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Exploring the care effects of multiple factors on the educational achievement of children looked after at home and away from home: an investigation of two Scottish local authorities

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the findings of a research project which explored the care factors that influence the educational achievement of looked-after children. The project was innovative because it focused on children looked after at home and away from home. A mixed-methods strategy was adopted to analyse data from two large Scottish local authorities. The project developed, what is to date, the largest dataset which includes variables for one-fifth of children discharged from care in Scotland over a 5-year period. The qualitative element of the project collected in-depth data on the care and education experiences of looked-after children and care leavers.

The overall finding was that looked-after children perform less well academically than their counterparts in the general school population. The empirical data indicated that factors such as placement type, reason for becoming looked after and age on becoming looked after were significant in determining educational achievement. Empirical results further indicated that looked-after children suffered from discrimination and social exclusion in many areas of their lives, including school and where they lived.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing concern in the last decade about the poor educational experience and achievement of the many children looked after by local authorities in the UK (Borland *et al.* 1998; Jackson 1999; Borland 2000; Jackson & Thomas 2000; Social Inclusion Unit 2003; Barnardo's 2006; Jackson & McParlin 2006; Maxwell *et al.* 2006). Some clear messages emerge from these studies, primarily the extent to which looked-after children are disadvantaged, but also how the experience of being looked after has a longer term effect with these children growing up to be amongst the most vulnerable adults in society, where social mobility and transition to adulthood is problematic (Berridge 2006). This paper reports the findings of a research project which explored the care factors that influence the educational achievement of looked-after children in two large Scottish local authorities. We report results from the statistical analysis of a specialist large-scale dataset and qualitative research concerning looked-after children.

EXPERIENCE OF BEING LOOKED AFTER

In Scotland, children who are in the care of local authorities are described as 'looked after' under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Children can be 'looked after' whilst remaining at their usual home, or

'looked after' in residential care, or in foster care. Those in residential and foster care are sometimes referred to as being 'look after away from home'. The majority of children in Scotland are looked after at home (Scottish Government 2005). In this paper we will use the term 'looked after' to refer to all children in local authority care and, where appropriate, we will make the distinction between those looked after at their usual home and those accommodated away from their usual home.

When a child becomes looked after, it becomes the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that the care the child is receiving is better than the care given before it became looked after. This includes the educational dimension of their care (HMI & SWSI 2001). Educational achievement is fundamentally important to the life chances of most children. The right to education is enshrined in the United Nations convention on the 'Rights of the Child', and attaining success in education is a *'graduated staircase'* to success in adulthood in terms of occupation, income and life style (Bradshaw & Mayhew 2005, p. 232). However, the socio-economic risk factors that are associated with family breakdown and admission to care also predict low educational achievement (Berridge 2006); therefore, whilst children in public care span a full range of educational potential, they do not, in general, perform as well as other children living in their local area. Jackson (1999) and Jackson & McParlin (2006) report that even those looked-after children who attend school regularly are unlikely to reach their educational potential, unless active measures are taken to compensate for earlier disadvantages. We envisage that the minimum educational aim that looked-after children do as well as all other children cannot easily be achieved because looked-after children have so many disadvantages that they need to perform a good deal better than other children to succeed in life.

UNDERLYING CAUSES FOR EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Maxwell *et al.* (2006) identified that there are four underlying causes for the educational underachievement of looked-after children. Placement instability has been linked to poor educational outcomes as looked-after children frequently have too many placement and school changes, which can be unsettling. The lack of sufficient support and encouragement where looked-after children live has been identified as another factor contributing to the educational underachievement of the looked-after population, coupled with the lack of support that looked-after children receive at school from teachers and pupils. Last, the lack of adequate support with emotional, mental and physical health and well-being has been identified as a contributing factor to the poor educational achievement of looked-after children.

FAILURE OF THE CORPORATE PARENT

There are those who hold the view that the care system is failing looked-after children because there is a general lack of shared knowledge between Social Work and Education Services in local authorities about each other's services, and that they do not currently work well together to communicate regularly about the children in their care (Walker 1994; Fletcher-Campbell 1998; Francis 2000; Who Cares? Scotland 2003; Barnardo's 2006; Bullock *et al.* 2006; Jackson & McParlin 2006). It is arguable that historically, local authorities have accepted little responsibility for the educational achievement (or failure) of looked-after children (Barnardo's 2006; Jackson & McParlin 2006). Instead, they have blamed the low achievement of the looked-after population on the disadvantaged backgrounds that these children have come from. Whilst it is recognized that background is a contributing factor to educational attainment and that children who experience early disadvantage require targeted educational support to succeed (Berridge 2006), research continues to illustrate that the poor educational achievement of looked-after children is often a product of the failure of the care system to recognize and address these issues rather than the fault of individual children (Jackson & McParlin 2006).

Current literature would suggest that the Westminster Government, the Scottish Government, and local authorities are all aware of these problems. The underachievement of looked-after children has been well documented in a range of recent government studies and reports (OFSTED & SSI 1996; OFSTED 2000; HMI & SWSI 2001; Social Inclusion Unit 2003; Scottish Government 2006, 2007a). National statistics report persistent underachievement by looked-after children. This questions the success of the raft of policies that have been floated to tackle this issue. Statistical returns collected by local authorities in Scotland for the period 2007–2008 illustrate the extent of the problem.[1] Ninety-one per cent of the general school population attained five or more awards at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Frame-

work (SCQF) level 3 or above (Scottish Government 2007b). By contrast, only 66% of those children looked after away from home attained, not five or more awards, but one or more awards at SCQF level 3 and only 53% of children looked at home attained one or more awards at SCQF level 3 (Audit Scotland 2008). Similarly, whilst 91% of the general pupil population in Scotland attained English and Maths at SCQF level 3 or above (Scottish Government 2007b), only 31% of the children looked after at home attained English and Maths at SCQF level 3 or above compared with 76% of children looked after away from home (Audit Scotland 2008).

