WORKING OUT WELL

Effective Provision for Excluded Pupils

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The research documented in this report set out to study a range of interventions and activities which deal with pupils who have been permanently excluded from school. Provision highlighted by LEAs themselves as 'innovative and effective' formed the focus of the study. The report presents the kinds of provision and support currently available within the Education Service (in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and other specialist units), as well as the contributions made by other agencies including Health and Social Services. Particular attention has been given to examples of multi-agency approaches and liaison. Three aims were outlined at the beginning of the research:

- to identify a range of activity, support and intervention available to permanently excluded pupils, including those exhibiting serious offending behaviours within the mainstream school;

- to study the processes and components of these strategies (including reintegration), in order to ascertain key factors in successful post-exclusion support; and

- to analyse the effects of these interventions and determine the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of various approaches.

METHODOLOGY

In June 1998, all local education authorities in England and Wales (181 in total) were contacted via a letter addressed initially to their Director of Education. The letter sought to collect information concerning effective practice in the provision available for permanently excluded children. To this end, it was requested that the letter be forwarded to the most appropriate individual within the LEA and that person then completed a simple pro forma. By September 1998, 67 replies had been received and these were followed up by telephone interviews to obtain further information on the provisions highlighted.

Following the telephone interviews, 30 LEAs representing a range of provisions were visited between December 1998 and March 1999. Initial visits entailed interviews with staff at both strategic and operational levels. Seven authorities were then invited to feature as case studies in the research and further visits were completed to ascertain the impact of the provisions, in terms of the effects and outcomes. Hence, interviews were conducted with young people themselves, as well as parents, members of staff and, where relevant, representatives from other agencies.

In total, 198 people were interviewed, which included subsamples of 39 young people and 11 parents. A wide range of individuals from other agencies also participated in the research, as outlined in the table below:

Agency	Number of interviewees
Pupil Referral Services (or equivalent)*	47
Education services	19
Youth Service	13
Social Services	12
Schools	11
Training providers	11
Education Welfare Service	7
Voluntary agencies	7
Youth Justice/Youth Offending Teams	5
Behaviour Support Service	4
Colleges	3
Careers Service	3
Educational Psychology Service	3
Work experience providers	2
Independent organisations	1

*   *Category includes secondary tuition centres, education support services, student support services, pupil services, alternative education*

This study covers the issues surrounding permanently excluded pupils specifically, although quite clearly, in some instances, this provision also catered for children at risk of exclusion, who were being offered alternative provision to ensure their continued inclusion in education and learning. In addition, given the aims and focus of this study outlined previously, the provision identified by LEAs related predominantly to the secondary phase of education. Strategies aimed at providing alternative education in key stage 4 are also discussed in a contiguous NFER study (Cullen *et al*, forthcoming).

Since the fieldwork was completed for this study, a number of publications have arisen which are concerned with the reduction of exclusion and subsequent educational provision. Circular 10/99 (GB. DfEE, 1999) outlines the introduction of Pastoral Support Programmes, for supporting disaffected young people in school, as well as the use of exclusion. Circular 11/99 (GB. DfEE 1999a) addresses education outside of school, pupils at risk of exclusion, the education and reintegration of excluded pupils and Pupil Referral Units. Finally, the Social Exclusion Unit recently published their report *Bridging the Gap* (GB. Parliament, House of Commons, 1999), which investigated the number of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, work or training and the associated reasons why. Clearly, the Government agenda has attempted to make schools take more responsibility for their disaffected pupils and given the planned investment in 'Social Inclusion' through the Standard Funds from April 2000, the completion of this study is both timely and appropriate. The report should therefore have relevance to schools as well as LEAs.

ABOUT THE REPORT

The report that follows relays the study's findings in the following structure:

Chapter One: **Provision for excluded pupils**
This chapter presents coverage of the main types of provision, and includes illustrations and cameos of various initiatives.

Chapter Two: **Operational issues and concerns**
This chapter engages with some of the key concerns, problems and dilemmas which provision for excluded pupils raised.

Chapter Three: **Effects and outcomes**
This section presents the range of effects and outcomes associated with provision for excluded pupils: effects on pupils as well as parents, agencies and staff are covered. A typology of effects appears at the beginning of the chapter.

Chapter Four: **Issues of effectiveness**
This chapter covers what interviewees nominated as the features or factors of their provision that accounted for its success in re-engaging young people. A typology of 'effectiveness' and summaries of the factors identified are presented.

Chapter Five: **Cost-effectiveness issues**
This chapter explores some of the issues surrounding – as well as interpretations of – cost-effectiveness, and delineates between 'extrinsic', 'intrinsic' and 'evidential' accounts. Thus, some versions of cost-effectiveness proffered by interviewees stressed the 'extrinsic' value added of provision in terms of savings to society, other agencies and the LEA, while others referred to the value-for-money inherent to the programmes.

One of the major themes of this report is to identify a continuum of provision that supports permanent excludees, who are at different stages of disengagement and distance, both psychologically and temporally, from mainstream schooling. The research particularly highlighted exclusion panels; reintegration to mainstream programmes; work-related alternative provision and finally 'combined alternative learning programmes' which worked with the more extreme cases of alienated or disaffected young people.

For readers particularly interested in pursuing one of these types of initiative, the relevant information can be found as follows:

Type of provision	Description of provision	Effects/outcomes	Effectiveness factors
Multi-agency panels *Summary chart*	pp. 14–16 p. 36	pp. 94–96	p. 131
Reintegration with mainstream curriculum *Summary chart*	pp. 17–21 p. 37	pp. 96–101	p. 132
Work-related learning programmes *Summary charts*	p. 21–25 pp. 38, 39, 40	pp. 101–102	p. 133
Combined alternative learning programmes *Summary charts*	pp. 25–29 pp. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45	pp. 102–104	
Personal and social development programmes *Summary chart*	pp. 30–31 p. 46	pp. 104–106	
Work with young offenders *Summary chart*	p. 31–33 p. 47	p. 106–107	

CHAPTER ONE
PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS:
A DESCRIPTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a descriptive account of the range of provision for permanently excluded pupils that was identified within the study. Firstly, a brief overview of the activity highlighted in the initial phase of the project will be presented, providing a very broad overview of the range of activities LEA personnel highlighted as effective practice for permanently excluded pupils. This is followed by a more detailed descriptive account of the initiatives examined within Phase One of the study, the 30 selected LEAs, within which a range of factors pertinent to each type of provision are discussed. The chapter concludes with a number of cameos illustrating, in more depth, a range of initiatives encountered during the research.

1.2 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: THE LEA RESPONSE

In the initial phase of the study, all LEAs were invited to indicate, by completing a pro forma, any examples of innovative and effective practices in relation to permanently excluded pupils. Sixty-seven LEAs replied and telephone interviews were then conducted, during which LEA personnel were asked to provide a brief description of:

- the project or practice they had identified;
- the agencies involved; and
- the pupil clientele.

A wide range of strategies and interventions was identified and, equally, practices involving a large number of agencies were noted. Although the study was not focusing on preventative strategies, about a fifth of LEA personnel (14 out of the 67) stressed that they were targeting resources on preventative work and identified preventative strategies as effective and/or innovative work in this area. Strategic-level preventative interventions focused mainly on:

- multi-agency or multi-disciplinary forums for discussion of cases;
- implementation of support packages; and
- data collection regarding pupils with behavioural difficulties and those at risk of exclusion.

Operational-level interventions included examples of general practice, as well as specific projects. The work of a range of support staff was highlighted by the respondents, including outreach from Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), the Behaviour Support Service, other agencies specifically appointed to work within schools and

multi-agency teams providing support packages for pupils at risk of exclusion. Also at the operational level, a range of specific projects targeted at addressing the personal and social needs of specific groups of pupils at risk of exclusion or aimed at preventing offending behaviour were also identified.

Although there was considerable overlap in many cases with provision for pupils with behaviour problems and those at risk of exclusion, permanently excluded pupils were the main focus for this study. Of the strategies aimed at addressing the needs of permanently excluded pupils, examples of both general practices, where interventions identified were an integral part of the ongoing work of services, and specific projects were presented. The majority of strategies focused on work directly targeted at excluded pupils, that is, at an operational level, whilst a few LEA personnel identified strategic-level interventions that were concerned with decision-making and planning within the LEA (e.g. decision-making panels), all of which focused on excluded pupils.

The provision for permanently excluded pupils was categorised according to the type of activity using the information obtained in the telephone interviews. Each type of provision is presented in rank order in Table 1.1, according to the number of respondents who chose to identify the provision. The table, therefore, refers only to the activities that interviewees chose to describe, in response to the request for effective and innovative practices or projects aimed at permanently excluded pupils. Some interviewees focused on more than one type of provision.

Table 1.1   Number of respondents identifying different types of provision

Provision	No. of respondents identifying the provision (n=67)
Work-related learning schemes, including college placement, work experience and/or training	46
Interventions aimed at reintegrating pupils into mainstream schools	34
Interventions aimed at addressing offending behaviour	31
Off-site centres, usually PRUs, providing a 'mainstream' curriculum for excluded pupils	22
Multi-disciplinary or multi-agency panels making decisions about placement of excluded pupils and, in some cases, monitoring exclusions	15
Personal and social development programmes	8

Source: Telephone interviews conducted in the initial phase of the study (1998)

Over two-thirds of respondents chose to focus on alternative provision for permanently excluded pupils, reflecting the increasing emphasis placed on the need

for viable educational alternatives for these pupils. At the same time, however, over half of the respondents highlighted interventions aimed at reintegrating excluded pupils into mainstream schools, suggesting that a high priority was also placed on re-entry into the normal mainstream environment, alongside their peers. Whilst PRUs have traditionally offered education for excluded pupils, only a third of LEA personnel chose to highlight practices within such off-site centres as innovative or effective. The need for multi-agency working as a means of addressing the needs of pupils with complex difficulties, such as those permanently excluded from school, has been a feature of much recent Government legislation (e.g. GB. DfEE, 1998 and 1999). Not surprisingly, therefore, just under a quarter of respondents chose to select practices with multi-disciplinary and multi-agency panels at their core. Projects and practices in which the main focus was one of personal and social development, although highlighted by less than one-eighth of respondents, indicate the recognition of the need to address issues wider than just the educational needs of this group of pupils and to take a more holistic approach.

1.2.1 Multi-agency involvement

In addition to a wide range of activity, a variety of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary involvement was identified. This included agency and service involvement in preventative strategies, in addition to interventions aimed at permanently excluded pupils. Table 1.2 indicates the range of agencies referred to by interviewees, which is given in rank order. (This table summarises the agencies and services interviewees chose to highlight and may not be considered to be a comprehensive list of multi-agency and service involvement with permanently excluded pupils.)

Table 1.2 The agencies and services referred to by interviewees

Outside agencies involved in rank order	Educational services involved in rank order
Social Services Youth Justice Service Health Service Police Voluntary agencies Local employers Training providers Careers Service	Education Welfare Service FE colleges Educational Psychology Service Youth Service Behaviour Support Service Learning Support Service

Source: Telephone interviews conducted in the initial phase of the study (1998)

The telephone interviews provided a broad overview of the role played by different agencies and services in addressing the needs of permanently excluded pupils. Over two-thirds of respondents mentioned Social Services involvement in their work with excluded pupils, whilst other outside agencies were noted by less than one-third. There appears, therefore, to be recognition that social issues impact on children's education and this again reflects the emphasis placed recently on joint working by the

Government. Involvement of the Education Welfare Service was noted by over half of all respondents, indicating the widening of the Service's role to include a significant remit in assisting with addressing the needs of this group of pupils. Further education colleges, too, were noted by about one-third of respondents, suggesting the increasing need for schools to utilise this sector's resources to enhance the learning opportunities for such pupils. About a quarter of respondents referred to the Youth Service's involvement and this may indicate increasing recognition that taking a different and informal approach may achieve something particularly significant for this group of youngsters.

Links with the Health Service, however, featured far less prominently, suggesting that this may be an area for development. Although permanent excludees are often in their final two years of schooling and many struggle to contemplate their future because of their complex difficulties, there appeared to be little involvement of the Careers Service, referred to by only eight respondents, and this too perhaps suggests an area for development. Learning Support Services were also noted by less than one-tenth of respondents, despite emphasis having been placed on the links between behaviour and learning difficulties, and perhaps this may also be an area that warrants some attention.

1.2.2 The role of outside agencies

Table 1.3 provides a concise overview of the activities outside agencies were reported to be involved in with regard to permanent excludees. By far the most common outside agency referred to by interviewees was Social Services. Social Services' involvement mainly focused on direct work with excluded pupils either as part of a multi-agency team or through attachment to a PRU or Pupil Referral Service. In this way, the social needs of pupils who had been excluded could be addressed alongside their educational needs. Three LEAs had joint education and Social Services provision for excluded pupils and/or looked after children. Three interviewees also referred to joint Social Services and education funding for pupils who were both 'looked after' and excluded. Within some authorities, Social Services were also involved at strategic level in multi-agency panels, thus allowing pupils' social needs to be taken into account when deciding the most appropriate placement for them.

The work of the Youth Justice Service, the police and the Probation Service was aimed at addressing offending behaviour directly, although these services were involved at strategic level in a few LEAs. Voluntary agencies, local employers and training providers all had a clear role in providing alternative learning experiences for excluded pupils. Where the Careers Service was involved, pupils were offered individual interviews focusing on their future and developing personal action plans, as well as group work looking at more general issues to do with careers and the work environment.

Table 1.3   The range of activities in which outside agencies were reported to be involved

Agency/service	Activities
Social Services	- part of a multi-agency team working with excluded pupils - direct work with excluded pupils in the PRU or on specific projects - joint Education and Social Services provision for excluded pupils - part of a multi-agency panel making decisions about excluded pupils - joint Social Services and Education funding for excluded pupils - involvement in Youth Offending Teams - joint training with Education - joint meetings with Education to discuss cases
Youth Justice Service	- involvement in Youth Offending Teams - direct work with excluded pupils in the PRU - part of a PRU multi-agency team - involvement in and access to exclusion panels
Health Service	- access through Behaviour Support Teams for 'acting out' pupils - discussion of strategies for working with excluded pupils with educational staff - providing reports on pupils for an exclusion panel - involvement in projects for excluded pupils with a health focus - access to a multi-agency team working with excluded pupils
Police	- provision of out-of-school activities for pupils at risk of offending - involvement in multi-agency exclusion panels - involvement in Youth Offending Teams - education involvement in 'caution plus' meetings run by the police
Probation Service	- involvement in exclusion steering groups - direct work with pupils aimed at reducing offending behaviour - involvement in the Youth Offending Teams
Voluntary agencies	providing alternative learning experiences for excluded pupils
Local employers	providing alternative work experiences for excluded pupils
Training providers	providing alternative learning experiences for excluded pupils
Careers Service	individual and group work with pupils through projects or the PRU

Source: Telephone interviews conducted in the initial phase of the study (1998)

1.2.3 The role of education services

Table 1.4 presents the range of activities in which education services were reported to be involved. The Education Welfare Service and FE colleges were the most common education-related agencies identified by interviewees as being involved in provision for excluded pupils. The work of the Education Welfare Service focused on direct work with those at risk of exclusion as well as excluded pupils, although in some LEAs they were also involved at a strategic level, such as involvement in multi-agency panels. They worked as part of multi-agency teams, as individual workers attached to PRUs and were also involved in specific projects. Further education

colleges, like voluntary agencies, local employers and training providers, had a clear role in providing alternative learning experiences and an alternative learning environment for excluded pupils. They offered a range of courses, including those with a more vocational focus and basic skills opportunities.

Youth Service involvement usually centred around direct work with individuals or groups aimed at addressing the personal and social needs of pupils. In some LEAs, the Youth Service appeared to have developed a major role in providing programmes for excluded pupils and one respondent described the Youth Service as the '*main provider*' for pupils out of school. In only a few cases was the Youth Service involved at a more strategic level in decision-making and planning.

The role of the Educational Psychology Service was reported by interviewees to be in direct work with individuals, particularly assessment of their needs and involvement in strategic groups with responsibility for excluded pupils. The Behaviour and Learning Support Services appeared to form part of a multi-disciplinary team working directly with permanently excluded pupils or were represented on panels with responsibility for the placement of pupils.

Table 1.4 The range of activities in which education services were reported to be involved

Education services	Activities
Education Welfare Service	• direct work with pupils as part of a multi-agency team or PRU • pre-permanent exclusion meetings • reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools • involvement in specific projects • involvement in exclusion panels • preventative work with pupils at risk of exclusion • involvement in strategic working groups • multi-agency meetings addressing offending behaviour
Colleges	• provision of alternative learning experiences for excluded pupils
Educational Psychology	• direct work with excluded pupils through a PRU or behaviour support service, particularly assessment • direct work with pupils as part of a multi-agency team • involvement in steering groups • involvement in multi-agency and multi-disciplinary panels
Youth Service	• main provider for pupils out of school • preparation for employment • group work on personal and social development • part of a multi-agency team within the PRU • support for pupils (and their families) with offending behaviour
Behaviour/Learning Support Services	• direct work with pupils as part of a multi-agency team • involvement in multi-disciplinary placement panels

Source: Telephone interviews conducted in the initial phase of the study (1998)

1.3 THE PROVISIONS IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE 30 LEAS VISITED

Having examined the range of activities identified within the initial phase of the study and the different agencies and services involved, we now present a more detailed account of the initiatives aimed at permanently excluded pupils highlighted in the 30 LEAs visited. LEAs were selected mainly on the basis of the initiatives they identified, although consideration was also given to the selection of a sample that covered different types and sizes of LEA. Initiatives were considered with specific criteria in mind, including whether they had multi-agency input, whether their work focused on pupils with offending behaviour, the perceived effectiveness of the initiative and whether the project or practice was nominated as innovative by the LEA.

Interviews were conducted with LEA staff at both strategic and operational levels, during which they were asked to provide a brief overview of the initiative, outlining how it came about, who managed it and the main objectives. The interviews also covered which agencies were involved and their roles, the pupil clientele, the criteria for selection and the referral procedure, in addition to details about how the initiative worked and the opportunities for pupils to be reintegrated into mainstream education.

A number of initiatives involving a wide range of strategies were identified and many of the LEAs mentioned more than one aspect of their provision, creating a quite complex picture overall. However, the initiatives identified were organised into a typology that is presented in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5   Typology of the initiatives

Type	Description
Multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panels	Panels making decisions about permanently excluded pupils and accessing other forms of provision.
Reintegration with an off-site mainstream curriculum	Provision involving reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools and delivery of an off-site mainstream curriculum, mainly offered in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or through a Pupil Referral Service.
Work-related learning programmes	Programmes in which either college, work experience or training provision were the main component.
Combined alternative learning programmes	Initiatives in which a combination of basic skills, work experience or training and personal and social education and leisure were offered.
PSE programmes	Programmes in which PSE was the main component.
Work with young offenders	Initiatives in which the main focus of the work was with young offenders and, as such, they were delivered outside of, although linked to, the education system.

The different types of provision identified are presented visually in the form of a continuum in Table 1.6 on p. 13, on the basis of the degree of disaffection experienced by the pupils they catered for. The continuum ranges from mainstream education, catering for the majority of pupils at one end, to combined alternative learning programmes, which cater for the most disaffected and most challenging pupils at the other. The panel process forms a bridge between mainstream education and provision that lies outside the mainstream system. It was noted that personal and

social education programmes and work with young offenders may take place at any point along the continuum. It was also noted that options for pupils permanently excluded in Year 9 might be limited.

A description of each type of provision follows. This includes, for each type of provision:

- how the provision was managed;
- the referral procedure;
- referral criteria;
- the client group; and
- how the provision was evaluated.

In addition, sections are included which are specifically relevant to the type of provision being discussed.

Table 1.6   The continuum of provision

Increasing distance away from mainstream education ────────>

PROVISION	The panel process	Reintegration with mainstream curriculum	Work-related learning programmes	Combined alternative learning programmes
CLIENT GROUP	Excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion, either pupils of all ages, or secondary pupils only	Excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion with behavioural problems, all secondary pupils or Years 9 to 11 only	Excluded pupils in Years 10 and 11 who tend to be pupils with behaviour difficulties that can be managed relatively easily	Pupils in Years 10 and 11, often with complex difficulties, who have been unable to access any other forms of educational provision
TYPE OF INTERVENTION	Pupils reintegrated into a mainstream school with support	Pupils reintegrated following a short-term intervention with mainstream curriculum delivery and some follow-up support	College, work and training placements. Pupils are unlikely to be considered for reintegration	Reintegration into mainstream education is not an option as pupils have become too far removed from the mainstream system

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│ **Personal and social development programmes** │
│ **and** │
│ **Work with young offenders** │
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1.3.1 Multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panels

Nine of the 30 LEAs altogether noted some form of panel through which permanently excluded pupils were processed and five proposed the panel as their main initiative. These five will be discussed in detail here. Panels were set up in response to concerns about the number of pupils out of school and the unfair distribution of permanently excluded pupils amongst mainstream schools. The aims of panels, therefore, were to reduce the number of pupils out of school and to distribute permanently excluded pupils fairly. Panels made decisions with regard to excluded pupils and accessed other forms of provision. Some also had a monitoring role. In four, reintegration was described as an integral part of the panel process. Within these four, reintegration into mainstream education was considered to be a main aim of the panel process, which was used to decide the receiving school and to organise support for the pupil. Where a panel was in place to endorse this process, pupils did not automatically attend the PRU, but might be reintegrated immediately into another school depending on their individual circumstances, for example, if a one-off incident had led to exclusion. Panels feature in a number of the small high-excluding London boroughs within the sample of LEAs.

Management

Typically, the panels had multi-agency representation and were usually either endorsed or overseen by the Education Service.

The referral procedure

In three cases, the LEA was automatically notified of a permanent exclusion by schools and an LEA representative presented cases to the panel. In one case, this only happened once pupils had been rejected by the parents' first choice of school (except for 'looked after' pupils). In another LEA, any of the agencies represented on the multi-disciplinary panel could nominate referrals. One panel tried to operate in a more preventative way, and the aim was for schools to refer direct to the panel prior to exclusion.

Referral criteria

For all the panels, permanent exclusion was one of the main criteria for referral and, whilst two catered for pupils of all ages, two catered only for secondary-aged pupils. One authority had a two-tier panel system in which pupils of all ages went to a multi-agency panel and those suitable for reintegration in the secondary age range then went to a multi-disciplinary exclusion panel for placement. The point at which panels intervened in the exclusion process varied. An additional criterion to be met in one authority was that pupils had been rejected by one school and were therefore considered '*hard to place*' (except 'looked after' pupils). On the other hand, referrals of all pupils that agencies were concerned about were accepted in another. An interviewee within one authority also specified that the panel would not consider pupils with statements of special educational need or those from out of the borough.

Pupils

The number of excluded pupils passing through the panel process ranged from 25 to 107 in any one year. The majority of pupils were boys. All interviewees indicated

that pupils passing through the panels exhibited a wide range of behaviour, and extreme behaviours such as the use of weapons and assaults on teachers were noted. The ethnicity of pupils tended to reflect that of the local area, although in one authority an interviewee commented that they were a '*high excluder of black boys*'. The ethnicity of permanently excluded pupils is discussed further in Chapter Two of this report, which relates to issues and concerns of interviewees.

Panel representation

Panels were either multi-agency or had Education Service representation only. Two panels were multi-agency, with Social Services being included in both, although one had a much wider multi-agency representation (see Illustration 1). This allowed the panel to consider the pupils' needs as a whole, rather than just their educational needs, to take a wide spectrum of information into account when deciding the most appropriate provision and to access a broad range of provision. Three panels had exclusively educational representation. One comprised governors, the LEA and headteachers only, whilst others had wider educational representation, including the Education Welfare Service (EWS), the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department within the LEA.

Illustration 1

A multi-agency panel, with representation from secondary headteachers, the Educational Psychology Service, the Education Welfare Service, the police, the Youth Crime Reduction Service, Social Services, the Youth Justice Service and colleges, takes referrals of permanently excluded pupils from schools. Information is collected by the LEA from pupils' previous schools and, following discussion, the panel makes recommendations regarding appropriate provision from a range of alternatives, including reintegration into mainstream school, attendance at the PRU, part-time college placement or vocational training through a voluntary organisation.

The panel process

Panels met weekly, fortnightly, or when there were cases to discuss and they made decisions regarding the most appropriate provision for excluded pupils. Options generally included reintegration into another mainstream school, special needs provision, PRU placement, college placement and, in some cases, work or training placement. Where reintegration was considered appropriate, the panel usually decided the most appropriate mainstream school for pupils. In one authority, a separate multi-disciplinary panel dealt with reintegration and selected the most appropriate mainstream school (see Illustration 2).

Illustration 2

A multi-agency panel, with LEA, Educational Psychology, Education Welfare and Social Services representation, accepts referrals of pupils about whom agencies are concerned, including permanently excluded pupils. Prior to the meeting, the Education Welfare Officer and the social worker conduct a home visit to collect information about the pupil. Following discussion, the panel decides the most appropriate provision for them. Pupils to be reintegrated into another mainstream school are then referred to the exclusion panel where representatives from the LEA, the Learning Support Service, the SEN department and headteachers from secondary schools select an appropriate school. They take into account a number of factors, including parental choice, the background of the pupil and information about the schools within the LEA.

Panels made informed decisions based on information collected about the background of the pupils and the local schools. In two cases (as illustrated above), an Education Welfare Officer, one with a social worker, conducted a home visit to collect information for the panel prior to the meeting. However, in others, information was obtained by the LEA from the excluding school (see Illustration 3).

Illustration 3

The LEA is automatically notified of a permanent exclusion by schools and the panel, consisting of governors, a headteacher and LEA representation, is set up when required. The LEA collates background information about the pupil from the excluding school. At the meeting, the case is discussed in detail and the pupil is matched to another mainstream school, taking many factors into account. These include parental preference, location, pupil characteristics and friendship groups, in addition to the characteristics of the local schools and knowledge of the year groups. In this way, the panel attempts to identify the best match possible. A letter is then sent to the governors of the receiving school outlining the reasons for their choice. The school has five days in which to object to the decision and put their case forward, although the panel may still decide that the best school was selected. Information about the pupil is sent to the school and parents are then asked to contact the school direct.

In some cases, another function of the panel, in addition to decision-making, was to monitor pupils out of school and, where stated, this was achieved by using a database. This information was said to be invaluable in enabling the LEA to account for all pupils out of school.

Evaluation

It was rare for interviewees to refer to any formal evaluation of the panel process: it was more likely to be aspects of the provision accessed that were formally evaluated. In the one LEA where interviewees did refer to formal evaluation, this had been carried out by an independent SEN organisation in the panel's first year in operation.

Informal evaluation was said to take place in four of the five LEAs and this tended to take the form of feedback on the progress of pupils integrated into new schools. In two LEAs, the panel was reviewed termly; in one, this was done informally by an SEN working group; while in another, panel members were surveyed as to their opinions on the effectiveness of the process.

1.3.2 Reintegration with mainstream curriculum

Seventeen of the initiatives focused on reintegrating excluded pupils into mainstream school and this was intimately linked with provision of a mainstream off-site curriculum in an off-site location. This package was usually provided through a PRU or Pupil Referral Service, although exceptions to this were noted. These included an initiative where pupils went to a farm and followed a mainstream curriculum in the morning and farm activities in the afternoon (see Illustration 4), and a joint Social Services and Education provision that worked with excluded pupils. In the latter, teachers from the local PRU offered a mainstream curriculum to pupils attending the provision on a flexible basis depending on their needs. Thus, some pupils were able to attend the PRU either full-time or part-time in order to receive their education, whilst others received their education through the teachers from the PRU who attended the joint provision.

Management

Management of this type of programme was usually by the Education Service. Six of the 17 programmes in this category were overseen by multi-agency advisory groups or committees. One other programme was just about to establish such a group.

Illustration 4

A main feature of this project is that it is based on a farm in a beautiful location and it offers pupils a 'retreat-like' environment. The provision is managed within the Education Service. The project takes ten to 13 excluded pupils who are expected to return to mainstream education, and mainstream schools refer pupils through the Pupil Support Service. They are assessed by an educational psychologist and may then be referred to the project. There is a very structured timetable. One teacher and two teaching assistants provide a mainstream curriculum, including maths, English, science, geography and history, in the mornings to small groups of pupils. In the afternoon, pupils participate in a programme of farm activities.

The referral procedure

In the majority of cases, only educational services referred to this type of provision, although, in six LEAs, Social Services referred pupils either directly or through the panel process. In the same six, educational services other than schools, such as the Education Welfare Service, were also able to refer pupils. Whilst direct referral from schools was a feature in three LEAs, a filtering process was evident in others, either through the LEA and the panel process or through the Education Welfare Service or Educational Psychology Service. Where there was a specific LEA officer with the responsibility for exclusions, there was a clear referral procedure and exclusions automatically went from schools to the LEA officer and then through the panel process.

Referral criteria

All of the interviewees in these initiatives stated that they took pupils who were permanently excluded from mainstream schools, although nine indicated that additional criteria would need to be fulfilled for pupils to be accepted. These included being unable to return to another mainstream school immediately, having a statement of special educational need and having a receiving mainstream school. In one

authority, the provision appeared to be limited to the most challenging pupils as they had to be permanently excluded twice in order to be accepted.

Seven of the initiatives had a wider remit with the result that permanently excluded pupils were taught alongside others with widely differing needs. Four catered for pupils at risk of being excluded, two accepted persistent non-attenders, whilst one took pupils not in school for a variety of reasons including non-attendance, pregnancy and medical needs.

Pupils

The decision to reintegrate pupils into mainstream schools appeared to be based mainly on the age of the pupil. According to interviewees, the number of pupils up to Year 9 who were reintegrated was the same as that for pupils up to Year 10. One rationale presented for not reintegrating Years 10 and 11 pupils was their inability to catch up with the coursework missed. In a few LEAs, however, reintegration was the aim for all pupils, including Year 11. In one authority, it appeared that if pupils had been permanently excluded on more than one occasion, there was no attempt to reintegrate them and alternative provision was sought.

Pupil Referral Units catered for a range of different ages. Five of the PRUs catered for pupils from Years 9 to 11, four catered for all ages, whilst three focused on pupils from Years 7 to 10. Where PRUs catered for pupils in Year 11, a work-related curriculum was often deemed as more appropriate than a mainstream curriculum. The majority of interviewees referred to a higher number of boys compared to girls, although one stated the ratio was 50:50 and another that the number of girls within the PRU was increasing. Some interviewees indicated that pupils receiving an off-site mainstream curriculum covered a wide range of ability, whilst a few interviewees described these pupils as underachievers or of below average ability. Five interviewees noted high numbers of pupils with special educational needs, although only two specified that pupils often had unidentified learning difficulties. Some interviewees indicated that pupils showed minimal amounts of offending behaviour whilst others stated that a wide range of offending behaviour was evident.

The curriculum

In most cases, provision for permanently excluded pupils was limited to part-time, usually two to three days a week. Two LEAs were able to offer full-time provision, and another was able to offer four-and-a-half days each week. On the other hand, one interviewee stated that they were only able to offer permanently excluded pupils five hours' actual teaching each week. Attendance tended to be on a sessional or daily basis. Emphasis was placed on providing the National Curriculum, particularly the core subjects. The range of subjects that pupils received, however, often appeared to be dependent on staff expertise: for example, some were able to offer modern foreign languages, whilst others were not and one interviewee stated that they were unable to provide PE.

A small basic skills component was sometimes available for key stage 4 pupils attending the PRU and this was often offered alongside college placement and training, but sometimes with work experience and leisure pursuits. In some cases,

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leisure activities were used to enhance the core programme, although, in two cases, this was for older pupils only. One interviewee, for example, described a strong outdoor education facility that they used regularly. (The provision of basic skills and leisure activities for excluded pupils is discussed in more depth later in the section on combined alternative learning programmes.)

The approaches used

Pupil referral units were categorised according to the type of approach they adopted for addressing pupils' difficulties. Two main approaches were evident: those which focused on behaviour management and those which concentrated upon providing a therapeutic environment for pupils, placing emphasis on good teacher–pupil relationships and offering counselling and other therapeutic interventions.

Seven out of the 17 units appeared to adopt a more behavioural approach, often with behavioural targets outlined in an Individual Education Plan. In one unit, the excluding school selected the targets to be worked on; otherwise targets were set by PRU staff. In the ten other units, the emphasis tended to be more on relationship building, building self-esteem and confidence and providing individual counselling. In six out of the 17 units, a key tutor or key teacher approach was adopted. Whilst three mentioned mentoring schemes for pupils, only one involved an external agency, the Youth Service. Two units had social worker input and were therefore able to provide specialist social support to pupils alongside their education (see Illustration 5). Two PRUs offered anger management as part of their programme and another had regular psychiatric input to enable pupils to address mental health problems. In another two, drama was used to address issues, although only one had a qualified drama therapist, who was also a teacher.

Illustration 5

This PRU is one where a social worker, social worker support assistants and a youth worker are integrated as part of the team. Through this multi-agency involvement, the PRU is able to offer a range of alternative interventions as part of their programme, including anger management, drama therapy and mentoring, in addition to an Outward Bound course. Reintegration into mainstream schools is facilitated by the social worker and social worker support assistants.

The process of reintegration

The majority of interviewees stated that they tried to reintegrate pupils into mainstream school as soon as possible and some units operated on a definite time limit of either six or 12 weeks. One of the latter included a six-week assessment period followed by a six-week reintegration programme. In six units, assessment of pupils' difficulties, either by a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or an educational psychologist, was seen as a major part of their role (see Illustration 6). This enabled both learning and behavioural targets to be set to address weaknesses and provided additional information for the receiving school. Three interviewees stated that they used 'Successmaker', an integrated learning package, to address learning needs.

There was some variance as to the point at which a receiving school was selected. In a few instances, selection of a school was a condition of admission. In another case, a new school had to be named within 12 weeks of the exclusion. Parental choice, together with previous history and knowledge of local schools, was taken into account in the selection process (see Illustration 3 within the previous section on multi-agency panels). As discussed previously, in some cases the selection was made by a multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panel, usually involving headteacher representation to ensure an 'even-handed' selection of schools. In one authority, parents were discouraged from contacting schools themselves; whilst, in another, this practice was advocated.

