Effective communication between agencies and with parents of disabled pupils was also seen as a great strength where that happened – and this often meant having named people to go to with issues or concerns and to talk about successes. Finally there was good practice recognised which was based on good working relationships between the school and voluntary sector agencies working with children and young people.

Link to associated quotes

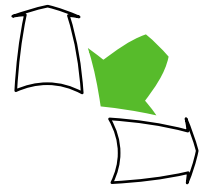


Views on the strengths of current practice

3.5 Careers Advice

Specialist careers staff were viewed positively by many of the young people interviewed. These staff helped with careers and college information but young people especially valued staff who they felt showed a genuine personal interest in their welfare and success, staff who spent time with them and who perhaps helped access bursaries or benefits. Some young people had participated in groups facilitated by both teachers and Careers staff which focused on communication skills and life choices.

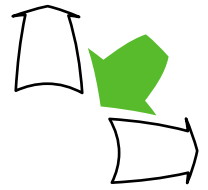
“They’re good, they give you so much information as you need it and they give advice, not like teachers.” (girl, 17 int.6)



Views on the strengths of current practice

3.6 Course choices

When young people talked positively about making course choices in secondary school, or about college or university, it was usually in the context of Guidance staff or specialist Careers staff taking time to sit and talk with them about their options. Written information or course booklets were seen as helpful. Young people also value the opportunity to try something out, this was sometimes the case with short work experiences that confirmed young people's interest in a job or at key stages in secondary school when course options were available: **"We had a chance to try every subject over a week, like tasters so you could find out which ones you wanted to do."** (boy, 18 int.83)



Views on the strengths of current practice

3.7 PSE

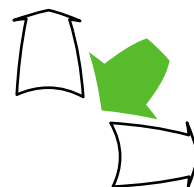
There were positive experiences of PSE. In one small group discussion young people highlighted the role their key workers from a national voluntary organisation had played in terms of personal and social education. In the school setting young people enjoyed more active learning approaches where they were used, such as playing games or discussions following the input from external agencies such as the Police or voluntary sector projects.

Parents recognised the value of PSE in both primary and secondary schools, and in both mainstream and special school settings.

“Where else are we going to learn about these things?” (boy, 15 int.64)

“They’re good at telling you about all the stuff about growing up.. it’s a pretty good course”. (girl, 14 int.72)

“PSE in special schools covers a wide range of topics including drugs and relationships, but there is perhaps scope for introducing more materials from an earlier age on gender differences” (parent 6F).



Views on the strengths of current practice

3.8 Individuals and specific strategies that provide support

The most commonly mentioned positive aspect of support in school across interviews was the recognition by young people, but in particular by girls, of an individual within the school who had provided support, either at a time of need or on an ongoing basis. On occasion the person named is a class or subject teacher, at other times a member of the school's Guidance team. Oftentimes these supportive members of staff are those who young people have picked themselves, or who with whom they have positive ongoing relationships. In the linked quotes there are many examples from young people to illustrate this point.

Young people also talked positively about the role of voluntary sector staff and social workers. Voluntary sector agencies often staffed school and community based groups which young people attended and which addressed issues in their lives. In one special school setting a voluntary sector agency was supporting the development of a school council, one young person said their work helped him realise that **"I want to change what isn't right. I want to be the person who made the school better"** (boy, 12 int.57) Social workers were identified as intermediaries, being able **"to talk to you and sort things out, they talk to your parents and the school"** (boy, 13 int.9)

Specific approaches or strategies aimed at supporting young people in school were recalled by some of the young people interviewed, this included use of circle time, paired reading and a 'time-out' card.

Some parents knew of specialist counselling services and felt that it could be very effective in supporting young people on issues such as surviving abuse, self harm and anger management.

Participating agencies highlighted the important role that individual Guidance teachers play. They reported confidence in services when Guidance staff in school are accessible for pupils and when at the heart of that relationship there is a commitment to being sympathetic and non-judgemental. They highlighted that individual Guidance teachers work best when they have time to listen, and understand and offer confidentiality – then allowing pupils to come to them to talk about personal issues. Agencies thought that a good Guidance system put the pupil at the centre of the service provided.

The availability of training and support for support staff was also highlighted as a characteristic of positive services. The view was that there needs to be trust, team work and ongoing continuing professional development.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.1 Behaviour support

When it comes to support for behaviour there was a common view amongst young people and parents that detentions, suspensions and exclusions had not helped address underlying issues, but had been used frequently as a response none the less.

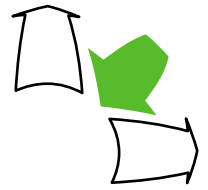
There was also a sense amongst young people that reputations and labels had stuck from very early days and that each problematic incident a young person was involved in became something that would drag on, with several members of school staff reacting over time.

Parents identified a lack of sharing of information as problematic. A lack of communication meant that it was difficult to sustain shared approaches to behaviour. It was not always clear enough when progress was being made. In general schools were thought to be reactive rather than engaged more proactively, particularly in terms of preventative work.

Parents recognised that both they and class teachers required more information and support when it came to working with children with specific conditions or behaviours. A lack of continuity in the relationships between pupils and teachers was thought to make managing some behaviour more difficult.

There were concerns amongst agencies that the guidance system has become punitive and is losing support. One agency commented that **“It is generally acknowledged that there is a tension between support and discipline issues - this needs to be explored in order to provide support which is a positive and useful experience for the young person.”** (on-line agency respondent)

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.2 Learning Support

Some young people felt that there was not enough **learning support** available in the main class setting. When support might be available it was sometimes not provided by staff with the necessary understanding or approach young people required. Support across school was not necessarily consistent or sustained.

In some places learning support was seen by both young people and parents as having some stigma. For one boy in a special school setting there was a concern that the academic work undertaken was less demanding than it should be, this caused problems for him in terms of his future aspirations.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.3 Links between home and school/views of family background

For some young people there are important cultural clashes which arise out of expectations that learning should take place in the school setting. Young gypsy/traveller children explained that there is a perception that **“schools are dangerous places, there’s drugs there and pupils get drunk and they drive fast cars, my Mum doesn’t like schools.”** (boy, 13 int.22) For the children spoken to, not attending school has meant that until the recent intervention of a specialist service no support for their learning has been provided, leading to a view for this 13 year old that **“..it’s too late for me to go to school. I’m working on my reading and writing now. I like it. I’m getting there but before it was just a nursery teacher who helped. I was ashamed. I couldn’t even spell my name. I prefer the group stuff now more than one to one. I like learning.”** (boy, 13 int.22)

Pupils with caring responsibilities also recognised a lack of understanding and practical support.

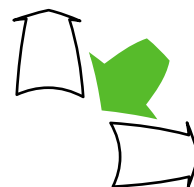
Parent’s evenings were seen as the main way parents heard about progress and got the opportunity to discuss things. There were however a number of concerns expressed; some parents didn’t really see them as effective as the school set the agenda, others felt that more regular sessions would be better. A number of parents worked in the evenings and were not always able to attend. One parent expressed frustration when meeting with teachers as **“pulling together an overview of departments was difficult due to a lack of team work”** (parent 7F)

Some parents said they felt intimidated attending groups or going to parents evenings particularly when it was in a large room with lots of people and little privacy. Others said that there should be friendlier reception staff as parents were scared to speak either on the phone or face to face to some staff.

There were concerns amongst parents that the number of children in classes can make it difficult to identify that families may need additional support or to identify children who are becoming withdrawn. There was also a suggestion that **“the school nurse should check to see that children are clean and fed”** (parent 15F)

How schools engage with parents was also raised by several agency respondents. They identified a need for help for parents to understand careers/training options so that they too could advise their children. There was also not enough support to help parents address and understand their own anxieties or stress about education.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.4 Young people with disabilities in mainstream settings

Disabled pupils in the mainstream setting were critical of the support they sometimes received. They report a lack of understanding or knowledge of needs, issues like not having desks that a wheelchair user could sit at, or benches in practical subjects that were too high to use. Where equipment needed adaptation the specialist help to get it done was not always available. One parent described a child having to crawl into a classroom on their hands and knees because there was no room for their power chair.

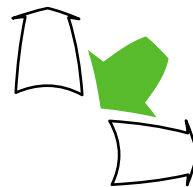
Where young people had specific learning needs or difficulties staff were sometimes not aware of these. It was suggested by agencies that there is a need for increased learning support in schools, and that targeting this support needed to be based on schools being better at screening for conditions like dyspraxia, ADHD and dyslexia.

One boy (aged 12) and his Mum completed our young people's on-line questionnaire and gave several examples of the ill-preparedness and errors made by his school. While the boy's Mum thought that **"This school is really trying new things, so for new kids in future years things should be good"** there were also many examples of what the school is currently getting wrong. These included **"taunting"** as a result of the child being very open in PSE classes: **"I don't like them. The class has everyone in and I have to say things about me and they snigger"**. School life is perceived as being **"too fast"** or **"people don't explain what I can do if I feel worried.... they don't ask what things I like"**. Other examples were given of disregard for the child and his feelings. On one occasion the boy had come home crying because on getting to the cloakroom his was the only coat left, the class had gone on a trip and he and his classroom assistant had not been told. On another occasion the family was told that the child should not attend for two days because tests in science subjects were being undertaken which staff thought he should not bother with.

There were concerns amongst participating agencies that schools are becoming increasingly focused on qualifications as a measure of success, that a focus on academic attainment led to a view that learning disabled pupils were undermining the success of the school. Gaps were perceived in the provision for pupils who did not engage with a more academically focused curriculum.

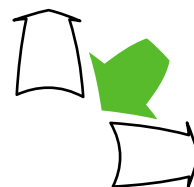
From parents came the view that labeling their child as special could **"sometimes be defined as set apart and different"** (parent online). There was felt to be **"a need for greater awareness of disabilities at all levels; management, teachers, caretakers, canteen staff and other pupils"** (parent online).

