

How much is education included in the plans of children on Supervision Requirements?

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
List of tables	5
List of figures	5
1. Introduction	6
Looked after children	6
Educational attainment of looked after children	6
Child plans	6
Research aims	7
2. Methods	8
Selection of sample	8
Information collection	8
3. Backgrounds of children	10
4. Inclusion of education in reports for Children’s Hearings	12
Social Work reports for Children’s Hearings	12
Education reports for Children’s Hearings	15
5. Inclusion of education in planning for children’s futures	16
Educational transitions and plans	16
6. How children’s educational needs and abilities are considered in plans	18
Place of residence	24
Children’s ambitions	25
7. Children’s Hearings – consideration of education in decision-making	27
Educational representatives at Children’s Hearings	28
8. Education of children on Supervision Requirements at home	29
Inclusion of education in plans	29
Consideration of education in Hearing decision-making	30
9. Discussion	31
Child plans	31
Children’s Hearings System	32
Children on Supervision Requirements at home	33
10. References	34
Appendix A Research variables	36

Executive Summary

There are 16,171 looked after children in Scotland. For most of them (13,903 children), the legal basis of this is a Supervision Requirement made by a Children's Hearing. The educational attainment of looked after children is, on average, significantly lower than that of other children. Children who are looked after at home, in particular, tend to face greater obstacles to their learning and have poorer educational outcomes than their peers.

Every looked after child in Scotland (whether looked after at home or away from home) must have a plan in place that should address all their needs, including those related to their education. There is little information on how education is considered and included in Child Plans, and there are issues on the extent to which plans consider outcomes for children and assess and address their needs. This research aimed to help fill this gap by finding out how much education is considered in the plans of children on Supervision Requirements (at home and accommodated) and in the decisions of Children's Hearings.

The cases of 250 children on Supervision Requirements, aged between three and 17 years old were examined. These children were selected at random from 10 local authority areas from those who had a Children's Hearing in April or May 2012 where a substantive decision was made. The reports, plans and Hearing decisions were examined to determine the extent to which education was considered.

Findings

98% of reports and plans were produced by Social Work. A core component of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is that there is a lead professional to co-ordinate a multi-agency child's plan. **This research raises questions on the extent that professionals in services other than Social Work are taking on the role of lead professional.**

How much children's education was considered in plans varied – 68% of plans included some reference to the child's education, however, less than a half (48%) included specific actions for the child's education. Scottish Government guidance states that children's plans should address their educational and wider developmental needs and should include details of the services to meet these. **That less than a half of children in this research had plans that met their educational needs and how these would be addressed, suggests that more needs to be done.**

Plans were more likely to address children's educational problems and needs than their abilities: - 53% of children with learning difficulties, 46% with emotional difficulties, 40% where attendance was poor, and 35% whose behaviour was affecting their learning had plans with actions to help address these. In comparison, 17% of children who were achieving educationally had plans to support their potential and continued achievement. None of the children who were described as talented had plans that considered their abilities. Few plans recorded the child's

views and/or aspirations, and only 6% of children had plans that included actions to support them in realising their ambitions. **If plans and interventions are to support children in achieving their potential, they must take into account children's aspirations and abilities as well as addressing their needs.**

It is a statutory requirement that that in planning for a child, local authorities take a long-term view of the child's education. In this research, less than a quarter of plans considered long-term outcomes for children's education – i.e. 22% had educational goals for the child beyond the current school year. **This research indicates that the majority of plans do not include a long-term view of looked after children's education.**

Education was included in 48% of Hearing reasons and 6% of Hearing decisions. A Supervision Requirement provides the statutory basis for measures to support the child. **As education is key to children's development and long-term outcomes, should it be considered by all Children's Hearings in their decision making?** School representatives were present at 44% of Hearings. Whilst it may not always be appropriate for them to be at Hearings, their input can be valuable as they have day to day contact with the child. **SCRA will examine its own practice to facilitate schools attendance at Hearings and ensure that information on the child's education is available for Panel Members.**

There were 96 children in this research who had Supervision Requirements at home. These children were more likely to have problems related to their education, for example, 75% of children where attendance was an issue lived at home, and 10 of the 15 children who had been excluded lived at home. Hearings decisions and reasons were more likely to include education for children on Supervision Requirements at home: 12 of the 16 children where education was made a condition of their Supervision Requirement lived at home; and education was included in the Hearings' reasons for 68% of those on Supervision Requirements at home. However, the extent to which education was considered in the plans of children with Supervision Requirements at home was very similar to the other children in this research. **Should there be greater prioritisation of the education of children on Supervision Requirements at home as is it more likely to be of concern and the reason why they are subject to compulsory measures of supervision?**

List of tables

Table 1	Inclusion of education in plans	16
Table 2	Inclusion of education in plans for children in P7 to S1	17
Table 3	Inclusion of education in plans for children in S3 to further education	17
Table 4	How children’s educational needs and problems are considered in plans	19
Table 5	Education factors and place of residence	24
Table 6	Inclusion of education in plans of children on Supervision Requirements at home	30

List of figures

Figure 1	Ages of children	10
Figure 2	School years of children	10
Figure 3	Consulted on Social Work reports	13
Figure 4	Education needs identified	14
Figure 5	Types of Children’s Hearings	27
Figure 6	Ages of children on Supervision Requirements at home	29

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1. Introduction

Looked after children

'Looked After Children' are those who are 'looked after' in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children, and to take their views into account in decisions made about them.

There are 16,171 looked after children in Scotland¹ (Scottish Government, 2012a). For most, the legal basis of this is a Supervision Requirement made by a Children's Hearing. In 2012, there were 13,903 children with Supervision Requirements². About a half of these children were looked after at home with their parent(s); 24% lived with foster carers; 16% with relatives or friends (i.e. kinship care); and 6% in residential care (SCRA, 2012a).

Educational attainment of looked after children

The educational attainment of looked after children is, on average, significantly lower than that of other children. In 2009-10, 56% of all school leavers had gained five or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 (standard grade credit) or better. The equivalent figures were 0.5% of school leavers who were 'looked after at home', and 4.7% of leavers looked after away from home. This is lower than the attainment for pupils with additional support needs and for those from the most deprived areas (Scottish Government, 2011a). This has been recognised as a concern for many years (HM Inspector of Schools and Social Work Service Inspectorate, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2007a).

The educational attainment of looked after children has recently been the subject of an inquiry by the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee. The Committee concluded that the attainment gap between looked after children and their peers remains unacceptably wide, despite the considerable efforts that have been made (Scottish Parliament, 2012). As the Extraordinary Lives report noted: "*there is nothing inevitable about looked after children doing less well in education*" (SWIa, 2006). However, there is a direct relationship between key care factors and children's educational attainment. For example, looked after children face more practical obstacles to learning, stigma and discrimination in school, lack of support and encouragement from the adults in their lives, and more changes in schools and placements than other children (McClung and Gayle, 2010).