In the majority, reintegration was negotiated with the receiving school by the PRU staff alone. In one, the reintegration plan was developed through discussion between the parent, the child and the staff from the PRU. On the other hand, a planning meeting involving support staff, teaching staff, a representative from the receiving school, the pupil, the carer and other agencies in one unit meant that roles and responsibilities with regard to the reintegration process were set out clearly from the beginning. Plans were regularly reviewed and adapted to suit the needs of both the individual and the school. In one authority, a designated integration team, composed of nine workers, spent time with pupils at the PRU and then devised individual reintegration packages for them. A placement officer within the team undertook negotiation with schools and arranged an appointment for the parents and the pupil at the school. The Education Welfare Service played a key role in negotiating with schools in one, whilst in another, a designated 'reintegration tutor' within the PRU was responsible for liaison. In one project, where a lot of emphasis was placed on giving pupils responsibility, pupils were supported to negotiate reintegration themselves.

In some LEAs, reintegration was very individualised and some pupils returned to school full-time immediately, but it was more usual for pupils to have a phased reintegration, with opportunities for review and adaptation of the process. During reintegration, dual registration at the PRU and the school was often used as a safety net. Support for pupils during reintegration was usually the responsibility of the teaching staff at the PRU, although in one case pupil support assistants implemented support (see Illustration 7) and, in another (identified as Illustration 5), a social worker and some social worker support assistants played a key role.

Illustration 7

Pupil support assistants within the PRU are used to support pupils with behaviour problems. Continuity is maintained by the same assistants providing support to pupils during reintegration into their mainstream school. Support during reintegration is regularly reviewed and revised and there is enough flexibility for the level of support to be increased if the pupil is struggling. During reintegration, dual registration (at the school and the PRU) is used as a safety net for the pupil (for more detail, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 37).

Support took the form of monitoring, in-class support or examination of the difficulties encountered within the school environment on return to the PRU. One interviewee noted that support was only available for the first six weeks of reintegration because of the strain on resources. In one authority, schools were offered £5,000 towards the support package as an incentive to take excluded pupils.

A few LEA personnel stressed the importance of providing schools with quality information when taking on excluded pupils. In one initiative, a checklist of behaviours was used to establish the pupil's readiness for reintegration (see Illustration 8) and this then provided evidence for the school that the pupil had worked on his/her difficulties. In most, however, it appeared that readiness for reintegration was very much a subjective judgement and this was the only example of a specific mechanism in operation.

Illustration 8

A behaviour checklist is completed by the excluding school so that a baseline assessment can be obtained prior to the pupil attending the PRU and this provides something to work on. A checklist is also used to determine readiness for reintegration. Progress in certain skill areas, including the pupil's awareness of his/her own difficulties, relating to others and classroom survival skills, is measured. A scoring system is used to identify when sufficient progress has been made. This information also enables the PRU to provide the receiving school with quality information and they are able to see clearly the progress that the pupil has made since their exclusion (for more detail, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 37).

Evaluation
In six of these initiatives, no formal evaluation had taken place while in two, interviewees indicated that it was due to take place. In nine LEAs, interviewees referred to recent OFSTED inspections.

Informal evaluation was carried out by programme staff in ten LEAs, usually in the form of the monitoring of attendance rates, opt-out rates, length of stay and of outcomes for the young people involved (e.g. qualifications, employment, reduction in offending behaviour, raised levels of confidence/self-esteem, etc.). Informal evaluation referred to in one other LEA included some verbal feedback following an HM inspection.

1.3.3 Work-related learning programmes
Initiatives within eight LEAs were identified as work-related learning programmes where college placement, work experience placement or training was the main focus.

Three programmes combined college placement with work experience; another three combined work experience and training. One consisted of college placement only and another combined work experience, college and training opportunities for excluded pupils. In two, there was a basic skills component and, in one case, leisure activities were incorporated into the timetable. (However, as these were only a small aspect of work-related learning programmes, these elements are discussed in more detail in the section on combined alternative learning programmes.) One respondent also referred to pupils having access to careers advice through the Careers Service. The aim of these programmes was to re-engage pupils in the education process by providing them with a more relevant learning experience.

Management

Six of the work-related alternative learning programmes were managed by the Education Service, usually in conjunction with the local colleges or training providers in which the courses were located. One was managed by a voluntary agency and run on a day-to-day basis by their senior youth worker. The remaining programme was managed by a steering group which included the community education officer, the Principal Education Welfare Officer, the head of the PRU together with representatives from local colleges and training agencies.

The referral procedure

Provision was usually coordinated through PRUs and pupils selected by the head of the unit; in one case, in conjunction with an Education Welfare Officer. In others, however, referrals from schools, PRUs and other agencies went through a referral panel and then to those coordinating the provision. In the few cases where colleges were represented on panels, they were directly involved in discussions around the appropriateness of placement. Where pupils accessed provision through the panel process, information was obtained from the referrer and the pupil was interviewed prior to acceptance on the programme. A learning support teacher had special responsibility for coordination of provision in one authority and, in another, a specially designated Youth Access Coordinator was appointed (see Illustration 9). In contrast, in one initiative, pupils were referred directly to the college. In one case, where young people did not respond to contact from the coordinator of the provision, the Education Welfare Service was asked to become involved on their behalf.

Illustration 9

A designated Youth Access Coordinator provides information to schools regarding the availability of college placements and work experience placements in the area. The coordinator establishes links with local colleges, local businesses, the Careers Service and a range of other agencies. The role of the coordinator is, therefore, to broker on behalf of the LEA so that the school is not responsible for placing pupils. The provision caters for pupils who are permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion and aged 14 to 16. The Youth Access Coordinator helps schools develop full-time and part-time packages of alternative learning programmes for these pupils. Part-time college placements in the form of link courses of one day a week are free to schools for pupils at risk of exclusion. A young person's centre is established at one of the colleges to provide support for pupils (for more detail, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 38).

Referral criteria

Permanent exclusion was one of the main criteria for selection, although in a few initiatives, pupils at risk of exclusion and self-excludees were catered for, and in another instance, pupils with learning difficulties were also accepted. In the majority, pupils in Year 11 only were accepted, whilst in two, pupils in Years 10 and 11 were catered for. One example, unusually, was open to all secondary-aged pupils. An additional criterion in two of the initiatives was a demonstrated interest in a particular vocational area; thus access was limited to more motivated pupils and those more likely to succeed.

Pupils

The number of pupils accepted on programmes ranged from 15 to 30. Pupils on all of the work-related learning programmes tended to be mainly male and of low to average ability, although in some programmes, pupils covered the full range of ability. Two respondents stated that pupils had gaps in learning or were *'behind academically'*. One initiative included pupils with statements. Some pupils were also described as having committed a range of offending behaviour, although one interviewee indicated that there was only a small proportion of persistent offenders. In only one case was there a high proportion of African-Caribbean pupils, reflecting the numbers in the local area.

The components of a work-related learning programme

Work-related learning programmes comprised three main elements:

- college placement;
- work experience; and
- training.

Half of the 30 LEAs identified links with local colleges to provide alternative learning packages for excluded pupils. Work experience was noted in 13 of the authorities, whilst 11 referred to training provision.

College placement

College placement was a major component of five of the initiatives identified as work-related learning programmes. It was usually offered on a part-time basis and was often linked to work experience or, in one case, basic skills and leisure activities. Provision ranged from 'in-fill' courses offered for half a day a week to full-time, although it was more usual for pupils to be attending college for one or two days per week. Courses offered varied considerably, from solely motor vehicle mechanics in one initiative to open access to all college courses in another (see Illustration 10). Course options included those with a more vocational focus, such as hairdressing and catering, those with a recreational focus, such as art, drama and leisure activities, and those with an academic focus such as GCSE English.

In a few of the initiatives, pupil support was evident. A teacher or key worker usually monitored pupils' progress, whilst, in one case, a young person's centre had been set up at the college to provide direct support to pupils. In another case, the LEA had

funded the college for their own education care officer and, in addition, had provided a pupil support assistant to support pupils from the PRU to the college.

Illustration 10

This initiative caters for 30 pupils who have been excluded in their final year of schooling. Taster sessions at the college are also offered to pupils in Year 10 and they have access to a range of 12 courses, including catering, hairdressing, motor mechanics and child care. Pupils are selected from those attending the PRU and the provision is coordinated by staff from the unit. A key worker monitors and supports pupils when they are attending the college. A steering group, including representation from the college, training agencies, the Education Business Partnership, the Careers Service, the Education Welfare Service, Social Services, and the Health Authority, in addition to the head of the PRU, oversees the initiative.

Work experience

Work experience was a major component of both work-related and combined alternative learning programmes. Interestingly, this contrasted with college placement, which was rarely offered to pupils at the extreme end of the disaffection continuum. In work-related learning programmes, work experience was usually offered alongside college placement or training, and in combined programmes, it was offered alongside basic skills, personal and social development and leisure activities (these are discussed in detail in the next section). Different components were sometimes intrinsically linked. For example, work placement was used to enhance college work (see Illustration 11). Basic skills work focused on work-related topics and was an integral requirement for placement within the work environment (see Illustration 15 in the section on combined alternative learning programmes).

Illustration 11

Twenty pupils from the PRU, identified in Year 10, follow a work-related learning package in Year 11. Typically, this consists of one day a week at the PRU doing GCSE work, three days at the college and one day a week on work experience. Pupils are able to access all the courses available at the college and they work alongside other students. They spend one day a week with a local employer doing some on-the-job training that is designed to reinforce the course they have chosen at college.

Work experience was often arranged through the PRU or Pupil Referral Service, sometimes working in close partnership with a work experience coordinating body or business partnership, and in one case with the Careers Service. In others, it was organised through staff on a specific project or through a designated coordinator. In all cases, work experience was provided by local businesses and employers, with whom close links were described. In contrast to college placement, it was usually offered for one day a week only, although one initiative was able to provide five days a week and another stated that they would offer pupils more if they responded well.

Training

Training was defined as any form of work-related training that was offered by an outside provider other than through college, such as independent training providers. It included, therefore, the likes of First Aid and Health and Safety courses, in addition to specific vocational training. Access to training provision appeared to be more limited

for permanently excluded pupils in comparison to work experience and college placement. There were five initiatives in which training was a major component and six others that referred briefly to training provision for excluded pupils. Training was provided in four of the work-related learning programmes and in all cases, this was offered in conjunction with work experience. Training was also a major component in one of the combined alternative learning programmes and formed a small element in two others. In some cases, training was accessed through the PRU, in some through a panel, whilst in others it was accessed through a coordinator or agency running a particular project.

In the few initiatives in which training was a major component, it was offered by outside training providers and independent companies, in which case it often had to be bought in, or provided through voluntary or charitable organisations. Provision ranged from half a day a week, time-limited for a ten-week period, to two to four days a week, usually in the form of short-term courses. Training was usually only available to a small number of pupils at any one time, or for pupils accessing individual packages and placed on appropriate courses alongside other trainees (in one case, adults). In two cases, training was provided by organisations that were able to access a range of courses. These included, for example, horticulture, joinery, carpentry and bricklaying (see Illustration 12). On the other hand, training provided by one organisation focused on car maintenance and mechanics and pupils had to show an interest in this to be accepted on the course.

Illustration 12

A small team of two teaching staff and a team leader, including a learning support teacher, liaises with a range of training and work experience providers to develop individual packages of provision for excluded pupils. Pupils are able to access a range of courses, including catering and woodwork courses, run by outside providers. Group work on personal and social development, work on basic skills and some leisure activities are also provided as part of the package where appropriate.

Evaluation

Staff from seven of the eight work-related initiatives indicated that no formal evaluation had taken place, three of these intimating that it was too early yet. Formal evaluations had taken place in the remaining initiative, one by the project's funding body, and one semi-formal one by the Home Office which looked particularly at the offending behaviour of the young people involved.

In three of the initiatives, some informal evaluation had taken place in the form of monitoring the pupils' progress, including feedback from schools. In the other five initiatives, staff did not refer to any informal evaluation.

1.3.4 Combined alternative learning programmes

Within eight LEAs, combined alternative learning programmes aimed at pupils who were permanently excluded were identified. These programmes integrated a number of different aspects of alternative learning provision. All included basic skills work, work experience or training, personal and social development and leisure activities as major aspects of their provision. Two joint Social Services and Education units were included within this group and it was interesting to note that these had often been set

up in high-excluding, small education authorities. The aim of these programmes was to develop pupils' self-esteem and to integrate them into college or work rather than into mainstream education, although one of the programmes did reintegrate pupils into mainstream schooling (see Illustration 13).

Illustration 13
The aim of this programme is to re-engage pupils in the educational process and then to reintegrate them back into the mainstream school environment. Pupils excluded, or about to be excluded, in Years 10 and 11 follow a time-limited programme run by the Youth Service. The programme is comprised of elements of basic skills work and personal and social development. Emphasis is placed on establishing effective communication skills, and pupil achievements are recognised through nationally recognised accreditation. The youth workers provide group counselling and one-to-one work on personal and social development. They are also able to offer pupils work experience placements for limited periods (for more detailed information, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 43).

Management
Six of the eight combined alternative learning programmes were managed by the Education Service, five of these in conjunction with another agency. In three, the other agency involved was Social Services, in one it was the Youth Service and in the other it was a voluntary agency. One other combined alternative learning programme was managed by the Youth Service, which then reported to the Director of Education every term. In the remaining programme, overall management was through a voluntary agency, with the day-to-day running handled by a practitioners' group made up of representatives from the referring agencies.

The referral procedure
In four of these initiatives, a range of agencies, including the Education Welfare Service, Social Services and the Educational Psychology Service, were able to refer directly to the provision. In contrast, in another, only educational agencies were able to refer. In one of the joint Education and Social Services provisions, schools had to direct referrals through the Education Welfare Service. Use of a referral form was noted in two cases, and one joint Social Services and Education provision required an 'essential information form' to be completed.

In two cases, referrals went through the normal PRS/PRU procedure and were, therefore, more closely linked into the education system. In these cases, a forum examined referrals and the head of the service, who was described as having an overview, then referred appropriate pupils to the project. In one incidence, pupils were only referred if it was reported back to the Behaviour Support Service that home tuition or PRU placement had broken down. In another, the Education Welfare Officer attached to the project took responsibility for all referrals.

A pupil and parent interview commonly took place following referral and the placement was discussed prior to making a decision. One joint Social Services and Education provision also included the social worker in this meeting.

Referral criteria

Half of the programmes catered for pupils unable to return to mainstream school and for whom all other educational provision had failed. Other educational provision had been tried first and, in one initiative, pupils had to have been through at least two forms of other provision before they would be accepted on the programme. Within five of the initiatives, interviewees indicated that the pupils were those with the most challenging behaviour and one stated that some pupils had previously absconded from provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In one initiative, some consideration was given to the likelihood of success and whether pupils would fit into the group before they were accepted.

Where provision jointly involved Social Services and Education, pupils had to be out of school and deemed to be at risk socially or of concern to Social Services. However, in one case, all pupils identified as experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties were catered for.

Pupils

Combined alternative learning programmes tended to be available to only small numbers of pupils, ranging from six to 18 in one group. Interviewees noted the good staff–student ratio. Four of the initiatives catered for Year 10 and 11 pupils, whilst two catered for Year 11 pupils only. One took pupils up to 18 years and another catered for pupils from 12 to 16 years. In one authority, there were two joint Social Services and Education units, one for pupils in key stage 4 and one for pupils in key stages 2 and 3.

In three of the initiatives, interviewees described pupils as '*low achievers*' or '*struggling academically*', but this was attributed to a disrupted education rather than a lack of ability. However, two interviewees referred to literacy and numeracy difficulties or learning difficulties and one to an '*academic mix*'. Pupils tended to be those with the most challenging behaviour. Six interviewees indicated that pupils had been involved in a range of offending behaviour. Two referred to car crime, whilst two referred to more serious offending behaviour, such as violent assault and aggravated burglary. Two interviewees noted that pupils were often looked after by the local authority.

The components of a combined alternative learning programme

As stated previously, combined alternative learning programmes integrated a number of different components. These were:

- work experience, training or college placement;
- basic skills;
- personal and social development; and
- constructive leisure activities.

However, importance was also placed on the creation of a particular ethos. A relaxed atmosphere, the flexibility to deal with personal problems when they arose and an emphasis on the development of effective personal relationships were also felt to be important aspects of the work.

Work experience, training and college provision have been discussed in detail previously. Work experience, rather than training or college placement, was utilised in the majority of cases, despite the difficulties expressed by interviewees in obtaining work placements for pupils with such challenging behaviour. Whilst personal and social development also formed a major aspect, this is discussed in the next section, which relates to specific personal and social development programmes. All of the combined alternative learning programmes offered pupils full-time provision (expected to attend five days a week).

Basic skills

Basic skills were defined as literacy, numeracy and lifeskills. In the majority of cases, basic skills occupied approximately half of the time (e.g. mornings or two days a week). Basic skills were delivered by tutors from training agencies, by Youth Service tutors, or by staff from voluntary agencies.

The range of basic skills covered always included literacy and numeracy (or communication skills), and some form of lifeskills. Some included other skills, such as practical skills, working with others, planning and problem solving. Group sizes for basic skills delivery ranged from one or two to 15 pupils. Pupils were often required to take responsibility for their own learning, to consider their strengths and weaknesses and to plan their own goals. In some cases, delivery of basic skills was intrinsically linked with community involvement and work placement. On all courses, pupils received some form of accreditation and were often required to keep a portfolio or evidence of their work. Forms of accreditation included:

- Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards;
- Basic Skills Agency (Wordpower and Numberpower);
- City and Guilds Achievement Awards (see Illustration 14);
- Association Examining Board (AEB) basic skills;
- Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB) Certificates of Achievement; and
- Midland Examining Group (MEG) Certificates of Achievement.

Illustrations 14 and 15 exemplify how the development of basic skills was linked to other aspects within a combined alternative learning programme.

Illustration 14

This provision is run by a training agency and offered to young people aged 14 to 18 who have been denied access to education, including those who have been permanently excluded. Young people are referred by a range of agencies and are interviewed and then offered a place. Literacy and numeracy form a major part of the programme, alongside vocational training and a personal and social development component. Young people are required to write a running diary that includes a daily write-up of the activities that they take part in on the programme. This culminates in the development of a portfolio that goes towards the City and Guilds Profile of Achievement Award.

> **Illustration 15**
> This alternative learning programme combines personal and social development, basic skills and work experience components. Pupils spend two days a week on key skill areas delivered by training tutors through the Foundation Training Award, which is part of the ASDAN scheme. The four key skill areas, including Wordpower and Numberpower, form the main part of the programme and development of these skill areas is intrinsically linked to the work experience placements that pupils attend (for more detailed information, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 45).

Constructive leisure activities

Constructive leisure activities were a major component in combined alternative learning programmes. The benefits to pupils were felt to warrant time being spent in this way. However, such activities were also offered in other forms of provision identified within the 30 LEAs. (This included six PRUs in which leisure was felt to be an important aspect of the programme for excluded pupils. In these, provision ranged from extra-curricular activities to a full day a week for pupils in Year 11 and included one PRU with their own outdoor education facility used for residential weekends.)

Activities described included:

- water sports, e.g. canoeing, power boating, sailing and swimming;
- outdoor pursuits, e.g. climbing, walking, abseiling and camping; and
- indoor pursuits, e.g. table tennis, snooker and pool.

Within the combined alternative learning programmes for excluded pupils, a considerable part of the timetable appeared to be devoted to leisure pursuits, as much as every afternoon in one case, and they tended to include a wide and varied range of activities (see Illustration 16). In some cases, local sports centres and community facilities were used to enhance the range of activities.

> **Illustration 16**
> This combined alternative learning programme has its own outdoor pursuits centre. Pupils on the course attend for weekends and activities include canoeing and walking. Pupils are involved in 'designing' the weekends through menu planning, budgeting and route planning. In this way, aspects of basic skills, such as money management and map reading skills, are covered and involvement in leisure activities enhances other aspects of the programme.

Evaluation

Staff in seven of the eight programmes indicated that no formal evaluation had taken place, although in two, interviewees did refer to recent OFSTED inspections within the LEA. In the remaining programme, a formal evaluation of the programme itself, and of the inter-agency working involved, had been conducted by students from the local university. In six of the programmes, reference was made to informal evaluation by programme staff. In two, staff indicated that no informal evaluation had taken place.

1.3.5 Personal and social development programmes

Eleven initiatives overall from the 30 LEAs contained a formalised personal and social development aspect. Eight of these were combined alternative learning programmes and these included three joint Social Services and Education provisions for excluded pupils. Three initiatives, however, focused mainly on personal and social development, with basic skills in two cases. Personal and social development (PSD) included work specifically focused on self-esteem and confidence building, discussion groups where issues such as drugs and sex education were covered and social skills enhancement, such as team building and assertiveness training.

Management

Of the three PSD-type programmes, one was managed by Social Services, one by the Education Service and one jointly by the Youth Service and Health, with strategic management through a multi-agency steering group.

The referral procedure

In all cases, referrals were taken direct from schools and, in one case, also from the Education Welfare Service, Social Services, the Youth Service and Youth Justice and, in another, from the Education Welfare Service and the Child Guidance Service. For one of the programmes, a referral form, available in all local schools, was completed. Only one interviewee referred to a parent and child interview prior to attendance on the programme.

Referral criteria

In one of the initiatives, pupils excluded or attending school less than 50 per cent of the time were accepted, whilst another catered for pupils who were excluded and those who were 'looked after'. One project was said to be preventative and aimed to pre-empt the exclusion process with pupils at risk of exclusion able to access the programme.

Pupils

Two initiatives where pupils were withdrawn from lessons made provision for a relatively small number of pupils (up to 15) either in Year 10 or Years 10 and 11, although in the latter they were catered for in separate groups. Where pupils attended full-time, 38 pupils from 12-years-old were catered for, and these were pupils that tended to exhibit offending behaviour. On the preventative project, the pupils in Year 11 were all girls, whereas those in Year 10 were mainly boys. An interviewee within one programme described pupils as having a wide range of ability, whereas another stated that pupils had a significant amount of learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The programmes

The three initiatives that focused mainly on personal and social development catered for pupils who were either excluded or at risk of exclusion. Two of these programmes also contained a basic skills element.

Programmes included:

- work specifically focused on self-esteem and confidence building;
- discussion of health-related issues such as contraception, drugs, etc.; and
- work on social skills, such as team building and assertiveness.

This was mainly effected through group work, although some of the programmes were able to offer pupils individual time when needed. In two cases, emphasis was placed on pupils setting their own personal goals. As with combined alternative learning programmes, a relaxed atmosphere, the flexibility to deal with personal problems when they arose and an emphasis on the development of effective personal relationships were also felt to be important components.

Four of the personal and social development programmes were implemented by youth workers, in one case, in conjunction with a health worker and, in another, with a specialist teacher. The other programmes were delivered by a variety of different professionals, including teachers, social workers, staff from a training agency and staff from a voluntary agency.

Where personal and social development was incorporated as part of a combined programme, it usually occupied up to two days of the full-time programme. On the other hand, in the preventative programme, pupils were withdrawn for two days a week to undertake a range of activities aimed at improving their self-esteem and assertiveness. During this time, they had access to both individual work and group discussion. Another programme was time-limited and pupils attended one day a week over a period of ten weeks (see Illustration 17).

Illustration 17

The majority of pupils are referred to this provision by mainstream schools, but some are referred through the Youth Service, Social Services, the Youth Justice Service and the Education Welfare Service. Pupils must be excluded or only attending school for 50 per cent of the time. Fifteen Year 10 pupils are accepted on each project, which runs for one day a week over the course of a ten-week period. The initiative is based at a youth centre that is on the site of one of the local secondary schools. Half of each day is spent on developing a folder of work as evidence for the ASDAN award, which includes basic skills and covers areas such as personal responsibility, communication and employment. The other half of the day is spent on health issues and raising self-esteem. A lot of emphasis is placed on the psychological well-being of pupils and they are able to set their own goals relating to personal issues (for more detailed information, see the summary chart at the end of this chapter, p. 46).

Evaluation

In the three LEAs offering this type of programme, no formal evaluation had taken place. In two of these, interviewees referred to informal evaluation by programme staff which, in one initiative, took the form of measuring pupils' health and levels of self-esteem on both entry and exit.

1.3.6 Work with young offenders

Within the 30 LEAs, three initiatives specifically focused on addressing offending behaviour and, although offending was the behaviour nominated as the catalyst for intervention, interviewees noted the overlap of their client group with permanent

excludees. They included an intervention following a caution and the work of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

Management
Two of these three programmes were managed by multi-agency groups, while the other was run by the police.

The referral process
All referrals came from the police, and, in one case, also through the courts.

Referral criteria
The overriding factor in referral to these initiatives was the committing of an offence, although the stage at which young people were referred varied. In one case, strict criteria had been developed by a range of agencies. In this case, referrals were not usually first-time offenders. The seriousness of the offence, the age of the offender and their previous offences were taken into account and they worked only with those who were not going to be prosecuted. In one provision, admission of the offence was a requirement; otherwise the Youth Offending Team would not get involved until the court had found the young person guilty and they had received a statutory order. In another, all those to be cautioned were catered for. All of the initiatives dealt with young people who had committed a wide range of offences. One interviewee described the range 'from shop lifting to assault', although they stated that they would not deal with more serious offences, such as murder. Whilst permanent exclusion was not a criterion for selection, in all cases, interviewees highlighted the overlap with this client group.

Pupils
All the initiatives catered for pupils between the ages of ten, the age of criminal responsibility, to 18 years, with one also catering for adults. Offenders were mainly male, although one interviewee noted an increase in the number of girls with offending behaviour. Interviewees frequently described pupils as having had a 'disrupted education' or 'missing significant amounts of schooling', thus reinforcing the findings of the Audit Commission (1996).

Interventions to address offending behaviour
Both of the YOTs included involvement of Education, Probation and Social Services, whereas one, in addition, included the Youth Service, the police and Health. The 'caution plus' scheme in the sample included Education, represented by the Education Welfare Service, the police, Social Services and the Youth Service.

In all cases, the aim was to work with young people or to provide services to young people in order to prevent re-offending. In both of the YOTs, an assessment of the young person's circumstances was undertaken, either through a home enquiry or by interviewing the young person and the victim of the crime. A report was then provided which established the needs to be addressed. The YOT provided intervention itself, although it was stressed that this had to address the offending

behaviour directly, or the young person was referred on to relevant agencies. Within the caution plus scheme, the team met prior to the cautioning process so that the police could make an informed decision, based on the information shared between the agencies, about the approach to take with young people. At the same time, the youth worker also attended the cautioning meeting and was available to the young person and the family as support and could access other agencies.

Evaluation

Interviewees in all three of these programmes referred to formal evaluation in the form of the collection of statistics on offending. Interviewees in one of the programmes also referred to informal evaluation in terms of monitoring the arrangements made for pupils' education.

1.4   KEY FINDINGS

- A continuum of provision was identified with provision of a mainstream curriculum and a reintegration package at one end and combined alternative learning programmes, involving a package of basic skills, work experience or training, personal and special development and leisure pursuits, at the other.

- The data might suggest that, other than reintegration into mainstream school, there are limited alternatives for permanently excluded pupils in Year 9.

- For pupils at the extreme end of disaffection, accessing combined alternative learning programmes meant that it was unlikely that they would be considered for reintegration into mainstream education.

- Excluded pupils constitute a heterogeneous population and the wide range of services and agencies associated with provision aimed at addressing their needs reflects this diversity.

- Excluded pupils frequently have attendant social difficulties and Social Services were involved with Education in a variety of ways within the provision identified. In a few isolated cases, joint provision had been developed to address both educational and social needs simultaneously.

- Despite the recognised overlap of excluded pupils and those with mental health problems, close working between educational and health professionals was rare.

- Within some authorities, the role of the Youth Service had been developed in order to provide group work focused on personal and social development for pupils who had been excluded.

- A high proportion of excluded pupils exhibit offending behaviour. There were examples in some authorities in which the police, the Youth Justice Service and Education were working together to try to prevent young offenders re-offending and going through the court system by addressing their needs holistically. Youth Offending Teams are in the early stages of development in

most authorities and, whilst some already had educational representatives appointed, it was difficult to determine the implications of this for pupils at this stage.

SUMMARY CHARTS

Description of the initiative	A multi-agency panel
Background	Exclusion was identified as an issue within this LEA and a working party, consisting of headteachers and LEA representation, was set up. Concern was expressed about the number of exclusions and the system in place for making decisions about individual exclusions. It was agreed that they should work together to get excluded children back into school and help those for whom mainstream school was not appropriate. A model for a panel was devised as a way of providing extra support for reintegration. The council endorsed this approach and provided funding for the panel.
The aims of the initiative are:	- to reduce the number of exclusions; - to clear a backlog of excluded pupils in unsatisfactory alternative provision; - to provide appropriate packages for excluded pupils; and - to ensure a fair distribution of excluded pupils across local schools
Multi-agency involvement	The panel consists of headteachers, LEA officers, a representative from the Special Educational Needs Support Service, a senior education social worker and a representative from Social Services. An LEA officer holds the budget.
Referral	When a pupil is permanently excluded, if there is not going to be an appeal, parents are issued with papers with which to approach another school. The school either decides to accept the pupil, accept them with extra support, or rejects the pupil, stating their reasons. Once a pupil has been rejected by a school, they are referred to the panel, although 'looked after' pupils are referred straight to the panel. Year 11 pupils are usually offered a key stage 4 package of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and college placement and this type of decision is just ratified by the panel.
The pupils	The panel deals with key stage 3 and 4 pupils, most of whom have been excluded, although some are non-attenders, and some are from out of county. The majority of pupils are male, very few from ethnic minority groups and they cover a range of academic ability and offending behaviour.
Preventative work	The panel has not been involved in preventative work up to now but there is a move towards pupils at risk of exclusion being referred to the panel. A short-term package, followed by reintegration, could then be negotiated.
The panel	Excluded pupils who are hard to place come before the panel. Each case is considered carefully and an individual package is put together for them. In most cases, this consists of supported reintegration into another school and all schools have agreed to accept the panel's recommendations. In other cases, a PRU placement together with a place at college may be implemented.

OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	Opportunities for reintegration are good because the headteachers in the area have agreed to work together on this. The panel directs a particular school to take a pupil and it is carefully managed so that no school has to take more than its fair share.
	Mainstream (National Curriculum)	Pupils who are directed to the PRU concentrate on GCSE work.
	Basic skills	There are opportunities at the PRU to study alternative courses, such as ASDAN.
	College	Key stage 4 pupils who are placed at the PRU have the option of attending a local college on an in-fill basis, following courses, such as catering, motor mechanics, etc, or some short courses, such as art, photography or even some GCSEs. College places are funded through the TEC, and the SEN Support Service provides a teacher to oversee the provision.
	Careers advice	This is available at the PRU for key stage 4 pupils.
	Personal and social development	Social skills work is available for key stage 4 pupils at the PRU.

Description of the initiative		Reintegration with a mainstream curriculum*
Background		GEST funding enabled the authority to set up a specialist team to work in a preventative way in schools. If pupils were excluded, however, extra resources were made available, in terms of staffing for extra teaching at the support centre, for assessment of their difficulties and for a more in-depth look at their readiness for reintegration into mainstream school.
The aims of the initiative are:		• to reduce exclusions by early identification of those at risk; • to provide a more rigorous education for permanently excluded pupils; • to avoid pupils getting lost in the system; • to have programmes in place for all excluded pupils.
Multi-agency involvement		A specialist team of behaviour support teachers, pupil support assistants, an education social worker and an educational psychologist.
Referral		Permanently excluded pupils are automatically referred, through LEA officers, to the Behaviour Support Service (BSS). The LEA collects information about the pupil and they examine individual circumstances to see if this initiative, at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) placement or a work-related learning scheme, is appropriate. Within a few days a letter is sent to parents inviting them to meet with the staff from the BSS.
The pupils		The team caters for Year 9 pupils and below and they are mainly boys. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs. Apart from pupils who have been excluded for minor offences, they are typical of the national picture of permanently excluded pupils.
Preventative work		Primarily, the team works in schools to try to prevent exclusion.
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	There is a commitment to place permanently excluded pupils in school within 12 weeks. A behaviour checklist is completed by the excluding school so that the team can identify areas of weakness. A checklist is also used to identify when pupils are ready for reintegration. This is based on a scoring system that identifies when sufficient progress in certain skill areas, such as awareness of their own difficulties, relating to others and classroom survival skills, has been made. Receiving schools are provided with as much quality information as possible and are able to see clearly areas of improvement. Pupils are supported by pupil support assistants both within the PRU and when they return to school so that continuity is maintained. Support is regularly reviewed and revised and the level of support is increased if a pupil is struggling. Dual registration, at the PRU and the school, provides a safety net for pupils.
	Mainstream (National Curriculum)	The PRU is able to offer permanently excluded pupils a half-time placement at key stage 3. They are taught the National Curriculum, with the exception of modern foreign languages. The pupils attend for half a day each day and they are taught by subject specialists. Each pupil has an Individual Education Programme.
	Personal and social development	Each pupil has a key worker who is responsible for communication with parents. All pupils undergo a psychological assessment by the educational psychologist and areas of cognitive difficulty are identified. Pupils are set behavioural targets and work is also done on social skills and personal effectiveness. Pupils have regular counselling sessions and there is usually someone available who is not teaching to provide support for pupils.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 1 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A work-related learning programme*		
Background	It was recognised that key stage 4 pupils rarely returned to mainstream school and that other packages of provision had to be developed for them. A secondary headteacher suggested that it would be better to have one person that schools could contact to direct them to packages, so a Youth Access Coordinator was appointed.		
The aims of the initiative are	• to establish packages to prevent exclusion; and • to provide excluded pupils with home tuition and work experience, a link course at college, or full-time college placement.		
Multi-agency involvement	The Youth Access Coordinator provides information to schools and provides support for pupils. The Coordinator works closely with the Behaviour Support Service, the Education Social Work Service, the police, the Youth Service, the local college, the TEC, Careers Plus, and local businesses. Three half-time outreach workers, with a monitoring role, are attached to the initiative.		
Referral	Permanent excludees are referred from services to the Youth Access initiative via behaviour planning meetings. Those at risk of exclusion are referred by schools through the Behaviour Support Service.		
The pupils	The initiative caters for those who are permanently excluded, self-excludees and those at risk of exclusion, aged 14–16 years. Seventy-five per cent are male and they cover the full range of ability, although it tends to be skewed more towards the bottom end. Offending behaviour includes theft and some drug abuse.		
Preventative work	The Youth Access Coordinator helps schools to establish packages that might prevent exclusion and maintain pupils in mainstream schools. Those at risk of exclusion may be able to take up a link course offered by a local college.		
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	At key stage 4, reintegration is not seen as appropriate.	
	College	The Youth Access Coordinator liaises with the local college to provide a full-time or part-time alternative for pupils. There is a young person's centre established at one college to provide support. Part-time college placements (link courses) of one day a week are free to schools for those pupils who schools feel are at risk of exclusion.	
	Work experience	The Youth Access Coordinator liaises with work placement providers to provide a full-time or part-time alternative. The coordinator relies on schools to feed him work placements. He brokers under the name of the LEA so that the school does not have responsibility for placing pupils.	
	Careers advice	The Youth Access Coordinator links with the Careers Service to provide careers interviews for pupils.	

