THE DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM TO DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study commissioned by the Scottish Executive sought to explore the delivery of the curriculum to disengaged young people in Scotland. The study was divided into two phases: an audit phase and a case-study phase. The audit phase involved a national questionnaire survey of all secondary schools and FE colleges in Scotland, as well as a wide range of other organisations working with young people. A total of 357 questionnaires were returned completed, reflecting a 40 per cent response rate. The audit phase also included telephone interviews with a sample of 41 questionnaire respondents.

A total of 16 interventions were selected for intensive case study. These interventions reflected a range of variables including geographic locale, age group, type of difficulty addressed, type of agency and type of provision. In addition, case studies were chosen because the work they were doing with disengaged youngsters appeared to be distinctive, either in its focus, or the type of activities involved. The case-study phase of the research included interviews with young people, their parents/carers, and strategic- and operational-level staff.

Key findings: overview and aims of the provision

National overview

- Strategies and interventions in place to address disengagement from the curriculum were oriented around the age groups associated with each type of provision.
- Young men were targeted more by interventions than young women; however, the number of young women involved was greater than expected.
- The most commonly cited aims for the school interventions related to positive feelings and attitudes, whilst for the college sample it was positive progression and for the other organisation sample it was positive progression and positive feelings/attitudes.

Case-study phase

- A typology of provision was identified ranging from preventative interventions and interventions in mainstream attempting to re-engage young people, to alternative forms of educational provision outside mainstream settings which were aiming to 'reclaim' the disengaged.
- The stated aims of case-study interventions often focused on overcoming barriers and related to: general inclusion, curriculum access: learning and achievement, i.e. direct barriers, curriculum access: attitude and behaviour, i.e. indirect barriers, and transition/ progression.

Key findings: staffing and funding

National overview

- In the school sample, age-related differences concerning the involvement of the careers service were noted, with a much smaller input at S1 and S2. The involvement of other work-related interventions also increased with age. Telephone interviewees highlighted a high level of social work input, reflecting the often complex social and emotional needs of disengaged young people. Time and resource constraints were identified by telephone interviewees as a particular issue when working with other agencies.
- It is noteworthy that a number of respondents did not gain any additional funding or resources to promote re-engagement in learning.

Case-study phase

- The main staffing issues raised by interviewees related to the availability, suitability, status and gender of staff working in interventions, and concerns regarding interagency working.
- In relation to funding, interventions which were maintaining young people within the community were viewed as cost-effective when compared with the cost of alternative, often residential, placements. Most interviewees were satisfied with the levels of funding, but expressed concern about the short-term and often arbitrary nature of such funding.

Key findings: the engaging curriculum

- Changing or adapting those parts of the curriculum which influence dislocation is clearly a key element of any re-engagement strategy. From the questionnaire and the case-study phase of the research, the following issues regarding curriculum engagement were raised:
  - changing the context of learning
  - adapting the content of learning
  - adapting the teaching approach and materials used
  - ensuring continuity and progression.
- The commonality across all provision appeared to be the focus on the needs and interests of young people and increasing the individual support provided. As well as alternative activities, across all three types of provision, there was a marked emphasis on an active teaching style by the teacher or tutor including: talking about, explaining, showing, reassuring, praising, monitoring progress, giving feedback, etc.

Key findings: impact and outcomes

National overview

- When respondents were asked to nominate improvements in engagement with learning as a result of being involved in the intervention, the school sample highlighted improvement in engagement with the curriculum and Standard Grades. The college sample highlighted improved engagement in vocational and core skills, and other organisations highlighted improved engagement in learning.
- Other benefits nominated included more positive attitudes and behaviour, and positive progression.

Case-study phase

- A wide range of outcomes was identified by interviewees, the most common related to behaviour modification, improvements in psychological well-being, advancement in learning-related skills and achievement/qualifications, attitudinal change and positive transition/progression.
- Behaviour modification was the most commonly identified outcome by interviewees. The most frequently identified change in behaviour related to improvements in attendance, which in turn was seen to have an impact on achievement, attainment and positive progression.
- Wider outcomes were also identified by interviewees. These related to benefits for other young people, for teachers and staff working with disengaged youngsters, for the local community, for young people's families and for other agencies and organisations.

Key findings: key factors in effectiveness

- Many of these factors mirrored those identified by interviewees in previous research by Kinder *et al.* (2000) on provision for excluded young people in England. The key factors identified focused on:
  - the characteristics of the provision
  - the appropriateness and suitability of provision content
  - staff and staffing issues
  - relationships.
- The characteristics of the contexts in which the curriculum was delivered were vitally important for re-engaging young people with learning, for example, the ambience and environment as well as the conceptual basis and ethos of interventions.

- Effectiveness relied heavily on young people's willingness and ability to re-engage with learning. As such, the learning content on offer had to be seen to be relevant to, and have meaning for, them.
- Interviewees stressed that having sufficient quantities of the 'right' staff and teachers underpinned the effectiveness of a provision.
- Young people asserted that the key factors in the effectiveness of provisions were the relationships they had with staff.

Key findings: difficulties, challenges and areas for development

National overview

- The strategies and interventions identified by school and other organisation respondents in both the questionnaire and telephone interview survey were addressing similar types of difficulty. They were both dealing most frequently with behavioural concerns, whilst college respondents identified learning concerns as the main difficulty.
- Difficulties faced by the actual interventions related to limited staff time allocated and limited resources.

Case-study phase

- The challenges identified by interviewees focused on:
  - young people
  - the provision
  - community/family factors
  - multi-agency working.
- The most frequently identified challenges related to the young people themselves and included: their behaviour and attitudes, that they were beyond the remit of the provision and difficulties with continuity, relationships and medical concerns.
- Challenges associated with the provision included the negative attitudes of other staff/young people towards the intervention, the constraints and limitations of the curriculum available (including within alternative educational provision) and a lack of appropriate provision to meet young people's needs.
- The key areas for development and improvement identified by interviewees focused on:
  - improving the provision by changing attitudes towards it, making the curriculum and activities more appropriate for youngsters' needs, and appointing additional staff with the appropriate skills and qualities, as well as ensuring greater involvement of existing staff within mainstream educational contexts

- ensuring positive progression via the provision of long-term support, the monitoring of outcome and destination data, and the provision of additional supported work and training opportunities
- increasing the level of community and family involvement in interventions and improving relationships with parents
- multi-agency working and the need to share good practice.

Key findings: concluding comments

At policy level, key issues raised by the research might be to consider:

- the value of further innovative alternative curriculum opportunities for young people, particularly at S1 and S2
- the sometimes limited availability of suitable progression routes back into mainstream education for the most disengaged youngsters
- the value of increasing the breadth of training and learning opportunities for youngsters involved in alternative education initiatives.

At practitioner level, key areas for development may be to consider:

- raising the profiles and acknowledging the skill base of support staff in schools
- providing opportunities to exchange effective practice by operational-level staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the research

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to undertake the research project, 'The delivery of the curriculum to disengaged young people', in September 1999. The context was one of increased interest in the potential of alternative ways to re-engage those young people who had been 'turned off' learning via the medium of the traditional school curriculum. Such interest was evidenced in Government policy through, for example, the report setting out its strategy for promoting social inclusion in Scotland (GB. Scottish Office, 1999). This heralded the setting up of the Scottish Social Inclusion Network and local Social Inclusion Partnerships, which conveyed a strong message about the need to tackle the exclusion and disengagement of young people. During the NFER research, a key recommendation of the Beattie Committee Report (1999), that inclusion should underpin all post-school guidance, education and training, was accepted as reflecting the approach of the Scottish Executive to vulnerable young people.

At school level, this commitment was evidenced in specific educational initiatives, such as the establishment of the Excellence Fund for Schools, as well as the Alternative to Exclusion Grant Scheme, which highlighted a concern to tackle the causes, and reduce the incidence, of disaffection and exclusion from school. Guidelines for schools and authorities on exclusions (GB. SOEID, 1998) emphasised the importance of the curriculum in delivering every pupil's right to an education that takes account of age, aptitude and ability, and which is valued by them.

The concern to offer a suitable route to success for all pupils within the mainstream curriculum in Scottish schools had been reflected in a number of initiatives, for example, in the national guidelines for the curriculum 5–14 (GB. SOED, 1993), in the Howie report (1992) on upper secondary education and in the *Higher Still* reform of courses and accreditation routes (GB. Scottish Office, 1994; SCCC, 1999a). (At the time of the NFER research, the latter was in its first year of implementation.) There was also a nation-wide emphasis on school self-evaluation of the quality of the education offered to pupils, supported by HMI and relevant publications (see, *inter alia*, GB. SOEID. HMI, 1996; GB. Scottish Office. HMI. Audit Unit, 1999). Success in creating a broad curricular experience for pupils was celebrated in publications such as *Success Stories II* (Gillespie, 1999).

Within this approach to the curriculum overall, two strands relevant to the NFER research were also receiving attention: the education of those experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the educational links between school and the adult world of work. With regard to the former, there was a specific focus on inclusion and on promoting

positive and supportive approaches to meeting the needs of young people (see, *inter alia*, Lloyd, 1992; Munn, 1994; Lloyd, 1996; Munn *et al.*, 1997; Martin, 1999; Munn, 1999), as well as a growing interest in listening to the views of young people about the services provided for them (for example, Taylor, 1996; Thomas *et al.*, 1998; Ritchie, 1999).

The focus on educational links between school and the world of further education, training and employment was not new (see, for example, Bishop, 1989; Black *et al.*, 1992; Turner *et al.*, 1994) and had been given a boost by the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (see, *inter alia*, Devine *et al.*, 1994). However, the late 1990s saw a renewed emphasis in Scotland on the importance of such links being integrated into the curriculum, rather than being seen as an 'add-on' (see, for example, SCCC, 1995; GB. SOEID, 1997; SCCC, 1999b).

What was thought to be missing was any Scottish research focusing on the particular benefits of such approaches for addressing the needs of young people who found the traditional classroom-based delivery of the curriculum difficult to access. Recent research over a number of years in England and Wales had clearly demonstrated a causal relationship between pupil disaffection and the kinds of learning opportunity available within mainstream schools' academic curriculum content (Kinder *et al.*, 1995; 1996; 1998a; 1999; 1999a; 1999b; Kinder and Wilkin, 1998). Equally, it had established that the traditional classroom contexts of learning and schools' general ambience and culture can feature as a factor in young people becoming excluded (or excluding themselves) from educational opportunity. Kinder *et al.* note that truancy or inappropriate behaviour can be said to represent '*flight or fight*' responses to a discomforting environment, and that disaffected young people's discourse, resonating with recurrent phrases such as '*school is boring*' and '*teachers don't respect pupils*', indicates a systemic, and indeed symbolic, breakdown between mainstream education and some of its pupil clients. Kinder *et al.* note that this breakdown is particularly evident in the 14–16 age group, i.e. Secondary Three and Four, and undoubtedly it is boys, minority groups and the socio-economically disadvantaged who feature significantly in the statistics and incidences of educational disengagement. In Scotland also, research had shown precisely these trends (see, *inter alia*, Munn *et al.*, 1997; 2000; Lloyd *et al.*, 1999).

Alternative provision, involving an adaptation of the traditional content and/or contexts of learning, had proved to be a successful way to re-engage disaffected young people with educational opportunity. Vocational training and experience, alternative accreditation, attendance at non-school locations and ongoing contact with professionals from other non-education services have all featured as aspects of this alternative provision. Such opportunities have undoubtedly burgeoned since the social inclusion agenda has increased its profile.

A range of research projects and consultancy work undertaken by Kinder *et al.* (1995; 1996; 1999a) and Kinder and Wilkin (1998), examining strategies to combat pupil disaffection, showed that the key components of learning

rehabilitation included:

- the establishment of positive personal relationships with an adult who can model pro-social values
- the internalisation of a sense of achievement, progression and continuity in a young person's learning pathway, including vocational education
- the opportunity for engaging in constructive leisure activity.

The contribution of other agencies, including youth and community services, social services, health agencies, FE colleges, education business partnerships (EBPs), training providers, employers, careers and guidance companies, police and the voluntary sector, has been highly evident in a wide range of initiatives and interventions aimed at re-engaging disengaged young people. Recent research by NFER (Cullen *et al.*, 2000) showed that, working with schools in a range of ways, these agencies can provide a learning experience that previously disengaged young people value; and can form a bridge to enable the youngsters to follow positive progression routes back into mainstream education, training or employment.

1.2 The research project

1.2.1 Aims

The research had two main aims:

1. To identify the range of strategies and provision across Scotland that sought to deliver a more appropriate curriculum and which had a specific focus on disaffection/disengagement.
2. To assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the major approaches identified, in terms of:
   (a) the curriculum content delivered successfully
   (b) the impact on the young people's motivation to re-engage/ engage in learning
   (c) the impact on their attendance, attainment, aspirations and attitude to learning.

1.2.2 The research design

The research design was in two phases: an **audit phase** and a **case-study phase**.

Phase One: the audit

The audit phase was also in two parts, involving survey and telephone interview methods. Part One involved the sending of questionnaires to:

- all secondary schools (including special schools)

- all FE colleges
- a wide range of other organisations working with young people. (The range covered careers services, education business partnerships, health board trusts, local enterprise companies (LECs), local education authorities, police forces, social work departments, training agencies, voluntary sector organisations and jointly run initiatives.)

The response rate was as follows: 30 per cent of the school sample; 41 per cent of the college sample; 55 per cent of the other organisation sample. Altogether, a total of 893 questionnaires were sent out, and 357 were returned completed (40 per cent overall response rate).

Part Two of the audit phase comprised 41 telephone interviews selected from the three questionnaire sub-samples: 22 were with schools, five with colleges and 14 with other organisations. This selection was intended to cover a range of variables including:

- geographic locale
- age group
- type of difficulty addressed
- type of agency
- type of provision.

Telephone interviewees were also chosen because the work they were doing with disengaged youngsters appeared to be distinctive, either in its focus, or the type of activities involved. The purpose of the telephone interviews was to expand on the information gained through the questionnaire.

Phase Two: the case studies

From the 41 initiatives followed up through telephone interviews, 16 case-study sites were selected for in-depth study. Of these, seven were schools, two were further education colleges and seven were drawn from other organisations working with disengaged young people. The same variables were applied.

The fieldwork programme at each site included interviews at both strategic and operational level, and observations. In addition, up to six young people and three parents/carers were interviewed. On average, about ten interviews were conducted per case study. Documentary evidence of evaluation and outcomes was also collected.

At a strategic level, interviews with senior managers covered:

- a strategic overview of the provision
- staffing and funding issues
- impact and outcomes of the provision
- approaches to evaluation of the provision.

At an operational level, interviews with staff covered:

- details of the provision
- the curriculum content and delivery
- the impact and outcomes of the initiative
- evaluation
- staffing and funding issues.

Both senior managers and staff were also asked, in conclusion, to give their views on the key factors that foster re-engagement with learning.

Parents/carers of young people interviewed were asked to give their views on:

- the young person's school experience
- the initiative and how the young person had become involved
- the impact of the provision on the young person
- hopes for the young person's future.

Young people were asked their views of similar topics. Informal observations and documentary evidence were also part of the data set.

1.3 About this report

The report presents the findings of the research in a thematic way:

- A conceptual 'map' is presented to guide readers through the many types of support and provision designed to address disengagement from the curriculum. The stated aims of the provision/strategies are also explored (Chapter 2).
- An exploration of issues relating to the staffing and funding of the interventions (Chapter 3).
- The ways in which the content, delivery and context of learning are adapted to meet the needs of young people, as well as how connecting relationships and structures are fostered and maintained (Chapter 4).
- The impacts and outcomes associated with the provision (Chapter 5).
- The key factors in effectiveness – what actually makes a difference in the delivery of the curriculum (Chapter 6).
- Challenges associated with the provision and areas for improvement and future development (Chapter 7).

2. OVERVIEW AND AIMS OF PROVISION

The present chapter starts by offering a national overview of the different types of provision, and the range of aims highlighted in the questionnaire and telephone interview stages of the research. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of data derived from the case-study phase, and includes a typology of provision and an exploration of the stated aims of each type of intervention. Descriptive summaries of selected individual provisions/ interventions are also presented to further illustrate the nature of the range of strategies employed to re-engage young people with learning.

2.1 National overview

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked about the existence of strategies to address disengagement/disaffection according to key age bands: 12–14-year-olds, 14–16-year-olds, 16–18-year-olds and 18–21-year-olds.

Not surprisingly, strategies were orientated around the age groups primarily associated with each type of provision.

- Nearly nine-tenths (89 per cent) of respondents in the school sample noted the existence of strategies for S3–S4 pupils, and just over three-quarters (78 per cent) identified provision for S1–S2 pupils, as opposed to just over half (52 per cent) for S5–S6.
- Two-thirds of colleges identified strategies for re-engagement in place for school leavers, and just over half (53 per cent) of this sample also noted provision for school-age pupils and for young adults (up to age 21).
- 'Other' organisations were most likely to mention strategies for both S3–S4 and S5–S6, with two-thirds of respondents noting provision for each of these groups. It is interesting to note that half of this sample also referred to strategies in place for S1–S2, perhaps signalling recognition of the importance of early intervention and additional support.
- Within each of the sample types and across all the age ranges, there was a male to female ratio of roughly 3:2 (15,570 to 10,016). Only in the college sample, for the age range S5–S6, were more females targeted than males. Notwithstanding this, given the predominance of males in exclusion figures and characterised as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the number of girls involved is greater than perhaps might have been expected.

Respondents across the three samples were also asked, in an open question, to comment on the aims of their provision (see Tables 2.1a–c in Appendix).

- Overall, the most commonly cited aims for young people in the school sample were, in rank order, positive feelings and attitudes, achievement, behaviour, learning, curriculum, and transition. The stated aims varied according to the age group concerned. Improving behaviour was nominated as an aim by two-fifths (41 and 40 per cent respectively) of school respondents for both S1–S2 and S3–S4 age groups, but by only just over one-fifth (23 per cent) of respondents for S5–S6 pupils. Hence, addressing behaviour appears to have been given a greater emphasis for younger pupils.
- In the college sample, positive progression was the most frequently nominated aim, followed by achievement, and positive feelings/ attitudes. Clearly, colleges were focusing on preparing young people, whether school pupils, school leavers, or young adults, for their 'next step'. The lower numbers (two of the ten responding colleges) mentioning positive feelings/attitudes for school-age pupils may also be noteworthy.
- Within the 'other' organisations sample, positive progression and positive feelings/attitudes were the most commonly nominated aims for young people. It is interesting to note that 'achievement' received comparatively few nominations, although 'engagement with learning' was the third most frequently mentioned aim. Hence, in a similar manner to the college sample, other organisations appear to have been focusing on directly, and indirectly, preparing young people for their next stage. There were, however, age-related variations within this overall pattern. For example, positive progression was highlighted by only nine per cent of other organisation respondents as an aim for 12–13-year-olds, compared to 57 per cent of respondents for 16–17-year-olds. Conversely, inclusion, engagement with learning, and improved behaviour were cited more frequently as aims for the younger age groups (12–15-year-olds) than the older age groups (16–21-year-olds). Inclusion was the most frequently stated aim for 12–13-year-olds, perhaps reflecting the importance attached by these interventions to ensuring that young people were not excluded from learning opportunities at such an early age.

Telephone interviewees' responses generally echoed the above findings, reflecting the importance attached to focusing on young people's attitudes and behaviour. Representatives of colleges and other organisations also noted the need to concentrate on preparing young people for transition and stressed the importance of providing disengaged young people with the necessary skills and abilities with which to succeed. Interviewees from the school sample also noted that their provision focused on assisting pupils to access the 'normal' curriculum, or adapting it to suit their needs.

2.2 Typology of the continuum of provision

From the case studies of provision at 16 sites across Scotland, the patterns that had begun to emerge from the questionnaire responses became clearer. Just as there are degrees of disengagement from the curriculum, from 'at risk of becoming disengaged' to 'excluded/self-excluded from the mainstream curriculum', so there are different degrees of provision, from preventative, through intervention while still in the mainstream, to alternative forms of educational provision (designed to 'reclaim' those who have become completely disengaged). Each of the 16 case studies fitted into one of three categories on this continuum of provision, as the summary below indicates.

Summary of the 16 case studies

PREVENTATIVE	MAINSTREAM	RECLAIMED DISENGAGED
Inclusive schooling Designed to address the needs of all pupils attending this island secondary school (not targeted).	**Support base** Used as a focus of a range of provision in this town secondary school.	**Leavers' programme** Offered to 15-year-olds in this city SEBD special school.
After school club (reading) and support classes Targeted on some pupils in S1 and S2 in this city secondary school.	**ASDAN Youth Award** Targeted pupils with low attendance at risk of exclusion from this urban secondary school.	**Alternative to residential care project** Served a rural area; run and funded jointly by social work and education.
Special needs careers advice Special needs careers adviser worked with leavers' group in a highland special school.	**Support base plus external placements** Provided learning and SEBD support in this highland secondary school.	**Learning and employment project** Funded and run by an urban LEC.
Pupil mentoring project Run by a learning business partnership and targeted those living in priority postcode areas.	**School liaison group and youth strategy worker** These acted as a focus for a range of provision in this city secondary school.	**Education through car mechanics** A social work project targeted at young offenders and others 'at risk' in the community.
	Catering and Hospitality course Offered as a vocational programme for 15-year-olds in this city college.	**Drugs education through football** A community police project targeting young offenders and those 'at risk' because of drug/alcohol misuse.
	Range of vocational courses Rural college offered 15-year-olds the chance to experience different vocational pathways.	**Volunteer programme** A voluntary sector project targeting young unemployed but including young employed too.

Examples from each type of provision are presented in the summary charts at the end of this chapter.

2.3 Stated aims of the three provision types

The following section explores and discusses the stated aims and focuses of the provision and initiatives identified by the case-study interviewees, illustrated and exemplified, where appropriate, by direct quotations. The stated aims, often focusing on the overcoming of certain barriers, have been divided into four main categories:

1. **general inclusion**
2. **curriculum access: learning and achievement, i.e. direct barriers**
3. **curriculum access: attitude and behaviour, i.e. indirect barriers**
4. **transition/progression.**

2.3.1 General inclusion

The focus on inclusion and supporting inclusion by overcoming barriers to accessing learning/education constituted a major stated aim of the provision, according to case-study interviewees. Although all were focusing on inclusion, the different types of provision approached this in a variety of ways. 'Preventative' types of provision were primarily focusing on providing support to maintain all youngsters within the school environment. 'Mainstream' types of provision were aiming to support those youngsters who were already disengaged, including excluded pupils, and were working to retain them in mainstream, through strategies orientated around supporting that version of inclusion. 'Reclaimed disengaged' provisions were, however, aiming to provide support in order to prevent young people being excluded, not just from learning opportunities, but also from, and within, their local communities, and as such had a much more wide-reaching inclusion focus. Hence, the nature and context of intended inclusion varied according to the type of provision and reflected the degree of difficulties being experienced by young people. These differently orientated strategies for inclusion are illustrated in the following comments:

General inclusion: preventative provision

We see ourselves as a very inclusive school and we try and make sure that all the youngsters are dealt with in mainstream if possible (senior manager, secondary school).

General inclusion: mainstream provision

Pupils continue with their curriculum in the [name of provision] with a view to returning them to class as soon as possible. The medium- to long-term aim is to get them back into class (senior manager, secondary school).

General inclusion: reclaimed disengaged provision

It's about keeping kids in their own communities (senior manager, social work).

[It's for] *children in school causing major problems who would go to residential if they didn't attend* [name of provision] (senior manager, education).

2.3.2 Curriculum access: learning and achievement

In addition to issues surrounding inclusion, aims were identified which focused on overcoming direct barriers to accessing the curriculum. Direct barriers to the curriculum related to pupil performance and curriculum capabilities, and these were challenged through the application of a range of strategies, which again varied according to the context of the provision. Thus, initiatives with a preventative focus were aiming to implement strategies to enable young people with specific learning needs to successfully access the mainstream curriculum. These were youngsters whose learning needs were not severe but which may impede their achievement and/or lead to disengagement in the future. So, for example, one provider was focusing on addressing underachievers' learning needs via curriculum differentiation and intensive learning support to improve reading ages. These types of provision also focused on raising young people's awareness of, and value they accorded to, academic and work/employment-orientated opportunities, through, for example, the promotion of notions of lifelong learning.

Aims directly linked to learning and academic achievement were also explicit within mainstream types of provision. Stated aims focused on **re-**engaging young people by addressing and overcoming **specific** learning needs. The emphasis was on improving access to the mainstream curriculum, which, in some instances, included a modification of this curriculum. So, for example, the pursuit and achievement of vocational qualifications in **college** also aimed to increase pupils' awareness of the relevance of, and engagement with, the **school** curriculum. Similarly, the provision of alternative accreditation within mainstream schools aimed to improve achievement by providing pupils with what they perceived to be a more relevant curriculum which better suited their needs. However, this also aimed to have an indirect impact on pupils' performance in the mainstream curriculum by highlighting the relevance of learning in general, and various academic subjects in particular, to their lives.

Those working in provision focusing on reclaiming the disengaged were similarly aiming to overcome barriers to learning. Most of the young people attending this type of provision had a range of learning needs, for example, learning difficulties or a lack of previous educational opportunities and positive experiences. In many instances, disengagement was so severe that providers' primary aim centred on just re-engaging young people in learning. Providers in this category of intervention were not focusing on accessing a mainstream curriculum but there was a strong focus on achievement via alternative accreditation, vocational qualifications, core skill development, sports activities and training. The stated learning-related aims focused on engagement via the acquisition of basic and core skills and by providing learning packages which were appropriate to the individual learning needs of the young person.

Accessing the curriculum: learning and achievement: preventative provision

[Our aim is] *to develop more appropriate curriculum material, making the curriculum more accessible* (principal teacher, guidance, secondary school).

Accessing the curriculum: learning and achievement: mainstream provision

[Our aim is] *to look at their strengths ... let them develop these and through doing that try and work on their weaknesses* (programme coordinator, secondary school).

Accessing the curriculum: learning and achievement: reclaimed disengaged provision

[Our aim is] *to re-engage young people in learning via ... the provision of core educational skills* (provision literature).

We aim to make learning more interesting (senior manager, alternative education initiative).

2.3.3 Curriculum access: attitude and behaviour

Aims focusing on engendering **particular attitudes and feelings** about self and others were linked to successfully accessing the curriculum. All types of provision were focusing on increasing confidence and self-esteem as an indirect way of overcoming barriers to accessing the curriculum. However, the extent to which this was a stated aim varied between types of provision and reflected the levels of disengagement of the young people involved. Consequently, all those providers working with the most disaffected youngsters identified improving the confidence and self-esteem of young people as stated aims, as opposed to only one of the providers working in the preventative category. For those providers working with the most disaffected youngsters, the young people who had '*failed everywhere else*', the raising of self-esteem and confidence were seen as essential prerequisites for engaging them in any form of learning. Examples of stated aims orientated around feelings and attitudes are presented below:

Curriculum access: attitude/feelings: preventative provision

Mentoring relationships aim to develop youngsters' self-esteem, in order to increase engagement with learning, and ultimately their achievement (provision literature).

Curriculum access: attitude/feelings: mainstream provision

To raise pupil self-esteem and to raise teacher expectations of those pupils ... The idea of [name of provision] *is to give them a sense of identity within the school and to give them that by getting them an identity amongst themselves in* [name of provision] (senior manager, secondary school).

Curriculum access: attitude/feelings: reclaimed disengaged provision

Encourage responsibility for self and others, promote self-confidence and self-esteem, and foster positive relationships (provision literature).

Behaviour which inhibited youngsters' ability to access the curriculum was another indirect barrier identified by interviewees. Preventative initiatives were focusing on monitoring behaviour, for example attendance, to ensure that it did not impact on young people's ability to access the curriculum. Interviewees working in mainstream initiatives, however, suggested that issues of behaviour were already impacting on young people's ability to access the curriculum. Hence, these types of provision had a greater focus on behaviour modification, including anger management and improving attendance. Mainstream interventions were focusing on supporting pupils' behavioural needs within the context of accessing the curriculum and functioning within the school environment.

In contrast, projects focusing on reclaiming the disengaged were attempting to overcome, or challenge, significant extrinsic barriers to learning, including discrimination, social and domestic problems, and other community factors. Their focus was on addressing and limiting specific behaviours, primarily offending and drug misuse which, amongst other factors, inhibited young people's ability to access learning. Some of these difficulties placed youngsters at risk of being accommodated, and projects were also seeking to provide support which aimed to stop them being placed in residential care. However, projects were not only focusing on such negative aspects of young people's behaviour; they were also aiming to provide positive and viable alternatives to that behaviour, via the provision of vocational qualifications and the acquisition of learning skills based on social and recreational activities, for example.

Curriculum access: behaviour: preventative provision

Mentors monitor attendance (senior manager, mentoring programme).

Curriculum access: behaviour: mainstream provision

To encourage children to come to school (teacher, secondary school).

To challenge young people's behaviour and to encourage them to consider alternative ways of dealing with conflict and anger (anger management course, evaluation literature).

Curriculum access: behaviour: reclaimed disengaged provision

The projects are set up to lower offending. A large percentage of these pupils are high-rate or medium-rate offenders (senior manager, police).

2.3.4 Transition/progression

All types of provision had aims which were linked to positive post-programme progression and were challenging barriers to successful transition. The barriers could be defined as learning barriers and behavioural barriers, including extrinsic factors.

Provision with a preventative focus was aiming to provide young people with learning difficulties, or those identified as being in danger of

experiencing difficulties, with advice and/or support as they approached the transition stage. They were also focusing on extrinsic community factors, such as inter-generational unemployment, which may impede youngsters' progression from school to the world of work. In one case, mentors were being used to provide youngsters with aspirational goals which would then hopefully impact on the young person's academic achievement in school, and ultimately their employment prospects. Mainstream provision was also focusing on overcoming barriers to transition by overcoming specific barriers to learning, such as dyslexia, for example. Colleges were working with school-age youngsters and school leavers to provide appropriate routes for progression and positive post-16 progression.

The considerable focus on challenging and overcoming barriers to transition in provisions which aimed to reclaim the disengaged reflected the age and status of the young people involved. All were outside mainstream education, and a significant number were approaching school-leaving age. So, it was noted that the key aim here was to '*hook youngsters in*', to enable them to make an effective transition to training, college or employment. Projects also aimed to equip young people with the necessary skills, such as social and life skills, as well as job/employment-related skills, to make that transition smoothly. Therefore, the focus here was on providing them with practical skills as much as achievements (including qualifications), in addition to offering advice and information.

Transition: preventative provision

The main aim is to enable the young people [with SEN] to be as independent as possible when they leave (class teacher, special school).

Transition: mainstream provision

To provide appropriate routes for progression whether to other courses, employment, vocational courses, core skills ... (senior manager, college).

Transition: reclaimed provision

To prepare the individual for life after [name of provision] (provision handout).

We're aiming to give pupils a greater understanding of the world outside school and how to manage their lives in it (senior manager, special school).

Table 2.1 overleaf presents a summative overview of the discussion of these aims and focuses. The chapter concludes with specific examples of the range of initiatives and provision included in the case-study phase.