Child plans

Every looked after child in Scotland (whether looked after at home or away from home) must have a plan in place that should address all their needs, including those

¹ At 31st July 2011.

² At 31st March 2012.

related to their education (Scottish Executive, 2007a). This is a key part of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2012b) and is a statutory requirement.

The Looked After Children (Scotland) (Regulations) 2009 require that an assessment is made when a child becomes or is about to become looked after, and that this assessment leads to a 'Child's Plan'. This plan must include arrangements concerning *"details of any services to be provided to meet the care, education and health needs of the child"* (Scottish Parliament, 2011). In addition, since 2010 all looked after children are presumed to have additional support needs, unless an assessment finds that this is not the case, and are required to be assessed for whether they need a Co-ordinated Support Plan (Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended in 2009). Guidance on Care Plans also states: *"In planning for the child, local authorities should have regard to continuity of education, take a long-term view of the child's education, provide educational and developmental opportunities and support and promote potential and achievement"* (Scottish Government, 2011).

Research aims

There is little information on how education is considered and included in Child Plans. Almost all (96%) looked after children had a care plan at 31 July 2011 (Scottish Government, 2012a). However, there are issues on the extent to which plans consider outcomes for the children and assess and address their needs (SWIa 2010; HMIE, 2010).

The aim of this research is to determine the extent to which education is considered in the plans of children with Supervision Requirements and in the information provided to their Children's Hearings.

Children looked after at home have a distinctive experience that has specific consequences for their education, they can face obstacles to learning that other children do not (McClung and Gayle, 2010). There is a lack of information on why these children have poorer educational outcomes than other looked after children, and what needs to be done to better understand their particular support needs in education (Connelly and Furnivall, 2012). An additional aim of this research is therefore to compare the education content of the plans of children on Supervision Requirements at home with those of other children on Supervision Requirements.

The Scottish Government, in its response to the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee's inquiry, recognised the need for greater understanding of the circumstances of looked after children and how the care and education systems can better support them (Scottish Government, 2012c). SCRA carried out this research to provide evidence to help inform policy makers and practitioners in taking forward their work to improve the educational outcomes of looked after children.

2. Methods

Selection of sample

The research examined the cases of 250 children and young people aged from three to 17 years old.

The research covered 10 local authority areas:

- Dundee
- East Lothian
- Edinburgh
- Fife
- Glasgow
- Highland
- North Lanarkshire
- Perth & Kinross
- South Lanarkshire
- Stirling.

Highland was included as it was the GIRFEC Pathfinder, and the other areas were selected to give a mixture of urban and rural areas. This selection of areas also allowed for different formats of reports and plans to be included in the research.

The children in the sample were from these areas and who had:

- a Supervision Requirement; and
- a review Children's Hearing held in the period 1 April to 31 May 2012 that had made a **substantive**³ decision.

Twenty five children who fulfilled the above criteria were selected at random from each of the 10 areas.

Information collection

Children's Hearings papers must include a report provided by the local authority (usually Social Work)⁴ that provides information on the child's background, chronology of events, assessment of the child's needs and a plan to address these. In addition, Hearing papers may also include school reports, All About Me forms (giving the child's views), safeguarder reports, residential unit reports, etc.

Information was collected from the papers presented to the 250 Children's Hearings that were held in April or May 2012, and the Hearings decisions and reasons. This information was all held in SCRA case files.

Information was collected between June and October 2012.

³ Over a quarter of Hearings do not make substantive decisions and are continued (SCRA 2012b). As this research looked at how education was considered in Hearing decision-making, only Hearings that made substantive decisions (i.e. to continue, vary or terminate a Supervision Requirement) were included in the study.

⁴ Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996. S.S.I. 1996 No. 3261 (S.251)

All information collected was recorded against a defined set of variables. These fell into four broad categories: background information on children's education; content of reports and plans; extent that plans consider education and children's needs, abilities and ambitions; and Hearing decisions (see Appendix A for a full list of research variables).

Information was recorded and analysed using MS Excel.

Confidentiality

All information was held electronically and securely on encrypted laptops or in an electronic folder accessible only by members of the SCRA research team, all of whom have Enhanced Disclosure Scotland clearance. No names or identifying information of any child were recorded. Thus the data extracted were non-identifiable and used for the purposes of this research only.

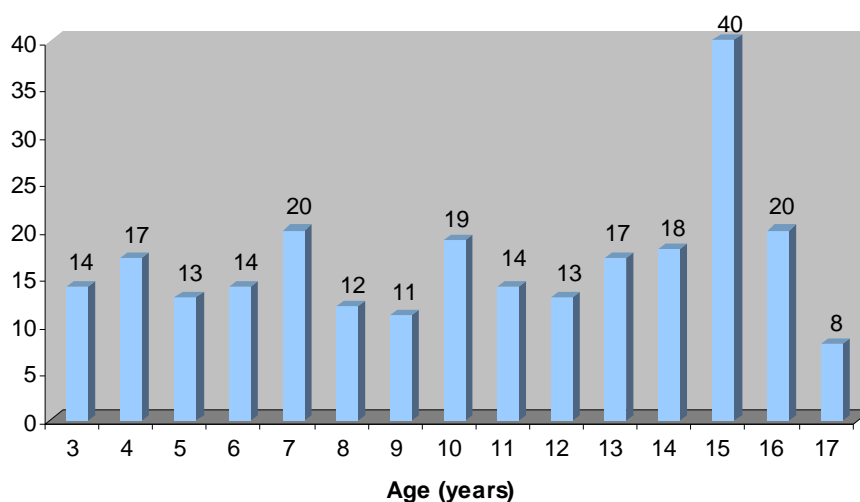
Findings are reported on an anonymised and aggregated basis. Where case studies are given, these are anonymised and pseudonyms used. Some details in case studies are changed to ensure anonymity.

3. Backgrounds of children

The 250 children in this research:

- 138 were male (55%) and 112 were female (45%).
- 96 were looked after at home (38%), 72 were in foster care (29%), 57 were in kinship care (23%), 24 were in residential care (10%) and one was in prison.