*   *Referred to as Case Study 2 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A work-related learning programme*
Background	This initiative originated as a response to the numbers of pupils referred to the Learning Support Service for behaviour difficulties and the increasing number of exclusions. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was unable to cope with the numbers of pupils and this provision was developed for pupils alienated from the school setting and not turning up for traditional unit provision.
The aims of the initiative are:	- to provide a package of training, work experience and basic skills for pupils; - to build up training places and work experience placements within the community for pupils; - to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence; - to keep a link with the education process so that pupils are not lost to the system; - to prepare pupils for further education or training; and - to help pupils build a skills profile and achieve some qualifications and experiences.
Multi agency involvement	The team consists of two teaching staff, one of whom is a learning support teacher, and a team leader, also from education. A range of training and work experience providers are accessed in order to put together individual packages for pupils. There are links with the Education Social Work Service if pupils are initially non-responsive to their contact.
Referral	Pupils go through a committee/panel, to the head of the Learning Support Service, then to the team. Schools can also refer pupils of concern through the behaviour support panel. Where PRU provision has not worked, pupils are referred directly from the PRU. A few are referred through other routes such as secure provision and the Young Offenders Institution. Telephone or written contact is then made and if this provokes no response an education social worker is asked to make contact for the team. This is followed by a home visit. A package based on individual needs is put together.
The pupils	The initiative caters for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are not attending school in the normal manner and in the main they are pupils who have been permanently excluded. About 28 pupils follow programmes at any one time. Pupils have a wide range of ability, although they are generally of low to average ability and many have learning gaps. Pupils are predominantly male. Some pupils have statements of special educational need.
Preventative work	Some pupils are at risk of exclusion, so in this way it is preventative.

OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	Reintegration is appropriate for some pupils but this is beyond the remit of the project and tends to be in exceptional circumstances. The provision usually just works with pupils that are presented to them.
	Basic skills	Educational input is provided by the learning support teacher where appropriate. Other teachers are used to provide basic skills. Pupils undertake written projects, work on communication skills and listening skills. The staff run action days when pupils have to go out into the community and communicate with the general public. The ASDAN award scheme is used for accreditation.
	Work experience	The teachers access a range of work experience providers in the community. Work experience tends to be provided only for Year 11 pupils.
	Personal and social development	Group work involves topics such as stereotypes, social awareness, perceptions, beliefs, and values. Some pupils follow a course for two days a week specifically aimed at personal and social development.
	Vocational training	A range of courses is available through training providers. For example, a catering course is available through a centre where there is a catering manager and an industrial business kitchen. A woodwork course is also available. Pupils usually attend NVQ courses for two or three days a week.
	Careers advice	The teaching staff link with the Careers Service to provide careers advice for pupils, particularly at the beginning of the project.

* *Referred to as Case Study 3a in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A work-related learning programme*
Background	The project was set up seven years ago, with funding secured from the Safer Cities initiative, and additional support received from Probation and Nissan. At the time of the project's inception, car crime in the area was at an all time high. The YMCA now runs the project through their own funding. The programme lasts for ten weeks in total, with young people attending for half a day a week. Participants learn about motor vehicle maintenance in the classroom and then apply their learning in the workshop. There is also a leisure component, with opportunities to drive vehicles around a track.
The aims of the initiative are:	• the main objective is to give young people involved in car crime an opportunity to get involved in motor vehicle related activities in a legal, safe, educational way; • for permanently or temporarily excluded pupils, the objective is also to reintegrate them into school.
Multi-agency involvement	Funding was initially provided by Safer Cities, Probation and input from Nissan. Nissan also supplied two instructors to run the course at the beginning.
Referral	The project operates an informal open access referral system, taking referrals from probation, Social Services, schools, youth justice, Education Social Work Service and voluntary organisations.
The pupils	The project works with young people aged between 11 and 16. Seventy-five to 80 per cent are male. The target group includes excluded children, those deemed to be at risk of exclusion and those at risk of offending. The project also runs a course for students with special needs.
Preventative work	Those at risk of exclusion attend for half a day on the course, and then spend the rest of the week in school
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM **Reintegration**	The programme runs with the underlying aim of reintegrating back into school. Staff concentrate on giving young people the basic skills needed to return to school and through liaison with the Education Welfare Officer and school, a phased reintegration programme may be negotiated (some days at the project, some at school).
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM **Vocational training/leisure activities**	The youngsters complete a course on basic motor vehicle maintenance, and have the opportunity to drive a motor cycle or dual-controlled car around a track.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 3b in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A combined alternative learning programme*		
Background		Research by the Youth Justice Service revealed that some of the young people known to them were not receiving an education or training. A voluntary training agency was therefore approached to set up a project to address their needs. The 12-week full-time or part-time programme is based around the City and Guild's Profile of Achievement. No course is the same, but is instead built around the particular needs of the target group.	
The aims of the initiative are:		• to provide access for disadvantaged youngsters to education (14–15 years old) and/or training (16–18 years old).	
Multi-agency involvement		Other agencies are brought in to run specific parts of the programme, e.g. a first aid course is run by the St John's Ambulance Brigade and a local family planning nurse offers sessions on contraception and GUM clinics. The steering group includes representatives from the Education Social Work Service, the TEC, Probation, Social Service, Youth Justice and Careers. The referral agency is invited to a review meeting with the young person every four weeks.	
Referral		Referrals are taken from a number of agencies: Education, Social Services and the Youth Service. Agencies are informed as to when the project is recruiting and asked to send in a referral form. Every young person who is referred is then interviewed, preferably with their parents and the referring agency. The interview enables the programme leader to organise the children into appropriate groups and to test their motivation.	
The pupils		The project works with 14–18-year-olds who are unable to access education or training due to their disadvantaged status, e.g. excludees, those at risk of exclusion, young offenders and 'looked after' children.	
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	Reintegration	Officially, one of the main targets is to get young people of school age back into mainstream. In practice, relatively small numbers of young people have returned to school after the programme. Often, the young people must wait until they are old enough to access a youth training programme or access other alternative educational provision.	
	Basic skills	The programme includes the core elements of literacy and numeracy. All activities are written up on a daily basis, culminating in a portfolio which goes forward to the City and Guilds Profile of Achievement Award. Skills covered include lifeskills, communication skills, team work, planning and problem solving. The programme also includes an emergency first aid element and some IT.	
	Careers advice	Young people use the Careers Service and the Service comes to the programme to make an input. The programme also provides advice on how to look for work and a tour of a local large employer, incorporating a session on how this company likes application forms to be submitted.	
	Personal and social development	Sessions are run on sexual health and parenting skills. Staff also work to develop confidence and self-esteem in the young people.	
	Leisure activities	If a team has worked well, they are rewarded with a residential trip which includes a range of activities, e.g. canoeing, gorge walking, map reading, many of which help to develop team building skills.	
	Work experience	Young people embark on volunteer work for the National Trust in the Lake District, for which they receive a certificate.	

*   *Referred to as Case Study 3c in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

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Description of initiative	A combined alternative learning programme*
Background	An inspection highlighted that the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) catered for too wide a range of pupils. At the same time, the Pupil Referral Service wanted to set up provision for pupils who exhibited challenging behaviour in a variety of settings and they were trying to work with the Youth Offending Team to look at ways of engaging young people who were at risk through their offending behaviour. A small project was started and some premises were purchased and it has since been extended by accessing a variety of different funds.
The aims of the initiative are:	• to enable pupils to perform a meaningful role in society; • to prevent them from entering into a long-term life of crime and being disengaged from society; • to form a positive relationship with pupils; • to build pupils' self-esteem; and • to help pupils set goals for the future.
Multi agency direct involvement	The programme is delivered by teaching staff with support staff, but they work closely with any agency involved with the pupils. They pull all agencies together early on in working with the pupils so that they know they are working holistically.
Referral	The referral procedure is tied in to the Pupil Referral Service system. A referral team, including the Education Welfare Service, look at all referrals from schools and the PRU. The head of the Pupil Referral Service has an overview and there is a referral meeting between him and the head of the project. As soon as possible they meet with the pupil and parent, who are given two to three days to make a decision.
The pupils	The provision targets pupils for whom everything else appears to have failed: mainstream is not an option and EBD schools have not coped with them. Pupils have usually been through at least two stages of provision before. Ten to 12 pupils aged 14–16 are accepted on the programme. They are mainly males, all young offenders, a few are mixed-race; most are capable of GCSE maths and English. The likelihood of success and whether they will fit into the group are additional criteria.

OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	Reintegration is a possibility, but it does not really happen and pupils usually stay until they are 16. If they do really well and address their problems, they may be reintegrated into the PRU or college for GCSEs.
	Basic skills	The programme is full-time and that is the aim, but they will accept pupils part-time. They provide a core curriculum of maths, English, a little bit of science, IT, lifeskills and PSE each morning. There is the opportunity to gain qualifications, and external tutors are used for some subjects, e.g. GCSE art.
	College	Pupils can go to the regional college but that does not happen very often.
	Work experience	Work placements take place in the afternoons and some of the work in the morning sessions is based around preparation for work.
	Careers advice	At the beginning of term, pupils are helped to look at what they want to do as a career and the work placements are based around that.
	Personal and social development	There is a key worker system in place and an holistic approach is taken. The main objective is to form positive staff–pupil relationships and build pupils' self-esteem and self-worth. They have a non-rejection policy and the flexibility for pupils to deal with problems at any time is built in to the programme.
	Leisure activities	In the afternoons, pupils do various activities including, for example, swimming, snooker, riding motor bikes. They undertake a range of outward bound activities, e.g. camping at weekends.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 4 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A combined alternative learning programme*
Background	The project began at one school that was under special measures and had a particularly difficult group of young people who they thought would be disruptive when they were inspected. The Youth Service was asked if it could make provision for ten pupils. The Director of Education was consulted and it was agreed that the Youth Service would set up a centre for education/training as some of the youth workers were also qualified teachers and they ran a programme for the ten young people. This has since been expanded to pupils from other schools.
The aims of the initiative are:	• to give the pupils a better education in their final year of schooling than they may receive if they remain in school.
Multi-agency involvement	The programme is run by the Youth Service and all the staff directly involved are youth workers with additional teaching qualifications. An educational psychologist is attached to the project and they link with the Education Support Service and the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The provision is to be expanded to a 60-place Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) that is jointly resourced by the Educational Support Service, the Youth Service and Social Services because it has been so successful.
Referral	Referrals are made by schools, the EWS, the Education Support Service or by school admissions. A referral form is completed and the young person and their parents are interviewed and given the option of going on the programme.
The pupils	The programme caters for pupils that are on a school roll, about to be permanently excluded and in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are mainly black males, often struggling academically, and most are known to the police. The programme has a maximum of 40 places (ten pupils from each school).
Preventative work	The programme is preventative in that they work with some pupils at risk of exclusion.
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM **Reintegration**	Reintegration is the underlying aim and the pupils are told that they should be in school. It is a 12-week programme, though, pupils in Year 11 may remain for the whole year.
Basic skills	It is an educational programme and emphasis is placed on communication skills. Courses offered include Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) courses, those accredited through the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), and other courses accredited through National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).
Work experience	Work experience is offered to pupils as part of the programme where it is appropriate
Personal and social development	Behavioural issues are addressed through group counselling and individual work. Assertiveness training, leadership skills and teamwork form part of the programme.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 5 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A combined alternative learning programme*
Background	Social Services wanted to work in a preventative way to prevent family break-up and, in planning for this, they found that a substantial number of young people were out of school. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) had also identified a group of pupils whose needs were very diverse. The pupils found it very difficult to manage even in small groups and were not being engaged effectively or were not attending at all. Social Services, therefore, took the young people into their day provision unit and the PRU provided education.
The aims of the initiative are:	• to engage young people who are alienated or excluded from educational provision and at risk in some way; • to prevent the need for young people to be accommodated by Social Services; • to provide individualised packages of educational and social care for young people; and • to reintegrate all pupils into some form of education.
Multi-agency involvement	This is a joint Social Services and Education unit. Social workers develop an activity programme for pupils, and teachers from the PRU are used flexibly for specific pieces of work with individual pupils. Some pupils also attend the PRU. There is also input from the Health Service and the Youth Justice Service in the form of specific group work with young people.
Referral	Field social workers contact the unit by telephone and also complete a referral form and an essential information record for the child. However, teachers from the PRU can also suggest appropriate pupils. An initial meeting is held with the child, their parents/carers, the social worker and a representative from Education. Aims are decided and a review date, for approximately one month's time, is set.
The pupils	Pupils have to be out of school, although not necessarily permanently excluded, and have family problems or a social need, i.e. they are at risk of offending, risk of care placement, risk of placement breakdown, or there are child protection issues. The unit works with small groups of pupils aged 12 to 16 years. There are more boys, slightly more black pupils, an academic mix and an offending behaviour range from shoplifting to aggravated burglary.

OUTSIDE MAINSTREM	**Reintegration**	Reintegration is the aim for every young person. They all have short-term targets and a long-term education plan that is developed with them, their parents or carers, their social worker and Education. They may be reintegrated into the PRU or college rather than a mainstream school.
	Mainstream (National Curriculum)	An individual programme is developed for each young person. Pupils may access a mainstream curriculum at the PRU or receive basic skills tuition which is delivered at the unit by teachers from the PRU. They work on the basis of a minimum of academic subjects, including maths, English and science. They try to re-engage young people in education by focusing on subjects they are interested in and in which they want to achieve. They use a lot of IT and project work and incorporate practical subjects, such as cooking. The curriculum is very flexible.
	Basic skills	
	College	For individual pupils, one of the aims may be to reintegrate them into college.
	Careers advice	Careers advice can be offered, when appropriate, as part of programme.
	Personal and social development	Social workers in the unit provide a programme of constructive activities that includes aspects of personal and social development, behaviour support and discussion groups. They address behavioural difficulties on a daily basis and explore with young people the causes and alternative ways of behaving. A group is also run by the local health information project.
	Leisure activities	The programme of constructive activities offered by the social workers includes recreational activities, such as table tennis, pool, and visits to the cinema, etc.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 6 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative		A combined alternative learning programme*
	Background	The head of the Behaviour Support Service (BSS) identified a group of young people receiving home tuition, with very challenging behaviour, who were unable to sustain a place within a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). It was decided to establish a project for them. With limited money available from their home tuition, and because the head of service himself had a Youth Service background, he decided to use specific youth workers for the delivery of the project and also approached a training provider for some educational input. A package was then put together that was felt to address their needs.
	The aims of the initiative are:	• to provide young people with some form of education; • to prepare pupils for the world of work; • to help pupils understand their role in society; and • to help them achieve, including qualifications, and to take more responsibility.
	Multi-agency involvement	The Youth Service is the main provider with input from training agency tutors, local employers and businesses, community groups and the Careers Service.
	Referral	All permanently excluded pupils go to the Behaviour Support Service and they either receive home tuition or go to a PRU. If it is reported back to the BSS that the pupils are not accessing this provision, they are then referred to the project through the project coordinator. The project coordinator then visits them at home.
	The pupils	The project is aimed at pupils who have been unable to access any other form of education. They are mostly excluded pupils and self-excluders, mainly boys with very challenging behaviour which has included violent assault and absconding from previous EBD provision. They have great difficulties concentrating and their literacy and numeracy skills are often poor. Pupils are identified at the end of Year 10 and begin the project in Year 11. The project took three groups of ten pupils in its first year and has one group of 15 pupils in its second year.
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	Basic skills	The pupils spend two days a week for four hours each day on key skills that are delivered by training tutors bought in from a training agency. The tutors deliver the Foundation Training Award (part of ASDAN) and focus on four key skill areas including problem solving, maintaining work standards and working within a group. They deliver skills that are linked to the pupils' work experience placements through Access to NVQ, which is adapted from a course normally delivered to 16-year-olds who are undecided as to what they want to do and this prepares them to go on to an NVQ course. Pupils identify their own strengths and weaknesses and plan their own goals. They also do City and Guilds, Wordpower and Numberpower.
	Work experience	Work experience is provided for all those for whom it is considered appropriate. It is usually for one day a week, but they try to be flexible and offer more when pupils are responding well. The project coordinator finds work placements through local employers, businesses and community groups, but this has proved to be difficult at times.
	Vocational training	The project is based within the premises of a training provider, and tutors from the training agency are used to deliver key skills. A range of courses with accreditation, including, for example, first aid training and Health and Safety, is provided by independent training companies who are bought in.
	Careers advice	Sessions are provided from the Careers Service on identifying strengths and weaknesses and all pupils are offered an individual careers interview.
	Personal and social development	Two days a week are spent on personal and social development with the youth workers. This includes group discussion, visits to places of interest within the community, leisure pursuits and the opportunity to discuss any problems that they have. This is emphasised as the biggest aspect of the programme.
	Leisure activities	Leisure activities form part of the personal and social development aspect of the project.

*   *Referred to as Case Study 7 in Chapter Three, 'Effects and Outcomes'.*

Description of the initiative	A personal and social education programme
Background	A peer research project was conducted and they found that the young people involved in this project were not actually in school. This was a concern that was relevant to the Health Authority as well, so a proposal was developed to respond to this need and a joint post between the Health Service and the Youth Service was funded. The criteria for selection of pupils and the process were agreed and the first group was recruited. One particular school piloted the scheme and it then evolved naturally.
The aims of the initiative are:	- to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem; - to enable them to develop personally and socially; - to reintegrate pupils back into their mainstream school; and - to improve their attendance.
Multi-agency involvement	The project coordinator is part Youth Service and part Health Authority-funded. In addition there is one part-time and one full-time youth worker and a social worker seconded to the project. There are links with the Education Welfare Service and school staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), who may come to visit the project occasionally. Additional services are contacted as required.
Referral	The majority are referred from schools, but some come through the Youth Service, Social Services, Youth Justice and the Education Welfare Service. All schools have referral forms. Pupils and parents are interviewed at home before they attend. Placement is voluntary and agreement is secured at this stage.
The pupils	Pupils attending the project are excluded or attending school less than 50 per cent of the time. Fifteen pupils from Years 9 and 10 are accepted on each project. There are more boys than girls, many pupils with learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties, and they tend to lead 'chaotic lives'.
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM	**Reintegration**	One of the main aims of the project is to re-engage pupils in education. The staff have personal links with schools and a good relationship has developed. The project staff support pupils to negotiate their own reintegration into school and parents are involved in this process. There is an expectation that the agency which referred the young person to the project maintains contact with the young person.
	Basic skills	Pupils attend the project for one day a week over a period of ten weeks. It is based at the youth centre on the site of one of the schools. Basic skills form one component of the course and basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills are also delivered. The further education version of the ASDAN scheme, which is a nationally recognised scheme, is used for accreditation of basic skills. This is based on pupils producing a folder of evidence and verification by staff. There are a series of standards with challenges at different levels. Pupils have to demonstrate the key skills through their work in all aspects of the course.
	Personal and social development	The personal and social development aspect of the course is accredited through the ASDAN award scheme. Pupils cover topics that include independent living, health and fitness, responsibility and organisation. They set their own goals on personal issues and pupils undertake both individual and group work. In a typical day, they spend half a day on their folder of evidence and half a day on health issues. A lot of emphasis is placed on health issues and this covers specific work on raising their self-esteem, sexual health, stereotypes, etc.

Description of the initiative	Work with young offenders
Background	The provision evolved over a number of years from juvenile bureaux where professionals were brought together to look at the needs of a young person. Over the last three to four years, teams have been established to adopt a more formal role with young people. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) supervises the statutory order applied through the courts. The case worker will make contact with the young person and access other agencies as appropriate.
The aims of the initiative are:	• to support young people going through the Youth Justice system, to divert these young people from further offending and to divert young people from custody.
Multi-agency involvement	Social Services provide social workers to work directly with the young people. They have a supervisory capacity in carrying out the statutory orders. The Probation Service has a similar input as well as offering group work. Education input entails i) assessment of current educational circumstances; ii) accessing the most appropriate provision (school, Pupil Referral Unit, home tuition or college for Year 11s); iii) supporting the young person's educational placement.
Referral	Referral is through the police or the courts. If a young person is arrested and the police require more information, they will ask the team to do a 'home enquiry'. This involves collating information about the young person so that the police can decide the best course of action. Where a young person is found guilty of an offence, a statutory order is imposed and the YOT is required to hold that order by the courts.
The pupils	The criteria for YOT involvement is that the young person admits the offence. If they are pleading not guilty, the YOT will not be involved until the young person is found guilty in court and an order imposed. Many are excluded from school but this is not a criterion for selection. The age range is ten to 18 years.
OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM **Reintegration**	Reintegration depends on the age of the child and takes place through the Reintegration Manager of the Behaviour Support Service. For Years 10 and 11, reintegration is fairly limited. Instead the young person may access college provision.

CHAPTER TWO
OPERATIONAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this report has identified a range of strategies and interventions for permanently excluded pupils, which were highlighted as examples of effective and/or innovative practice by the 30 LEAs visited. However, when discussing these approaches, staff at both strategic and operational levels also raised significant issues and concerns. This section explores the key operational issues mentioned by staff working with, or having responsibility for, excluded youngsters. In pinpointing these issues, the discussion highlights the constraints that affect practitioners working within the field of exclusion and examines how these constraints impact on excluded youngsters. This section examines the key operational issues in relation to both the processes and components of the initiatives and strategies discussed. Within this context, key issues raised by interviewees primarily related to:

Processes of alternative provision	Components of alternative provision
• multi-agency working	• the nature of provision
• referral and selection	• staff
• reintegration	• curriculum
• evaluation	• young people and their families

The following sections explore issues relating to the processes of provision for excluded youngsters and then go on to examine issues relating to the components of this provision.

PROCESSES OF PROVISION

2.2 MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Interviewees recognised the benefits associated with joint working and 'joined-up' services in providing for a range of need (social, health and educational). However, they were critical of aspects of multi-agency work, highlighting the practical complexities and associated costs. The informal and *ad hoc* nature of links meant that the effectiveness of multi-agency working was frequently constrained. Key issues raised with regard to multi-agency working focused on:

- links with other agencies;
- agency constraints and objectives;
- confidentiality; and
- continuity and coordination.

2.2.1 Links with other agencies

A lack of multi-agency input was a frustration sometimes highlighted by practitioners, who pinpointed difficulties in accessing specialist support and, where support was available, the quantity and timing of it. One such problematic relationship was with Social Services. The need to initiate or develop links with Social Services was said to be thwarted because the service was already overburdened with child protection issues. Whilst recognising the constraints Social Services work under, LEA staff felt that their earlier intervention with excluded youngsters could avert crisis situations.

Health, in particular psychiatric/mental health provision, was another major agency interviewees would have liked to see greater input from. Health was a key agency, not only because many excluded youngsters had health concerns relating to mental health problems and drugs misuse, but also because there was a recognised overlap in the client group between excluded pupils and those with mental health problems. Constraints on the involvement of health professionals related to a lack of provision and resources within the authority, which in turn were reflected in long waiting lists for referral to, for example, psychiatric services. Interviewees also highlighted difficulties in accessing health provision due to different remits and working practices.

Educational professionals recognised a need for greater input from voluntary agencies but also expressed concern about the *ad hoc* nature of such input and a need for the implementation of clear working (or 'quality') frameworks and coordination of service provision for excluded pupils. Conversely, voluntary agencies expressed concern that schools did not consult with them sufficiently or utilise their skills and expertise prior to exclusion. A need for better links with schools and education services in general, was an issue raised by interviewees within initiatives at the furthest end of the continuum of provision for permanently excluded pupils, for example, those working on Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and in Social Services-run provision.

2.2.2 Agency constraints and objectives

Agencies involved with excluded youngsters were often working under different constraints and with different objectives. This variation could result in tension and professional jealousies, which had a negative impact on multi-agency working, and on the young people themselves.

Tension was particularly marked in the divergence of perspectives between practitioners with an educational focus and those with a social work/youth work focus, and this divergence was also reflected in the ways in which agencies measured success. Disparities in what was considered 'appropriate' provision for excluded, 'looked after' youngsters reflected the different priorities of the agencies working with

these young people, as well as highlighting conflict over *which* agency should be providing the alternative provision.

2.2.3 Confidentiality

A further constraint on successful multi-agency working was the issue of confidentiality. Educational staff highlighted difficulties in accessing information from Social/Youth Services, whilst social/youth workers expressed concern about divulging confidential information to educational professionals. Practitioners with an educational focus who were relatively distant (both physically and in outlook) from Social/Youth Services were at times unaware of, or frustrated by, the protocols social/youth practitioners worked under. These concerns highlighted a need for practitioners to have a greater understanding of the parameters within which other agencies work. In some authorities, the deficit in professionals' knowledge concerning agency constraints and roles had been successfully addressed by the introduction of inter-agency meetings. Furthermore, those LEAs with multi-disciplinary input to Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or Pupil Referral Services appeared to have greater understanding of different agencies, how they worked and their respective roles. Professionals/staff from authorities where this type of multi-agency approach did not exist, or was less apparent, were more likely to be critical or suspicious of other agencies.

2.2.4 Continuity and coordination

Exclusion panels had been used successfully in authorities to provide a coordinated approach in determining the destination of permanently excluded pupils. However, practitioners sitting on the panels raised concerns that there was a danger of excessive dialogue but few practical outcomes, thus highlighting a need to monitor outcomes closely and for responsibility to be assigned to key workers or lead agencies.

To summarise, the key issues raised with regard to multi-agency work focused on the need for additional support, not only from major agencies, such as Social Services and Health, but also from more disparate voluntary groups. Secondly, interviewees highlighted the need for effective coordination and communication and the difficulties associated with a multiplicity of provision.

2.3 REFERRAL AND SELECTION

The process of selecting and referring excluded youngsters to initiatives was another area where interviewees identified some key issues. General issues related to:

- who/which agency can refer;
- referral criteria;
- information exchange; and
- volume of referrals.

2.3.1 Who/which agency can refer

A range of agencies was referring young people to the initiatives. These referring agencies included multi-disciplinary panels, the Educational Welfare Service, Behaviour Support Teams, the Youth Service and Social Services. Who actually referred a young person to an initiative was very much dependent on the type of initiative and its agency remit. The referral process was simplified when a lead agency or multi-disciplinary group, for example a panel, was involved in the decision-making process. However, difficulties were encountered with those young people who had disparate multi-agency involvement and who were more likely to be further along the disaffection continuum. In some instances, the overlap in professionals working with youngsters had resulted in multiple referrals to initiatives, whereas in others, young people had 'slipped through the net' because no single agency had taken responsibility for them. Different agencies were using different criteria for referral to initiatives and there were reports of disagreement over which agencies could initiate referrals. This lack of coherence was a particular concern for agencies working with 'looked after' youngsters.

2.3.2 Referral criteria

Generally, negative criteria such as permanent exclusion were used for referral to provisions in this study. Many staff felt this approach was counter-productive, arguing that referral should be presented as a positive and beneficial experience. A negative focus frequently meant that youngsters were only referred when their situation had reached crisis point, for example, when they had already been excluded and/or had committed an offence. It was an issue for staff within the provisions that youngsters had to be excluded before support and/or assistance was put in place, or before they were given opportunities to follow an alternative curriculum. Interviewees felt that they should be providing input sooner, that is preventative work at a younger age would be more effective than crisis management later, when youngsters were excluded, and relationships had already broken down.

Exclusion panels generally had clear frameworks for referral. However, there were still issues surrounding the arbitrary nature of referral and onerous levels of administration. Referral to PRUs was often determined by a designated LEA officer or Pupil Referral Service. Nevertheless, PRU staff also raised the issue of inappropriate referrals, over which they had little or no control. These were the result of what were viewed as inappropriate exclusions from mainstream school. The head of a PRU described his 'despair' when young people were referred to the PRU after being permanently excluded for one incidence of drug taking (this is no longer possible under the new regulations outlined in Circular 11/99). This meant that young people who had a genuine need were unable to access the provision. Furthermore, they also questioned the suitability of placing excluded youngsters who required EBD provision in PRUs.

Staff in two LEAs highlighted inappropriate referrals relating to drugs misuse. They felt that schools had not recognised or were unwilling to recognise them as drugs-related exclusions. This, in turn, led to inappropriate referrals to initiatives focusing

on behaviour management. Staff in a further four authorities also highlighted the lack of drugs advice, counselling and rehabilitation services for youngsters under 16.

Related to the issue of inappropriate referrals was the feeling that PRUs should be more selective in their admissions policies. As the head of a PRU observed: '*We try to offer something to everyone and very occasionally I question that.*' In contrast, there were a number of PRUs that had quite stringent entry criteria. These PRUs operated a 'revolving door' type of intervention which meant that an 'exit strategy' had to be devised before young people could be admitted to the unit. Thus, a receiving school had to be identified prior to entry to the PRU. It was, however, noted that these criteria may further exclude the most needy and/or vulnerable groups of young people, such as 'looked after' and young offenders, pushing them further along the disaffection continuum.

Referral to work-related and combined alternative programmes was often dependent on an individual, for example the head of a PRU. This was seen as providing a much-needed safety net, so that for instance, all college referrals were filtered through a key person in alternative education who assessed the suitability of youngsters for a college placement. However, there were dangers associated with reliance on a key person: if they moved on, links might be lost and referrals could be overly dependent on this individual's contacts and relationships with other agencies.

2.3.3 Information exchange

Interviewees highlighted a number of issues concerning the information they received when excluded youngsters were referred to the provision. These included comments on:

- a lack of information;
- irrelevant information; and
- information withheld by referring agencies.

Practitioners working with young people who had recently been excluded from mainstream school focused on the lack of, as well as the irrelevance of, much of the information they received from excluding schools. One consequence was that initiatives had to conduct learning assessments of the pupils when they were referred to them. However, many projects noted that they preferred to administer their own learning assessments as they felt these might highlight learning difficulties which had not been previously identified, and because they preferred their relationship with youngsters to start with a 'clean slate'. Nevertheless, interviewees felt that it would be beneficial to expand the focus of information provided by referring agencies. In two LEAs, issues relating to the lack of and quality of information provided by referring agencies had been addressed via the introduction of referral forms which had to be completed by excluding schools.

The lack of information supplied by referring agencies was a key issue for those initiatives dealing with youngsters further along the disaffection continuum. It was often extremely difficult for them to obtain relevant, quite basic information because youngsters had been 'out' of the education system for so long. Staff were also

concerned that schools were withholding information about youngsters who had not been out of school for a significant length of time.

2.3.4 Volume of referrals

The vast majority of initiatives were inundated with referrals and the volume of referrals was particularly an issue within the London boroughs. This was exacerbated by the fact that the young person may have been excluded out of the borough. Only one initiative, a personal and social development programme, had experienced difficulties in maintaining a sufficient number of quality referrals. This was because the project was dependent on other agencies making referrals; thus, as the project leader pointed out '[the project] *is only as good as your referrals*'. However, this type of referral approach also meant that the initiative received via the Youth Service young people whom schools would not have referred.

To summarise, the main issues raised by interviewees concerning the referral and selection of excluded youngsters to projects related to:

- the crisis management of the provision – pupils were referred too late and only after a serious incident had occurred;
- the lack of relevant information received from referring agencies; and
- the lack of drugs services available for under 16s.

2.4   REINTEGRATION

This section focuses on the issues surrounding the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. The 'next step' for many permanently excluded youngsters is a return to mainstream school, whilst for others it is integration into some form of alternative provision which may include college and/or a work placement. However, for a significant number of permanently excluded youngsters in this research, the path was not quite so clear. General issues and concerns raised by interviewees regarding the reintegration of permanently excluded youngsters related to:

- attitudes towards reintegration;
- next step;
- rate of reintegration;
- support; and
- appropriate provision.

2.4.1 Attitudes towards reintegration

The actual *need* for reintegration was an issue raised by staff working within provisions for permanently excluded children. Many felt that they should not be in a position where they were having to reintegrate excluded youngsters back into mainstream provision. Reintegration was seen as a problematic process resulting from segregated provision, which many felt could have been avoided by, for example, offering in-school support for pupils at risk of exclusion.

The relationship between support services/units and schools was also seen as a crucial factor in determining successful reintegration. Conversely, schools' opposition to reintegration could make the process virtually impossible. Thus, the attitude of the school/college/work placement towards excluded youngsters was seen as an important factor in determining a successful reintegration. The attitude of the young person was also seen to have a significant impact on the success of the reintegration process. Interviewees highlighted that many excluded youngsters did not want to return to mainstream school because of the negative experiences at school and the positive experiences they had within alternative provision. This was an issue raised both by staff working on the alternative programmes with extremely disaffected youngsters, as well as by staff in PRUs who were focusing on reintegration into mainstream school.

Some schools' reluctance to reintegrate excluded youngsters can also be linked to concerns that they would be 'blamed' if the reintegration failed. Conversely, staff within the provisions felt that reintegration often failed because of schools' unrealistic expectations of pupils and because pupils were not always aware of what was expected of them in the school. Staff also felt that reintegration failed because of the withdrawal of support, or because difficulties in a child's life had not been addressed. They highlighted the influence of out-of-school factors which might lead to failure.

The effects of a post-reintegration exclusion were said to be likely to push youngsters further along the disaffection continuum, especially as legally schools do not have to admit pupils who have been permanently excluded from two or more schools. Staff within alternative provision spoke of youngsters becoming *'doubly disaffected'*; a failed reintegration meant that they had been rejected once more. As the head of a PRU observed, this meant they sometimes go *'full scale into criminal activities'*. The following sections examine issues relating to the reintegration process.

2.4.2 Next step

Exclusion panels had been established in a number of authorities to address concerns that under-subscribed schools were being asked to take disproportionate numbers of permanent excludees. The introduction of panels meant that headteachers were responsible for, or had input into, the reallocation of excluded pupils within the LEA, which was viewed as a much fairer system. However, there were issues surrounding the workings of these panels. There were difficulties when headteachers were only one part of a multi-agency team determining the destination of excluded youngsters, or where schools within the authority were not supportive of the panel. Without the unanimous support of schools, panels' powers were limited. This was a particular issue in authorities where schools were saying that they were full. The panel's position was extremely weak as they were asking schools to take pupils over their roll. It was felt that in some instances, schools were withholding information about the number of pupils on roll and that the introduction of better reporting systems would mean that panels had more accurate information.