Other parents felt that there was **"a need for a much greater awareness of conditions such as dyslexia, asthma, epilepsy and ADHD"** (parent 9F) and that there **"should be information and resources to provide the necessary professional support"** (parents 8F)



Holiday times were highlighted as a particular issue by parents/carers of those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as there was generally “no support or activities available during this time” (parents 7F)

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.5 Course choices and options of learning outside school

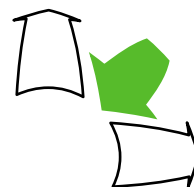
Young people reported weaknesses in current practices around making course choices in the secondary school setting. Parents also expressed concerns that young people had to make subject choices at the end of S2 without being aware of what they wanted to do. There was a strong sense amongst some pupils that the more academically orientated pupils were given preference in subject choices, that pupils in alternative units or in special schools were seen as automatically less capable, that there was a lack of information about what courses entailed, and that for pupils who also required support for their behaviour or learning choice was removed.

Young people who were not academically orientated, and in particular those who could not leave school at the end of their 4th year because they had not reached their sixteenth birthday, reported negative experiences of the school system, often feeling unwelcome and that they were wasting time. In one setting a group of boys were placed in a group out with the normal school timetable. Their timetable was arranged so that they did not have breaks or lunch with young people who had been their peers. They told us that they were in the group because they were seen as likely to 'corrupt' other young people.

Undoubtedly for some young people there are strong feelings that school is not a relevant place for them and that they already know what they want to work at as adults, and may have already got involved in part time work based around that choice. Some young people were frustrated by a lack of opportunity to experience college or workplace environments before their 4th year.

Another group of young people who perceived a lack of choice in the curriculum were young people who were looked after. There was a sense of being **"landed with what was left"** (girl, 16 int.17). One young woman explained: **"I moved at the beginning of 3rd year and I was given subjects like art, computers and geography which I wouldn't have picked. Nobody explained why. I tried to get my support worker to do something but they said it wasn't possible to change anything."** (girl, 16 int.42)

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.6 PSE

PSE received much criticism from young people. Weaknesses in current PSE programmes included their over simplistic messages about issues such as drugs, a lack of time dedicated to PSE in the curriculum, delivery by teachers with little or no expertise in the area (including staff covering PSE if class teachers are absent), a lack of use of creative or active learning methods and problems for young people when the subject is delivered by a teacher they do not like or get on with.

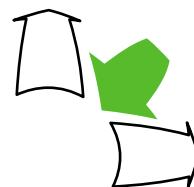
There was some indication of embarrassment with some aspects of sex and relationship education. One young woman reported that work in the classroom on sexual health was difficult for her, indicating a need for PSE to have some sensitivity to young people's experiences. She told us: **"I do not like when we were working on sexual health because I got sexually assaulted when I was 14 years old. If I could change anything I'd still do social education as long as we did not do sexual health stuff."** (girl, 15, on-line response)

Some young people with histories of exclusion, absenteeism or placement in special units do not remember having PSE as part of their curriculum. Young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender young people do not see themselves reflected in what is taught. Concern was expressed by young people attending Catholic schools about what PSE had been provided.

In engaging with young disabled people in special school settings there has been some difficulty in identifying what PSE they access. Often, time is allocated to what is described as 'Life skills' classes but these are often focused on practical tasks and issues concerned with living as a disabled person in the community. It is unclear from speaking to some young disabled people out with mainstream education whether they are given opportunities, for example, to learn about drug and alcohol issues or sex and relationships as pupils in mainstream settings do.

Agencies thought that PSE in some schools was also seen as lacking relevance or credibility with some pupils. One agency described PSE as **"out of date, using irrelevant resources"**. They quoted a report on a consultation with young people which stated that too much PSE comprised of **"watching videos with no discussion, this is not education"** (Agency 10A). Sex and relationship education was seen by one agency as hardest for schools to deal with.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.7 Specialist resources, getting help when it's needed, including at points of choice and transition.

A major issue coming out of interviews with young people in relation to current support in school was the lack of help available when pupils need it. This included at times of transition from primary to secondary (several young people identified this change as particularly problematic), when moving between schools, moving from S2 into S3 and from S4 into S5 – both times at which the curriculum changes and is perceived to become more demanding.

Young people reported feeling the pressure of decisions which were to be made about subjects, and particularly about life after school, as one young person said **“It's hard having to make choices early in 6th year, it seems like life choices”** (girl, 17, int.20).

Transitions, particularly from school to work or college, were of interest to parents. There was a general feeling that young people **“take decisions themselves and that parents are not really aware of the role the school plays in this transition”** (parent 4F). **“A need for more support”** was expressed (parent 9F) particularly for disabled pupils. One parent identified that rather than the school, **“it was an external agency which was enabling the transition”** (parent 13F)

One parent suggested that school **“didn't really prepare young people for the world of work as they didn't do practice interviews and placements till final year”** (parent 4F) another gave an example of a placement being missed **“due to illness and the opportunity not being repeated”** (parent 6F)

There was a suggestion that **“staff in school didn't really know what was out there work wise”** (parent 7F) and there seemed to be **“little matching of aspirations to actual work placements”** (parent 10F). One parent felt that there should be **“a wider range of placements e.g. joinery or other jobs where you 'get dirty' ”** (parent 12F)

Other young people reported that although specific issues or needs, such as counselling, were clearly identified, and referrals may have been made, no service was forthcoming.

Some young women who had been pregnant at school also highlighted concerns over changes or adaptation of specialist resources and support to more generic support for young people with a range of needs which left them feeling vulnerable while a much valued resource was lost.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.8 Bullying and Racism

A common theme across discussions with young people and parents is dissatisfaction with how bullying and racism are prevented and responded to.

Young people from black/minority ethnic communities, including young refugee and asylum seeking children and young people, experience racism in Scotland's schools. Young people reported things like: **"I reported abuse to teachers and they don't do anything. People would take things from my bag and when I reported it they just told me to hold my bag a different way"** (boy, 16 int.79) and **"People say things about me that upset my belief and education"** (boy, 14 on-line response)

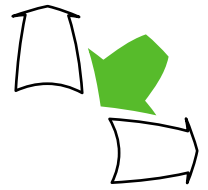
Young disabled people in the mainstream also experience abuse: **"I asked the teacher to stop a 4th year boy calling me a mingo. It's been happening since 1st year. Kids swear at me outside school as well."** (girl, 13 int.10)

One young person's perception was that **"there's school in the classroom and school in the playground. Teachers don't really know what it's like."** (girl, 12 int.85) Many participants talked about adult unwillingness to recognise what happens, and failure to respond appropriately.

Parents were particularly concerned that a failure to deal effectively with bullying meant that children were then moved from one school to another.

Agencies too had their concerns. There were concerns about the **"inhospitable school environment"** (Agency 10A) and that vulnerable young people, particularly disabled pupils in the mainstream setting and young asylum seekers/refugees faced the threat and actual experience of bullying and harassment. One agency identified an increase in recent months in the racism faced by Muslim pupils. The view was that training and support for staff was needed **"to extend teachers understanding of what bullying is"**. (Agency 10 A)

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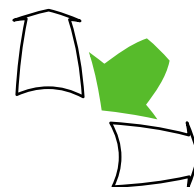
Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.9 Schooling away from home

Some young people in Scotland live considerable distances from school and so some pupils live in hostels or in host families. Some go home at weekends, some only at holidays. These pupils talked about the support they need, and the role schools might have in providing support. One young woman described her experiences and feeling on the issue:

“Teachers don’t take much interest in this. My parents found me lodgings. I did get some support from the lodging family but nothing specific, you just get used to it. It would have helped to know the family beforehand. People who’ve got brothers or sisters here already are better. On the positive side though you do grow up quicker, you become more independent.” (girl, 14 int.72)

And if there are any problems?: “I’d tell my parents. I wouldn’t tell the school. That would feel like going to far. They do look after us in school but when it comes to outside school I don’t think they take much of a role. I wouldn’t want school to be involved in my care. School is 9 till 4. I don’t want them involved.” (girl, 14 int.72)



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.10 Teacher attitudes and behaviour

A further key weakness in the support that pupils receive at school is identified by young people as the attitude and behaviour of some teachers and other school staff. This included administrative staff. Young people reported a number of incidents where they felt humiliated, scared and judged by teachers.

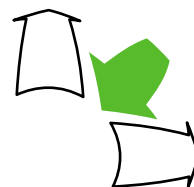
One young lesbian's experience of a school residential trip was described as follows: **"The teacher made me sleep away from the boys and girls, said I was dangerous to both."** This girl was of the view that **"support isn't a priority for schools"** (girl, 15 int.88).

Other young people had experienced judgemental attitudes and bad behaviour by teachers. A young woman who was pregnant at school described the following:

"Reactions were mixed. Some teachers gave me the hard shoulder, I was just classed as the pregnant girl in school... It's not that I felt pushed out but I didn't feel comfortable. I think the male teachers were nervous. One teacher commented in front of the whole class 'I'm really disappointed in you and if the rumour's true about who is the father you must have been really drunk'. Then later I was told the school wasn't insured to have a pregnant pupil and so I had to leave... I would rather people involved you in discussion. It felt like they were angry or just sorry for you. It felt like being talked about. Teachers think they know you, say they're disappointed. It didn't feel like sympathy. It felt patronising. One teacher even questioned my wee sister who's in first year. She told her she was disappointed in me." (girl, 16 int.20)

Some agency respondents identified the need for staff in schools to be more caring in their attitude. One agency told us that in their view current Guidance systems were **"only appropriate for people who succeed in the school environment, no support system for those who learn differently, they are asked to leave school prior to exams by the Head teacher because their grades will pull down the achievement on the school league tables, or sometimes they are suspended after witch hunt type scenarios. The Head teacher puts it to the young people that he would advise them to leave early and get a job."** (on-line respondent)

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

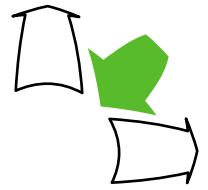
4.11 Pressures on Guidance staff and the need for training

Pupils had concerns about whether as teachers, Guidance staff are the most appropriate providers of some aspects of support in school, and if they are, identify a general lack of time and availability to provide that support. There were also concerns amongst agencies about the low expectations some pupils and staff have about what support can be provided in some schools, it would appear that **“Guidance provision is vastly different across different schools and there is a lack of consistency around the availability of support”**. (on-line agency respondent)

Agencies identified a lack of necessary time and training for school staff to be able to support children and young people effectively. The view was that current support systems are under pressure, and that pressure resulted in a reduction of the quality of support provided. Staff appear to be swamped by the need to react to issues, with little time for working directly with those pupils experiencing difficulties, and appeared to be deficit oriented.