Figure 1. Ages of children

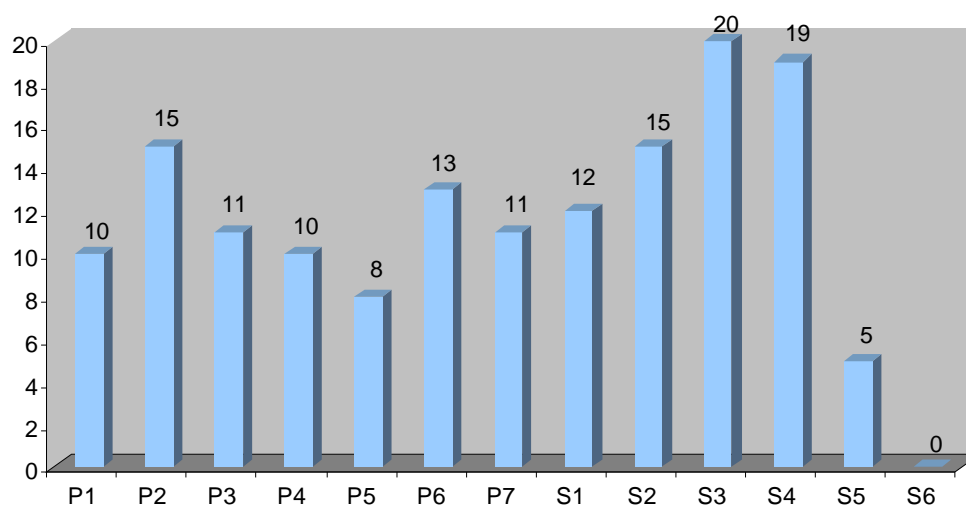


Stage and type of education

Of the 195 children of school age:

- 103 were in primary education (41%); and
- 92 were in secondary education (37%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. School years of children*



* There were also 46 children where their school year was not specified in reports and 55 children where this was not applicable (i.e. the child was in nursery, further education, employment or not in education or employment).

154 of the primary and secondary school age children (62%) were in mainstream full-time education.

19 children were in mainstream education with some form of additional support (e.g. reduced or part-time timetable) (7%). The reasons for this were related to poor attendance (eight children), the child needing support for their behaviour in school (seven children), or the child requiring specialised support (four children). Two of the children had been excluded within the previous three months.

12 children were at residential school (5%) and 10 attended some other type of specialised school (4%).

Of the other 55 children, 36 were at nursery (14%), 12 were in college/further education (5%), four were not in education or employment (2%), and three were in employment or apprenticeships (1%).

Fifteen children (6%) had been **excluded** from education at least once in the three months prior to their Hearing in April or May 2012.

4. Inclusion of education in reports for Children's Hearings

Children's Hearings must be provided with '*a report of the local authority on the child and his social background*'. This report is requested by the Reporter from the local authority and is then provided by the Reporter to the Hearing⁵. This report is usually the main report for the Hearing and is necessary for Hearing decision-making.

Under GIRFEC, every looked after child should have an integrated 'Child Plan' (Scottish Executive, 2007b), and this plan should be the report presented to Children's Hearings. The format of 'Child Plans' can vary (Scottish Parliament, 2011), and this was reflected in this research - there were three main types of reports for Hearings: Social Background Reports; Integrated Assessment Reports; and Child Plans. How planning for the child was included in these reports varied from recommendations to the Hearing to stand alone plans. To ensure that all consideration of planning for the child was considered in this research, the content of the body of the reports is considered separately from any plan or recommendation for the child. This section looks at the information on the children's education included in reports, and sections 5 and 6 examine the content of the plans.

For 243 of the 250 children (97%) a report with some form of recommendation or plan was provided for their Hearings⁶. 238 of the 243 reports (98%) were produced by Social Work. Two reports were completed by multiagency groups following multiagency meetings, one by a residential unit and two by other professionals. As most reports were produced by Social Work, they are referred to as 'Social Work reports' for the remainder of this report.

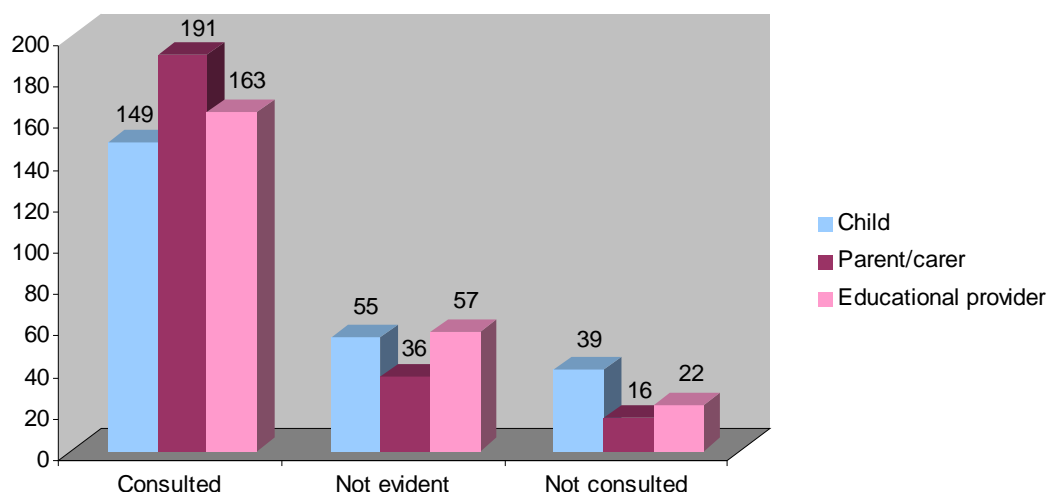
Social Work reports for Children's Hearings

The majority of children, parents and education providers were consulted during the writing of the Social Work reports (Figure 3). The extent to which their views on education were included varied.

⁵ Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996. S.S.I. 1996 No. 3261 (S.251)

⁶ This high proportion is not surprising as all the Hearings in this research had made substantive decisions and to do so requires that they have a Social Work Report. Over a quarter of all Hearings do not make substantive decisions and are continued (SCRA 2012b).

Figure 3. Consulted on Social Work reports



Children's views on education

149 of the 243 children were consulted on the content of the Social Work reports; 78 of these Social Work reports (32%) contained information on the child's views on their education.

53 children had their views on their education included in other reports for their Hearings (e.g. school report, All About Me form).

Inclusion of education in Social Work reports

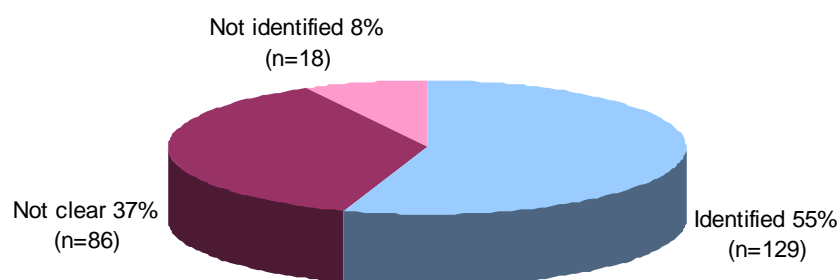
233 of the 243 Social Work reports (96%) included information on the child's education. Of the other 10 reports, nine did not include information on the child's education and in one no information was recorded.