Those initiatives preparing young people for reintegration generally had a limited number of schools that they could reintegrate into and the schools with places did not always have the appropriate support networks to meet excluded youngsters' needs. Both staff within alternative provision and schools raised the issue that some, often

under-subscribed schools, were being asked to integrate a disproportionate number of excluded pupils. Their comments again highlighted the issue of 'collective responsibility': who is responsible for excluded pupils within an authority? Interviewees working within the provisions felt that schools needed to recognise their responsibilities towards excluded pupils.

Reintegration was particularly problematic in those authorities where there was no process by which schools were allocated permanent excludees. Staff within the provisions felt there was a need for headteachers to take responsibility for reintegration, for example, via a panel-based allocation system. Furthermore, the next step for the most disaffected youngsters was problematic: if they were unable to reintegrate into mainstream provision, there were few other options available to them.

2.4.3 Rate of reintegration

The length of time taken to reintegrate pupils into mainstream or alternative provision was another key issue raised by interviewees. The speed of reintegration was seen as a crucial factor in determining whether excludees' disaffection became entrenched and whether they were 'lost' from the education system. For example, the head of one PRU observed that before attending the unit, some pupils had been out of school for 12 months. This made the process of reintegration extremely problematic because in that time, youngsters were likely to become dislocated and disengaged from the education system. In a number of authorities, the introduction of exclusion panels and multi-agency integration teams was seen to have speeded up the reintegration process. However, staff also voiced concerns that, if youngsters were reintegrated too early, before they were ready, and without the necessary support networks, then they may be simply entering a process which meant they would fail again.

Generally, there was an expectation that the majority of excluded youngsters up to Year 10 attending reintegration with mainstream curriculum programmes would return to mainstream school. Those young people in Years 10 and 11 were more likely to be integrated into an alternative learning programme which might include college, work experience, training and/or basic skills. A range of reintegration approaches was used by these initiatives. Some had a relatively *ad hoc* approach, whilst others had structured reintegration programmes with, for example, a 'readiness for reintegration checklist' or scale. A number of the latter types of intervention had time-limited input, for example, six, nine or 12 weeks, and would not admit a pupil until an exit strategy, including a receiving school, had been identified. This approach was seen to aid the process of reintegration, although staff acknowledged that in practice, young people might attend the unit for longer than the designated number of weeks.

The length of time taken to reintegrate a pupil into mainstream provision was more likely to be raised as an issue by those staff in initiatives where a defined and specific reintegration programme was not an intrinsic part of the intervention. The speed and rate of reintegration were very much dependent on a unit or a head of unit's relationship with individual schools. In some authorities, there were concerns regarding the lack of continuity and coherence in the reintegration process.

Not only was the timing of reintegration crucial; so was the nature of the reintegration process. Interviewees presented conflicting views about whether reintegration should be a phased process and whether youngsters should initially attend school part-time or full-time. Some staff within alternative provision felt that phased reintegration was preferable as it was too much to expect youngsters to return to school full-time, especially if they had attended the provision on a part-time basis. However, many schools were reluctant to accommodate such phased reintegrations.

Furthermore, disparities between the regimes found in school and within provisions for the permanently excluded meant that some youngsters had difficulties coping with things like homework when they returned to school. The issue of dual registration was raised by interviewees in a further two authorities. It was seen as a successful approach because it incorporated a number of fail-safes: if the reintegration failed, then the unit would take them back, and if it worked, they would be placed on the school roll. Notwithstanding the successes associated with dual registration, concerns were raised about the unofficial practice of schools taking excluded youngsters on a 'trial basis', for anything up to six months. Interviewees highlighted youngsters' intense feelings of rejection if schools did not admit them after a trial period and also the likelihood that these young people, whose self-esteem was already extremely low, would see their self-confidence plummet. The reaction of the young person to this type of rejection is likely to be similar to the reaction of children who are excluded after reintegration.

The expectation of staff working with youngsters further along the disaffection continuum was that because of their learning and behavioural needs and/or age, they were unlikely to be reintegrated into mainstream school. There was a recognised need for these youngsters to re-engage with learning rather than with school. For a significant number, prior to re-engaging with learning, there was also a need for staff to work on raising their self-confidence and self-esteem. For young people attending these types of initiative, reintegration into mainstream school was an unrealistic goal.

Integrating excluded youngsters into college had met with varying degrees of success in different authorities. Difficulties associated with using college placements related to the age of excluded youngsters, political issues within the LEA, colleges refusing to take youngsters with behaviour problems or those permanently excluded for violent or aggressive behaviour, and also to the financing of the placements.

2.4.4 Support

The support provided on reintegration was a huge issue, both for staff within schools and within the provisions. School staff raised concerns about the paucity of information provided by referring agencies; the withholding of crucial information concerning, for example, academic ability or behavioural difficulties may have serious implications for a successful reintegration.

Schools highlighted the lack of support available, along with concerns that initial promises of support quickly disappeared. It was suggested that, on reintegration, there should be a guaranteed period of time (dependent on the child's needs) when support was available to schools. Staff within the provisions also raised a number of issues

concerning the level and nature of support provided on reintegration, stressing the importance of providing practical support. Key workers were often used to provide in-school support for both the school and the young person. Staff within alternative provision stressed the need for youngsters to have someone *outside* school they could turn to, perhaps someone they had worked with when they attended the provision. Key workers with particular skills, such as behaviour management or learning support, may be a vital lifeline for young people returning to mainstream school. However, *who* provided this support was an issue raised by one initiative; they deliberately used social workers for reintegration rather than teachers.

The resources available limited the level of support provided on reintegration. One initiative had addressed this problem by opening its centre 'out of hours' so that young people could come and talk through any problems they had with staff at the centre. Inevitably, the level of support offered was a key issue for schools and initiatives; generally both would have liked greater input, although, in one authority, a staff member highlighted a possible downside to intensive pupil support, namely that there was a danger *'that you're not teaching the pupil to be responsible for their own behaviour'* (pupil support assistant).

Both schools and staff within the provisions acknowledged that there was a need for greater support for school staff in developing their skills for working with excluded youngsters. Pupil Referral Services and PRUs stressed the need to work with schools regarding behaviour management in general, and not just to focus on supporting individual youngsters. A number of initiatives had successfully used youth workers or behaviour support staff to support young people into college. However, some initiatives had experienced difficulties which related to the support available in college, both for youngsters and college staff, as well as to issues relating to *who* was responsible for the young people whilst they were attending college.

2.4.5 Appropriate provision

A lack of appropriate and alternative provision within some authorities meant that reintegration was, at times, a difficult and unsatisfactory process. Interviewees felt that there was a need for all referring agencies to have clear guidelines as to the type of pupils it was appropriate to reintegrate. A number of instances were cited where pupils had been returned to mainstream school because there was no evidence, for example a statement, indicating that they should be anywhere else or, because there was no alternative provision for them.

This lack of alternative and appropriate provision meant that for many PRUs, for example, the ideal of a 'revolving door' approach to reintegration was an unrealistic goal. Staff highlighted the difficulties associated with working in units that had been established to provide short-term intervention but which, due to a lack of alternative provision, were being used as long-term interventions. Conversely, interviewees also raised concerns that some excluded youngsters were remaining in alternative provision when they should be in mainstream and that disproportionate numbers of youngsters were being reintegrated into special schools.

This section has highlighted some of the complexities associated with the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. It has highlighted the need for support on reintegration, not only for the young people, but also for staff within schools and colleges to furnish them with the skills to work successfully with excluded youngsters.

2.5 EVALUATION

Interviewees recognised a need for initiatives to be evaluated, as well as acknowledging the benefits associated with an effective evaluation process. However, they also raised concerns about evaluation which were related to:

- the need for evaluation;
- challenges to evaluation; and
- criteria for evaluation.

Generally, interviewees acknowledged a need for some form of evaluation in order to ensure that objectives were met and to give initiatives a sense of accountability. Concerns were raised, not only about a lack of evaluation, but also regarding the nature of the evaluation process. The latter related to whether evaluation should be formal or informal, conducted internally or externally and who should be responsible for the process. The evaluation of some initiatives was pre-determined by funding requirements. So, for example, projects had to be evaluated to secure funding or to enable staff to be placed on permanent contracts.

The flexible and adaptable approach of some of the initiatives, particularly the personal and social development programmes, meant that they were extremely difficult to evaluate because the 'goalposts' of the provision were constantly changing. Even within the same LEA, it was seen as extremely difficult to establish service performance indicators, for example, for PRUs, because every area and centre was unique.

The criteria used to evaluate initiatives depended on the nature of the project and the agency carrying out the evaluation. Generally, those initiatives focusing on reintegration into mainstream education were formally evaluated using academic criteria. In contrast, those initiatives further along the disaffection continuum were more likely to be informally and internally evaluated using criteria based on evidence of personal and social development, such as raising self-esteem. Interviewees raised concerns that similar criteria were being used to evaluate very different types of provision, for example, when OFSTED evaluated PRUs on the same basis as secondary schools. The imposition of inappropriate performance criteria was particularly a concern for staff working with youngsters at the far end of the disaffection continuum. Their focus on qualitative rather than quantitative outcomes meant that it was very difficult to actually measure outcomes. In addition, interviewees felt that they were still working in a culture where only quantitative evaluation was valued by external agencies. Furthermore, the quantitative focus of evaluation procedures did not account for the other benefits of provision. Interviewees also highlighted the need to evaluate long-term outcomes associated with intervention, for example, what happens after youngsters are reintegrated back into

school, as well as a need to extend that evaluation beyond school age and into adult life.

The following sections go on to explore the components of alternative provision, beginning with the provision itself, then examining issues relating to the staffing of alternative provision and the curriculum, and finally exploring some specific issues which relate to excluded youngsters and their families.

COMPONENTS OF PROVISION

2.6 THE NATURE OF PROVISION

This section explores the issues raised by interviewees concerning the nature of alternative provision and the repercussions that this may have for excluded youngsters and their families. Issues raised related to:

- status;
- access;
- full-time provision; and
- relevance and flexibility.

2.6.1 Status

The status and 'reputation' of provision for the permanently excluded inevitably influenced the attitude of the local community, including staff within schools, colleges and local businesses. Staff working in initiatives focusing on reintegration highlighted that they had to contend with the legacy of the centre/unit formerly being a 'training centre' or work experience centre for special schools. Although they acknowledged that the situation was improving, the academic credibility of many of these centres/units was still questioned by some local schools. Furthermore, staff highlighted some parents' reluctance to send their children to the centre/unit because of its reputation within the authority. Staff were acutely aware of the need to raise the status of the centre/unit and, in particular, that the current provision had to challenge these previous identities. There was also a recognised need to further emphasise the educational focus and academic attainment of pupils within the provision.

The frequent lack of investment in unit/centre buildings and facilities was seen to have a detrimental impact on youngsters. As staff highlighted, excluded youngsters were already likely to have extremely low self-esteem and feel rejected and, by placing them in 'dump' provision with poor facilities, those feelings of worthlessness were reinforced.

The status of alternative provision was also an issue for those initiatives working with youngsters further along the disaffection continuum. Staff within these fragile, and often extremely informal, entities felt they were in limbo status because they did not have the official recognition of PRUs. Whilst they were seen to be carrying out a

satisfactory service and whilst funding was available, their tenuous position was maintained; however, there was always the danger that this may be lost.

Staff working with youngsters further along the disaffection continuum also raised concerns regarding what they viewed as an artificial split between pre- and post-16 provision. As they highlighted, just because young people turn 16 it does not mean that they stop needing support and assistance. So, for example, combined alternative learning programmes that had established successful work placements later failed because support was withdrawn when youngsters reached 16. Staff felt that there was an acute need to recognise and resource such initiatives.

2.6.2 Access
The ability to physically access provision was a barrier for excluded youngsters in both rural and urban authorities. In rural counties, transport was costly and time-consuming, especially when youngsters had to be transported between home and provision, and then between provisions, for example, PRU and college. Where transport was unavailable, many youngsters found it difficult to cope with the practicalities of getting themselves to a centre or college. Sometimes the 'parochial' attitude of youngsters (i.e. their limited geographical mobility – both psychologically and physically) meant that, even in urban authorities, excluded youngsters experienced difficulty in accessing provision out of their immediate area. These difficulties need to be addressed and highlight youngsters' need for support when accessing alternative provision.

2.6.3 Full-time provision
This was a major issue for the PRUs, particularly in light of the Government directive for full-time provision by September 2002 (Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), 1998). Difficulties in providing full-time provision were often related to funding and staffing constraints. However, staff working with youngsters further along the disaffection continuum also raised the issue of the appropriateness of full-time provision for youngsters 'far out' of the educational system. Their concern was that full-time attendance at alternative provision might be as unsuitable for these youngsters as full-time attendance at school. Furthermore, a number of interviewees argued that the intense nature of tuition within some PRUs, for example, meant that excluded youngsters within their authority received a similar number of hours' teaching time to those pupils in school. Nevertheless, despite these claims, other interviewees contended that part-time provision was a 'second-best' option and that excluded youngsters had a right to, and needed to receive, full-time provision. Even where youngsters were only attending part-time, staff reintegrating them back into mainstream school felt that they should attend the centre/unit for full days so that they could cope with whole days, lunchtimes and breaks when they returned.

2.6.4 Relevance and flexibility
This was a key issue raised by staff working within the full range of provision for the permanently excluded, from PRUs to those working with young offenders. Staff emphasised the need for flexibility in the provision of alternative initiatives so that if,

for example, work placements broke down or needed to be reviewed, the provision was sufficiently adaptable so that young people could move on without a sense of failure. Interviewees also stressed the need for provision to offer something relevant to the young person's needs. The irrelevance of the school curriculum can be seen as a significant contribution to excluded youngsters' disengagement from school.

The key issues raised by interviewees regarding the nature of alternative provision related to problems concerning the status of provision within the authority and youngsters' ability to access provision. They also contributed to the debate over whether provision should be on a full- or part-time basis and highlighted the need for provision to be flexible and relevant to excluded youngsters' needs.

2.7 STAFF

A number of key issues were raised by staff working in the provisions which related to their:

- conditions of service;
- training; and
- credentials.

2.7.1 Conditions of service

The main issues raised by staff concerning conditions of service related to poor remuneration and the temporary nature of contracts. A number of staff felt that their remuneration did not reflect the responsibilities they were expected to undertake. This resulted in staff demoralisation and feelings that they were not valued and their skills and qualities not sufficiently recognised. The temporary nature of many contracts also resulted in a lack of continuity in provision as staff were lost to permanent posts or the provision was suspended whilst further funding was secured. This lack of continuity inevitably had a detrimental impact on the youngsters attending the provision, who were often extremely vulnerable young people and in desperate need of consistency in their lives.

Staff highlighted the pressure and stress they experienced in their posts, which they linked to long and intensive hours of work with few breaks and a considerable amount of informal 'after hours' contact. Staff working within the provisions also felt that they had greater levels of responsibility than, for example, teachers in mainstream schools, because they were often working in isolation and had no one to pass managerial decisions on to. These constraints meant that some types of initiative experienced difficulties in recruiting staff, which adversely affected the level of provision they could offer excluded youngsters within the authority.

2.7.2 Training

Training was a key issue raised by staff working within the provisions. They identified a range of factors that had a detrimental impact on the provision, including a lack of training, a deficit in staff with appropriate skills and service reorganisation.

Staff working in the provisions, as well as those in colleges and teachers within mainstream schools, also highlighted a need for additional training to expand their repertoire of skills when working with excluded youngsters. Projects were often dependent on short-term funding, which meant that posts were temporary in nature and there were few opportunities for staff training and development. Staff training suffered in what can be seen as a 'bidding' culture. This lack of investment in long-term training inevitably affected the type of staff attracted to these posts.

2.7.3 Credentials

Interviewees also highlighted issues relating to the professional background and credentials of staff working within the provisions. There were conflicting opinions over *who* should be providing alternative provision. For example, those with a teaching background felt that, when working with disaffected youngsters their experience meant that they could empathise with teachers and the challenges they faced in schools. In contrast, staff from other disciplines, for example, Youth/Social Services felt that the strength of their approach lay in the fact that they were *not* teachers, which meant that they were able to enhance and expand the type of provision and relationships offered to youngsters. So, for example, their added flexibility meant that they were able to offer provision in the school holidays. Staff working on combined alternative learning programmes also highlighted their empathetic approach. Many had similar experiences of disaffection and exclusion, and were also from the same culture, community or neighbourhood as the young people they worked with. However, staff working in PRUs/PRSs also highlighted the need for staff to have an empathetic approach and the importance of a relationship/counselling focus within the provision.

Staff within these provisions were felt to have a significant role to play in determining the life chances of many excluded youngsters. Thus, it was seen as extremely important that they were well trained, their skills recognised and developed, and the role they play was valued and recognised. Nevertheless, it was felt that successful practice with excluded youngsters occurred despite short-term contracts, poor remuneration and few opportunities for professional development.

2.8 CURRICULUM

The curriculum provided by initiatives within the study could be divided into two broad categories. The first had a National Curriculum focus and was offered by PRUs and Pupil Referral Services reintegrating excluded youngsters back into mainstream school. The National Curriculum focus of such initiatives was, unsurprisingly, seen to aid and assist excluded youngsters' successful reintegration. The second included those initiatives which were offering an alternative curriculum and, generally, were not reintegrating excluded pupils back into mainstream school, although they may have been integrating them back into mainstream learning, such as college.

The curriculum issues raised by staff within PRUs and Pupil Referral Services focusing on delivering a modified National Curriculum related to constraints on curriculum content and delivery. Staff and/or funding restrictions meant that the vast majority of these initiatives were part-time. The part-time nature of the provision

severely curtailed opportunities to offer a full curriculum. Staff expressed their frustration at only being able to provide excluded youngsters with a limited curriculum. At present, PRUs are only legally required to offer a core curriculum, and staff highlighted that this limited provision raises issues concerning equality and human rights.

The curriculum offered by PRUs and Pupil Referral Services was often constrained by a lack of facilities and equipment, or a lack of staff specialism. This meant that many initiatives were unable to offer particular subjects, such as design and technology, science, or modern languages. Many excluded youngsters had experienced difficulties (learning and behavioural) with modern languages, such as French, in school. It was felt that if PRUs/PRSs did not offer modern languages then these difficulties were likely to be more acute by the time youngsters returned to school, which inevitably must impact on their behaviour within these lessons. A small number of PRUs did offer modern languages because they recognised that this was an area of potential conflict for youngsters in school, but they also acknowledged that they were unusual in offering these subjects.

A lack of staff with subject specialism also restricted the range of subjects initiatives could offer excluded youngsters. However, some interviewees felt that it was more important for staff working within PRUs/PRSs to have the skills to develop positive and therapeutic relationships with youngsters, than to have subject specialisms. This belief was reflected in one PRU's teaching practices in particular: there were no subject specialists; youngsters were assigned a key teacher who would teach them everything whilst they attended the PRU.

Although offering a mainstream curriculum, many staff within PRUs/PRSs emphasised the relationship/counselling focus of their intervention. They highlighted the irrelevance of focusing on the National Curriculum in isolation if excluded youngsters were unable to cope with relationships in the classroom. Furthermore, they emphasised the need for provision to address the problems that had led to exclusion; otherwise there was little point in youngsters attending the initiative. Staff also highlighted that the delivery of a mainstream curriculum within the context of a PRU/PRS was intensive in time and staff. Staff were only able to teach in small groups and often needed to differentiate the curriculum for individual youngsters.

Staff working within alternative learning programmes highlighted what they saw as the gaps in mainstream curriculum provision and how these exacerbated young people's disaffection within school. They pinpointed a need for an alternative curriculum within mainstream schools to accommodate those pupils who were not going to achieve A–C GCSE grades and, in particular, a need to extend work-related learning and recognise alternative forms of accreditation. They also highlighted a need to raise teachers' expectations of those disaffected youngsters who were academically able and capable of achieving GCSE grades.

2.9 YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Key issues raised by interviewees concerning young people and their families related to:

- pupils with special educational needs;
- 'looked after' pupils;
- ethnic minority pupils and cultural issues; and
- parental and community influences.

2.9.1 Pupils with special educational needs

Interviewees highlighted the fact that many excluded youngsters had learning and/or behavioural needs which placed them just above the cut-off point for statementing; this meant that their needs had not been acknowledged, or had not been sufficiently severe to warrant the provision of additional learning and/or behaviour support in school.

Interviewees also raised the critical issue surrounding the link between learning and behaviour and how enmeshed the two can become. They emphasised the need for alternative provision to provide learning support in addition to behaviour support. Many staff within the provisions felt that they were focusing on behavioural and/or learning difficulties that had not been previously addressed. However, there was disagreement as to the extent to which learning difficulties were an identifying characteristic of the excluded youngster. A number of interviewees highlighted that many youngsters had unaddressed learning needs which did not reflect a lack of ability but rather a 'gap' in learning because they had been out of the education system for a significant amount of time. This debate also raised an issue concerning staff's academic expectation of excluded youngsters, and particularly that their academic potential should not be dismissed because of gaps in their learning and/or behavioural difficulties.

LEA staff raised concerns regarding the number of youngsters with statements who were excluded from school. Figures quoted by the head of the Behaviour Support Service in one authority showed that statemented youngsters accounted for 20 per cent of excluded youngsters but only two per cent of the school population. The availability of suitable provision for excluded youngsters with statements was extremely limited in some authorities and many PRUs did provide intervention and support. However, PRUs 'should not normally be named on a statement of SEN' and, 'where a pupil's long-term needs cannot be met in a mainstream school, a PRU should not be regarded as a substitute for a special school' (GB. DfEE, 1999, p.41). Interviewees reiterated this opinion, expressing concern that PRUs and other types of alternative provision were inappropriate for meeting the long-term needs of statemented pupils. This was an issue both for staff working with youngsters recently excluded from mainstream school, as well as those working with youngsters who were completely detached from the education system and were seen as 'beyond' the level of statementing. There were few options available to those pupils who had been excluded from EBD schools or who refused to attend the provision named in the statement.

2.9.2 'Looked after' pupils

The key factor identified by staff as contributing to 'looked after' youngsters' over-representation in the exclusion statistics was the lack of continuity in their lives. This discontinuity and constant movement were seen to have an extremely detrimental impact on their education. However, lack of continuity was not only an issue for 'looked after' youngsters; it was also seen by interviewees as a key factor impacting on the lives of many excluded youngsters.

2.9.3 Ethnic minority pupils and cultural issues

Interviewees highlighted the over-representation of pupils of African-Caribbean origin in the exclusion figures, but they also expressed concern regarding rates of exclusion for other ethnic minority groups, for example Croatian pupils, which were not identified in the statistics. There was also concern that whilst the exclusion rates for African-Caribbean boys appeared to be beginning to be addressed, exclusion rates for other ethnic minorities, for example Bangladeshi boys, and for African-Caribbean girls were rising. The rates of exclusion of pupils of African-Caribbean origin were still a cause for concern in the London boroughs and urban authorities. Interviewees also highlighted the need to address and accommodate cultural differences and beliefs relating to sex and drugs education when working with excluded pupils. A small number of respondents also highlighted the need to address gender issues and youngsters' attitudes towards women, particularly as male students dominated much of the provision for the permanently excluded.

2.9.4 Parental and community influences

Interviewees observed that there was often a 'family cycle' of poor school experiences, poor attendance and/or exclusion from school. Parents' negative experiences of school inevitably had an impact on their children's attitude towards school. Parents' relationship with their child's school prior to exclusion was also frequently a negative experience. Interviewees felt that it was important to obtain the parents' perspective of the exclusion, as it was often very different to the school's view. They also highlighted the fact that many parents wanted to support their children but did not know how to. Interviewees felt that there was an enormous need for parental support and advice regarding exclusion. Most parents did not know who to turn to when their child was excluded. Interviewees voiced concern that there was insufficient advocacy for parents and youngsters when a child was excluded from school. For example, an education social worker may produce a formal case report but they may not know the child. In particular, interviewees felt that there was a need to incorporate voluntary organisations, for example African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, into the advocacy remit. They also highlighted outside factors, such as offending and drugs misuse, which were often beyond staff control and had a significant impact on the excluded youngsters they were working with.

To summarise, interviewees' comments reinforced the findings of previous studies on exclusion (SEU, 1998) which showed that certain types of pupil, namely SEN, 'looked after' and/or African-Caribbean boys, are over-represented in the exclusion statistics. Furthermore, this study has gone on to show that many excluded youngsters are also just above the cut-off point for SEN, suggesting that although their needs may

not be sufficient to warrant a statement, they may have been instrumental in determining their exclusion from school. This section has also raised issues concerning the academic attainment of excluded pupils, particularly that educational professionals' academic expectations of them are limited because of their behaviour and/or gaps in their learning. This section has also highlighted the need to constantly review the categorisation of groups vulnerable to exclusion. For example, concerns regarding the exclusion of African-Caribbean boys must also be viewed in the context of increases in the number of exclusions of African-Caribbean girls, as well as the growth in the exclusion of other ethnic minority groups.

2.10 KEY FINDINGS

- Multi-agency work with excluded youngsters was said to need to incorporate not only the major agencies of Social Services and Health but also voluntary groups and organisations representing ethnic minorities. It was felt that their incorporation into the strategies implemented for addressing exclusion should involve consultation and action *prior* to exclusion.

- A common view was that there is still a 'crisis approach' to referral to alternative provision. Although authorities were increasingly focusing on preventative work, many youngsters were only referred when they were a long way along the disaffection continuum, when their behaviour might have become entrenched and their learning had suffered as a consequence.

- Respondents highlighted the need for the implementation of swift reintegration policies so that youngsters were not out of the education system for long periods of time. They also emphasised the need for planned programmes of support when youngsters were reintegrated back into mainstream education.

- Respondents pinpointed difficulties in measuring performance criteria within alternative provision due to the narrow approach to evaluation within education. Alternative provision, particularly that focusing on working with excluded youngsters at the furthest end of the disaffection continuum, will not fit rigid performance indicators; there is a need for an alternative approach.

- The status, part-time nature (although changing) and lack of investment in alternative provision meant that it was still seen by many as a 'second best' option, raising human rights issues concerning the education of excluded youngsters.

- The need for an empathetic approach when working with excluded youngsters was stressed.

- It was noted that the curriculum offered within alternative provision could be frequently constrained by staffing, funding and/or accommodation issues.

- It was indicated that a disproportionate number of pupils with learning difficulties were permanently excluded.

- Drugs-related exclusions were sometimes hidden by schools, or schools were unaware that exclusions were drugs-related.

- The lack of drugs services, including rehabilitation for under 16s, was noted in a number of instances.

CHAPTER THREE
EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The provisions outlined in this report all endeavoured to meet the needs of permanently excluded children. Young people involved in these provisions experienced a number of difficulties including negative attitudes towards education, aggression, low self-esteem and behavioural and learning difficulties. The challenge for those working alongside such a group was to set in motion a series of changes, which enabled the young people to re-engage positively with some form of educational experience.

In terms of impact, the reported effects were indeed wide, spanning from academic advancement through to elevated self-confidence. Given that the provisions catered for children at different points along the disaffection continuum, the effects cited revealed a degree of variation between the provisions. Furthermore, the case study research shed light on the different perspectives of pupils, parents and external agencies and how they were affected by the provisions, directly or indirectly.

In analysing the data, a typology of effects emerged and it is this typology which serves as an underlining framework for the chapter. Following a presentation of the complete typology, the chapter falls into two main sections. The first section endeavours to expand on the typology, using illustrative examples taken from the seven case-study projects. In this phase of the research, it was very much the intention to garner views from those directly affected by the provisions. Hence, the section starts by relaying the views of the immediate benefactors, the children themselves. This is followed by a consideration of parent effects; effects experienced by the professionals involved; effects thought to impact on the surrounding community and finally, effects in relation to the actual process of exclusion. The second half of the chapter then moves on to consider the effects according to the 'type of provision'. Phase One of the research involved interviews with strategic and operational personnel in 30 LEAs and the projects they identified fell into six categories as outlined earlier in Chapter One. The effects typology has therefore been applied to the six types of provision, with an attempt to identify those effects which appear to be common to particular provisions.

3.2 A TYPOLOGY OF EFFECTS/OUTCOMES

The following typology was formulated from the multitude of effects evidenced by interviewees in all phases of the research. The typology classifies effects experienced by the immediate target group, i.e. pupils, and also distinguishes the ways in which parents, professionals, the exclusions process and the surrounding community were reported to be influenced.

A TYPOLOGY OF EFFECTS

LOCUS/TYPE OF EFFECT	DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT
PUPIL	
Advancements in learning	Advancement in learning through: • access to education • accredited courses • basic skills training • vocational training • eligibility for exams • and/or an academic improvement, generally
Behavioural modification	A behavioural change in the form of: • improved self-presentation • improved attendance • improved application to work • a 'calming down' and improved self-control • reduced offending • maturation • general behavioural improvements
Attitudinal change	A positive attitudinal transformation in relation to: • education/training • adults • future • other cultures
Relationship development and enhancement	Improved relations with: • parents • peers • teachers/staff • adults in general
Psychological well-being	Improved psychological well-being through: • elevated self-esteem • enhanced confidence • a sense of achievement • general contentment
Improved communication skills	More effective communication between the young person and: • parents • peers • others generally
Increased awareness	Raised awareness of: • educational opportunities • work-related opportunities • personal skills and abilities
Post programme progression	Positive advancement on to: • work • education • vocational training

LOCUS/TYPE OF EFFECT	DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT
PARENT	
Support and information	Parents benefit from: • support and advice • respite • information exchange
Relationship enhancement and development	• Improved relations within the family (better communication, less conflict)
PROFESSIONAL/ORGANISATION	
Relationship development and enhancement	• An improvement in inter-agency relations
Attitudinal change	• Attitudinal change amongst professionals (including schools and provision staff)
Raised awareness	Enhanced knowledge and understanding concerning: • the roles of other agencies • the exclusions process • the needs of young people generally
Impact on practice	• Involvement with the provision impacts on the practice of other agencies
Support and information exchange	Joint working between agencies facilitates and improves: • inter-agency support • information exchange • data collection and tracking
COMMUNITY	
Reduced offending	• A reduction in offending amongst the permanently excluded impacts on the surrounding community
Attitudinal change	• Community participation serves to inform, re-educate and challenge preconceived stereotypes of young people
PROCESSES OF EXCLUSION	
Reintegration	Impact of the reintegration process in terms of: • a return to mainstream • minimised time out of education • faster reintegration
Fairer system	• Those involved in educational placement after an exclusion (parents, pupils and schools) view the process as a fairer one
Fewer exclusions	• Reduced exclusion figures

3.3 THE CASE STUDIES: AN ILLUSTRATION OF EFFECTS

Seven authorities were selected as case studies in order to gain the views and ascertain the effects on:

- pupils;
- parents;
- professionals;
- the surrounding community; and
- the exclusion process.

The case-study provisions provided examples of combined alternative learning programmes, work-related alternative learning programmes and reintegration into mainstream. The key features of each case study can be found within the summary charts, pp. 36–47. It should be noted that in one LEA, three projects were visited (3a and 3b (work-related learning programmes) and 3c (combined alternative learning programme)).

3.3.1 Pupil effects

Given the target group of these provisions, the first set of effects to be presented is those that pertain directly to the young people involved.

Advancements in learning

Educational input was a component of all the case-study provisions, although the quantity and type was seen to vary. Academic improvement thus took many forms, ranging from a general improvement in learning through to formal accreditation and qualifications:

Accredited courses
We have a number of different themes within the programme and they are all based around the achievement of the City and Guilds profiles of achievement (manager).

Basic skills
My handwriting was a mess when I first come and then it's like starting to pick up a bit now and spelling, like some spelling, I forgot how to do them (male, aged 16, Case Study 3c (combined alternative learning programme)).

Vocational training
I've known a number of youngsters who've gone to college and got involved in painting and decorating, car maintenance, whatever, and suddenly their education is much more in line with their abilities (educational psychologist).

General academic improvement
I think it's learnt me a bit (male, aged 15, Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme)).

In the research, permanently excluded children did not emerge as an homogenous group. The reasons for their exclusions, what happened afterwards, their response and their social backgrounds showed wide variations. For some, reintegration into

mainstream school and GCSEs remained a possibility; for others, accreditation of any form represented a significant accomplishment. The comment below comes from a social worker whose client had surprised and impressed everyone by reaching a point where sitting an exam actually became an option for him:

Advancements in learning (eligibility for exams)

He's been able to achieve and we never thought he'd be able to do these basic exams, 'cos he missed quite a lot of schooling ... A couple of weeks ago, he was going around and saying to everybody 'I'm going to do an exam, I'm going to do an exam' – which was kind of like, wow – we never thought he'd be able to put in for that (social worker, Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme)).

Three initiatives (Case Studies 3a (work-related learning programme), 4 and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes)) provided for youngsters who had been excluded from school (or who had excluded themselves), for whom no other provision had been successful and who, prior to the programme, were receiving little or no educational input. These projects provided for youngsters who had previously been '*wandering the streets*' and offered them more than '*three hours a week home tuition*', and this fact alone was cited as an effect of the work and might be considered academic advancement at the lowest level:

Advancement in learning (access to education)

We are at least removing them from this situation where they are bored stiff, they are getting into trouble; at least there's some routine for part of the week (teacher, Case Study 3a).

For those so removed from school life and disenchanted with the educational experience, attendance alone could therefore be perceived as academic progress. In Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme), the first task was to secure some kind of regular attendance (by any means possible). One youngster cited this as a major effect of the project: '*It helped me get back into school, to do my education instead of just lying in bed all day and then going out at 11, 12 o'clock in the morning*' (male, aged 14).

In these initiatives, pupils were said to have made general improvements in their learning. In Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), for example, young people commented that they had made progress with their learning as a result of the course, and there was a feeling that they had learned more there than they would have done at school or in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Similarly, in Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme), despite less emphasis being given to academic work, general educational improvement was none the less apparent, reported by a parent, a youth justice officer and pupils:

Advancement in learning (general academic improvement)

Helped me a lot in learning, because when I was out of school for a year, I went, not dumb, but I fell behind and couldn't sort it out. But now, I'm back where I was, sorted out again (male, aged 15).

Whilst Case Studies 3a (work-related learning programme), 4 and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes) provided for broadly the same client base and

interviewees shared the notion that youngsters' attendance at the project and any general educational improvement were a significant effect of their work, the different approaches of these initiatives did mean some variation in the effects reported. In Case Study 7, for example, much of the emphasis was on the achievement of recognised certificates and qualifications, and consequently this was a frequently cited effect. All of the components of the course, including basic skills education, leisure pursuits and first aid training, were recognised ultimately by formal **accreditation:**

Advancement in learning (accredited courses)
Everything they do, there is a certificate at the end of it and it's not one I produce. It's a nationally recognised certificate so they've achieved something that is worthwhile and something that they can take away and use when they are looking for work (coordinator of project).