Agencies saw the need for training to improve understanding and communication. Training was also seen as necessary on issues of confidentiality and understanding and working with looked after children and young people. It was also seen as particularly important is respect of young people who might be lesbian or gay **“as the first point of contact is so important in finding appropriate information and responses.”** (Agency 5A) The agency highlighted a high incidence of attempted suicide amongst young LGBT people aggravated by of inappropriate school intervention.

Link to associated quotes



Views on weaknesses of current practice

4.12 Confidentiality

Young people raised specific issues in current practices of some Guidance staff in the secondary sector. There are concerns about a lack of confidentiality and about a lack of privacy in engaging with Guidance staff.

“The guidance teacher comes to speak to you and makes it really obvious, in front of other people. How can you talk in that situation?” (boy, 14 int.84)

“You met your Guidance teacher in an open plan office. It isn’t private. I give them the benefit of the doubt, they are very busy.” (girl, 15 int.35)

“You can’t always trust them not to say things that you have told them so you stop telling them things.” (girl, 13 int.82)

See section 5.4 for further views on information sharing and confidentiality in relation to how agencies work together.



Views on agencies working together

5.1 Why agencies should collaborate?

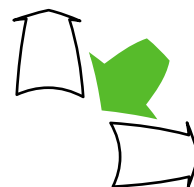
Evidence from those consulted suggests that where there is “joined up” working between agencies then things generally go more smoothly in achieving effective solutions to issues. One parent described a situation whereby all the agencies were working well together to support a young asylum seeker and another talked of the review process having become more positive.

A common theme from external agencies was the need for schools to be part of better integrated responses, to be better at working with social work, youth work, careers, health and police colleagues.

Better integration and better use of agencies with expertise in terms of disabled young people and minority communities was seen as crucial. For example, one agency told us there was a need for **“more liaison between schools and specialist service role to ensure better home school links are developed... Managers need to realise important of allocation of support staff in relation to Gypsy/Traveller children... Systems throughout Scotland should be fine tuned... it would make it easier for a group who are on the move so much.”** (on-line agency respondent)

Another contributor provided examples of serious failings in current support systems, highlighting **“a lack of joined up activity between schools and Social Work. Often poor engagement with other key services: careers, health, police. Strategic failures: tendency to work through local plots but failure to apply lessons learnt across the LEA. Limited involvement of Psychological Services – particularly in the area of post school transition planning. No developed Educational Welfare Service leading to numbers of young people dropping out of the system for long periods.”** (on-line agency respondent)

Where there were effective ways of working together, it was identified that this was often based on the **“ethos created in establishments and on individual personalities”** (on-line respondent)



Views on agencies working together

5.2 Links between pastoral care, learning support and behavioural support

Agencies commenting on the relationship between pastoral care, learning support and behavioural support in schools gave a strong sense that in many cases work is undertaken in isolation. On occasion services can be located in a different part of the school.

A parent support agency talked of **“learning support, behaviour support and guidance not necessarily working well together as this is a very stressful area and there is often a high turnover of staff”** (Agency 7A)

One agency commented: **“they are not working together well enough to keep every pupil on school role. Many pupils are lost to special school or non attendance.”** This agency also saw a gap in terms of support for children and young people because school based services **“only works on 40 weeks of the school year.”** (on-line respondent)

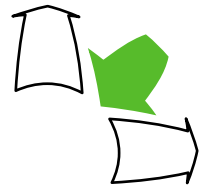
There are concerns amongst agencies that pastoral care, learning support and behaviour support can work in isolation from other parts of the education system, sometimes isolating the young person and working to their own agendas. For disabled young people there were particular concerns about a lack of integration of school based support services with support that might help with transition to post school service and adult life. In general the view was that joint working within the system needs to be better co-ordinated, as the aspects link together and impact on each other. One contributor told us:

“The danger that can come from this is that the agenda for working with this group of children and young people becomes driven by the needs of learning support departments as opposed to the individual needs of the child or young person. I have also seen learning/behaviour support work closely with the wider education/social work service which leads to a far greater integrated approach.” (on-line respondent)

Overall the input from agencies suggests that the level of integration between aspects of support in school varies greatly from school to school. It is also clear that pupils do not necessarily recognise the different roles or responsibilities that teachers may use to distinguish themselves. For example one agency reported that **“many young people talk about the personal support they have received from their learning support worker rather than their guidance support worker. Learning support is usually spending much more time with vulnerable young people in schools. They know the young person better and the young person feels more able to confide in and trust their learning support teacher.”** (on-line respondent) Schools where there were multi disciplinary bases often displayed pro-active strategies for dealing with issues and young people had a feeling of having somewhere to go where they could be listened to.



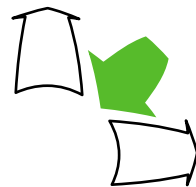
Another agency reported that: “The key message on this issue seems to be that where a young person has a strong relationship with a member of staff, whatever their job title might be, that relationship should be encouraged and supported by the school.” (on-line respondent)



Views on agencies working together

5.3 Terms of reference

Different approaches and language amongst professionals were highlighted by agencies as contributing to challenges facing agencies working together. Working together seems to be better in situations where staff are used to working with a range of outside agencies, although this can work better in some circumstances than others. However agencies expressed concerns that working in inter-disciplinary settings can mean different theoretical approaches, and co-working which can lack shared terms of reference. There were particular concerns expressed by one respondent that teachers in special schools **“fear other professionals, especially the children’s rights officer.”** (on-line agency respondent) The view was that regular meetings, an exchange of information and discussing strategies together can help.



Views on agencies working together

5.4 Information sharing and confidentiality

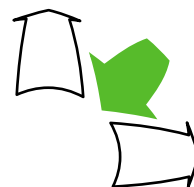
More than any other issue raised in the context of discussions about how professionals work together young people's concerns were about the sharing of information and confidentiality. Young people felt that workers shared information without permission, and in some instances carelessly and with little respect.

Young people with experiences of the care system talked about their need for support, and for sensitivity with information. On the one hand one young person commented that **"people who've been in care need someone who understands. Someone you can talk to when you need to. You shouldn't get treated differently because you're in the system"** (girl, 15 int. 95) However, another young person interviewed told us: **"After telling the head teacher something really personal every teacher commented on it. I got lectured and told off by staff. They would just talk about stuff in front of me. I knew about monthly meetings about me and sometimes I was allowed to stay and sometimes I wasn't. I didn't know the reason why. All the staff knew when I was in foster care."** (young man, 24, int.29)

Young people had a strong sense of how they wanted information handled by professionals, and there was a palpable sense of hurt and injustice when professionals are insensitive or get this wrong:

"I've had different teachers who know a lot about my problems. A teacher came up in the social area and said she'd heard I had problems, she asked me 'how are you?' They'd obviously been gossiping." (girl, 16 int.7)

"Students should have a choice about what is passed home. If you tell the Guidance teachers something they can just tell the head teacher or Police, or they just turn up at your door. Things should be confidential if you want it to be. The pupil should decide." (boy, 14 int.67)



Views on agencies working together

5.5 Young people's experiences of interagency meetings and forums

On the whole young people seemed unaware of the ways in which professional people and agencies worked together, either within the school or between school and external agencies. However, the most obvious point at which young people did have some perception of professionals talking together about them was at reviews or case conferences or meetings called at points of crisis.

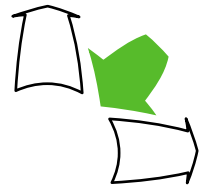
In such contexts there were concerns about not being asked for a view: **"People probably talk about me in meetings but I've never been asked"** (boy, 12 int.14) or only being able to give an opinion when specifically asked. One young person said they spoke at reviews **"if there's something they need to ask me about"** (boy, 13 int.13). When they are involved the young person's perception is that views have little influence. One young disabled participant said that **"adults who talk make decisions for you."** (girl, 15 int.100)

Some young people found meetings difficult experiences, as one boy commented: **"I just be quiet. It gets a bit agitated in meetings."** (boy, 13 int.12). Others have been excluded from attending: **"I got chucked out of the meetings so now they're private between Mum and the teachers".** (girl, 13 int.55) and others find them unreal and frustrating: **"I never liked going to meetings. Because your Mum's there they don't shout in your face and that. Nobody explains what's going to happen."** (boy, 14 int.47)

One young woman interviewed was frustrated to find that a meeting with representatives from different agencies had taken place without her knowledge: **"Everybody had a meeting about me, they told me it was none of my business. My Mum didn't even know. I only found out because the (voluntary sector agency named) worker told me. They talk about me. It does my head in. They write notes about me, things that I say about my personal life end up in notes about me. They made a decision to send me to a group without asking me if I wanted to go. People shouldn't have a meeting about me without me being there."** (girl, 15 int.50)

One young person reported positively about review meetings in which a range of professionals talked about his needs and involved him. Such meetings were not anticipated keenly, and the young person did not always attend every meeting, but did know when discussions were taking place: **"I have reviews I go to. My key worker goes and the head of the unit and a worker from (voluntary sector agency named) and my parents. They talk about me, it's boring. I get a chance to speak, I can do that. When I'm not there they pass on information."** (boy, 15 int.43) Another young man also discussed attendance at reviews, again it was clear that several adults with different roles were also present and that participation was possible, however as highlighted in an earlier section on weaknesses in the system there was a lack of support for implementation of any decisions made.