In 124 of the 233 reports (53%) education was in a separate section; and in 109 (47%) it was in the main body and throughout the report.

In 135 cases (58%), there was evidence of regular review of the child's educational progress, needs and issues. In 90 cases (38%) it was not clear from reports whether education was regularly reviewed; and in eight education was not regularly reviewed.

129 reports (55%) clearly identified the child's educational needs (Figure 4); and 140 reports (60%) identified the child's educational strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 4. Education needs identified



Children's achievements and ambitions

39 of the 233 Social Work reports (17%) included children's **achievements**, however, the majority (194, 83%) did not. Children's achievements, when mentioned, covered academic success (e.g. achieving qualifications, getting good grades, securing college places, etc.), more general educational achievements (e.g. becoming more confident in a subject, applying themselves more in class, improvement in behaviour, etc.) or vocational successes (e.g. being accepted to play for a local sports team, winning awards, etc.).

45 of the 233 Social Work reports (19%) included the children's **ambitions**. These children usually wanted to stay on at school, go onto further education for vocational qualifications (e.g. hairdressing, beauty therapy, mechanic, catering, etc.); or to pursue their ambitions in sports or performing. Two children had ambitions for academic careers. 188 of the 233 reports (81%) did not include the child's ambitions.

Involvement in education

To find out how the child's involvement in education was described, each of the 233 Social Work reports was examined and the description coded as: positive; negative; or mixed:

- 120 of Social Work reports (52%) had positive descriptions of the children's involvement in their education – working hard, good attendance, making progress, enjoying school, popular and happy, etc.
- 79 (34%) described children's involvement in education as mix of positive and negative issues – lacking confidence but tries hard, previous poor behaviour has improved, poor attendance but works well when at school, etc.
- 29 (12%) had negative descriptions – inappropriate or aggressive behaviour, poor attendance and punctuality, exclusions, etc.
- Five Social Work reports did not describe the children's involvement in education.

Placement moves and the impact on children's education

27 of the 233 children (12%) were being considered for a placement move; 18 of the 27 Social Work reports (67%) considered the impact that a placement move would have on their education.

Education reports for Children's Hearings

Almost a half of the 250 children (n=124) also had some form of education report provided for their Children's Hearings - 104 of these were school reports. There were also 10 reports from residential units and 10 from other sources⁷.

The content of 50 of the 124 education reports (40%) were accurately reflected in the Social Work reports; 48 were partly reflected (39%), and 20 were not accurately reflected in the Social Work reports (16%). The remaining six children did not have a Social Work report provided for their Hearing.

⁷ Two from Educational Psychologists, one Co-ordinated Support Plans and one Individualised Education Plan. Three children had more than one type of report and three had 'other' forms of educational reports.

5. Inclusion of education in planning for children’s futures

This section examines the extent that education was considered in the plan for the child. It looks at any planning for the child whether in a stand-alone Child Plan, separate section of the Social Work report, or Social Work recommendation.

There were plans for 243 of the 250 children. Education was considered in 70% of plans (n=171). In 105 of these 171 plans (61%), there were specific actions for the child’s education (Table 1).

For 137 of the 243 children (56%) the report and plan did not include specific actions for their education; and the plans for 71 children (29%) did not include their education at all⁸.

Table 1. Inclusion of education in plans

Extent education included in plan	Number of children	% of children in research*	% of children with report/plans
Social Work report and planning for child’s future	243	97%	100%
Plan that included reference to child’s education	171	68%	70%
Plan that included specific actions for child’s education	105	42%	43%

*250 children⁹

Educational goals

The 233 Social Work report and plans, that included education, were examined to find out if short and long-term educational goals for the child were considered. For the purposes of this research, short-term was within the current school year and long-term beyond the current school year:

- Short-term educational goals were included in 51% of Social Work reports (n=118).
- Long-term educational goals were present in under a quarter of Social Work reports (22%, n=52).

Educational transitions and plans

The plans of children at key stages of their education were examined to find out how much education was considered. These were children who were at one of two transitions points in their education:

- P7 and S1 (transition from primary to secondary school) – 23 children.
- S3, S4, S5¹⁰ and further education (transition from secondary school to further education or employment) – 56 children.

⁸ See section 6 for examples of specific actions and general statements included in plans

⁹ In one case, no information was recorded on the future planning for the child.

¹⁰ None were in S6

Transition from primary to secondary school

Education was considered in the plans of 16 of the 22 children in P7 and S1 (73%), and for nine of these children there were specific actions for their education in their plans (Table 2).

Table 2. Inclusion of education in plans for children in P7 to S1

Extent education included in plan	Number of children	% of children in P7-S1*	% of children with report/plans
Social Work report and planning for child's future	22	96%	100%
Plan that included reference to child's education	16	70%	73%
Plan that included specific actions for child's education	9	39%	41%

*23 children

Transition from secondary school to further education or employment

45 of the 56 children in S3, S4, S5 and further education had plans that included some reference to their education, and for 33 of these children there were specific actions for their education (Table 3).

Table 3. Inclusion of education in plans for children in S3 to further education

Extent education included in plan	Number of children	% of children in S3 to FE*	% of children with reports/plans
Social Work report and planning for child's future	55	98%	100%
Plan that included reference to child's education	45	80%	82%
Plan that included specific actions for child's education	33	59%	60%

*56 children

6. How children's educational needs and abilities were considered in plans

All information that referred to education and was provided to Hearings in reports (e.g. from social work, school, residential units, etc.) was examined together with the child's views (from e.g. All About Me forms, Hearing decisions, Social Work and school reports). This collated information was then compared to the children's plans. This was then used to assess the extent to which plans considered children's educational needs and abilities, and their ambitions.

To ascertain the extent to which children's educational needs and abilities were considered in their plans, all reports were first examined to determine what these were. Factors related to education were noted where they were described in any of the reports provided to Hearings. The most common were:

Abilities

- Achieving – where the child was making good progress at school and/or where specific educational achievements were recorded.
- Talented – children who were noted as having particular talents.

Needs and problems

- Attendance – poor school attendance, late coming, exclusions, and/or truancy.
- Behaviour (affecting the child's education) – child is aggressive or offensive to others, displays challenging or inappropriate behaviour, is disruptive in school, or has tantrums.
- Emotional difficulties (affecting the child's education) – external factors affecting the child's emotional well-being and ability to learn (e.g. previous abuse, home situation), and/ or child has anxieties or poor self esteem.
- Learning difficulties – examples included Aspergers, ADHD, requires Additional Support for Learning, and developmental delay.

These factors were mentioned in reports for the Hearings of 171 of the 250 children. For 79 children, there were either no specific factors mentioned and/or a general statement on progress (60 children); there was no mention of education in any of the reports for the Hearing (seven children); other factors (six children); no reports for the Hearing (three children); differences between the accounts of child's education in social work and school reports (three children).