Table 2.1 Summary of aims

AIMS	TYPE OF PROVISION		
	Preventative	**Mainstream**	**Reclaimed disengaged**
Inclusion	*General inclusion* • inclusion of all pupils	*General inclusion* • prevent exclusion • support inclusion • support retention	*Specific inclusion* • maintain young people in the community
Learning	• promote lifelong learning • develop more appropriate curriculum	• develop strengths and tackle weaknesses • relate academic subjects to real life situations	• re-engage young people in learning • provide core educational skills • maximise individuals' potential to learn • provide positive learning experience
Achievement	• support underachievers	• alternative accreditation • vocational qualifications • support achievement • re-engage underachievers	• alternative accreditation • vocational qualifications e.g. SVQs • training
Attitude/ feelings	• increase confidence • increase self-esteem	• increase confidence • increase self-esteem • increase sense of belonging to school	• increase confidence • increase self-esteem • encourage responsibility for self and others • foster positive relationships
Behaviour	• monitor attendance • monitor behaviour	• provide pupils with strategies to handle conflict • improve attendance	• reduce offending • reduce drug taking
Transition/ progression	• provide appropppriate progression routes • raise awareness of world of work • make young people as independent as possible	• provide appropriate routes for progression	• provide appropriate progression routes • vocational skills • experiential skills • life skills • job skills

SUMMARY CHARTS OF TYPE OF PROVISION

PREVENTATIVE provision: example 1 (support in school – not targeted)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Secondary school Small town, island S1–S6 Whole school
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: urban 'incomers' finding it difficult to fit in to the local community; including pupils with wide range of special educational needs • curriculum: aspects of context and content of learning (especially for pupils with special educational needs) • symptoms: low self-esteem, low motivation, low reading age, disruptive behaviour
Focus of provision	• inclusion for all • accessing the curriculum • improving attitudes and behaviour
Activities	S1/S6 buddy system; S6 pupils working with teachers in the classroom; cooperative teaching with support for learning staff; individualised programmes, including work experience, for S5 Christmas leavers; behaviour cards; pupils working with support for learning teacher rather than being excluded
Other agencies involved	• speech therapists • occupational therapists • local employers
Referral procedure	• through behaviour cards or learning support

PREVENTATIVE provision: example 2 (targeted support in school)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Secondary school City, central belt S1–S2 About 70 currently
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: family and community experiences of social disadvantage • curricular relationships: aspects of the learning context, and of teaching and learning styles • symptoms: low reading age, underachievement, poor behaviour
Focus of provision	• accessing the curriculum by improving basic skills • adapting the curriculum to suit learning preferences
Activities	S1: after school club focusing on reading S2: four classes with additional support
Other agencies involved	• none
Referral procedure	• S1: through liaison between assistant head teacher and primary school • S2: through head of learning support and assistant head teacher

PREVENTATIVE provision: example 3 (careers service support in special school)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Careers service/special school Small town, highland 15–19-year-olds Eight in this school per annum (total of about 50 per adviser per annum)
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: negative attitudes to learning difficulties • structural: gap between school system and post-16 systems • symptoms: lack of sustainable post-16 placements
Focus of provision	• positive post-school progression
Activities	Special needs careers advice: careers advice and guidance; careers interviews with individual young people; review meetings with parents; visits to workshops, employers, training organisations; visit to careers fair; college tasters; work placements.
Other agencies involved	• schools (guidance, behaviour and learning support staff) • colleges • employers and training organisations • health professionals (child psychiatry, child health, school paediatricians) • psychological services • social work
Referral procedure	• varies; many different agencies refer young people

PREVENTATIVE provision: example 4 (mentoring support in school)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Learning business partnership Three authorities, central belt S3–S5 200+
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: family problems, socio-economic deprivation • structural: transition issues linked to cross-generational unemployment • symptoms: poor attendance, underachievement
Focus of provision	• positive post-16 progression • access to the curriculum • improving attitudes and behaviour
Activities	Business mentoring: employed adults in public, private and voluntary sectors mentoring pupils; two-year commitment from mentors; monthly mentoring session at school; mentors monitor attendance and other targets and promote lifelong learning; work place visits; work experience; social activities.
Other agencies involved	• schools • wide range of local and national businesses
Referral procedure	• open to all young people living in priority postcode areas • individual pupils identified by schools

MAINSTREAM intervention: example 1 (school based)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Secondary school Urban, north lowlands S3–S4 Ten
Main difficulties addressed	• curriculum: aspects of context, content and teaching and learning styles • symptoms: underachievement, poor behaviour, truancy
Focus of provision	• post-16 progression through additional accreditation • improving attitudes and behaviour
Activities	ASDAN Youth Awards: integrated into the school timetable in place of two Standard Grades. A tailored personal and social development programme, providing a broad educational experience through personal and community challenges and constructive leisure activities.
Other agencies involved	• local youth project • the police • local environment centre • local family centre
Referral procedure	• usually through behaviour support • sometimes through the education welfare officer/ social worker

MAINSTREAM intervention: example 2 (college based)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	College City, central belt Mainly 15–16-year-olds Varies
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: negative attitudes towards special educational needs • structural: lack of post-16 options • symptoms: low attainment, low self-esteem, lack of hope for the future
Focus of provision	• positive post-16 progression (vocationally specific focus) • accessing the curriculum through basic and core skills, including use of computers
Activities	Catering and hospitality course as part of a personal learning plan and offering opportunities for national accreditation.
Other agencies involved	• schools • local council • community education • local enterprise council • social work • police • community learning strategy • local projects working with excluded young people
Referral procedure	• through schools and education authority advisory service

RECLAIMING THE DISENGAGED: example 1 (not vocationally specific)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Social work and education Small rural town S3–S4 Six
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: family breakdown and community deprivation • symptoms: severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, violence and drug-related offences, being 'looked after', excluded/self-excluded from school
Focus of provision	• alternative curriculum • improving attitudes and behaviour
Activities	Individual education and action plans: ASDAN Youth Award, group work, outdoor education, work experience, social skills, communication skills, information technology, home economics, art and design.
Other agencies involved	• schools • health professionals • parents • the Prince's Trust • community education • careers service • local college
Referral procedure	• through education and social work referral meeting

RECLAIMING THE DISENGAGED: example 2 (vocationally specific)

Lead agency/site **Geographic location** **Year/age of young people** **Number of young people**	Social work department/purpose built garage workshop Urban area, central belt 15–16-year-olds 11–15
Main difficulties addressed	• social relationships: problems at school, in the family ('looked after', or at risk of being accommodated) and in the community (widespread alcohol and drug misuse) • curriculum: aspects of content and teaching and learning styles • symptoms: on supervision orders, alcohol and drug-related offences, low reading ages, low self-esteem, excluded/self-excluded from school
Focus of provision	• positive post-16 progression (vocationally specific focus)
Activities	Car mechanics, careers advice and guidance, basic skills work, personal and social development through group work, constructive leisure (Duke of Edinburgh Award)
Other agencies involved	• local college • education department • community education • Barnardo's • local centre offering drugs advice • Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
Referral procedure	• through social work

3. STAFFING AND FUNDING

This chapter considers issues of staffing and funding raised by interviewees in the questionnaire and case-study phases of the research. For each section, a national overview is presented, followed by more detailed analysis based on information collected in the case-study phase of the research.

3.1 Staffing issues

3.1.1 National overview

In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked to specify any external agencies, organisations and/or individuals who were involved in the initiatives/strategies identified (see Tables 3.1a–c in Appendix). The main findings were:

- In the school sample, the most frequently used external agencies were those that have had a history of working with schools, namely psychological services, social work and the careers service. Age-related differences were seen in relation to the involvement of the careers service in particular. Only 24 per cent of the school sample cited involvement of the careers service for S1–S2 pupils, compared with 83 per cent for S3–S4, and 79 per cent for S5–S6. Similarly, schools' involvement of FE colleges increased from three per cent in S1–S2, to 58 per cent in S3–S4, to 70 per cent in S5–S6. The involvement of other work-related interventions, for example, education industry links (EILs) and education business partnerships, also increased with age.
- In relation to school-age pupils, colleges were most likely to be working with schools and the careers service. For school leavers, the careers service was the external agency most frequently involved, whilst for young adults it was the local enterprise company or social work.
- Schools were the most commonly cited partner by other organisations working with 12–15-year-olds, whilst for 16–21-year-olds, social work was the most frequently cited partner. Other organisations also highlighted a high level of parental involvement, particularly for 12–17-year-olds. Age-related differences were apparent, for example, in relation to voluntary sector involvement. Only 31 per cent of other organisations cited voluntary sector involvement for 12–13-year-olds, compared with a 70 per cent involvement for 18–21-year-olds. Conversely, the involvement of the psychological services and behaviour and learning support services decreased with age. Other organisations were also more likely to involve work-related agencies with older age groups (16–21-year-olds). The level of involvement of certain agencies between S1–S2 and S3–S4 was also interesting. For

example, only one per cent of the other organisations used training agencies to work with 12–13-year-olds, compared with 30 per cent of the sample for the 14–15-year-olds.

- The majority of respondents across all three samples worked with at least one external organisation, and many worked with a range of partners.

Telephone interviewees also mentioned a high level of social work input, reflecting the fact that disengaged youngsters often have complex social and emotional needs. This social and emotional support was often linked into personal and social development activities. Telephone interviewees also frequently cited agencies which were supporting and adapting the context and content of learning: FE colleges; learning support; and community education. The majority of other organisations involved in the interview stage were working with FE colleges, reflecting the perceived benefits of focusing on the 'next step' by providing job-related options and skills. Other statutory services, notably health, the police and the psychological services, were also referenced.

The main issues raised by telephone interviewees in relation to working with other agencies were: time constraints; resource constraints; and remit constraints (i.e. the different focuses of agencies working with disengaged youngsters). Time and resource constraints were issues for interviewees from all types of provision, but appeared to be of particular concern for school respondents. Possible divergence in the focus of different agencies was a problem raised by interviewees from all types of intervention, in particular, the different approaches of education and social work. However, at times, this was also seen as a beneficial source of conflict as it meant that professionals from both disciplines were able to appreciate each other's viewpoints, providing an ideal combination of education and social awareness.

3.1.2 Staffing: issues from the case-study phase

Interviewees in the case-study phase were also asked if they felt there were any particular issues associated with the staffing of the provision, initiative or strategy identified. (A number of these concerns were also raised by interviewees as challenges and are discussed in further detail in Chapter 7.)

The main areas of concern identified by staff related to:

- **availability and suitability of staff**
- **interagency working**
- **status**
- **gender.**

The availability and suitability of staff was identified as an issue by interviewees within all types of provision. Interviewees' concerns related to:

- Insufficient numbers of staff to work with young people. Staff were over-stretched because, for example, they were working with young people who did not count towards staffing levels.
- A lack of time to work with young people, because of the demands of the curriculum and other teaching commitments.
- A recognition of optimum staffing levels. For example, companies releasing mentors acknowledged that there was a maximum number of staff who could be involved in the programme without affecting the operation of the company. The seniority of staff involved was also seen as critical, both for the young people receiving the mentoring and the company/organisation releasing the mentors. Those personnel who would make ideal mentors were also often key members of staff within the organisation. It was important that their time commitment to the programme was carefully monitored.
- The need to recognise that there were minimum staffing levels below which interventions could not operate effectively and, in some instances, safely. In particular, those provisions which were working with highly disengaged young people required a high staff:young person ratio.
- The need for suitably trained staff and the importance of professional development for all staff working with disengaged youngsters. One interviewee identified constraints on professional development within social work because of the lack of opportunities for secondment.
- The importance of having a 'repertoire of skills' in order to work effectively with disengaged youngsters.
- Short-term contracts which created instability and uncertainty regarding the future of the provision. Some staff were constantly required to seek continued funding for their posts.

All issues relating to **interagency working** were identified by interviewees within reclaimed disengaged-type interventions and focused on:

- The priority clientele of different agencies. For example, in a joint education and social work project, a senior manager from education observed that young people may be '*creating mayhem*' in school but social work might not be involved with them: they would be a '*high priority for us, but not for them*'.
- Liaison at an operational level. For example, in a joint education and social work project, senior managers stressed the importance of liaison between provision staff and young people's individual social workers. A senior social work manager felt that there was a danger that once young people were placed at the provision, social workers felt that they could move on, that the young person was '*sorted*'.
- External agency input. There was a recognised need for external agency/staff involvement to be co-facilitated by someone from the provision. There was also an acknowledged need for clear lines of communication.

- The '*professional snobbery*' of the teaching profession was identified by a community education worker. This was further reflected in a reluctance to be open to constructive criticism and learn alongside other professionals.
- A belief that there was still tokenism surrounding multi-agency working.

Status of staff was identified within a preventative-type intervention and focused on:

- The role of support for learning staff within the school. This role was alleged to have been seen as an '*easy option*' and not valued by other members of staff. There was an identified need to '*raise their status, to spread the word as widely as possible that they have a role to play*'.
- Conflict between staff working with disengaged youngsters also surfaced as an issue. It was suggested, that in some instances, rivalry existed between guidance and support for learning staff. Consequently, there was a need to get '*them to work more effectively together ... we've come a long way, but I think there's a long way still to go*' (senior manager, preventative provision, secondary school).

The gender of staff was an issue raised by interviewees in both preventative and reclaimed disengaged-type provisions. It was felt that some disengaged young men would have benefited from more male members of staff who could provide positive role models and challenge negative attitudes towards women.

Table 3.1 provides an overview, by provision type, of the wide range of external agencies involved in the initiatives and interventions identified in the case-study phase of the research.

Table 3.1 External agencies identified as being involved in the three types of provision: the case-study phase

PREVENTATIVE	MAINSTREAM	RECLAIMED DISENGAGED
Education • Schools • Colleges	**Education** • Schools • Colleges • Community education/ learning strategy • Higher education	**Education** • Schools • Colleges • Community education, e.g. sexual health • Education department
Social and health • Social work • Psychological services • Health, e.g. child psychiatry, child health, school paediatricians, speech and occupational therapists	**Social and health** • Social work, e.g. youth strategy workers, in-school support worker, family centre • Youth project • Psychological services, e.g. anger management, boys and girls groups • Health, e.g. speech and language therapists	**Social and health** • Social work • Youth work • Psychological services • Health, e.g. sexual health advice
Charities and voluntary organisations	**Charities and voluntary organisations** • Charity organisations, e.g. Riding for the Disabled • Voluntary organisations and projects, e.g. working with excluded youngsters • Environmental organisations	**Charities and voluntary organisations** • Charity organisations, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, Barnardo's, Prince's Trust • Voluntary organisations, e.g. Fairbridge, YMCA • Drugs advice service
Employment-related • Employers	**Employment-related** • Employers • Training agency • Education industry links • Local enterprise council	**Employment-related** • Employers including arts and media organisations, professional football clubs, army • Training agency • Careers service, e.g. individual careers plans • Local development agency
Local government/other agencies • Local authority • Police	**Local government/ other agencies** • Local authority • Police	**Local government/ other agencies** • Social inclusion partnership • Police
Parents • Parents	**Parents** • Parents	**Parents** • Parents

3.2 Funding issues

3.2.1 National overview

In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked to specify any external or additional funding for the strategies/provision identified (see Tables 3.2a-c in Appendix). The main findings were:

- There were a number of respondents across the samples whose intervention did not gain any additional funding or resources to promote re-engagement in learning. This is noteworthy, given that a lack of funding was frequently noted as a constraint, or reason for non-provision. Furthermore, a number of respondents wrote that they were not aware that such external funding might be available.
- Schools were most likely to source additional funding from government initiatives.
- For colleges, the source of external funding appeared to be dependent on the age of the young people. So, for school pupils, external funding was most likely to come from the local authority; for school leavers, it was the local enterprise company/Scottish Enterprise and, for young adults, it was government initiatives.
- Other organisations were most likely to secure external funding from the local authority.

Telephone interviewees reiterated these points. School respondents noted that external funding came predominantly from government initiatives, such as the Excellence Fund, Alternatives to Exclusion initiative and funding for New Community Schools. The other main external funding source was the local authority. Other sources of funding included: lottery grants; businesses; fund-raising; European funding; LECs; and charitable organisations. It was clear that many schools gained funding from more than one source and also allocated parts of the school budget to the provision. Some interviewees spoke of financial difficulties, and much of the funding for provision was time-bound and short-term.

External sources of funding for the college-based provision discussed in the telephone interviews included European funding, core funding and LEC funding. In one instance, an extra level of funding was received for certain students, including, for example, those with learning difficulties.

The main source of external funding for other organisations was the local authority. Other sources included government initiatives, a local regeneration partnership, charitable organisations, Scottish Enterprise and European funding. Finding funding to support individual young people was a significant and challenging aspect of the work of some other organisations.

3.2.2 Funding: issues from the case-study phase

In the case-study phase of the research, interviewees were asked if they felt there were any particular issues relating to the funding or resourcing of the interventions/provisions identified. Interviewees' responses reiterated many of the challenges raised by telephone interviewees and the questionnaire data relating to a lack of, and the constraints on, funding.

The main issues raised by case-study interviewees relating to funding focused on:

- **cost-effectiveness**
- **satisfaction with level of funding**
- **constraints and other issues.**

The issue of **cost-effectiveness** was raised by interviewees in mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions who were working with young people at risk of being placed in residential or secure accommodation. They felt that their provision/role was cost-effective because they were keeping young people out of residential placements and schools, and thus the intervention was '*not expensive in real terms*' (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision). Similarly, in another reclaimed disengaged-type intervention, funding was not seen as an issue because '*it's a lot cheaper to keep young people in the community than put them in accommodation*' (social worker).

The cost-effectiveness of one reclaimed disengaged-type intervention was said to be reflected in the following data (provision literature):

Cost of young person attending the provision	*Cost of residential/secure placement*
£251.60 per week	**From £959 to £2,096.50 per week**

Furthermore, interventions which were successful in reducing or stopping young people's drug misuse and/or offending were viewed as extremely cost-effective. A police officer highlighted the future savings to society in general:

> *Each course takes about £3,000 to run. Acquisitive crime* [stealing to fund a drug habit] ... *can account for £100,000 per year for one person. Shop lifting, traditionally, is the highest crime that is committed by any drug user. When we approach the private sector for funding, we have to prove to them that what we are doing is cost-effective because we're taking out the shop lifter of the future and turning them into something more responsible, more willing to take account of their own actions, more willing to fit back into a school* (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

When considering **levels of funding**, a number of respondents in mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions said that they were '*happy*' or '*fairly happy*' with the levels of funding/resources available to them. Furthermore, in one reclaimed disengaged-type provision, both operational- and strategic-level staff stated that the intervention was '*not about throwing money at them* [young people]' (provider), and that '*the more resources you throw at problems, the more resources people need*' (senior manager). Providers also felt that it was important that '*we try to help them* [young people] *consider money – that the budget for the project is their budget as well ... they know we're accountable ... and it's not just a money tree*'. Making young people aware that the project did not have endless resources, so they did not think that money was '*just there*', was seen as a part of the provider's role in educating young people within the intervention (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Interviewees also raised concerns and highlighted difficulties in relation to **funding constraints**. Some interviewees highlighted reductions in local government funding, which meant that posts previously funded by the education authority, for example area network support teachers, were cut. Similarly, service reviews in other agencies, for example community education and social work, meant that mainstream interventions had lost staff who were not replaced.

Instances were given of funding not following young people when they were attending an alternative provision. Schools were said to be still receiving funding for young people who were attending the provision because they remained on the school roll. As a senior manager observed:

> *The Education Department are happy to endorse our programme but they're not happy to pay for it.* [Name of school] *will still have the young people on our programme on their school roll, so they will still get central funding for that young person, but they are not providing a service for them. We provide the service and the school gets the money. I'm not picking on* [name of school]; *that's just the system and that's just what happens* (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The short-term and arbitrary nature of provision funding was also raised. Reliance on one-off payments and grants from the private sector was said not to be conducive to long-term planning: '*We've had private funding from Marks and Spencer's but we shouldn't be relying on things like that. Funding is a real struggle*' (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

There were '*huge issues*' around special schools receiving the same capitation as mainstream schools, as a teacher observed: '*We cannot deliver our curriculum on the money we get from the local authority*'. Although the school had additional staff to support students, they received no resources to fund courses, such as 'life skills modules', which had to be paid for through staff fund-raising and donations.

An interviewee from a mainstream intervention was concerned that the availability of funding for off-site provision would force the school to adopt an exclusionary approach to dealing with young people with behavioural difficulties, rather than continuing with their desired approach of supporting them in mainstream.

A national push for inclusion without the funding to match was a concern for some interviewees from mainstream interventions. Interviewees felt that they were being asked to take increasing numbers of young people with difficulties, but without the necessary resources to support them. The closing of special schools also meant that mainstream schools were taking increasing numbers of young people with severe difficulties, but that this was not reflected in a sufficient increase in staffing ratios. In contrast, teachers highlighted tensions in one school where an intervention had attracted funding and employed additional staff, when other departments within the school were stretched to the limit and required additional staff, but were unable to secure funding.

The time spent securing resources was an issue raised by senior managers in mainstream interventions. Meanwhile, another interviewee in a reclaimed disengaged-type intervention highlighted the importance of 'connections' in successfully accessing resources and provision in kind. Linked to this was a further belief that providers needed to be able to work with the funding actually obtained and make it achieve. That is, it was said that effective and imaginative use of funding would show the success of the provision, which would in turn attract further funding. As a senior manager observed: '[name of provision] *has only ever devised and run two courses with ten people on each course. It's now targeting about 79 people and we're moving on to our fourth and fifth courses. That was only achievable by extending the private sector support*'.

It was said that additional funding would provide reclaimed disengaged interventions with opportunities to provide better facilities and the ability to run additional activities, but also to maintain post-course/intervention contact which was seen as extremely important for these youngsters. A further issue, raised by a careers adviser working with young people attending a reclaimed disengaged intervention, was the money received by young people on supportive Skillseekers. The low level of payment meant that young people did not feel valued.

Table 3.2 overleaf provides an overview, by provision type, of the sources of funding and resources for the provisions visited in the case-study phase of the research.

Table 3.2 Sources of funding and resources for the three types of provision: the case-study phase

SOURCE OF FUNDING	TYPE OF PROVISION		
	Preventative	Mainstream	Reclaimed disengaged
Education	• School/college budget • Education authority • Alternatives to Exclusion	• School/college budget • Education authority • Alternatives to Exclusion • Excellence fund	• Education authority • Community education
Other agencies	• Careers Service		• Social work • Police
Local authority/ government/ European initiatives	• Social inclusion partnership	• European funding	• Social inclusion partnership • Social fund • New Deal • Skillseekers • Local authority
Charities/ voluntary groups	• Prince's Trust	• Prince's Trust • Children in Need	• Trust funds • Charities
Corporate sector	• Local Enterprise Company	• Local Enterprise Company • Scottish Enterprise	• Local businesses

4. THE ENGAGING CURRICULUM

4.1 Introduction

A reconsideration of the context, content and delivery of the curriculum may prevent or change negative attitudes towards learning and education. Changing or adapting those parts of the curriculum which influence dislocation is clearly a key element of re-engagement. As an overview, it can be said that, the further along the disengagement continuum young people are, the more change and adaptation may be necessary for successful re-engagement.

From the questionnaire and the case-study phase of the research, the following issues regarding curriculum engagement were raised:

- **changing the context of learning**
- **adapting the content of learning**
- **adapting the teaching approach and materials used**
- **continuity and progression**
- **structural connection.**

4.2 The changed context of learning

From the case-study phase of the research, changing the context of learning for school-age pupils involved trying to create an inclusive school/ community where the needs of a wide range of young people could be met. This often had to cater for quiet and vulnerable pupils (at risk of passive disengagement), as well as more 'noisy', attention-seeking young people (at risk of active disengagement). Sometimes this was done using school-based locations and personnel and, in other cases, this was augmented by people from outside the school working with pupils (e.g. mentors, careers advisers), or by pupils going out into the community (e.g. for work placements, college courses). Whatever the strategy employed, the underlying aim was to create a sense of belonging to the school and to the local community.

The emphasis for those young people already disengaged within mainstream education was often orientated more towards providing young people with access to a specific learning environment where they could feel safe and valued, and one which fostered a sense of belonging:

> *The school has to provide a positive environment so that the pupil doesn't feel that everything is negative and they're being punished. They should be able to come in, be supported and learn* (social worker, linked to school-based mainstream intervention).

> *Young people have to feel happy in the* [learning] *environment. They have to feel part of it and that they are valued* (head of behaviour support, mainstream intervention – secondary school).

A number of initiatives, especially those reclaiming disengaged young people, were located outside mainstream settings. These alternative locations were seen as providing greater flexibility in the context of learning, as the following comment illustrates:

> *Not being in a school makes a difference. Because of the large numbers in a school building, timetables have to be adhered to exactly and there have to be lots of rules about keeping the noise level down and safe movement around the building. In the workshop and groupwork context, with just a small group, it is easy to be more relaxed than school* (community education worker linked to social work project, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The essential components of this change in the learning context often involved:

- increased positive attention from adults, through spending time in small groups and in one-to-one situations. This was said to contribute to a situation in which young people felt they were treated with respect, acknowledged, listened to, supported and encouraged.
- increased 'ownership'. It was deemed important that young people were consulted and that the provision curriculum was negotiated with them.
- less formality. It was important that young people felt they had equality of status with staff which was reflected in the use of first names and the acceptance of informal language within the provision. The flexible and less formal nature of the provision was also reflected in less rigid timetables which were adapted to suit the needs of the young people.

The following chart provides some examples of how the context of learning was changed within the interventions visited.

Changing the context of learning: insights from the case studies

House system
A house system created a smaller group to identify with (fostered by inter-house competitions). (mainstream provision).

A 'tartan' system of support incorporating a vertical house system and 'horizontal' support from assistant headteachers ensured continuity of support for pupils from the same guidance and group tutors throughout their school career (mainstream provision).

Buddy system
A buddy system that paired S1 and S6 pupils in the same house helped both to feel valued and took away a great deal of S1 pupils' fears about being in a large school, being bullied and being unable to do the work (preventative provision).

In-school units
Internal 'exclusion', involving working one-to-one with a support for learning teacher, prevented the sense of rejection that goes with a real exclusion from school, ensured school work remained up to date and provided supportive adult attention (preventative provision). A tutorial base provided a safe and supported environment for one-to-one and small group work (mainstream provision).

Learning support units, or support bases within the school, provided pupils (both engaged and disengaged) with additional support for their learning needs, for example, via ITC-based learning and one-to-one support (mainstream provision).

After school club/classes with additional support
The after school club provided a staffed but less formal, voluntary forum for additional work on literacy. The classes with additional support were smaller than ordinary classes or had an additional member of staff – this meant more attention for pupils, less disruption and more work (when attention was paid to seating pupils) (preventative provision).

Special needs careers advice
The traditional one-to-one careers interview was supplemented by taking the young people out to careers fairs, to employers, to training agencies and local colleges (preventative provision).

Pupil mentoring project
Space was created in the school timetable to enable one-to-one meetings with mentors from the business community and for out-of-school visits to the mentor's workplace (preventative provision).

Pupil mentoring project gave older pupils opportunities to support younger students with similar difficulties and problems, for example, dyslexia and bullying (mainstream provision).

Alternative location within mainstream educational settings
Alternative accreditation based in a separate area fostering identity and belonging to the school with community opportunities or experiences, e.g. leisure activities etc. (mainstream provision).

Alternative location outside mainstream educational settings
The use of alternative locations in which to base learning. For example, community settings – learning in the community – and work-related settings – learning on the job and work experience (mainstream and reclaimed disengaged provision).

In addition, examples of distance learning and the rise of residentials were further ways in which the context of learning could be changed.

4.3 Adapting curriculum content

In order to understand the ways in which the curriculum was made more accessible, questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate the range of activities included in their provision/support for disengaged youngsters, which fell into the following categories:

- personal and social development
- support for learning
- careers-related activities
- work-related activities
- training opportunities
- FE/HE activities.

Many detailed activities were offered (illustrated in Figure 4.1). Schools, colleges and other organisations reported using a wide range of these alternative or additional activities in addressing disengagement/disaffection from the curriculum. It is also apparent that not all respondents 'targeted' a specific sub-group of 'disengaged' young people, for example, some careers- and work-related learning activities involved the whole cohort, not just those youngsters who might be considered disengaged or at risk of disengagement.

Figure 4.1 Activities for disengaged youngsters: a detailed list for questionnaire respondents

Personal and social development activities:
- mentoring
- residential experience
- working in a team
- working independently
- support from guidance staff
- youth strategy support
- counselling
- constructive leisure – arts related
- constructive leisure – sports related
- volunteering
- community placement
- community work/project
- entrepreneurship
- cross-organisation projects
- confidence building
- assertiveness training

Support for learning:
- study support/study skills
- thinking skills
- ICT skills

Careers activities:
- careers
- conference/evening/exhibition
- careers education
- interview skills
- recording achievement
- contact with careers service
- job clubs

Work-related activities:
- business games/enterprise project
- community work/project
- extended work experience
- industrial awareness conference
- visit/s from employed adult/s
- work shadowing
- workplace visits
- world of work research activity
- world of work simulation
- business personnel placement in school/college/organisation
- staff secondment to business/industry

Training activities:
- visit to training agency
- training taster
- part-time training

FE/HE activities:
- college/university visits
- college/university taster
- input from university liaison officers
- part-time college course
- full-time college course
- FE/HE student mentoring of pupil/s

Taking an overview of the reported use of different types of activities, it is interesting to note that, in schools, personal and social development, support for learning and careers activities, all of which might be seen as part of their 'normal' repertoire, were used more often to address disengagement from learning than the more post-16 orientated activities. Further statistical analysis showed that with older pupils (S3 to S6), the use of at least one work-related activity to promote engagement with learning was more common than the use of at least one careers-related activity. In general, across the three samples, careers, work-related, training and FE/HE activities, not surprisingly were used more with older, rather than younger age groups. Furthermore, telephone interviewees also highlighted the need to adapt the programmes available in colleges and other organisations, in order to accommodate the increasing numbers of girls being referred to them.

4.3.1 Adapting curriculum content: personal and social development activities

The personal and social development activities most frequently cited (see Tables 4.1a–c in Appendix) by each sub-sample in the national survey were as follows:

- Support from guidance staff and counselling were the activities identified most often by the school sample across all the age groups, the former especially for S3–S4 (92 per cent).
- In the college sample, support from guidance staff was again the most frequently cited activity for all the young people, although, for school leavers, working independently was identified as an equally important activity.
- Other organisations nominated confidence-building activities and counselling as the most often employed activities for all age groups.

Telephone interviewees were also asked to describe the personal and social development activities they utilised. Mentoring, counselling, group work, and guidance support were all frequently mentioned. This emotional support often incorporated behavioural support and there was also an emphasis, especially in special schools, on providing activities for disengaged youngsters that focused on 'life and social skills'.

The importance of giving time and attention to the development of personal and social skills within the curriculum was also emphasised in the case studies of all three types of provision. The following descriptions and comments from each type of provision illustrate how this was manifest at practitioner level.

Personal and social development activities: insights from the case studies

Life skills: preventative provision (special school)
The curriculum is based on life skills and on transition. The main aim is to enable the young people to be as independent as possible when they leave. For example, numeracy work includes telling the time and handling money. Literacy work is about functional literacy, the ability to read simple instructions such as on packets, in leaflets and on advertisements. It is also about writing and listening. Home economics – basic healthy cooking, microwave cooking, preparing snacks and healthy meals – is also part of the curriculum. Independence and being able to look after themselves is felt to be important. 'Local journeys' is another module, starting at a simple level – a walking journey to one of the local shops, accompanied first of all, then unaccompanied. A bus journey into town follows, again accompanied and then unaccompanied and they have to handle the money for their fares and make a small purchase when they get there, and then do the return journey (based on interview with leavers' group class teacher).

Working in a team and group work: reclaimed disengaged provision
The first couple of courses were about football skill development and all the qualities that go with it – team building, team work, functioning in a group, etc. We've now developed it into a more specific, issue-type thing where the youngsters now partake in educational group work [once a week]. *... I do group work with youngsters on issue-based things about bullying, being sexist, racist, and I can have a conversation about it. It's not a case of 'I'm the adult and you'll sit there and learn'. It's a group work situation and sometimes it takes you a month to get to that stage* (youth worker, community police project).

Anger management group: mainstream provision
A group of S2 male and female pupils who had a history of exclusion were able to work well in the support base but were '*blowing up*' in ordinary classes. The educational psychologist was asked to run an anger management course. This lasted for six weeks. A solution-focused approach was used. This involved looking at triggers for anger, getting pupils to scale where they thought they were in terms of anger and also included relaxation exercises. The focus was for each one to find out what worked for them in preventing outbursts (based on interview with senior educational psychologist, linked to secondary school).

Rights in relation to the law: reclaimed disengaged provision
The focus is on the law in the post-16 context because the youngsters are 15-and-a-half and a lot of them have picked up charges that will be dealt with through the criminal justice system so [name of external agency] goes over the system and all the steps to going to court, who is in the court. They go through their rights in relation to stop and search by the police and also what they can expect in terms of fines etc. in relation to different offences. They also work on family relationships and because the assistant manager knows the programme and the young people, s/he can alert staff when they need to take care over what is covered and how it is done. For example, last year, they covered bereavement and loss – one person had recently lost his mother so the assistant manager spoke to him and to the worker and asked whether the young person wanted to be involved or not (based on interview with assistant manager, social work project).