Link to associated quotes



Views on agencies working together

5.6 Working together for prevention

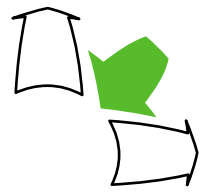
Young people wanted professional people to be better at preventing problems developing and to focus on the positive, as well as the problems:

“In primary school they should be able to see and sense the tension and deal with it before it reaches secondary. They should pass on information from primary to secondary school about who is vulnerable and who is bullying.” (girl, 19 int.26)

“They only talked about the bad things. Never the good things. Then I wasn’t allowed in and they would come and tell me what had happened.” (boy, 17 int.93)

Parents were also of the view that external agencies **“were only brought in if there was a crisis.”** (parent 5F).

One on-line contributor offered the view that there is **“poor partnership working between the education authority and other agencies”**.



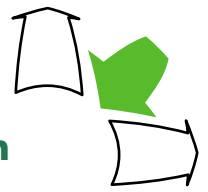
Views on agencies working together

5.7 Clarifying who's who and what they do

When it comes to school support systems/staff working together within and out with school on aspects such as home-school links, child protection or looked after children, the perception of agencies was that it could be difficult to identify the right people with responsibility for such areas. It was thought that liaison, and work done with young people, can be very dependant on individual personalities. One agency suggested that **“some people go that extra mile to really make a difference to a child’s life chances, some don’t. This could be a training issue or selection of correct personnel for job.”** (on-line respondent)

Agencies reported that inter-agency working can go well when schools are small and where guidance staff tend to do have responsibility for a whole range of support issues, i.e. child protection and looked after young people. It was thought that lessons could be learned from good practice emerging from the New Community School model, but that basically services work well together and in the best interests of the child when schools have a policy of effective communication with all agencies, including parents, health, social work, police and children’s panel.

There were also concerns that a lack of clarity about agency roles meant that agencies were doing the same things unnecessarily, and that a lack of joined-up working, particularly between education and social work services, meant that systems of assessment, review and planning were not as good as they should be.



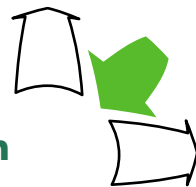
What support should be provided to young people in school?

6.1 Young people's views

In the context of interviews and discussions, and on-line, young people identified that support in school would be improved by:

- Smaller schools/class sizes
- Being listened to more
- More help when you go to secondary school
- More detailed information in making subject choices (what's involved/expected)
- More practical as opposed to academic subjects in school
- Health drop in provision and breakfast clubs
- Extra curricular facilities
- More support for looked after young people to sustain school work and deal with issues
- Consideration of home and community circumstances and affect on school life, particularly young carers and those with mental health issues
- More empathy from teachers and an understanding that they have a responsibility to listen to children, to offer support when it is needed
- Dealing with bullying more effectively
- A choice of guidance teacher
- A conflict management/resolution system for dealing with issues with teachers
- A better understanding of how confidentiality works
- A better physical environment

Link to associated quotes



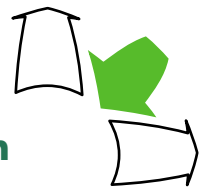
What support should be provided to young people in school?

6.2 Parents / carer's views

In the context of interviews and discussions, and on-line, parents/carers identified that support in school would be improved by:

- Schools listening to parents and carers more, with more input to school inspections
- A better developed partnership between parents/carers and school in relation to individual young people
- Reviewing current parents/carers evening arrangements and changing them to better meet the needs of all parties
- A better understanding of what Home-School Support is available, what individual rights are, help with identifying best options
- A named contact within a school who can deal with matters and make things happen
- More health provision through school to support the physical and mental health needs of young people
- Consideration of more support during school holidays

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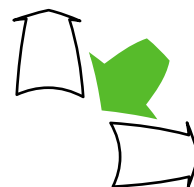
What support should be provided to young people in school?

6.3 Agency views

In the context of interviews and discussions, and on-line, agencies identified that support in school would be improved by:

- Flexible provision which can respond to meet the needs of all pupils as individuals
- Support which is person-centred and available on a needs led basis
- Support which is about developing positive and caring relationships
- Support services which are regularly evaluated, with evaluation being transparent and involving pupils as users
- Having a key named person in school for every pupil to co-ordinate services and ensure needs are met. This person should also be accessible to parents.
- Confidentiality, together with clarity about policy and procedures
- More valuing and respect for the skills of other professional who work outside schools and clear systems for working together in the interests of young people
- School staff skilled in developing and delivering strategies for better home school collaboration
- Support services which have the trust of young people

Link to associated quotes



Who should provide support to young people in school

7.1 Young people's views

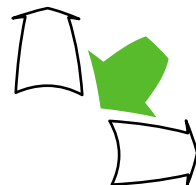
When talking about who should provide the support young people need in school, discussion centred around three main areas – the characteristic of a support service which might be available in school, the qualities which staff members would need to have and whether the support envisaged was best delivered by teaching or non-teaching staff.

Young people identified the key characteristics of a school support service – it should be delivered in ways which were non-stigmatising, was private and offered young people confidentiality. Support needed to be impartial and staff needed to be proactive in getting to know pupils. Pupils should feel that they were being protected from harm and that the support service on offer could actively tackle, or do something, about issues which pupils might bring to it. Young people from specific groups said that the service needs to understand the needs of disabled young people, young asylum seekers and those with experience of being looked after.

Across interviews there was consensus about the qualities required of staff who provide support in school. Staff should be accessible, impartial and non judgemental. They need to understand how confidentiality works, reward successes and not punish children. Staff would need to treat people fairly and equally. They would be good at calming people and situations down, speaking to young people in ways they can understand. They would be kind.

There was discussion across interviews about whether support was best provided by teaching or non teaching staff. Unfortunately some young people clearly saw Guidance staff as not on their side. There was a view that the job of supporting young people was enough of a job in itself and could not be successfully undertaken along with teaching commitments. Young people's experience was that teachers were busy people who often could not give them the time they wanted. There was a common view that it was difficult or embarrassing to talk to someone about private or difficult issues who might be one of your subject teachers at another time.

Link to associated quotes



Who should provide support to young people in school

7.2 Parents / carers views

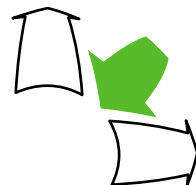
There were a range of views expressed on whether or not school is the best placed agency to provide support services

A minority (about 1 in 5 parents) felt that as school is the only place that most children and young people go to, most services should be available there. School should therefore be the first port of call with the capacity to refer children and young people on to further support in relation to education and non-education matters. It was recognised that some young people don't have freedom at home to go out and access support elsewhere. There was also a feeling that there should be an element of choice as it is often easier for young people to access support elsewhere.

Almost a third of respondents said that school should provide at least part of the support required. There was a feeling that schools weren't resourced to co-ordinate the support required by some young people who might require significant health sector resources. One parent suggested there should be **"a partnership with health authorities and social services with a multi-disciplinary team with some independence from the "educational services" as not all teachers have the gift or want to take on guidance/social work type roles, nor should they have to"**. (Parent online)

A further 1 in 3 parents responding agreed with a proposition that there should be additional voluntary or independent organisations that a child could use after school or at weekends as **"often children are made fun of because they attend support services within school"** (Parents online)

One parent said they don't know whether or not school was the best agency to provide support. One parent expressed the view that school should be the main agency to provide support to children and young people.



Who should provide support to young people in school

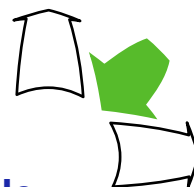
7.3 Agency views

While some agencies identified the need for guidance staff who did not also have subject teaching responsibilities, the overwhelming view of agencies was that support in school needs to come from a range of people who have the skills, knowledge and attitude that mean that young people will approach them, or ensure they have their needs properly identified. One agency commented that **“there can be no specific agency for this work.”** (on-line respondent)

One agency identified the need for a **“team approach but with clear roles and protocols/service level agreements.”** (on-line respondent) They identified what might be seen as a tiered approach, from first line support to more specialist support.

Teachers were identified as the first line in school in terms of support but several other professional groups, social workers, counsellors, youth workers, were named as appropriate members of a team of people providing what children and young people need. In relation to youth counselling services one agency said that: **“Young people often wish to speak to someone immediately. The presence of a counsellor, with their code of confidentiality, could provide a solution to this problem.”** (on-line respondent)

Whoever would provide support the particular skills or characteristics of the adults which pupils need included: someone who is accessible, has good listening skills, is non-judgemental and appreciates the importance of confidentiality.



Key issues and Conclusions

8.1 Key issues arising from the consultation with young people

Young people have raised several aspects of support in school which they considered are positive. These include support from Learning Support teachers, both in mainstream classes and in specialist settings. Young people value the caring and positive attitudes of these teachers. Support from, and relationships built with teaching and voluntary sector staff providing behaviour support are also valued. Some schools have also developed positive supports for young disabled pupils in the mainstream. In other schools approaches such as Circle Time and buddying are highlighted. When it comes to making course choices or decisions about life after school the input of Guidance teachers and Careers Scotland staff have been highlighted. There are positive reports about PSE in the secondary sector where active learning approaches are used, some young people recognise that school might be the only source of learning for them on some aspects of the PSE curriculum.