The extent to which plans considered these factors for the 171 children - either to address them and/or to develop the child's abilities is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. How children’s educational needs and problems were included in plans

Education factor	Number of children				
	Extent considered in Plan			No plan for Hearing	Total*
	Specific plan/actions on education	General statement on education	Education not included		
Achieving	10 (17%)	24 (42%)	23 (40%)	0	57
Talented	1 (8%)	8 (67%)	3 (32%)	0	12
Attendance	21 (40%)	15 (28%)	16 (30%)	1 (2%)	53
Behaviour	13 (35%)	15 (40%)	9 (24%)	0	37
Emotional difficulties	6 (46%)	6 (46%)	1 (8%)	0	13
Learning difficulties	17 (53%)	12 (38%)	3 (9%)	0	32
Total*	64	60	46	1	171*

*Some children had two factors and are counted twice above.

- 64 children (37%) had plans that included specific actions to meet their educational needs and abilities.
- 60 children (35%) had general statements in their plans about their education and did not include any specific actions to meet their educational needs, problems or potential.
- Education was not included in the plans of 46 children (27%), where one or two of the above factors were identified. For one child, there was no plan for their Hearing.

Plans were more likely to include specific actions on education where the child had problems or needs. It was rarer for plans to include consideration of children’s abilities and talents and how to support and develop these.

Achieving

For 10 of the 57 (18%) achieving children, their plans included actions to support their potential and continued achievement.

Case study 1 Amy

Amy is 14 years old and living with foster carers. She has achieved excellent results in her exams and wants to stay on at school to then go to university. Her plan supports her academic potential:

*‘Achieving academic potential across all the curriculum.
 Opportunities to partake and have new experiences.
 Liaison and participation in information nights and meetings with carers. Assistance with transport and financial support.’*

Case study 2 Liam

Liam is currently living with foster carers, with plans for him to move towards independent living. He is in S5 at secondary school and sitting his Highers. He wants to stay on at school to S6 then go to college. His school reports that he is making good progress in all his subjects, has excellent attendance and a positive attitude to education. His plan includes support for his education at school and beyond:

'To continue to discuss academic progress with Liam and to offer him a conducive atmosphere to study and support within his independent placement.

To be offered support and guidance from Young People's Team in relation to decisions regarding education.

To be offered appointment with careers guidance.'

For 23 of the 57 (40%) achieving children, there was no mention of education in their plans; and for another 24 children (42%) their plans included general statements on education.

Case study 3 Hayden

Hayden is in S2 and is academically achieving. She is about to choose her subjects for Standard Grades. She likes school and wants to stay at the same one. She lives with foster carers. Her plan includes a general statement on attendance:

'For Hayden to attend school so that she can continue to progress with her education'

Case Study 4 Robert

Robert is 14 years old and living in a residential unit. He enjoys school and is achieving good grades. His plan includes a general statement on his education and no specific actions on how to support him:

'To continue the way he is going as he is doing very well''

Talented

There were twelve children who were described as having a particular talent, this was usually in sport or creative arts. There was no mention of this, or on how to support and develop their talents in any of these children's plans. In one child's plan, there was specific consideration of their education but this was related to their behavioural problems and not their abilities. There were general statements on education in eight children's plans and no inclusion of education in three.

Case study 5 Evan

Evan is in P5 and lives with his foster carers. He is described as being very intelligent and displays a particular talent for football. His plan states:

'To continue to attend primary school.'

Case study 6 Sarah

Sarah is 15 years old and lives in a residential unit. She is about to sit her Standard Grades and is expected to do well, and would like to go to college. She is also gifted musically. Education is not included in her plan.

Attendance

There were actions to address poor attendance in the plans of 21 of the 53 children (40%) where this was an issue.

Case study 7 Kara

Kara is three years old and lives at home. She has recently started nursery school. This is providing her with stability and support, and the opportunity to interact with children her own age. Her attendance is being affected by her parents' transport difficulties.

'Transport to be provided for Kara to attend nursery.

Liaison between Social Work and nursery on child's emotional, social and educational development.'

Case study 8 Max

Max is in S3 at secondary school and lives at home. He has previously had poor school attendance and this has affected his academic progress. He now realises that he must attend school, and his attendance and behaviour at school are improving. His plan includes supports for him to re-engage with education:

'Max to have weekly sessions with an integration team worker to explore barriers to education.

To continue to attend [Education] Project.'

There were general statements on education and/or attendance in the plans of 15 children (28%).

Case study 9 Anya

Anya lives at home and is 15 years old. She was being bullied at school, and as a result stopped attending. She is academically able and her behaviour is good in school. Due to her poor attendance she was placed on a reduced timetable and withdrawn from most of her Standard Grade courses. She says she enjoys school and wants to attend. Her plan states:

'To get support with training and education.'

For 16 children (30%) with poor attendance there was no mention of education in their plans, and for one child no plan/report was provided for their Hearing.

Case study 10 Louise

Louise is nine years old and lives with her aunt. Her school is concerned that her progress is being affected by late coming and unexplained absences. Louise is happy and hardworking when she is at school. Education is not included in her plan.

Behaviour

The plans of 13 of the 37 children (35%) included actions to help address their behavioural difficulties.

Case study 11 Fraser

Fraser is in S2 and lives with foster carers. His behaviour at school is a cause for concern and is hindering his progress. He is attention seeking and lacks concentration. He also selectively truants classes. In the past he has been excluded for being physically abusive to his teachers. His plan includes:

'Fraser to have access to guidance teacher as much as necessary and will meet with each other regularly.

Fraser to commit to school work to help him achieve qualifications he needs for future.

School are to make a clear plan of support and Fraser to be involved in this.

Praise is to be given to Fraser for his achievements to build up his confidence and self-worth.'

For 15 children with problematic behaviour (40%) there were general statements on education in their plans.

Case study 12 Daniel

Daniel's school report describes him as insolent and uncooperative with his teachers, lacking effort and being disruptive in class. He has good attendance and is always on time. He is 13 years old and lives with his grandfather. His plan has the statement:

'Daniel to continue to go to school.'

Education was not considered in the plans of the remaining nine children (24%) whose behaviour at school was of concern.

Case study 13 Campbell

Campbell is nine years old and lives with his grandparents. He is aggressive and physically abusive to pupils and teachers, and has been excluded because of his behaviour. Education is not included in his plan.

Emotional difficulties

For the 13 children whose emotional problems were affecting their ability to learn, six (46%) had plans to address these concerns and these were usually to provide

extra support for the child in school to improve their confidence and self esteem, and develop their social skills.