Self-esteem and confidence-building work: reclaimed disengaged provision
This involves the use of a card game stressing the positives, e.g. getting a tall person who hates being tall to work with a small person who hates being small, so that they can see what is good about being tall or small. Another card game builds on their sense of achievement, e.g. they pick up a card that asks them to say one thing their mother said '*well done*' for. Alternatively, they have to say what subject they are good at, or what they feel they are getting better at. These games help staff to get to know the young people and identify positive attributes that can be built on. *By the end, I can say to a young person 'You are reliable, trustworthy and friendly'. 'Oh, so I am!' So it works, it really works* (based on interview with assistant manager, social work project).

4.3.2 Adapting curriculum content: support for learning

Analysis of data generated in the questionnaire stage of the research (see Tables 4.2a–c in Appendix) showed that:

- Study support/study skills was the most common support for learning activity across all age groups in both the school and college samples.
- In the college sample, ICT skills were seen as being equally important as study support/study skills for school leavers.
- Just over half of the other organisation sample did not respond to this section of the questionnaire. Of those who did respond, the most frequently identified activity was thinking skills.

The greater use of support for learning activities by schools and colleges, as compared to other organisations, is possibly a reflection of the differences in their primary roles: schools and colleges are places devoted to learning, while the other organisations sample covered a wide range of agencies and services.

The following chart provides examples of the support for learning activities identified in the case-study phase of the research.

Support for learning activities: insights from the case studies

Cooperative teaching: preventative provision

I'm involved in cooperative teaching in [name of provision]. *For example, I support in [name of teacher]'s English class two periods a week. I support the pupils in the class by working with them to carry out the tasks set. I also look at the materials and work with the teacher on the production of these, as well as in devising teaching strategies. I look at individual- and class-level responses to the tasks set and I will pass on successful strategies to other teachers of* [name of provision] (principal teacher support for learning, secondary school).

Two S2 boys taught in the provision spoke about their views of cooperative teaching. One explained that one teacher could not get round everybody so that with two you received more help. The other thought it was better because, if there was a fight or an argument, one teacher could keep the work going while the other could sort out the problem. They agreed that it improved behaviour in the class and one said that he felt he was getting better at his work as a result of the cooperative teaching (based on interviews with pupils involved in a preventative intervention at a secondary school).

Support base: mainstream provision

Pupils who did not thrive in a classroom situation were able to work on the same curriculum content but in the quieter, more supportive atmosphere of the base. Here, for example, they could study subjects like maths and English but also benefit from greater attention and help from the support for learning staff. In addition, they could work alone, rather than be distracted by others. As one boy commented: '*At the* [name of provision], *there's no one there to annoy you. I get on better with the teachers in the* [name of provision] *because they listen to you. I get more chance to do my work without anyone yapping at me. If you need help at the* [name of provision], *all you have to do is ask for it*' (based on interviews with pupils involved in a mainstream intervention at a secondary school).

4.3.3 Adapting curriculum content: careers education

The national survey data (see Tables 4.3a–c) showed that:

- Careers education was the most common careers activity mentioned by nearly three-quarters of the school sample for S3–S6. However, for S1–S2, careers education was only reported by a third of respondents, and the most frequently mentioned careers activity for this age group was recording achievement. It should be noted that no response was given by almost half of the respondents for S1–S2.
- The focus for the college sample also reflected the age/stage of the young people. Contact with the careers service and recording achievement were the most common activities for school pupils. Careers education, contact with the careers service, interview skills, and recording achievement were mentioned equally as activities for school leavers. Careers education and interview skills were noted as the most common activities for young adults within the college sample.
- The responses of the other organisation sample also reflected the ages of the young people they were working with. Just over a tenth of respondents included careers education for 12–13-year-olds, whereas over a half included careers education for 18–21-year-olds. For 14–15-year-olds, as many respondents gave no response as cited careers education, whilst for 16–21-year-olds, interview skills were mentioned most frequently.

From the questionnaire data, the relatively low use of careers activities in the other organisation sample, particularly for the younger age groups, perhaps reflects a greater emphasis on activities designed to promote personal, social and emotional development.

Careers activities: insights from the case studies

Practical help and careers advice: reclaimed disengaged provision
In the car mechanics course, run by the local social work department, the boys were given practical help with writing their CVs, letters of application and with filling in application forms. The assistant manager talked to them individually about what they wanted to do in the future. They used a computer package to test themselves for their aptitude in relation to three jobs. A specific link careers adviser began working with them during the course and remained their link to the careers service after they left the course. In addition, contacts were made for them with prospective local employers, such as Kwikfit, and the Army recruitment team visited the centre and spoke about the opportunities of an Army career. Certificates, stating what had been achieved on the course, helped the boys when they went for interviews (based on visit to reclaimed disengaged provision).

Individual careers action plans: preventative provision
Through the year, a lot of individual interviewing is done based on developing the careers action plan. The action plan is not a static document; it develops and changes throughout the year. For example, one pupil was about to begin a trial work experience in a children's nursery with a view to leaving school and going on to a training course. There was a standard pattern to the action plan involving a review of activity, job interest, etc. All the youngsters in the school had a Record of Needs and so had Future Needs reviews and follow-up reviews. Those coming up to their leaving date had review meetings involving, as in one case, the pupil's teacher, a parent/carer, his/her social worker, the careers adviser and an educational psychologist. Prior to the meeting, the action plan would be drawn up and it would be agreed that it would be presented to the meeting. It is seen as a joint statement to the meeting. The key part of it, for the purposes of the review meeting, is to identify next steps (based on interview with special needs careers adviser).

4.3.4 Adapting curriculum content: work-related learning

In relation to work-related learning, the national survey data (see Tables 4.4a–c in Appendix) revealed that:

- Just over four-fifths of the school sample gave no response for S1–S2, whilst those focusing on S3–S6 were most likely to offer extended work experience programmes.
- In the college sample, school-age pupils were most frequently involved in extended work placements, whilst school leavers were more likely to go on workplace visits, and young adults were more likely to be given opportunities for both extended work placements and workplace visits.
- Work-related activities were infrequently used by other organisations working with the younger age groups, particularly 12–13-year-olds. However, for those organisations working with 16–21-year-olds, community work, workplace visits, and extended work experience were the most common work-related activities identified. It was interesting to note that two-fifths of respondents working with 18–21-year-olds used community-related work activities.

It is perhaps not surprising that work-related activities were predominantly used with the older age groups, especially those about to move on to the next stage of their lives. Special school telephone respondents spoke of how enterprise activities and work experience were incorporated into activities available for older pupils on 'leavers' programmes, in order to provide them with key survival skills. Conversely, it is interesting to note that a number of 12–13-year-olds (more than a quarter in the school sample and nearly a fifth in the other organisation sample) **were** involved in work-related activities.

Work-related learning activities: insights from the case studies

Workplace visit: preventative provision
An S4 girl visited her mentor's workplace. The mentor introduced the girl to her colleagues, showed her what the job entailed and allowed her to use the computer to compose a letter to apply for a Saturday job. The rest of the day, the girl work-shadowed her mentor. The mentor thought it was a useful day and the girl thought that the workplace was more friendly and '*laid back*' than she had envisaged it would be (based on interview with mentor, mentoring project in secondary school).

Enterprise activity: reclaimed disengaged provision
The programme for final year pupils in the SEBD special school included a module on enterprise activity. The module lasted for three weeks and culminated with a group activity, such as running a small business, putting on an event for the community (e.g. a café for the younger pupils in the school), making and selling chess sets, running a snooker tournament (with cash prizes). Pupils had to consider what the term '*being enterprising*' meant and had to assess their own enterprise skills. The special school used this module to develop communication skills and to encourage pupils to work with others who were not necessarily their friends or from the same age group (based on visit to reclaimed disengaged provision).

Examples of the range of work-related opportunities identified in the case-study phase of the research are presented in Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 Work-related opportunities: some examples

PREVENTATIVE	MAINSTREAM	RECLAIMED DISENGAGED
• mentees accompanied their mentors on workplace visits • work placements for S5 Christmas leavers • special school leavers tried out different courses at college, experienced more than one work placement and visited local employers and training agencies • individual career action plans	• part-time college courses • extended work experience • individual support to find an appropriate post-16 placement	• full-time vocational courses (e.g. car mechanics) • part-time vocational courses • work placements • visits from employers and training agencies • part-time college courses • follow-up courses identified • individual help with CVs, application forms • close contact with careers adviser

4.3.5 Adapting curriculum content: training activities

The national survey (see Tables 4.5a–c in Appendix) showed that:

- Training activities were rarely used by those in the school sample, especially with younger pupils. For older pupils, visiting a training agency was the most frequent activity, mentioned by a fifth of respondents.
- For the college sample, training tasters were the most frequently cited activity for all age groups. Overall, more than a half of college respondents mentioned this activity.
- As with schools, the other organisations rarely used training activities with 12–13-year-olds. The most frequent activity for 14–21-year-olds were visits to training agencies, which were used by nearly two-fifths of respondents providing training activities for 16–21-year-olds. Training tasters were also used by nearly a third of other organisations working with 16–21-year-olds.

The infrequent reference to training activities by schools and other organisations contrasts with their higher use by colleges. The opportunity, during the early years of secondary school, to increase awareness of progression routes through training, may be an issue to explore further.

Training activities: insights from the case studies

Childcare: preventative provision
A girl leaving special school wanted to work with nursery children. She was due to spend five mornings on work placement at a local nursery. In addition, the careers adviser took her to meet the local training provider. Arrangements for her to spend three afternoons at the training centre were made. There she would be trained in all the skills needed for the work (based on interview with special needs careers advice).

Car mechanics: reclaimed disengaged provision
We only do jobs that the boys can do. Otherwise it would be us doing it and just telling them. We cover pre-MOT, MOT, changing tyres, changing wheels, wheel balancing, changing oil, etc. We used to do spray painting but that stopped because the new premises had a leak, plus health and safety regulations were too onerous. But that was good, because it showed the lads how seriously health and safety was taken (mechanics tutor, social work project).

4.3.6 Adapting curriculum content: FE/HE activities

The questionnaire data (see Tables 4.6a–c in Appendix) showed that:

- Further/higher education activities were rarely used by the school sample for S1–S2, but they were used frequently for the older age groups. The most common further/higher education activities for the older age groups were college/university vists and part-time college courses. Half (50 per cent) of the school respondents for S3–S4, and more than half (57 per cent) for S5–S6 used college/ university visits. Similarly, more than two-fifths (44 per cent) of school respondents used part-time college courses with S3–S4 pupils and nearly a half (48 per cent) of respondents used part-time college courses with S5–S6.
- All the college respondents who completed the school pupil section of the questionnaire cited part-time college courses, and most cited full-time college courses. Those completing the school leaver and/or young adult sections mainly left this part of the questionnaire blank, but most of those who did complete it cited peer mentoring as their main further/ higher education activity.
- No response was given by almost all (99 per cent) of the other organisation respondents completing the section for 12–13-year-olds; by over a half (54 per cent) for 14–15-year-olds; a half (50 per cent) for 16–17-year-olds; and just over two-fifths (43 per cent) for 18–21-year-olds. Of those respondents who did indicate further/higher education activities, visits to colleges/universities were cited most frequently for 14–17-year-olds, whilst part-time college courses were most popular for 18–21-year-olds.

All the colleges in the telephone sample were offering pre-vocational programmes for young people unable to access mainstream college placements because of their age and learning/behavioural needs, thus reflecting the importance of transition provision.

FE activities: insight from the case studies

College course offering 'tasters' of different vocational pathways: mainstream provision
The programme offered PE plus three vocationally orientated options to pupils in S3, and PE plus five options to those in S4. Programme choices ran for six months (May to December) and then the young people could change or continue with existing options from January to June. If a pupil wanted to concentrate on one specific area, this was accommodated if possible. The full range of options available to choose from was: welding and fabrication, motor vehicle, marine engineering, mechanical engineering (bench skills), carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, brickwork, electrical, electronics, plumbing, catering, caring, hair, beauty, computing, office administration, pre-service, internet. The curriculum was based around short practical exercises that produced an artefact, if possible. For example, in electronics, a printed circuit board was made (based on visit to college).

4.4 Adapting teaching approaches and materials

Case-study data provided many detailed examples of the ways activities and teaching approaches were adapted to engage young people in the curriculum. Figure 4.3 identifies some of the main features of their engagement approaches, and some detailed examples are also presented.

Figure 4.3 Adapted and alternative content: general points

PREVENTATIVE	MAINSTREAM	RECLAIMED DISENGAGED
• built on pupils' experiential knowledge (see example) • pitched lessons to suit ability thus making them accessible • devised individual education plans, including work experience, for S5 'Christmas leavers'	• used materials and set work that matched reading ability • used visually stimulating materials and a range of media (e.g. OHPs, video, CD ROM, computer) • based content around needs and interests identified by the pupils (see cameo) • based content around an individual education plan • used pupils' knowledge and skills in high profile ways within the school (see cameo)	• based content around needs and interests identified by the young people • encouraged the young people to come up with ideas and followed these through • used the 'hook' of a particular interest, e.g. football or car mechanics, to divert young people from a destructive lifestyle (see cameo) • gave the young people more responsibility (see cameo)

The commonality across all provision appeared to be the focus on the needs and interests of young people and increasing the individual support provided, as well as engendering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Adapted teaching approaches and materials: insights from the case studies

Built on pupils' experiential knowledge: preventative provision

I choose the texts we study carefully. We've done texts they can readily identify with, for example, with characters their own age. It's good if the characters are slightly rebellious teenagers. They like reading about people that they recognise so, for example, Betsy Byer's book about foster kids. They know a lot about these things and it gives them the chance to apply their knowledge to academia because a lot of them know people who've been fostered or experienced it themselves. Another text we did was about bullying – these kids tend to be bullied or protagonists. It's a good way of exploring things they all know about. You have to target their knowledge and ensure that you're giving them the chance to apply everything they know from life to what we do in the classroom. You get a chance in English to explore these kinds of things. We spend a lot of time talking as a group (English teacher, secondary school).

Based content on needs and interests identified by pupils: mainstream provision

It has to be a person-centred approach if you are to have any chance of reaching them. [Name of provision] *looks at a pupil's strengths and builds on that and looks at where they need extra support and looks at relevant things to them. There are a group of young girls who are studying Beauty and Health. They're gaining a lot of skills through this project. They present themselves in a positive way to total strangers and other agencies, they research things, they negotiate and they will write up an article to share with their peers. There are lots of skills there that they could get in the curriculum but they don't see the relevance, but by having their own project, they do. They're still gaining the same skills and experience, they're just doing it slightly differently. With this type of approach, learning becomes a positive thing, not a chore* (community education officer linked to secondary school).

Pupil perspectives from the same intervention:
We do challenges here, things like getting out into the school garden and making it look better. I'm building a bird house just now. Sometimes we pick our own challenges or sometimes we're given little green cards with challenges on them (S3 pupil).

We set tasks and challenges for ourselves and try to complete them. ... I went on an assault course which was organised by the police (S3 pupil).

Used pupils' knowledge and skills in high profile ways within the school: mainstream provision
A former school refuser, who had been encouraged into school via the support base intervention, showed that she had excellent IT skills. She had the idea of producing a pamphlet about school refusal. This was funded through a contact at the local education centre who specialised in the use of IT for meeting special educational needs. The girl wrote, designed and produced the pamphlet, which was circulated to all S1 pupils. When a teacher was planning a talk to the school's Scripture Union about a trip to Israel, the same girl used her IT skills to present the photographs and key points of the talk to the audience (based on notes of discussion with head of behaviour support, secondary school).

Gave the young people more responsibility: reclaimed disengaged provision
Just before they leave, we give them an opportunity to be in charge of the workshop as the foreman. I say to them 'But remember when you're telling the others what to do, that tomorrow it will be their turn! If you're bad to him, he'll be bad to you!' I like to give them a wee bit of authority. I give them feedback on how they did. It gives them a wee chance to be strutting their stuff. 'This is my garage now' (centre manager, social work project).

Used the 'hook' of a particular interest to divert from a destructive lifestyle: reclaimed disengaged provision
The way the course is set up, within a police framework, I have to prove to senior management that I can lower offending rates and tackle some of the issues around drug use. From an educational source, they have youngsters who are on the verge of exclusion or have been excluded, or are in behavioural units. More often than not, the carrot for them is that it provides something that young people want to physically do but, beyond the course, there are opportunities. I see the ten-week course as a period of stabilisation for a lot of these youngsters. The courses are so attractive to the young people that come on them so they need to conform on the course and when they do that, they always begin to understand why they need to conform at school and why they need to conform in their own areas where they're committing crime (community policeman, police project).

Pupil perspectives from the same intervention:
I started on the first course because I wasn't going to school. ... Since I've been on the football course, my attendance at school has been much better because coming here to the football gives me something to look forward to. That's what keeps me in school (male, police project).

As well as alternative activities, across all three types of provision, there was a marked emphasis on an active teaching style by the teacher or tutor, with references to how engaging teaching involved:

- talking about (a wide variety of issues, not just the curriculum topic)
- explaining (the task)
- showing (how to do the task)
- helping with (the task)
- reassuring
- praising
- encouraging
- communicating high expectations of the young people

- setting targets
- monitoring progress
- giving feedback.

Activity-based learning for the young people was mentioned in all three types of provision, but was most strongly emphasised by interviewees representing reclaimed disengaged-type provision. Here, participation in discussion, practical 'hands-on' activities, team-building and problem-solving approaches were frequently evident. This is illustrated in the following comments.

Activity-based learning: reclaimed disengaged provision

I try to deliver the material in a participative way, not just 'Right, fill in these worksheets'. I get them to work in pairs, or work in groups; sometimes we watch a video together or I base work round a game, brainstorming their ideas, using [teaching] *packs. It's all really participative, really getting them involved. It's not just a case of 'Right, you sit there and listen to me' all the time. I find it's the best way to get them to understand what you are trying to teach them* (community education worker, social work project).

While they're teaching you, they don't just pin you doon tae a table and chair and gie ye a lot of work tae dae, know what I mean? (young person, social work project).

Teaching styles that engaged young people in learning also appeared to reduce the status differential between adults and young people. This was sometimes expressed through an explicit use of body language that emphasised equality.

Engaging teaching/tutoring/mentoring reduced status differentials: preventative provision

Sometimes just sitting beside them and giving them help works because that's what these kids really want. They want the teacher to be all theirs (English teacher, secondary school).

I've had to rethink my approach [since leaving mainstream teaching]. *I'm working alongside them, not delivering a body of knowledge to them* (class teacher, special school).

4.5 Continuity and progression

As well as the content or delivery of the curriculum, interviewees in the case-study phase of the research noted other key characteristics of an 'engaging' curriculum. Interviewees from all three types of provision mentioned the fact that the young people's experience of learning should include:

- continuity within topics, tasks, subject areas
- encouragement and rewarding of progress
- (for older clients) a curriculum which enabled positive progression to continuing education, training or employment.

Continuity was raised as an issue because young people at risk of, or already disengaged from, the curriculum often had poor or sporadic attendance. It was seen as important that the young person was able to complete work, even if there was a break in attendance between beginning and completing the task. Interviewees also recognised that young people's attendance would only improve if their return to school, college or the provision was supported by the staff involved. This included 'welcoming' the young person back to the learning environment and not making an issue about their non-attendance.

Continuity: insights from the case studies

Continuity: preventative provision
Continuity is the key issue. In normal classes, they wouldn't finish anything [because their pattern of attendance is so chaotic]. *If you don't finish work continually in every class you're in, it switches you right off. In the support classes, they get to finish and complete things* (principal teacher English, secondary school).

Continuity: mainstream provision
[It's important not to] *make a big deal about work that has been missed if pupils have been absent for a while. If you go on and on about how much they've missed, then they say 'I can't do it. I'm never going to catch up' and that's it.* ... [It's better to] *acknowledge them when they come into the classroom, chat to them, make them feel as if they're wanted, and that they're not a burden when they come back.* ... *I try to make them feel comfortable in the classroom situation. I don't overwhelm them with anything. I give them something that isn't directly associated with the work they've missed. Maybe give them something that can lead on to the next section, into the same section as the rest of the class* (English teacher, secondary school).

Continuity: reclaimed disengaged provision
We never give them a row for sleeping in. We praise them and tell them they're welcome. 'Well done! We're pleased you made it.' It makes it easier for them. ... *If they've blown up for some reason and don't feel they can come back with their head held high, we'll go out and see them in their house and say 'Look, it's forgotten about. Come in tomorrow'. We make it easy for them to come back. Not like at school where it would be 'Where's this? Where's that?' Just 'Pleased to see you!'* (centre manager, social work project).

Adopting a lifestyle that included a structured day was, in itself, seen as an important aspect of re-engagment in learning and, indeed, one that was necessary if post-16 placements in college, training or employment were to be maintained in the longer term.

Structure: reclaimed disengaged provision
What we find is that if they are excluded from school, they don't feel good about themselves and that's when they become vulnerable. So a lot of our work is about keeping them in some kind of structure, for example, in school [the project], *work, training scheme, youth support, basically anything at all to try to make sure that they have some structure in their lives* (social worker, social work project).

In all three types of provision, a clear connection was made between learning in the present and a positive **progression** route into post-16 life. Whatever the age of the young person, this connection was often created by building up a chain of links between 'now' and 'then'. As well as noting the importance of acknowledging progress, for example through target setting

and monitoring achievement, praise and reward, interviewees cited other ways of establishing pupils' sense of progression. These included:

- articulating a clear purpose for each lesson
- making explicit progression from one lesson, stage or topic to the next
- providing help when required and supporting and encouraging engagement with the task at hand
- promoting the notion of lifelong learning, i.e. that opportunities continued after compulsory education was finished
- focusing on post-16 progression routes.

Connecting present learning to positive progression: insights from the case-studies

Purpose: preventative provision
It's very important for these children to know why they're learning. We try to sit down with them and work out what they want to learn (class teacher, special school).

Purpose: mainstream provision
One of the students wants to be a waiter but his writing skills are very poor and he realised that he would not be able to become a waiter unless his writing improved. He was still attending school part-time and he used his time in school to improve his writing because he now had a practical application for it which made him more enthusiastic to learn (guidance counsellor, college).

Help, support and encouragement to engage with the task in hand: reclaimed disengaged provision
I show them what to do, in small stages that they are able to take in, and I show them how to do it. Then I let them have a go at it. Some will pick it up straightaway; others will need you to go over it with them one-to-one. I don't always get the chance to do that with them immediately but I'll try to do it later (mechanics tutor, social work project).

Promoting the idea of lifelong learning: preventative provision
The [name of organisation] *encourages and promotes lifelong learning with the business community, the schools and the pupils* (senior manager).

Promoting the idea of lifelong learning: reclaimed disengaged provision
I tell them about the idea of lifelong learning. Whether it's learning in the workshop, in the classroom, through the Duke of Edinburgh Award, I tell them that you don't have to sit down and study hard to get on in life; that you can do it in wee bits; that you don't have to put it down on paper, you can work on a computer (assistant manager, social work project).

Post-16 progression routes: mainstream provision
We had one boy here who was floundering and going nowhere, and an opportunity came up for him to study car mechanics at college. It was a big risk but we let him go there and he's now qualified (head of behaviour support, secondary school).

Post-16 progression routes: reclaimed disengaged provision
We've tried to develop a model where there are follow-up courses for the youngsters ... follow-up is very important because youngsters can be left high and dry and they can regress very quickly (youth worker, community police project).

On a voluntary basis, the young people do work placements of their choice which last for two weeks. This gives them a better idea of what direction they want to take in their lives (team leader, voluntary sector project).

For those approaching the watershed of age 16, information about, and opportunities to try out, positive options for the next stage were thus included in the curriculum (see Figure 4.3, work-related opportunities).

4.6 Structural connection

Maintaining young people in mainstream educational provision was assisted when the '*patchwork pieces*' of the provision were '*sewn together*', by personal contact and liaison. It is important to emphasise that the separate structures of pre- and post-16 education, of different agencies involved with young people, of training and of employment were, in the first instance, effectively connected up on behalf of the young people by the adults around them. Once these prior links had been made, the young people often managed to move from one structure to another without 'falling through the net' or becoming disconnected. As the following examples show, adults sometimes made connections in a formal way through, for example, regular meetings, but sometimes connections were made and maintained on an informal and opportunistic basis, via brief telephone conversations or a meeting during school break. In preventative and mainstream-type provision, it was important that the internal structures of the school, that is, senior management, especially those responsible for the discipline system, guidance, learning support, behaviour support and subject departments, worked together in an integrated way (see also Munn *et al.*, 2000).

Structural connections were made:

- within schools
- between schools
- between schools and alternative providers
- between schools and post-16 providers
- between education and other professionals
- between other professionals.

Illustrative examples of these connections are given below.

Structural connections – insights from the case studies

Structural connection *within schools*: preventative provision
The guidance team and the senior management team meet once a week. The senior management team meets as a group to discuss guidance issues. The guidance team meets weekly, and one of the support for learning team attends that. One of the guidance staff is also a support for learning teacher so she is the liaison there. It's actually much more integrated now than it was before (based on interview with assistant headteacher, secondary school).

Structural connection *between schools (primary–secondary liaison):* mainstream provision
We have four feeder primaries and we work very closely with them. Myself, learning support, behaviour support and department staff visit the primaries. I go three times a year to meet with the headteacher. The primaries like the liaison. Learning Support and Guidance pick up early in P7 who to be looking out for in terms of the curriculum, but also those for whom the transfer to mainstream secondary is a big issue (assistant headteacher, secondary school).

Structural connection *between schools and alternative providers:* mainstream provision
One secondary school used the senior educational psychologist to access suitable alternative placements for S3–S4 pupils. These might include time in a support unit, part-time in college and part-time work experience (based on interview with senior educational psychologist).

Structural connection *between schools and post-16 providers:* mainstream provision
The key is that [the course leader in local college] *and I liaise closely with regard to what provision is on offer and we match that provision to appropriate pupils. It's the liaison stage, in my view, that determines the potential for success* (teacher from local school using college *course as a mainstream intervention).*

Structural connection *between education and other professionals:* preventative provision
A careers adviser and a special school developed a framework for working together through using the same PSE module and Access 2 (SEN careers adviser).

An education authority, an education business partnership and a local regeneration partnership worked together to provide a transition to work programme, including a mentoring component for 40 young people. Specifically in relation to the mentoring, meetings were held once a term for mentors and schools to discuss issues: '*Meetings are important because you don't know if you're doing it right and when you speak to others you realise you are doing it right!*' (mentor). In addition, within each school, coordinators were available at a specified time each week if mentors wanted to see them. Forms were available if a pupil disclosed anything that needed to be passed on to guidance on the understanding that the school would respond that working day. The administrative staff in the school office organised times for pupil and mentor to meet and informed each if one was absent (mentoring project, secondary school).

Structural connection *between other professionals:* reclaimed disengaged provision
This range [of other agencies, including a Barnardo's project on offending behaviour, a local resource centre dealing with drugs and alcohol issues, community education and careers] *gives the young people the chance to have their problems at home or anywhere else picked up on and gives them a route into support and yet keeps that quite informal. ...I have an end-of-term evaluation which all the agencies complete and send back to me. Then I liaise with them before the start of the new term to organise when their slot is going to be* (assistant manager, social work project).

Adapting the curriculum context and content to meet the needs and interests of disengaged young people showed many different facets for consideration. Teaching style and approaches, practical-based activities, new locations and learning opportunities all featured in the case studies, as well as recognising the importance of ensuring continuity, progression and coherence in the learning experience of the young person.

Underpinning much of this engaging curriculum were references to the importance of relationships between adults and young people, and to the significance of the connection the provision had with parents/carers and also with the community (e.g. through community workers, extended work experience placements, and even educational visits). Relations between different professionals also featured as a component of the engaging curriculum.

The following chapters seek to identify the kinds of outcomes that can accrue from the engaging curriculum and to catalogue the perceived key factors underpinning effective provision.

5. IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

5.1 National overview

In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked to specify areas of success in terms of improved engagement with learning as a result of being involved in the provision (see Tables 5.1a–c in Appendix). The main findings were:

- About half of the school sample highlighted improved engagement in the 5–14 curriculum, and two-thirds cited improved engagement with Standard Grades.
- In the college sample, school pupils and school leavers were particularly cited as having improved engagement in specific vocational skills, while core skills featured highly in the responses of those referring to provision for young adults (up to 21-year-olds).
- Other organisations also cited improved engagement with learning, particularly in terms of achievement for post-16-year-olds and general improvements in learning for 12–15-year-olds.

In addition, respondents were asked to highlight any additional benefits which had arisen as a result of the young people's involvement in the provision.

- When asked to nominate other benefits for the young people, it was noteworthy that the school sample's highest response related to more positive attitudes and behaviour, while the college sample most often specifically nominated positive progression. The sample of other organisations also suggested positive attitudes and 'support and advice' (see Tables 5.2a–c in Appendix).
- When asked to nominate other benefits of the provision, the highest response from schools referred to benefits for staff. Colleges gave emphasis to networking and partnership and the most frequent answer noted that the college itself benefited from offering provision. Other organisations and schools were the only sub-samples to mention benefits to families and other organisations were most likely to refer to benefits for the local community (see Tables 5.3a–c in Appendix).

Telephone interviewees noted all these benefits. College respondents identified restructured curriculum or guidance facilities, while schools referred to the fact that staff sometimes had raised awareness of the SEN implications of disengagement, as well as the respite from disaffected youngsters in out-of-classroom bases. Increased and improved relations with schools, and a greater profile in the community, were particularly specified by some of the other organisations.

5.2 Impact and outcomes: the case-study phase

This section focuses on the impact and outcomes identified by interviewees during the case-study period of the research. Interviewees were asked to provide examples of how the initiatives, strategies and interventions had impacted on the young people involved. Young people and parents/carers were also asked if they had seen any changes in themselves/their children as a result of attending the provision. Furthermore, interviewees were also asked to identify any wider impacts/outcomes, for example on other youngsters, families or staff, which they felt were linked to the provision.

5.2.1 Impact on young people

The potential impact interventions could have on young people is perhaps best summarised by a young person attending a provision:

> *The whole experience here will stick with me because I've never really done anything with my life until I met* [name of member of staff] *and now I've got two certificates for being a peer educator and I've got a coaching course certificate and I've done work experience as a grounds keeper. So things are looking pretty good for me to get a job as a grounds man, and that's all because I came on this course* (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The reported impacts and outcomes for young people receiving the provision fell into ten main categories:

1. **Advancement in learning-related skills**
2. **Advancement in achievement/qualifications**
3. **Behaviour modification**
4. **Psychological well-being**
5. **Attitudinal change**
6. **Positive transition/progression**
7. **Increased awareness**
8. **Relationship development**
9. **Improved communication skills**
10. **Reintegration/integration.**

Impact 1: Advancement in learning-related skills

It is evident that a key component of all types of provision was the aim that young people would experience advancement in their learning, and outcomes identified included:

- **an improvement in basic skills**
- **gaining vocational skills**
- **accessing the mainstream curriculum**
- **social or life skills.**

Interviewees from all types of provision reported **an improvement in basic skills** amongst the young people they were working with. For example, an improvement in basic skills, specifically an increase in reading ages, was the main stated focus of one of the preventative-type provisions based in a school. A member of school staff observed that, as a result of their involvement in the provision, the reading ages of some pupils had '*improved considerably*'. A parent and her daughter reiterated this opinion.

Improved basic skills

She couldn't read, she couldn't understand the questions and then she couldn't do the work ... since she has been in [name of provision] *she reads to the wee ones at night – something she would never do before... Her work is coming on better because she can read and understand it better* (parent of S2 pupil, preventative provision).

I have learnt more and my spelling has got better ... because I have been put in the right class with the right people and the right teachers (S2 pupil, preventative provision).

The type of provision affected the type of basic skills outcome for youngsters. The preventative provision illustrated above was focusing on improving reading ages in S2 so that pupils with low reading ages were able to access the mainstream curriculum before they were 'turned off' learning. In contrast, initiatives which were aiming to 'reclaim' the disengaged were working with youngsters who were already 'turned off' learning. Thus, for this group, the focus on improving basic skills was the first step back on the learning ladder. Poor basic skills and unaddressed learning needs were often stated as being among the reasons why they had become disengaged in the first place. A strategy for 'hooking' these youngsters back in was to get them to engage in basic skills provision directly related to vocational skills.