METHODOLOGY

This project adopts a mixed-methods approach (Bergman 2008). The project developed a quantitative dataset from official and administrative records and collected qualitative data. An original feature of the project is the development of a specialist quantitative dataset relating to the educational achievement of children looked after away from home and children looked after at home. Despite the size of this latter group, most studies relating to children who are looked after at home generally do not concentrate on education but on the care aspect of their lives. The quantitative dataset is the largest specialist dataset containing information on looked-after children in Scotland. It is a Census (i.e. 100%) of all looked-after children in two Scottish local authorities (n = 1407) who were aged over 15 years old and were discharged from care over a 5-year period (2000/01–2004/05). The dataset is a large-scale resource and contains 20% of all of the looked-after children in Scotland aged 15 years or over who were discharged from care within the 5-year period. The dataset includes measures relating to educational achievement and social care measures for children in care (approximately 40 variables) and therefore facilitates multivariate data analyses that would not be possible with other existing data resources.

The project was further enhanced with a qualitative component. In-depth information was collected on the care and educational experiences of a sample of looked-after children (n = 30). This information was gathered via one to one in-depth interviews with the looked-after children. Areas such as placement history, placement experience, support from carers and professionals, school experiences, school exclusions, support from teachers and pupils, decision-making and general social exclusion were considered in the interviews.[2] A purposive sampling approach was adopted for this element of the project. This ensured that the research sample was characteristic of the total looked-after population within local authority 1. Of the 30 children interviewed, 76% (23) were looked after and 24% (7) were care leavers. Just under three quarters were male (63%, 19 children) and 37% (11) were female. In terms of placement type, 24% (7) were care leavers, 46% (14) lived in some form of residential care and 30% (9) lived in the community in foster care or at home with their families. More than half of the sample attended mainstream school (60%, 18 children) and 40% (12) attended a specialist provision, such as a residential school, an education unit or were educated in secure accommodation. In terms of age profile, 50% (15) were aged 11–15 years old and 50% (15) were aged 16–19 years old. As the project was particularly interested in SCQF attainment at secondary school level and sought to gain insight into the journey and experiences faced by looked-after children at this key stage, no children under the age of 11 years old were selected for the research project.

FINDINGS

Assessing the relationships between key care factors

In this section, we report statistical results from the specialist looked-after children dataset. The overall message from the analysis of this dataset was that looked-after children from both Local Authorities did less well academically than their counterparts in the general school population. This finding chimes with existing research and with official Scottish data.

In terms of care experiences and educational achievement, largely the research findings were as we had anticipated, as looked-after children in Authority 1 and Authority 2 performed less well academically than the general school population. This mirrored the educational achievement of looked-after children throughout Scotland. We were able to identify that care factors and educational achievement were interconnected and that looked-after children with a specific set of care factors were likely to perform better educationally than other children with another set of care factors. For instance, where a child was looked after (placement type) proved to be significant in terms of academic achievement. However, we found that a number of care factors actually led to a looked-after child being placed in a particular placement

setting. As illustrated in Table 1, we established that the age a child became looked after and the reason for becoming looked after had a bearing on placement type. Indeed, children who became looked after when they were under 12 years old were more likely to be looked after away from home and children who became looked after when they were 12 years old or over tended to be looked after at home or in residential care. Similarly, children who became looked after as a result of non-attendance at school or school exclusion were mostly being looked after at home. This is likely to have had some influence on the educational achievement of children looked after at home.[3]

We were also able to establish that children who became looked after when they were under 12 years old were likely to have more placements than those children who became looked after when they were 12 years old or over. This is a crucial finding as our empirical evidence demonstrates that Authority 1 and Authority 2 are not paying close attention to reducing the number of placements that looked-after children have. This will have had serious consequences for these children, as it has been demonstrated that placement changes without close attention to continuity, can result in looked-after children being out of schools for long periods of time, and it can also result in a drop in achievement levels (Biehal *et al.* 1995; Jackson & Thomas 2000). Additionally, it is also worth noting that 60% of the children in residential care actually started off being looked after in foster care but had been unable to settle. Given we found that there was a correlation between number of placements and placement type, with children in residential care having more placements than those in foster care, this is a significant finding. Indeed, it raises questions about the different environments that these children are living in (i.e. family setting over group living), and about how effective each setting is at nurturing, supporting and providing these children with a stable environment. From our research findings, we could speculate that generally, residential care is unable to provide looked-after children with the same kind of stability that foster care can generally provide.

On discharge from care, the majority of looked-after children remained or returned to the family home but we found that the reason for becoming looked after had a bearing on whether a child returned home or whether they lived elsewhere. We were able to ascertain that significantly higher proportions of children who had become looked after as a result of offending behaviour or carer alcohol and drug misuse lived

Table 1 Summary of associated care factors (bi-variate relationships)

	Last placement	Age received into care	Received into care reason	Length of time looked after	Number of placements	Discharge accommodation (family home, other)	Age on discharge (under 17, over 17)
Last placement (foster, residential, home)						$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.636$	$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.154$
Age received into care (under 12, over 12)	$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.423$				$P < 0.05$ Gamma = –0.381		
Received into care reason (parental, child)	$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.377$	$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.380$				$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.425$	
Length of time looked after (less than 1 year, 1–3 years, 3–5 years, 5+ years)	$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.016$			$P < 0.001$ $V = 0.290$			
Number of placements (1, more than 1)	$P < 0.05$ $V = 0.251$						

Note: Crammer's V has been used as a measure of association for two categorical variables and Gamma has been used as a measure of association where the variable is ordered.

Table 2 Summary of associated care factors and educational attainment

Measures			*P* value	Effect size (*V*)
SCQF level 3 awards		Placement (foster, residential, home)	0.001	0.356
		Age received into care (under 12, over 12)	0.001	0.154
		Gender (male and female)	0.05	0.067
		Number of placements (1, more than 1)	0.001	0.287
SCQF level 4 awards	Placement (foster, residential, home)	One award	0.001	0.377
		Three awards	0.001	0.424
		Five awards	0.001	0.379
	Received into care reason (child, parent)	One award	0.001	0.277
		Three awards	0.001	0.309
		Five awards	0.001	0.356
	Age received into care age (under 12, over 12)	One award	0.001	0.222
		Three awards	0.001	0.233
		Five awards	0.001	0.225
	Gender (male, female)	One award	0.001	0.113
		Three awards	0.001	0.109
		Five awards	0.001	0.110
	English and Maths	Placement type (foster, residential, home)	0.001	0.309
		Age received into care (under 12 , over 12)	0.001	0.261
SCQF level 6 awards	Placement (foster, residential, home)	One award	0.001	0.247
		Three awards	0.05	0.113