Case study 13 Mhairi

Mhairi lives at home and is 13 years old. She suffers from extreme anxiety which prevents her attending school. She is academically able but her progress is being affected. Her plan includes the actions:

'Mhairi to attend CAMHS.

Identification of education placement appropriate to Mhairi's needs is a priority.'

Six children (46%) had general statements on education in their plans, and for one there was no mention of education.

Case study 14 Keira

Keira is 10 years old and lives with her adult sister. She is described as being a bright and capable child. Her school is concerned that her progress is being hampered by her emotional difficulties. She is particularly unsettled and upset after prison visits to her father. Her plan does not include mention of her emotional problems or education.

Learning difficulties

Thirty two children were reported as having learning difficulties. For over half of the children with learning difficulties (53%, n=17), there was detailed consideration of their educational needs in their plans.

Case study 15 Brodie

Brodie is 11 years old and lives with foster carers. He is developmentally behind. He has recently moved to a new primary school where he gets input from the Support for Learning Team. Brodies likes school and his teacher who he says is funny. His plan includes:

'Brodie to continue to attend current school.

ISP to be in place and monitored termly

Education meetings to consider very real need for support termly.'

Case study 16 Connor

Connor had a delayed start to secondary school and is now in S4. He needs additional support at school. He is supported at home by his foster carers. He enjoys school and is popular with pupils and teachers. He wants to go to college. His plan addresses his needs and ambitions:

'Special Needs Register

Transition planning from school to college

Support for Connor to travel independently to go to college.'

In three cases (9%), there was no mention of education in their plans. There were general statements about education in the plans of 12 children (38%).

Case study 17 Logan

Logan is seven years old and lives at home. He needs help with literacy and maths and gets additional support at school. There are concerns about his development as his parents are failing to take him to his speech and language therapy appointments. His plan states:

'Parents to support him in doing his homework.'

Place of residence

The most common place of residence was at home with one or both parents – this was 96 children of whom 73 had one or two of the educational factors recorded in their plans. There were 72 children who were in foster care, and 48 of them had one or two of the factors included in the plans. Fifty seven children lived with kinship carers and 37 of them had specific education factors in their plans. For the 24 children in residential care or school, there were 13 whose plan included the education factor(s).

The places of residence of the 171 children whose Hearings papers included at least one of the education factors were examined (Table 5).

Table 5. Education factors and place of residence

Education factor	Number of children				Total
	Home	Foster care	Kinship care	Residential care/ school	
Achieving	17 (23%)	18 (38%)	18 (48%)	4 (31%)	57
Talented	4 (5%)	4 (8%)	2 (5%)	2 (15%)	12
Attendance	40 (55%)	3 (6%)	6 (16%)	4 (31%)	53
Behaviour	14 (19%)	12 (25%)	6 (16%)	5 (37%)	37
Emotional difficulties	4 (5%)	4 (8%)	4 (11%)	1 (7%)	13
Learning difficulties	9 (12%)	14 (29%)	7 (19%)	2 (15%)	32
Total*	73	48	37	13	171

*Some children had two factors.

There were differences in the numbers of children with one or two of the education factors depending on their place of residence. The main differences related to attendance, learning difficulties and achieving.

Problems with **school attendance** were more prevalent for children living at home with one or both of their parents. This was 40 of the 73 (55%) children living at home (where a specific education factor was included in their Hearing papers). This also means that 75% of children, whose attendance was recorded as an issue, lived at home.

38% of the children who were noted as having **learning difficulties** lived in foster care. This is 14 of the 48 children (29%) in foster care.

Eighteen of the 48 children (38%) in foster care, and 18 of the 37 children (47%) in kinship care were described as **achieving**. This is 63% of the children who were noted as achieving in their Hearings papers.

Children's ambitions

The ambitions of 45¹¹ of the 250 children were recorded in the papers for their Hearings. Their plans were examined to find out whether they mentioned the children's ambitions and, if they did, what actions were included to support the children in achieving them.

The plans of 15 of the 45 children (33%) (or 6% of the 250 children in the study) did include actions to support them in achieving their ambitions which usually related to staying on at school to gain qualifications (seven children) or to go onto further education (five children).

Case study 18 Jade

Jade is 15 years old and at residential school. She wants to be a beautician or hairdresser and knows that she needs to get good grades to get into college. Her plan supports her ambitions:

'Education package being put in place that will help her achieve ambition of being beautician/hairdresser.'

Case study 19 Kris

Kris is 16 years old and in residential care. His ambition is to be a mechanic and he is looking forward to starting his work placement. His plan reflects this:

'To commence an independent work placement as an apprentice mechanic which Kris has expressed interest in. Garage has link with the unit to provide support.'

¹¹ The ambitions of three children were not described.

For 11 children their plans did include general statements on continued educational support but no specific actions on how to help them realise their ambitions.

Case study 20 **Skye**

Skye is 16 years old. Her school attendance is sporadic as she sometimes has to stay at home to care for her father who has health problems. Despite this she is achieving good grades and wants to stay at school for S5 and then go onto study nursing. Her plan does not include actions to support her in achieving her ambitions: *'To continue attending school and sit exams and continue for another year.'*

For 16 children there was little or nothing in their plans that referred to their ambitions.

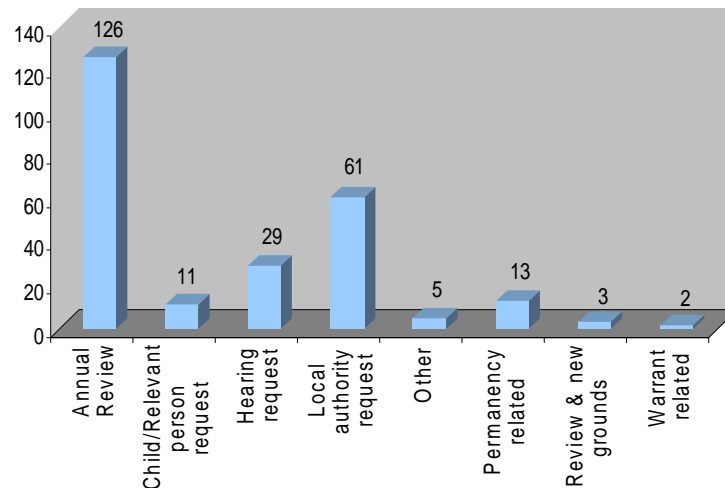
Case study 21 **Alicia**

Alicia is 16 years old and living at home. She wants to be a hairdresser. She has recently left school and has secured a hairdressing course at college. She is also working part-time in a hairdressers. Her plan does not mention education, employment or her ambitions.

7. Children’s Hearings – consideration of education in decision-making

The majority of the 250 Hearings were held to review Supervision Requirements, with 50% being Annual Reviews (Figure 5). The Supervision Requirements of 21 children (8%) were terminated at their Children’s Hearings.