Practitioners saw **vocational and practical skills** as an important and effective way of engaging the most disaffected youngsters. Thus, interviewees within interventions which were focusing on 'reclaiming the disengaged' were most likely to identify positive impacts associated with vocational experiences. For example, a teacher at a special school for youngsters with severe SEBD described the impact of work experience on one girl who was a '*school refuser, she had no confidence. She went on a carefully chosen work experience – small group, in an office – and she got a job there. She was so happy by the time she left here; she was completely turned around*' (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The pursuit of vocational skills was also used to effectively re-engage youngsters who were completely outside the learning environment. A college provider gave the example of one student who had come to the college with '*nothing*', but had accessed a pre-vocational course in catering, '*and now, a year and a half later, is managing to cope with modules*'. Vocational training was used very successfully with young people who were offending, at risk of being accommodated, and who were not attending school, but were now able to complete written work in the form of work-related activities, for example, job applications. Vocational training was being used to engage young people in basic skills, and vocational activities

were employed as a means of engaging with conventional literacy and numeracy. This impacted significantly on youngsters because they were able to see the relevance and usefulness of literacy and numeracy skills as they were directly linked to work outcomes.

Vocational skills
[We do] *all the basic mechanics stuff, plus all the stuff we do with the teachers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays about writing letters and CVs. If it wasn't for them, we probably wouldn't even know how to write* (student, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The development of vocational skills was also evident in 'mainstream' provision as part of combined learning packages, for example part-time attendance at school and college, or school and work experience.

Vocational skills
One boy who was never at school had no self-confidence, could barely read. He's now in at school and working outside with a ranger and doing technical work; it helped him to find his niche (provider, mainstream provision – secondary school).

The gaining of vocational skills was not always directly linked to vocational outcomes but, in certain instances, was identified by young people as having practical outcomes in the domestic environment, for example, and could even be seen to be contributing to the family economy.

Vocational skills
Because of the skills that we've learned here, we can help out more at home with things like cooking, painting and decorating (15-year-old student, mainstream provision – college).

I'll be helping my dad build a shed and I'll be able to help him because I do joinery here (15-year-old student, mainstream provision – college).

The benefits associated with achievable practical outcomes were clearly identified by both young people and practitioners.

Practical skills
When you're at college you actually do things but when you're at school, you just write about it so you're learning nothing (15-year-old student, mainstream provision – college).

Practical subjects are a super way of learning. They like to learn by doing and while they're doing things, especially if they're quite intensive, they forget they can't do things (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision – special school).

They have found that they have skills that other people don't have, which is very unusual for them in their lives up until now (teacher, mainstream provision – college).

Thus, vocational and practical skills can be seen as effective in re-engaging young people who are still within mainstream learning contexts, as well as engaging those who are outside mainstream education.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, **accessing the mainstream curriculum** was only identified as an outcome for preventative and mainstream interventions, and was mainly highlighted by providers in mainstream provision. So, for instance, examples were reported of school providers saying pupils were able to access the mainstream curriculum because of the additional support (learning and/or behaviour) they received when attending a learning support

base. Attending a support base was seen by many youngsters as a refuge and release mechanism, somewhere they could go when they were experiencing difficulties in school. As a result of this additional support, they were able to access the mainstream curriculum much more effectively. This support also included interventions which modified the mainstream curriculum, for example, by reducing the number of subjects studied and/ or providing some form of alternative curriculum or accreditation.

Accessing the mainstream curriculum
[As a result of involvement in the provision] *hot spots for them in the curriculum in the school aren't as hot anymore because they have a link in the school where they can get support to resolve those difficulties* (community education officer, mainstream provision – secondary school).

Providers identified the outcomes of enhancement and/or development of **social and life skills** across the range of provision. Both preventative and reclaimed disengaged-type provisions were focusing on equipping young people with special needs with social and life skills to enable them to operate with increased independence and more effectively within the community. Interviewees reported outcomes such as independent travel, accessing leisure facilities, and cooking, as enhancing students' survival skills in the community.

Life skills
Over the two years with this group, I've seen them make so much progress. Last year, one girl did an independent trip to college and has travelled all year on her own without incident (teacher, preventative provision – special school).

There was also an emphasis on the acquisition of social skills for the most severely disengaged, and the need to engage these youngsters on a social level, prior to educational engagement, was highlighted. Impacting on the capacity for social engagement, for example for young people with severe SEBD, was seen as vital, as without these skills, young people were unable to engage in learning. Social engagement was a necessary prerequisite to educational engagement.

Social skills
There's a huge emphasis on social skills. If you can get these kids to say 'good morning' that is a success, because before it was just a grunt (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

Other learning impacts and outcomes identified by interviewees can be categorised as **general improvements in learning**. These ranged from re-engaging with schoolwork, to an improved attention span, to understanding more in class, and completing homework. Impacts and outcomes identified by mainstream providers included using information technology to engage young people in learning, keeping pupils on task by using a variety of resources in a flexible way, and young people taking responsibility for their own learning via engagement in alternative accreditation. The following statements, which relate to young people who were involved in alternative accreditation, identify these impacts and outcomes.

General improvement in learning
I think my learning has improved too because I understand more things in normal classes and I do my homework now, which I didn't do before (pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

We have proof from the schools that these kids, who they thought were lost initially, are now back in line with their learning (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Young people also noted improvements in their own learning, particularly those within mainstream provision. The identified effects of involvement included:

- the ability to get on with work
- time to do work
- time out to focus on learning
- working better
- academic improvement.

Parents also identified improvements in their children's learning including:

- increased concentration
- working better
- enjoying the work.

The nature of identified outcomes varied with the type of provision. In preventative provision, identified outcomes included general statements about 'working better', for example. In mainstream provision, the outcomes more often related to actual progression in learning, pupils saying they were able to get on with their work, for example. A key factor identified here was the focus on sufficient **time** to complete work and in a context conducive to progression.

General improvements in learning
I've noticed that I get on with my work ... I've got time to do it (pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

Because it gets me away for all the stuff I need to do, and all my priorities. I can just focus on my work in [name of provision] (pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

There is not as much to distract him and he does get on with his work (parent, mainstream provision – secondary school).

Children in this class have done a lot more work than they would have done in a normal class. [Name of pupil] *would rarely get anything finished in a normal class but here the others are at his pace so he can keep up* (teacher, preventative provision – secondary school).

General improvements in learning also included the gaining or enhancing of skills used in the learning context, for example, study and presentation skills. These were also viewed as transferable skills which young people could utilise in the post-16 contexts of further education, training and/or employment. Young people were gaining skills, such as time-planning and presentation skills, which, in one instance, were enhanced by external providers (business mentors).

Impact 2: Advancement in achievement

A number of outcomes cited were directly linked to increased attainment by interviewees. So, not only were young people perceived to be **engaging** in learning, they were also seen to be making progress and **achieving**. Providers viewed this as having a cyclical impact: young people were experiencing success which led to more success, i.e. achievement fostered further achievement.

A wide range of achievements was noted by interviewees, including:

- **general improvements in educational achievement**
- **success in accredited courses, for example ASDAN**
- **vocationally based qualifications, for example in catering and mechanics**
- **academically based qualifications, for example Standard Grades.**

Thus, achievements can be seen to range from informal to formally recognised/measured impacts and outcomes.

Providers working in provision focusing on reclaiming the disengaged were most likely to identify **general improvements in achievement/attainment** for the young people they were working with. For the most disengaged and disaffected youngsters, the fact that they were achieving in learning, that is succeeding rather than failing, was seen to have had a significant impact. General improvements in achievement were also identified in both mainstream and preventative types of provision. These interventions were providing a learning environment in which young people with behavioural and learning needs could succeed.

General improvements in educational achievement

That is the only place [support base] *where they can actually get him to do some work ... he is actually doing work, rather than doing nothing* (parent, mainstream provision – secondary school).

They achieved a lot more being in a group with similarly able pupils ... it brought the stragglers up and has given others a chance to do well (teacher, preventative provision – secondary school).

Accredited courses, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, were also seen to have been particularly successful with highly disengaged youngsters. This was attributed to the belief that involvement in such award schemes ensured that interventions, in addition to challenging negative behaviours (such as offending), were also focusing on young people's achievement and positive outcomes. Providers also identified a positive post-programme outcome, as youngsters were able to use these nationally recognised awards as exemplars of achievement to support job applications. These were young people who were identified as being individuals who would have achieved little or nothing in school, and whose future employment prospects may consequently have been greatly reduced.

Success in accredited courses

They hadn't achieved anything at school and this [Duke of Edinburgh Award] *was an achievement* (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

It takes real commitment from the young people. ... It's great that they've kept that on. It's been a real achievement for them (community education worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

At least I feel that I'm learning something here and I know that I'm going to walk out with something instead of nothing (15-year-old female school refuser, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The achievement of **vocational qualifications** identified by interviewees included sports coaching certificates, peer educator certificates, youth work diplomas, catering and mechanics qualifications, and SVQs. Both mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions were providing vocational qualifications within mainstream education and community settings. Within a mainstream context, these types of provision were seen as having particularly successful outcomes for school non-attenders and those with specific learning difficulties. Instances were given of school non-attenders who may not have achieved within the school context but had successfully gained vocational qualifications at college.

Vocationally based qualifications

She now has a direction in life. If she'd stayed in school, she probably wouldn't have sat her exams because she wouldn't have come. She is now achieving at college [completing a hospitality and catering course] (teacher, mainstream provision – college).

To see [name of pupil] *who was a disaster at school and if we'd pushed him to attend, we'd have never seen him again, but because a different package was put in place, it worked! Now he is doing an HNC and is guaranteed an apprenticeship as a result of how well he's done. A marvellous example of what can happen if a school is willing to say 'OK, this is not right for this boy. Let's abandon what the law says and what the curriculum says and let's see what we can do for him'. It's been really successful and in his eyes* [the school] *is just wonderful and he's left very, very positively* (senior manager, mainstream provision – secondary school).

Young people were also achieving **academically based qualifications** as a result of involvement in the initiatives. It was interesting to note that this also included young people within the reclaimed disengaged-type provisions. Interviewees highlighted several instances where attending the provision had enabled youngsters, who were completely out of the mainstream education system, to take examinations and complete Standard Grades. Attending the provision had helped them refocus their lives and increased their motivation and confidence to tackle something they thought they had failed at.

Academically based qualifications

At school, before I came here, the teacher asked me to do an exam but I wouldn't do it but I've now been back and I've done that exam (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

We've had two young people who were school refusers who came on our programme and realised during their time with us 'Oh maybe it would be a good idea to get my Standard Grades' and they actually went back to school again (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Impact 3: Behaviour modification

As already apparent in some of the previous comments, advancement in attainment was often directly related to, and dependent upon, modifications in a young person's behaviour. Indeed, overall, behaviour modification was the impact most frequently identified by case-study interviewees. The range of impacts and outcomes identified included:

- **general improvements in behaviour**
- **improved attendance**
- **impacts relating to inclusion**
- **personal maturity**
- **impact on anti-social behaviours.**

General improvements in behaviour were identified by interviewees across the range of provisions. Interviewees were not pinpointing particular aspects of behaviour but were identifying an *overall* improvement in behaviour. This was most frequently identified as an impact within mainstream provision, perhaps reflecting the type of young people these interventions were working with – those who were already disengaged, but not at the extreme end of the disaffection continuum.

Both preventative and mainstream interviewees identified impacts such as '*improved behaviour in class*' and '*improved behaviour in school*', as a result of young people being involved in such initiatives. Consequential impacts were also identified by interviewees within mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type provisions. For example, part-time attendance at college, or an alternative education provision, was seen to have a significant impact on young people's behaviour in school. These alternative education providers were helping young people re-engage with learning and also giving them incentives to modify their behaviour in school. In provision focusing on reclaiming the disengaged, general improvements in behaviour reflected the wider remit of these interventions so that reported impacts also related to improvements in behaviour at home and in the community.

General improvements in behaviour

In class she reacted better with teachers – I told her that what you give out comes back to you so if you're OK with teachers they'll be OK with you (mentor, preventative provision).

[Name of school] *has commented to the college about the improved behaviour of the students who attend the college* (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

He realised that he had to be disciplined on [name of provision] *and at school because he realised very quickly that if he wasn't behaving in school, they had the autonomy to pull him off* [name of provision]. *He realised that his behaviour had to improve on and off* [name of provision] (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

As a peer educator, I see somebody getting picked for the course because they're having problems in school. You notice as they go through the ten-and-a-half weeks, they'll keep going to school, they'll be good – they won't be good all the time but there'll be a big improvement in their behaviour and the way they speak to other people and adults. It all changes for the good (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

General improvements in behaviour were also seen as having additional positive impacts on other behaviours, including **improved attendance**, for example. One young person attending a mainstream initiative identified the link between improvements in her behaviour and her attendance at school:

Improved attendance
It helps me come in in the morning because [before] *I usually avoided registration because my guidance teacher nips my head when I'm bad, but now that I'm good in classes, the guidance teacher comes in and praises me* (S3 pupil, mainstream provision – school).

Indeed, the most frequently identified change in behaviour related to improvements in attendance. This was also viewed by interviewees as having a direct impact on achievement, attainment, and positive post-programme progression. Within mainstream provision, interviewees were most likely to highlight an improvement in attendance as an impact of the provision. For example, learning support units had proved particularly successful in increasing the attendance of school refusers and school phobics because they allowed vulnerable youngsters to access a secure learning environment with support for their learning and/or behavioural needs. This had a further impact on young people's attainment as it meant that they were able to complete Standard Grades, for example.

Within 'preventative' types of provision, young people were less disengaged, and an improvement in attendance was only reported as an outcome by interviewees in one provision. However, one of these interviewees also highlighted a 'softer' impact on young people, an improvement in time-keeping, which if left unaddressed, possibly had the potential to become an attendance problem in the future. This interviewee felt that mentors were able to demonstrate the importance of regular attendance and punctuality at work and link this to attendance and punctuality at school. Mentors were showing young people that they '*might not fancy it* [work] *but they still come in*' and that '*it's not just school that dictates you come in at 9 am, it's a fact of life*' (business mentoring coordinator, preventative provision).

Improved attendance
We have one pupil who is a school phobic and she will not attend classes [but] *... she will ... come into the* [name of provision] *... She's managed to sit all her exams ... If the* [name of provision] *wasn't here, she wouldn't have attended school at all, so it's been very successful* (provider, mainstream provision – school).

Mentoring's encouraged her school attendance; her work's improved because her attendance has improved (mentor, preventative provision).

When I was in first and second year, my attendance was either 60 per cent or under, but in third year it was 84 per cent, and now my attendance is perfect, 100 per cent (S4 pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

You can't expect too much from them ... If they're here by 9.30 am, we've got that kid out of bed and they're now here prepared to do something (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

An improvement in rates of attendance was the impact most frequently identified by interviewees in the reclaimed disengaged type of provision. This significant impact was highlighted by equal numbers of providers and young people. The outcome was also significant because of the progress it

reflected: many of these young people had previously not been attending school, but were attending the alternative education initiatives full-time. The stated impact on attendance also reflects the fact that many of these young people had been out of the education system for considerable lengths of time and were '*desperate to **do** something*' (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision), but were unable to return to mainstream education because they were too far along the disengaged continuum. So, it was said that when they were given the opportunity to attend a provision which suited their needs, attendance rates were remarkably good. This impact on attendance levels for young people within the reclaimed disengaged-type provision is reflected in the following data and comments.

Improved attendance – reclaimed disengaged provision

Project 1

Number of young people	13
Average attendance at school	20%
Average attendance at alternative education provider	90%

Project 2

Number of young people	4
Average attendance at school	26%
Average attendance at alternative education provider	88%

Improved attendance

We've been averaging about 11 pupils a day out of 13, which is a good record because these pupils didn't attend school at all (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Even if [name of young person] *has a dispute with staff he comes here, when it'd be quite easy for him to go and see his friends. He even comes in when he's in a bad mood and fed up with people* (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

A lot of the time, young people come in even though they don't have to – they come in because there is something for them (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Furthermore, in one instance in particular, attendance at a reclaimed disengaged-type intervention had actually resulted in one young person re-engaging with school:

Improved attendance

I never liked school at all and you'd never catch me there, but then I got this chance and [name of provider] *had a talk to me and I ended up sticking in at school. This* [name of provision] *keeps you going and makes school more bearable* (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Interviewees also identified positive outcomes relating to behaviour modification which resulted in **general inclusive outcomes**, i.e. maintaining young people within the learning environment and/or community. Preventative and mainstream interventions were identifying behavioural outcomes relating to the prevention and/or reduction of exclusions from school. Mainstream interviewees highlighted this impact in particular, because they were working with disengaged young people who were in danger of, or had previously been, excluded from school. Interviewees within the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions identified behavioural impacts relating to maintaining young people within the community. These were young people who were, for instance, in danger of being

accommodated, offending and/or excluded from school, so, as a manager of one provision identified, it was a significant outcome that they had only excluded one young person in 17 years.

General inclusive outcomes

There would have been more suspensions if they had stayed in 'normal' S2 classes (provider, preventative provision – school).

I think if the [name of provision] *hadn't been there,* [name of child] *would have been expelled from this school ... If it hadn't been for them, I reckon he wouldn't be here; he would be in a secure school by now* (parent, mainstream intervention – school).

It [the provision] *keeps kids out of residential school* (senior manager social work, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Behavioural outcomes concerning **personal maturity**, that is, intrinsic to the individual youngster, were also identified by interviewees. In preventative provision, reference was made to young people becoming more mature, calmer and more settled in class. In mainstream provision, young people becoming calmer, more mature, less boisterous and able to manage their anger more effectively were similarly mentioned as outcomes. All these identified outcomes reflected an improvement in self-control which allowed youngsters to access the curriculum more effectively. It was interesting that these impacts were reported by parents and youngsters rather than providers.

For provision focusing on 'reclaiming' the disengaged, an increase in maturity was seen as the most significant impact. Linked to this was youngsters' '*taking responsibility for their own behaviour*' and '*responsibility for their self in general*', that is improved self-control generally, rather than just within the classroom context, as was seen in the mainstream provisions. As was the case for preventative and mainstream provisions, these outcomes were most frequently reported by parents/carers, perhaps because they were most likely to notice changes in their children's behaviour at home.

Personal maturity

[It's] *just calmed me down – I haven't had any punishment exercises since I have been there. So it has helped me in that kind of way, keeping me out of trouble. I have better behaviour ... I behave better and act more mature* (pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

I just wanted all the attention, but since I've been on that [report sheet], *I've calmed down a lot. It has done me the world of good to be on the report sheet, it's helped me a lot. My behaviour used to be really bad but now I've been getting positive reports from the teachers* (S3 pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

He's calmed down a lot ... he has matured. Getting the chance to do 'adult' work has helped him develop maturity (carer, reclaimed disengaged provision).

He's just quietened down as opposed to the way he used to be – always in trouble and carrying on. All his cheek and all that. He was here a couple of months and everything just seemed to fall back into place, the way he used to be. So I see a real big change in him. It's done him the world of good, definitely (parent, reclaimed disengaged provision).

We draft some youngsters into local football teams, and they learn in a team setting that they can't let people down. They have to go along at certain times, they have to be involved in training, and the feedback we get back from the clubs is almost 100 per cent (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Finally, outcomes and impacts relating to **anti-social behaviours** were identified predominantly by interviewees within provision focusing on reclaiming the disengaged (although, they were also identified by two interviewees working in mainstream provisions). This is not surprising given that a reduction or cessation in drug misuse and offending rates was often a stated aim of this type of provision and, consequently, providers were likely to be monitoring levels of offending and drug use. In addition, associated outcomes then related to positive post-programme progression into education, training, or employment. Interviewees gave examples of young people achieving personal and educational challenges which were directly linked to the curtailment or stopping of offending or drug misuse. Responses also reflected the well-documented link between non-attendance at school and offending behaviour. Both young people and providers recognised that attendance at these initiatives was helping them curtail their offending behaviour, giving them fewer opportunities to offend, but also providing them with positive alternatives.

Impact on anti-social behaviours

One of the most pleasing things for me is that we have two youngsters who, last year, were not attending at school and were heavily involved in crime. I've now got them working as peer educators and it's brilliant (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

In the last course we ran, a young person came on the course with a history of 60 previous offences and he was 13. In the last week of the course, he committed one offence and we decided to keep him on the course and two months after the course, he still hasn't reoffended (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

A lot of our success has come from young people who are moving away from the drug culture. One of our boys was a heroin user... He was on methadone when he started our programme and he stuck with it with a lot of support. He ran the [name of place] *marathon. He's now at one of the* [name of place] *colleges doing a youth work diploma* (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

It keeps us off the street ... [before I'd] *nothing to do during the week ... it keeps you out of trouble* (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Impact 4: Psychological well-being

After behaviour modification, interviewees most frequently identified impacts and outcomes relating to improvements in young people's psychological well-being. Providers were most likely to identify these effects; however, a significant number of young people and their parents/ carers also highlighted impacts and outcomes relating to psychological well-being. Within this overall category, two impacts were predominant: an **increase in confidence**, and an **enhancement of self-esteem**, while other references were also made to a **reduction in stress** and **anxiety**.

Although interviewees from all types of provision identified impacts and outcomes relating to enhancing young people's **self-esteem** and **confidence**, they were most likely to be highlighted by interviewees within the reclaimed disengaged type of initiative. This perhaps reflected the very low levels of self-esteem and confidence exhibited by young people within these types of provision. Initiatives provided a range of activities, including personal development courses, counselling and social skills sessions, as well as a

general ethos which continually focused on enhancing confidence and self-esteem. Providers recognised that, in order for these young people to re-engage with learning, they had to re-engage socially via increasing their confidence and self-esteem. Thus, within these types of provision, a significant impact was that confidence and self-esteem were increased within a social environment, which meant that providers could move on to engaging them within the learning environment.

Increase in confidence and self-esteem

He's got a lot more confidence. When he first came here you'd be lucky if you got a grunt out of him. Now ... he seems a lot more relaxed in new situations and meeting people. Coming to the project has given him more confidence in himself (parent and social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

They'll leave [the provision] *with higher self-esteem, which is worth a lot more than a few Standard Grades* (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

I think the impact on [name of daughter] *has been quite dramatic. She's much more adult and has more confidence. She takes more responsibility for herself and even her dress sense has improved* (parent, reclaimed disengaged provision).

We see a big difference in them over the 12 weeks, in that they build up their self-esteem and confidence (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Raising self-esteem and confidence was also identified as an outcome for young people involved in mainstream initiatives, particularly for those who already exhibited relatively high levels of disengagement and were struggling at school. Part-time attendance at college provided them with the opportunity to experience success within an educational context. Practical and vocational activities often enabled them to discover skills they did not know they had, and this was seen to have a huge impact on young people's self-esteem and confidence. Increased confidence was said not just to be reflected in the learning/academic environment but also in their personal demeanours.

Increase in confidence

Kids often arrive from school to the college thinking that they can do nothing, but at the end of the college course, they smile more, they talk more and they are more confident. They realise that they're not the big failure that they thought they were at school (provider, mainstream provision – college).

Interviewees within preventative interventions also highlighted outcomes relating to an increase in young people's confidence within a mainstream learning context.

Increase in confidence

It is relaxed and comfortable, it's not embarrassing and we aren't scared to spell a word or anything in front of the teacher or the whole class, because the class – it is all the same for them and they were all embarrassed to come up and ask, so we are all just the same – equal. We are not any different (S2 pupil, preventative provision – secondary school).

The example given shows how providing a secure learning environment can have a positive impact on a young person's confidence to participate within that learning environment. This was reiterated by a teacher in the

school who observed that s/he had seen a huge increase in confidence in young people involved in the provision, with most of them being quite happy and even keen to read aloud, whereas before they were not. Similarly, a young person who was involved in a mentoring relationship who prior to that had been a social isolate was described by teachers as having '*blossomed*'. She was '*much more confident*', she was a '*completely different girl*', she had a '*much better opinion of herself*', had '*far more friends*' and had '*started to socialise*'. These comments highlight both the educational and personal outcomes of the mentoring relationship.

Such psychological outcomes were directly linked to a sense of achievement due to successful involvement in provision and were noted by interviewees in all types of provision. (This impact illustrates the important link between feelings of success and achievement and self-esteem/confidence, which in turn leads to progression in learning. This was reinforced by a positive affirmation of progression in learning, e.g. awards.)

Sense of achievement

She sees herself coming on, so she is not ashamed, she can stand up, answer a question – it has brought her out of her shell that much! ... I think the award scheme gave the boost 'at last I have got something for something I have done'. It wasn't just a certificate that everyone got. You had to work to get the award scheme, and [name of pupil] *worked, she did it herself* (parent, preventative provision – secondary school).

They develop a sense of achievement within college, as opposed to school; their self-esteem and confidence are built up, and they become more positive generally (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

Another reported impact related to challenging negative feelings and emotions within the young person. For some young people, this was described as a reduction in feelings of stress and anxiety associated with being in school. Interventions were successfully overcoming these difficulties by, for example:

- providing someone young people could discuss their problems with
- providing someone who could act as an advocate on their behalf in school or at home
- changing the context of the learning environment so that school phobics/refusers did not have to participate in mainstream classes
- resolving difficulties at home and so making their lives more stable, helping them access education more effectively.

Outcomes relating to improvements in young people's physical well-being were associated with interventions which had a sports-related focus, and these in turn had an effect on psychological well-being.

Impact 5: Attitudinal change

Changes in attitude amongst young people were reported as a significant impact of the interventions: young people's willingness and/or motivation to access education, training, or employment, and related opportunities were

noted. Providers were successfully challenging young people's attitudes towards learning and employment which, in many instances, also had a positive impact on their behaviour. Changes in attitude were highlighted by interviewees in the following areas:

- **school and education/training**
- **career/future**
- **adults**.

Interviewees from preventative interventions highlighted young people's attitudinal change to learning, and in particular, to motivational aspects of learning and lifelong learning.

Attitudinal change – to education/training

It's [the provision] *good for some of the brighter girls ... because they get the chance to work hard and see themselves as being some of the better pupils – in another class they wouldn't be one of the best – this has encouraged them to enjoy their work and not feel that there's always someone doing better; they've been allowed to shine in this class* (teacher, preventative provision – secondary school).

If young people are talking to people who are themselves still learning, it makes learning more attractive for them. We as an organisation are trying to promote lifelong learning: mentoring by its very nature does this as a matter of course (senior manager, preventative provision).

The main attitudinal impact identified by interviewees was towards **school and education/training**, and was noted by interviewees from mainstream provision in particular. While sometimes youngsters were adjusting disengaged attitudes to school, others were reported to have a more general reconnection to education and training. However, 'school' as an institution remained a problematic relationship in some instances.

Attitudinal change – to school

Get them back into the feeling that they are part of the school, they've got to aspire to be part of the school community. We don't want them to feel that because they've experienced a lot of trouble in departments, that's the end of their existence in school; it's a matter of getting them back with it (senior manager, mainstream provision – secondary school).

In mainstream interventions, most impacts were identified by young people themselves. In school, this included a more positive attitude to learning, whilst those attending college spoke of a change in their attitude to education/ training because they were now able to see the relevance of learning. As a student observed: '*my attitude towards learning has changed*' (student, mainstream provision – college) – which s/he linked to being involved in practical skills which were more relevant to his/her learning strengths and needs. Another student reiterated the greater relevance of the college curriculum compared to the school curriculum, which had impacted on her attitude to learning: '*I want to learn more now and I'm more willing to learn* [because] *I'm learning a lot more here ... I'm more interested in what I'm being taught here*' (student, mainstream provision – college).

Attitudinal change – to education
The work seems a bit easier now that we're in [name of provision] *because you don't expect to fail all your tests anymore because of* [name of provider's] *positive attitude. You go in thinking to yourself 'I'll be able to do this, no bother', and you go in and do your best ... you've got a better attitude towards life. Before I went into the* [name of provision], *I wasn't positive about anything but* [name of provider] *is there every day telling you to be positive. She says say 'I can' instead of saying 'I cannot', or 'I wonder if I can?' If you say to yourself 'I can do it, I can do it', you end up giving yourself so much faith that you can do it* (S3 pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

A change in young people's **attitude to their career/future in general** was identified by interviewees within mainstream and reclaimed disengaged types of provision and was linked to positive progression for young people within these interventions. This attitudinal change was also linked to young people beginning to take responsibility for their own behaviour rather than '*blaming everyone else for their problems*' (provider, mainstream provision – college). This was exemplified by the following comment made by a social worker concerning his client attending an alternative education provision.

Attitudinal change – to future
[Name of young person] *said in the past he used to get up and only think for the day, but now he's thinking ahead about his career. 'What can I do when I leave* [name of provision]*?' ... That looking ahead is quite positive ... that's part and parcel of looking at the consequences of his behaviour, which is a good step ... he's starting to take responsibility* (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Changes in young people's **attitude towards adults** with whom they came into contact was reported by interviewees and linked to the development of more positive relationships, for example, with teachers and other figures of authority including parents/carers. This attitudinal change was most frequently identified by interviewees within the reclaimed disengaged type of provision, reflecting the previous breakdown of relationships between these youngsters and adults in authority. Perhaps the most interesting impact here was the change in young people's attitude towards the police in two of the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. This shift in attitude can be seen as significant when many of the young people attending these projects had been involved in offending and drug taking.

Attitudinal change – to adults
We work closely with the community police. The kids hate the police when they come in here but by the time they leave it's 'Hello [name of officer], *how're you doing?'* (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Beyond that, a change in young people's **attitude in general** was most frequently identified by interviewees within the reclaimed disengaged-type provisions. This general change in attitude was identified by the young people themselves and their parents/carers. Changes were linked to increased maturity, better relationships with staff and young people at the

projects, and general changes in their demeanour, which were seen as having a positive impact on their ability to engage with, or access, educational/ work-related opportunities.

Attitudinal change – attitude in general
When he started at the provision, he came on leaps and bounds. I noticed a lot of difference. I saw a big change in his attitude ... before he wouldn't get up in the morning (parent, reclaimed disengaged provision).

My attitude's changed since I was at school; I've grown up a bit. My attitude's changed being with different people. I'm not getting bossed around so much (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Impact 6: Positive transition/progression

Impacts and outcomes relating to positive progression have already been highlighted in a number of the other sections, for example, school non-attenders being able to complete Standard Grades in a learning support unit, which meant that they were then able to access further education. This section focuses on specific outcomes identified by interviewees relating to positive transition/progression in the following areas:

- **employment**
- **education**
- **vocational training**
- **positive transition in general.**

Progression into employment was an outcome identified by interviewees in both mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type provisions. Interventions providing vocational training for severely disengaged youngsters highlighted their success in relation to young people securing employment after the programme, even when rates of unemployment were high.

Positive progression – work
A lad we placed in the bus company in [name of town] *– ten people got laid off and he got kept on because he was a hard worker. It was a real success for him, he proved himself* (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Years ago, we'd get 99 per cent employment for them. Now employment is very hard – if we get two out of ten into jobs, we're doing well. But last term, out of nine, six were employed. We pull strings here and there for them and chance our arm for them (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Interviewees also gave examples of work experience opportunities which had led to employment, and young people stated that they had more confidence about job interviews and felt that they had developed job-seeking skills as a result of attending the provision.

Impacts and outcomes relating to **education generally** referred to young people's positive **progression into further education**. However, one mainstream provider also gave the example of a pupil who had successfully accessed higher education, despite experiencing complex difficulties including drug misuse and physical abuse. Mainstream providers also gave

examples of youngsters who were completely disengaged from education within the school context, but who had successfully completed examinations at college. Changing the learning context and the content of the curriculum had re-engaged these youngsters in education. Furthermore, once they were 'hooked into' this educational environment, opportunities existed for further progression to other courses. A return to full-time education at school was also identified as a positive outcome for some youngsters attending the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions.

Positive progression – education

If we can keep the student occupied and happy during the week, there's every chance that that student will want to do another course (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

One of the successes of the college is that the Scottish average of progression from school to further education is 18 per cent but it's 25 per cent here. I think this is because we have a more appropriate curriculum (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

A number of interviewees gave accounts of positive **progression into vocational training**, including the completion of pre-vocational courses at college, which then enabled youngsters to access mainstream vocational courses. Vocational training was also seen as assisting young people's progress after the course, as a college provider observed: '*they are more prepared for the job market; they have developed more confidence and a more positive outlook and that makes them more in charge of themselves*' (provider, mainstream provision – college). Progression into vocational training had provided disengaged youngsters in mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-types of provision with a practical focus to their learning and presented them with achievable goals. Thus, vocational training provided them with opportunities to progress. An example of this kind of progression was given by an assistant headteacher who described a package set up with the local college for a school non-attender. Initially he attended college one day a week doing motor mechanics; then he went two days a week and '*they were so pleased with him they asked him to go four days a week and they did maths and English Standard Grade with him*'. In S4 he attended college full-time and completed a National Certificate in car mechanics in two months (which should have taken a year); he then moved on to an HNC and was guaranteed an apprenticeship. Similarly, a parent described how his daughter did not have any aims or ambitions in school because she was in '*special education*' but the opportunity to access a vocational course at college had given her the opportunity '*to specialise in something rather than going nowhere in school*' (parent, mainstream provision – college).