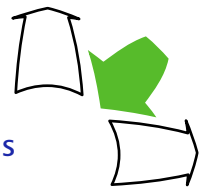
The most positive aspect of support in school is identified as being when an individual pupil has the one to one support of an accessible, friendly and caring adult.

Several aspects of support in school are viewed as unsatisfactory. Young people propose that there should be more learning support available in school and that there should be no stigma attached to using it. Detentions, suspensions and exclusions are seen as ineffective at changing behaviour. For some young people there are concerns about being labelled as problematic, or having family reputations follow them. Where specialist or targeted support is available there are concerns when it becomes more generic in its focus because effectiveness can be lost.

There are also weaknesses identified in terms of support, information and the range of choices available when subject choices are made. PSE is seen as ineffective when it is delivered by staff with little interest or expertise. Some young people appear to have little PSE input if they are out of the mainstream. Others see little reflection of their lives in the PSE curriculum, or feel adults limit or censor what is taught. On the whole schools are seen as ineffective at handling racism and bullying. Disabled pupils in the mainstream report experiences which reflect ignorance and insensitivity.

Young people are concerned about a lack of availability of support when they need it. Some staff are seen as judgemental and aggressive. Generally, Guidance staff are seen as hard to access and very busy.

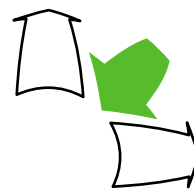
When young people attend reviews, case conferences or meetings they can feel that their views are not listened to. There is concern about the lack of confidentiality in schools and that professional people talk about pupils and make decisions when they are not present. Young people suggest that services need to focus on the positive and undertake preventative work.



Young people expressed the need for support at times of transition. This means support when choices are being made about subjects in school and about life after school. Some young people want a more practical focus to their school subjects. More extra curricular facilities and support are requested, as is an increased recognition in school of the home and community circumstances of pupils. Young people want to be able to access support and help if they want to complain about a teacher and they wanted schools to be better at preventing and responding to bullying – by both pupils and teachers. Participants expressed a need for time and places where pupils can share concerns and seek out support.

Young people talk about support services in school which should be non-stigmatising and confidential. Staff who work in such services should be accessible, impartial and non-judgemental. They should understand how confidentiality works, reward successes and not punish pupils. They should be interested, helpful and kind. Generally the young people interviewed prefer the idea that support in school should come from staff who were not also teaching them.

Fundamentally, young people want schools to be places within which there are good relationships and a positive ethos.



Key issues and Conclusions

8.2 Key issues arising from the consultation with parents / carers

Consultation with parents/carers about their experiences and hopes for support in school suggests that while many needs are currently being met, there are a number of more vulnerable children and young people whose needs are not being met as well as they could be.

Parents identify that there are gaps in the knowledge that they have about their child's schooling, and a lack of understanding about what support young people might be entitled to. Parents report a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities when it comes to inter-agency working, particularly in relation to overseeing action and considering things from the child or young person's point of view.

Parents and carers are very keen to support their children in whatever ways they can and they believe that by creating the right environment and conditions, stronger working relations can be developed with school and more issues can be addressed effectively.

According to those consulted in the course of this study, the supporting of children or young people, particularly the most vulnerable, while they are going through school is best achieved when the following conditions exist:

When a child or young person has someone who knows them well in school, sees their potential and is approachable.

When that person has the time, and resources, to provide the range of support necessary, together with a clear understanding of confidentiality.

When a holistic approach is taken to the individual child or young person.

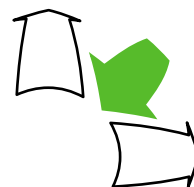
When parents or carers are able to establish good communication and relationships with school and support staff.

When there is a mutual relationship of respect between all parties; parents or carers and schools, pupils and teachers, schools and other support agencies.

When there are clear roles and responsibilities for different agencies and things get done.

When all agencies work well together in the best interests of the child.

When there is more information available to everyone, about what support is available and how to access it.



Key issues and Conclusions

8.3 Key issues arising from the consultation with agencies

Agencies identified several aspects of support in school which they see as strengths. These include aspects of interpersonal relationships and ethos, clarity in the role of staff and proactive, flexible and well resourced services. In particular accessible, sympathetic and non judgemental Guidance staff are valued. Training and support for staff that provide support services was seen as a strength of some schools. Where schools get the support for disabled pupils right, this was seen positively.

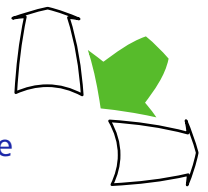
There are also concerns about weaknesses in current practices. Agencies identify lack of necessary time and training for school staff to be able to support children and young people effectively. Schools have too much of a focus on academic attainment, there is a need for more learning support in schools. There are concerns that the guidance systems in some schools have become punitive, and that schools need to be better at engaging with parents. There are also concerns that some school staff lack an appropriately caring attitude. There are concerns about the ways in which schools deal with bullying and deliver PSE.

When it comes to the relationships between pastoral care, learning support and behaviour support some participating agencies report that in some schools work is undertaken in isolation. On occasion these supports can work in isolation from other parts of the education system, sometimes isolating the young person. For example, for disabled young people there are particular concerns about a lack of integration of school based support services, which if they worked together, might help with transition to post school services and adult life. Agencies identify that it is sometimes difficult for their staff to identify who has responsibility within a school for specific areas such as looked after children or child protection.

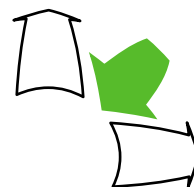
Agencies propose that young people should be served by support services which are seamless. Support services need to be flexible to respond to the needs of all pupils, and to treat pupils as individuals. Agencies suggest that every pupil should have a named person in school and that support services should be regularly evaluated.

The purpose of school based support should be to develop positive, caring, relationships. When it comes to working together agencies want school support services to value and respect the skills of other professionals. They recognise the need for school staff to have specific skills to adequately co-ordinate behaviour management strategies between home and school.

There is recognition that pupils require 'an open door', and that even when direct support cannot come from the teacher approached in the first instance, that teacher should be able to signpost a young person to what they need. There should be an ethos of person centred support. Schools should become needs led, not system led, putting the child at the centre.



While some agencies identify the need for guidance staff who do not also have subject teaching responsibilities, the overwhelming view of agencies is that support in school needs to come from a range of people who have the skills, knowledge and attitude that mean that young people will approach them, or ensure they have their needs properly identified. Teachers are identified as the first line in school in terms of support but several other professional groups, social workers, counsellors, youth workers, are named as appropriate members of a team of people providing what children and young people need.



Key issues and Conclusions

8.4 Conclusions

“I don’t know what to do if there’s a problem. If I’m feeling unhappy I don’t go to anyone.” (boy, 12 int.71)

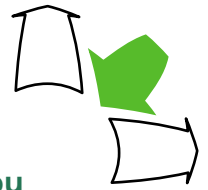
“The development of services is encouraging and we are keen not to lose sight of the many significant moves which have already been made, however, continued evaluation and adjustment to services are necessary.”
(on-line agency respondent)

The studies undertaken and reported on here could easily be read as simply over critical or as non-representative of the wider experience of young people, who for the most part get through school fine and move into adult life having successfully engaged with the system and with whatever support and guidance they may have needed along the way. To view these findings as such would be a wasted opportunity. What is contained in these findings are some clear reflections, and even clearer hopes and aspirations, about what we could be doing, and doing better.

To get to the stage where we welcome and accept both recognition and criticism, and then act to build on assets and address the deficits, we have to be open, we have to be able to critically reflect on what is currently happening in schools.

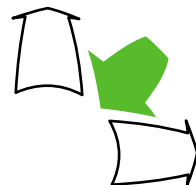
In discussing the importance and nature of critical reflection on teacher’s practice Stephen Brookfield proposes that **“We teach to change the world”**. He also recognises however that **“One of the hardest things that teachers learn is that the sincerity of their intentions does not guarantee the purity of their practice”** because **“...the cultural, psychological and political complexities of learning, and the ways in which power complicates all human relationships means that teaching can never be innocent.”** He also understands the problem when teachers read **“...poor evaluations of our teaching, often written by only a small minority of our students, and immediately conclude that we are hopeless failures.”** Nonetheless he expects that teachers engage in reflection which becomes critical because **“a critically reflective stance towards our teaching helps us avoid these traps of demoralisation and self-laceration. It might not win us easy promotion or bring us lots of friends. But it does increase enormously the chances that we will survive in the classroom with enough energy and sense of purpose to have some real effect on those we teach.”**

It is the intention of these studies to help us put in place the kinds of support that all children and young people need, and that some may need more than others. At the heart of that support needs to be a positive school ethos, dependent on the relationships which participants in this research have identified are so necessary.



In one of our small group discussions with young people one of those present summed up her view that support in school should be based on **“trust - so you can say things confidentially. Trustability, so they would only keep things quiet, would help you.”** (girl, 16 int.17) Stephen Brookfield shares such a view, and it is with this final quote that we recommend that the detail of these studies is used to positively influence the National Review of Guidance in Schools.

“Trust is the thread that ties these practices together. Through their actions teachers build or diminish the amount of trust in the world. Coming to trust another person is the most fragile of human projects. It requires knowing someone over a period of time and seeing their honesty modelled in their actions... A teacher who takes students seriously and treats them as adults shows that she can be trusted. A teacher who emphasises peer learning shows that it’s important to trust other students. A teacher who encourages students to point out to her what about her actions is oppressive, and who seeks to change what she does in response to their concerns, is a model of critical reflection. Such a teacher is one who truly is trustworthy.”