Figure 5. Types of Children’s Hearings



Reasons for Hearings’ decisions

120 of the of the 250 Hearings (48%) cited the child’s education in the reasons for their decision¹²:

- school attendance (positive or negative) - 41% (49 children)
- additional support required - 12% (29 children)
- attainment - 11% (27 children)
- behaviour - 9% (22 children)
- change of school - 10% (12 children)
- ambitions – 8% (10 children)
- further education - 6% (seven children)
- educational alternatives, transport or truancy (three children each).

Education as condition of Supervision Requirements

Education was included as a condition of Supervision Requirements of 16 children (6%). These were conditions about: the child’s attendance at school (n=6) (e.g. must continue to attend school); a change of school (including a change in residential unit that also provided education) (n=5); or that additional support be provided (n=5). Eleven children were at secondary school, three at primary school, one was in nursery (condition was attendance at nursery) and one was in further education (condition was the provision of additional support).

¹² 49 of the 120 children (41%) had more than one educational factor in their Hearings’ reasons.

Education representatives at Children's Hearings

Representatives from schools attended 111 of the 250 Hearings (44%). It should be noted that most of the 250 Hearings were held on a school day.

The further through school the child was, the more likely it was that a school representative attended their Hearing:

- 33% (n=12) of children in nursery;
- 47% (n=49) of primary school children
- 53% (n=49) of secondary school children.

A representative from the child's school was more likely to be at their Hearing if the child was on a Supervision Requirement at home – 54 of the 96 children looked after at home (56%). In comparison, this was: 24 of 72 children in foster care (33%), 23 of the 57 children in kinship care (40%), and 10 of the 24 in residential care or school (42%).

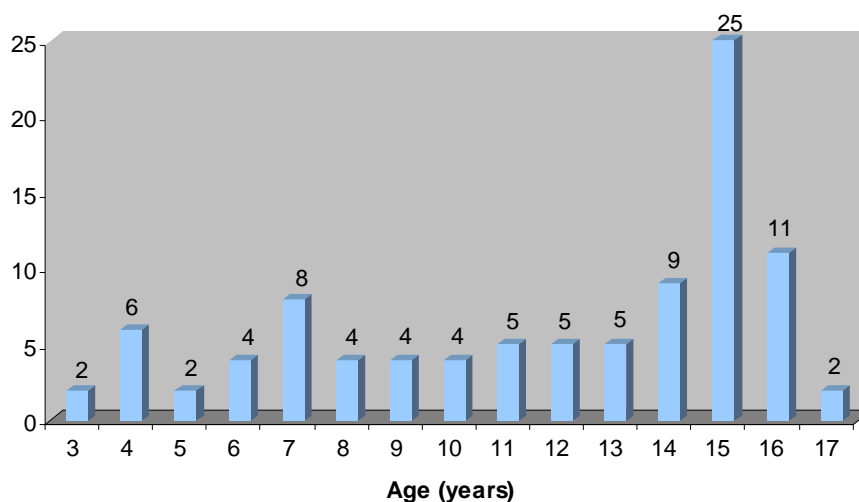
Children who had education included in their Hearings' **decisions/reasons** (but not necessarily as a condition of Supervision Requirements) were more likely to have school representative at their Hearings (56%, n=67), compared to those that did not (34%, n=44).

For the 16 children with education included as a **condition** of their Supervision Requirements, 10 (62%) had a school representative at their Hearing.

8. Education of children on Supervision Requirements at home

96 children (38%) were on Supervision Requirements at home: 55 were male (57%) and 41 female (43%), and about a half were in their teens (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Ages of children on Supervision Requirements at home



44 were in secondary school (46%), 32 in primary school (33%), 10 at nursery (10%), seven were in further education (7%), two were not in education or employment (2%) and one was employed/in an apprenticeship.

60 were in mainstream full-time education (62%) and 10 were in mainstream education with some form of additional support (10%) (e.g. reduced or part-time timetable).

Ten (10%) children on Supervision Requirements at home had been **excluded** from school in the three months prior to the Hearing. This is 10 of the 15 children in this research who had been excluded.

Inclusion of education in plans

Children's education was considered in the plans of 69 of the 96 children (75%) on Supervision Requirements at home (Table 6). In 49 of these 69 plans (71%), there were specific actions on the child's education.

43 of the 92 children on home Supervision Requirements who had some form of Social work report and plan (47%) - their plan did not include specific actions for their education, and for 22 children their plans did not include education at all¹³.

33 of the 92 children (37%) on Supervision Requirements at home had their involvement with their education discussed wholly positively in Social Work reports (in comparison to 52% of the sample).

¹³ See section 6 for examples of specific actions and general statements included in plans.

Table 6. Inclusion of education in the plans of children on Supervision Requirements at home

Extent education included in plan	Number of children	% of children on home SR*	% of children with reports/plans
Social Work report and planning for child's future	92	96%	100%
Some form of planning for the child's education contained within report/plan	69	72%	75%
Planning for the child's education that included specific actions for child's education	49	51%	53%

* 96 children¹⁴

The extent that educational was included in plans of children on Supervision Requirements at home was similar to all children in this research.

Consideration of education in Hearing decision-making

This research has found that children on Supervision Requirements at home are more likely to have issues related to their education. This was reflected in Hearings decisions and reasons:

- Just over half of the 96 children (56%, n=54) on Supervision Requirements at home had an school representative at their Hearing (in comparison to 44% of the sample)
- 65 children (68%) had education cited in the Hearings' reasons, the most common were to do with:
 - 52% (n=34) – the child's school attendance (positive or negative)
 - 28% (n=18) – additional support required for the child
 - 17% (n=11) – the child's attainment
 - 14% (n=9) – the child's behaviour.
- 13% had education included as a condition of their Supervision Requirements (in comparison to 6% of the sample as a whole). This is 12 of the 16 children in this research who had education as a condition of their Supervision Requirements.

¹⁴ In one case, no information was recorded on the future planning for the child.

9. Discussion

Child plans

It is widely recognised that looked after children need additional support for their learning because of the difficulties they can face (Enquire, 2011), such as:

- dealing with a parent's substance abuse
- chaotic home circumstances
- problems associated with trauma or abuse experienced in the early years
- moving home a lot and having to change schools
- being bullied or stigmatised
- finding it hard to control their behaviour
- having a low attendance rate at school
- feeling depressed or anxious
- having difficulty finding a quiet place to do homework and access to the internet.

Every looked after child should have a plan that addresses all of their needs, and takes a long-term view of their education. This is central to GIRFEC (Scottish Government, 2012b), and reflects the long-standing commitment of the Scottish Government and Parliament to address the educational needs of looked after children (Connolly, 2007). The Scottish Government (2012d) proposes there is a statutory requirement on local authorities to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children in their area and that each child who is assessed as needing help, will have that support coordinated and recorded within a single plan.