Interviewees from a reclaimed disengaged type of provision, which was targeting young people with difficulties, but who were keenly interested in football, identified a range of vocational directions. These included course participants progressing on to achieve football coaching certificates, to train with professional football clubs, to return to the course as peer educators, and to be involved in community-based activities. These were young people who had been excluded from school, and were offending and misusing drugs prior to attending the course.

Positive progression – vocational training
The school couldn't do anything with him ... he now coaches a primary school class on a regular basis, and the education department are so enthusiastic about that they want to spread it out to other schools (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Impact 7: Raising awareness

Linked to positive progression were impacts and outcomes relating to raising young people's awareness of:

- **work-related opportunities**
- **personal skills and abilities**
- **educational opportunities**
- **future opportunities in general.**

The main outcomes identified by interviewees related to raising awareness of work-related opportunities and personal skills and abilities.

An increased awareness of **work-related opportunities** was reported in careers-focused interventions which, in addition to explaining available options and discussing future plans, also ensured that young people had realistic expectations about work and what would be required of them within the work environment, for example that '*working in a hairdresser does mean sweeping the floor*' (careers adviser, reclaimed disengaged provision). Interventions were supplying information which young people may have difficulties accessing because of their learning needs, or a lack of confidence, or a lack of opportunity because no one in the family was working. Mentors from the business community had proved particularly successful in overcoming the latter barrier. Increased awareness of work-related opportunities also affected young people's engagement with learning, as illustrated by the following comments.

Raising awareness – work-related opportunities
I would like to run my own business – taking stock, ordering things, managing people. I can do that kind of course here ... I can learn everything I need to know. It's good to know that I can achieve that here because I didn't have that feeling at school (student, mainstream provision – college).

Generally, if kids can see that their future is going to be limited due to some deficiency in their learning, they are keen to learn and fill that gap (provider, mainstream provision – college).

Raising young people's **awareness of their own skills and abilities** was seen as a positive impact, particularly for youngsters with low self-esteem and learning needs, which meant that they had rarely experienced success in an educational context. This impact was identified by interviewees within mainstream interventions in particular.

Raising awareness – personal skills and abilities
Being at college rather than school makes the young people more aware of what they're good at and what they want to do (senior manager, mainstream provision – college).

Impact 8: Relationship development

Impacts relating to relationship development focused on three main areas. These were relationships with:

- **adults**
- **peers**
- **relationships in general.**

Interviewees from the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions were most likely to identify impacts relating to relationship development, perhaps reflecting the significance attached to this outcome for severely disengaged youngsters. In mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions, outcomes relating to relationship development were most frequently identified by young people themselves.

Interviewees most frequently identified impacts related to developments in young people's **relationships with adults**. This is not surprising, given that a problematic relationship with adults was identified as a common difficulty for disengaged youngsters, or those in danger of becoming disengaged. Thus, reported effects related to young people's relationships with authority figures in their lives, primarily parents/carers, teachers/staff, and the police. Young people's relationships with the police have already been discussed in the previous section focusing on attitudinal change.

Strategies such as mentoring were seen as effective in making youngsters '*better at relating to adults*' (senior manager, preventative provision – school). Mentoring gave young people the opportunity to develop a relationship with an adult that was outside the '*professional*' context of school: a mentor described him/herself as a '*grown-up friend*'. Young people also felt that their relationships with teachers/staff had improved because of the approaches taken by teachers/staff within the interventions. Youngsters' relationships at home were also seen to have improved because, for example, they had learnt how to manage their behaviour more effectively. Furthermore, because youngsters were happier attending the initiatives, they were achieving something, they were no longer truanting from school, and there was a positive impact on their relationships at home.

Relationship development – with adults

I get on better with teachers in the [name of provision] *because they listen to you* (pupil, mainstream provision – secondary school).

For some, relationships at home have improved because the pupils themselves are learning different coping strategies (community education officer, mainstream provision – secondary school).

I've changed a lot at home – coming here's helped a lot. Before I used to lose my temper really bad and argue all the time with my mum and dad (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Developments in **relationships with peers** were least likely to be identified by interviewees. However, where they were commented on, impacts related

to the development of a group identity, team work, team building, and youngsters receiving support from one another. A sense of group identity was heightened by youngsters facing challenges together and identifying common goals and aims within interventions.

Relationship development – with peers
Before we got into [name of provision] *I didn't get on with many of the others but ... we were all pals after a couple of weeks, because we're working together and achieving challenges* (pupil, mainstream provision – school).

When I was in school I used to fight with the others, but here you get to know them better and it brings you all together (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The final type of relationship outcome noted was the development of **relationships in general**, which occurred in interventions where young people were, perhaps for the first time, coming into contact with a wide range of people. Reported outcomes focused on youngsters learning to interact with different people and also learning about responsibilities towards others. Interventions were providing them with work-related opportunities which enabled them to see the importance of working with others, the need to get on with other people, and the possible consequences of letting people down. Significantly, when young people attending the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions were asked what they had learnt at the provision, one of the most frequent responses they gave was that they had learnt '*how to get on with people*'.

Relationship development – in general
I've noticed a big change, because when I first started I was a pure pain and didn't like to get on with anybody but now I'm learning, I'm working with adults and people younger than me and people from colleges (young person, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Impact 9: Improved communication skills

Impacts identified in this category related to a general improvement in communication skills and were highlighted by interviewees from mainstream initiatives. Reported impacts identified by staff included young people speaking more, being able to articulate what they were thinking, and becoming more communicative. Young people also identified improvements in their communication skills; a dyslexic student linked this directly to the delivery and content of the curriculum in college:

Improved communication skills – general improvement
When they talk to us I understand what they're saying and I can answer back in a positive way ... now I can communicate much better with other people (17-year-old student, mainstream provision – college).

Impact 10: Reintegration/integration

Stated outcomes relating to the reintegration or integration of young people either had an **educational** or a **community** focus. A number of these impacts have already been identified within the previous section focusing on

behaviour modification because successful reintegration/integration was often seen as a direct result of behaviour modification.

Educational reintegration outcomes mentioned by interviewees related to maintaining or returning youngsters to mainstream education, including: maintaining young people with special needs in mainstream classes; returning youngsters to mainstream classes after they had spent time in a learning support unit; and reintegrating school phobics back into mainstream classes. The following comments illustrate that young people's successful participation in an initiative was seen as the key factor in maintaining their engagement with, or even re-engaging them in, the mainstream curriculum.

Reintegration/integration – educational focus

If it wasn't for [name of provision] *these pupils would have fallen through the net, or would have been excluded every other week because of their behaviour or difficulties, or they would have excluded themselves* (community education officer, mainstream provision – secondary school).

When, after five or six weeks, an excluded boy says 'I want to go back to school'; 'But you were excluded because of your behaviour'; 'Yes, but that was because I didn't understand the lessons'. In here, we take them back up to the level that they could go back to school if they want. We offer them part-time places here if they want to go to school part-time (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged).

Stated outcomes with a **community reintegration** focus related to maintaining young people within the community, greater community participation and increased independence within the community. The successful maintenance of young people within the community was, for example, reflected in project performance indicators which showed in one intervention that three young people had been diverted from residential school and, in another, that three young people had been prevented from going into residential care. Reported outcomes relating to greater community participation included, for example, children with special needs completing work experience in the community. Similarly, pupils completing alternative accreditation alongside their Standard Grades were involved in environmental activities in school, for example, and as result of this, they were expanding their interests in these activities out into the community. As a community education officer observed: '*Out in the community, they're more likely to get involved in various activities*'. Increased independence within the community focused on young people becoming less reliant on the support of other agencies and the removal of supervision orders and voluntary support.

Reintegration/integration – community focus

So six young people have managed to build up to living independently without support in the community. Therefore they are not at risk, they are not isolated ...These young people have managed to terminate any kind of involvement, dependency [on social work]. *That's huge progress* (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

5.2.2 Wider impact and outcomes

Wider impact and outcomes associated with the interventions and identified by interviewees focused on six main areas. These were impacts and outcomes relating to:

1. **Other young people**
2. **Teachers/staff**
3. **Community**
4. **Home/families**
5. **Other agencies.**

Impact 1: Other young people

Outcomes relating to benefits of the provision for other young people were identified by interviewees, and focused on:

- **mentoring/peer education**
- **raising pupil awareness of special needs**
- **increased time for other pupils.**

The most frequent response given by interviewees when highlighting impact on other youngsters was the effect of using young people involved in the provision as **mentors** or **peer educators** to work with other youngsters with similar problems. This was a strategy which had successfully been implemented within all types of provision. The mentors and peer educators were passing on their skills and strategies for coping with a range of difficulties including: bullying, severe dyslexia and other learning difficulties, drug misuse and offending behaviours. As well as providing support for one another whilst attending courses, young people were also returning to work on courses that they had previously participated in.

Impact on other young people – mentoring
It was very easy for him to identify the problems that he'd been through and there was at least one person who came through the second course that wouldn't have come through it unless he was there (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Raising other pupils' awareness of the difficulties faced by young people with special needs was identified as an outcome by interviewees within a preventative-type intervention. It was felt that the inclusion of young people with a wide range of special needs within mainstream classes had made other pupils within the school more aware of the difficulties young people with special needs experienced.

Finally, a teacher in one mainstream intervention felt that s/he was able to give other pupils in the class more of his/her time because disengaged youngsters were receiving additional support: '*If two or three are in the* [name of provision], *it's good because I can allocate more of my time to the ones in the classroom*' (subject teacher, mainstream intervention).

Impact 2: Teachers/staff

In a number of instances, positive outcomes and developments for teaching staff working with disengaged young people were noted. These included:

- **greater differentiation**
- **better information/support available**
- **a sense of personal satisfaction**
- **acquiring new skills.**

Several interviewees identified impacts relating to the development of greater differentiation of the curriculum by teachers/staff because they were teaching youngsters involved in the provision. Thus, teachers and staff were adapting their teaching styles and approaches in order to include young people with special needs within mainstream classes, for example. This was seen as a '*learning experience*' for some members of staff. Furthermore, a senior manager within a preventative intervention also highlighted that the introduction of this initiative had led to greater awareness amongst principal teachers of the need to differentiate curriculum materials. The provision of support classes had, to a greater extent, exposed the learning needs of the pupils involved and, as a direct consequence, had also highlighted that some of the curriculum materials used were inappropriate for some pupils' needs.

Generally, within mainstream interventions, departments were responsible for providing young people with work if they were attending learning support units. This was seen by one senior manager as an effective strategy to ensure that work was sufficiently differentiated. He observed that occasionally work had to be returned to departments because, for example, youngsters were unable to read it. He felt that this approach kept departments '*on their toes*'. Furthermore, the incorporation of increasing numbers of disengaged youngsters within mainstream provision, at college for example, had led to a revision of the courses available. The college curriculum had been adapted to suit the needs of the students.

Provision staff were viewed by other teachers and staff as an additional and important source of **information** and **support**. For example, they were able to provide specialist advice, such as careers advice for young people with special needs. They were also providing additional support for teachers such as strategies to use with disengaged youngsters in the classroom.

Teachers and staff working with young people also highlighted the **personal rewards** and **satisfaction** they received from working with disengaged youngsters or those at risk of disengagement. Their satisfaction was linked to their success in re-engaging youngsters and seeing them succeed within an educational environment. Staff working with the most challenging young people acknowledged that the rewards were great '*when things go right*'. Personal satisfaction was also linked to the opportunity for staff to develop a relationship with these youngsters because they were working with them on a more intensive basis. Staff had time to get to know youngsters because

they were working with them in smaller classes, or in small groups, or on a one-to-one basis. Mentors observed that they had changed their own attitudes to young people, particularly those with problems, and that being involved in the programme had raised issues for them they would not have thought of before. Mentors also commented on the great personal satisfaction that they felt from being involved in the provision: it was their opportunity to '*give something back*' to the community.

Finally, adults and staff involved in provision for disengaged youngsters observed that they were **learning new skills**. As well as those relating to differentiating the curriculum, it was noted that schools' involvement in a business mentoring programme had provided staff with opportunities to learn additional skills and strategies from the business mentors working with pupils. Conversely, a mentoring coordinator from one of the schools also felt that the programme had reinforced his staff's awareness of their own abilities to work with disengaged youngsters. It was a '*revelation*' to him to see how nervous successful business people could be, when faced with 13- and 14-year-old youngsters. He observed: '*We don't realise how skilled we are at dealing with young people*'. Impacts relating to the enhancement of work-related skills were identified by both mentors and managers within the mentoring programme. Involvement in mentoring was seen to have assisted mentors in developing a wide range of work-related skills and competencies including: inter-personal skills; confidence; organisation/presentation skills; time management skills; and peer relationships within the workplace.

Impact 3: Community

Beneficial outcomes of the provisions for the community itself were highlighted in a number of instances. One impact, highlighted by interviewees within preventative-type interventions, related to increased awareness within the community. Interviewees observed that the active involvement of young people with special needs in the community, for example via work experience, meant that the local community was more aware of, and understood, what pupils with special needs had to offer. An example of corporate involvement in a pupil mentoring programme in local schools had resulted in businesses becoming more involved in the community and more aware of community issues. Businesses themselves felt that their involvement in mentoring had also raised their profile within the local community.

A number of the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions focused on involving young people in community projects, and thus not only benefited individual youngsters, but also had positive outcomes for the local community in general. Young people's involvement in community projects provided practical support for environmental and social initiatives, such as working on a local canal project, working in a children's nursery, and redecorating a day centre for the elderly. This involvement also raised the profile of projects within the local area and assisted in creating a positive image both for the project and the young people involved.

Finally, a reduction in young people's rates of offending was said to have had a positive impact on the local community. As one interviewee highlighted, positive outcomes for the local community were not just related to a reduction in young people's offending behaviours, but also to a reduction in their '*nuisance*' behaviours in the community.

Impact 4: Home/families

Sometimes, interviewees also noted the beneficial outcomes for parents and carers. Those interventions which provided parents/carers with support, and also suggested strategies for managing young people's behaviour at home, inevitably impacted on relationships at home. The majority of these impacts were identified by interviewees from the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. Outcomes cited included:

- **an increase in stability at home**
- **a general improvement in relationships at home**
- **a positive effect on the family, a 'quietening down' at home.**

One parent felt that it had brought the family '*right back to where we were*' before their child started having problems.

Parents also felt that relationships with their children were less stressful because they knew '*where they were*' and '*what they were doing*'. These were young people who had not been attending school and had often been involved in offending and drug misuse. Thus, parents were extremely relieved that their children were involved in something positive which was also going to increase their educational and work-related opportunities.

Young people's involvement in these interventions was also said to have changed parents' attitudes towards their children. For example, a provider within a preventative-type intervention observed that the parents of some children with special needs were surprised at their child's progress and their ability to access work experience and college placements independently. Participation in the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions also gave parents opportunities to see their children in an environment in which they were succeeding. One provider in particular said that he had brought fathers into the project to urge them not to be so hard on their sons – to '*give them a chance*', because their sons were '*good*'. This was seen as an important strategy because parents were likely to have had '*endless meetings*' focusing on their child's negative behaviours throughout their school careers, so it was important for them to hear that their children were '*doing good things*' and achieving. A further outcome identified by providers within a reclaimed disengaged type of provision was an improvement in parents' attitude towards themselves. They observed that parents often had very low self-esteem which could be boosted by receiving positive reports about their children and seeing them achieve educationally, perhaps for the first time in a number of years.

Impact 5: Agencies/organisations

Finally, working with other agencies and organisations was seen to have positive outcomes in relation to:

- **improved interagency working**
- **staff development**
- **resource implications.**

A number of stated impacts related to a maintenance of, or an improvement in, **interagency working** connected with the interventions. For example, a careers adviser working with young people with special educational needs was using his role to enhance interagency working between social work and the careers service. The programme, focusing on members of the business community mentoring school pupils, was also seen to be breaking down barriers and improving interaction between schools and local businesses. The existence of a successful joint education/social work intervention for disengaged youngsters was seen to be assisting in maintaining a good working relationship between the agencies, and had established liaison systems which had been successfully utilised in other initiatives.

Staff development was raised as an impact, specifically by one of the businesses involved in a mentoring programme. Mentoring was viewed as an ideal opportunity for staff development, particularly for those employees who were in a position to take on more responsibility but did not have the opportunity to do this within the remit of their own jobs. This organisation also viewed its involvement in mentoring as a way of marketing the company to prospective future employees.

In addition, a senior manager from a reclaimed disengaged-type intervention noted an impact on **resources**. He observed that the money saved by the project successfully preventing young people from being accommodated in a residential placement allowed resources to be diverted elsewhere for other projects.

Table 5.2 summarises the stated impacts and outcomes on the young people. These effects were identified by senior managers, providers, other staff, young people and parents/carers.

Table 5.2 Stated impacts and outcomes: young people

Advancement in learning • Basic skills • Vocational/practical skills • Accessing mainstream curriculum • Social/life skills • General improvement in learning	**Positive transition/progression** • Work • Education • Vocational training • Positive transition in general
Advancement in achievement • Academic qualifications • Accredited courses • Vocational qualifications • General improvement in achievement	**Increased awareness** • Work-related opportunities • Educational opportunities • Personal skills and abilities • Future opportunities in general
Behaviour modification • Improved attendance • Calmer/improved self-control • Maturation • Prevention/ reduction in exclusions • Reduction in/cessation of offending • Reduction in/cessation of drugs' misuse • Maintained within community • General improvement in behaviour	**Relationship development** • Parents • Peers • Teachers/staff • Police • Local community • Relationships in general
Psychological and physical well-being • Increase in confidence • Increase in self-esteem • Sense of achievement • Less stress/anxiety • Greater continuity/stability • General contentment • Improvement in physical fitness	**Improved communication skills** • Parents • Others generally
Attitudinal change • To school • To education/training • To career • To adults • To police • To the future • In general	**Reintegration/integration** • Return to mainstream education • Maintained within school/class • Greater community participation • Maintained within community

6. KEY FACTORS IN EFFECTIVENESS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the elements identified as being key factors in the effectiveness of provisions and initiatives – in essence, what it is that makes a difference in the delivery of the curriculum to disengaged young people. An overview, based on data derived from the telephone interviews, is followed by a detailed analysis of information collected during the case-study phase of the research.

6.2 Key factors in effectiveness: the telephone interview phase

Telephone interviewees were asked to identify the factors which they felt played a key role in re-engaging young people in learning, and these were divided into two main categories.

- **Personnel and personal issues**

Interviewees noted that the effectiveness of a provision stemmed from the qualities and characteristics of the staff involved. The nature of relationships amongst and between those attending, delivering, or otherwise associated with, a provision was also seen as contributing to its effectiveness. These included peer relationships, relationships between staff and young people and also the quality of interagency working. Within this broad category, interviewees also noted that effectiveness depended considerably on provisions being 'young person focused' and on young people taking responsibility for their own education.

- **Learning-orientated issues**

Interviewees asserted that the content or curriculum offered by a provision was a key factor of effectiveness. Young people had to be presented with appropriate, relevant and achievable activities in order to successfully re-engage with learning. Similarly, interviewees also highlighted the effectiveness of a positive approach and the importance of building young people's self-confidence and self-esteem.

A wide range of factors was thus presented as being central to re-engaging young people in learning. Whilst there were many similarities in the key factors identified by interviewees working in schools, colleges and other organisations, some differences did emerge. Those working in other organisations were more likely to cite the importance of young people taking

responsibility for their own learning, whilst school- and college-based interviewees were more likely to focus on factors more explicitly related to learning and teaching, curriculum and pedagogical factors.

Set against the telephone interview data, complex patterns can be seen to exist in terms of the key factors emerging from the case-study interview data.

6.3 Key factors in effectiveness: the case-study phase

In the case-study phase of the research, young people, parents/carers, and operational- and strategic-level interviewees highlighted a wide range of factors relating to effectiveness. Many of these factors mirrored those identified by interviewees in previous research by Kinder *et al.* (2000), which focused on provision for young people excluded from school in England and Wales. This in itself may be a highly important finding. The following analysis considers four main groups of factors:

- **the characteristics of the provision**
- **the appropriateness and suitability of provision content**
- **staff and staffing issues**
- **relationships.**

The components of each group are presented and discussed in turn, followed by a summary table of each main category of factors.

6.3.1 Effectiveness factor: the characteristics of the provision

Interviewees noted that the characteristics of the contexts in which the curriculum was delivered were vitally important for re-engaging young people with learning. The following categories of provision characteristics were identified as key factors of effectiveness:

- **actual presence**
- **clarity of definition**
- **ambience and environment**
- **conceptual basis and ethos**
- **selection processes.**

Representatives of reclaimed disengaged-type provisions commented that an underlying factor of the effectiveness of such provisions stemmed from their very existence, i.e. **the actual presence of the provision or initiative.**

A senior manager, for example, asserted that one particular project was regarded, on a fundamental level, as being somewhere for these particular young people to go and something for them to do: '*Without this, these kids would be non-attenders, at home causing all sorts of problems, drinking, offending, using substances*' (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision). Effectiveness sprang from the notion that it '*keeps kids in their own communities*' rather than these young people being placed in residential accommodation. As well as these social benefits of reducing residential placements, this provision was said to have the advantage of relieving social services' financial burden, allowing resources to be effectively targeted elsewhere (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Similarly, another reclaimed disengaged-type provision was deemed to be effective by an operational-level staff member as it provided an alternative, or diversionary, focus for young people. The project staff endeavoured to inspire the young people to engage in activities that did not involve them '*hanging around with other offenders*' in their communities (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Provisions were also said to be effective as a result of **clarity of definition**, i.e. a clear presentation and understanding of their remit and what their purpose was. For example, a support base was regarded as being effective as it was known to have been specifically designed to '*take pupils through the process of rejoining the educational system*' (manager, mainstream provision). Similarly, several other interventions were seen to be effective because of the ways in which they were presented and perceived; they were not 'sin bins', but regarded as '*a place where they could be helped in school and not just excluded from class*' (senior manager, mainstream provision).

Interviewees highlighted key factors of effectiveness which related to the **ambience** and **environment** of a particular provision or initiative. Young people, parents, and operational- and strategic-level interviewees all identified small class or group sizes as being a significant factor of effectiveness. Pupils asserted that the smaller number of pupils in learning support bases, for example, led them to find it easier to access the teachers, and to receive more attention from them than they did in the ordinary school setting. Being in an environment with fewer people was also seen to facilitate increased concentration because of the reduced potential for distractions. Pupils attending a mainstream intervention, for example, noted that '*when I'm sitting by myself, I can work better; there are not a lot of folk in here and I get a chance to do work*'. The parent/carer of one of these youngsters carried this point further by noting that '*when he's in a big class, he can sort of slip into the background and do nothing, if he gets the chance*'. Hence, small provisions were also regarded as being effective because of their increased monitoring/supervision characteristics.

Similarly, pupils were considered to be more able to access the curriculum in environments where it was easier to focus on their work. A teacher noted that a mainstream intervention was effective in re-engaging pupils as

the temptation to '*play to the gallery*' was removed from some pupils. The small size of this support base was deemed to be '*congenial*' to learning and helping pupils to concentrate on work, rather than being distracted in a large classroom setting.

In addition to facilitating easier access to the curriculum through reducing the opportunities for distraction, the small size of a provision was generally seen as being an essential basis for positively re-engaging young people in the educational process. Small provisions were said to be effective because of the ambience and atmosphere they fostered. Several pupils noted that they '*felt more comfortable*' in smaller classes, and a parent of a pupil attending a mainstream-type provision stressed that his/her child was happier and able to achieve more in a '*protected*' environment. S/he was said to be less anxious about having a lot of work to catch up on because s/he '*doesn't have to look round all the time, worrying about who is looking*'.

A managerial-level interviewee noted that a particular preventative-type mentoring project was effective as it provided young people with a stable environment and a degree of continuity/certainty in their otherwise '*chaotic lives*'. Similarly, an operational-level interviewee asserted that the effectiveness of a learning support base stemmed from the fact that it provided '*security for vulnerable children*' (senior educational psychologist, mainstream provision).

Young people, and operational- and managerial-level staff representing reclaimed disengaged-type provisions, were the interviewees most likely to identify relaxed, supportive and secure environments as being key factors of effectiveness. For example, a community education worker noted that a particular initiative was effective because it offered young people a different environment to school, which involved them '*not being told what to do all the time*' and where staff were '*not talking down to them like teachers do*'. In addition, young people and staff all sat at a round table – symbolising equality – and young people were permitted to eat and drink whilst attending classes/sessions at the provision. A young person attending a different project noted that small classrooms, small group size and the less rigid environment contributed to the provision's success: '*you can have a break and have a chat and a coffee; it's not like high school*'. A welfare professional noted that this particular young person felt that '*this is a safe place for* [him/her] *to be, and if things are approached the right way,* [s/he] *can actually talk about what's bothering* [him/her]' (social worker). This project was said to be effective as it provided young people with '*time and space to sort themselves out if there's a problem*', being less constrained than school and with fewer sources for potential conflict. The following comments reflect the importance of providing young people with appropriate contexts for learning; '*many of the young people that attend* [the project] *are not disengaged from learning; they are just disengaged from learning in the school environment ... When they come here, they gobble the work up*' (development manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Several pupils also noted the relaxed atmosphere of a provision as being particularly conducive to encouraging positive interaction with their peers and participation in lessons and activities. The relaxed atmosphere of a provision was also said, by operational-level interviewees, to facilitate learning and success. Young people were said to be able to '*achieve*' in non-pressured environments, where they had '*no one breathing down their necks about what went wrong before*' (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision). A guidance counsellor reinforced these sentiments with reference to a mainstream provision which involved the use of first names and '*friendly*' relationships: '*the only way these kids will want to learn is if you provide them with an environment in which they feel comfortable*'.

Effectiveness was also seen to derive from the fact that provisions could provide young people with some respite, particularly from school. This was especially apparent in the comments of interviewees representing preventative and mainstream-type provisions. For example, a mainstream initiative was considered by a strategic-level interviewee to be effective, as it provided pupils with a 'space' in which they could prepare to fit back into school. The manager of a mentoring project asserted that an initiative was highly effective because it allowed pupils '*time out*', and gave them a '*haven*' from the stress of school (manager, mainstream provision). An operational-level interviewee also stated that a particular mainstream-type provision was effective because it provided young people with '*a safe haven where they can talk through their difficulties and stop things from escalating*' (teacher).

The **conceptual basis** and **ethos** of the provision also featured as a key factor. Preventative and mainstream initiatives were deemed to be successful because of their integrated, non-segregated nature and orientation. That is, effectiveness stemmed from the efforts made to ensure that support and additional help were made available within the structures and contexts of 'ordinary' mainstream education. For example, a teacher in a school operating a preventative initiative noted that it was effective because pupils attended the support base '*as and when necessary*'. A strategic-level interviewee echoed and expanded this view, suggesting that a key factor of effectiveness stemmed from the fact that there was '*no special unit*' in the school. All the pupils received a mainstream education, but support for particular subjects or issues was available in a tutorial support base. By way of contrast, a mainstream intervention was said to be effective because it was based on, and promoted the development of, a special group identity within the rest of the school. Feelings of '*belonging*' and '*identity*' amongst participants were encouraged in order to boost their self-esteem and confidence, and to combat the stigma and negativity from other pupils who were not involved, promoting the notion that they were '*special, but not inferior*' within the school.

Interviewees stressed the importance of developing an appropriate tone or feel surrounding or encapsulating a provision. A teacher in a mainstream initiative, for example, noted that effectiveness involved '*trying to make*

them feel welcome in the classroom'. A guidance counsellor asserted that in order to be effective, the atmosphere of a mainstream provision had to be '*totally different to school ... I wanted to make the ... experience very different from the school experience. Whatever they did at school, I don't do*'. Hence, mainstream, preventative and reclaimed disengaged-type provisions were said to be effective because of their approaches and orientations towards young people. Operational- and strategic-level interviewees stressed the necessity for the young people to have positive, uplifting and constructive experiences whilst attending these provisions. Many interviewees, including the manager of a mainstream pupil support base, and a community education officer also representing a mainstream-type intervention, spoke of the need for a 'person-centred' approach in order for a provision to be effective. A behaviour support teacher noted that such lessons should be learned and then acted on in the mainstream educational setting, when s/he asserted that the '*child-centred approach*' of primary should be adapted and applied to the '*curriculum-driven*' secondary environment (mainstream provision).

It was said that, in order to be effective, the provision and the approach it employed, had to be supportive and constructive rather than confrontational in the eyes of young people. Staff had to be seen as '*friends*' rather than '*teachers at school*' who were often perceived as representing the '*enemy*' (teacher, mainstream provision). A social worker commented that '*the approach from adults is the most important thing – a teenage-friendly approach – "we value you and we're going to look for your potential and help you reach your potential"*' (reclaimed disengaged provision). Thus, young people in general, and those attending reclaimed disengaged-type provisions in particular, had to be '*approached in the right way, at the right level, on their level, if there's to be any success*' (instructor/provider reclaimed disengaged provision). Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to '*work with them in a holistic way*' in an attempt to address the problems prohibiting engagement with learning (instructor/provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Openness was identified as an essential component which underpinned the appropriate ethos of an effective provision. A teacher declared that a reclaimed disengaged initiative was effective because everything was out in the open, '*everything is shared*'. Young people attending this project were required to fill in self-assessment sheets, and then the staff completed other sections in full view of the young people so that nothing was said or written '*behind closed doors*'. In addition to this emphasis on honesty, the importance of staff's willingness to draw a line under the previous lives of the young people attending the provision was also highlighted. Pupils '*come here with a clean slate. It doesn't matter what they've done before, it's an opportunity for a fresh start*' (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The ethos of another reclaimed disengaged-type provision was said to be effective because it operated on the lines that '*as many chances as they need, they get*' (centre manager, reclaimed disengaged provision). Young

people attending this project were said to be aware that they would never be excluded from the project, and this had immediate, positive impacts on the way they acted. '*No matter how bad you are,* [exclusion is not an option] *so don't try that on with us*' (centre manager, reclaimed disengaged provision). Such projects were deemed to be effective as they did not contain elements, or sources of conflict and confrontation.

Positive feedback, encouragement and the 'praise culture' characterised effective provision. A strategic-level interviewee noted that the staff working at a reclaimed disengaged-type provision would not reprimand young people for late arrival, but would focus on a positive aspect by saying '*well done for getting here – pleased to see you*'.

Interviewees contended that effectiveness stemmed from the ability or intent of a provision to raise the awareness and expectations held of, and by, young people. A teacher working in a preventative-type provision, for example, noted that '*they appreciate that we had high expectations of them, they weren't in a support class because we thought they couldn't cope. They were there because we thought they could cope, but we wanted them to be able to cope better than they were*' (teacher, preventative provision). Hence, developing the belief amongst pupils that teachers thought they were able to achieve was said to be a highly effective motivating factor.

The environment of a provision was seen to play a significant role in this. A guidance teacher suggested that because a mainstream-type provision was college- rather than school-based, it contributed to raising young people's awareness of where their strengths were and what they would like to do in the future. The senior manager of this intervention also noted that it was effective because of the ways in which teachers' perceptions of young people had changed, as had pupils' own self-expectations and self-confidence.

A senior manager of a vehicle project also stated that during the course of their initial interview, young people were informed of the behaviour and outcomes that were expected of them. They were told that they were expected to respond positively to the treatment they would receive in ordinary workplace environments and '*to make it on their own in the real world*' (reclaimed disengaged provision).