Providers and those youngsters who had completed the course drew attention to the certificates gained. The **basic skills** qualifications included Wordpower and Numberpower and *'on the last project, a majority of the young people actually achieved all the qualifications and certificates that we hoped they would achieve'* (tutor). The project was distinct amongst the case studies in that youngsters could achieve leisure-related qualifications like Power Boat level one and two. The opportunity to do this was appreciated by the young people, who valued it both for the chance it gave them to experience a completely new activity (*'We went out on speed boats and I would never have thought of doing anything like that'* (male, aged 15)) and for the certificates gained and the resulting feelings of success and achievement:

Advancement in learning (accredited courses)
I got qualifications. I got two power boat certificates, leadership certificate. What they try and do here is take you on these leisure course things and you get a certificate at the end. It all builds up. It's something you can choose. It's something you can show off. It's an achievement really. People know what you have done. It's leisure, but it's also work (male, aged 16).

Although this course had led to academic advancement for youngsters who previously were receiving no educational input, some were concerned that their successes were not highly regarded. One boy on this course, though proud of the City and Guilds qualifications he had achieved, was aware of the hierarchy of educational achievement and the prestige of GCSEs: *'I haven't got GCSEs, but I have got City and Guilds. I know they are nothing special at the moment ... a lot of jobs are looking for GCSEs.'*

Vocational outcomes were cited as an effect in three case studies (1 (reintegration with mainstream curriculum), 2 and 3b (work-related learning programmes)), though their approaches were very different. In Case Study 1, the main focus of the work was the reintegration of youngsters into mainstream school, but for those excluded late in their school careers, work experience or vocational courses at college were considered more appropriate. Several youngsters were said to have achieved highly: *'We've got youngsters who've consistently failed in the school system but have gone to college and done very well indeed because the slant is practical, non-verbal'*(educational psychologist). These youngsters were not going back to school and for them their vocational pursuits became their education. In another case study,

youngsters learned the basics of car mechanics in a mock workroom one afternoon a week for ten weeks, and on completion of the course, they acquired the first part of an accreditation towards an NVQ:

Advancement in learning (accreditated courses and vocational training)
They can achieve something at the end of a ten-week session ... if they complete at least eight of the ten sessions they will get a certificate which is, albeit very minor, it's an accreditation towards a level one NVQ (senior youth worker).

This programme attempted to capitalise on the appeal of vocational pursuits and pupils' sense of achievement at having succeeded in learning about mechanics in order to reintegrate them into or re-engage with education. Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme) operated similarly, offering young people the opportunity to access work experience while still at school. A temporary diversion from mainstream would sometimes be all that was needed to re-engage a young person in academic endeavours, as a mother of one boy explained:

Attitudinal change (education)
Because it's just one day, it has actually made him make better use of his education at school, where as he could have thrown it away and wasted it, so in that aspect that has done him a lot of good (parent of male, aged 15).

Children on this programme therefore demonstrated healthier attitudes towards education and as a consequence, their academic performance improved.

Although the many educational benefits for the case-study initiatives were highlighted, it is important to acknowledge the concerns that some youngsters harboured about their academic advancement. One boy's recognition of the greater prestige of GCSEs compared with City and Guilds qualifications has already been noted. Further to this, some young people from Case Study 3a (work-related learning programme), an initiative which did not aim for reintegration and was designed for those for whom all other input had failed, expressed some anxiety about the educational provision they received. Whilst able to cite many other positive effects emanating from the initiative, they were still concerned that they were not receiving the type of education they would in a more formal setting and did not have the opportunity to take GCSEs. This case study paired its clients with external providers or training organisations. For one girl, her placement had meant an improvement in her social skills and support from project staff as she stopped using drugs, but she still commented that ultimately she would prefer to return to a PRU, '*because I was getting an education and that down there. I am not, coming here*'. Similarly, a boy who was attending a bricklaying course as well as receiving individual tuition wanted to return to '*proper education*': '*I want to go to school, I don't want to be working ... I would rather be sitting in the classroom with your uniform on.*' This perhaps reveals that, whatever other benefits this type of initiative brings, some youngsters still attach great importance to educational outcomes. Whether they would truly be able to access more formal education is another issue, however. The providers of Case Study 3a (work-related learning programme) were aware of both these young people's concerns and were trying to rectify the situation, but this was not always straightforward: despite her concerns about her academic advancement, the girl had rejected the individual tuition they had provided.

Behavioural modification

A permanent exclusion is often related to the unmanageable behaviour exhibited by the pupil concerned. Thus, a principal concern for those working with the recipients, is to modify behaviour, such that the young person is able to function effectively in the presence of others and respond appropriately to a range of situations. There were a variety of ways in which the young people attending the provisions were seen to change behaviourally.

Later in this section, the lack of verbalised self-esteem amongst the young people is reported. However, a more subtle indication that their self-esteem had actually improved was reflected in their overall self-presentation. In Case Studies 5 and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes), adult interviewees noted that the young people were now taking a greater pride in their appearance:

Behavioural modification (improved self-presentation)
They start caring about themselves. I have noticed in their clothing. You find that they will be quite smartly dressed when they come to college ... it will be clean clothes and things like that (youth worker, Case Study 7).

Often, a source of difficulties in school stems from the inability of pupils to apply themselves to work, instead becoming bored or distracted, invariably causing a problem in terms of classroom management. Case Study 5, a 12-week programme with an emphasis on reintegration, had managed to extend the concentration span of one particular individual. A tendency to be distracted was acknowledged by both son and mother and this inevitably ended in teacher–pupil confrontation while in mainstream school. Thus, the ability to complete set work was a crucial skill to develop, one which increased the likelihood of a successful reintegration:

Behavioural modification (improved application to work)
I get down to my work more. I may talk and all that, but at the end of the day, I always get my work finished (male, aged 15)

Many young people acknowledged the 'calming effect', whereby they acquired the skills (consciously or unconsciously) to diffuse anger and general emotional discord. Previous research has shown that some children in mainstream can be overwhelmed by feelings of frustration, anger and oppression, the root of which may lie in learning difficulties, family problems or, sometimes, an environment that they perceive to be stifling (Kinder *et al.*, 1998). Consequently, their educational performance and behaviour are adversely affected. Skills for dissipating negative emotions, therefore, are a valuable resource for many excluded children. Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme) sought to give children the '*ability to cope with higher levels of frustration and anxiety and the ability to walk away from a situation and say no. The ability to say, no – that's not nice; you don't do that to people, you don't trash the classroom*' (project worker).

'Calming down' and improved self-control emerged in the majority of provisions, from which a few examples have been selected. Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme) catered for a cohort which was all male, offending, with little or no prospect of re-entry into mainstream education and a selection criterion of '*nothing else has worked*'. As a group, behavioural problems typically precipitated their

exclusions. On entry to the programme, however, three youngsters explained how they had 'calmed down' and that their aggressive tendencies had indeed subsided. The following comment comes from a pupil who was suspended 14 times before being *'thrown out 'cos I frightened too many teachers and pupils'*:

Behavioural modification (calming down and improved self-control)
I've had one fight at [the project] *and that's it. At school I was having a fight every single day and I've calmed down quite a lot. They've sorted me out* (male, aged 15).

Meanwhile, interviewees in Case Study 1 (reintegration with mainstream curriculum) described the transformation of pupils who initially displayed extreme behaviour problems. One girl was depicted as *'horrific'* at first, but could now *'accept reasoning'* and *'accept people speaking to her'*. Generally, the pupils were said to be *'more responsible for their own behaviour'*.

Even in Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme), where college places were secured for what could be termed *'less troublesome'* students, young people still reported more stable behaviour patterns. When asked why, one pupil replied: *'because they treat you more like adults than little kids'*.

In short, some permanently excluded children exhibit inappropriate, exaggerated behaviour, which makes it difficult for them to conform to life within mainstream school. A major effect emanating from the work of the seven case-study initiatives therefore appeared to be a behavioural 'defusion', such that the young people learnt to respond appropriately to situations and express themselves, without resorting to aggressive tactics.

A reduction in youngsters' offending behaviour was identified as an effect of the work of three case-study initiatives (3c, 6 and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes)): *'I ain't getting into trouble as much ... not thieving, I don't thieve ... it keeps me out of trouble'* (male, aged 15). In one of these projects, Case Study 7, an initiative designed for those for whom all other education provision had failed and who had been receiving no or limited input previously, this was the most frequently cited behaviour change by the young people interviewed (though, interestingly perhaps, it was not highlighted by the adult interviewees). In each of these case studies, the provision occupied and stimulated the youngsters during the day, filling their time with credible and alternative activities, and this approach emerged as one reason for the change in their behaviour, as a social worker from one of these initiatives explained:

Behavioural modification (reduced offending)
To be honest, it's kept my young person out of crime ... He's been doing something meaningful ... That's certainly been a massive contribution to him, not getting into further trouble with the police.

Youngsters too ascribed the reduction in their offending behaviour to the fact that they were occupied during the day. One boy from Case Study 7 stated that he had not committed a burglary since September when he started on the programme *' 'cos I'm here, I'm not bored'*, and a girl who had been *'sitting indoors'* all day before starting the programme acknowledged that it *'stopped me getting into trouble because if I was*

at home now I would probably be getting into trouble or something'. A young male from Case Study 3c whose offending had declined since he started the programme attributed it to the early morning start: *'When you get up early in the morning ... I just feel like going to bed most nights when I get home'* (male, aged 16).

However, there was the suggestion that these youngsters were merely being 'deflected' from criminal activity rather than 'cured' of it, particularly in Case Study 3c. When the 12-week programme ended, without the routine or support the youngsters had received, their offending sometimes commenced again. A social worker from the Youth Justice Service, whilst acknowledging that a lack of resources dictated that there could be no follow-up, commented that some of her clients felt that they were *'dropped, basically'* at the end of the programme and that if there was nothing else for them, *'they just revert back to the way life was before'* (social worker, Youth Justice). This problem was known to the course providers:

Behavioural modification (reduced offending)
I can name two or three lads well known in the community for TWOKING who, whilst they were on the programme, their offending reduced seriously. They didn't offend while they were doing it but when they left here, they started to reoffend because they didn't have the support (programme leader).

This perhaps suggests a need for some form of continuation in provision after youngsters' time at these initiatives has ended.

During the interviews, children were asked to compare school with the projects they were currently attending. Very often, references to *'respect'* and *'being treated as an adult'* were made. At the same time, project staff, parents and children reported *'a general maturing and settling down'* (staff member, Case Study 6). One could conclude, therefore, that a more adult environment can, in some cases, encourage a more mature demeanour amongst the young people. For instance, students at college generally enjoy greater freedom, responsibility for their own study and more equitable relationships with their tutors. Hence, a distinct effect emanating from Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme) was evidence of a mature approach, which, in the following example, impacted positively on the child–parent relationship:

Behavioural modification (maturation)
I think he has got more mature, he has grown up with it ... in that way it's helped us because now I am having conversations with him ... so we are having more adult conversations because of it, because of the way he has matured (parent of male, aged 16).

In Case Study 4, work experience featured in the programme of available activities and one placement provider observed a number of changes in the young person allocated to the company, one of which entailed *'maturing in the job'*. In Case Study 7, young people's maturation was detected by those who worked most closely with them and the youngsters who had completed the programme the previous year:

> **Behavioural modification (maturation)**
> *I reckon I have changed. I have grown up a bit more, and just noticed that I can't keep being childish like I was at school. I have got to grow up and that, get a job and everything for my career* (female, aged16).

One boy was described as a particular success by a provider: '*Meeting him first time on the course and seeing what he is like now – a sensible, level headed, mature lad ... there has been quite a big change in him.*' The boy now worked voluntarily at the outdoor centre which the project used and he commented that he could see something of his old self in the current group on the programme and could pass on words of wisdom: '*I was talking to some of the lads in the class and saying they've got a second chance and not many people get a second chance. They can get out of it something they want.*'

Interestingly, those youngsters currently on the project did not report any maturation in themselves, but one parent had already seen some improvement in her son: 'A *big change in just the few weeks ... from being an immature baby boy to like a young man*' (parent of male).

Some of the behaviour modification effects cited by the providers who worked most closely with the young people in Case Studies 3a (work-related learning programme), 3c and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes) revealed the importance of the smallest changes when dealing with such disaffected youngsters. A simple improvement in their manners, for example, was highlighted by one youth worker in Case Study 7 as indicative of the success of the project:

> **Behavioural modification (general behavioural improvement)**
> *When we were at college, I said: 'Please can you knock on the door before you enter.' Good manners ... I got them knocking on the door before they entered the room and one day we were working in the college and one of the staff just came in the door, and they all jumped up and said: 'She didn't knock on the door, Miss; she didn't knock on the door.' So just that one small thing I knew was successful.*

These small changes in behaviour were a particular feature of this project (Case Study 7). This initiative was distinct in that youngsters' inclusion in society was explicitly stated as an effect: '... *really taking them back – inclusion – into society*' (tutor), '... *their ability to function better in society*' (pastoral tutor). A pastoral tutor described how he could see the young people '*growing*' and '*gaining knowledge of the society they're living in*'. Suggesting that part of his role was almost paternal ('*it's as you would have hoped that their younger life could have been with their parents*'), he stated that the youngsters were introduced to places in the community where previously they did not feel they belonged: '*They are able to go into the library once we have taken them and decide on a book and not feel that this is the wrong place for me to be.*' Further, an important change in this case study, described by a youth worker, an academic and pastoral tutor, was the young people's ability to ask for help with their work:

> *I think one of the loveliest things with them is they push you off when you are first there; but then, after that, [they will say] 'Can you help me? What's this about?'* (pastoral tutor).

Like Case Study 7, but perhaps even more so, interviewees from Case Study 3a (work-related learning programme) were keen to point out that, because of the extent of disaffection within their client group, they had '*very, very few massive successes*'. The provision involved placing youngsters who previously had refused any education with training agencies as well as offering some tutoring. Examples of success were pupils who progressed from attending their placement from one day a week to two days a week. A youngster who had responded '*favourably*' to the initiative and on whom the programme was said to have had a '*reasonable*' impact was described as '*the exception rather than the rule*' (team leader).

Attitudinal change

A shift in youngsters' attitudes towards education, the future, adults and other cultures also emerged as an effect of the provision. Perhaps reflecting the differing degree of disaffection of the youngsters partaking in the various initiatives, there appeared to be almost a continuum of youngsters' changing attitudes towards education. In Case Study 5 (combined alternative learning programme), young people were explicitly told that the programme was not a permanent arrangement and that reintegration was the overriding concern. This was reflected in the children's conversations as they verbalised a desire to return to mainstream. An attitudinal transformation was reported by pupils, parents and other agencies:

Attitudinal change (education)
When she started here you could see a change in her attitude; her attitude had changed, life was worth living again ... she wants to be back at school, she wants to get back into school, so yes, it's a positive thing her being here ... wanting to go back into mainstream education (parent of female, aged 15).

In case studies for perhaps more disaffected youngsters where reintegration was not an option, re-engagement with learning generally constituted an attitudinal change. In Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), an initiative led by youth workers and designed for those for whom all other education provision had failed, youngsters' attitudinal change was the realisation that '*they had messed up in school and that this was their only chance and their only opportunity to put things right*' (tutor). One 16-year-old boy, who had also completed the programme and who admitted that he had '*quite a bad attitude at school*', said the programme had '*made me want to learn. It gave me a kick up the backside.*' When asked what made the difference, he replied: '*You start to believe in yourself and I thought I could do it.*'

With regard to the future, there was also evidence of a more positive outlook with references to college, work and training. In Case Studies 2 (work-related learning programme) and 5 (combined alternative learning programme), there were examples of young people who, spurred on by their successes at the initiatives, could now look optimistically towards the future, with a plan of action allowing them to actualise their ambitions:

> **Attitudinal change (the future)**
> *I think the other interesting thing about our students is that they go on afterwards to further education: they talk about going to college, they talk about going to university, where other people in Year 10, they don't see that in their future* (head of education support service, Case Study 5).

In Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), the programme involved '*loads*' of advice on career planning and visits to the careers centre to look at vacancies: for one 16-year-old-girl, this, as well as the approach of the youth workers in explaining '*nice and slowly, making sure we understood*', had changed her attitude towards employment:

> **Attitudinal change (employment)**
> *If I didn't come here, I would have the wrong attitude. I think I learnt something through my career, thinking about it ... I think it has helped me a lot, careerwise, knowing that I have got to get out there.*

As well as changes in their attitudes to education and the future, a shift in the young people's own attitudes towards others was also reported: '*I'm not as mouthy; I suppose I can be still when I want to: if there's no need, then I won't.*' This girl (from youth worker-led Case Study 7) attributed her change to the staff's approach to the youngsters on the course: '*When I first started, they would say like ... "If you get on with us, we get on with you." And we did and we got on really well.*' Also, in this case study, a change in the young people's perceptions of individuals from different cultures was highlighted:

> **Attitudinal change (other cultures)**
> *Accepting others, people round them, more accepting people for whatever they are* [happens]; *for example, quite a lot of them have been racist. We do issues about racism and all that, about how other people feel and everything, and then they see a different coloured person. You don't get what you get in the beginning from them: 'Oh look ...' They are just like another person* (youth worker).

Equally, an improvement in attitudes towards people outside their own age group was described, and also attributed to the positive relationships established with the youth workers at the project. These relationships made the young people realise '*all the adults out there are not the same as we thought they were*' (youth worker). A similar impact was reported in Case Study 3c (combined alternative learning programme), where the '*the biggest effect*' of the programme was deemed to be the youngsters' realisation of adults' concern for them: '*It opens their eyes to the fact that there are people who do care because they may come from uncaring backgrounds themselves*' (programme leader).

Relationship development and enhancement
Given the reported effects of maturity, confidence and social skills, it is not surprising that enhanced relations were also evident, with parents, peers, teachers/staff or adults generally.

Though cited less frequently than other effects in Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), some young people were aware of an improvement in their relationships. Several commented on having made new friends since they started at the project. One girl was aware of better relationships at home and a boy stated that his parents and fellow employees at the shop where he worked now trusted him more. From a parental viewpoint, one of the parents referred to a better relationship with her son, who was now more civil and affectionate:

Relationship development and enhancement (parents)
He has given me more cuddles. He used to do that. I always got a kiss and a cuddle before he went out, and then it all just went downhill, but now he is back to giving us his kisses and cuddles when he goes out (parent of male).

However, one participant reported that his relationship with his mother had not improved: *'I used to shout at my mum, all stuff like that, but now I do it worse ... so it ain't solved none of them problems at home'* (male, aged 15). This underlines the limitations of interventions where family and social problems dominate. It is in these situations where staff find it most difficult to achieve success: *'I suppose the more baggage they come with, that's where the difficulty will be because you are working on a lot of different issues'* (training provider, Case Study 5). A social worker who referred to Case Study 3a did acknowledge, however, that when dealing with families in crisis, the project was *'extremely helpful'*. It had helped prevent youngsters from being accommodated by the local authority because, for permanent excludes or non-attendees, it ensured that for some time at least *'they are not under their mam's or their dad's feet, causing bother'* (social worker).

A youth worker and pastoral tutor who worked most closely with the youngsters in Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme) commented on the relationships which developed between them and the young people: *'With most of them it forms quite a solid friendship really.'* Indeed, a mother attributed the changes she had seen in her son to the relationship the youth workers had established: *'They are saying to me within the last month they have really seen an improvement; he is a nice chap ... they've got some sort of relationship there that he has actually responded to'* (parent of male, aged 16).

In Case Study 1 (reintegration with mainstream curriculum), the positive relationships established with staff were also acknowledged by adult interviewees, and one of the youngsters noted that *'I get on with the teachers better'*. The smaller groups and more *'sympathetic'* environment of the PRU were thought to enable this, and good relationships with adults were seen to enhance their self-esteem and aid reintegration into mainstream education. Such relationships can be fundamental to this type of work, as was the case in Case Study 4 (work-related learning programme): *'When we feel we've got a relationship and the kid is turning up because they want to turn up, then we can start to shift the emphasis a little bit to more academic and more setting goals for the future'* (project manager). For some children, it may be the first time they have encountered non-authoritarian adults to whom they can relate and with whom they can feel comfortable:

> **Relationship development and enhancement (adults)**
> *She has settled down. She is realising that there are adults who are interested in her, rather than just ones who tell her off. She gets on better with adults* (parent of female aged 15, Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme)).

In addition to developing positive child–adult relationships, other methods of facilitating interpersonal relations came to light. The programme leader in Case Study 3c (combined alternative learning programme) explained that many of the activities they did, particularly a residential trip, required the participants to work together so that they could develop the skills requisite for teamwork:

> *It's my view that although they are friends, they don't help each other in a way that is going to help them progress. This way, working as a team moulds them together and they can see they have to help each other* (programme leader).

College and/or work experience offers a very different educational opportunity in comparison to the more structured and controlled regime of mainstream school. For some students, the resultant effects (more mature attitudes, settling down and raised confidence) transferred on to the quality of their interpersonal relations, and in Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme), enhanced relationships, in all areas, seemed to figure highly: '*I get on with people better than I was, because I would go home some* [*sic*] *and I would be in a mood. And since I have started here, I have been all right*' (female, aged 16).

In the eyes of one staff member, these new social skills were thought to be just as important as academic advancement because they were the skills that would foster success later in the adult world:

> *I think sometimes, even if they don't learn anything, socially it's very, very good for them to share good manners, attitude. I think that's all very important when they go out into the big wide world. So I think really it's successful from that point of view, as well as from the academic side* (student welfare officer).

Psychological well-being

Children who find themselves excluded may suffer from low self-esteem and diminished self-confidence and in recognition of this fact, a number of provisions made concerted efforts to tackle the problem.

A distinct effect emanating from Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme) was that of enhanced psychological well-being. Opportunities to undertake alternative activities, with a practical orientation and selection on the basis of personal interest, fostered successful performance, which in turn impacted positively on self-esteem and confidence. Similarly, Case Studies 3b (work-related learning programme) and 7 (combined alternative learning programme) allowed for the acquisition of practical skills and certificates, opportunities which made youngsters '*so proud and pleased*'. Again, positive improvements in psychological well-being were detected. Hence, achievement and psychological well-being would appear to be intimately related:

> **Psychological well-being (elevated self-esteem)**
> *It boosts their self-esteem; they are doing something worthwhile and people are listening and taking notice and they are achieving something. It's like when somebody goes back and they say to their mam: 'I have learnt how to drive a car.' OK, it might be just round a track, but it's an achievement for someone who probably hasn't achieved a lot* (social worker, Case Study 3b).

A number of young people in Case Study 2 voiced feelings of general contentment, which, although vague as an effect, is significant in that it represents an emotional transformation for those concerned and suggests that the programme was able to meet the emotional needs of permanently excluded children: '*I am a lot happier coming here because in school I used to get fed up and I don't get fed up here; I get on with the teachers a lot better*' (male, aged16).

The programme offered by Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme) incorporated a large personal and social development component and it was clearly the intention to develop the child's sense of emotional well-being. The results were voiced by a parent of one child, who also highlighted the double blow of special needs and permanent exclusion:

> **Psychological well-being (elevated self-esteem)**
> *You need something like this, 'cos children with special needs have very low self-esteem and generally children who are excluded have very low self-esteem and* [the provision] *has helped bring his self-esteem up ... that he is worth something, that he can do something, that there is a good side to him* (parent of male).

It was more common for staff or other professionals to cite elevated self-esteem or self-confidence as a programme outcome than the children themselves. As a concept, self-esteem may therefore be unfamiliar to many young people, or at least not one they are able to communicate readily. This was the situation in Case Study 5 (combined alternative learning programme), where neither parents nor pupils mentioned the effect explicitly, but professionals and staff members were aware of its presence:

> **Psychological well-being (enhanced self-confidence)**
> *It helped them to build their confidence back up because they are in a smaller group environment, so it helps them to build their confidence and to make them know that they are special and they are needed and they are wanted and they can achieve something ... I think it just gives them a sense of worth really* (education welfare officer).

Likewise in Case Studies 3c and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes), an improvement in their psychological well-being was detected by those who worked most closely with the young people, but the youngsters currently on the programmes did not identify these effects. In Case Study 3c, those who referred to the programme were particularly aware of an improved psychological status:

> **Psychological well-being (enhanced confidence and elevated self-esteem)**
> *They know they haven't achieved academically in the past ... and I think that, in itself, is always in the back of their head and they think 'I'm not going to be able to do this' ... But, by the time they've gone through the project, they know they can, and I think it's like a steady build up of self-esteem, self-confidence and, like, personality building* (probation officer).

Self-esteem may also take some time to materialise and it was therefore only the youngsters who had actually completed the course in Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme) who reported a positive change in their psychological well-being. Both pupil interviewees stated that they felt more confident as a result of the programme, one girl commenting that the best thing about the course was *'being able to speak out, feeling confident'*.

Improved communication skills

Explicit reference to better 'communication skills' was surprisingly rare. Professionals did not mention it in their checklist of effects. However, there were more indirect examples of where young people were clearly being more 'pleasant', 'open' and 'less aggressive'. These changes have already been partly discussed in behavioural effects.

In Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme), where children displayed a history of behavioural problems and aggression, two pupils (both on work experience placements) recognised that their communication skills had developed:

> **Improved communication skills (general)**
> *It's learnt me to respect people when they come into a building and ask you things ... be polite and things like that* (male, aged 15).

In a similar provision, Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), this effect was cited by young people in terms of being less *'mouthy'* or argumentative, while the parents and a youth worker had noticed communication enhancement. The youth worker was aware that the young people could now *'have a conversation without any bad language, with them looking at you instead of looking at their feet'*.

For some children, a refinement in communication was apparent; for others, an actual communication link was established. In Case Studies 5 and 7, parent–child relationships were reported to have improved as a result of more open dialogue:

> **Improved communication (parents)**
> *He is more talkative and tells us a lot more that goes on here, whereas at school he stopped telling us everything that was going on. He comes in and I say 'Did you have a good day?' and he will say 'Oh yes' and then he gets into telling us what he has done and everything* (parent of male).

Increased awareness

Pupils' increased awareness, particularly of their own skills and abilities, was an effect especially characteristic of Case Study 5 (combined alternative learning programme). Though reintegration into mainstream school was the primary aim of

the provision, students for whom this was not available could remain with the programme, where, in addition to other provision, they received careers guidance and the opportunity of work experience. Both a training provider and work experience coordinator cited that youngsters developed an awareness of their own skills as a result of the project, and were also better informed as to what employers wanted, what they had to offer and how they could develop the necessary requirements:

Increased awareness (of personal skills and abilities)
I think it's really just to open their eyes and to make them aware of their choices, to basically make them aware of what they have got, what they might need to develop if they want to go down a certain road and making things seem like they are attainable really (work placement organiser).

In another initiative, Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), for a 16-year-old boy who had completed the programme, not only had the course made him realise he could achieve, but he also felt: *'It's made my life better. It's made me realise I can do these things without arguing. It helps you a lot ... It's turned me into a better person than what I was.'*

Post-programme progression

While provisions were primarily geared to meeting the immediate educational needs of young people, efforts were made to prepare them for life beyond the programme. In each of the case studies, comments, largely from professionals, suggested that a number of young people had moved on positively once the programme had ceased, either on to further training, college or employment:

Post-programme progression (education, vocational training and employment)
Last year some went on to college, one joined a motor programme, one went into retail and another went to a training programme (careers consultant, Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme)).

We do have at least two, probably three people, two that I am still aware of, who have now left school and one is actually doing a modern apprenticeship as a mechanic, the other one is doing a YTS as a mechanic, the third one had started a modern apprenticeship as a mechanic ... I do know two out of those three, their main interests in car mechanics was developed with this project (senior youth worker, Case Study 3b (combined alternative learning programme)).

In some case studies, there was a commitment to securing the young person's future. In Case Study 1 (reintegration with mainstream curriculum), for those youngsters who were not reintegrated into mainstream school but completed their education at college or at the PRU, it was guaranteed that they would be placed in employment, in training or on a college course. A similar promise operated in Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme):

> **Post-programme progression (vocational training and employment)**
> *They are given a work experience placement in the final year which is guaranteed to lead on to training or work, so they are not left in a position where they have done the work experience and then there is nothing for them. I think that's a really positive thing, to continue it* (Youth Justice officer).

Equally, in Case Study 2 (work-related alternative learning programme), a part-time college programme was devised in the hope that this would ease the students into more demanding, full-time study at some point in the future:

> **Post-programme progression (education)**
> *If they want to become a full-time student and we think it's going to work for them, they would come in September, probably on something like a BTEC first ... that's what we are aiming to prepare them for* (head of Learning Support Service).

It was not only in terms of employment that initiatives attempted to provide for youngsters when their time at the project ended. In Case Study 3b (work-related learning programme), for example, the organisation which ran the project offered other provision in the evenings and at weekends, and there were opportunities for the youngsters to become involved in these activities. This was said to give them more focus and more structured leisure time. Similarly, another initiative (Case Study 5 (combined alternative learning programme)) attempted to capitalise on the youngsters' attitudinal change in favour of education by referring them on to a charity-run scheme which further developed their skills over a 12-week programme. The importance of this type of continuation in provision was highlighted earlier (see Behaviour modification (reduced offending)) where it was acknowledged that the lack of support for youngsters after their course finished had meant that some had reverted back to their previous behaviour patterns, in particular, offending.

Given the levels of disaffection exhibited by some of the youngsters partaking in the case-study initiatives, it is possibly unrealistic to expect all to have progressed positively following their time at the course or even to have felt they had changed. Two youngsters from Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme), both of whom had serious problems at home (those for whom the providers said the programme had less success), reported no changes in themselves as a result of the programme. One boy, for example, felt '*I haven't really changed*' and noted that relationships at home had degenerated further, though he did acknowledge that the youth club element of the provision gave him a place to go, '*so it's helping us in a way ... instead of being out on the street mucking about and things, we go up there*'.

3.3.2 Parent effects
So far, the reported effects have impacted on the immediate programme participants, the children. Parents too, however, were seen to benefit positively from their child's participation.

Support and information

In a number of the case studies, parents commended project staff for their support, time and information exchange, which often contrasted with their experiences of mainstream education.

For some, this increased liaison brought peace of mind:

> **Information exchange**
> *I can now drive around with a free mind and not worry about* [my son], *because they will deal with it. If they see something happening, then they will phone me and let me know* (parent of male, aged 14, Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme)).

For others, it reduced confrontation and brought harmony to family life:

> **Relationship enhancement and development**
> [He] *is more relaxed and he will go there. He would come home about half three, I think, and he would come in and there would be none of the animosity, none of the arguments* (parent of male, aged 15, Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme)).

Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme) was unusual, as when necessary, the provision could also accommodate children. The residential component was therefore held in high regard by those families in need of respite:

> **Respite for families**
> *I wasn't fit enough to teach him at home. Ex-hubby would have lost his job if he'd had to have stayed home. I physically wasn't able. His father couldn't – so it would have meant me going more mental than I already am and his dad losing his job. So I can't tell you how much it's saved us* (parent of male).

In Case Studies 5 and 6 (combined alternative learning programmes), professionals from other agencies credited project staff for the time given to parents. In the latter case, parental support complemented the overall holistic approach:

> **Support for families**
> *They provide support to carers as well. That's where it works well, because they consider more than just the child's education. They work with the whole child* (social worker).

In Case Studies 4, 5 and 6 (combined alternative learning programmes), parental liaison emerged as an explicit working practice, whereby staff made determined efforts to keep parents informed and offered advice where needed. Often, though, parents would benefit indirectly, simply because their child's behaviour had improved, thus reducing tensions within the family, making life as a parent considerably less stressful: '*It helped me because he was a better boy to look after. He wasn't too awkward and he wasn't so difficult*' (parent of male, Case Study 4 (combined alternative learning programme)). Even in Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme), where direct parental support was less apparent, parents still

felt that they themselves had been assisted by the provision: *'It's made it easier for us'* (parents of male, aged 16).

3.3.3 Professional/organisational effects
Support and information

Throughout the provisions, professionals recognised the benefits of working together. By joining forces, they enjoyed multi-agency support and access to valuable information.

In Case Studies 3a (work-related learning programme) and 4 (combined alternative learning programme), the projects were seen to support the work of external agencies, in particular Youth Justice and Probation.   One officer felt that the provision reinforced work she was already doing with her clients because *'it's not just coming from* [project], *it's coming from me as well'* (Youth Justice officer). Also, by seeing her clients at the project, it improved her access to them, away from the stresses and influences of the family home.   In addition, disclosure of child protection issues by the young people resulted in referral to other agencies. Thus: *'We act as a monitoring service because sometimes we find out things they might not'* (team leader).

In Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme), a formalised system administered by a youth access coordinator had been created to process referrals to college. Beforehand, college personnel had to deal directly with schools, parents and sometimes young people.   A rationalisation of the system relieved the college and provided backup support where problems arose:

> **Inter-agency support**
> *It has been a lot easier since* [X] *has been in post. If we have got any problems once the students are here, as we do have from time to time – it might be behavioural problems, it may be a problem of non-attendance – then I can just contact* [X]. *He will do a home visit, then get back to me and then hopefully we can work out something suitable again* (student welfare officer).

Support in mainstream was also in evidence. In Case Study 1,where the emphasis of the initiative was on reintegration, behaviour support teachers worked in the classroom to support reintegrated youngsters. Their presence could lead to unofficial training for the teacher as they learnt how to respond to the pupil's behaviour: *'You can be in class probably supporting the pupil, but in effect, you could be supporting the teacher instead of the pupil'* (pupil support assistant).   A deputy head of a secondary school which reintegrated pupils commented that the willingness of the Case Study 1's staff to advise teachers who were having difficulties with particular pupils was a *'big bonus'* to the school and *'a great boost'* to the successful reintegration of youngsters.

Relationship development and enhancement

In many of the case studies, the programmes were said to promote effective working relationships between the different agencies. In one project (Case Study 7 (combined alternative learning programme)), different organisations (e.g. training providers, Careers Service) provided input or designed part of the programme for very

disaffected young people (e.g. training sessions, careers input) and this was termed '*a very good example of agencies working together with this extremely difficult group*' (careers consultant).

At Case Study 3c (combined alternative learning programme), a group had been established for practitioners who referred to the project. This group was said by members to have '*improved inter-agency working together*' and had raised awareness amongst practitioners, as they had developed '*an understanding of what each other's roles are and all the various agencies involved with a particular person*' (careers coordinator). For this interviewee, the group had also meant she now had '*the names of people I can phone up and discuss individuals if necessary*'. The group had also benefited the providers of the programmes: the relationships which had been established had helped the referral process '*because we can have a dialogue with the referring agency about the young person if we are not sure about anything*' (project manager).