Note: Crammer's V has been used as a measure of association for two categorical variables.
SCQF = Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

outwith the family home when discharged from care. Other care factors such as such as placement type were found to contribute to discharge destination, with almost all children on home supervision remaining in the family home on discharge from care. Whereas, we determined that the majority of children who had been in residential care were living in supported accommodation or had their own tenancies on leaving care. We found that children who had been in foster care were the least likely to return to the family home on discharge from care. This could be related to expectations of family life following time in foster care, or that family ties were not as strong for those who had been in foster care, especially where they have been offered an appropriate alternative family environment. Overall, it is quite interesting that that the majority of looked-after children return to their family homes (or remain at home for those on home supervision orders) on discharge from care, and with this are returning to many of the issues associated with them becoming looked after in the first instance. This could perhaps explain why many people who have been looked after are still found to be at a higher risk of social exclusion on into their 20s. The long-term effects of being looked after have been evidenced in studies, for example Dixon & Stein (2002); Courtney & Dworsky (2006); and Cashmore *et al.* (2007).

How care factors influence the educational achievement of looked-after children

We were able to illustrate that looked-after children performed less well than the general school population across all SCQF levels, and that children looked after at home performed less well than all other looked-after children at all SCQF levels. We found that children in residential care performed as poorly as those looked after at home when we considered higher level awards such as five or more awards at SCQF level 4 or above. At specific SCQF levels, other care factors such as the age a child was when they became looked after, gender and the primary reason for becoming looked after, were also significant factors in determining educational achievement.

As reported in Table 2 above, children who became looked after when they were younger (under 12) outperformed older children across all SCQF level awards. We theorize that this might be because children who became looked after when they were younger tended to live in foster care and have more settled lives. Generally, this meant they were more equipped for learning. The empirical findings also demonstrated that females outperformed males across all SCQF level awards, as they do in the general school population. Generally, the number of placements a

child had was not significant but we anticipate that this is a result of the low numbers of children in the sample that we were able to collect this information for, rather than it not being a significant factor in determining educational achievement (See Table 2 above).[4]

A good indicator of literacy and numeracy levels in the school population is the proportions achieving English and Maths. In this project we found that the achievement of English and Maths was influenced by placement type and age on becoming looked after. In comparison with all other looked-after children, a far higher proportion of children in foster care attained English and Maths at SCQF level 4 or above. Children in residential care performed as poorly as those looked after at home. Nevertheless, greater proportions of children in residential care attained English only at SCQF level 4 compared with those looked after at home. This again is a crucial finding as English and Maths at SCQF level 3 is often a requirement to gain entry to low-level employment and foundation level college courses and our results demonstrate that children looked after at home are the least likely of all looked-after children to gain entry to either. Correspondingly, children who became looked after when they were younger (under 12) were more likely to attain English and Maths than those who became looked after when they were 12 years old or over. This is not surprising as children who are looked after at home tend to become looked after when they are over 12 years old, as a result of problems at school. As has been noted previously, children looked after at home perform the least well overall. This raises the issue about the suitability of home supervision for those children requiring supervision orders and the amount of consideration given to the educational element of care for this group.

The effects of multiple care factors on academic achievement

Through the examination of the combined effects of gender and placement type on the educational achievement of all 1407 looked-after children in our sample, we have been able to demonstrate some of the significant subtleties. As demonstrated in Table 3, across all levels, children looked after at home performed less well than children looked after away from home, a widely documented outcome. However, on further examination, we found that whilst children in residential care outperformed their male and female counterparts who were looked after at home, in lower level SCQF awards (one or more at SCQF level 3 or above and one or more at SCQF level 4 or above), they performed as poorly as their male and female counterparts who were looked after at home when consideration was given to higher level awards (three or more at SCQF level 4 or above and five or more at SCQF level 4 or above). At lower levels (one or more at SCQF level 3 or above and one or more at SCQF level 4 or above), male children in foster care outperformed all other looked-after children, including females in foster care. This runs counter to the trends in the general school population, where female children outperform males across all levels. However, females outperformed their male counterparts in all other placement settings (See Table 3 above).

Whilst this is indeed an important observation, it is perhaps the regression models which follow that provide the greatest insight into the impact that combined care factors have on educational achievement in the looked-after population. In these, we explored the relationship between educational achievement and multiple key care factors such as last placement type, gender, age on becoming looked after and reason for becoming looked after (see Table 4 above). Through the application of a multivariate approach (standard logistic regression models) we were able to confirm that when all of these factors were considered together in a statistical model, that gender was no longer significant. However, placement, age on becoming looked after and the reason for becoming looked after were jointly significant in determining educational achievement. For instance, children who were less than 12 years old when they became looked after and who became looked after as a result of parental behaviour were more successful educationally than children in the same placement types who became looked after when they were over 12 years of age, as result of their own behaviour. Generally speaking children in foster care outperformed children looked after at home and in residential care; however, in some instances, these children outperformed children in foster care, specifically, those children who became looked after when they were under 12 years old as a result of parental behaviour. Essentially, the empirical findings illustrate that children who become looked after before the age of 12, for reasons associated with parental behaviour, were more likely to do better in their education. However, becoming looked after as a result of their own behaviour, at aged 12 or over, is less likely to lead to better educational achievements. This raises the wider question, namely whether the differences are related to placement types *per se*, or to the populations

Table 3 Summary of Combined Effects of Gender and Placement Type on Achievement (Standard Logistic Regression Models)