The comments of a provider/teacher involved with a reclaimed disengaged-type initiative perhaps draw together and illustrate the combination of such key factors of effectiveness:

> *creating the right atmosphere ... a warm, caring environment ... we are non-judgemental and non-threatening ... we work in a humanistic way. We try to be honest, warm and genuine with them ... try to respect them as individuals, and we try to accept their behaviours.*

Selection processes. Several interviewees noted that the composition and make-up of young people attending a provision, and the ways in which they were selected, were key factors of the effectiveness of all three provision types. Effective targeting was deemed necessary in order to reach the young people who would benefit from attending the initiative. A senior educational psychologist, for example, noted that a mainstream initiative was effective as a result of the '*careful selection of pupils*'. It was deemed necessary to '*target well and comprehensively*' as it was not always the case that '*the ones that make the most noise are the ones that need the most help: sometimes pupils disengage by becoming quieter*'. Hence, effectiveness was underpinned by the negotiation of supply and demand – matching pupil need with what the provision could offer.

The early identification of pupil needs was regarded as underpinning the effectiveness of mainstream provisions. One behaviour support teacher, for example, noted the importance of identifying the specific problems (or potential problems) of children whilst they were still attending primary school. In this way, it was deemed possible to '*establish their strengths and identify where special support was needed*' and '*develop a strategy before they even start at secondary*' (mainstream provision). Similarly, a guidance teacher, also working in a mainstream provision, noted that the effectiveness of early identification arose from the chance to '*try and prevent children disappearing down the tubes*'.

The composition of several provisions was also regarded as being a key factor in their effectiveness. A social worker, for example, noted that a reclaimed disengaged-type initiative was an effective provision for a particular young person, because all the others in attendance had similar experiences and shared similar circumstances. Hence, this young person was said to have felt that he had nothing to prove and that '*they weren't going to isolate him*'. A strategic-level interviewee representing a preventative provision noted that '*if the pupils are happy in their social group, our job is half done*', something also mentioned by pupils attending this provision.

Finally, a strategic-level interviewee noted that well-managed gatekeeping was the key to the effectiveness of a reclaimed disengaged-type provision, as an '*inappropriate mix*' of young people, or too many young people arriving too quickly, could lead to problems. Furthermore, it was asserted that '*small is beautiful*', making this project highly manageable.

The main characteristics of a provision which contribute to its effectiveness are summarised in Table 6.1 overleaf.

Table 6.1 Summary of the characteristics of the provision which contribute to its effectiveness

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROVISION	
Actual presence	• maintains young people in their communities • diverts young people away from possibly harmful and unlawful activity, provides constructive alternatives • reduces costs associated with residential placements
Clear definition	• clarity of understanding – provision's aims and intentions
Ambience and environment	• small class/group sizes – fewer distractions, closer monitoring/supervision by staff/teachers, increased access to the curriculum • safe, comfortable, relaxed context for learning • different from ordinary school contexts • respite, '*time-out*' function • '*haven*' from stress of school
Conceptual basis and ethos	• non-segregated, inclusionary ethos • development of provision-based identity • welcoming, constructive, positive atmosphere • person-centred approach – '*teenage-friendly*' • openness and honesty • opportunities for fresh starts and clean slates • non-threatening approach • non-judgemental approach • praise and encouragement: 'praise culture' • raising expectations
Selection processes	• effective targeting of provision • early identification of need • appropriate group composition

6.3.2 Effectiveness factor: the appropriateness and suitability of provision content

Interviewees noted that effectiveness relied heavily on young people's willingness and ability to re-engage with learning. As such, the learning content on offer had to be seen to be relevant to, and have meaning for, them. The main categories of factors which were said to be effective in achieving this were:

- **personal and social focus**
- **an appropriate curriculum/content**
- **issues of accreditation.**

An educational content which focused on addressing and developing the **personal** and **social aspects** of young people's lives was considered by many operational- and strategic-level interviewees, to be a vital key factor in the effectiveness of a provision or initiative.

Several representatives of preventative and mainstream-type provisions highlighted activities and initiatives which aimed to raise the self-esteem of young people as being important key factors of effectiveness. This was seen by one senior manager of a preventative provision as being of particular importance, especially in the light of his/her interpretations of local contexts and circumstances. The young people attending this particular school were understood to be '*self-effacing*' and unwilling to acknowledge their abilities or achievements. Hence, this preventative-type initiative aimed to increase pupils' self-esteem through specifically designed '*self-esteem projects*' and the pursuit of achievement certificates. Raising self-esteem was said to be a long-term target in the overall school plan, but this was seen as being a '*long, slow process*'.

Key factors of effectiveness highlighted by operational-level staff from mainstream-type initiatives included the employment of techniques and approaches designed to raise self-esteem, such as '*positive reinforcement and encouragement.*' A mainstream support base which was '*well stocked with computers*' was also seen by a support teacher to be effective in developing the self-esteem of pupils with literacy and writing difficulties. A teacher involved in another mainstream-type provision noted that it was necessary for the resources employed in a tutorial support base to be equal to, or of better quality than, those available in the ordinary school setting, to symbolise the importance and validity of the base.

Interviewees representing reclaimed disengaged-type provisions also stressed the importance of trying to boost young people's self-esteem and confidence. According to the manager of a vehicle project, praise and encouragement were necessary in order to build, or rebuild, young people's sense of self worth as '*they've been trod on for years by their teachers and their parents*'. It was seen as essential to encourage success through '*positive affirmation*' and to constantly focus on the positive aspects or areas of young people's lives. A key factor of effectiveness was the drive to ensure that, whilst attending the provision, young people succeeded at something and that such successes were celebrated. Consequently, events such as 'Parents' Day', were seen as being particularly valuable tools of re-engagement: '*However bad they are, they get a report that says they've done well at something, for the first time for many*' (provider, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Hence, re-engagement with learning involved the remotivation of young people through addressing the perception and management of 'self'. Interviewees noted a range of effective measures or strategies employed towards this end, including focusing on the social and communication skills of young people. For example, the assistant manager of a reclaimed disengaged-type provision noted that by sitting with the young people during lunch and break times, the staff were able to engage in the indirect teaching of social and interactive skills and behaviour. Similarly, accompanying them on trips into the wider community, demonstrating what was, and what was not, acceptable behaviour, was deemed to be highly effective in facilitating the re-engagement of these young people: '*Some people call it*

zero tolerance, but if you take care of the small things [such as not shouting or swearing in public, not smoking on buses], *the big things take care of themselves*'.

Re-engagement through the development of life skills was also considered to be a highly effective strategy underpinning a college-based component of a mainstream-type initiative as it '*provided some sort of routine into otherwise fairly chaotic lives*' and '*inspired enjoyment*' for the young people (senior manager, mainstream provision). Such conditions were seen to be the necessary prerequisites for any further engagement with learning, and in some cases, constituted the ends themselves. A behaviour support teacher, for example, noted that the pursuit of social and life skills was highly effective as it worked towards '*really meeting the fundamental needs of these young people, so that even if they don't get academic achievement, they can communicate within their environment*' (mainstream provision). Other interviewees also remarked that preventative and mainstream-type interventions were effective as they helped young people to develop '*coping strategies*', be they related to the negotiation of classroom or wider contexts and settings (head of pupil support base, mainstream provision).

Social and personal development was regarded as an effective means of reorientating young people towards learning and education. It was deemed necessary to foster and encourage the belief in young people's abilities and show how learning had a bearing on their futures. A mentor participating in a preventative-type provision, for example, noted that the programme was effective as it encouraged young people '*to get themselves educated*' and made them realise that education was essential for securing employment in the future. A strategic-level interviewee reiterated these sentiments, commenting that effectiveness came from instilling young people with senses of ownership of, and responsibility for, **their** education, '*making the kids realise that it's up to them*' (preventative provision). In a similar way, a strategic-level interviewee stressed that a key factor in the effectiveness of a mainstream-type provision was that, through a focus on personal and social factors, young people were able to 'reconnect', or re-establish their relationship with learning in general, and school in particular. This provision aimed to make pupils believe that just because they had previously had troubles or difficulties, it was not the end of their relationship with the school, by giving them '*time and attention, we listen to them and try to come to an arrangement where they accept what they've done. ... get them back into the feeling that they're part of the school,* [they've] *got to aspire to be part of the school community*' (senior manager, mainstream provision).

The reorientation of educational and learning approaches was also seen as being a significant factor in the effectiveness of provisions and initiatives. Principally, effectiveness stemmed from ensuring that pupils were '*not set up to fail*' (drugs project officer, reclaimed disengaged provision) and that the content and the experience of the provision were constructive: '*Make learning a positive thing, not a chore*' (community education officer, mainstream provision). Consequently, measures such as lowering the

'*pressure*' associated with ordinary schooling by reducing a provision's timetable were deemed to be highly effective, enabling young people to '*cope with the workload*' (strategic-level interviewee, mainstream provision). A young person attending a reclaimed disengaged-type provision noted the effectiveness of a less pressured timetable: '*Here you get to lie in in the morning. It gives me time for my brain to think, rather than getting up early in the morning, just walking about and not knowing where you are – it's too early.*'

As well as the approach or ethos underpinning the learning environment, the **nature** and **characteristics of the curriculum** or content on offer were seen to be key factors of potential effectiveness. Interviewees stressed the importance of reducing the pressure on young people, and lowering their chances of failing, by offering alternatives to 'conventional' education. A teacher at a reclaimed disengaged-type provision, for example, suggested that young people had previously engaged with education and school, but had failed, so were unwilling, or unable, to re-engage. Consequently, alternative contents were necessary to develop their self-belief. In a similar way, a behaviour support teacher working in a mainstream-type provision asserted that '*you have to look at alternatives before the kid fails*'. Similarly, '*if the kids are really high, trying to make them do academic work would be a waste of time*' (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision). A senior trainer working at a reclaimed disengaged-type provision also noted that effectiveness stemmed from moving away from the school curriculum as much as possible: '*It's entirely different from the school curriculum, but at the same time, they're still gaining their core skills.*' Practical and recreational-based learning meant that young people often did not realise that they were actually learning.

Interviewees representing all types of provision noted that the availability of individual programmes or packages of activities contributed significantly to the effectiveness of a particular initiative. Effectiveness was seen to involve the careful and considered matching of the content offered, to the needs of individual pupils. A behaviour support teacher working in a mainstream intervention, for example, noted that effectiveness stemmed from the direction and nature of activities being '*based on the particular needs, skills and talents of the individual child*'. This was said to be especially important for pupils with low literacy levels, as they were said to often perceive the curriculum as being irrelevant to them. Similarly, a provider/teacher noted that a reclaimed disengaged-type project was '*strong*' because it motivated young people through offering activities in which they were interested. Despite being effective practice, this approach was said to be very difficult to achieve, '*because some of them are just not interested in anything, other than alcohol, drugs and sex*'.

In addition, an effective provision was characterised as one in which the content and activities were also perceived as relevant and useful to the young people. Thus, the curriculum on offer had to be '*interesting*', '*varied*', and '*appropriate but challenging*' in order to successfully '*hook ... young people*

in' (teacher, guidance teacher, senior educational psychologist, mainstream provision). As a means of attempting to ensure such relevance, many interviewees noted the importance and effectiveness of including a strong practical, '*hands-on*' element: '*Kids nowadays don't want to write; they want to do*' (teacher at college, mainstream provision); '*So many kids are put off by sitting at a desk with a pen and paper. It gives them another way*' (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The inclusion of work experience placements and opportunities was highlighted as being a key factor of effectiveness by interviewees representing all three provision types. Work experience was seen as a valuable component of a provision's content as it provided young people with an opportunity to do something which they may enjoy doing, and so encouraged increased engagement with learning. Consequently, a careers teacher working in a preventative-type provision regarded work experience as highly effective because it extended the curriculum and offered young people '*interesting*' activities '*which they couldn't do in a small school like this*'. Work experience, and workplace visits were also deemed to be highly effective tools to be employed as they had the potential to broaden young people's horizons and provide insights into the opportunities and experiences of life after school/provision. Effectiveness stemmed from '*opening up the world of work to young people who might not otherwise have had access to it*' (careers manager, preventative provision). This was seen as being especially significant for young people whose home/family and community contexts were characterised by (long-term) unemployment. Work experience for these young people was a key factor of a provision's effectiveness, according to a teacher in a reclaimed disengaged-type provision, as it helped to '*inspire the belief that they can achieve and that they can find employment – opportunities do exist*'.

Activities with a recreational focus were also highlighted as being key factors in the effectiveness of provisions, especially those dealing with the most highly disaffected young people. Recreational activities were deemed to encourage attendance and participation as young people were seen to want to take part. Consequently, activities of this type could be used as vehicles for developing the social and life skills of young people as a basis for further engagement with learning.

Interviewees representing all three types of provision noted that effectiveness was increased when the content of both group and individual programmes was negotiated with the young people. It was seen as important to instil a sense of ownership amongst the young people, encouraging them to actively participate in planning and carrying out activities. This was especially so for young people attending reclaimed disengaged-type provisions: '*It's a hands-on approach and the kids feel they can have a say. It's not dictatorial. It's a two-way street, and it's flexible; the kids have an input into how the course is run*' (sports coach).

Thus, the notions of pupil choice, and the ability of a provision to be sensitive, and responsive to, both the needs and wishes of young people, were regarded as being key factors of effectiveness. A teacher noted that the effectiveness of a reclaimed disengaged-type provision related to '*the fact that they're able to do something, be able to make choices, the kids are able to choose something they're interested in at least some of the time*'. Furthermore, the length of time spent on particular activities was also negotiated with the young people. For example, if the young people did not want to do a certain activity at a particular time, the group had the autonomy to decide when it would be done, and what would immediately replace it. Effectiveness stemmed from not imposing the curriculum or learning activities upon young people. It was important that young people were given '*a chance to say that they don't like it*' (manager, preventative mentoring project).

Interviewees noted that provisions could only be effective when the needs of pupils were successfully met, and in order to do this, it was recognised that it was necessary for flexibility in the content or curriculum on offer to the young people. A strategic-level interviewee, for example, claimed that a reclaimed disengaged-type provision was effective because of the ability to tailor programmes and activities to the dynamic needs of groups and individuals as a result of staff not being '*as constrained as mainstream teachers*' (senior manager). Similarly, a teacher also noted that another project was effective as staff were able to '*develop our own curriculum*' and focus on meeting individual needs.

Issues of accreditation also featured as a key factor of effectiveness. Several interviewees noted that it was important for young people to have access to formal qualifications where Standard Grade success was unlikely. A mainstream-type initiative was considered by its coordinator to be highly effective because it had '*tinkered*' with the mainstream educational system and provided a viable alternative to Standard Grade activities. Although the young people were disaffected and disengaged, a '*curriculum initiative, rather than a behaviour initiative*' was introduced. The pursuit of a nationally accredited certificate – ASDAN Youth Award – was initiated to meet the needs of the young people, which the mainstream curriculum was failing to do. This alternative route was deemed to be effective because '*it play*[ed] *to the young person's strengths, rather than their weaknesses*' (coordinator, mainstream provision). In working on strengths, staff and young people were then able to work on weaknesses.

The main characteristics of a provision's content which contribute to its effectiveness are summarised in Table 6.2 overleaf.

Table 6.2 Summary of the characteristics of the provision's content which contribute to its effectiveness

THE PROVISION CONTENT	
Personal and social focus	• raising self-esteem • techniques such as '*positive reinforcement and encouragement*' • availability of good-quality resources • ensure achievement and success • celebrate achievement and success • reinforce young people's belief in their potential/ future • make learning '*a positive thing, not a chore*'
An appropriate curriculum/ content	• individual programmes/packages ensure success by offering content/activities relevant and interesting to young people • different to school work • practical component • importance of work experience – extension of curriculum, develop insights into the '*world of work*' • negotiating content with young people • choice • flexibility of content/curriculum
Accreditation	• opportunity to achieve viable alternative accreditation and nationally recognised awards

6.3.3 Effectiveness factor: staff and staffing issues

Many interviewees stressed that having sufficient quantities of the 'right' staff and teachers underpinned the effectiveness of a provision. The range of factors identified has been divided into the following categories:

- **availability of additional and specialist support teachers**
- **flexibility of staff and the provision/intervention**
- **personal attributes and appropriate qualities of staff**
- **status/position of staff.**

The **availability of additional and specialist support teachers** in the learning environment was seen as a significant factor by young people in particular. Several pupils noted that the presence of extra teachers in the classroom environment made accessing the curriculum easier for them as class/group discipline was increased. A pupil attending a preventative-type provision suggested that having several teachers in a classroom meant that individual attention was increased and the momentum of work was maintained by one teacher addressing any problems whilst the other concentrated on work-related issues. The presence of auxiliary teachers in the classroom was identified by a pupil attending a mainstream-type

provision as being effective because of the additional support s/he received: '*It just helps me to be the same as the rest of the class.*' Other pupils also noted that such teachers were able to assist through scribing for them and generally helping them with their work.

Support teachers were considered to be effective in giving pupils increased points of contact in the school. This was identified by a pupil attending a preventative-type provision, who noted that the knowledge that guidance teachers were readily available in the school helped to combat alienation and fostered feelings of belonging. This was seen to have encouraged an easier transition from primary to secondary school.

The **flexibility** and **versatility** of teachers' approaches were seen as effective techniques in '*trying to find what will turn that child back on, or take away whatever the problem is*'. It was asserted that '*you go about that by having as many strings to your bow as possible. If one doesn't work, try another*' (guidance teacher, mainstream provision). Flexibility regarding issues of time and timing was also noted as being a key factor of a provision's effectiveness. The senior manager of a mainstream-type intervention, for example, stressed the importance of a provision's ability to respond to, and accommodate, the young people's volatility, and the effects of community-based factors/influences. It was said that adhering to set timetables could be very problematic, and a strength of a provision stemmed from its spontaneity, meaning that it was often '*reactive rather than proactive*' in delivering a programme to young people (senior manager, mainstream provision).

Pupils, parents, and operational- and strategic-level interviewees representing all provision types noted that the **personal attributes** and **characteristics of staff** were vitally important factors in the effectiveness of provisions. Pupils, for example, noted the effectiveness of the positive manner and friendly nature of staff. One teacher in a mainstream-type provision was described as '*brilliant ... she's pleasant to work with, to talk to, she's just pleasant*', whilst the effectiveness of another such provision was seen to stem from the positive, happy attitude of a particular staff member: '*she's got a positive attitude ... more like a friend than a teacher. You don't fail your tests anymore because of* [the teacher's] *positive attitude.*' Finally, one pupil asserted that re-engagement was facilitated by the approachability and '*human qualities*' of a teacher: '[name of teacher] *is a good Samaritan gone bad*' (mainstream provision).

Operational- and strategic-level interviewees also noted such personal attributes, as well as highlighting additional related factors of effectiveness. Operational staff – chiefly providers and teachers – generally noted the ability of staff to relate to, manage and understand the pupils, their needs, their behaviour and their problems. One teacher in a preventative provision spoke of the importance of teachers' deep understandings of the pupils. A support teacher working in a mainstream-type provision noted that '*kids*

must feel that support teachers are approachable and trustworthy'. The presence of '*non-judgemental, resilient staff*' was regarded by a behaviour support teacher as contributing significantly to the effectiveness of a mainstream-type intervention. Another teacher asserted that '*if they think you like them* [pupils], *that makes a very big difference to them*' (mainstream provision).

Strategic-level staff also noted the effectiveness of such staff characteristics, and introduced several others, especially relating to teachers' abilities to effectively 'manage' these young people. For example, a manager of a mainstream intervention highlighted the '*importance of the personalities of the people actually dealing with the kids ... they need to be caring and need to be able to cope with their anger, to be able to cope with them throwing a tantrum, using bad language*'.

The personal attributes of the personnel working with young people in reclaimed disengaged-type provisions were also deemed to be essential factors of their effectiveness. A parent, for example, asserted that the '*best part of the project is the staff – the way they handle the kids, the way they do things with the kids, explain things to them and understand them*'. A teacher noted that effectiveness stemmed from situations in which '*staff must enjoy what they do, and this must be picked up by the kids*'. Empathy was mentioned by several interviewees. One strategic-level interviewee stated that the staff needed to be '*empathetic, not necessarily sympathetic*' towards the young people, whilst another noted that '*empathy is a very important quality to have when working with these young people. ... You have to be non-judgemental and fairly thick skinned – not shocked by anything*'.

An operational-level interviewee working as a provider/trainer spoke of the importance of personal experience as a basis for securing the trust and respect of the young people and demonstrating to them the validity (hence the effectiveness) of the provision. This particular interviewee had him/herself been introduced to the project as part of a Community Service Order for vehicle-related offences. The shared background, his/her understanding of the behaviour of the young people on the project and the insights s/he could provide were deemed to contribute to the project's effectiveness: '*I can tell the boys what it's like.*' Similarly, a strategic-level interviewee noted that '*the staff have all been through the same route that these kids are following, so they know the score*'.

For several other interviewees, effectiveness also hinged on a high level of understanding of the young people and their environments: '*You can guess what's being going on the night before by how they are.*' This level of knowledge was seen to have '*consequences for how we pitch the work that day*' (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision), underpinning the effectiveness of the provision. The presence of young, local staff was seen to be a highly valuable characteristic of one provision. It was asserted that

staff members were often known to the young people prior to their involvement in the project. A pupil expressed the implications of the involvement of local staff, noting that '*we know the guy that trains us here because he lives just down the road. All our teachers at school stayed miles away. We're not going to give our trainer here any cheek because he lives just up the road*' (reclaimed disengaged provision).

The **status of staff** was also seen as an important factor in delivering effective interventions. Two operational-level interviewees noted that the effectiveness of a mentoring-based preventative provision was linked with the 'status' of the mentors. It was asserted that the young people saw mentors as being a '*middle ground*' between them and other staff. This '*outsider*' status was alleged to have given mentors in a mainstream-type provision a credibility in the eyes of young people that teachers may not have had.

Mentors were seen, by interviewees representing both preventative and mainstream-type initiatives, to contribute heavily to the effectiveness of provisions because of the additional or alternative dimensions, perspectives and experiences they could offer young people. This was seen to be especially important in relation to wider life experience, particularly work-related issues, as it was asserted that many young people lacked the influence and perspectives of a positive, working role model in their family and community environments. This mentoring programme was considered effective because of the choice of mentors – '*bringing in mentors not missionaries*' who were realistic about what they could achieve and the extent of the impact they could have. Effectiveness also stemmed from the independent nature of mentors:

> *Someone not in authority coming in and endorsing what authority* [parents/teachers] *is saying* [giving young people the] *opportunity to discuss their time at school and their concerns about the future with a non-authoritarian adult who's not paid to give them guidance and support* ... [who has] *no axe to grind* ... [who] *do it because they choose to and want to do it ... pupils value that* (senior manager, preventative mentoring project).

Similarly, in the case of guidance and support teachers, it was noted by a strategic-level interviewee that it was important for them to be seen as being '*more on the kids' side*'. The confidentiality and impartiality of a youth strategy worker, for example, who was not connected with the institutions of school or family were seen as key factors in the effectiveness of a mainstream-type intervention.

The staff and staffing issues identified as contributing to the effectiveness of the provision are summarised in Table 6.3 overleaf.

Table 6.3 Summary of staff and staffing issues identified as contributing to the effectiveness of the provision

STAFF AND STAFFING ISSUES	
Availability of additional and specialist support teachers in the learning environment	• auxiliary, support and guidance teachers to provide extra practical support in class • keep pupils focused on work and maintain a conducive working/learning environment • point of contact within the school, reduce feelings of being alone and assist in transition
Flexibility of staff	• flexibility of teacher's approach • flexibility relating to issues of time and timing
Personal attributes and appropriate qualities of staff	• manner, friendly nature and positive attitude of staff • approachability and '*human qualities*' • ability to relate to, and understand young people • trust • non-judgemental, resilient staff • empathetic approach • personal experience and knowledge – commonality and shared experiences, local staff
Status/position of staff	• staff acting as middle ground between young people and provision • credibility and additional dimensions/perspectives of mentors

6.3.4 Effectiveness factor: relationships

Interviewees identified characteristics of relationships which took place within the provision, such as relationships between staff and young people, and the nature of peer relationships, as being key elements of effectiveness. Similarly, relationships that occurred between provisions, especially those involving other agencies, were seen to be significant in the success of a provision. Factors highlighted have been grouped into the following categories:

- **relationships within the provision**
- **relationships beyond the provision.**

Young people asserted that key factors in the effectiveness of all three provision types were the **relationships** they had **with staff** within the provision and the way in which they felt they were treated. One young person, for example, noted that s/he was '*treated like an adult here* [college placement, as opposed to being] ... *treated like a dog at school*' (mainstream provision), whilst another stated that '*we're treated like adults here; school is just for children*' (mainstream provision). These adult-like relationships were seen to involve communication on a first name basis, symbolising a shift in the balance of young person–staff/teacher power relationships.

Effectiveness was also seen to stem from the mutual respect between young people and staff members: '*I get on well with the teachers. If you give them respect, they give you respect. It works like that*' (preventative provision). One young person also reported that the feeling that teachers in a mainstream-type provision '*listen instead of ignoring you*' was a factor of its effectiveness.

Operational- and strategic-level interviewees specifically highlighted the importance of '*building relationships of trust*' as a key factor in the effectiveness (teacher, reclaimed disengaged provision). A strategic-level interviewee noted that the securing of additional funding for a preventative-type initiative allowed the employment of additional staff so that certain existing teachers could spend increased time with particular young people. This enabled them to '*capitalise on previous knowledge of each other and existing relationships*'. This was seen as '*incredibly successful*'.

The development of close relationships between staff and young people attending a mainstream-type provision was seen to involve '*making them feel as if they're wanted and not a burden when they come back in* [to the classroom]'. Furthermore, the establishment of '*a good rapport*' was seen by one interviewee as an essential basis for successfully encouraging the young people to attend a particular reclaimed disengaged-type provision in the first place.

A teacher/provider noted that success in the case of a reclaimed disengaged-type initiative was based on '*forming good relationships ... that's the only way it works. That's about ignoring the challenging behaviour and always encouraging the good behaviour*'. Other interviewees also stressed the need to develop good relationships and gain the trust of the young people, but equally noted that this had to be a reciprocal process – with rights come responsibilities. For example, a provider working in a reclaimed disengaged-type provision asserted that effectiveness derived from '*respecting and being straight*' with the young people. However, the young people were made acutely aware that the same levels of respect were expected in return. They were expected to behave in an adult fashion if they were treated in this way. A senior manager of a mainstream-type provision echoed these sentiments, arguing that effectiveness arose from the fact that staff would '*engage the kids in a trusting relationship, listen to them and respect them, but also tell them what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour*'.

The development of good relationships between young people themselves was considered by some interviewees, especially those representing reclaimed disengaged-type provisions, to be a key factor of effectiveness. One such project was regarded as providing young people with an opportunity to develop relationships with their peers in a non-pressured environment where they had nothing to prove. Another interviewee stressed that '*strength comes from working in a group*', and this particular initiative was said to be effective as many activities were orientated towards team-

building and group formation (development manager, reclaimed disengaged). The importance of establishing relationships within the group was also stressed by a teacher who noted that '*everything else builds on from setting up the group*'.

Intra-provision/initiative links and relationships were regarded, by some interviewees, as key factors of effectiveness. For example, the senior manager of a mainstream-type provision stressed that it was vital that all staff in the school were kept informed of the work of the initiative, and that they were aware of all the school population's needs. Effectiveness stemmed from the maintenance of close relationships between different elements of the school, '*keep*[ing] *communication high profile so that all staff are aware of young people who are disengaging*'. It was also noted that the effectiveness of a provision could be boosted by ensuring positive involvement of parents, giving them constructive feedback on their child's progress, and also receiving information from them (mainstream provision).

Operational- and strategic-level staff were keen to suggest that the effectiveness of a provision was aided by the ways in which it operated or cooperated with other agencies and services, that is **relationships beyond the provision**. Hence, multi-agency working was identified as a key factor of effective practice because of the direct links which could be fostered and developed. The senior managers of both a preventative and a mainstream-type secondary school provision noted that it was essential to create close working relationships with primary teachers and headteachers, in order to understand the needs of pupils prior to their arrival: '*The idea is to establish a link between primary and secondary so that every child coming new to S1 is known.*' In this way, the provisions were deemed to be better able to prepare themselves for the individual needs of pupils during transition and to establish multi-agency support from an early stage.

The centre manager of a reclaimed disengaged-type provision also stressed that good liaison with other agencies contributed to its effectiveness, as it was necessary to establish and secure transition and progression routes for young people leaving the provision. Hence, the development of links with specialist agencies, such as careers and health, was deemed to contribute to the effectiveness of a provision. One interviewee noted the impact of police involvement with a reclaimed disengaged-type provision as being a vitally significant element of its success. The burgeoning relationships between the police and young people attending a vehicle-related project, for example, were regarded as contributing to keeping the young people away from the criminal justice system (reclaimed disengaged provision).

In addition to the direct links and associations, cooperative and multi-agency working was also regarded as a key factor of effectiveness, as a result of increased potential for communication and information sharing. Operational- and strategic-level staff noted that '*the sharing of experience and knowledge amongst a wide group of professionals*' significantly

increased the effectiveness of all types of provision (guidance and youth strategy coordinator, mainstream provision). Effectiveness stemmed from the ability or opportunity to be able to call on '*a really comprehensive body of professional advice*' including the police, social services, health, school nurse and educational psychologist (guidance and youth strategy coordinator, mainstream provision).

The importance of building relationships between the provision and the families or carers of the young people was recognised across the three types of provision. This involved information sharing and dynamic feedback, relating to the positive and negative aspects of the young person's experience of the provision.

> *I came to the school believing strongly that ... relationships with parents were crucial. How you are perceived by the parents is crucial.* [In this school] *we have an open door policy so parents can come in whenever they want to without having to make appointments. The parents are very supportive of their children. I try to retain my professionalism but without being intimidating, so that I can have a good relationship with parents. ... I have very close links with parents because I see them when I take the young people home and when I pick them up* (behaviour support teacher, secondary school, mainstream provision).

Similarly, the development of relationships between provisions, young people and the wider community was also regarded as being of great importance. Such relationships were deemed to be effective as they facilitated and strengthened young people's inclusion and participation in their local communities. Hence, the local community was seen as a useful resource provider, through local businesses providing work experience placements, for example, and also as the arena in which the young people were being prepared to participate.

> *I have very good links with the local community because of arranging work experience for the pupils. Work experience in something they are interested in helps them to take their place in the community* (head of behaviour support, mainstream provision – secondary school).
>
> *We get a lot of positive feedback from the community because of successful work placements* (senior trainer, reclaimed disengaged provision).

The relationship issues identified as contributing to the effectiveness of the provision are summarised in Table 6.4 overleaf.

Table 6.4 Summary of relationship issues which were identified as contributing to the effectiveness of provision

RELATIONSHIPS	
Relationships within the provision	• adult-like staff–pupil relationships • respect • trust • development and maintenance of relationships and group dynamics • intra-provision relationships
Relationships beyond the provision	• direct links and multi-agency involvement/support • communication and information exchange • relationships with families • relationships within the wider community

7. DIFFICULTIES, CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Difficulties addressed: national overview

In the questionnaire phase of the research, respondents were asked to indicate the types of difficulty being addressed by the support/provision in place. This specifically related to the difficulties experienced by the young people attending the provision (see Tables 7.1a–c in Appendix). Responses were classified into the following broad categories: social and emotional concerns, learning and behavioural needs, and other related factors which may be associated with disengagement, including exclusion from school, drug misuse and offending behaviour.

- The difficulties cited most frequently in the school sample were disruptive behaviour in S1–S4, and underachievement and low motivation in S5–S6. In addition, low self-esteem figured highly across all the year groups.
- In the college sample, a history of poor attendance at school was cited most often as a problem for school-age pupils, whilst low levels of basic skills were seen as the key difficulty for school leavers. Experience of unemployment and a need for learning support were seen as the main problems facing young adults in the college sample.
- The difficulties presented by the other organisations sample mirrored those highlighted by schools: disruptive behaviour for pre-16s, and low self-esteem and low motivation for those aged 16 and over.
- It should be noted that a significant number of other types of difficulty highlighted by respondents, for example, immaturity, low motivation, low reading age and a history of exclusion, were also nominated by more than a half of respondents within each sample. This suggests that respondents viewed the difficulties they sought to address as being multiple rather than single areas for concern.

Key findings from telephone interviewees concerning the types of difficulty addressed supported the questionnaire data. Those from schools and other organisations dealt most frequently with behavioural concerns, and those from colleges with learning concerns. One college respondent highlighted that many of the young people with whom they were working had experienced gaps in their learning. This dislocation in their lives was seen as a key causal factor in their disengagement. Other college respondents also highlighted the difficulties experienced by Christmas leavers who were not in a position to access mainstream courses because of their learning and/or behavioural needs.