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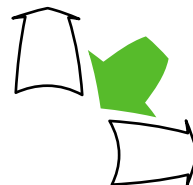
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Stephen Brookfield

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(last accessed 31st March 2004)



3.1 associated quotes

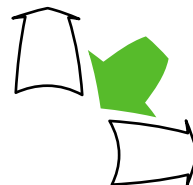
“The teachers weren’t like teachers. They were there to teach but not to be better than you. They didn’t force you to be in the class so everyone wanted to be there. They were streetwise. I was happy there, even though I got kicked out.” (girl, 17 int.28)

“It’s the only thing that’s helping. The teachers aren’t cheeky, not like normal teachers, they’re chilled. It’s a place to calm down and not get suspended.” (boy 15 int.49)

“You can ask them for key time and they’ll spend time with you. You get it every month but you can ask for extra. You talk about getting into trouble and you get a game of pool toward the end. If you’re good you still get your key time. At High School I would have talked to the Head teacher and he would have set me a detention.” (boy, 15 int.43)

“Every day we have an activity after lunch, it’s not a reward, it’s about how we learn, we need help to stop and think.” (boy 16, int.45)

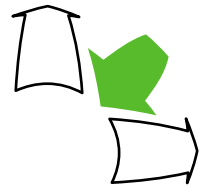
“The staff try to help you, they reward good behaviour. Learning support and behaviour support teachers do fine.” (boy, 15 int.5)



3.2 associated quotes

“They treat you like a person, they focus on you, they don’t make you feel stupid” (girl, 16, int.39)

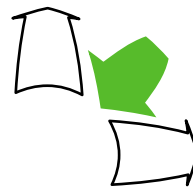
“I started school just four weeks after arriving in Scotland. The first time you’re in school you don’t understand anything. I was in the bi-lingual base to start with. I didn’t have any English before I arrived, they helped us, most Scottish people are good but some aren’t. At first people told us to go away but now it’s okay. The teachers have tried to help their best. Teachers haven’t made any mistakes.” (boy, 15 int.80)



3.4 associated quotes

“In certain schools in Glasgow the support packages for children with special educational needs is very good. It has also been my experience that most of the schools that I have clients in are happy to work in partnership with workers like myself and are sold on the benefits.” (on-line agency respondent)

“At the centre of support is the child and all parties work to ensure that inclusion means inclusion and not just integration. Continuous staff development is also very important to keep staff up to date on policy and methodology.” (on-line agency respondent)



3.8 associated quotes

“We do like games and we send round a teddy bear and who has it can talk. We sing and talk about the things we’re sad with. The group decided on the questions we use at circle time like what have I enjoyed this week and what hasn’t gone so well.” (boy, 7 int.51)

“I get a time out card. I just need to show it to a class teacher when I feel like I need to get out of the class and I can go”. (girl, 13 int.55)

“My head teacher really helped. I owe him so much, like practical help, help with transport to school after I got attacked. He was the reason I kept going to school.” (girl, 17 int.28)

“At primary school the teacher used to call in to see me at home when I was off school for three months. She was really nice to me.” (girl, 15 int.27)

“I got help when I lost my Mum. It would have been helpful if it hadn’t been so up front, teachers kept asking if I was okay. I was grateful to my music teacher though. We got on really well, informal. If I needed to get to her I could just turn up.” (girl 15 int.73)

“On one occasion a guidance teacher gave me a couple of hours to walk around and really talk things through” (girl, 18 int.31)

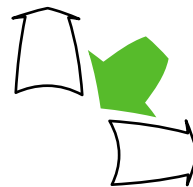
“Sometimes there’s a teacher who you know better. You don’t know your Guidance teacher. The teacher you know better will say quietly ‘do you want to talk, nobody else needs to know’” (girl, 15 int.35)

“A teacher told me he was gay. It really helped me to know I could make it.” (boy, 17 int.86)

“When I got pregnant I got support from my biology teacher – you’d have thought that would have been a Guidance teacher’s role” (girl, 17, int.21)

“Mrs. C. is nice. She helps me with numbers. When I go back to school if we’ve been travelling she always asks where I’ve been and if it’s been good. Going back to school is fine.” (girl, 9 int.23)

“I’d have attempted suicide if she hadn’t been here. I can’t think of anyone else at school who would have helped me. She made me feel I could talk to her. Sometimes I worry about coming here but then lots of people come here for lots of reasons so they don’t all have problems. When she sees me in the doorway she just says ‘come in here’. She’s so nice, she really cares about your feelings. You can tell her anything. She’s a good spokesperson to talk to teachers if you’re having a problem.” (girl, 17, int.6)



4.1 associated quotes

"If you're in bother you get a detention at lunchtime. Sometimes you don't get lunch. They leave you in a room and forget about you. If you don't learn from detention you get it again next week." (boy, 15 int.65)

"I got excluded 4 times in 1st year. I never got through a whole term once. I only had between 40 and 50% attendance." (boy, 16 int.45)

"When they suspended me it just made it worse. I just sat in the house, grounded." (boy 15 int.43)

"You get an exclusion for 2 weeks, go for a meeting with your parents, get asked to fill in a form saying you'll not be bad again. Sometimes you mean it. I just don't like schools." (boy, 14 int.47)

"I didn't have a school to go to for six months. I just sat in the house. I didn't get a teacher visiting or anything. Then they're trying to get you to school, then suspend you. What sense is there in that? I don't want to go anyway." (boy 14 int.48)

"I was branded the bad boy as soon as I came here" (boy 15 int.66)

"I used to get pulled up for things my sister did. I think that whole families are picked on by teachers." (girl, 15 int.32)

"If one teacher gives you a row it shouldn't be followed by another teacher giving you a row, like the Head or whoever. In this school one row isn't enough, and then they tell your Mum and then its another row. If you do one thing it seems everyone knows." (boy, 14 int.68)

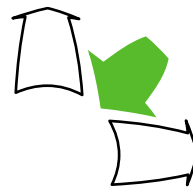
"We need regular (weekly) reporting on progress to ensure that the home/school partnership is as effective as it can be" (parent 1F)

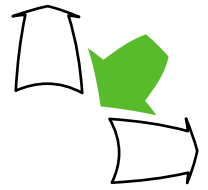
"...more specific support for parents dealing with conditions such as ADHD and Autism... more information for both parents and teachers on dealing with such conditions." (parent 5F)

"Schools tend to be reactive in their responses to behavioural issues" (parent 5F)

"... lack of activities for young people, particularly in rural communities can result in over policing of young people with for example 14 year olds being brought home in handcuffs" (parent 13F).

"... school had exhausted all the avenues for punishment... perhaps more creative approaches were required" (parent 12F)





4.2 associated quotes

“More support is needed in class, one teacher can’t get round to everyone that’s struggling” (girl, 16 int.17)

“Some classroom assistants help the whole class, some do nothing. Sometimes they just give you the answers, tell you stuff” (boy, 13 int.16)

“You got slagged off if you had a learning support teacher. They draw attention by calling you out of class by tannoying. They shout at you in front of other people. Class teachers are too busy to help with learning, you just have to wait.” (girl, 15 int.36)

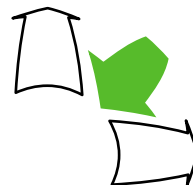
“I would have preferred to stay in the mainstream. You get more out of it, higher up in the work. I want to do mechanics but I need qualifications” (boy, 15 int.43)

“All young people should have work at their level” (parent 1F)

“There can be stigma attached to attending learning support which can sometimes lead to taunting and bullying... other subjects are missed while attending learning support sometimes resulting in getting behind there too” (parent 1F).

“... there is no empathy- it is like taking an Eskimo to mid Australia and expecting them to get on with it” (parent 8F)

“There can often be additional support for children and young people in exams, for example more time or additional technology, but there is an absence of strategies for effectively using such support” (parent 10F)



4.3 associated quotes

“The guidance system does not go out to meet parents and enable them to participate in their children’s education. It is seen as part of the ‘system’. When children are really struggling and in danger of exclusion, the guidance system has begun to be punitive and it loses parents support. A teacher’s perspective is not sufficient to obtain parent support; the additional skills of social workers can assist in supporting parents and in obtaining their co-operation to work with the school for their children’s benefit.” (on-line agency respondent)

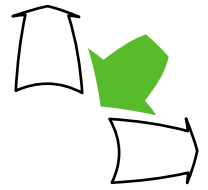
“I would have stayed longer if we had talked more and they had given me a chance to explain my situation and problems.” (girl, 18 int.30)

“Teachers don’t take the time to understand the situation at home.” (girl, 13 int.82)

“They didn’t understand my low attendance or when I was up all night looking after my Mum and fell asleep in class. They didn’t try to understand. They said I would be sent to the Children’s Panel.” (boy, 18 int.83)

“Some parents have had bad experiences of school themselves” (Agency 1A)

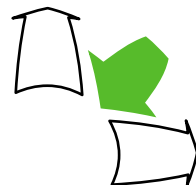
“In other groups of particularly young parents, there can be a high incidence of mental health problems and people on Prozac- there is an absence of counselling or other therapies to address issues” (Agency 7A)



4.4 associated quotes

“My record of needs says teachers should avoid confrontation but they give me books or materials to read. All I’m trying to do is ask questions and this means they don’t answer them.” (boy, 14 int.68)

“Our experience of working with young people post-school suggests that many of the problems are contextual i.e. inappropriate curriculum or approaches to learning. Vocational programmes need to be much more fully developed, timetabled and accorded equal status...this needs to be reflected in more sophisticated systems of measuring school performance.” (on-line agency respondent)



4.5 associated quotes

“It didn’t feel like much of a choice. I was in learning support, why didn’t I get to choose?” (girl, 15 int.18)

“It felt like the brainy people got their science subject choices, and the rest didn’t get a chance.” (boy, 15 int.74)

“There is no choice because there’s a shortage of staff. You just go to the class where there’s a teacher.” (girl, 15 int.96)

“You need more information about what the courses will be like later. You choose stuff without a real insight about what it’s going to be like. Bringing older pupils into to tell us what its like would be more helpful than choosing it and then wanting to change.” (girl, 14 int.72)