	B	Standard error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
One or more at SCQF level 3 or above						
Foster care	2.18	0.24	80.2	1	<0.001	8.83
Residential care	1.3	0.14	91.18	1	<0.001	3.69
Female	0.38	0.13	9.2	1	<0.001	1.47
Foster care * female	–0.75	0.34	4.79	1	<0.05	0.47
Constant	–0.69	0.09	59.62	1	<0.001	0.5
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.130$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.173$.						
One or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	2.41	0.22	116.5	1	<0.001	11.11
Residential care	1.06	0.14	60.02	1	<0.001	2.89
Female	0.6	0.13	20.55	1	<0.001	1.83
Foster care * female	–0.67	0.32	4.37	1	<0.05	0.51
Constant	–1.41	0.1	186.3	1	<0.001	0.24
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.146$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.198$.						
Three or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	2.36	0.17	195.1	1	<0.001	10.55
Residential care	0.42	0.17	5.99	1	<0.001	1.51
Female	0.5	0.14	12.65	1	<0.001	1.64
Constant	–2.03	0.12	280.3	1	<0.001	0.13
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.15$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.23$.						
Five or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	2.1	0.18	135.9	1	<0.001	8.15
Residential care	–0.06	0.23	0.06	1	>0.05	0.95
Female	0.58	0.16	12.59	1	<0.001	1.78
Constant	–2.59	0.15	303.1	1	<0.001	0.08
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.12$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.20$.						
English at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	2.16	0.17	167.1	1	<0.001	8.65
Residential	0.7	0.16	18.88	1	<0.001	2.01
Female	0.66	0.14	23.99	1	<0.001	1.94
Constant	–2.08	0.12	292.9	1	<0.001	0.13
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.14$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.20$.						
English and Maths at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster Care	2.34	0.19	147.8	1	<0.001	10.36
Residential Care	0.29	0.24	1.48	1	>0.05	1.34
Female	0.57	0.17	10.96	1	<0.001	1.77
Constant	–2.89	0.17	304.9	1	<0.001	0.06
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.12$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.22$.						

SCQF = Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

of children which are allocated to these two destinations. We envisage that there will also be independent factors that affect educational achievement that we have cannot be explored in this current research project because of the scope and limitations of the available data resources.

Other factors impacting on educational experience and achievement

The qualitative data provided further explanation for the poor educational achievement of looked-after children. As such, reflection has been given to two areas. These are care experiences and educational experiences. In respect of the care element of being looked after, we were able to determine that only three-quarters of the 30 looked-after children who participated in the interviews said they could talk to and felt supported by at least one adult in their life. This included teaching staff, care staff, parents and carers. The quarter who said they had no one to talk to were mostly living in residential units. In the research project, 60% said that there was at least one person who asked them about school on a regular basis. This included teaching staff, care staff, parents and carers. However, fewer (53%) children were able to identify at least one person who was proud of their achievements. These findings are significant because poor educa-

Table 4 Summary of combined effects of received into care reason, age on entering care and placement type on achievement (standard logistic regression models)

	B	Standard error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
One or more at SCQF level 3 or above						
Foster care	0.83	0.27	9.54	1	<0.001	2.29
Residential care	0.11	0.18	0.35	1	>0.05	1.11
Received into care under 12	0.46	0.21	4.99	1	<0.05	1.59
Female	0.51	0.16	9.79	1	<0.001	1.66
Constant	−0.49	0.12	15.64	1	<0.001	0.61
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.05$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.07$.						
One or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	0.99	0.36	7.47	1	<0.05	2.7
Residential care	0.25	0.25	1.04	1	>0.05	1.29
Received into care under 12	0.89	0.27	10.69	1	<0.001	2.44
Parental reasons	0.47	0.22	4.64	1	<0.05	1.61
Constant	−0.93	0.15	36.78	1	<0.001	0.39
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.12$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.16$.						
Three or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	1.28	0.35	13	1	<0.001	3.59
Residential care	0.15	0.28	0.31	1	>0.05	1.17
Received into care under 12	0.85	0.28	9.33	1	<0.001	2.33
Parental reasons	0.64	0.24	6.93	1	<0.05	1.9
Constant	−1.66	0.18	81.12	1	<0.001	0.19
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.15$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.21$.						
Five or more at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	1.64	0.37	19.86	1	<0.001	5.16
Residential care	−0.41	0.37	1.28	1	>0.05	0.66
Received into care under 12	0.64	0.31	4.11	1	<0.05	1.89
Parental reasons	0.96	0.29	10.58	1	<0.001	2.61
Constant	−2.3	0.23	97.08	1	<0.001	0.1
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.19$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.29$.						
English at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	1.46	0.32	21.31	1	<0.001	4.32
Residential care	0.04	0.3	0.02	1	>0.05	1.04
Parental reasons	0.65	0.26	6.29	1	<0.05	1.91
Constant	−1.79	0.19	85.46	1	<0.001	0.17
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.10$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.15$.						
English and Maths at SCQF level 4 or above						
Foster care	1.08	0.37	8.28	1	<0.001	2.94
Residential care	−0.31	0.38	0.67	1	>0.05	0.73
Received into care under 12	0.86	0.32	7.06	1	<0.05	2.36
Parental reasons	0.68	0.31	4.72	1	<0.05	1.97
Constant	−2.42	0.24	98.65	1	<0.001	0.09
Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.119$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.198$						

SCQF = Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

tional achievement is also the result of inadequate support from parents and carers. It is also related to a lack of awareness on the part of educationalists (Pecora *et al.* 2006). As demonstrated above, some of the children who participated in our research highlighted the lack of support from both of these arenas.

When asked who at school should know that they were looked after, mostly, children thought that head teachers and guidance teachers were the only people who should be told they were looked after. Although, over half of the children did not know what their school had been told about them being looked after and over half of the children stated that no one had helped them work out what they were going to tell other children at school about being looked after. Interestingly, just under one-quarter of looked-after children thought that their social worker had no contact with their school about them. The majority of these children attended mainstream school and lived in residential units. Moreover, only one-third of looked-after children stated that their social workers had asked them for their views on their education. Our research illustrated that children are more likely to be involved in decision-making about their care, rather

than their education. As our sample from foster care was so small, it was difficult to make any correlation between placement type and children being asked for their views on their education. However, research by Shaw (1998) and Who Cares? Scotland (2003) determined that children in foster care had more say in their daily lives than those in residential care. Indeed, those children who had not been asked their views on their education were either living in residential care or at home (Shaw 1998 and Who Cares? Scotland 2003).