Learning and behavioural concerns can be seen as intrinsic factors in that they focus on the individual, but they are often influenced by extrinsic factors, such as socio-economic circumstances, including deprivation. The impact of socio-economic deprivation on disengagement from learning was another key difficulty raised by telephone interviewees. Indicators of poverty included high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, and young people living in Priority Postcode Areas, Objective One Areas, and/or Social Inclusion Partnership Areas. It should also be noted that most respondents from other organisations and colleges were working with youngsters a long way along the disaffection continuum, including those who had been excluded from school.

7.2 Difficulties faced by the provision: national overview

Questionnaire respondents were invited to indicate the constraints on their provision (see Tables 7.2a–c in Appendix). For those who reported making no provision aimed at addressing disengagement from learning, their reasons for doing so were requested. There was consistency across the three samples in terms of the constraints most frequently cited. All raised limitations to money and staff time as the two major constraints.

- For schools, the main constraint was limited staff time allocated, followed by limited money available.
- For colleges, the main constraint was limited money available, followed by limited staff time allocated.
- The other organisations sample cited similar responses to those of the colleges, with the main constraint being limited money available, followed by limited staff time allocated.
- It is interesting to note that more other organisation respondents nominated constraints than either of the school or college respondents. Furthermore, other organisations were more likely to suggest limited opportunities regarding work/training/college placements and other 'local possibilities'. Nearly half (43 per cent and 48 per cent respectively) of the other organisations sample cited these factors as constraints, compared to approximately one in six and one in ten (three and two mentions respectively) of the college respondents, and about a quarter (23 per cent for both) of the school respondents.
- The 'entrenched attitudes' of young people featured more often in the responses of the other organisations, suggesting their clientele displayed greater levels of disengagement.

7.3 Challenges faced by the provision: the case-study phase

Interviewees in the case-study phase of the research were asked to identify any challenges or less successful aspects of the provision, and in the case of young people and their parents/carers, whether there was anything they did not like about the provision. The following discussion presents an overview of interviewees' responses to these questions. The challenges identified by interviewees focused on:

- **young people**
- **the provision**
- **community/family factors**
- **multi-agency working.**

7.3.1 Challenges associated with young people

Interviewees most frequently identified challenges relating to the young people involved in the interventions, and these have been further divided into the following categories:

- **behaviour**
- **attitude**
- **beyond the remit of the provision**
- **positive progression**
- **relationships**
- **medical.**

Young people's **behaviour** was identified as a significant challenge by interviewees from all types of provision. The responses focused on young people's behaviour in general and their attendance in particular. What was viewed as challenging behaviour was very much dependent on the context in which that behaviour occurred. Challenging behaviour within preventative-type interventions was unlikely to be identified as such within the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. Interviewees from preventative and mainstream-type interventions were focusing on behaviour which was classified as unacceptable within mainstream educational settings, whereas interviewees from reclaimed disengaged-type initiatives were working with young people whose behaviour had excluded them from mainstream education and was in danger of excluding them from the community.

In mainstream interventions, the behavioural challenges highlighted by interviewees focused on youngsters' inability to maintain behavioural improvements, for example when they returned to mainstream classes. They could modify their behaviour in the provision because they were, for example, receiving one-to-one support, although their behaviour remained

challenging in a class situation and at home. Other youngsters were able to modify their behaviour in mainstream classes but they were only able to sustain it for a certain length of time. The challenge was how to sustain the gains made whilst attending the provision.

Challenges highlighted by interviewees not only focused on individual youngsters' behaviour but also on the negative impact this behaviour may have on other young people within the class/provision. This was identified by interviewees from all types of provision, but it was in the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions (where youngsters' behaviour was likely to be more challenging) that interviewees highlighted that such behaviour may place other youngsters at risk, both physically and psychologically. Their behaviour was also seen to have a negative impact on other youngsters' behaviour within the class/provision. Young people attending the reclaimed disengaged-type provisions also commented on this, making reference to '*arguments*' and young people '*smashing things up*', for example.

Interviewees from all types of provision also focused on young people's attendance as a continuing challenge faced by the provision. Non-attendance was viewed as a particularly challenging behavioural pattern by provision staff: '*established patterns of non-attendance are very hard to break*' (social worker, mainstream provision). The loss of continuity in delivering the curriculum to these young people due to their variable attendance was also a challenge identified by provision staff.

The **attitude** of young people involved in all types of provision was identified as a challenge by staff working with them. Success was often measured by young people's willingness to engage; thus an inability or unwillingness to engage with the process and/or communicate with staff was seen as a significant challenge.

Interviewees also felt that some young people's compliance about their involvement in the provision was a particular challenge. Instances were given of young people who said they were going to stay on at school to satisfy their mentors' expectations, or had stated that they wanted a place at a provision to keep the '*Recorder happy*'. Similarly, youngsters at one reclaimed disengaged-type intervention had said they wanted a place but had no real commitment: as a teacher observed, they were '*paid to attend but not to behave*'. A lack of commitment meant that these youngsters were extremely difficult to engage. Motivation was seen as the key – young people had to want to achieve. If they were not motivated, they would not achieve or be successful; the limits were set by the young people themselves. This was illustrated by the following comment by a senior manager from a reclaimed disengaged-type provision: '*If a young person has no wish to do anything, there is very little we can do for them because it drags down the rest of the group. You have to have something that you can start working with.*'

Staff viewed some young people attending mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type provision as **beyond the remit of the intervention** due to

their gender, age, and/or difficulties. Interviewees from reclaimed disengaged-type interventions which were focusing on what have traditionally been viewed as 'male' occupations, for example car maintenance and football, acknowledged the need to make the provision more appealing to girls and to provide greater opportunities for girls. As a direct response to this challenge, the football-focused intervention had successfully expanded its courses to include drama and dance.

Other youngsters beyond the remit of provision included very damaged young people with severe psychological difficulties due to physical and/or sexual abuse, and young people who were seen as too far along the disaffection continuum for the mainstream provision they were currently attending. Interviewees expressed concern that the interventions were '*too little and too late*', and that some youngsters were not responding to the strategies in place and were still disruptive. Hence, interviewees felt that some young people could not achieve within the context in which they found themselves – that is mainstream education was not appropriate. Older pupils who recognised that they were not going to achieve at school, who were said to '*feel there's nothing left for them in school*' (senior manager, mainstream provision), were also identified as a challenge by mainstream providers.

Challenges to young people's **positive post-programme progression** focused on a lack of continuity for young people. Staff were concerned that youngsters may lose crucial support mechanisms when they left interventions. An inability to follow youngsters through, and concerns about 'unknown destinations', were particular issues for staff working with young people with SEN and SEBD. For example, a careers adviser working with young people from a SEBD special school pointed out that by the time they reached 18, a third of the youngsters s/he was working with would have had lengthy periods of unemployment. Furthermore, s/he expressed further concern that two of the young people who had left two years previously had never worked or undertaken any training since.

Challenges to positive progression also focused on a lack of appropriate post-16 provision for young people with SEN and SEBD, in particular a lack of supported work placements and flexible training opportunities. Thus, youngsters may progress into employment but they may not be in a position to sustain that employment. As a careers adviser observed: '*Success with someone who has been disengaged from mainstream school can't be really measured in terms of whether you get them fixed up with a job ... It's more about what is happening with that individual at the age of 21, 22*' (preventative provision).

Interviewees viewed young people who were unable to establish trusting **relationships** with adults as being extremely difficult to engage. Their lack of trust was often linked to previous damaging relationships with adults. As a principal guidance teacher observed: '*they don't trust anyone: people let them down so often, and you're just another adult who's going to let them down*'.

Interviewees also identified challenges relating to young people's **medical concerns**. These challenges all related to the difficulties associated with working with young people with ADHD.

Table 7.1 Summary of challenges identified relating to the young people

YOUNG PEOPLE	
Behaviour	• general behaviour • attendance
Attitude	• unwillingness/inability to engage • compliance
Beyond the remit of the provision	• due to extreme difficulties • due to age • due to gender
Positive progression	• lack of appropriate opportunities • inflexibility of opportunities
Relationships	• inability to develop relationships
Medical concerns	• ADHD

7.3.2 Challenges associated with the provision

Challenges associated with the provision highlighted by interviewees focused on:

- **the attitudes of others**
- **engaging with the mainstream curriculum**
- **staff-related issues**
- **inappropriateness of the provision**
- **operational constraints.**

The negative **attitudes** of non-provision staff and other young people towards the interventions were identified as challenges by interviewees in all types of provision. This can be seen to operate at both an intra- and inter-institution level. Within reclaimed disengaged-type interventions, it was the negative attitudes of some schools which were seen as presenting a challenge to providers. This was highlighted in the following comment made by a young person's social worker: '*People lose sight that the resource is there for the children, not for the convenience of the school or other establishments, to put children into as a holding ground because you can't find anything else for them.*'

Within mainstream and preventative interventions, it was the negative attitudes of other staff and young people within the school/college which were identified as a challenge. Interviewees observed that some members of staff were not supportive of the interventions which were in place to

support disengaged youngsters or those in danger of disengagement. For example, support classes were viewed by some teaching staff as '*ghettoising*' pupils, whilst others had made it clear to pupils in the support classes that they did not enjoy teaching them. Provision staff felt that they had to challenge negative representations and images of, and attitudes towards, the interventions and the young people involved. For example, as one interviewee pointed out, there were concerns amongst staff that the provision was seen as '*too attractive*' and that some pupils saw it as an '*easy option*' (teacher, mainstream provision). Lack of awareness amongst other staff and pupils of interventions' aims and objectives, and a lack of involvement in the provision, led to perceptions that children attending the provision were privileged and were being rewarded for poor behaviour. Young people attending the mainstream interventions said that both staff and pupils were jealous because '*they think we can do whatever we want*'. These points were further illustrated in the following comment by a pupil attending a mainstream intervention. It highlights the harshness of peer relations and the language of exclusion.

> *Some of the other kids call us 'Downies' and 'Spackers' but it's just because they're jealous ... 'Downies' means that you've got a couple of screws missing and you're not quite right in the head. It doesn't bother me that they call us 'Downies' because they're just jealous* (S3 pupil, mainstream provision).

Furthermore, other agency staff working with the young people involved in mainstream interventions felt that some teaching staff handed over responsibility for pupils when they attended the provision, rather than meeting their needs/providing support within the classroom. Subject teachers also felt that coursework in the classroom could be disrupted by young people moving between the class and the provision. This exclusion from the classroom was also seen by other agency staff as labelling young people, making it harder for them to return to mainstream classes and for teachers to accept them back in. Linked to this were the attitudes of some staff towards young people with behavioural difficulties:

> *... there is still a long way to go with people not just seeing pupils with behavioural difficulties as a 'naughty boy' or a 'naughty girl'. There are things that you can put in place to help them, but you need the support of everybody across the board to do that ... it causes a lot of upset, I think, in schools ... It is very difficult in a whole-school situation for those pupils to be seen as well, yes, they have a right to be here as well, even though they've got behavioural difficulties and we've got to do everything we can to support them* (principal teacher, support for learning, preventative provision).

Challenges identified by interviewees in preventative and mainstream interventions focused on the continuing **difficulties** young people experienced in **engaging with the mainstream curriculum**. This included difficulties in engaging with a modified mainstream curriculum. For

example, pupils' inability to connect learning at school with future employment opportunities, and an inability to see the relevance of what they were learning at school, were often noted. Other difficulties identified focused on challenges faced by staff in adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of disengaged youngsters and with the introduction of the Higher Still curriculum, which had increased the written requirements of some college modules, effectively excluding some students because of their low levels of basic skills.

In the reclaimed disengaged types of intervention, challenges identified by interviewees focused on the limitations of the curriculum available within the initiatives. It should be noted that many of these young people were at the far end of the disaffection continuum, and thus it may not have been appropriate or possible for them to engage with a mainstream curriculum. Nevertheless, staff and parents did express concern that youngsters who were capable of academic achievement were unable to complete national examinations such as Standard Grades within the provision, and that this may limit future educational and job-related opportunities. As a parent of a young person attending a vocationally based provision observed: '*the only thing I regret, and I think he'll regret as well, is that he didn't sit his exams*'.

Staff-related challenges raised by interviewees focused on: time commitments; the availability and suitability of staff; delivering the curriculum to disengaged young people; and relationships with young people.

Working with disengaged young people, for example on an individual basis, was seen as extremely time consuming. The time commitment required of staff, not only in delivering the curriculum, but also in working with young people on a pastoral level, was seen as a significant challenge by staff working within interventions. This was particularly apparent within mainstream educational settings, given the other demands on staff time.

A further time-related challenge identified by interviewees was the time commitment of voluntary staff. This was a particular issue in a mentoring programme where employers were releasing employees to be involved in the project. Although the firms involved were extremely supportive of the programme, the coordinator of the programme felt that releasing staff might become more of an issue in the future, as firms became '*leaner*'. A representative from one of the employers involved also pointed out that there was an optimum number of staff who could be involved in the programme before it had a detrimental impact on business, and that staff involvement needed to be time-limited.

Finding suitable and available staff to work with disengaged youngsters was also identified as a challenge by interviewees. A shortage of staff available to work in the interventions meant that, in some instances, they could not be staffed on a full-time basis or there were insufficient staff to supervise young people when they were out in the community.

Managers saw the inclusion of challenging young people within the mainstream curriculum as stressful for staff. Parents of youngsters attending college as an alternative to school felt that a major challenge for staff was the need to be aware of, and to include, those youngsters who were disengaged but not displaying behavioural difficulties, i.e. the challenge of identification. This was reiterated by a member of staff working in a mainstream intervention who observed that working to the different strengths of the young people involved was '*very challenging*'.

The nature of the young person/adult relationship was a further challenge raised by a mentor working with disengaged young people in schools. '*Getting them to accept you*' was a major challenge: it was important that the youngster did not see the mentor as an authority figure because the success of the intervention was based on having a non-authoritarian relationship with the young person. The difficulties linked to this relationship highlight the lack of such relationships within many young people's lives. In this case, it was noted that initially young people assumed that mentors were yet another professional who was being paid to talk to them.

A further challenge raised by interviewees was the inability to provide interventions which completely, or sufficiently, suited the complex or varied learning needs of the young people involved. This focused on the challenge of matching supply and demand. Within mainstream interventions, this included an inability to provide the learning support element, such as one-to-one support, which young people required. Similarly, within one reclaimed disengaged-type provision, a lack of alternative places for young people within the authority meant that youngsters may remain within the provision, although it was not necessarily the most appropriate placement for them. This resulted in other young people being denied access to the provision, which meant that what was already a scarce resource was further constrained.

A further challenge identified by staff focused on **operational constraints** and the inflexibility of the system in which they were working. This was highlighted in particular by careers advisers working with SEN and SEBD students who felt that the approach to careers was '*system centred*' rather than '*person centred*'. This meant that they were unable to respond flexibly to the needs of the young people they were working with.

Getting the '*right mix of youngsters*', for example, in support classes, in anger management groups, and in programmes for young people with severe SEBD, was viewed as a significant challenge for staff involved in all types of intervention. Staff identified the possible detrimental effects on other youngsters if they did not get the composition right, the nature of which related to the type of provision concerned. In preventative interventions, detrimental impacts identified related to learning outcomes, for example, other youngsters not performing as well as they might have because of disruptive pupils in the class; whereas, in the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions, not getting the right mix of youngsters had reportedly led to

young people leaving the provision. However, it should be acknowledged that operational and staffing constraints within reclaimed disengaged-type interventions could mean that staff had little choice in how they grouped young people.

Table 7.2 Summary of challenges identified relating to the provision

THE PROVISION	
Attitude of others	• other staff • other young people • negative identity
Curriculum	• young people unable to cope with modified mainstream curriculum • limitations of provision curriculum
Staff	• time commitment • availability and suitability of staff • delivering the curriculum to disengaged young people • relationships with young people
Inappropriate provision	• lack of alternatives
Operational constraints	• flexibility • getting right mix

7.3.3 Challenges associated with the community and the family

The third category of challenges identified by interviewees focused on areas of influence over which provision staff had very little control. These were:

- **community factors**
- **family factors.**

Community factors were identified as a significant challenge by staff in all types of provision. The main concerns related to drug and alcohol misuse, and offending, both within the community and the family (explored in the following section).

Interviewees within mainstream interventions highlighted structural challenges and the wider implications of young people's drug misuse, as a community education officer, for example, observed: '*our school system is not flexible enough to cope with a situation like that* [young people with drug and alcohol problems]' (community education officer, mainstream provision). The possible wider implications of young people's drug misuse was illustrated by a college tutor, who observed that the unpredictable behaviour of students on drugs could not be tolerated due to '*health and safety considerations*' on vocationally based courses. The lack of detoxification facilities for young people within the community was a further issue raised by interviewees.

The deprivation experienced by some communities was also viewed as a significant challenge by interviewees. A lack of affordable amenities, such as youth clubs, within the community meant that many of youngsters had little or nothing to do when they were not at school or the provision. Parents expressed concern about the activities their children were involved in when they were not attending the provision: '*I panic when he's not here because at least when he's here, I know where he is and what he's getting up to*' (parent, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Contrasting levels of deprivation within a school's catchment area were also seen as a challenge to engaging youngsters. For example, one school situated in a relatively affluent area had a significant intake of pupils from a deprived area. Staff expressed concern that pupils from the deprived area felt that they did not '*belong*' to the area/school because of its relative affluence. Conversely, pupils from the relatively affluent area surrounding the school would not attend group work at a project based in the deprived area. These issues of geography and territorialism were also reflected in the comments of youngsters who were attending college: '*I would like it* [college] *to be in* [name of home town] *because nobody treats me like shit there ... I hate* [name of college town] *and they hate me.*' These comments highlight the possible challenges associated with sending young people to provision out of their locality.

Challenges identified by interviewees relating to **family factors** focused on behaviour, attitudes and experiences. Within the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions, reference was made to young people whose families were involved in anti-social and criminal behaviours and offending, including drug dealing and drug taking. In these instances, a significant challenge for interventions and for the young people was an attempt to overcome, or at least lessen, the effects of these behaviours. For example, one young person was described by his social worker as carrying a '*long history of violence in the family ... that's his currency, he's a West of Scotland hard man*'. He was said to have a reputation, which he needed to live up to, both within his family and the community, which had proved a significant challenge for the professionals working with him.

Some young people within mainstream interventions were also described as having '*horrendous backgrounds*'. However, at times school staff felt that they may manipulate their difficulties because they knew staff would not '*push them too far. Pupils know staff will not push them so they will not push themselves*' (guidance teacher, mainstream provision). The challenges faced by mainstream staff were summarised by a senior manager in one school who observed that some pupils '*bring the bitterness from their home circumstances and are very unforgiving*'.

Interviewees from preventative interventions were less likely to focus on anti-social behaviours within the family and were more likely to focus on the challenges faced by parents/carers due to a lack of family support, a lack of confidence and a lack of awareness of parents'/carers' rights, for example. Parents' unrealistic expectations of what their children could

achieve were also identified as a challenge for provision staff working with young people with SEN.

Within mainstream interventions, parents'/carers' own negative school experiences were also identified as influencing the attitudes and behaviours of their children: '*often behind a disengaged pupil there's a disenchanted parent*' (senior manager, mainstream provision). Furthermore, inter-generational unemployment within families was seen as reinforcing negative attitudes towards school and young people not valuing education. Linked to this was a lack of encouragement from home about school, and parents presenting their children with conflicting messages concerning education.

Table 7.3 Summary of challenges identified relating to the community and family

THE COMMUNITY AND FAMILY	
Community	• drugs/offending • deprivation • territorialism
Family	• drugs/offending • behaviour • attitude

7.3.4 Challenges associated with multi-agency working

The fourth category of challenge identified by interviewees focused on issues surrounding multi-agency working, and other agency work in general. Although there were examples of successful multi-agency work, this was also identified as a challenge by interviewees in three of the case studies (one case study in each type of intervention). The challenges highlighted by interviewees surrounding multi-agency working focused on:

- **joined-up thinking**
- **availability of support and information**
- **attitudes.**

A concern raised by an interviewee from one of the preventative-type interventions was that, although **joined-up thinking** was beginning to occur at an operational level, it was still not happening at a strategic level. This was seen as presenting challenges for operational staff who were trying to implement more effective multi-agency working strategies but felt that the strategic networks were not in place to support them.

Interviewees both within mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions highlighted challenges concerning the **availability of support and information** from other agencies. They expressed frustration about the level and type of external agency support, and the speed with which it was implemented: '*the wheels of support grind slowly*' (senior manager, mainstream provision). In particular, when a young person's difficulties

were sufficiently severe that they were referred through the children's system, the legal process was so protracted that recommendations made frequently did not '*measure up*' to the young person's difficulties. The heavy workload of other agency staff, for example social work and educational psychologists, meant that concerns were expressed within mainstream interventions that young people were not seen as quickly as they might be. This meant that, at times, young people's difficulties were exacerbated because of a lack of agency support. Furthermore, an interviewee working with extremely disengaged young people in an alternative education provision expressed concern about the lack of information and/or the speed with which information was supplied by social work about the young people attending the project. When working with severely disengaged young people, it was crucial that staff had as much information as possible to ensure that they did not inadvertently trigger negative behaviours, for example.

A challenge raised by a member of staff working within social work was the **attitudes of families** towards other agency input. This particular interviewee was involved in non-statutory voluntary work with young people in a mainstream setting. S/he highlighted a significant challenge associated with this preventative-type approach to social work related to the stigma arising from a family's association with this agency: '*Families would rather be involved with psychiatric services, anything, rather than have a social worker involved*' (provider, mainstream provision).

Table 7.4 Summary of challenges identified relating to multi-agency working

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING	
Joined-up thinking	• not happening
Availability of support/information	• lack of information • professionals' workload
Attitudes	• stigma attached to social work

To conclude, the challenges and difficulties faced and addressed by interventions working with disengaged youngsters focused on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and these challenges frequently focused on difficulties in relationships. Intrinsic factors related to internal challenges and difficulties associated with the young person and also the provision itself. These included young people's behaviour and the provision's structural and operational relationship within the organisation in which it was based. Extrinsic factors related to external challenges and difficulties emanating from the family/community and from working with external agencies. As has been shown in the previous discussion, intrinsic and extrinsic challenges were frequently regarded as being inter-linked and inter-dependent.

Table 7.5 Overall summary of challenges identified

Associated with young people	Associated with the provision
• young people's behaviour • young people's attitude • beyond the remit of the provision • positive progression • relationships • medical concern	• attitudes of others • engaging with the mainstream curriculum • staff-related issues • inappropriateness of the provision • operational constraints
Associated with community/family	**Associated with multi-agency working**
• community factors • family factors	• joined-up thinking • availability of support/information • attitudes

7.4 Areas for development: the case-study phase

All interviewees were also asked if they felt there were any ways in which the provision/intervention or strategy could be improved. The following discussion presents a brief overview of the main areas for development highlighted by interviewees. In some instances, the areas for development identified by interviewees addressed specific challenges, and, in other instances, interviewees focused on more general areas for development and ways of improving the provision.

Areas for development/improvement were grouped into the following categories:

- **the provision**
- **positive progression**
- **community/family**
- **multi-agency working.**

7.4.1 Improving the provision

The key areas nominated by interviewees in relation to improving the provision focused on:

- **changing attitudes**
- **improving the curriculum/activities available**
- **staff**
- **increase in provision**
- **funding.**

Changing attitudes. Within mainstream interventions, interviewees felt that negative attitudes held by staff and young people towards the provisions and the young people who attended them could be successfully overcome by increasing their involvement with the provision. For example, it was felt that increasing the numbers of teaching staff and other pupils involved with, and working in, the provision would ensure that it was seen as a school resource. These opinions are highlighted in the following comments made by subject teachers:

> *The staff need to be more involved ... so that they all feel as if they're part of it ... because at the moment it's this small group doing their own thing ... and nobody can see an awful lot of benefits coming out of it* (mainstream provision).

> *We need a better PR system of communication. I took some first years down there to have a look so that it's not perceived as somewhere for bad boys* (mainstream provision).

Furthermore, it was felt that difficulties associated with withdrawing young people from classes to attend the provision could be partly addressed by **all** youngsters using the provision as a resource. In addition, it was felt that issues connected with withdrawal could also be overcome by providing greater in-class support.

Increasing the profile and awareness of children's rights within the school in general, and of the aims of the provision in particular, was also seen as a way of changing negative attitudes towards the provision and the young people involved in it. It was felt that a greater awareness amongst staff and pupils of the aims and objectives of the provision would lead to greater understanding, and a reduction in criticism and resentment.

The need for teaching staff to maintain responsibility for young people when they were referred to learning support units was also reflected in a belief that schools should maintain responsibility for (or, as a minimum, maintain links with) young people referred to reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. This attitude was highlighted by a social worker when he observed that: '*a stronger obligation should be put on schools to put in*

more support at the project' (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision). Furthermore, this interviewee felt that there was a need to tighten the management structures of the provision, in order to ensure that the responsibilities and obligations of the school and the provision were clearly defined.

Suggested ways of **improving the curriculum/activities available** focused on making them more appropriate for the needs of the young people involved. In mainstream provision, this included tailoring support to meet the specific needs of individual youngsters, for example, via the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Interviewees within schools also identified a need for greater curriculum differentiation by subject departments and a need to increase the provision of ITC to enable staff to work to youngsters' strengths as well as focusing on their weaknesses. Young people within mainstream provision felt that the interventions could be improved with '*more computing*' and '*more sports facilities*'.

A further area identified for development was an extension of the activities and support available to young people within mainstream and reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. Within mainstream interventions, this focused on using staff from other agencies, for example, educational psychology and social work, to provide, or expand on, existing specialist support and provision. Areas identified for development included group work and anger management courses. Senior managers within mainstream provision also identified the need to develop strategies, with other agency support, for the inclusion of young people who would previously have been placed in special education. Connected to this inclusion of young people with special needs in mainstream educational settings was the belief that colleges and schools needed to recognise '*performance indicators other than academic achievement*' (college tutor, mainstream provision).

Provision staff within the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions identified a need to extend the range of activities/curriculum available to disengaged youngsters. These activities were often project-specific, for example a parenting course, motorbike maintenance and a driving skills course, but also included a need to access more formal qualifications. Interviewees also highlighted the benefits associated with extending the activities available to include weekend and evening provision. Furthermore, within male-dominated interventions, staff were also aware of the need to expand the remit of the provision to include activities which would attract and include girls.

Areas of development and ways of improving provision in relation to **staff** focused on the need for additional staff with the appropriate skills and qualities to work with disengaged youngsters. As a principal teacher, support for learning, observed: '*you're never going to get to the stage where you feel you have enough staff to meet the needs of pupils*' (preventative provision). However, this desire to increase staffing levels was usually constrained by a lack of resources.

Interviewees within mainstream interventions identified a need to increase the involvement of existing staff, in the support both of disengaged youngsters and of other staff. For example, '*the greater involvement of support for learning staff*' was an area for development in one school. Interviewees also highlighted the need to use staff and their associated skills to support and inform other staff. For example, in one school, support for learning staff were to produce guidance for teaching staff. As a senior manager observed: '*we want to take staff with us rather than haul them on board*' (senior manager, mainstream provision). The appointment of full-time behaviour support staff who could also be involved in family work was identified as an area for development within mainstream interventions. The provision of administrative support within reclaimed disengaged-type interventions was also seen as a useful way of ensuring that staff time was focused on working with the young people at the intervention. Staff in all types of provision felt that their effectiveness could be improved by increasing the time they had available to work with and/or prepare to work with young people involved in the interventions.

A number of areas for development focused on constraints due to a lack of provision and the need to **increase the provision** available. These included a need for an increase in alternative education placements available for young people still in mainstream education, as well as an increase in places available for looked after children on vocationally oriented alternative placements. This was highlighted by a residential worker: '*There should be more projects like this... for those still in the community and in mainstream but also for those in care...there's just not enough provision to support the youngsters in the home – these young people with no placements are really suffering*' (reclaimed disengaged provision). This was reiterated by a guidance teacher within mainstream provision when s/he observed that there was a need to find places for young people '*at the most extreme edge of disaffection*' (guidance teacher, mainstream provision). Other areas for development highlighted by interviewees focused on health-related concerns, in particular a need for detoxification provision for the under-16s.

Staff within mainstream provision raised the need for earlier intervention: '*I think the pupils would benefit from earlier intervention. If that was in place, we wouldn't have so many dropping out by the time they get to the end of second year*' (community education officer, mainstream provision).

Interviewees identified a number of ways to improve provision, one of which was to **increase the resources available to interventions**, for example, to fund additional staff to work in the provision. Within reclaimed disengaged-type provisions, it was suggested that additional funding could be used to enable young people to access formal educational qualifications in college, for example, as well as enabling interventions to offer improved leisure activities and better facilities.

Table 7.6 Summary of areas for development associated with the provision

THE PROVISION	
Attitudes	• increase other staff involvement in the provision • use provision as a school resource • increase whole-school awareness • use in-class strategies rather than withdrawal
Curriculum	• tailoring support to meet individual needs • extend range of activities • implement new strategies • look at other performance indicators
Staff	• increasing the number of staff available • increasing time available • increasing involvement of staff • increasing information available • increasing support for staff
Increased provision	• more provision outside school • earlier intervention
Funding	• increased resources to meet pupils' needs and maintain in mainstream

7.4.2 Positive progression

Areas for improvement focusing on positive progression highlighted the need for:

- **long-term support**
- **monitoring of outcomes and destinations**
- **increased supported work and training opportunities.**

Access to **long-term support** and the **monitoring of outcome and destination data** were viewed as crucial factors in ensuring successful post-intervention progression for all youngsters. Linked to this was a perceived need to increase the number of supported work and training opportunities available, in particular for vulnerable youngsters such as those with special educational needs and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. One interviewee also highlighted the need to increase the involvement of other agencies, for example community education, in order to provide continuing support for young people when social work support ceased: '*They still need the structured leisure activities ... without such activities they are vulnerable to hanging round street corners, drinking ...*' (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision).

A further area for development identified by interviewees concerning positive progression was the need, where this was appropriate, to improve rates of reintegration back into mainstream education for young people attending the reclaimed disengaged-type interventions. Opportunities for

return needed to be improved: '*for those who have the ability to go back ... the young person needs to feel that there is still a buy-in back to school, that they can keep up with their subjects ... or give them the opportunity to access college*' (social worker, reclaimed disengaged provision). This interviewee was uncomfortable with the feeling that once youngsters were attending the alternative provision there were few opportunities for them to return to mainstream education. A senior manager within this provision reinforced the previous interviewee's concerns when he observed that: '*the rate of reintegration is not high...once they're out it's difficult to get them back in*' (senior manager, reclaimed disengaged provision).

Table 7.7 Summary of areas for development associated with positive progression

POSITIVE PROGRESSION	
Positive progression	• long-term support • long-term monitoring of outcomes and destinations • increase the number of supported work and training opportunities available • increase rates of reintegration/opportunities to return to mainstream • greater autonomy • increase flexibility of provision

7.4.3 Community/family factors

Interviewees within mainstream interventions identified a need to:

- **increase the level of community/family involvement**
- **improve relationships with parents.**

An increase in parental involvement in the actual provision was highlighted, for example parents coming in and supporting their children's learning, or providing additional skills training for youngsters and sharing their own expertise. An increase in parental involvement was also seen as providing opportunities for parental support, giving them the chance to have someone to talk to. An improvement identified by a parent related to the ability to be able to obtain advice about their child's problems within school, rather than having to go to outside agencies and professionals.

Table 7.8 Summary of areas for development associated with community and family

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY	
Community	• greater community involvement
Family	• greater liaison with parents • greater parental involvement

7.4.4 Multi-agency working

Areas for development surrounding multi-agency working focused on a need to:

- **share good practice**
- **the availability of agency support and information**
- **the need to implement and develop new strategies, including those with a preventative focus.**

Interviewees identified a need to increase the level and range of agency input, for example, greater involvement of educational psychologists in group work in schools, as well as the further development of preventative initiatives by social work in secondary schools, and the need to extend these interventions to primaries. Schools also identified a need for agencies to improve their mechanisms for reporting back information concerning the children they were working with.