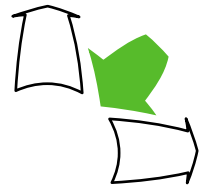
“How can you choose at 13 what you want to do, you’re just thinking what you’re doing at the weekend.” (girl, 16 int.20)

“I was never made aware of what options there were for me, I still don’t know if I have any. I don’t remember ever talking to anyone about it. I didn’t want to leave school at 16 but I didn’t feel I could stay.” (boy, 18 int.83)

“...they think we’ll corrupt them... we’re like zoo animals. The only reason we’re on this programme is so the school can get rid of us. We’ve always been seen as a group here that mucks about.” (boy, 15 int.62)

“...don’t think what I can learn at school will help much. I know what I want to do, I want to be a fisherman or work on the pier. I already do some work after school.” (boy, 12 int.71)

“I know you can’t go through life with no school, but say, could there be more chances to work. I’ve always had part time work. I’m just not a school type person.” (girl, 15 int.73)



4.6 associated quotes

“We’ve touched on drugs and alcohol. It doesn’t benefit me personally. It shouldn’t be called guidance ‘cos its not guidance.” (girl, 16 int.7)

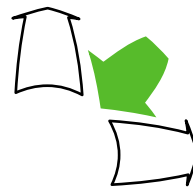
“Classes are so big you can’t talk anyway.” (girl, 17 int.6)

“I haven’t been in social ed. So I don’t know what they’ve been doing. I haven’t done what the other S4s have done.” (girl, 16 int.17)

“I went to a Catholic school first. We got sex education in our religious education class so it was set in a Catholic frame. It felt like it was censored and not about real life.” (boy, 14 int.84)

“The teacher covered pregnancy and one girl mentioned abortion as an option but the teacher wouldn’t agree and picked on the girl.” (girl, 17 int.21)

“It’s irrelevant. Totally pointless. Make it relevant, what about gays? Where are we in PSE?” (girl, 17 int.87)



4.7 associated quotes

"I preferred primary to secondary because secondary is more stressful and there's new teachers. The first couple of years are the hardest, finding out where everything is, who people are and what you're expected to do. 4th years difficult too though, there's pressure for exams." (girl, 15 int.35)

"I got a merit award every year at primary, never at secondary. I just didn't feel welcome." (girl, 16 int.39)

"Some subjects are getting harder and the homework is building up. Some nights some subjects, well they demand homework back the next day and teachers don't check out the balance of stuff over the week." (girl, 14 int.72)

"The step into 5th year is hard. I didn't study before. It was hard, like work was moderate to extremely hard. They tell you, 'you have a study period' but you didn't know how to use it." (girl, 19 int.19)

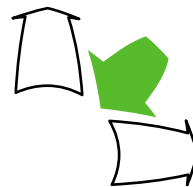
"Because information isn't passed from one school to the next they make you do the same work over and over again. I've got so many files in different places, they don't pass information on or portfolios of work you've already done." (girl, 15 int.96)

"They said I needed counselling for behaviour management and anger management but I don't see the problem. Anyway, I'm still waiting. If they say they're going to do something they never do it." (boy, 14 int.67)

"I got into trouble disrupting the class. Got sent out, detentions, letters home. For fighting too. They suggested I go to an Educational Psychologist but it never happened." (girl, 15 int.73)

"It started as a unit for pregnant young women but they introduced young people with behavioural problems and all the young women left. You just couldn't mix people together. It was dangerous, they were threatening violence. It felt like the purpose of the unit was undermined and what was the point of having a nursery there? While it was a specialist unit you could do what you needed to do." (girl, 19 int.19)

"I feel like giving up, so much else is going on. Your head is pickled. Everybody has a view. It all seems to make sense but it feels like you don't have any options. Nobody is helping... they expect my parents to pay, to support me until I'm 25, so I can't go and study, I have to work." (girl, 19 int.19)



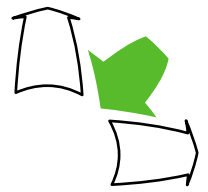
4.8 associated quotes

“Bullying should be sorted without saying the bullied person had reported it. You want to tell the teachers just one thing, they keep asking questions. It turns into a big thing. They punish them and it’s just a mess then”. (boy, 14 int.68)

“Bullying was worse in early secondary. As we grew up it got better but not for everyone. In 1st year we got the school rules. They were on the wall and got vandalised. There wasn’t any discussion about bullying. Teachers weren’t interested. Maybe they were frightened. A few teachers had bad experiences, breakdowns. Sometimes though teachers can bully pupils.... I did have a good Guidance teacher but telling made you a grass. Even when I wasn’t being bullied it was verbal harassment. It hurts you when you go home, changes your mood. I’d be angry and frustrated. People commit suicide you know... They didn’t know what to do so my Mum sent me to self defence classes for years. But when it came to being bullied I’d just still stand there and take a punch in the face. I didn’t see why I had to fight back. Why was it up to me to punch back?” (boy, 16 int.37)

“... the system of bringing the bully in front of the headmaster only works for a short time resulting in children who are victims of bullying being moved school in some cases a number of times”. (parent 1F)

“...schools can be aware of the bullying, but not able to address it leaving the victim vulnerable and often with low self esteem” (parent 10F)



4.10 associated quotes

“I have to deal with them every day. Some are alright but the rest think they’re better than you and talk to you like you’re worth nothing.” (girl, 15 int.50)

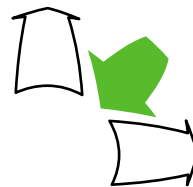
“Teachers should treat us better. Don’t shout in our faces, that just gets you pure angry and you blow your head and end up suspended.” (boy, 14 int.48)

“Even when someone is in tears they keep shouting.” (girl, 15 int.32)

“You would say you can’t do something but they don’t help you. You can tell they hate you. They keep you waiting.” (boy, 16 int.45)

“I was having a problem with one of my teachers. I got sent to the Head of House. He wanted me to face the teacher and I kept telling him I couldn’t face it but he forced me to see him. The same teacher told me to talk with a girl I’d had a row with about religion. I started crying but he forced me to do it. My parents phoned the school but they didn’t get anything back. He asked me what church I went to and told me to go to the Bible for answers. He prayed over me... I feel like he’s the elephant and I’m the mouse, he has so much power over me. He really won’t leave me alone. If he sees me he always takes the opportunity to talk to me. I avoid eye contact. I’m scared of the power he has. I’m scared of being humiliated.” (girl, 17 int.6)

“Teachers make a remark in front of the whole class or ask you questions they know you can’t answer in front of other people because it’s too complicated or personal. It makes you feel they really don’t want to know the answer.” (girl, 18 int.24)



4.11 associated quotes

“They need to be more personal, somebody you can talk to instead of someone that gives you behaviour slips. Half the time they’re in meetings. They go ‘right, that’s all I’ve got time for, now make another appointment’. Nine times out of ten they’re away at a meeting or blabbing to other teachers. They’re just not there when you need them.” (girl, 16 int.17)

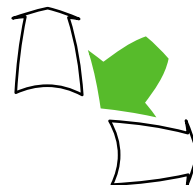
“Guidance teachers are too busy. They don’t ask you how you feel. They try to make you make decisions quickly. There’s only 5 minutes for an interview. They only want to see you if you’re in trouble.” (girl, 15 int.32)

“Although we’ve got guidance teachers you can’t talk to them. They’re subject teachers too. You need relationships that are equal, not ordering us about or telling us what to do. They can’t put their finger on what will help you, teachers think there’s one way to deal with things” (girl, 17 int.6)

“You can’t get a hold of a Guidance teacher who has responsibility for 100 people.” (girl, 19 int.19)

“Children and young people who are the most vulnerable report that they are opting out of school, and in some cases being denied an education because of the lack of support available to them. The service is under immense pressure, which also means that those with occasional or less severe support needs are being denied a quality service.... Most guidance teachers are extremely busy people with a large caseload of pupils whilst also carrying out other responsibilities in the school and so many are not available when they are needed by pupils.” (on-line agency respondent)

“Schools are deficit orientated and that achieving a balance can be difficult” (Agency 1A)

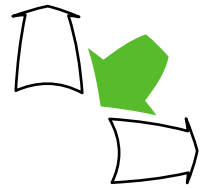


5.5 Associated quotes

“They have meetings about my future where it feels like they decide. I get tests. They have meetings about my prospects and there’ll be stuff I have to do in a year. They ask me what I want but it’s really kind of boring, I like having the spotlight but they’re a bit over the top with their questions.” (boy, 14 int.68)

“They talk about you like you’re not even there. I’d never speak my mind. Just agree, it’s easier. If I was to speak my mind I’d need to hide behind Mike Tyson... They ask you awkward questions, like what’s your problem at school, questions that are hard to answer, too big.” (boy, 14 int.4)

“They have meetings with me in school. My auntie and uncle come as well as the Guidance teacher but I don’t know if I’ll ever go back there. And there’s the Psychiatrist and my teacher and the head teacher from the special school. They talk about what I’ve been doing, sometimes it’s positive, sometimes it’s hard. They set targets like no swearing or get along with others but there’s no help to do these things.” (boy, 15, int.74)



6.1 associated quotes

“Smaller classes would be easier” (girl, 14 int.8)

“You need less people to make a smaller community, like a village rather than a city. In a village people know each other. In a city they just buzz past and don’t care.” (girl, 12, int.85)

“In 1st and 2nd year there should be a choice of subjects. You have your own ideas of life and what you want to do. I would have been happier.” (girl, 16 int.42)

“If young people aren’t interested in academic subjects they should get to do practical subjects earlier than 4th year. People get fed up of school but in 3rd year going to college makes a difference. There was new things to do, it helps you in the future thinking about jobs. It was really helpful hands on stuff.” (boy, 14 int.8)