A child with no friends is an isolated child who is likely to become an isolated adult (Daniel *et al.* 1999). Therefore, helping a looked-after child to make and sustain friendships will improve the quality of their lives. All of the children interviewed for the research project said they had friends at school, with 60% having contact with their friends outside school. The majority of the 40% who had little or no contact with friends outside school were those children who were living in residential units or living at home with parents. This is concerning as it has been identified that friendship is very important to looked-after children. In the *'Let's Face It'* study (2003) three-quarters of children said that friendship was very important to them. This is an area of concern and further consideration needs to be given by the corporate parent to ensure that looked-after children, particularly those in residential care and those looked after at home, are encouraged and supported to have contact with their school friends outside of school. This is vital for ensuring social inclusion for these vulnerable children.

Bullying was also identified as a problem in the project, with just under half (43%) of the children who participated reporting that they had been bullied. Of those who reported being bullied 76% had told someone about the bullying but it had only stopped for 46% of these children. The proportions of children who reported that they experienced bullying is concerning, as research has shown that bullying can have profoundly upsetting consequences on a child's physical and mental health and can affect a child's confidence. This of course impacts further on the academic achievement of a group of children who are already disadvantaged (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2004).

In respect of educational experiences, we discovered that stability was an important issue, with 80% of looked-after children having changed school at least once and 10% having changed school more than five times. The primary reasons given by children for school changes were exclusion and placement changes. Indeed, we found that 80% of the children who participated in the research had been excluded from school at some point and that a significantly high proportion of them had been excluded more than once. Almost all children said that an improvement in their behaviour would have prevented them from being excluded from school. As highlighted by the children, this was directly related to the lack of understanding by teachers and pupils over what it was like to be looked after. We find this to be of real concern especially because school exclusion is probably the most serious sanction a British school can use in response to disruptive behaviour (Baron *et al.* 2000). Indeed, there is little support around which helps looked-after children question their exclusion from school. Jackson & Sachdev (2001) found that local authorities have failed to take steps to pre-empt the exclusion of looked-after children and when children have been excluded, local authorities are providing little or no support to them. This is corroborated in a study by Cashmore *et al.* (2007) who found that 49% of looked-after children in the study had been excluded from school. Additionally, empirical findings from research conducted by Fernandez (2007) suggests that 20% of looked-after children who were reported to be behind their age-appropriate grade were so as a result of exclusion from school.

A correlation between enjoyment of school and school attendance was established in our research project, with 76% of children stating that they enjoyed school and attended almost all of the time. However, children often refer to the stigma attached to being looked after. One place this is likely to be felt is at school (Lynes & Goddard 1995). In our research, one-third (30%) of the looked-after children stated they were treated differently at school by teachers. Almost all of these children were living in residential units and all were attending mainstream schools. All of the children identified being treated differently as a negative because they wanted to be treated like all other pupils. In addition, one-quarter (23%) of children thought that teachers expected less of them because they were looked after. In a research conducted by Shaw (1998), three-quarters of the sample reported attending school always. However, a higher proportion of children in foster care than residential care reported attending school always in her study. In our research, there was no correlation between school attendance and placement type. This could be related to the small number of children in foster care in the sample.

Authority 1 had an alternative Education Service provision for looked-after children. Nevertheless, the in-depth interview data highlighted that this was under resourced and did not provide services to all

factions of the looked-after community. What is more is that Authority 1 had developed a resource to help looked-after children with homework, but this resource did not provide support to all looked-after children, especially those on home supervision and at college. Indeed, just under half (43%) of those children who said they received homework reportedly had no one to help them with their homework. This is a matter of concern as it has long been recognized that homework is important to a child's educational progress (Jackson & Sachdev 2001). It is also widely recognized that children will undertake their homework and exam revision in their own homes. However, just over a quarter of looked-after children did not have a quiet place to study where they lived. Primarily, these were children living in residential units. The majority of those children who reported having access to study space but not using were looked after at home. These children were also far less likely to have access to a personal computer (PC) than all other looked-after children. However, it was reported that children living in residential units were not always able to access PCs in the units where they lived. This was because of study rooms being made bedrooms because of overcrowding, or broken PCs not being repaired. Additionally, we were able to ascertain that almost all children had access to books where they lived (86%). The 14% who did not have access to books where they lived were all looked after at home.

Overall, we consider that these findings provide improved insights into the day-to-day world of looked-after children. They illuminate important practical obstacles that obstruct the education of looked-after children. They also provide some explanation as to why children in foster care perform significantly better at school than children who are looked after at home or in residential care settings.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are three messages that emerge from the empirical research findings. These are that:

1. The corporate parent has not yet been wholly effective in improving the educational achievement of looked-after children
2. There is a relationship between key care factors and educational achievement. When we take a multidimensional view of the relationship between key care factors and educational achievement, it is a specific combination of key factors that determine different levels of educational achievement within the looked-after population
3. Looked-after children are being discriminated against as they continue to perform less well academically than the general school population

The empirical findings illustrate that the looked-after population is not a homogenous group. We would argue that the corporate parent needs to further consider how to improve the life chances of specific groups of looked-after children to ensure that they are, at least, equal to those of all other looked-after children. The corporate parent must take seriously the negative experiences of many looked-after children. In particular, more consideration needs to be given to where children are placed when they become looked after, and also to the emotional and practical support needed by children who are looked after at home and in residential care, to ensure that they have comparable experiences to those in foster care, as a minimum. Similarly, those who became looked after when they were over 12 years of age and those who became looked after as a result of their own behaviour may benefit from additional support to compensate for the experiences that they had prior to becoming looked after.

An emerging feature of the empirical data is that being looked after at home is a distinctive experience that has specific consequences for educational achievement. We strongly recommend that in the future researchers take care to recognize that this is a distinctive group of children in care. We also argue that there is an urgent need for research that examines the psychological impacts of being 'looked after' at home.

The experience that looked-after children have in school requires further consideration by the corporate parent. Looked-after children can have a negative experience at school; this is often associated with the stigma of being looked after. Also their relationships with teachers and other children have been found to impact on their experience, particularly for those children in residential care who attend mainstream schools. Additionally, many more looked-after children face exclusion from school, and sometimes for long periods. A scheme which targets looked-after children and focuses on limiting school exclusions could potentially pay dividends. Further research and evaluation in this area would be beneficial.