Table 7.9 Summary of areas for development associated with multi-agency working

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING	
Joined-up thinking	• share good practice
Availability of support/ information	• improve agency reporting
Strategy development	• new strategies with other agencies • preventative

To conclude, the areas for development/improvement highlighted by interviewees were frequently linked to the challenges and difficulties identified previously. Areas for development reflected concerns about the constraints of the provision, in particular regarding its flexibility, availability and appropriateness for the young people targeted. This discussion has shown that the key areas for development identified by interviewees again focused on extrinsic and intrinsic factors. In noting areas for development, interviewees were suggesting ways of 'filling the gap' and 'joining up' extrinsic and intrinsic factors, as well as improving interrelationships within the provision. For example, suggestions were made to foster greater **external** and community involvement in the provision, whilst also ensuring greater **internal** involvement in the provision from its containing institution or framework.

Table 7.10 Overall summary of areas for development

Associated with the provision	Associated with positive progression
• changing attitudes • improving the curriculum • staff • increase in provision • funding	• long-term support • monitoring outcomes and destinations • increased supported work and training opportunities
Associated with community/family	**Associated with multi-agency working**
• greater involvement • increased liaison	• joined-up thinking • availability of support/information • strategy development

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This research project has itemised a wide range of activity, as well as the principles and values, that underpin successfully re-engaging young people in learning and the curriculum.

Its findings show much resonance and similarity with the kinds of strategies in place for disengaged young people in other parts of the United Kingdom. Similarly, the study showed there was much congruence in the accounts of impact on those young people who were being offered support to re-engage with learning.

At policy level, key issues raised by the research might be to consider:

- the value of further innovative alternative curriculum opportunities for young people, particularly at S1 and S2 (although the strength of the guidance system in many Scottish schools did emerge as a positive feature in the case-study phase)
- the sometimes limited availability of suitable progression routes back into mainstream education for the most disengaged youngsters
- the need to increase the breadth of training and learning opportunities for youngsters involved in alternative education initiatives.

The wide array of activities corroborated in the questionnaire returns suggests a great deal of support and provision is being tailored to the needs of disengaged and at-risk young people. Hence, at practitioner level, key areas for development may be to consider :

- raising the profiles and acknowledging the skill base of support staff in schools
- providing opportunities to exchange effective practice by operational-level staff.

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APPENDIX

Tables

Please note that in the tables that follow:

- n/a stands for 'not asked';
- all percentages are rounded to the nearest integer;
- in the college sample, 'young adults' refers to individuals up to age 21 who had a gap between leaving school and starting college;
- data from the college sample are presented as numbers only – percentages could be misleading because of the sample size (N=19).

Chapter 2 Overview and aims of provision

Table 2.1a School sample: aims for pupils

Orientated to:	S1–S2 %	S3–S4 %	S5–S6 %
Achievement	34	46	38
Learning	29	25	16
Curriculum	19	28	18
Feelings/attitudes	43	50	35
Behaviour	41	40	23
Transition	12	19	42
Minimising non-educational problems	0	1	1
No response	17	8	12
N	116	132	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 2.1b College sample: aims for students

Orientated to:	School Pupils N=10	School Leavers N=13	Young Adults N=10
Achievement	4	6	5
Engagement with learning	1	3	1
Positive feelings/attitudes	2	5	3
Improved behaviour	0	0	0
Positive progression	4	7	6
Inclusion	2	3	2
Improved decision-making	0	0	0
Cope with adult environment	4	3	2
Better awareness of options	1	1	0
No response	1	1	0

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 2.1c Other organisation sample: aims for young people

Orientated to:	12–13yrs %	14–15yrs %	16–17yrs %	18–21yrs %
Achievement	13	16	13	13
Engagement with learning	26	34	12	16
Positive feelings/attitudes	23	37	32	40
Improved behaviour	27	22	8	7
Positive progression	9	27	57	49
Inclusion	35	26	9	18
Citizenship/rights	9	10	12	12
Improved quality of life	16	10	18	17
Provision of info/advice/support	16	14	15	17
Introduce to other agencies	0	0	2	4
No response	21	11	11	4
N	94	124	124	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Chapter 3 Staffing and funding

Table 3.1a School sample: external involvement

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Psychological services	73	Psychological services	86	Careers service	79
Social work	70	Careers service	83	FE college	70
Learning support	56	Social work	80	Psychological services	66
Health	55	Health	67	Social work	62
Behaviour support	53	Learning support	58	Employer	45
Police	43	FE college	58	Education industry link	43
Careers service	24	Behaviour support	55	Learning support	43
Community education	23	Police	48	Health	42
Generic support service	15	EBP	39	EBP	40
Other	13	Education industry link	38	Police	38
Voluntary sector	11	Community education	38	Community education	32
Local community project	9	Employer	33	Training agency	31
No response	9	Voluntary sector	20	Behaviour support	30
EBP	7	Local community project	20	Voluntary sector	21
FE college	3	Other	14	Local community project	19
Education industry link	3	Training agency	14	HE sector	19
None	2	Employed adult	11	Employed adult	17
Awarding body	2	Awarding body	10	LEC	16
LEC	2	LEC	10	Other	10
HE sector	1	Generic support service	9	Generic support service	9
Employed adult	1	None	4	Awarding body	9
Training agency	n/a	HE sector	4	No response	3
Employer	n/a	No response	2	None	1
N	116		132		77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 3.1b College sample: external involvement

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
School	9	Careers service	10	Social work	7
Careers service	9	LEC	8	LEC	7
Social work	8	Employer	8	Careers service	6
Parents	7	Social work	7	Employer	5
LEC	6	Parents	7	Health	5
Community education	6	Health	6	Training agency	4
Employer	5	Training agency	5	Police	4
Training agency	4	Private training provider	4	Private training provider	3
Other	4	Community education	4	Employed adult	3
Voluntary sector	3	Police	4	Awarding body	3
EBP	3	Awarding body	3	Local community project	3
Local community project	3	Voluntary sector	3	Community education	3
Police	3	EBP	3	Other	3
Health	3	Education industry link	3	HE sector	2
HE sector	2	HE sector	2	Parents	2
Private training provider	2	Employed adult	2	EBP	1
Employed adult	2	Local community project	1	Education industry link	1
Education industry link	2	Other	1	Voluntary sector	0
Awarding body	1	No response	1	No response	0
No response	0	School	n/a	School	n/a

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 3.1c Other organisation sample: external involvement

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
School	67	School	79	Social work	66	Social work	71
Parents/carers	60	Social work	72	School	63	Voluntary sector	70
Social work	60	Parents/carers	70	Parents/carers	63	Community education	57
Psych service	53	Psych service	57	Voluntary sector	59	FE/HE sector	53
Health	47	Health	53	Careers	58	Job centre	53
Community education	44	Community education	52	FE/HE	52	Training agency	51
Learning support	40	FE/HE	45	Health	52	Careers	51
Behaviour support	39	Careers	45	Training agency	51	Health	51
Police	38	Behaviour support	40	Community education	49	School	47
Voluntary sector	31	Learning support	40	Job centre	42	Parents/carers	45
Sports organisation	25	Police	40	Psych service	39	Police	45
No response	20	Voluntary sector	34	Police	39	Community project	43
Community project	17	Training agency	30	Private sector	38	Private sector	40
Arts organisation	12	Community project	29	LEC	35	LEC	33
Generic support service	11	Private sector	27	Community project	32	Learning support	26
Careers	10	Sports organisation	24	Learning support	32	Awarding body	25
Religious organisation	7	EBP	20	Behaviour support	29	EBP	25
Awarding body	3	Arts organisation	17	Awarding body	23	Sports organisation	25
FE/HE	2	Awarding body	16	EBP	17	Psych service	24
Job centre	2	Job centre	14	Sports organisation	16	Scottish enterprise	22
Private sector	2	LEC	14	Employed adult	15	Behaviour support	20
None	1	Employed adult	13	Scottish enterprise	15	Other	18
Training agency	1	EIL	11	Other	13	Arts organisation	16
Chamber of commerce	1	Religious organisation	10	Arts organisation	12	Religious organisation	15
Scottish enterprise	1	Scottish enterprise	8	Religious organisation	11	EIL	13
LEC	1	No response	8	EIL	9	Employed adult	9
Other	1	Other	7	No response	9	Generic support	8
Employed adult	0	Generic support	7	Chamber of commerce	7	Chamber of commerce	7
EBP	0	Chamber of commerce	2	Generic support	7	No response	1
EIL	0	Church	0	Church	0	Church	0
Church	0	None	0	None	0	None	0
N	94		124		124		76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 3.2a School sample: sources of external (i.e. additional) funding

	S1–S2 %	S3–S4 %	S5–S6 %
School fundraising	0	2	1
FE college	0	1	1
Careers service/company	0	2	0
Business/industry	1	5	12
Local authority	17	18	18
Voluntary sector	2	5	1
Government funding	31	36	19
European funding	0	1	0
None	7	13	10
No response	48	27	47
N	116	132	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 3.2b College sample: sources of external (i.e. additional) funding

	School Pupils N=10	School Leavers N=13	Young Adults N=10
Local authority	3	1	2
Voluntary sector	1	0	0
Government	1	1	4
European Union	2	5	3
Local/Scottish Enterprise Co.	2	6	3
None	2	1	0
No response	2	3	1

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 3.2c Other organisation sample: sources of external (i.e. additional) funding

	12–13yrs %	14–15yrs %	16–17yrs %	18–21yrs %
Local authority	19	22	21	26
Voluntary sector	10	7	7	14
Government	7	15	17	30
European Union	0	1	6	13
Local/Scottish Enterprise Co.	9	9	19	20
Business/industry	0	0	0	0
EBP	1	3	2	0
Careers service	0	0	1	1
None	11	6	7	8
No response	57	54	47	24
N	94	124	124	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Chapter 4 The engaging curriculum

Table 4.1a School sample: personal and social development activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Support from guidance staff	88	Support from guidance staff	93	Support from guidance staff	75
Counselling	74	Counselling	74	Counselling	61
Working independently	51	Working in a team	61	Working independently	60
Working in a team	51	Mentoring	60	Working in a team	57
Mentoring	47	Working independently	58	Mentoring	42
Youth strategy support	39	Constructive leisure	45	Constructive leisure	36
Constructive leisure	35	Youth strategy support	44	Youth strategy support	34
Residential experience	19	Residential experience	28	Residential experience	26
Other	13	Other	12	No response	10
No response	6	No response	1	Other	4
N	116		132		77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.1b College sample: personal and social development activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	N=10	Rank order	N=13	Rank order	N=10
Support from guidance staff	9	Support from guidance staff	12	Support from guidance staff	10
Working in a team	7	Working independently	12	Working independently	8
Working independently	7	Working in a team	11	Working in a team	7
Counselling	7	Counselling	8	Counselling	7
Mentoring	6	Mentoring	8	Mentoring	5
Residential experience	3	Community placement	5	Cross-college projects	5
Community placement	3	Cross-college projects	5	Community placement	3
Constructive leisure	2	Residential experience	4	Residential experience	2
Community work/project	2	Constructive leisure	4	Constructive leisure	2
Cross-college projects	2	Entrepreneurship	2	Community work/project	2
Volunteering	1	Volunteering	1	Volunteering	1
Entrepreneurship	1	Community work/project	1	Entrepreneurship	1
Other	1	Other	0	Other	1
No response	1	No response	0	No response	0

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 4.1c Other organisation sample: personal and social development activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Confidence building	66	Confidence building	75	Confidence building	72	Confidence building	75
Counselling	50	Counselling	61	Counselling	63	Counselling	63
Working in a team	47	Working in a team	57	Working in a team	50	Working in a team	47
Leisure-sports	38	Citizenship/rights	40	Citizenship/rights	44	Citizenship/rights	42
Leisure-arts	35	Leisure-arts	40	Working independently	44	Mentoring	41
Mentoring	33	Leisure-sports	40	Mentoring	38	Assertiveness	37
Citizenship/rights	33	Assertiveness	38	Assertiveness	32	Youth strategy support	36
Assertiveness	32	Mentoring	36	Leisure-arts	32	Residential experience	33
Youth strategy support	30	Working independently	36	Leisure-sports	32	Other	33
Working independently	28	Youth strategy support	32	Residential experience	29	Leisure-arts	30
Residential experience	26	Residential experience	30	Youth strategy support	27	Leisure-sports	30
No response	25	Other	18	Other	15	Working independently	29
Other	14	No response	14	No response	11	No response	4
N	94		124		124		76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.2a School sample: support for learning activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Study support/skills	78	Study support/skills	80	Study support/skills	65
ICT skills	64	ICT skills	64	ICT skills	57
Thinking skills	43	Thinking skills	38	Thinking skills	35
Other	11	Other	13	No response	22
No response	9	No response	6	Other	9
N	116	N	132	N	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.2b College sample: support for learning activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Study support/skills	9	Study support/skills	12	Study support/skills	10
ICT skills	8	ICT skills	12	ICT skills	9
Thinking skills	4	Thinking skills	10	Thinking skills	7
Other	2	Other	4	Other	3
No response	1	No response	0	No response	0

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 4.2c Other organisations sample: support for learning activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	57	No response	51	No response	58	No response	42
Thinking skills	30	Thinking skills	32	Thinking skills	28	Thinking skills	38
Study support/skills	20	Study support/skills	25	Study support/skills	22	ICT skills	28
ICT skills	18	ICT skills	24	ICT skills	18	Study support/skills	26
Other	7	Other	9	Other	7	Other	7
N	94	N	124	N	124	N	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.3a School sample: careers activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	49	Careers education	73	Careers education	74
Recording achievement	41	Recording achievement	65	Recording achievement	66
Careers education	33	Interview skills	55	Interview skills	62
Careers events	16	Careers events	45	Careers events	56
Interview skills	9	No response	18	No response	16
Other	2	Other	4	Other	3
N	116	N	132	N	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.3b College sample: careers activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Contact with careers service	7	Contact with careers service	8	Careers education	7
Recording achievement	7	Careers education	8	Interview skills	7
Careers education	4	Interview skills	8	Contact with careers service	6
Interview skills	4	Recording achievement	8	Recording achievement	6
Careers events	3	Careers events	7	Job clubs	5
Other	1	Job clubs	4	Careers events	4
No response	1	Other	1	Other	2
Job clubs	n/a	No response	1	No response	1

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 4.3c Other organisation sample: careers activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	76	Careers education	45	Interview skills	57	Interview skills	67
Recording achievement	17	No response	45	Careers education	51	Careers education	54
Careers education	11	Interview skills achievement	40 44	Recording achievement	50	Recording	
Interview skills	4	Recording achievement	39	Careers events	34	Careers events	29
Careers events	2	Careers events	27	No response	32	No response	20
Other	2	Other	7	Other	12	Other	16
N	94	N	124	N	124	N	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.4a School sample: work-related activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	82	Extended work experience	64	Extended work experience	65
Community work/project	8	Workplace visits	45	Workplace visits	43
Business game/ent. project	5	Community work/project	35	Community work/project	36
Industrial awareness conference	3	Industrial awareness conference	25	Business game/ent. project	34
Workplace visits	3	Business game/ent. project	24	Industrial awareness conference	31
World of work research activity	3	Visit/s from employed adults	24	Visit/s from employed adults	30
Teacher seconded to industry	3	World of work research activity	19	Work shadowing	25
Visit/s from employed adults	1	World of work simulation	19	World of work research activity	23
Work shadowing	1	Work shadowing	14	World of work simulation	12
World of work simulation	0	No response	12	No response	12
Business placement in school	0	Teacher seconded to industry	9	Teacher seconded to to industry	9
Other	0	Business placement in school	2	Business placement in school	4
Extended work experience	n/a	Other	2	Other	1
N	116	N	132	N	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.4b College sample: work-related activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Extended work placement	4	Workplace visits	9	Extended work placement	7
Business game/ent. project	3	Extended work placement	8	Workplace visits	7
Work shadowing	3	Business game/ent. project	5	Work shadowing	4
Workplace visits	3	Visits from employers	4	World of work simulation	4
World of work simulation	2	Work shadowing	4	Business game/ent. project	3
No response	2	World of work simulation	4	Industrial awareness conf.	2
Visits from employers	1	World of work research activity	2	World of work research activity	2
World of work research activity	1	No response	2	No response	2
Business placement in college	1	Industrial awareness conf.	1	Visits from employers	1
Tutor secondment to industry	0	Business placement in college	1	Business placement in college	1
Other	0	Tutor secondment to industry	1	Tutor secondment to industry	1
Industrial awareness conf.	n/a	Other	0	Other	0

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 4.4c Other organisation sample: work-related activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	84	No response	45	No response	40	Community work	40
Community work	10	Workplace visits	32	Extended work experience	32	No response	37
Workplace visits	5	Community work	30	Community work	31	Workplace visits	34
Other	2	Extended work experience	30	Workplace visits	30	Extended work experience	28
Business game/ent. project	0	Visits from employed adults	16	Visits from employed adults	21	Visits from employed adults	16
Extended work experience	0	World of work simulation	13	World of work simulation	14	World ofwork simulation	15
Industrial awareness	0	World of work research activity	11	World of work research activity	10	Work shadowing	11
Visits from employed adults	0	Work shadowing	9	Work shadowing	10	World of work research activity	9
Work shadowing	0	Business game/ent. project	9	Business game/ent. project	9	Other	7
World of work research activity	0	Industrial awareness	4	Industrial awareness	6	Business game/ent. project	5
World of work simulation	0	Other	2	Business placement in org.	6	Business placement in org.	5
Business placement in org.	0	Staff secondment to industry	2	Staff secondment to industry	3	Industrial awareness	4
Staff secondment to industry	0	Business placement in org.	1	Other	2	Staff secondment to industry	3
N	94	N	124	N	124	N	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.5a School sample: training activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	99	No response	74	No response	69
Visit to agency	1	Visit to agency	18	Visit to agency	21
Taster	n/a	Taster	13	Taster	16
Part-time training	n/a	Part-time training	9	Part-time training	12
N	116	N	132	N	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.5b College sample: training activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Taster	4	Taster	8	Taster	6
No response	4	No response	5	No response	4
Part-time training	3	Part-time training	3	Part-time training	3
Visit to agency	1	Visit to agency	1	Visit to agency	2

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 4.5c Other organisation sample: training activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	97	No response	69	No response	43	Visit to agency	38
Taster	2	Visit to agency	23	Visit to agency	36	No response	37
Visit to agency	1	Taster	17	Taster	32	Taster	30
Part-time training	0	Part-time training	14	Part-time training	22	Part-time training	25
Other	0	Other	1	Other	8	Other	13
N	94	N	124	N	124	N	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.6a School sample: FE/HE activities

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
FE/HE student mentoring	3	Part-time college course	44	Part-time college course	48
Other	2	College/university taster	33	College/university taster	34
College/university visits	0	No response	29	Full-time college course	31
Full-time college course	n/a	Full-time college course	18	No response	21
Part-time college course	n/a	FE/HE student mentoring	5	FE/HE student mentoring	9
College/university taster	n/a	Other	3	Other	1
N	116	N	132	N	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.6b College sample: FE/HE activities

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Part-time college course	10	No response	7	No response	7
Full-time college course	8	FE mentoring of students	5	FE mentoring students	3
College*/university taster	6	College*/university visits	2	Input from university liaison officer	2
FE mentoring of students	4	Input from university liaison officer	2	College*/university visits	1
College*/university visits	2	College*/university taster	1	HE mentoring of students	1
HE mentoring of students	1	HE mentoring of students	1	Other	0
Other	0	Other	1	College*/university taster	0
No response	0	Part-time college course	n/a	Part-time college course	n/a
Input from university liaison officer	n/a	Full-time college course	n/a	Full-time college course	n/a

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.
** College visits and tasters were options only in the school pupil section.*

Table 4.6c Other organisation sample: FE/HE activities

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
No response	99	No response	54	No response	50	No response	43
Part-time college course	1	College/university visits	40	College/university visits	33	Part-time college course	36
College/university visits	0	Part-time college course	24	Part-time college course	30	College/university visits	34
College/university taster	0	College/university taster	20	Full-time college course	21	Full-time college course	25
Full-time college course	0	Full-time college course	9	College/university taster	18	College/university taster	12
FE/HE mentor	0	Other	2	FE/HE mentor	6	Other	5
Other	0	FE/HE mentor	1	Other	3	FE/HE mentor	4
N	94	N	124	N	124	N	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Chapter 5 Impact and outcomes

Table 5.1a School sample: improvement in engagement with learning

	S1–S2 %	S3–S4 %	S5–S6 %
5–14 curriculum		n/a	n/a
Named subjects	26		
General answer	14		
Comment on level of improvement	4		
Comment on type of improvement	11		
Named skills	2		
No response	53		
Standard Grades	n/a		n/a
Named subjects		19	
General answer		18	
Comment on level of improvement		11	
Comment on type of improvement		28	
No response		36	
Highers	n/a	n/a	
Named subjects			5
General answer			4
Comment on level of improvement			3
Comment on type of improvement			8
No response			82
Higher Still courses	n/a		
Named subjects		11	16
General answer		4	1
Comment on level of improvement		2	0
Comment on type of improvement		1	1
No response		83	75
Core skills			
Named subjects	19	17	16
General answer	2	8	9
Comment on level of improvement	3	1	0
Comment on type of improvement	5	2	1
No response	76	73	75
Alternative accreditation	n/a		
ASDAN		6	3
Duke of Edinburgh Award		8	3
Caledonian Award		4	5
Other named award		2	0
School award/certificates		1	0
General answer/comment		2	4
No response		81	87
Work-related learning	**n/a**	16	21
Specific vocational skills	**n/a**	10	16
Other			
Community involvement	1	2	0
Fundraising/enterprise activity	0	1	0
College link	0	1	4
Out-of-hours learning	3	1	0
Personal/social development	2	1	0
Comment on whole section	3	7	7
Named courses	3	5	7
No response	84	86	84
N	116	132	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 5.1b College sample: improvement in engagement with learning

	School Pupils N=10	School Leavers N=13	Young Adults N=10
Academic learning	4	*7	6
Core skills	8	8	8
Alternative accreditation	1	1	0
Work-related learning	7	5	6
Specific vocational skills	9	9	6
Other	4	5	2
No response	1	2	1

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.
** 3 x Highers course/s and 4 x Higher Still course/s.*

Table 5.1c Other organisation sample: improvement in engagement with learning

	12–13yrs %	14–15yrs %	16–17yrs %	18–21yrs %
Achievement	39	58	69	67
Learning	84	59	38	40
Positive feelings/attitudes	35	29	23	33
Improved behaviour	41	32	9	9
Positive progression	4	6	40	31
Inclusion	8	13	8	9
Citizenship/rights	8	4	8	4
Better quality of life	0	0	8	2
N*	49	78	65	52

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.
** N totals represent respondents who highlighted that there had been an improvement in engagement with learning only.*

Table 5.2a School sample: other benefits for pupils

Orientated to:	S1–S2 %	S3–S4 %	S5–S6 %
Achievement	16	22	14
Learning (including curriculum)	16	14	16
Feelings/attitudes	27	30	23
Behaviour	22	24	10
Transition	3	8	18
Aims/hopes only	5	2	10
Too soon to say	7	9	8
Comments on improvement	3	5	3
Miscellaneous (one-offs)	1	15	1
No response	35	24	30
N	116	132	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 5.2b College sample: other benefits for students

	School Pupils N=10	School Leavers N=13	Young Adults N=10
Achievement	0	3	3
Engagement with learning	2	3	1
Positive feelings/attitudes	1	3	3
Improved behaviour	0	1	0
Positive progression	2	6	4
Inclusion	2	1	1
Citizenship/rights	0	0	0
Improved awareness of world of work	1	1	0
Improved awareness of possibilities	2	1	1
Other	0	0	0
No response	4	5	5

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 5.2c Other organisation sample: other benefits for young people

	12–13yrs %	14–15yrs %	16–17yrs %	18–21yrs %
Achievement	5	6	3	1
Engagement with learning	13	14	7	8
Positive feelings/attitudes	30	36	30	45
Improved behaviour	26	23	12	13
Positive progression	6	11	17	20
Inclusion	21	18	14	12
Citizenship/rights	11	6	4	7
Better quality of life	6	8	7	7
Support/advice	22	20	20	24
Introduction to other agencies	3	5	7	8
Eligibility for social security benefits	n/a	n/a	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0
No response	30	25	32	16
N	94	124	124	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 5.3a School sample: other benefits for schools

Improved:	S1–S2 %	S3–S4 %	S5–S6 %
Achievement/standards	4	5	5
Provision	12	14	10
Behaviour	14	20	9
Early intervention	4	1	1
Positive school ethos	9	8	4
Transition-related outcomes	2	2	9
Staff-related outcomes	20	22	10
External relations (agencies/parents)	14	13	5
Miscellaneous (one-offs)	4	3	2
No response	43	39	57
N	116	132	77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 5.3b College sample: other benefits

	School Pupils N=10	School Leavers N=13	Young Adults N=10
Responding college	6	6	4
Families	0	0	0
Schools	1	0	0
Local community	1	2	4
Other agencies working with young people	2	2	3
Networking/partnership	5	1	4
Young people	1	1	1
Other	0	0	0
No response	1	6	2

A multiple-response question; therefore the numbers do not sum to the total N.

Table 5.3c Other organisation sample: other benefits

	12–13yrs %	14–15yrs %	16–17yrs %	18–21yrs %
Responding organisation	7	11	13	16
Families	15	15	9	1
Schools	14	11	4	1
Local community	14	20	13	25
Other agencies	13	19	20	20
Networking	15	15	15	13
Partnership	0	0	0	0
Young person	12	13	18	18
Provision of support/facility	3	3	3	5
No response	44	37	38	29
N	94	124	124	76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Chapter 7 Difficulties, challenges and areas for improvement

Table 7.1a School sample: difficulties experienced by target pupils

S1–S2		S3–S4		S5–S6	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Disruptive/acting out	86	Disruptive/acting out	90	Low motivation	64
Low self-esteem	82	Low self-esteem	86	Underachieving	64
Immaturity	75	Low motivation	83	Low self-esteem	57
Low motivation	74	History of temporary exclusion	80	Recorded SEN	53
Low reading age	73	Underachieving	76	Not academic	52
Underachieving	69	Low reading age	75	Immaturity	52
Truanting	62	Truanting	74	Disruptive/acting out	48
History of temporary exclusion	62	Immaturity	69	Truancy	47
Not academic	60	Withdrawn	59	Low reading age	45
Withdrawn	57	Not academic	55	History of temporary exclusion	43
Recorded SEN	55	Recorded SEN	55	Withdrawn	34
Gifted but bored	15	History of removal from register	27	History of removal from register	9
History of		Gifted but bored removal from register	14 15	Gifted but bored	8
Other	11	Other	13	Other	16
No response	3	No response	1	No response	5
N	116		132		77

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 7.1b College sample: profile of students targeted

School Pupils		School Leavers		Young Adults	
Rank order	**N=10**	**Rank order**	**N=13**	**Rank order**	**N=10**
Poor attendance at school	9	Low level of basic skills	12	Contact with learning support	8
Poor behaviour in school	8	Contact with learning support	11	History of unemployment	8
Temporary exclusion (school)	7	Poor behaviour in school	10	Low level of basic skills	7
Contact with learning support	7	Poor attendance at school	10	Poor attendance at school	7
Disadvantaged background	7	Requiring remediation	9	Disadvantaged background	7
Removed from school register	6	Low results	9	Requiring remediation	6
Low level of basic skills	6	Under-achievement	8	Low results	6
Under-achievement	5	Disadvantaged background	8	Poor behaviour in school	6
Low results	3	Temporary exclusion (school)	7	Under-achievement	5
Requiring remediation	3	Removed from school register	3	Temporary exclusion (school)	4
History of unemployment	n/a	History of unemployment	n/a	Removed from school register	3
Other	2	Other	2	Other	3
No response	0	No response	0	No response	0

A multiple-response question; therefore numbers do not sum to total N.

Table 7.1c Other organisation sample: problems faced by young people targeted

12–13yrs		14–15yrs		16–17yrs		18–21yrs	
Rank order	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**	**Rank order**	**%**
Disruptive	75	Disruptive	87	Low motivation	85	Low motivation	97
History of temporary exclusion	72	Non-attendance	86	Low self-esteem	85	Low self-esteem	96
Low self-esteem	71	Low self-esteem	86	Immaturity	82	History of unemployment	93
Underachieving	71	Low motivation	85	Disruptive	82	Underachieving	86
Low motivation	70	Underachieving	82	Non-attendance	77	Immaturity	86
Immaturity	66	Immaturity	81	Underachieving	77	Drug-related	84
Risk of offending	65	History of temporary exclusion	80	History temporary exclusion	76	Non-attendance	84
Non-attendance	65	Risk of offending	77	Drugs-related	75	History of offending	83
Low reading age	64	Not academic	73	Risk of unemployment	73	History of temporary exclusion	8
Withdrawn	62	Withdrawn	72	Not academic	69	Disruptive	82
Not academic	62	Drugs-related	69	History of offending	69	Not academic	76
Drugs-related	45	Low reading age	67	Withdrawn	68	Low reading age	72
History of offending	43	History of offending	64	Risk of offending	68	Risk of offending	71
Recorded SEN	37	Risk of unemployment	60	History of unemployment	61	Withdrawn	67
History of removal from register	35	History of removal from register	5	Low reading age	58	Mental health	62
Mental health	32	Recorded SEN	51	Recorded SEN	49	Recorded SEN	62
Gifted but bored	25	Mental health	46	History of removal from register	48	Risk of unemployment	62
No response	18	Gifted but bored	32	Mental health	47	History of removal from register	57
Other	9	Other	17	Gifted but bored	39	Gifted but bored	49
Risk of unemployment	n/a	History of unemployment	15	Other	15	Other	15
History of unemployment	n/a	No response	8	No response	7	No response	0
N	94		124		124		76

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 7.2a School sample: constraints/reasons for non-provision

Rank order	%
Limited staff time allocated	47
Limited money available	40
Constraints of curriculum	32
None ticked	31
Constraints of the timetable	30
Entrenched attitudes of some pupils	29
Unsupportive attitudes of some parents	28
Limited work/training/college placements	23
Limited range of other possibilities	23
Unsupportive attitudes of some staff	15
Other school priorities	14
No disaffected/disengaged pupils	9
N	149

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 7.2b College sample: constraints/reasons for non-provision

Rank order	N=19
Limited money available	9
Limited staff time allocated	7
None ticked	7
Lack of staff skills/specialist teacher strategies	5
Other college priorities	4
Entrenched attitudes of some students	4
Unsupportive attitude of some staff	3
Limited work/training/college placements	3
Timetable constraints	2
Course programme constraints	2
Limited range of other local opportunities	2
Unsupportive attitudes from some parents	1
Other	1
No disaffected	1

A multiple-response question; therefore numbers do not sum to total N.

Table 7.2c Other organisation sample: constraints/reasons for non-provision

Rank order	%
Limited money available	65
Limited staff time allocated	64
Limited range of other local possibilities	48
Entrenched attitudes of some young people	45
Limited work/training/college placements	43
Unsupportive attitudes from some staff	40
Unsupportive attitudes from some parents	40
Other priorities	38
Constraints of school timetable	33
Constraints of school curriculum	32
Lack of support for school staff to develop this kind of work	26
Other	17
None ticked	6
N	189

A multiple-response question; therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

THE DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM TO DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

This report offers an exploration of the range of strategies and provision across Scotland that is aimed at addressing young people's disaffection and disengagement from learning. It explores the types of provision in place, ranging from those with a preventative focus and those addressing disengagement within mainstream educational contexts, to alternative forms of educational provision aiming to 'reclaim' those who have become completely disengaged. The study is based on information received from a national survey of Scottish secondary schools, FE colleges and other organisations working with young people, a telephone survey of 41 questionnaire respondents and 16 case studies. During the case-study phase of the research, young people, their parents/carers and strategic and operational staff were interviewed to gain their perspectives and insights into the strategies and interventions used to re-engage young people in learning.

The report includes:

- an overview of the types of support and provision designed to address disengagement from the curriculum
- an exploration of the 'engaging' curriculum, the ways in which the content, delivery and context of learning are adapted to meet the needs of young people
- an account of the impact and outcomes associated with the provision
- an audit of the key factors contributing to the effectiveness of the provision
- challenges associated with the provision and areas for improvement and future development.

Given the increased interest in the potential of alternative ways to re-engage young people who have been 'turned off' learning via the medium of the traditional school curriculum, and the concern to offer suitable routes for success to all youngsters, this publication should have much interest for schools, colleges and other organisations. In addition, it will also be relevant to a wide range of educational professionals, as well as those from other services, at both operational and strategic levels.

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