3.3.4 Community effects
So far, effects have extended to young people, parents, staff and other agencies. However, the impact of the programmes can be detected even further afield, out in the community.

Reduced offending
A reduction in youngsters' offending behaviour and the consequent impact on the local community were identified as an effect of Case Study 3b (work-related learning programme). Many of the youngsters on the course had been involved in car crime and the programme, it was said, '*gives them a better insight into working with vehicles and getting involved with mechanical things in general on more of a legal basis than an illegal basis*' (senior youth worker). Liaison with the police had shown that there had been a significant reduction in car crime in the areas in which the youngsters attending the programme lived. In addition, the programme had had a national effect, having been replicated by the Home Office and become part of pre-release courses for young offenders who had been in custody for car-related crime:

> *The Home Office were very, very keen to get on board with the training that we actually do, to such an extent that now the actual mechanical training that we deliver to the young people is ... actually duplicated, as if it has been photocopied and run inside six young offenders' institutes throughout England on a pre-release course for young offenders* (senior youth worker).

Attitudinal change
In Case Study 3c (combined alternative learning programme), an element of the programme involved voluntary work for a conservation charity in the Lake District. Not only did this benefit the young people – '*it's great for mixing with other people*' – but it could also challenge and change the public's preconceived notions of disaffected youngsters and permanent excludees:

> **Attitudinal change**
> *It helps educate other members of the public who I feel need educating about these types of kids. They are so badly stereotyped it is unbelievable* (programme leader).

3.3.5 Process effects

Process effects pertained to issues around exclusion and subsequent reintegration.

Reintegration

Reintegration into mainstream education was the principal aim and predominant effect in two case-study programmes (1 and 5). Many examples of successful reintegration were given. In Case Study 1, for example, a deputy head from one receiving school commented of one reintegrated pupil '*you couldn't pick him out from the crowd*', noting that he no longer needed any in-school support and that he had not been involved in any incidences of misbehaviour. However, reflecting the extent of the difficulties permanently excluded pupils might experience, this deputy head also recounted the experience of another reintegrated boy, '*an extreme case*', who was back at the case-study initiative for support during a 30-day fixed-term exclusion. The facility to do this, however, had meant that '*there's a 50-50 chance that there's somebody there who, in the past, would have been permanently excluded, he may well now not be*'.

In Case Study 2 (work-related learning programme), a different form of reintegration occurred. Young people were not specifically 'reintegrated', because often they had not been excluded. Instead, the programme enabled challenging youngsters to remain within mainstream education by offering a more flexible combination of activities (college/work experience), whereas previously, permanent exclusion may have been the inevitable conclusion. So, in a sense, the young people were indeed being reintegrated, from a negative to a positive school experience:

> **A return to mainstream**
> *It's just towards school because he is no longer a pain. He was a pain because he wouldn't get up; it's not because he is tired, he just didn't want to go. He wouldn't get ready and he would laze around ... now he just gets up* (parent of male, aged 15, Case Study 2).

In Case Study 6 (combined alternative learning programme), despite catering for a clientele experiencing many problems (behavioural, social and family-related), reintegration was still the overriding objective, though this might be to college or to a PRU. The project could lay claim to a notable success concerning a particular pupil with a long history of behavioural problems related to Attention Deficit Disorder: '*He'd had problems since he was three at nursery school, because he's always been hyper and couldn't focus on anything. We've had him at the psychologist on and off for 11 years*' (parent of male). The end result was an exclusion from secondary school, yet after spending some time at the project, this boy was able to entertain the possibility of mainstream education once more:

I had a phone call yesterday, from the special needs lady. She said that all the teachers at school were really pleased with him, that he is really trying academically – struggling, but he's trying (parent of male).

Some young people however, were considered too far removed from the demands and regime of mainstream education to ever consider a return (Case Studies 4 and 7 (combined alternative learning programmes)). In Case Study 4, requests for reintegration would be followed up and supported, but generally, the issue never arose. Instead, pupils remained with the programme until the end of compulsory education, applying themselves, often very successfully, to a range of activities which complemented their interests and needs.

Fairer system
The existence of Case Study 1 (reintegration with mainstream curriculum) was said to have simplified the process by which excluded pupils were allocated to schools. All requests to schools to reintegrate pupils were now generated by the initiative whereas previously '*they were coming through different routes*' (deputy head, secondary school).

3.3.6 Key findings
The interviews conducted during the case-study phase of the research served to demonstrate that the effects arising from the provisions were not confined to programme recipients. Those on the periphery, namely parents, other professionals and the community, were also thought to have been influenced, largely positively, through their involvement.

Pupil effects
- The most significant and varied impact was experienced by the group specifically targeted for intervention, the young people.

- Eight major types of effects were evidenced, ranging from academic advancement through to enhanced interpersonal relations.

- Effects were seen to vary according to the child's position along the disaffection continuum – for those at the extreme end, mere attendance at the provision was considered an achievement, while those closer to mainstream could consider the possibility of reintegration.

Parent effects
- Parents benefited from support and information provided by the project staff and for many, this brought peace of mind and reassurance.

- As a consequence of the child's improved behaviour, temper and attitude, families reported a reduction in confrontation and better relations between parent and offspring.

Professional/organisational effects

- Multi-agency working brought access to valuable information and improved relationships between different agencies, and, when an individual was a subject of concern for several different agencies, ensured a coordinated approach.

- In one project, liaison between project and school staff raised teachers' awareness of how to respond to pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

Community effects

- Surrounding communities were also affected by the work of the initiatives. For example, police reported a significant reduction in car crime in an area occupied by young people who were now accessing a work-related learning programme.

- Another case-study initiative which brought youngsters into contact with the community was said to precipitate a positive attitudinal shift, in terms of the way excluded children were viewed by the public.

Process effects

- A fairer system and reintegration into mainstream were the two 'process' effects reported during the case-study phase of the research.

- Although many examples were provided, reintegration was not always a foregone conclusion for those excluded from school. Reintegration depended on a number of factors – age of child, availability of places and the needs of the child. Some provisions catered for pupils for whom all other education provision had failed. Here, reintegration was not considered an option, and the effects highlighted centred instead on improvements made to pupils' basic skills, interpersonal relationships and their enhanced self-esteem.

3.4 EFFECTS BY PROVISION TYPE

The second part of this chapter focuses on the effects according to the type of provision. Phase One of the research involved interviews with key personnel at strategic and operational level from 30 LEAs. These interviews produced details on six broad categories of provision, as outlined earlier in Chapter One:

- multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panels;
- reintegration and mainstream curriculum projects;
- work-related learning programmes;
- combined alternative learning programmes;
- PSE-type programmes; and
- work with young offenders.

The effects of each are considered in turn, with emphasis given to those effects which appear to be common across LEAs.

3.4.1 Multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panels

The panels described in this study were convened to consider the educational provision of young people following an exclusion, although some would deal universally with children outside mainstream education, whether they were excluded or not. Unlike other forms of provision, the panels were exclusively concerned with managing educational placement post-exclusion, rather than addressing any underlying causes or symptoms directly. Thus, the effects reported were quite distinct from those expressed by interviewees elsewhere and were largely related to the exclusions process.

The very existence of a panel, assembled to review, assess and reallocate permanently excluded children, significantly reduced the time out of education and ensured that all excluded children were accounted for. The main effect arising from exclusion panels, therefore, was cited as a faster reintegration into appropriate provision. Before panels were established, it was noted that children could be out of the system for weeks, sometimes months:

> **PROCESS EFFECT: Reintegration (faster reintegration)**
> *I think the improvements are that the delay is not there, between an exclusion and something happening to a child. That delay is not there, because I know of children who have been out of school a long time with very very little going on, so I think that is a big improvement* (senior social worker).

Panels offered a formal setting to assess the future of every excluded child: '*They can come straight to the panel; they can share information and then look at what's the best educational option for this young person.*' Representatives from various agencies met together in order to agree a course of action on the basis of their combined expertise. Not only that, each agency brought to the meeting their own knowledge of the child in question, which could then be pooled together to assemble a complete picture of that individual. Thus, any decisions were based on a wealth of supporting information:

> **PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Information exchange**
> *When I go to the meetings I get the ethnic code, the date of birth, year group, reasons for exclusions, check that they follow the good practice guidelines – very strict practice in the borough, to see that exclusion was indeed the last resort, to make sure they went through a range of helping services first and we find out which outside agencies ... there are a number of projects, mentoring schemes. We find out whether a child has a statement and we check out what provision is being given at that stage and we check whether this is the first, second, third permanent exclusion, because that's relevant for the placement panel. We take that information to the panel, so they can make an informed decision and they can agree the best long-term provision, whether the family need an Education Welfare Officer and whether there needs to be a joint planning between Education and the Social Service, because some children are so disadvantaged. So what we are talking about is getting full information and as quickly as possible* (exclusions officer).

Because the child was allocated after an 'informed' discussion, the receiving school (if reintegration was appropriate) generally viewed the procedure and the subsequent decision as a fair one:

PROCESS EFFECT: Fairer system and minimised time out of education

The majority of schools think it is a fairer system and so far, we have managed to place any pupil where mainstream was appropriate. Previously, before we had the placement panel, we had a number of pupils who were out of full-time education for much longer. We've got no children out any longer than 35 days (schools' project officer).

Interviewees raised the concern that, without a panel, permanent excludees would simply be 'dumped' on schools with spare places, resulting in an uneven distribution of excluded children, as well as their associated behavioural problems. The panel, through its assimilation and evaluation of key factors, ensured that a more reasoned decision was reached, one which was more likely to win the approval of those involved.

Representation of schools on the panel further ensured that the process operated as smoothly as possible for one of two reasons. Firstly, headteachers *'perhaps find it easier to accept a decision that their colleagues have made'* rather than a directive imposed by the LEA *'saying "you must take this pupil"'* (schools' project officer). Secondly, attendance at the panel was seen as beneficial for schools. It could provide school staff with the opportunity to meet other professionals, to share good practice and gain immediate access to knowledge and expertise (advantages shared by all those involved). Having established working relationships with the participating agencies, headteachers could approach panel members for more general advice concerning exclusions or behaviour management. Interviewees observed an enhanced awareness on the part of headteachers through their involvement with the panel. They were reported to gain a greater understanding of the exclusions process, in terms of its management and consequences. Interestingly, exclusions figures in two authorities had fallen, with the supposition that this related to raised awareness amongst headteachers:

PROCESS EFFECT: Fewer exclusions
PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Raised awareness

Another interesting finding was that exclusions fell very sharply at the beginning of the term to what they have been the beginning of the term last year. I suspect that it was a lot to do with awareness-raising that had taken place as a result of setting up this process (client manager, alternative education).

All of the above effects of exclusion panels were cited by at least two LEAs. Three additional effects were raised by separate LEAs. Firstly, as well as providing an arena in which to collectively discuss permanently excluded children, the panels also incorporated an administrative monitoring mechanism, whereby the post-exclusion history of each child was recorded and decisions minuted for future reference. This ensured that LEAs had some means of recourse should their decisions ever be challenged.

In addition to collating information on a particular child, an interviewee from one LEA also felt that the panel served to consolidate the provision for permanently excluded pupils. Before the panel, excluded children could access any one of several projects and eventual placement may have been somewhat arbitrary. The panel was thought to 'pull together' the various types of provision so that the best possible placement could be recommended.

The final effect concerning exclusion panels was a negative one. In cases where the emphasis was on reintegration, it was noted there was the possibility that some children might be inappropriately placed back into mainstream, exerting pressure on the school and increasing the likelihood of a second exclusion. One interviewee expressed reservations that children were simply being passed around the system. The comment below highlights the strain that some schools experience when having to take on excluded pupils:

> *There is an unrealistic pressure to find places in mainstream schools and mainstream schools cannot cope with the problems that these children have. When you take on a new child, maybe it would be an hour's work for a head of year and that would be it. It's ten or 20 hours so far; it's ridiculous and that is time that Mr [X] doesn't have and other people don't have either* (teacher).

In this way, not only did an inappropriate reintegration impact on teaching staff, but the education of other children may also have been affected.

However, given the fact that panels facilitated public discussion and a pooling of expertise, the process of post-exclusion was felt to be enhanced due to greater transparency, formalisation and careful deliberation. This impacted on schools, those responsible for managing exclusions and the children whose future will have been decided as a consequence of objective discussion.

3.4.2 Reintegration with mainstream curriculum

Among the range of provision in the sample of 30 were 17 initiatives offering a mainstream curriculum and aiming for the full reintegration of young people. These programmes, offered mainly through a PRU, provided youngsters with as much of a mainstream curriculum as possible as they worked towards reintegration, in some cases within a time-limited period. The main effects cited very much reflected the focus of their work: the successful reintegration of pupils back into mainstream; the improved relationships and support for schools which in turn facilitated the reintegration process; and the academic advancement of youngsters. In addition, the effects on parents were frequently acknowledged.

Given that the aim of these projects was reintegration, it is perhaps unsurprising that an effect commonly reported was the return of pupils to mainstream education (mainly school but also college for Year 10 and 11 pupils). Interviewees gave figures indicating the number of young people who had been reintegrated into mainstream education. However, a comparison between LEAs in terms of the percentages of pupils returning to mainstream may be misleading given that, although the aim of these projects was the same, their cohort of pupils, the time frame in which they

operated and local circumstances (e.g. the willingness of schools to take excluded pupils) might be very different:

PROCESS EFFECT: Reintegration (a return to mainstream)

Our success rate was deemed to be 44 per cent in terms of returning to education ... which was thought to be good (head of Behaviour Support Service).

Last year, of 117 excludees, 50 were integrated back into school and only four remained permanently excluded. If you take away Years 10 and 11, who we deliberately do not put back into school, you are looking at 60-odd per cent reintegration rate. It is always between 68 per cent and 64 per cent, the 30-odd per cent remaining (manager of Student Support Service).

There was recognition from a number of interviewees that the effects of their work were best assessed not through the number of pupils returning to mainstream school, but rather through the percentages remaining there: *'Seventy-eight per cent of the kids who we've put back since '94 either completed their education without being permanently excluded or are still there'* (head of PRU).

Those from newly established projects were able to compare current and old levels of reintegration in order to gauge the effects of their work. A headteacher at a PRU noted that previously five per cent of permanent excludees had returned to mainstream, but since its establishment, 39 per cent had been reintegrated successfully. In another LEA, the inception of a team working specifically to reintegrate pupils had *'greatly raised'* the number of youngsters returning to school, and the length of time they spent out of mainstream education had been notably reduced from a lapse of six months between exclusion and reintegration:

PROCESS EFFECT: Reintegration (faster reintegration and time out of education minimised)

The quickest we got a kid back was three days. The average was 17 days turn-around from the integration team picking them up to getting them back to schools. I'd now say that a permanently excluded pupil is likely to be out of school for 12 weeks, which is a huge improvement – it was disturbing before (head of Pupil Referral Services).

Beyond the figures and perhaps more illuminating given the nature of this work, were specific examples of pupils who had successfully returned to school. Often these revealed that the initiatives had benefited very troubled youngsters and were achieving considerable success in difficult situations. For example, in one LEA, a PRU manager described a pupil who, when excluded from school in Year 7, was *'a monster'*, but after two years at the provision was reintegrated into a new school and became a prefect – *'and that was a kid a lot of people gave up on completely'*. Similarly, a pupil support manager recounted the turn-around in a twice-excluded boy who was now *'very successfully reintegrated into a school in the north of the borough, which was a shock to everyone'*, and a head of centre relayed how his initiative had been successful in integrating *'some very difficult'* young people into college. Further, Chapter Two highlighted the difficulty some initiatives experienced with schools reluctant to accept permanently excluded pupils, particularly those at key stage 4. Reintegration in these circumstances was therefore a notable achievement. In one case, an interviewee commented that a particularly positive outcome from the

work of his initiative had been the reintegration of two Year 11 boys into a secondary school where they had achieved 'reasonable GCSE results'.

The impact on schools of this type of initiative was frequently cited. Two main outcomes emerged, both of which were said to facilitate the reintegration process: the support and information offered to schools and the improvement in relationships between the provision and schools. In terms of support and information, in cases where projects supplied schools with comprehensive information about the pupils they were receiving, this was said to enable the school to place pupils in the correct class or set. Equally, when the provision provided in-school support following the reintegration, this had the effect of making schools feel less uneasy about the prospect of taking on an excluded youngster: 'Since the inception of the integration team, we've been more successful because schools know they're going to get support and they're more comfortable in giving them a fresh start' (head of Pupil Referral Service). Indeed, one initiative which had limited success at reintegration acknowledged that this was because it could not offer such support to schools during the reintegration process and they were therefore reluctant to accept pupils.

A second effect on schools was said to be the establishment of good relationships between the initiatives and schools, which also aided the reintegration process. A headteacher of a PRU, for example, described the outcome of a meeting with a school to discuss the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils:

PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Relationship development and enhancement
After the meeting we had with them, it sounds rather childish but the senior teacher said 'I know you now, I like you, I'll talk to you', and we've got things moving ever since. We've broken down the resistance. PR is very important with the schools (head of centre).

In another LEA, successfully reintegrating pupils had reversed a situation whereby local schools were not fully collaborating when the PRU was first established: '*I think the more we have worked with schools over the last four years, I think the more we have got them on side. When we have worked with schools successfully once, they are more willing to take pupils back in the next time*' (headteacher of PRU).

Reflecting the focus of these initiatives in providing a mainstream curriculum, another commonly cited effect was pupils' academic advancement. When projects made a clear assessment of youngsters' ability, this, in some cases, had resulted in the diagnosis of previously unrecognised learning difficulties. Further, the small class size and higher degree of individual attention meant that pupils could begin to attain in those areas of the curriculum where previously they had struggled:

PUPIL EFFECT: Advancement in learning (general improvement)
One child in key stage 2 came here as a permanent exclusion in Year 5. The staff realised that he couldn't read or write. After his first week, they said 'What have you learnt this week?' and the child beamed from ear to ear and said 'Everything' (pupil support manager).

In some initiatives when a return to schools was not possible, pupils were able to continue their education at the provision. In these cases, interviewees cited that the youngsters achieved qualifications in accredited courses, including GCSEs:

PUPIL EFFECT: Advancement in learning (accredited courses)

We enter them for C of E English and maths and sometimes GCSEs. All our lads got distinction at C of E English last year (headteacher of PRU).

All pupils in Year 11 do at least four GCSE subjects, some of them five. Their success rate is very good. These kids are still part-time, three days a week, but of course they get a lot of individual attention. These kids have terrific success because they do a GCSE subject in one year, three days a week (headteacher of PRU).

Whilst achieving accredited qualifications was cited as an effect in itself of the work of these programmes, it was also acknowledged that this success had led to other benefits for pupils. As a senior education officer explained, academic achievement gave the youngsters '*more options in the future and in terms of all the other things, like self-esteem, it's magic*'. Indeed, pupils' post-programme progression was highlighted: an interviewee from one initiative relayed that 50 per cent of the youngsters on the programme went on to further education.

The effects on parents of the work of the provision concerned with reintegration to a mainstream curriculum were also commonly highlighted. The support and comprehensive, honest information which parents received from programme staff and the '*excellent relationships*' this generated were often described:

PARENT EFFECT: Support and information

I think they appreciate for the first time, because being a small unit we can give them more time, and we can be far more constructive about the support their child needs and their child's progress, and we are able to talk in far more detail. They are used to in mainstream school to simply being presented with negative information about incidences and very little else, whereas here we have got far more time and resources to be talking to them on an ongoing basis (headteacher of PRU).

In one programme, in particular, the fact that staff were from the same cultural background as the parents was seen to facilitate a very open and productive relationship between the worker and the family:

> *It's very supportive but there's no brushing over the cracks; they go straight for it: 'This is what you haven't done as a parent; this is what you need to do.' The kind of things you can't say as a white, middle-class teacher or deputy head, they can say and they do* (deputy head, secondary school).

Interviewees also reported relationship enhancement between the parent and young person as a result of the initiative. Parents, they recounted, often told them what a difference the project had made to their family life as their child's behaviour had improved at home and arguments had stopped.

Another effect cited, though less frequently, pertained to the benefits of multi-agency working. Where initiatives involved representatives from different agencies, a

number of interviewees highlighted the support and information, awareness-raising and attitudinal change which multi-agency working had engendered:

<table>
<tr><td>PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Relationship development and enhancement
<i>There's been less suspicion about the different roles of social worker, health visitor, school nurse, etc., because people have worked together as colleagues and shared the same office. I found that very helpful</i> (head of Pupil Referral Service).

PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Attitudinal change
<i>Social Services as a service isn't understood well but is probably better understood by us, because we have a more individual child focus. Schools will look at the whole school needs, the class needs. A social worker will look at their individual client's needs. And sometimes that can cause tensions. Our service can often understand those tensions and we can very often be a bridge between a school and the other service</i> (service leader).</td></tr>
</table>

All of the above effects were frequently cited as the outcomes of the work of initiatives concerned with reintegration and mainstream curriculum. Some effects were mentioned less often but should still be acknowledged: pupils' re-engagement with learning, for example: *'Once children are here, I'd say about 80 per cent of them want to go back into school. They really want to go back into school and re-engage in learning'* (head of centre). Equally, the high-quality teaching which pupils received at one project was highlighted: *'Pupils receive as much of the National Curriculum as possible and the teaching, especially at key stage 2 and in IT, is excellent'* (head of centre). In addition to the educational impact of these projects on youngsters, the effects on their relationships with their peers and adults were also cited, though less often. A head of service described how youngsters developed trusting relationships with adults at her initiative despite their initial reluctance. She offered as an example of success, the case of one boy who hugged her and told her he hated her, *'and he meant it, but in a sense that was a success in that here was an adult he trusted enough to be able to say it to'*.

A final effect was the improvement in the local reputation of one initiative. Provision of a mainstream curriculum meant this PRU was no longer regarded by schools and the community as a *'place to dump kids'*; rather, *'in the last 24 months it's moved right away from that by putting in some structure. It's not just a place where people go to do woodwork or car mechanics; it's got a structured curriculum'* (headteacher, secondary school).

Negative effects of the work were also reported at times. In some cases, pupils preferred the more supportive environment and smaller size of these initiatives to school and wanted to remain there rather than return to mainstream: *'We have a number who would rather be educated down here for the rest of their school life. They feel comfortable. They feel secure. They like learning in this particular mode; it's non-threatening'* (head of centre). One headteacher whose school had reintegrated pupils commented that whilst *'on occasion they come back changed people'*, at other times *'they come back the same person that left or they could be worse'* (headteacher, secondary school).

Seventeen initiatives in the sample were concerned with reintegration and mainstream curriculum. However, as Chapter One explained, there were differences in their precise way of working or emphasis: whether they had a behavioural focus; a relationship/ counselling focus; and or a relationship/counselling focus coupled with leisure opportunities. The effects discussed above were highlighted across the 17 initiatives regardless of their approach. However, the particular focus of the programme did appear to have some bearing on the effects reported. For example, though improvements in pupils' psychological well-being were noted as an effect of the work in each of the three types of initiative, this was especially the case for the programmes which had a relationship/counselling focus. An education support worker from one such initiative described the change in one girl they had worked with: '*She has blossomed ... she has got confidence; she feels much better about herself. She has still got a lot of wobbles, but she is going to go on to something else.*' Furthermore, an improvement in young people's behaviour was mentioned as a common effect (specifically cited by interviewees from two or more LEAs) in programmes with a behavioural approach.

3.4.3 Work-related learning programmes

Within the sample, a number of provisions included a work-related learning programme, either in the form of a vocational college course or placement with an employer. The first common effect arising from the programmes was the sense of achievement that the children enjoyed as a result of their participation:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Psychological well-being (a sense of achievement)**
> *It provides them with a good experience, a challenging experience, and they achieve something in something that interests them. It's a different approach, different atmosphere. So by the end of Year 11, instead of being totally negative about education and drifting out, they've had one or two positive experiences and that will make them go on* (community education officer).

Children who beforehand had no interest in education, were suddenly immersing themselves in a programme of study or work experience, because it was something that interested them, something they were good at and something which could lead to future employment:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Attitudinal change (education)**
> *We have had some tremendous successes. I remember one kid that I worked with, education had no meaning for him at all. We then involved him in an NVQ catering hospitality and suddenly he wanted to be a chef* (head of service).

Having tasted success, their self-esteem and confidence flourished and from this point, they were able to plan positively for the future.

Work-related programmes, therefore, produced long-term as well as short-term effects '*enabling them to move on and become much more useful members of society in the longer term*' (assistant education officer). For many young people, the programmes acted as a gateway to college, future training or employment. In one provision, 50 per cent of the students came back and enrolled at college when the programme had

ceased. In another, students were promised that when they left the programme they would either start a job, undertake further training or secure a place at college.

Additional effects which arose separately from the various provisions were also evident. In one area, the college itself had gained from the implementation of a formal structure to process referrals from schools. The initiative liaised between school and college, to ensure that children were referred appropriately, that the process was standardised and that children could be monitored while attending:

PROFESSIONAL/ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT: Support and information exchange
The college is using me as a filter, 'cos they know me and I promise them a three working day turn-around, from their contact to me getting back to them and saying yeah, school think this is right for the young person (project coordinator).

Prior to this initiative, children of school age could refer themselves to college, but with a formal system in place, the college was reassured that all parties were informed and that an agreed protocol would be adhered to. Meanwhile the schools were offered some protection because it was the coordinator and not themselves who referred a child. In the event of placement breakdown, therefore, the coordinator was ultimately accountable and relations between the school and college would not be damaged.

3.4.4 Combined alternative learning programmes

Provisions offering a combined alternative learning programme typically catered for children at the furthest point of the disaffection continuum – those with experience of multiple exclusions, young offenders and children for whom mainstream education was no longer an option. Consequently, the focus and constitution of these programmes contrasted markedly with others in the sample, where the underlying intention tended to be one of reintegration. The programmes offered a combination of basic skills, work experience and/or training, as well as an element of personal and social development and leisure pursuits. Participants of combined alternative learning programmes were often characterised by educational failure, conflict and frustration, such that behaviour and attitudinal modification became the overriding concerns. Academic success in some incidences took second place. The reported effects reflected this departure from a more 'mainstream' philosophy.

The first effect, nominated by six of the nine provisions, was that of improved attendance. In cases where children were so disengaged from education, their physical presence alone was deemed an indicator of success:

PUPIL EFFECT: Behavioural modification (improved attendance)
Given all these reasons for these kids on the fringes of society to go to the fringes of society, I was really pleased we got through to Easter with 17 out of the 30 kids (head of Behaviour Support Service).

A number of the young people had a history of offending behaviour: *'Everything you can imagine – house burglaries, TWOKS, ABH, GBH, public order stuff. Even had kids charged with quite serious sexual offences. We see a full range of stuff.'* The various provisions, however, presented an alternative to these activities, and as a consequence their criminal activities were seen to diminish:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Behavioural modification (reduced offending)**
> *The other indicator is those statistics of kids who were offending greatly before they come here, compared with the rate of offending since they came here. The rates of offending are way, way down and in many cases it stops completely* (project manager).

A reduction in offending may simply have stemmed from young people being occupied during the day. This notion is supported by the experiences of one project, where offending behaviour was seen to increase during the holidays (in particular the long summer holiday), times when pupils were not able to access the project.

In terms of emotional well-being, four provisions mentioned an elevation in self-esteem and confidence:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Psychological well-being (self-esteem and confidence)**
> *They did some assessments after the pilot and there was a marked increase in basic skills, self-esteem and confidence* (project worker).

An interviewee from the same project considered that the higher levels of self-esteem alone proved the value of the initiative, an indication that combined alternative learning programmes orientate themselves towards the goals of personal and social development.

However, success of an educational nature was also noted, with opportunities to attain accreditation in some form or another:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Advancement learning (accreditation)**
> *The number of certificates that the young people gain whilst they are with us. The fact that if they had been doing three hours a week home tuition, they probably wouldn't have got any certificates. With us I think the least that they had was about three* (project coordinator).

In one project, academic performance of the children had been completely reversed:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Advancement in learning (eligibility for exams)**
> *If you look back at school records, they'd say I'd lied. The kids all go through the exam system here. So those are reasonable indicators of performance* (project manager).

Staff recognised the benefits of accreditation. Certificates and awards were thought to foster a sense of achievement and from this achievement, the child's self-esteem and confidence developed:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Psychological well-being (sense of achievement and elevated self-esteem)**
> *We try to accredit as much as possible of what they do, so they do first aid certificates ... so you're building in as much self-esteem and achievement into the programme as you can* (project manager).

Moving on from effects experienced directly by pupils, two provisions noted effects which impacted on themselves and other professionals. In one project, the clientele would typically be known to several agencies and involvement in the project could furnish professionals with useful information when needed, e.g. a probation officer representing a child in court. An interviewee from another provision, based on a genuine union between Social Services and Education, highlighted a number of positive outcomes for the respective organisations – improved coordination concerning the young person's education, a sharing of information through open dialogue and less time spent in meetings.

So far, all the effects cited were evident in more than one provision. In addition, several isolated effects should also be mentioned.

As well as addressing the needs of permanently excluded children, one project made an impression on life in the family home. Improved behaviour, raised self-esteem and a generally happier child all combined to enhance the parent–child relationship:

PARENT EFFECT: Support for families
PARENT EFFECT: Relationship enhancement and development
We frequently get parents coming in and saying it has made such a difference and usually what it is is the arguments have stopped happening. Parents and pupils know when a life has been changed (head of Learning Support Service).

Long-term effects came to light, in the sense that there were examples of young people progressing positively into the future, either to college, further training or work. One provision gave the example of a young person who began a youth leaders' course, completed the course and subsequently secured a job in outdoor education. In another project, 90 per cent of the Year 11 students progressed on to work or college.

Finally, within this category of provision, one initiative existed with the specific aim of reintegrating a child after a 12-week programme, utilising a combined alternative learning approach. Here, a trouble-free return to mainstream schooling was deemed an indicator of success. A teacher's comment, relayed second-hand, would suggest that the programme was indeed fulfilling its objective:

PROCESS EFFECT: Reintegration (a return to mainstream)
I was talking to a teacher at one of the schools and he was saying his head of year, where they'd just reintegrated a young person, who'd been out for six weeks with us, the head of year had said he's matured six years in six weeks (head of youth and community).

3.4.5 Personal and social development programmes
Within the sample of 30 LEAs, three ran programmes with a dedicated personal and social development theme, covering topics such as drug abuse, sex education, health, self-esteem, confidence and conflict management. Essentially, the focus was very much on developing the 'whole child', beyond just their basic educational needs.

In accordance with the programmes' orientation, the common effects pertained more to the child's emotional well-being than their academic progress. Cited effects

included programmes which developed self-esteem and examples of heightened confidence amongst the young people:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Psychological well-being (enhanced confidence)**
> *When she first came over, she was very timid and very shy, but yesterday it was very noticeable that she is very much more confident, very much more at ease in a small group and she is the one that most readily offers ideas* (project teacher).
>
> **PUPIL EFFECT: Psychological well-being (elevated self-esteem)**
> *On entry they do a self-esteem circle and they do one on exit to see how they have progressed. Seventy-five per cent have achieved at least the level up award and a couple have gone further* (Youth Service manager).

The very fact that the above programme included an award for self-esteem demonstrates the significance placed on nurturing this particular quality. Another interviewee from the same programme reiterated the status of self-esteem and its association with achievement generally:

> *The ASDAN award, that's a fairly key indicator* [of success] *because for many young people that would be the only thing they have achieved, growth in their self-esteem* (project manager).

In two areas, effects on schools were reported from their involvement in the projects. In both instances, those at risk from exclusion could be removed from the classroom, relieving the teachers in charge, while encouraging young people to contemplate their behaviour and future prospects:

> **PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Support**
> *It's probably a bit of a cooling-off period for the schools and to actually think they are on something, they are making an effort and to actually enable young people to reflect on their chances in life* (project manager).

In the absence of conflict and its associated stress, the morale of teachers was thought to improve.

Schools were also set an example of how to work effectively with groups of disaffected young people. In one area, the staff had received training around preventative work and in another, the school had initiated its own Year 11 project:

> **PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Raised awareness (young people)**
> *It has also affected the way the school work with young people and they have started their own Year 11 project, which is something that the young people on ... can be referred on to* (Youth Service manager).
>
> *I think that they have learnt a lot about how they deal with young people, from* [the provision] *and all the other people involved* (project manager).

Other effects related to the advantages of multi-agency working and enhanced awareness. Firstly, by working alongside one another, agencies could gain a better understanding of young people generally:

> **PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Raised awareness**
> *I mean there's a lot of other sub ones* [objectives] – *certainly to inform services about what's going on with excluded young people and I suggest* [the provision] *is able to offer some good insights as to what's happening for young people ... actually where young people are and that's useful* (project manager).

Secondly, the reported outcome of one programme included an enhanced awareness of life's opportunities amongst the recipients, accompanied by the notion that they could actually be successful: '*improved self-esteem, better aware and they feel they can achieve things*' (project manager).

3.4.6 Work with young offenders

The sample included three projects established with a remit for working with young offenders as the primary target group. Given the association between offending behaviour, truancy and exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998), the intake of these projects would inevitably include young people also excluded from school.

The main effect, not surprisingly, was a drop in offending behaviour:

> **PUPIL EFFECT: Behavioural modification (reduced offending)**
> *Police have compiled statistics and did a review a few months ago and looked at a key statistic, which is reoffending. National rate for reoffenders is 30 per cent; for those that had been through the ... scheme, it's down to ten per cent* (community education officer).

The second common effect related to the professionals involved. Working with young offenders necessitates inter-agency liaison as the young person may be in contact with police, Probation, Youth Justice and Social Services, to name but a few. By joining forces, a wealth of skills and experience is assimilated. Group discussion concerning a particular child facilitates consistency in working practices, as well as faster access to relevant services. Through the experience, the attitudes of participating professionals may be challenged and enlightened, and as a consequence, a new perspective emerges:

> **PROFESSIONAL EFFECT: Attitudinal change**
> *The police ... their changing attitudes ... working with other agencies. We've met chief inspectors... they've said just the information and the whole kind of ethos of the scheme have given them a different outlook of what can be achieved* (community education officer).

Finally, one project noted the almost metamorphic transformation achieved by some of its young people, from complete school absence through to regular attendance at college, then on to future employment:

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> **PUPIL EFFECT: Behavioural modification (improved attendance)**
> *The work we have done with the Year 11s getting them into college has had a significant effect, as they have gone from possibly not attending school at all to attending college two-and-a-half days a week studying a vocational skill, such as catering, which they see as relevant and have stopped offending and gone on to get jobs* (education liaison teacher).