All the 250 children in this research were looked after by way of Supervision Requirements made by Children's Hearings, and for almost all of them (97%)¹⁵ there was a report and evidence of some form of planning for them¹⁶. 98% of these reports and plans were produced by Social Work. A core component of GIRFEC is that there is a lead professional to co-ordinate a multi-agency child's plan, and that should be person best placed to co-ordinate the help the child needs. Although it is acknowledged that this will often be a social work professional, this should not be exclusively so (Scottish Government, 2010). **This research raises questions on the extent that professionals in services other than Social Work are taking on the role of lead professional.**

How much children's education was considered in these plans varied – 68% of plans included some reference to the child's education, however, less than a half (48%) included specific actions for the child's education. Scottish Government (2011) guidance states that children's plans should address their educational and wider developmental needs and should include details of the services to meet these. This is also a statutory requirement. **That less than a half of children in this research had plans that met their educational needs and how these should be addressed,**

¹⁵ At 31 July 2011, 97% of all children looked after at home had a current care plan and 96% of those looked after away from home (Scottish Government 2012a).

¹⁶ For their review Hearing in April or May 2012 where a substantive decision was made.

suggests that the plans of a majority of looked after children do not meet current statutory requirements. It also raises question on what more needs to be done so that all child plans meet current and proposed requirements.

The 2004 and 2009 Additional Support for Learning Acts¹⁷ require that in planning for a child, local authorities take a long-term view of the child's education. In this research, less than a quarter of plans considered long-term outcomes for children's education - 22% had educational goals for the child beyond the current school year. This finding is similar to those in the 2010 reports by SWIA (covering the years 2005 to 2009) and HMIe (covering the period 2007 to 2010), which found that few plans took a long-term view of the needs of the child. **This research indicates that there has been little progress with the majority of plans still not including long-term views of looked after children's education.**

Children at the transition point from school to further education or employment were more likely to have education included in their plans:- 60% had specific actions for their education. **This shows a more positive trend – that when children are at a key stage of their education there is more likely to be consideration of their education in plans.**

Plans were more likely to address children's educational problems and needs than their abilities: - 53% of children with learning difficulties, 46% with emotional difficulties, 40% where attendance was poor, and 35% whose behaviour was affecting their learning had plans with actions to help address these. In comparison, 17% of children who were achieving educationally had plans to support their potential and continued achievement. None of the children who were described as talented had plans that considered their abilities.

Children's views on their education were apparent in about a third of cases. It was less common for children's ambitions to be recorded – 18% of children; and rarer still for plans to include actions to support children in realising their ambitions – 6% of children. A recent review by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that teachers and other professionals may underestimate the aspirations of socio-disadvantaged children and their parents and not appreciate the importance with which school is viewed (Cummings *et al*, 2012). The lack of recording of views and ambitions found in this research, suggests that this may also be the case for children on Supervision Requirements. **If plans and interventions are to support children in achieving their potential, they must take into account children's aspirations and abilities as well as addressing their needs.**

Children's Hearings System

Education was included in 48% of Hearings reasons and 6% of Hearings decisions. A Supervision Requirement provides the statutory basis for measures to support the child. **As education is key to children's development and long-term outcomes,**

¹⁷ Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004; Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2009

should it be considered by all Children’s Hearings in their decision making? School representatives were present at 44% of Hearings. Whilst it may not always be appropriate for them to be at Hearings, their input can be valuable as they have day to day contact with the child. **SCRA will examine its own practice to facilitate schools attendance at Hearings and ensure that information on the child’s education is available for Panel Members.**

Children on Supervision Requirements at home

Guidance on the Looked After Children (Scotland) (Regulations) 2009 states that where the child is looked after at home:

“education will often be a significant element in the child’s plan and the local authority should aim to work with parents to promote the child’s education.”
(Scottish Government, 2011).

Various previous research has noted that children on Supervision Requirement at home are categorised differently by professionals and are not prioritised in terms of resource provision (Gadda and Fitzpatrick, 2012).

There were 96 children in this research who had Supervision Requirements at home. These children were more likely to have problems related to their education: 75% of children where attendance was an issue lived at home, and 10 of the 15 children who had been excluded lived at home. This is reflected in Hearing decisions; for example, 12 of the 16 children in this research where education was made a condition of their Supervision Requirement lived at home, and education was included in the Hearings’ reasons for 68% of those on Supervision Requirements at home. However, the extent to which education was considered in the plans of children with Supervision Requirements at home was very similar to the other children in this research. **The education of children with Supervision Requirements at home would therefore appear not to be being regarded differently by professionals from other children on Supervision Requirements. The question is, however, if there should be greater prioritisation of the education of children on Supervision Requirements at home as is it more likely to be of concern and the reason why they are subject to compulsory measures of supervision.**

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Appendix A Research variables

Context:

- Local Authority area
- Where child resides
- Age of child (years) at Hearing
- Male/female
- Level of education
- School year
- Type of education
- Hearing type
- Exclusions (in previous three months)

Content of the Child's Plan (or equivalent) – **general**:

- Is there a Child's Plan for Hearing?
- If not, is there another type of report/plan?
- Which agency produced the Child's Plan (or equivalent)
- Is education included in the Child's Plan (or equivalent)?
- If yes, is this up to date?
- Was the school consulted on the Child's Plan?
- Was the child/young person consulted on their Plan?
- Were parent(s) or carers consulted in the Plan?

Content of the Child's Plan – **education**:

- How is education included in the Child's Plan?
- Are the child's education/support needs identified?
- Are the child's achievements evident? If yes - description
- Are the child's ambitions evident? If yes - description
- Are the child's educational strengths and weaknesses described?
- Does the Plan identify child's short term educational goals?
- Does the Plan identify child's long term educational goals ?
- Is education within the Child's Plan regularly reviewed?
- Is a placement change being considered? If yes, is the impact on education considered? Description of arrangements.
- Is child's involvement in education described positively or negatively or mixed (brief description)
- If included, brief description of plans for child's education included in the Plan

Other education input:

- Is there any other report(s) for the Hearing on the child's education?
- If yes, type of report(s)?
- If yes, what's discussed in the report? – brief detail
- Is the other education report/input accurately reflected in the Child's Plan
- Did a representative from the child's school (or other educational representative) attend the Hearing?

Child/young person's views on education:

- Are the child's views on education included in the Child's Plan?
- Are the child's views on education included in other Hearing papers? If yes, where?
- What are the child's views? – brief detail

Hearing decision:

- Is education included in Hearing decision/reasons ? If yes, what does this refer to?
- If education a condition of the child's Supervision Requirement? If yes, what is this condition?



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