“Schools should recognise pupils talents. There should be things like drama and concerts to be part of, to build your confidence. There should be creative activities, they help learning and happiness.” (girl, 18 int.24)

“Adults should listen and advise, I’m not involved in decisions” (boy, 15 int.98)

“It’s a huge thing going from an island to live in a city. Here everyone helps out,. They don’t tell us about how it might feel emotionally when you go away.” (girl, 16 int.7)

“You need work that’s going to get you somewhere in life. Real work so that you’re not falling behind, missing all year. I was constantly behind.” (girl, 16 int.42)

“We have to help out at home, we have jobs and responsibilities there. Less homework if you don’t mind and if we forget it don’t get us into trouble.” (boy, 14 int.68)

“If you have problems at home you should have access to a psychologist, just to talk privately and confidentially.” (girl, 17 int.70)

“If a teacher has been brought up like us they understand more and we get on with them. Our backgrounds were rough and you take that into school. If there’s heavy stuff at home you take that into school. Our parents swore, hassled us. You can’t go back and change any of that, if I could I would, I’d stick in.” (boy, 18 int.46)

“Surely there should be some choice in your Guidance teacher, some way to



pick or change them, especially if you have a difficult relationship with one.” (girl, 12 int.21)

“You need to be able to complain about staff that are humiliating you, but you need to be sure you’re not just complaining to their friend.” (girl, 17 int.21)

“Everyone should have a panel where you can go and say what you want to about what’s not right. Give your views, and if you’ve got an issue with a teacher you need somewhere to go to resolve it.” (boy, 16 int.45)

“Young people should feel confident about going to school, especially moving from primary to secondary school. But you have fears about bullying and violence. Schools should have a strong approach to bullying. They should make an effort to get people to know each other, to get along. They should have common rooms for everyone that they design and manage or more activity days and things where pupils have to work together.” (girl, 16 int.38)

“Teachers should stop to find out why you are doing what you are doing” (girl, 18 int.30)

“Make sure that everyone has a slot to speak to someone on a regular basis, whether they use it or not. You should always know someone is there for you.” (girl, 18 int.24)

“Schools should give people one to one that definitely need it. They should surely use your record of needs to assess who needs it, not just the bad folk.” (girl, 16 int.17)

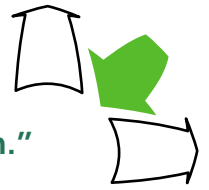
“If I’d have got what needed I’d have got better grades, maybe even a job. I’d be a better person.” (boy, 17 int.44)

“I had a lot of detention even in primary school. I was kept in at lunch and breaks. It didn’t help. Time out would have helped. Time to go through work so that they’d know what you were struggling with.” (girl 16 int.42)

“You need a place where someone is available to talk to and always from the start of school to the end of the day. Everyone should have their own teacher to talk to. Just now if you really want to talk to them just be bad and get a detention.” (girl, 14 int.18)

“You need trust - so you can say things confidentially. Trustability, so they would only keep things quiet, would help you.” (girl, 16 int.17)

“Confidentiality is not telling anyone else in school anything but if someone is in real danger, like suicide or in danger then the counsellor person could refer the on to someone else.” (girl, 19 int.19)



“My school has no toilet paper in the toilets in case someone blocks them.”
(girl, 16 int.88)

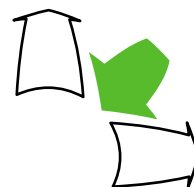
“...should use art and colour to make school feel less industrial.” (girl, 14
int.72)

“You need support, not bitching. They need to sit beside you and talk to you,
make you feel better. As you get older you see things better. You don’t have
to shout to get a row, no raised voices.” (boy, 17 int.44)

“...it would have helped if the school wanted to help me” (boy, 15 int.43)

“I feel like I’d like more help but it’s hard to ask if you don’t know the
teacher well. Feel like I’m struggling a bit but its not noticed in class. I’m left
behind. People aren’t always noticed.” (boy, 14 int.84)

“Comfortable is when teachers and pupils are friendly, no hassle. A place
where you feel safe from anything. Teachers don’t know that through time if
they keep shouting at you, you just go mad.” (boy, 18 int.46)



6.2 associated quotes

“Parents should be listened to more” (parent 1F)

“There should be more information on effective strategies parents could use and the services available to support them” (parent 8F).

“...an independent broker to work on behalf of the child or young person; such a person should have a detailed knowledge of finding their way through the system” (parent 6F).

“Support in school should be viewed from the point of view of social investment in young people rather than guidance which tends to focus on negatives” (parent 13F)

“...there should be a strengthening of home school links with the provision of more information on the curriculum and education system from before a child starts school through to on-going communication once they have started” (parent online).

“If we were more involved in the methods used in school then we could reinforce them at home” (parent online)

“Perhaps a monthly session when parents could drop in” (parent 5F)

“Make school more welcoming to parents, perhaps with a parent’s room” (parent 5F)

“Consider the format for parents/ carers sessions as large halls with queues of people can be very intimidating and lack privacy” (parent 15F)

“Encourage more parents to help in school” (parent 5F)

“Have more home books to mark progress” (parent 5F)

“More two way communication without causing alarm” (parent 5F)

“...what about the chance to speak to inspectors on reports” (parent 8F)

“...an occasional opportunity to meet the Director of Education once in a while” (parent 7F)

“...teachers are not aware of their behaviour which could be regarded as bullying” (parent online)



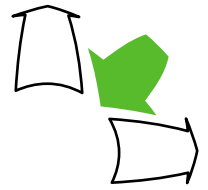
“...teachers should speak to pupils rather than shout at them.... more of a culture of respect within some schools where pupils weren’t referred to as “YOU” and were listened to “(parent 7F).

“... would like to see better mechanisms for getting agencies together” (parent 5F).

“It is voluntary sector agencies which have been most effective in engaging with families” (parent 12F)

“Social work is quite often absent” (parent 11F)

“Sometimes assumptions can be made that because pupil is from a middle class and intellectually capable family that there is less need for guidance/support” (parent online)



6.3 associated quotes

“Individual children’s needs should be met. An individual package available in every school, allowing children to not feel different for receiving support. Also to involve and co-ordinate all the services working with the child and his/her family.” (on-line agency respondent)

“The young people should be at the centre and empowered to guide the services into providing services that meet their needs. Schools need to become a needs led service that puts the individual pupil at the centre of any support service provided.” (on-line agency respondent)

“Need some kind of special person for the child to co-ordinate services to make sure the child’s needs are being fully met” (on-line agency respondent)

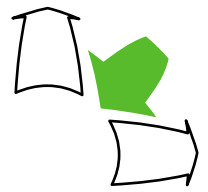
“Someone in school to get to know the child, get a handle on what goes on for them, and then work out how to help them from there.” (on-line agency respondent)

“Different agencies have different views of child protection procedures... the embedding of certain practices in joint working arrangements is helpful” (Agency 8A)

“Communication could still be improved as there is so much information to keep up with. Different agencies see things from their own points of view. Trust and continuity of aims together with mutual respect are top of the wish list” (Agency 6A)

“Community development workers should be employed in schools, especially special schools. They could encourage schools to think about connecting pupils within their community. I believe this is just as important as learning reading, writing and arithmetic. Schools are for learning, what better subject to learn about than people?” (on-line agency respondent)

“Children leaving school early to attend college, often because they can’t cope at school or are bad attendees, are presently unable to access any funds for college course equipment... therefore a vulnerable person can attend college but is not entitled to money from either institution... Presently money has to be sourced from wherever possible, taking unnecessary time and resources when it should be clear which institution is responsible.” (on-line agency respondent)



7.1 associated quotes

“You need someone who notices if you are struggling so you don’t always have to ask for help first.” (girl, 12 int.85)

“You need somebody who can do something about what they are told. Class teachers are limited to their class, sometimes things are bigger.” (boy 12 int.57)

“Somebody impartial, not your subject teacher or guidance teacher. Like someone you can make an appointment to see or someone that wants to check in with you so you don’t feel like you’re bothering them.” (girl, 17 int.21)

“You need a person specifically for kids in care, someone who understands what life is really like, streetwise and has made mistakes themselves.” (girl, 17 int.28)

“You need a helpful person, like a brother or sister to you, somebody that’ll listen. You expect confidentiality.” (girl, 14 int.18)

“They would take time to find out who you are and not make assumptions” (girl, 15 int.34)

“A supportive person would be like the bilingual base teachers. They care more, they support us. Someone who cares, looks after you, protects you.” (boy, 15 int.80)

“An adult you can talk to about anything that worries you. They should be nice and not grumpy. They shouldn’t give children rows unless they really deserve it. They shouldn’t take points off, that feels awful.” (girl, 9 int.23)

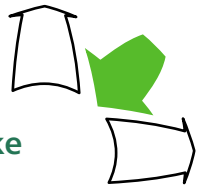
“People should be kind.” (boy, 8 int.75)

“You need to talk to someone when you need to. Someone who you can talk to about feelings. People need to be friendly and open otherwise people stay closed. I don’t think I would go to a teacher, it would feel weird, they’re okay for school work but it feels like teachers should be teachers. If it was someone who was separate from school it would help, it would still feel like school though but not as bad.” (girl, 14 int.72)

“Someone where it’s their only job, not second to teaching.” (girl, 15 int.27)

“Like a teacher without the hassle. Like if everyone was to vote for someone who you could go to and could go to teachers on your behalf, but they don’t teach. Someone you can see whenever you need to, like they’re not teaching too...someone that doesn’t just say cheer up and get on with your work.” (boy, 14 int.68)

“Guidance people aren’t the kind of people we’d want to go to. She’d take the schools side. She’s not interested. She doesn’t care.” (boy, 15 int. 63)



SUPPORT IN SCHOOL
THE VIEWS OF HARDER TO REACH GROUPS