Re-engagement was ascribed to the perceived relevance of vocational courses. This issue will be raised again, in a discussion of effective practice in Chapter Four.

3.4.7 Key findings
Multi-agency or multi-disciplinary panels

• With an emphasis on post-exclusion allocation, panels made the most visible impact on the process of exclusion.

• These 'process'-related effects included faster reintegration for the excluded child, a perception of fairness amongst those involved and a fall in the overall exclusion figures, as a result of raised awareness.

Reintegration and mainstream curriculum

• The effects emanating from initiatives concerned with reintegration and provision of a mainstream curriculum reflected their focus. The successful reintegration of pupils into mainstream was frequently highlighted as an outcome, as was pupils' academic advancement.

• Further, the effects of these initiatives on schools – relationship enhancement and support and information – were said to facilitate the reintegration process.

• Other commonly cited outcomes concerned parents: an improvement in their relationships with their offspring and the support and information the initiatives offered them.

Work-related learning programmes

• Participants in these programmes often experienced a sense of achievement, from which their self-esteem flourished and their attitudes to education improved.

• As a consequence, they were more likely to pursue education or training beyond school age and, in this sense, the provisions served as gateways to positive post-programme progression.

Combined alternative learning programmes

• A number of effects arose from combined alternative learning programmes, perhaps reflecting their multi-dimensional approach, which incorporated a broad spectrum of activities.

- Outcomes included elevated self-esteem, enhanced confidence, reduced offending behaviour, improved attendance, accreditation and information-sharing amongst professionals.

- Bearing in mind the profile of the young people concerned (those at the extreme end of the disaffection continuum), improved attendance and reduced offending were perhaps the effects most commonly associated with provisions of this nature.

Personal and social development programmes

- Where provisions promoted a focus on personal and social development, the underlying philosophy was to develop the whole child beyond just their educational needs. Correspondingly, the principal common effect pertained to the child's psychological well-being, in the form of improved self-esteem and confidence.

Work with young offenders

- Projects with a designated young offender intake no doubt gave priority to a reduction in offending behaviour and, in accordance with this aim, the main common effect was indeed a reduction in criminal activity.

- Working with young offenders also served to assemble professionals from different organisations, and as a result the professionals themselves were reported to benefit, through information exchange, more consistent working practices and enhanced awareness with regard to the education of disaffected young people.

3.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The effects generated by the initiatives were many and various, and were in the main, positive: in the case-study programmes the young people themselves, parents, providers and personnel from other agencies all described the multifarious benefits which the initiatives had brought. In terms of the impact on the youngsters themselves, not only were academic effects reported, but behavioural, emotional and psychological gains were also cited, e.g. a reduction in offending, an improved ability to communicate effectively and enhanced self-esteem. It clearly emerged, therefore, that the youngsters were generally making positive progress as a result of their time at the provision. A potential area for development was evident in the data, however. Interviewees from initiatives far down the exclusions continuum highlighted the lapse in youngsters' behaviour, particularly a return to offending, when their time at the project ended. In order to preserve the effects generated by these initiatives, there may be a need for a continuation in the provision, albeit in a more limited form, when youngsters have to leave these programmes.

Interviews with the children in this study revealed one very important point – while the permanently excluded share a common status, their personal characteristics, reasons for exclusion and effects emanating from the provisions were far from uniform. Provision thus needs to be differentiated to cater for a heterogeneous client

group. For some, a return to mainstream is wholly appropriate, while other young people benefit from alternative provision, with a focus on vocational qualifications. As a group, the permanently excluded cannot be automatically channelled into one type of provision. What works for one pupil may not work for another. Policy makers and practitioners need to appreciate this diversity and either put in place a number of avenues for the permanently excluded, or allow enough flexibility within a provision itself. Indeed, amongst professionals, 'flexibility' was cited as a key feature of effectiveness when working with excluded children.

The question now arises: how exactly are these effects being achieved? How is it that the provisions were able to foster success amongst a group of children who in the past had struggled in mainstream, often academically and behaviourally. The next chapter will seek to pinpoint those aspects of the provisions which contributed to the re-engagement and successful performance of permanently excluded children. In essence, the chapter will set out to identify those elements which represent 'effective practice'.

CHAPTER FOUR
ISSUES OF EFFECTIVENESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the third aim of the study, focusing on the effectiveness of the various provision types, interviewees were asked to identify the factors which they deemed to be central to the success of provision for excluded pupils. The following findings were derived from analysis of responses to the question put to all interviewees: '*What would you say are the key elements which make for effective practice in provision relating to exclusion?*'

Interviewees identified many key elements of effectiveness, and the range of responses fell into six major categories:

1. **The characteristics and stature of the provision/service**, e.g. non-judgemental, holistic approach to young people, e.g. the provision's status within the authority, and even its existence.

2. **The content of the provision/service**, e.g. offering an appropriate curriculum for each pupil/young person, importantly including '*flexibility*' and choice.

3. **Staff/personnel issues**, e.g. the characteristics, backgrounds and values of staff.

4. **Issues of relationships and collaboration**, e.g. the development and maintenance of good relationships and joint working with all those involved in the provision, including other agencies, young people and their parents/carers.

5. **Issues of time and timing**, e.g. the availability of time as a resource underpinning individual attention within the provision.

6. **Issues of data, knowledge and information**, e.g. the collection and exchange of information as a means of making informed decisions about young people; staff's knowledge of other agencies' discourse and protocols.

Respondents' answers frequently referred to more than one category, reflecting the perception that effectiveness stemmed from a combination of features. Each of these six categories is now discussed in detail, and a summary of the main aspects nominated concludes each section.

4.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROVISION OR SERVICE

The first key factor of effectiveness to be considered is that of the actual characteristics of the provision or service itself. Within this category, interviewees provided a range of responses including:

- the **actual presence** of a provision or service for excluded young people;
- its **status and definition**;
- its **conceptual basis**; and
- the **ambience and environment** of the provision.

4.2.1 The presence of a provision or service

Several interviewees asserted that the very existence of provision for excluded and disaffected young people was a central factor in its effectiveness because it resulted from the acceptance that there were young people with needs otherwise unaddressed: needs that were, as one respondent put it, '*smacking you in the face*'. The provision of education and opportunities '*other than within the school set-up*' was considered to be central as it was an alternative to letting these individuals '*wander the streets and be disruptive, misbehave, go through the courts ... anything that improves that, even a very little, is good practice*' (education social worker, work-related learning programme).

Another interviewee pursued a slightly different angle, noting that the provision was effective as its presence demonstrated to the excluded and disaffected young people themselves that '*somebody is actually caring about them*' (contract manager, multi-agency panel). In this case, provision was seen as symbolising the investment in, and valuing of, excluded and disaffected young people.

4.2.2 The status and definition of a provision/service

Several interviewees noted that a key factor in the effectiveness of a provision or service was the value it was accorded either by operational- or strategic-level staff within the LEA. One respondent, for example, noted that the staff involved in a particular initiative demonstrated not only commitment to it, but also a belief in its importance: '*We perceive what we are doing to be important and I think that makes* [the initiative] *effective*' (exclusions manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Another interviewee noted that the way in which an initiative was viewed by other agencies within the authority was central to its effectiveness:

> ... *the fact that we are seen very much by the LEA as part of the LEA. We're seen as a service within the LEA and they treat us like any other service; we're not seen as an off-shoot in the backwater* (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

It was also argued that support given by headteachers and their '*determination that it should be a success*' underpinned the effectiveness of one exclusions panel initiative (assistant education officer). Another interviewee stressed that the credibility a PRU

provision gained from securing '*extra resources at critical points* [in] *the development of the initiative*' had led indirectly to its effectiveness.

Support for the provision, in terms of financial assistance, was often regarded as an indication of value accorded. The funding of an initiative was thus seen to be a key feature of effectiveness both directly and indirectly: '*The City Council's financial commitment has made a major difference*' (head of Behaviour Support Services, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

In response to this question of key factors, one interviewee asserted that effectiveness occurred because of the message which the provision transmitted to the wider community. The development of a good reputation for this particular PRU was seen as crucial to its success:

> *There has to be a very clear message going round the neighbourhood that local youngsters are able to see that going into* [the PRU] *and doing work at* [the PRU] *can have a positive outcome; whereas* [in the past, the PRU was] *seen by those on the local estate as a real den of iniquity, with youngsters there seen by many as being out of control* (head of Pupil Support Service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Perceptions amongst schools of the quality of provision on offer were said to have underpinned support for one initiative, without which it would have been left to '*die in the water*' (Services to Young People manager, work-related learning programme). Thus, the key factors of reputation and status were closely connected to the existence of 'political' and financial commitment to the initiative.

4.2.3 Conceptual basis of provision or service

Many interviewees, representing the full range of provision types, noted that one of their key factors of effectiveness related to the initiative's conceptual basis and philosophical underpinning. It was stated that, in order for it to be effective, a provision or service had to be '*young-person focused*' and oriented towards understanding and meeting their needs. Hence, effectiveness was seen to relate to views and attitudes towards the young people themselves. One interviewee from a Pupil Support Centre, for example, argued that this initiative was successful because the provision on offer was oriented towards bringing out the best in people, based on the belief that '*in every pupil there is something good*'. Another respondent noted that the provision's effectiveness was underpinned by a commitment to the children's success, based on a non-confrontational approach to them and '*not looking at them as failures and not looking at them as somebody who's not going to get anywhere*'. Effectiveness was regarded as stemming from non-judgemental attitudes towards young people:

> *A lot of these kids are offenders in one way or another or have been excluded for certain behaviour that obviously other schools have found unacceptable.* [Here] *they are not judged on that; they are judged on the person that they are* (Youth Justice worker, combined alternative learning programme).

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Thus, effective provision included a reorientation in the way that the 'problem' and 'problem children' were conceptualised and approached. The value of such a pupil-centred ethos was echoed by other respondents, including one who noted that a particular service was effective because the headteachers involved were *'seeing the pupils as human beings with needs'* (Special Educational Needs Support Service representative, multi-agency panel initiative).

Some interviewees spoke of a *'holistic approach'* to solving the problems underpinning an exclusion as being a key factor of effectiveness. This was vital to the success of any provision as it was deemed impossible to consider any single element of a young person's situation in isolation: *'Key elements would be looking at the young person's needs and identifying areas where we can best help that young person'* (education liaison teacher, Youth Offending Team, work with young offenders).

In a similar way, the contexts or factors surrounding a young person's exclusion from school were seen as crucial factors for consideration, with several interviewees noting that effectiveness related to addressing but also *'respecting'* behavioural problems. Effectiveness was seen to stem from *'constantly challenging that behaviour problem'* and also from the ways that tutors were *'respectful of the fact that they have that problem and try as best they can to work with it'* (Youth and Community Services worker, combined alternative learning programme). With a slightly wider emphasis, it was also said that effective provision required broad insights into young people, developing *'an understanding of why the young people are the way they are'*. Once these general points, including the reasons for the exclusion, were apparent and understood, they could be carefully considered as a basis for developing alternative provision. This particular interviewee stated that he had *'an imaginary list of why young people have been excluded from school and I try to balance that out in terms of the rules and regulations that we have at* [the project]' (project worker, combined alternative learning programme). That is, it was deemed necessary for effective alternative provision to operate in different conceptual and operational contexts than those in which they had failed or from which they had been excluded.

Effective provision was also seen to require a conceptual shift by the young people themselves as well as the staff who worked with them. One interviewee summarised this, noting that the effectiveness of his project resulted from attempts to:

> ... *encourage the young people to get something out of the system. It's their education, it's their opportunity, and it's trying to get young people to see that. For colleagues, it's more trying to reframe, to be more deviant-sensitive, rather than deviant-provocative* (Preventing Exclusions project coordinator, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

The conceptual basis of effective provision for excluded pupils was thus, above all, young-person centred.

4.2.4 The ambience and environment of a provision or service

Alongside distinctive values and conceptual approaches, the ambience and environment of provision were also seen as central to effectiveness. The nature of an

initiative's approach in making provision for excluded young people was regarded as crucial to its success. For example, one interviewee noted that it was essential to take an individual approach to, and a personal interest in, each young person in order to gain their confidence, trust and respect as a basis for providing education. Thus, a high staff:pupil ratio combined with 'quality' relationships contributed vitally to the efficacy of an initiative.

It was similarly asserted that, in order to be effective, it was necessary for the provision to operate in a non-threatening, problem-solving way in which young people were valued. The ability of staff to '*communicate on a human level and on an expertise level with kids of this type*' was identified by the headteacher of a PRU as a key factor in its effectiveness.

In this way, the ethos surrounding a particular provision or service was regarded as a key feature in its effectiveness. For example, it was deemed necessary for 'effective provision' to have a safe, welcoming and positive atmosphere facilitating a high degree of interaction amongst staff and pupils. One interviewee asserted that a particular PRU was effective because:

> *It's a really good atmosphere for them; it's really nice and they're welcomed ... They get a lot of positive attention, a lot of encouragement and they can talk about things and if they want to shout and scream and tell you how unhappy they are, they can* (social worker, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

In one project where 'ethos' was nominated as a key factor, the young people were said to have developed '*a massive investment*' in it, fostering feelings of belonging and commitment. Another account focused on a provision's ability to allow young people to develop their skills and education in a '*comfort zone*'. These sentiments were echoed by others: it was noted that the effectiveness of one initiative was derived from the fact that it afforded young people '*space to off-load, to find solutions to their problems which they see as problems which no one else may see as problems, which is actually holding them up from developing*' (youth and community worker, personal and social development programme).

However, it was apparent that different types of provision were deemed to be effective in terms of the particular orientation and structure of their regimes. For example, several interviewees speaking about provision based on the reintegration of excluded pupils into mainstream education noted that effectiveness occurred when and because there was strict adherence to behavioural policies. One interviewee noted that '*we have a very strong behaviour policy which every member of staff follows and the kids like it*', whilst another described the regime of a PRU as:

> *... highly structured in our day. There is an expectation that when the kids come in, they go to their lessons, that lessons are quiet so that we can begin to learn. When we begin to learn, we begin to feel good about ourselves* (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Another interviewee asserted that a particular provision was effective as a result of its disciplined, controlled working ethos, which, he contended, '*the pupils are entitled*

to'. In this case, the provision was said to be highly structured in order to provide opportunities for success. Breaktimes and *'those areas which are difficult to manage in schools'* were absent so as to keep the pupils on track, allowing them to achieve and preparing them to return successfully to school.

In contrast, one interviewee, talking about the effectiveness of a work-related alternative learning programme, noted that he tried to keep the rules and regulations to a minimum as he considered rules to be a major source of conflict and a primary cause of young people's exclusion from school. It was argued that: *'Rules that may be stringent within school could well be relaxed here, so there's no cause or no reason to rebel against those rules.'* This was exemplified in relation to smoking. It was accepted that the young people wanted to smoke, so they were allowed a certain time and a certain place in which to do so, but on the grounds of safety, transgression would not be tolerated: *'Although* [rules] *are kept to a minimum, if they are broken, then youngsters are severely dealt with and they have an understanding of that from the beginning'* (project worker, work-related learning programme).

One interviewee talking about a personal and social development programme noted that young people found the project easier to attend because of its informality and dissimilarity to school. The *'user-friendly'* project was deemed to be effective because it aimed *'to remove any trace of intimidation'*. Another alternative provision initiative was said to be effective because of its *'far more relaxed atmosphere'* and the fact that young people were treated as adults and given responsibility that they had previously lacked. It was noted that: *'They are given the responsibility for things like driving tractors ... they are given that responsibility and they are not told to go and stand in the corridor because they can't add up'* (schools liaison officer, work-related learning programme).

Finally, the geographical setting of a provision and its physical characteristics were also regarded as being important factors of effectiveness. It was thus again argued that the level of resources and overall appearance of a PRU were essential features of effectiveness as these were seen to symbolise the importance of the provision and boost the pupils' self-esteem as a basis for learning. One respondent commented:

> *We are well resourced in terms of equipment, books, software. We look good; everywhere is carpeted. There are too many PRUs in this country that are under-resourced and in inadequate premises ... and if you've got a young person who feels bad about themselves ... that is how they further confirm for themselves that they are actually not worth it, so they attack the building. We have put a lot of effort into saying 'It matters to us as a staff team that this place looks good, because we think you're entitled to it.' That is key in my thinking: quality of environment leads to quality relationships. You have got to have quality of relationships with staff because that's how calmness occurs, so that learning can occur* (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

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SUMMARY OF: Key factors in effective provision for excluded young people 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROVISION	
Actual presence	• offering a physical base for excluded young people • symbolising attention/care about young people
Status and definition	• being well regarded and valued both internally and externally within the authority • being well supported by other agencies • being included in LEA dialogue • being seen to have positive messages and a good reputation within the wider community • being adequately resourced
Conceptual basis	• having a holistic approach to young people, their problems and how to best meet their complex needs • developing an understanding of young people and diagnosis of why they have been excluded • working in contexts that respect and address young people's behavioural problems • developing an ethos of inclusion • encouraging young people to get something out of their education • developing a non-judgemental, non-confrontational, positive and supportive approach • concentrating on developing the self-confidence and self-esteem of young people
Ambience and environment	• working in a non-threatening, problem-solving way, in which people are valued • emphasising listening, caring and communicating • having an individual interest in, and approach to, each young person • creating a positive atmosphere – a safe, welcoming 'comfort zone' • ensuring a relaxed atmosphere, with young people given responsibilities • having a high staff/young people ratio to assist positive attention and interaction • creating an informal structure, fostering group development • working at young people's 'investment' in the provision • providing space/opportunity for young people to 'off-load' and find solutions to their problems • developing a user-friendly environment, not intimidating, not like school • having a policy of strict adherence to 'relevant' rules • promoting an environment of control and discipline as pupils are entitled to an environment that allows them to access mainstream curriculum • providing a well-resourced, quality environment

4.3 THE APPROPRIATE CONTENT OF PROVISION

A second major category of effectiveness identified by the respondents lay in the area of relevance of learning. Many interviewees highlighted an appropriate content of the provision as being a key element of effectiveness. Given the continuum of provision under investigation, appropriateness was variously describe as:

- offering an equivalent curriculum to mainstream; or
- offering alternative learning opportunities to mainstream, including flexibility and choice.

However, effectiveness in terms of content invariably also included:

- a personal and social development focus; and
- opportunities for accreditation and achievement.

Above all, the provisions on offer were designed to re-engage young people, meet their needs and educate them through providing 'relevant' activities, including those that were practical, interesting and skill-related.

4.3.1 Personal and social focus

Many interviewees identified the social and personal focus of a provision or service as crucial factors of effectiveness because many excluded and disaffected young people were considered to have low self-esteem. A key factor of effectiveness was thus related to developing young people's social and personal skills, and building their self-confidence as a foundation for future vocational or academic development. A secondary headteacher respondent regarded a PRU to be offering effective provision as it put pupils in '*situations where they are learning social skills because often they don't know how to behave appropriately*'. One part of a work-related learning programme was also cited as effective because of its concentration on developing basic social skills as a basis for further education and training. It offered young people '*lots of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Lots of them feel that at school they are constantly being put down, if not by their teachers, by their peers and families*' (social worker with Youth Justice, combined alternative learning programme).

Another project's effectiveness was felt to be due to the counselling that pupils were receiving. It was stated that '*they feel particularly rewarded that they are getting this time with someone and their needs are being listened to*' (support team coordinator, personal and social development programme). It was also stated that joint provision was a key element of the effectiveness of a provision as it was argued that some pupils '*need more than an educational service*'. Another respondent also noted that '*it's not just the educational aspect that we need to bolster up in some of the pupils; it's the confidence-building*' (head of Integrated Support Service). Thus, the pastoral support offered by a range of agencies was seen as a key factor in effective provision.

4.3.2 An appropriate curriculum: offering different learning opportunities to mainstream

Several interviewees, including people involved with initiatives orientated towards reintegrating pupils, stressed the effectiveness of offering alternatives in terms of both learning content and learning contexts to those of mainstream education. In addition, the key factors of choice and flexibility also marked significant differences between this provision and that offered by mainstream schools. For example, a particular initiative was seen as effective as it was able to offer activities such as woodwork and pottery:

> *A lot of these kids, if they can go home with a bird-box on Friday it's a big trophy, its amazing, or a table for mum or some pottery for mum. They've actually succeeded; they've done something so therefore their self-esteem goes up* (project teacher, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

The fact that 'different' activities were on offer in non-classroom settings was noted by one respondent as being a key factor in a provision's effectiveness. It was asserted that, had the provision been '*all classroom-based, it would have failed*'. The range and variety of activities, opportunities and settings were deemed to have been successful and suited to the needs of the young people concerned: '*A lot of them are hyper and the classroom environment had failed them and they need something different. They are not given the opportunity to be bored or restless*' (training agency representative, combined alternative learning programme).

The ability to customise the content of packages was seen as a highly effective element of provision orientated towards reintegration. One interviewee, for example, stated that it was essential to positively engage a young person early on in the process, and it was necessary to have a programme flexible enough to provide exactly what individuals required:

> *In certain circumstances it's appropriate to start a package off with some individual counselling ... it may be appropriate to start a package off with a work experience placement; it may be appropriate to start off with an element of academic support ... the beauty of what we offer is we are not rigid* (head of Pupil Referral Service).

Indeed, many interviewees noted that 'flexibility' was a key factor of effectiveness. This discourse covered a range of implied meanings. In some instances, this notion of responsiveness related to the young person's reception of the provision, once in place. In others, 'flexibility' meant a programme that was actually initially tailored and designed to fit an individual's total learning requirement, and included an element of 'choice' by the young person. Several interviewees spoke of flexibility in terms of the way in which a provision or service could adapt to meet different and changing needs. One interviewee stressed that an initiative was effective because '*it's flexible, it's dynamic*' (head of Pupil Referral Services, reintegration with mainstream curriculum), whilst another stated: '*We will rapidly change if something isn't working out; there is a big flexibility*' (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). Others noted that the flexibility of the programme enabled individuals' needs to be addressed: '*I think it's adaptable and you can suit individual interests and address needs*' (chief education welfare officer, combined alternative learning programme).

4.3.3 An appropriate curriculum: offering equivalent learning opportunities to mainstream

In contrast, some interviewees stressed that their provisions were effective precisely because they offered the same curriculum and the same types of activities as mainstream schooling. For example, a manager of a PRU stated that one of the factors underpinning its effectiveness was its concentration on academic provision: *'The constant message is that education matters. Lessons have a particular time, you don't leave them.'* In a similar way, another PRU was also said to be very *'curriculum-focused'* (manager of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). One interviewee stated that the key factor of the effectiveness of an initiative was that it offered *'three core National Curriculum subjects* [which provided] *opportunities to move young people back from the centre into mainstream school'*. Following some mainstream subjects was argued to provide young people with *'a reasonable chance of getting back into the system'* (project worker, work-related learning programme). As well as that, *'the right attitudes to learning'* and the provision of *'quality teaching'* were noted as key factors.

4.3.4 Accreditation

Several interviewees remarked that certification and accreditation were also central to effectiveness. The head of a PRU stated that *'whatever we can go for in terms of accreditation, we go for'* as a means of *'improving their reintegration into the world of work profile'*. Certification was regarded as a highly effective means of boosting young people's self-esteem by an interviewee involved with a work-related learning programme. Awarding certificates for practical activities was seen as a way of demonstrating to young people that they were capable of achieving and succeeding:

> *... probably it's a lot better to get that achievement certificate to say what they have done, than at school be ridiculed and say you're not entered for any exams, you can't do maths, you can't do English ... this little piece of paper, whatever they get ... gives them that little bit more confidence to get on to something else in their lives* (project worker, work-related learning programme).

SUMMARY Key factors in effective provision for excluded young people 2. AN APPROPRIATE CONTENT	
Personal and social focus	• developing appropriate attitudes to learning and re-engagement • learning social skills • building confidence and self-esteem • ensuring areas of achievement • engaging other agencies to provide appropriate pastoral support
Different learning opportunities to mainstream	• providing a non-classroom setting • ensuring pupil choice • ensuring practical, skill-based activity • offering *'flexibility'*: ability and willingness to pre-plan provision in order to best meet needs of young people • offering *'flexibility'*: adapting any programme in order to suit the emerging interests and needs of individuals
Equivalent learning opportunities to mainstream	• ensuring quality teaching • including core curriculum subjects • promoting the right attitudes to learning
Accreditation	• ensuring certification for practical activity • promoting self-esteem

4.4   STAFF INVOLVED IN THE PROVISION

Many interviewees stressed that having *'quality'* staff was central to the effectiveness of a provision or service. It was noted that effectiveness was dependent on a *'good guy or gal running the provision, a teacher who has got clear objectives'* (director of Special Educational Needs, reintegration with mainstream curricula). In a similar way, one interviewee noted that: *'Any project, running anywhere in the country, is only as good as the person who runs it and actually the person dealing with the kids involved'* (project worker, work-related learning programme). A provision was also deemed to be effective because of the commitment of its staff: *'We like kids, we like working with parents, we like going in and out of schools* (City Exclusions manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

The attitudes of staff members and the way in which they approached the provision and the pupils were thus regarded as key factors of effectiveness. In addition to displaying patience, understanding and respect for the young people, it was noted that a particular provision was effective because of *'a shift in the way we look at children'*. This interviewee argued that effectiveness stemmed from the fact that children at this provision regarded staff as being *'solution-focused'*:

> *Children, by the time they arrive here, they're used to authority figures actually going into the nature of their difficulty rather than wanting to*

discover solutions. The staff here are active in wanting to find solutions (educational psychologist, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Several interviewees felt that certain distinctive characteristics or traits amongst staff members were key elements of the provision's effectiveness. For example, the head of a PRU asserted that the staff were *'all mavericks, to some extent, because you've got to be'*. Another respondent accounted for a personal and social development programme's effectiveness in terms of the nature, approach and attitude of the staff, all of which were described as being *'on the margins'*. Project staff were said to carry out their tasks with a sense of humour in a light-hearted way but were also *'brutally honest'* with the young people. This was seen as contributing to a highly distinctive (safe and friendly) identity of project with which the excluded young people could easily relate.

Effectiveness due to the alternative approach of staff and their relationships with pupils was noted elsewhere:

> ... [it's effective because] *we're not teachers. They call us by our first names. We command respect and we don't disrespect. Also, we're on the streets, we know what's out there and we know the language and they can't pull the wool over our eyes. Because of this, they can have a different dialogue with us, as opposed to in school* (health information project worker, combined alternative learning programme).

SUMMARY Key factors in effective provision for excluded young people 3. THE STAFF INVOLVED	
Calibre and background	• being of high quality: competent and able • having clear objectives and commitment • understanding of the peer culture and experiences of excluded youngsters • offering respect, honesty and patience to the young people

4.5 THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

Many interviewees noted that *'good relationships'* were central to the effectiveness of provision. Effectiveness was seen to stem from good communication and cooperation from everybody involved in the provision including:

*   other educational professionals, and particularly schools;
*   parents, pupils and staff; and
*   other agencies.

4.5.1 Relationships among educational professionals

Interviewees noted that relationships within the mechanics of provision or service were key elements in their effectiveness. Factors included the ease of communication within the LEA and the approachability of relevant staff. One interviewee contended

that: '*Right up to Director of Education level, communication is easy and I don't think there's anybody in the ... Education Service who I wouldn't feel able to talk to directly*' (educational psychologist, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

In a similar way, a panel system was deemed to be effective because of the nature of the working relationships that existed between it and the schools involved, ensuring a '*partnership approach*'. One respondent also stated that the effectiveness of a particular panel system was partly derived from its attempts to consolidate existing relationships within the process. Effectiveness was seen to stem from '*building on the relationship that the heads have with one another*' as a means of doing '*the best for the youngsters*' (area education officer, multi-agency panel).

Several interviewees identified the importance of clear communication between initiatives and schools as being key factors of effectiveness. One respondent deemed effectiveness to stem from '*listening carefully to the need, and respecting it, when the need comes up from schools*' (head of Learning and Behaviour Support, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). Another interviewee noted:

> *If we don't listen to what schools are saying or what young people are saying, then we are going to end up with a provision that we think is OK, but it doesn't reflect anybody else's needs* (assistant education officer for educational placements, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Positive interaction and clear communication between schools, LEAs and particular projects were also regarded as being vital for the success of provision for excluded young people. For example, one interviewee claimed that '*good working relationships with schools*' were a key factor of the effectiveness of a Student Support Service (Student Support Services manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). Another respondent claimed that the effectiveness of a Pupil Support Centre was based on close relationships, contact and familiarity between a staff member at the centre and a staff member at the school in which reintegration was proposed. In a similar way, an initiative orientated towards reintegration was deemed to be effective because of the detailed preparation, communication and planning processes that culminated in a contract between the service and the school:

> *We operate a contract system with school, so that once it has been agreed that a child is coming, an admission meeting is set up between the family, the child and somebody at the centre ... A key worker will go into the school and draw up a contract which sets out our role within the child's stage 3 IEP* (head of Learning and Behaviour Support Service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

4.5.2 Relationships amongst others directly involved in the provision or service, including parents, pupils and staff

Relationships with other parties involved in the provision of education for excluded and disaffected young people were also seen as central to effectiveness. One interviewee asserted that it was necessary to develop a '*good rapport with parents and carers*', to keep them informed and to offer support and help. Hence, a partnership approach was regarded as a key factor of effectiveness:

> *Parents are generally very appreciative of any support and help. I think* [effectiveness stems from] *being able to build up links and keep other people informed and try and keep the whole thing moving forward positively* (preventing exclusions project coordinator, multi-agency panel).

Another interviewee also noted that a key factor of effectiveness was working closely with parents: '*A lot of work is with parents rather than children, giving* [parents] *the skills, strength and support to sort out the problems they have with children attending school*' (education social work team leader, work-related learning programme).

A further effectiveness factor was cited as the development and maintenance of good relationships with pupils and young people themselves. As noted earlier, relationships were regarded as successful if they were based on honesty, and one interviewee noted that it was essential to listen to, and understand, the young people: '*If you don't build the bridges with the young people, then you are not going to achieve as much ... the main thrust* [of effectiveness] *is the actual relationship*' (project worker, work-related alternative learning programme).

One interviewee stated that effective practice was underpinned by notions of inclusion and the involvement of all relevant and interested parties. The participation of parents, carers and the young people themselves in the processes of a provision or service was deemed to be vital. It was asserted that: '*We try as much as possible to have it as a joint thing. With the best will in the world and all the hard work, we can't achieve success in isolation*' (senior residential social worker, combined alternative learning programme).

In particular, relationships with young people were deemed to have to strike the right balance for them to be successful. For example, one interviewee described the nature of his relationship with young people on a personal and social development programme: '*It isn't a formal relationship but it's not an informal friendly relationship; it's a supportive one*' (project leader, personal and social development programme).

The development of good relationships amongst staff was identified as a key factor of effectiveness, with one interviewee stating that a support service was successful because of '*team work, the way we work together and trust one another*' (head of Learning and Behaviour Support Service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). Another respondent noted that the ability and willingness of pupils to cooperate and work as a group contributed to the effectiveness of a work-related learning programme.

4.5.3 Collaboration with other agencies and joint working

Alongside the perceived benefits of good relationships between those concerned with the provision of educational opportunities for excluded young people, collaborative and joint working practices with other agencies were highlighted as central to effectiveness. It was asserted that a particular initiative was successful because it had a *'chief executive who is committed in inter-agency collaboration'* (assistant education officer, work-related learning programme). A headteacher and chair of an exclusions panel stated that the success of the panel was based on the collaboration of specialist agencies:

> *The multi-agency aspect is very useful. Some of the kids come from quite dysfunctional families so the coordinated efforts make for a more effective way of working. The more we can work together, the better* (headteacher, multi-agency panel).

In a similar way, the leader of a personal and social development project asserted that a fundamental factor in the project's effectiveness was its *'multi-agency staff team, which is led by youth work input and youth work methods'* (project leader, PSD programme). The value of this type of input from youth workers was also stressed by another interviewee, who claimed that, on a more strategic level: *'Partnership with the Youth Service is vital.'* This particular agency was regarded as able to *'reach the hard-to-find young people'* (schools liaison officer, work-related learning programme).

The establishment of links with other initiatives in the locality was seen by one interviewee as a means of increasing the effectiveness of the provision in terms of using these available resources and facilities. Another respondent exemplified such links, noting that a particular provision had been given training places by another provider at a cost well below their market value. In addition, effectiveness was cited as the links and relationships between *'the training providers and the Careers Service and the young people and the Careers Service'* (senior careers consultant, combined alternative learning programme).

One interviewee noted that an initiative was effective because of its integrated management structure with *'special education, services to young people and the Youth Service all lying within the Education Directorate'* (Services to Young People manager, work-related alternative learning programme).

SUMMARY	
Key factors in effective provision for excluded young people	
4. THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS	
Relationships among educational professionals	- creating good communications and working partnerships between school, LEA and project - ease of communication within LEA services - listening to schools' viewpoints, including clear contract systems - ensuring ongoing contact between schools and provision including designated personnel in a link role - undertaking detailed planning and preparation for '*next step*' provision
Relationships amongst parents, pupils and provision staff	- developing good rapport with parents - ensuring partnership approach and participation of parents - developing appropriate supportive relationships between staff and pupils - ensuring teamwork and trust amongst staff and a clear identity and cohesion - supporting young people working together
Multi-agency involvement and cooperation	- establishing coordinated efforts from a spectrum of specialist agencies - creating a multi-agency staff team with a range of expertise - having an integrated management team, e.g. different services under one directorate - establishing links with other initiatives in the locality – utilisation of resources - ensuring provision enhances links between young people and agencies such as Careers and training providers

4.6   ISSUES OF TIME AND TIMING

Several interviewees noted that '*time*' was a significant component of effective provision for excluded young people. Time and timing here referred to a number of different aspects, including:

- the need for the availability of time as an open-ended resource;
- the capacity to respond quickly to requests for support;
- the necessity of responding to early signs of disengagement; and
- the appropriate amount of contact time that excluded youngsters can manage in any educational opportunity.

4.6.1   Availability of time

Interviewees spoke of provisions being effective because staff were able to devote as much time as was necessary to young people who needed it. One person, for example, noted that a key factor in the effectiveness of a personal and social

development programme was the time available for one-to-one attention and interaction with each young person. This was seen as of great benefit as the pupils were considered to '*feel valued; they feel as if people are actually listening to them*' (member of Support Team for Education proficiency, personal and social development programme).