The array of social factors we considered were limited by the available data and it may have been beneficial to explore the impact that a wider set of factors had on educational achievement. In this respect, this is a limitation of the study, especially because we suspect that data related to parents and siblings as well as information on parental contact, extracurricular activities and social networks would

have enabled a more comprehensive analysis. Moreover, another limitation to the research is that authority 2 did not participate in the qualitative element of the research project. However, we are persuaded that this is not consequential and does not alter the substantive findings relating to the experiences that looked-after children have. We concluded that more detailed empirical research is necessary to improve the evidence base for the development of policy frameworks that can deliver better results for looked-after children. Indeed, as a nation, we need to tackle this blight on looked-after children. We need to find champions at all levels within local and national government to raise the profile of this issue and to push forward change to help children: we could do better!

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NOTE

1 The qualifications framework for the each country within the UK can be found at http://www.staff.stir.ac.uk/vernon.gayle/documents/TheQualificationsFrameworkintheUK.pdf

2 It was only possible to collect qualitative data from local authority 1 as local authority 2 only agreed research access for the quantitative element of the research.

3 A full data analysis can be found at http://www.staff.stir.ac.uk/vernon.gayle/documents/TablesAssociatedwithFigure1_4.pdf

4 We are persuaded that the missing data is not consequential and does not alter the substantive findings.

APPENDIX

Data associated with Table 1

First and last placement

		Last placement			
First placement		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total
At home	No.	170	0	2	172
	Row %[1]	98.8	0	1.2	100.0
	Col %	97.1	0	3.7	70.5
Foster care	No.	0	12	18	30
	Row %	0	40.0	60.0	100.0
	Col %	0	80.0	33.3	12.3
Residential care	No.	5	3	34	42
	Row %	11.9	7.1	81.0	100.0
	Col %	2.9	20.0	63.0	17.2
Total	No.	175	15	54	244
	Row %	71.7	6.1	22.1	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Age on becoming looked after and placement type

		Placement type			
Age received into care		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total
Under 12	No.	57	64	36	157
	Row %	36.3	40.8	22.9	100.0
	Col %	14.1	66.7	19.9	23.1
12 and over	No.	346	32	145	523
	Row %	66.2	6.1	27.7	100.0
	Col %	85.9	33.3	80.1	76.9
Total	No.	403	96	181	680
	Row %	59.3	14.1	26.6	100.0
	Col%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Received into care reason and age on becoming looked after

Received into care reason		Age received into care: Under 12	Age received into care: 12 and over	Total
Carer neglect/abandonment	No.	50	77	127
	Row%	39.4	60.6	100.0
	Col %	45.9	22.6	28.2
Child's behaviour	No.	13	81	94
	Row%	13.8	86.2	100.0
	Col %	11.9	23.8	20.9
Death or imprisonment of carer	No.	5	2	7
	Row%	71.4	28.6	100.0
	Col %	4.6	0.6	1.6
Carer alcohol/drug misuse	No.	15	21	36
	Row%	41.7	58.3	100.0
	Col %	13.8	6.2	8.0
Non-attendance/school exclusion	No.	6	102	108
	Row%	5.6	94.4	100.0
	Col %	5.5	29.9	24.0
Child's offending behaviour	No.	6	32	38
	Row%	15.8	84.2	100.0
	Col %	5.5	9.4	8.4
Child's alcohol/drug misuse	No.	0	6	6
	Row%	0	100.0	100.0
	Col %	0	1.8	1.3
Child protection	No.	14	20	34
	Row%	41.2	58.8	100.0
	Col %	12.8	5.9	7.6
Total	No.	109	341	450
	Row%	24.2	75.8	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Primary reason for becoming looked after and placement type

Received into care reason		Placement type: At home	Placement type: Foster care	Placement type: Residential care	Total
Carer neglect/abandonment	No.	62	36	29	127
	Row %	48.8	28.3	22.8	100.0
	Col %	21.6	53.7	29.3	28.0
Child's behaviour	No.	61	4	29	94
	Row %	64.9	4.3	30.9	100.0
	Col %	21.3	6.0	29.3	20.8
Death or imprisonment of carer	No.	2	1	4	7
	Row %	28.6	14.3	57.1	100.0
	Col %	0.7	1.5	4.0	1.5
Carer alcohol/drug misuse	No.	18	16	3	37
	Row %	48.6	43.2	8.1	100.0
	Col %	6.3	23.9	3.0	8.2
Non-attendance/school exclusion	No.	102	1	6	109
	Row %	93.6	0.9	5.5	100.0
	Col %	35.5	1.5	6.1	24.1
Child's offending behaviour	No.	19	0	19	38
	Row %	50.0	0	50.0	100.0
	Col %	6.6	0	19.2	8.4
Child's alcohol/drug misuse	No.	4	0	2	6
	Row %	66.7	0	33.3	100.0
	Col %	1.4	0	2.0	1.3
Child protection	No.	19	9	7	35
	Row %	54.3	25.7	20.0	100.0
	Col %	6.6	13.4	7.1	7.7
Total	No.	287	67	99	453
	Row %	63.4	14.8	21.9	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Primary reason for becoming looked after and length of time looked after

		Length of time				
Received into care reason		Less than 1 year	1 to under 3 years	3 to under 5 years	5+ years	Total
Carer neglect/abandonment	No.	10	30	12	7	59
	Row %	16.9	50.8	20.3	11.9	100.0
	Col %	27.0	25.2	28.6	46.7	27.7
Child's behaviour	No.	15	36	15	2	68
	Row %	22.1	52.9	22.1	2.9	100.0
	Col %	40.5	30.3	35.7	13.3	31.9
Death or imprisonment of carer	No.	0	1	1	3	5
	Row %	0	20.0	20.0	60.0	100.0
	Col %	0	0.8	2.4	20.0	2.3
Carer alcohol/drug misuse	No.	1	3	3	3	10
	Row %	10.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Col %	2.7	2.5	7.1	20.0	4.7
Non-attendance/school exclusion	No.	7	29	4	0	40
	Row %	17.5	72.5	10.0	0	100.0
	Col %	18.9	24.4	9.5	0	18.8
Child's offending behaviour	No.	3	13	2	0	18
	Row %	16.7	72.2	11.1	0	100.0
	Col %	8.1	10.9	4.8	0	8.5
Child's alcohol/drug misuse	No.	1	0	1	0	2
	Row %	50.0	0	50.0	0	100.0
	Col %	2.7	0	2.4	0	0.9
Child protection	No.	0	7	4	0	11
	Row %	0	63.6	36.4	0	100.0
	Col %	0	5.9	9.5	0	5.2
Total	No.	37	119	42	15	213
	Row %	17.4	55.9	19.7	7.0	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Length of time looked after and placement type