The issue of the availability and importance of providing '*time out for them to feel valued*' was seen as marking a crucial difference between the effectiveness of dedicated provisions for excluded and disaffected young people and the situation in mainstream schooling. One interviewee, for example, noted that:

> *A lot of the children we work with are very damaged. But, we can work with that. Schools can't sit down and work with every abused child and do that; they don't have the time* (Health Information project officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

As well as the opportunity to devote time to individuals, the ability to be flexible within the temporal framework and operation of a provision was also seen as a key factor in its effectiveness. For example, one interviewee asserted that the informal structure of a PRU made it possible for young people to talk to staff about their problems when they wanted or needed to: '*It's not formal in that you've got to say "we can talk about that later"; you've actually got the time ... right then*' (social worker, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

4.6.2 Response time

Several interviewees also highlighted the response time and the speed with which requests for help were met as key factors in the effectiveness of provisions and services. For example, the head of a Learning and Behaviour Support Service said that '*a speedy response to schools and families*' underpinned the success of the service: '*Go in. Go in tomorrow; don't write a letter.*' Another interviewee asserted that an initiative was effective as a result of adherence to '*absolute religious rules within the team about response rates ... the first rule of the team is that first one back plays the answering machine and responds, before you put the kettle on sometimes*' (City Exclusions manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). Giving immediate response to the children in crisis was also recognised as a factor in effectiveness.

4.6.3 Timing

Issues regarding the actual timing of provision were also identified as key elements of effectiveness. For example, the head of an Education Support Service stated that the early identification of disaffection and a rapid intervention were essential: '*Don't let them sit in school disaffected, disaffecting others. Get them out, get them busy*' (head of Education Support Service, combined alternative learning programme). An early and efficient dialogue between schools and provisions/services was seen as a key factor of effectiveness. A Support Team coordinator was said to be '*pleased that the school's talking to us about pupils at risk of exclusion before we get there. I think that's vital, early indications that there's problems*' (Support Team coordinator, personal and social development programme). Similarly, effective practice was seen

by another interviewee to involve working with younger (Year 8) pupils '*because by the time they get to Year 10, their disaffection can be quite deep and harder work*'. It was deemed necessary to '*pick them up before exclusion*' (Services to Young People manager, work-related learning programme).

4.6.4 Appropriate contact time

Finally, the time that pupils spent in a provision was seen to be important. For some, the time-limited aspect of provision was seen to focus the work of both staff and pupils: '*They are only here for a short period of time ... a half-day placement for periods of four to six weeks. I think in that time, to do individual focus work is acceptable ... we have a chance of doing some quite intensive individual work*' (headteacher for the School's Pre-admission Unit, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

It was also contended that the part-time nature of one PRU underpinned its effectiveness: '*They get as much as they can cope with. Most of these kids don't want full-time education; they want to feel successful at doing the amount we provide for them*' (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

SUMMARY Key factors in effective provision for excluded young people 5. TIME AND TIMING	
Availability of time	• creating time to listen and talk to young people • ensuring an immediate audience for pupils in crisis • making time for one-to-one attention • recognising damaged children will require time to progress
Appropriate timing	• ensuring a rapid response to schools and families and individual young people • having procedures for early identification of disengagement
Appropriate contact time	• recognising full-time education may not suit all excluded youngsters • establishing finite time frames to focus remediating work

4.7 ISSUES OF INFORMATION

Several interviewees stated that collection, exchange and application of information and knowledge were key factors in the effectiveness of provision for excluded youngsters. These included:

• a database, or appropriate tracking procedures
• an open exchange of information
• staff's knowledge of other agencies

4.7.1 Database

The collation of information and the development of a database were seen as an effective strategy by a head of Teaching Services who was able to monitor and track all pupils out of school. It was asserted that, in this way, no pupils would be lost from the system and a constant check could be kept.

4.7.2 Information exchange

Other interviewees noted that the sharing and dissemination of knowledge were a key factor of effectiveness. It was noted that different people or agencies involved in a provision or service could contribute valuable information enabling the development of a *'fuller picture'* of a young person as a basis for devising an appropriate package. For example, a respondent related that a particular service was effective because of the way people and agencies involved were *'sharing information, certainly for young people already tried in some ways ... it's a bit like, let's not keep flogging the same thing'* (senior social worker, multi-agency panel).

As part of this, another interviewee stated that such information exchanges could only be truly effective if they were based on:

> *Being honest about what the pupil is like. No school wants to get fobbed off with somebody who arrives with a mediocre report who turns out to be out-and-out bad and it's much better to be completely honest, so you know what you are getting. So you know how to deal with it from the beginning* (Pupil Support Centre, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

4.7.3 Knowledge about other agencies

Finally, several interviewees noted that the knowledge about other agencies which individual staff members had was central to the effectiveness of any provision. It was noted that as a result of their mixed and varied backgrounds, staff members were equipped with insights into the workings of other, relevant agencies. For example, one interviewee stated that the effectiveness of a Day Provision Unit arose from:

> *Having people that know what they are talking about* [and] *having a well-balanced team ... some that are educational, some that are more therapeutically orientated and also people that do have experience and understanding around each other's fields ... we have an understanding and an appreciation so that we can communicate with other professionals in their jargon* (staff member, combined alternative learning programme).

In addition, one interviewee noted that a particular initiative was characterised by *'a sound knowledge basis'* and that the staff had *'worked hard to make sure that we work closely with legal services and we're absolutely sure about the advice we give in terms of accuracy'* (exclusions manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

SUMMARY	
Key factors in effective provision for excluded pupils	
6. INTER-AGENCY INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND KNOWLEDGE	
Database and tracking procedures	• having a good knowledge of all young people out of school including tracking procedures • having comprehensive compilation of agencies involved with a particular child
Information exchange	• sharing information resources • developing a fuller picture of young people to devise appropriate packages • ensuring honesty in information exchange
Knowledge of other agencies	• having insights into the workings of other, relevant agencies • knowing the discourse and procedures of other agencies

4.8 KEY FINDINGS

The six categories of effective practice and provision, as identified by those professionals working in the area of exclusion, covered:

- **the characteristics and stature of the provision/service**
- **the content of the provision/service**
- **staff/personnel issues**
- **issues of relationship and collaboration**
- **issues of time and timing**
- **issues of data, knowledge and information.**

This list, while focused on work with excluded pupils, may perhaps equally be borne in mind when considering provision within mainstream for children at risk of exclusion. The need for curriculum flexibility and choice, a distinctive ambience and ethos, positive relationships, specific professional attributes and knowledge all surface as issues for mainstream schools to incorporate into their practice and provision. The consistency of comments from interviewees working in very different types of provision may be a particularly powerful insight into what effective practice must entail.

Notwithstanding this, some variation in the aspects of effectiveness emerged as interviewees discussed their particular initiative. To conclude the chapter, these key factors are summarised according to the provision typology developed by the study.

EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS: panels
'Effectiveness' was felt to occur when and because:
•   views about the purpose of exclusions and the exclusion process were inclusive in intent, and the exclusion process was seen as a long-term commitment to the youngsters
•   data and background information were rigorously collected and exchanged
•   pupils were tracked
•   the relationship between all agencies was strong and supportive, including that between school headteachers and other services
•   there was financial support and flexibility at the point of reintegration
•   the panel process itself was monitored and evaluated.

EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS: reintegration to mainstream

Effectiveness was felt to occur when and because:

- staff in PRUs had particular qualities and abilities, including a commitment to – and belief in – the young people (exhibited as patience, politeness and respect for their pupils), as well as subject and pedagogical expertise

- the ethos of the PRU promoted a safe, positive and calm environment, including a structured day and close relations with pupils (e.g. through personal tutors and mentors)

- the youngsters received the message that education matters and educational remotivation was a key purpose of the unit

- a financial commitment to the PRU was evident, including resources to ensure a quality environment and a staffing ratio/policy to allow sustained relations between team members and schools

- good relations existed with other LEA agencies and particularly with heads and schools

- a differentiated curriculum with flexibility to meet the individual needs of youngsters was in place: the focus being on achievement and ensuring the young person experienced success

- parental involvement was given high status, including feedback on progress, a commitment to parent–unit partnership and the opportunity for parents' ready (or even open) access to the unit

- the diagnosis and resolution of particular problems contributing to the initial exclusion (e.g. home and family problems) were ensured, i.e. a holistic approach was taken to pupil disengagement from learning

- the reintegration process was managed carefully, including practical support and assistance for the youngster (e.g. on matters of uniform, equipment, etc.); it was ensured that the young person was ready to return; gradual opportunities were provided for return (e.g. at first only to subjects where success was guaranteed)

- it was ensured that ongoing support was available as the youngster returned

- there was a commitment to supporting schools by proffering them general strategies to manage pupils

- young people were provided with the strategies and scripts to manage and cope with mainstream school culture

- detailed assessment was undertaken of the young person's abilities and aptitudes and high-quality information was relayed to the schools (e.g. appropriate behaviour management techniques and the youngster's preferred learning styles).

EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS: alternative learning programmes (including combined, work-related and PSD programmes and work with young offenders)

In work-related alternative learning programmes, effectiveness was felt to occur when and because:

- a holistic and individualised approach to the young person's needs and problems was taken

- good links and ongoing relations existed between external providers/agencies and the programme (including such things as discount-priced training places)

- a wide range of organisations could be called on

- ensuring that the young people experience a sense of achievement and success was a paramount aim

- the approach and atmosphere of any programme accessed was distinctive from mainstream school, usually informal, with fewer restrictions (such as uniform) but a firm structure

- a low pupil-teacher ratio was evident, with emphasis on positive and mutually respectful relationships

- basic skills (numeracy, literacy and IT) were included within the programmes as well as lifeskills, such as communication and team-building

- programmes were oriented around the particular needs and predilections of the young people, getting them to focus on future choices and plans and to take responsibility for their actions

- multi-agency working approaches and multi-agency staff teams, working for the benefit of the individual youngster, were in evidence

In addition, in programmes dealing with extreme cases of disaffection, such as **combined alternative learning programmes** (including PSD), effectiveness was felt to occur when and because:

- personal and social development issues were given paramount importance

- there was a recognition that formal education was not always the main priority in the young people's lives and that developing self-esteem and willingness to attend a project were first prerequisites

- a very great emphasis was placed on positive and supportive staff–pupil relations

- the programmes were sufficiently flexible to cater for the individual needs of pupils, including sufficient staff to respond to individual problems and crises

- staff offered street credibility and understanding of the cultures of the young people, as well as expertise in working with alienated youngsters

- a non-rejection policy was in existence; the provision was considered to be a 'safety net' of support

CHAPTER FIVE
COST-EFFECTIVENESS ISSUES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of cost-effectiveness was raised with each of the 30 projects visited, by asking interviewees the question '*In your perception, is the initiative cost-effective?*'

Nearly all those interviewed did respond in the affirmative, although their answers showed a number of different interpretations of – and rationales for – cost-effectiveness. These could be broadly categorised in two ways: some respondents calculated cost-effectiveness in **extrinsic** terms, particularly noting benefits and long-term economies beyond the actual provision and its clients; others highlighted **intrinsic** cost-effective aspects of the provision in terms of its inherent value for money or its eventual outcomes for the young people themselves.

Thus, in more detail, the following types of response emerged:

- **EXTRINSIC:** accounts emphasising **direct savings** to society generally or to other agencies or the LEA accruing from the provision.

- **EXTRINSIC:** accounts identifying '**add on**' **benefits** for schools or services associated with the provision.

- **INTRINSIC:** accounts itemising **cost benefits** that related entirely **to the young people** themselves (e.g. ensuring a quality of life for their future).

- **INTRINSIC:** accounts noting **economies** within the actual provision (e.g. the calibre/commitment of staff compared with their actual salary costs).

In addition, there was a further type of response definable as:

- **EVIDENTIAL:** responses given in strictly **evidential** terms were those quoting OFSTED's judgements on their provision's cost-effectiveness or noting the existence of an internal cost-effectiveness exercise.

In some instances, when the question of cost-effectiveness was asked, actual figures for 'per pupil' costing were volunteered. However, given the very different focuses, content, timescales and client groups which the initiatives were addressing, direct comparison between these answers was not easy or appropriate. Nevertheless, there were several notable points arising from these proffered figures. First, in general, the more extreme the disaffection in terms of distance

and drop-out from educational opportunity, the higher the per capita cost quoted. Thus, ongoing provision for 'lost' children in a county LEA was cited at around £10,000 per pupil; that for PRU and alternative provision for recently excluded pupils was variously quoted as between £3,000 and £6,000.

> *The cost of a student here – you're going to be looking at £9-10,000 per pupil* (combined alternative learning programme).

> *Currently, the PRU came out at £3,100 per pupil* (reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

> *A PRU place is about £5,000 a year* (reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

> *A child out of school and placed with me may cost anything between £4,000 to £8,000 assuming they are with us full-time and for the whole year* (reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

> *For the PRU* [you are talking about] *£6,500 to £7,000 per pupil* (reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Specific projects under the aegis of voluntary agencies or other services which were of limited time spans cited costs as under £2,000.

> *The cost of one young person for 12 weeks on our project was at maximum £1,450* (combined alternative learning programme).

> *It is quite cheap as a ten-week programme for 15 young people with full time youth worker, it's approximately £10,000 in total* ... (personal and social development programme).

A second theme emerging from these 'price' quotations was the recognition that the cost of ongoing provision for any of these pupils inevitably was higher than AWPU mainstream pupil figures. (Costs here were usually cited at around £2,000 per pupil per annum.) Sometimes, the costing for statemented special needs provision was cited as a more valid comparison.

Such nominations of actual monetary figures were however invariably accompanied by references to one or more of the other rationales (intrinsic, extrinsic or evidential) which needed to be included when considering 'cost-effectiveness'. As an overview, about two-thirds of the respondents cited cost-effectiveness in 'extrinsic' terms, while one-third chose to nominate 'intrinsic' rationales. However, 'evidential' cost-effectiveness references were noted in only four or five instances.

5.2 COST-EFFECTIVENESS: EXTRINSIC

Several versions of the extrinsic cost-effectiveness argument surfaced, all pinpointing the financial 'savings' accruing from effective provision for excluded pupils. Some respondents noted how **'society' generally** would benefit because of the likely corollary that excluded or 'lost' youngsters can cause future problems – and hence costs – in terms of their unemployment; crime and prison careers; or mental health needs.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVISION IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Societal savings	*The measure of* [cost-effectiveness] *is really if we can keep – or even put back – young people into education, training, employment. Ultimately the cost is less to society* (youth coordinator, work-related learning programme). *Further along the line, if you are keeping them out of prison in the future, or whatever, and you are putting them in work so they are actually paying taxes instead of living off benefit, then it must be cost-effective for the Government to deal with them at this stage* (college lecturer, work-related learning programme). *I think we are very expensive, but if we get it right now, we are saving for the country an enormous amount of money. If we can get young people into education, so they want to be contributors to society, if we can sort out some of the mental health concerns – these are major drains on the state in the future* (PRU manager, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *I think it is very good value. The support costs more than a place at school. The choice is pay more now, or pay a hell of a lot more later* (careers officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *Yes it is* [cost-effective]. *I think you've got to look longitudinally at this. You've got to think, if excluded pupils are out of school and not receiving any education,* [there are] *long-term implications for their psychiatric health, and the likelihood that they'll drift into crime. All that has costs. Okay, they might not be costs born by the education system, but they are borne by society at large* (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Other responses focused in more detail on the implications of **reducing offending behaviour**, seeing savings in terms of a diminution in the number of the likely victims of criminal activity and the services which deal directly with young offenders (e.g. courts and police). Cost-effectiveness was also couched in terms of the savings to **other local authority agencies**, particularly for Social Services in relation to youngsters who might otherwise be accommodated if they did not attend the provision offered.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Crime/offending reduced	*Well, it depends what you are basing it against. If you are basing it against criminality, truancy, whatever, whatever that costs, I think it is a fair price to pay* (education social worker, work-related learning programme). *... so when I say cost-effectiveness, I don't just mean money. It's like these outcomes, people don't dig deep enough to see what's actually being provided. I think what's being provided for these kids is very cost-effective. If I take them away for a week, you can say that it is respite for the community as well. How can you add up costs like that? You can't put a figure on that. If I stop one person reoffending, how much money does that save the community, the police, the fire brigade, the council? That one child out of 70 that I've stopped offending could be the one that burgles your house tomorrow night that won't do so. How can you put a cost on that? That's the way I look at it* (programme leader, combined alternative learning programme). *It is also cost-effective in terms of the community, because it went further than just the young person, that they were in a useful occupation, if you like. When they were here they weren't terrorising the community, they weren't shoplifting, or stealing cars, they weren't creating victims. There was also a reduction in court costs and police time, so there were those sorts of wider benefits as well* (project manager, combined alternative learning programme).
Savings to other services	*We could hypothesise that we are saving both our directorates with the work we do. A small task was done early this year by my predecessor which could evidence that with three children,* [the Service] *had saved £55,000. It is cost-effective. We certainly have huge numbers of kids on the welfare side teetering on accommodation, if not in it. So, we have a number of kids in foster places with working foster carers, those would be external residential places immediately, if this daycare provision was reduced* (Social Services fieldworker, combined alternative learning programme). *If we prevent a young person from being accommodated, then we save Social Services money* (senior social worker, combined alternative learning programme). *It's a cheaper process than going to court. It costs £721 to process a case in this way and £2,500 absolute minimum to go through the court procedure. This does not take into account other expenses such as solicitors fees etc. as well* (Youth Offending Team member, work with young offenders programme).

Beyond that, one of the most frequently voiced viewpoints was that specialist provision for excluded young people saved **the LEA** from having to finance the alternative of out-of-authority residential placements. Others spoke of cost-effectiveness for the LEA in terms of the provision reducing the likelihood of

statements for EBD, and this was evident particularly where early intervention was a component of the provision.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
LEA saving on out-of-authority placements	*I think £9–10,000* [spending] *as opposed to £80,000 a year for a place in some out-of-county establishment which never seems to do the job is terrific* (service manager, combined alternative learning programme). *If the youngster had gone out of county, we would be talking about a £30,000 package a year. You only need three of those and that's the same as the budget that we have for this project. So, we have been dealing with ten times the number of youngsters with the same resource that might have gone on just three* (area officer, multi-agency panel). *The cost of a special school placement for one child who could not be accommodated by our schemes locally would be between £20,000 and 35,000 a year. To send one child away would cover the potential cost of seven or eight children in the city* (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).
Reducing statementing	*If we can prove we're also reducing the number of youngsters who need to be statemented – and we're hoping our primary work will kick in with this – and that there'll be fewer youngsters statemented for EBD, we are then being extremely cost-effective* (head of Pupil Referral Service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *Yes, because we are about helping children be maintained at Stage 3 or even go back to Stage 2, which can be a lot less costly than providing a statutory assessment* (head of Service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Sometimes the cost-effectiveness argument focused on the economies of joint-agency working, with references to: joint reviews saved time and money and the different agencies' partial contribution to the provision was easily absorbed into working practices.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Economies of joint activity	*We have a lot of joint meetings and joint reviews that saves time and money, because there's less duplication of work, rather than two people doing the same thing* (senior social worker, combined alternative learning programme).
	Basically, at present, Education Welfare [and the] *Education Department supply half a day a week. Social Services supply two workers for half a day a week. This school sends a teacher for about an hour a week, and the Youth Service provides* [X] *who is a full time worker, for a whole day, and* [X] *is here for the whole day from the Health Authority. I am there for the whole day as well. So, the cost essentially is in terms of our time and it is just a part of their work. It's not their only job, the main focus, so that cost is borne by the agencies, and, in terms of operating costs, they are actually very small. The Youth Service managed the accreditation of it and we provide the room* (project leader, personal and social development programme).

Rather than focusing on any direct reductions in costs, another major set of extrinsic cost-effectiveness arguments nominated **value-added benefits** accruing from the provision. Those services whose exclusion provision included outreach support to schools and mainstream pupils particularly noted this aspect of cost-effectiveness, citing development work with teachers as another positive spin-off. The support given to heads and pastoral staff also was reckoned as a factor of cost-effectiveness: the associated credibility of the service which accrued from such assistance to schools was also noted as 'cost-effective'. Similarly 'support' offered to parents also featured as another aspect of value-added cost-effectiveness. Savings to schools were nominated as a cost-effectiveness factor: in some instances, the time which schools could 'recycle' on other than these troubled children was noted. Finally, new links to other agencies and interest groups were seen as an add-on benefit, and all types of agencies (including voluntary and non-educational services) could nominate this version of cost-effectiveness.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Outreach and in-school support	*In terms of giving a pupil an hour's education, we have got to be expensive. But, to assess cost-effectiveness, you would also have to look at our development of outreach work, reintegrating pupils back into school, providing for children who have previously been impossible to accommodate in mainstream* (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *I think the numbers of pupils we are dealing with within schools, added to the numbers that we actually deal with within the centre, makes us more cost-effective. You have an outreach provision; I've got a couple of staff who are doing home tuition for special pupils. So, yeah, I think the overall package comes out as much more cost-effective than a much narrower concept of a PRC* (admin officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).
Other sorts of support to school	*My teachers teach about half the time here and half the time in schools. But, when they're in school, they're not just working with the kids that have* [been reintegrated]. *All the different things like the in-service involved in developing IEPs and helping SENCOs develop IEPs, talking to other teachers about how to manage other kids* (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *Also, we aim to leave something behind in a school system; we're not just about bolt-on support. We do lots of systemic work, so we can leave things behind for the school, to use and further develop* (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).
Support for parents	*I think the Pupil Referral Service is cost-effective. I can't assess it financially, but in terms of looking after pupils and providing services for them, presenting a package to the parents that is potentially very meaningful, then, yes, I think it's very cost-effective* (admin officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).
Better links to new agencies and bodies	*We are running it on a shoestring actually. But ... it's enhancing the work of other elements that already exist, such as the Education Social Work Service and also the Youth Service work ... It gives us opportunities to work into areas that we wouldn't have otherwise have opportunities to do so ... we are working towards developing strong links with the local business community* [too] (service manager, work-related learning programme).

5.3 COST-EFFECTIVENESS: INTRINSIC

Instead of citing direct societal savings and add-on benefits for those connected – professionally or personally – to excluded youngsters, a range of responses to the question of cost-effectiveness focused on the provision's inherent worthwhileness and subsequent benefits for the young people themselves.

At one extreme, it appeared costs were deemed almost irrelevant in comparison with the import of re-engaging excluded children to ensure their positive futures. This type of answer appeared to imbue cost-effectiveness with what might be termed a 'New Testament' interpretation of inclusion. **'Saving' the young person** was paramount, regardless of cost, and, as such, might be seen to have noteworthy resonances with parables relating to lost sheep and the prodigal son. The cost-effectiveness of inclusion was 'beyond price'.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
'Saving' a young person	*I think whatever it costs, it's got to be worthwhile, it's got to be* [cost-effective] *because I think there is so much disaffection in schools, there has got to be something for students to move on to. So, I think, whatever the cost, it has got to be worthwhile to the young people, because these people are our future, the future of the country* (student welfare officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *A young person could be out of employment up till 40 years of age. So I am not sure by which criteria I can measure the cost-effectiveness of the worth of the young person's life or their livelihood* (team coordinator, personal and social development programme).

Other responses noted the inherent worth of provision, but with more definite references relating to the significance of immediate **potential learning opportunities** and outcomes. Sometimes, the cost-effectiveness of the provision was cited in terms of the superior quality – and quantity – of education when compared with the option of home tuition (although one view did state that home tuition allowed better access to deal with any family problems contributing to the exclusion). Beyond that, a range of answers stated cost-effectiveness related to the numbers of pupils accessing the provision: in these terms, **'throughput'** was a key measure of value.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Learning opportunities	*I think now our provision is cost-effective, or it's certainly getting there ... on the grounds of the learning outcomes of students* (headteacher, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).
Keeping them in 'education'	*It's the process that's important as well, and I think that what goes on here is ethically right, it's philosophically right and it's right for the children. So, although they might never return to mainstream school, which might be the end result that people would like to see, it doesn't mean to say they haven't been successful. So I do think it's cost-effective, even if they don't return* (Trust Director, work-related learning programme).
Throughput of youngsters	*Yes, it's not a lot of money when you think about it. I think the test is getting kids through the system. That's where it differs from other PRUs because the kids don't stay there for month after month, year after year* (senior education welfare officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum). *One of the things that is quite pertinent, is that although both PRUs have a role number or a target number where we expect them to have a minimum number of places, often they have a lot more pupils coming through* (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum).

Another version of cost-effectiveness related to the quality of provision in terms of the **calibre of staff, and their relative salary costs**. This was particularly noted in relation to Youth Service and voluntary agency contributions: value for money was constructed in terms of low outgoings compared to the human resources harnessed. Similarly, **using existing local authority facilities** and accessing (or 'infilling') established college provision were both cited as measures of cost-effectiveness. Comparison with the start-up costs of some voluntary agencies was made here.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
Staff quality	*Yes, staff work long hours, good quality of work* (school head, combined alternative learning programme).
Staff costs	*Oh, it's more than cost-effective, it's cheap. I mean we are being paid £5 an hour, £5.70 an hour, and of course we are using a Youth and Community building. It's free of charge, we do our own coffee, everything is very cost-effective. I think it's cheap, when you look upon what they put in education* (project worker, combined alternative learning programme).
Using existing facilities	*Of the £350,000 that* [one voluntary agency] *took, I would say that less than a fifth of that was actually channelled through to the students' education. They had to set up offices, they had to put computers in, they had to get staff in, they had to get counselling services in. ...* [Only] *£60/70,000 is going, at the end of the day, into getting that student into the classroom and dealing with the challenging behaviour, getting qualifications. In comparison to us, straightaway, because we already had staff who deal with this, we already had computer facilities, we already had a counselling service, we have already got a student support service, we have already got youth workers. So straightaway £170,000 (which I believe is the figure) was channelled mostly into the classroom* (further education provider, work-related learning programme). *If it is done as part of an existing structure, then the answer would be yes. If it means starting from scratch, then it might not be so cost-effective* (project worker, combined alternative learning programme).

Finally, the cost-effectiveness of provision was explained in terms of **evidence from internal or external reviews**. In some instances, the OFSTED appraisal was not necessarily accepted by the interviewee as an appropriate measure.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IS EVIDENT BECAUSE OF:	
External evidence	*OFSTED judged* [our PRU] *as 'value for money'* (principal education officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum)
	I think we offer very good value for money and OFSTED said we offer good value for money as well. Their value for money doesn't mean that this child costs 'x' amount of pounds. Their value for money is 'are the kids getting a good deal for the resources that are available to them?' So, if they're getting quality teaching, it's good value for money. I think that's a logical approach (head of PRU, reintegration with mainstream curriculum)
	Compared to national figures, I would think that if OFSTED came along, did their sums on us, that I would feel that we were reasonably cost-effective (admin officer, reintegration with mainstream curriculum)
	HMI said yes [the provision is cost-effective], *in their OFSTED, and I think that's as close as you can get. Because there are so many variables to add up, I don't know how you would clearly say that* (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum)
	OFSTED put us at providing satisfactory value for money – but I didn't agree with his maths (head of service, reintegration with mainstream curriculum)

Thus, value for money was the recurrent theme to emerge from these 'evidential' accounts of cost-effectiveness. As the above quotes show, sometimes the inference was that this was not an entirely appropriate, sufficient, or even ethical way to measure the cost-effectiveness of provision for some excluded pupils, who were invariably damaged and vulnerable. Equally, as Chapter Three ('Effects and Outcomes') has indicated, the measurement of effective support may require new indices of success to include those small personal, social and behavioural changes which providers, parents and youngsters could recount. The key issue is whether a cost-effectiveness measure can and will also recognise these outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study has encompassed a wide range of LEA activity to support the inclusion of permanently excluded pupils in some form of education and learning. It has clarified many of the approaches and philosophies underpinning this support. Undoubtedly, the testaments of the positive effects on young people suggest that a considerable network and skillbase exist within local authorities and that these are tackling effectively the problem of re-engaging young people.

A major question must be how far this network of professional expertise and commitment is currently being utilised – or emulated – by schools in preventative work and earlier interventions to limit the occurrence of permanent exclusion. Certainly, the fact that a number of the key stage 4 work-related programmes catered for both pupils at risk of exclusion and permanently excluded youngsters suggests that the methods and content of this alternative provision could have direct applicability for schools. Equally, the approaches and principles of LEA provision with a reintegration to mainstream focus might have much to offer those schools operating within-school units.

In this way, the characteristics of effectiveness outlined in Chapter Four might serve as a useful checklist for a much wider audience beyond LEA and other support services. Similarly, the wide range of effects audited in Chapter Three may suggest new ways of measuring successful engagement and the impact of provision.

Above all, the study seems to indicate one important lesson: namely, ensuring some personal equanimity, positive relationships with adults as well as a sense of success and self-chosen progression for the young person is a *sine qua non* in successful inclusion and reintegration. The continuum of provision covered in this study would suggest that the more extreme the youngster's alienation and distance from education, the more investment is needed in personal and social issues before educational re-engagement can occur.

The 'price' of this, particularly for the most alienated young people was recognised as inevitably high: appropriate adult:pupil ratios, opportunities for constructive leisure and personalised programmes of learning are all cost-intensive, particularly when the young person may need such provision on a sustained and long-term basis. Nevertheless, the commitment shown by respondents to excluded youngsters was again a notable – and quite humbling – feature of this study's interview programme. Perhaps that commitment needs further sustained financial and ideological support at a national level and in more of our secondary schools, thus better ensuring that both the extrinsic 'society to pay more now, or pay a hell of a lot more later' and the intrinsic 'saving a young person' cost-effectiveness arguments are universally acknowledged.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTORS IN EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED YOUNG PEOPLE

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTORS IN EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED YOUNG PEOPLE

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROVISION	
Actual presence	• offering a physical base for excluded young people • symbolising attention/care about young people
Status and definition	• being well regarded and valued both internally and externally within the authority • being well supported by other agencies • being included in LEA dialogue • being seen to have positive messages and a good reputation within the wider community • being adequately resourced
Conceptual basis	• having a holistic approach to young people, their problems and how to best meet their complex needs • developing an understanding of young people and diagnosis of why they have been excluded • working in contexts that respect and address young people's behavioural problems • developing an ethos of inclusion • encouraging young people to get something out of their education • developing a non-judgmental, non-confrontational, positive and supportive approach • concentrating on developing the self-confidence and self-esteem of young people
Ambience and environment	• working in a non-threatening, problem-solving way, in which people are valued • emphasising listening, caring and communicating • having an individual interest in, and approach to, each young person • creating a positive atmosphere – a safe, welcoming *'comfort zone'* • ensuring a relaxed atmosphere, with young people given responsibilities • having a high staff/young people ratio to assist positive attention and interaction • creating an informal structure, fostering group development • working at young people's *'investment'* in the provision • providing space/opportunity for young people to *'off-load'* and find solutions to their problems • developing a user-friendly environment, not intimidating, not like school • having a policy of strict adherence to 'relevant' rules • promoting an environment of control and discipline as pupils are entitled to an environment that allows them to access mainstream curriculum • providing a well-resourced, quality environment

AN APPROPRIATE CONTENT

Personal and social focus	• developing appropriate attitudes to learning and re-engagement • learning social skills • building confidence and self-esteem • ensuring areas of achievement • engaging other agencies to provide appropriate pastoral support
Different learning opportunities to mainstream	• providing a non-classroom setting • ensuring pupil choice • ensuring practical, skill-based activity • offering '*flexibility*': ability and willingness to pre-plan provision in order to best meet needs of young people • offering '*flexibility*': adapting any programme in order to suit the emerging interests and needs of individuals
Equivalent learning opportunities to mainstream	• ensuring quality teaching • including core curriculum subjects • promoting the right attitudes to learning
Accreditation	• ensuring certification for practical activity • promoting self-esteem

THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships among educational professionals	• creating good communications and working partnerships between school, LEA and project • ease of communication within LEA services • listening to schools' viewpoints, including clear contract systems • ensuring ongoing contact between schools and provision including designated personnel in a link role • undertaking detailed planning and preparation for '*next step*' provision
Relationships amongst parents, pupils and provision staff	• developing good rapport with parents • ensuring partnership approach and participation of parents • developing appropriate supportive relationships between staff and pupils • ensuring teamwork and trust amongst staff and a clear identity and cohesion • supporting young people working together
Multi-agency involvement and cooperation	• establishing coordinated efforts from a spectrum of specialist agencies • creating a multi-agency staff team with a range of expertise • having an integrated management team, e.g. different services under one directorate • establishing links with other initiatives in the locality – utilisation of resources • ensuring provision enhances links between young people and agencies such as Careers and training providers

THE STAFF INVOLVED	
Calibre and background	• being of high quality: competent, able • having clear objectives and commitment • understanding of the peer culture and experiences of excluded youngsters • offering respect, honesty and patience to the young people

TIME AND TIMING	
Availability of time	• creating time to listen and talk to young people • ensuring an immediate audience for pupils in crisis • making time for one-to-one attention • recognising damaged children will require time to progress
Appropriate timing	• ensuring a rapid response to schools and families and individual young people • having procedures for early identification of disengagement
Appropriate contact time	• recognising full-time education may not suit all excluded youngsters • establishing finite timeframes to focus remediating work

INTER-AGENCY INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND KNOWLEDGE	
Database and tracking procedures	• having a good knowledge of all young people out of school including tracking procedures • having comprehensive compilation of agencies involved with a particular child
Information exchange	• sharing information resources • developing fuller picture of young people to devise appropriate packages • ensuring honesty in information exchange
Knowledge of other agencies	• having insights into the workings of other, relevant agencies • knowing the discourse and procedures of other agencies

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Working Out Well:
effective provision for excluded pupils

This report offers description and analysis of educational provision available for young people permanently excluded from school. It describes, in depth, a wide range of provision, including: the work of multi-agency panels concerned with the immediate educational placement post-exclusion; programmes of reintegration to mainstream school; and those initiatives that offer learning experiences for youngsters far removed and alienated from mainstream education. The study is based on information received from 67 LEAs, 30 of which were visited. Seven case studies were also carried out. In all, nearly 200 interviews were undertaken to collect the opinions and experiences of excluded pupils, parents, teachers, educational professionals and representatives from a range of other agencies.

The report includes:

- illustrations of practice from many different initiatives;
- an account of issues and challenges associated with delivering such programmes;
- an overview of the impact and effects of the different provision for excluded young people;
- an audit of key factors contributing to the effectiveness of this provision; and
- views on the issue of cost-effectiveness of provision for excluded pupils.

Given the recent legislation regarding exclusion - and the whole social inclusion agenda - this publication should have much interest for schools, as well as a wide range of educational professionals (and those from other services), at both operational and strategic levels.