		Placement type			
Length of time		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total
Less than 1 year	No.	48	10	35	93
	Row %	51.6	10.8	37.6	100.0
	Col %	16.6	25.6	25.7	20.0
1 to under 3 years	No.	161	9	63	233
	Row %	69.1	3.9	27.0	100.0
	Col %	55.5	23.1	46.3	50.1
3 to under 5 years	No.	45	8	25	78
	Row %	57.7	10.3	32.1	100.0
	Col %	15.5	20.5	18.4	16.8
5+ years	No.	36	12	13	61
	Row %	59.0	19.7	21.3	100.0
	Col %	12.4	30.8	9.6	13.1
Total	No.	290	39	136	465
	Row %	62.4	8.4	29.2	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Age on being received into care by number of placements

		Number of placements				
Age received into care age		1	2–4	4–8	9+	Total
Under 12	No.	8	14	4	2	28
	Row %	28.6	50.0	14.3	7.1	100.0
	Col %	16.0	24.6	36.4	100.0	23.3
12 and over	No.	42	43	7	0	92
	Row %	45.7	46.7	7.6	0	100.0
	Col %	84.0	75.4	63.6	0	76.7
Total	No.	50	57	11	2	120
	Row %	41.7	47.5	9.2	1.7	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Number of placements and last placement type

		Placement type			
Number of placements		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total
One placement	No.	11	12	27	50
	Row%	22.0	24.0	54.0	100.0
	Col %	68.8	50.0	33.8	41.7
More than one placement	No.	5	12	53	70
	Row%	7.1	17.1	75.7	100.0
	Col %	31.3	50.0	66.3	58.3
Total	No.	16	24	80	120
	Row%	13.3	20.0	66.7	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Received into care reason and discharge accommodation

		Discharge accommodation		
Received into care reason		Home	Not home	Total
Carer neglect/abandonment	No.	32	10	42
	Row %	76.2	23.8	100.0
	Col %	30.5	33.3	31.1
Child's behaviour	No.	39	7	46
	Row %	84.8	15.2	100.0
	Col %	37.1	23.3	34.1
Death or imprisonment of carer	No.	0	2	2
	Row %	0	100.0	100.0
	Col %	0	6.7	1.5
Carer alcohol/drug misuse	No.	3	3	6
	Row %	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Col %	2.9	10.0	4.4
Non-attendance/school exclusion	No.	24	2	26
	Row %	92.3	7.7	100.0
	Col %	22.9	6.7	19.3
Child's offending behaviour	No.	4	5	9
	Row %	44.4	55.6	100.0
	Col %	3.8	16.7	6.7
Child's alcohol/drug misuse	No.	0	1	1
	Row %	0	100.0	100.0
	Col %	0	3.3	0.7
Child protection	No.	3	0	3
	Row %	100.0	0	100.0
	Col %	2.9	0	2.2
Total	No.	105	30	135
	Row %	77.8	22.2	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Placement type and discharge accommodation

Placement type		Discharge accommodation		Total
		Home	Not home	
At home	No.	115	2	117
	Row %	98.3	1.7	100.0
	Col %	79.3	5.0	63.2
Foster care	No.	5	8	13
	Row %	38.5	61.5	100.0
	Col %	3.4	20.0	7.0
Residential care	No.	25	30	55
	Row %	45.5	54.5	100.0
	Col %	17.2	75.0	29.7
Total	No.	145	40	185
	Row %	78.4	21.6	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Placement type and age on discharge

Placement type		Discharge age		Total
		Under 17	17 and over	
At home	No.	699	115	814
	Row%	85.9	14.1	100.0
	Col %	63.7	60.2	63.2
Foster care	No.	129	49	178
	Row%	72.5	27.5	100.0
	Col %	11.8	25.7	13.8
Residential rare	No.	269	27	296
	Row%	90.9	9.1	100.0
	Col %	24.5	14.1	23.0
Total	No.	1097	191	1288
	Row%	85.2	14.8	100.0
	Col %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Data associated with Table 2

SCQF level 3 awards and placement type

SCQF level 3 awards or above		Placement type			Total
		At home	Foster care	Residential care	
No awards	No.	517	51	112	680
	Row %	76.0	7.5	16.5	100.0
	Column %	63.1	21.3	32.2	48.3
One or more awards	No.	302	189	236	727
	Row %	41.5	26.0	32.5	100.0
	Column %	36.9	78.8	67.8	51.7
Total	No.	819	240	348	1407
	Row %	58.2	17.1	24.7	100.0
	Column %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SCQF level 3 awards and age received into care

SCQF level 3 awards or above		Age received into care		
		Under 12	12 and over	Total
No award	No.	58	289	347
	Row %	16.7	83.3	100.0
	Column %	36.9	55.3	51.0
One or more	No.	99	234	333
	Row %	29.7	70.3	100.0
	Column %	63.1	44.7	49.0
Total	No.	157	523	680
	Row %	23.1	76.9	100.0
	Column %	100.0	100.0	100.0

SCQF level 3 awards and gender

SCQF level 3 awards or above		Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
No awards	No.	433	247	680
	Row %	63.7	36.3	100.0
	Column %	51.1	44.2	48.3
One or more	No.	415	312	727
	Row %	57.1	42.9	100.0
	Column %	48.9	55.8	51.7
Total	No.	848	559	1407
	Row %	60.3	39.7	100.0
	Column %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Level 3 awards and number of placements

SCQF level 3 awards or above		Number of placements				
		1	2–4	5–8	9+	Total
No awards	No.	27	46	8	2	83
	Row %	32.5	55.4	9.6	2.4	100.0
	Column %	54.0	80.7	72.7	100.0	69.2
One or more	No.	23	11	3	0	37
	Row %	62.2	29.7	8.1	0.0	100.0
	Column %	46.0	19.3	27.3	0.0	30.8
Total	No.	50	57	11	2	120
	Row %	41.7	47.5	9.2	1.7	100.0
	Column %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SCQF level 4 and Placement Type

SCQF level 4 awards or above		Placement type				
		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total	Sig
No awards	No. (%)	622 (75.9)	66 (27.5)	185 (53.2)	195 (13.9)	$P < 0.001$ Crammer's $V = 0.377$
One or more	No. (%)	197 (24.1)	174 (72.5)	163 (46.8)	534 (38.0)	$P < 0.001$ Crammer's $V = 0.377$
Three or more	No. (%)	115 (14.0)	152 (63.3)	68 (19.5)	335 (23.8)	$P < 0.001$ Crammer's $V = 0.424$
Five or more	No.(%)	73 (8.9)	107 (44.6)	29 (8.3)	209 (14.9)	$P < 0.001$ Crammer's $V = 0.379$

SCQF Level 4 and *Received into Care Reason*

SCQF level 4 awards or above		Received into care reason									
		Carer neglect/ abandonment	Child's behaviour	Death or imprisonment of carer	Carer alcohol/ drug misuse	Non-attendance/ school exclusion	Child's offending behaviour	Child's alcohol/dug misuse	Child protection	Total	Sig
No awards	No.	62	65	4	12	79	21	3	13	259	$P < 0.001$ *$V = 0.277$
	%	48.8	69.1	57.1	32.4	72.5	55.3	50.0	37.1	57.2	
One or more	No.	65	29	3	25	30	17	3	22	194	$P < 0.001$ *$V = 0.277$
	%	51.2	30.9	42.9	67.6	27.5	44.7	50.0	62.9	42.8	
Three or more	No.	50	16	2	21	20	9	1	19	138	$P < 0.001$ *$V = 0.309$
	%	39.4	17.0	28.6	56.8	18.3	23.7	16.7	54.3	30.5	
Five or more	No.	38	7	1	18	12	4	1	17	98	$P < 0.001$ *$V = 0.356$
	%	29.9	7.4	14.3	48.6	11.0	10.5	16.7	48.6	21.6	

*Crammer's V

SCQF Level 4 Awards and Age *Received into Care*

SCQF level 4 awards or above		Age received into care: Under 12	12 and over	Total	Sig
No awards	No.	65	351	416	$P < 0.001$
	Row %	41.4	67.1	61.2	Crammer's $V = 0.222$
One or more	No.	92	172	264	$P < 0.001$
	Row %	58.6	32.9	38.8	Crammer's $V = 0.222$
Three or more	No.	73	114	187	$P < 0.001$
	Row %	46.5	21.8	27.5	Crammer's $V = 0.233$
Five or more	No.	56	76	132	$P < 0.001$
	Row %	35.6	14.5	19.4	Crammer's $V = 0.225$

SCQF level 4 awards and *gender*

SCQF level 4 awards or above		Gender: Male	Female	Total	Sig
No wards	No.	564	309	873	$P < 0.001$
	%	66.5	55.3	62.0	Crammer's $V = 0.113$
One or more	No.	284	250	534	$P < 0.001$
	%	33.5	44.7	38.0	Crammer's $V = 0.113$
Three or more	No.	170	165	335	$P < 0.001$
	%	20.0	29.5	23.8	Crammer's $V = 0.109$
Five or more	No.	99	110	209	$P < 0.001$
	%	11.7	19.7	14.9	Crammer's $V = 0.110$

SCQF level 4 in English and Maths by placement type

SCQF level 4 or above in English and Maths		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total children
English and Maths	No.	55	103	30	188
	%	29.3	54.8	16.0	100.0
		6.7	42.9	8.6	13.4
English only	No.	63	39	56	158
	%	39.9	24.7	35.4	100.0
		7.7	16.3	16.1	11.2
Maths only	No.	10	6	9	25
	%	40.0	24.0	36.0	100.0
		1.2	2.5	2.6	1.8
None	No.	691	92	253	1036
	%	66.7	8.9	24.4	100.0
		84.4	38.3	72.7	73.6
Total	No.	819	240	348	1407
	%	58.2	17.1	24.7	100.0
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SCQF level 6 awards by last placement

SCQF level 6 awards or above		At home	Foster care	Residential care	Total children	Sig
No awards	No.	448	163	200	811	$P < 0.001$
	%	98.9	88.1	99.0	96.5	Crammer's $V = 0.247$
One or more	No.	5	22	2	29	$P < 0.001$
	%	1.1	11.9	1.0	3.5	Crammer's $V = 0.247$
Three or more	No.	2	6	1	9	$P < 0.05$
	%	0.4	3.2	0.5	1.1	Crammer's $V = 0.113$

Data associated with Table 3

Probability

One or more at SCQF level 3 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.33	0.42	0.65	0.73	0.82	0.75

Probability

One or more at SCQF level 4 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.20	0.31	0.41	0.56	0.73	0.72

Probability

Three or more at SCQF level 4 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.12	0.18	0.17	0.25	0.58	0.70

Probability

Five or more at SCQF level 4 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.07	0.12	0.07	0.11	0.38	0.52

Probability

English at SCQF level 4 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.11	0.20	0.20	0.33	0.52	0.68

Probability

English and Maths at SCQF level 4 or above	Male at home	Female at home	Male in residential care	Female in residential care	Male in foster care	Female in foster care
Probability	0.05	0.09	0.07	0.12	0.38	0.49

Data associated with Table 4

Probability

One or more at SCQF level 3 or above			Probability
Foster care	Male	Under 12	0.69
	Male	Over 12	0.58
	Female	Under 12	0.79
	Female	Over 12	0.70
Residential care	Male	Under 12	0.52
	Male	Over 12	0.41
	Female	Under 12	0.64
	Female	Over 12	0.53
At home	Male	Under 12	0.49
	Male	Over 12	0.38
	Female	Under 12	0.62
	Female	Over 12	0.50

Probability

One or more at SCQF level 4 or above			Probability
Foster care	Child	Under 12	0.72
		Over 12	0.52
	Parent	Under 12	0.81
		Over 12	0.63
Residential care	Child	Under 12	0.55
		Over 12	0.34
	Parent	Under 12	0.67
		Over 12	0.45
At home	Child	Under 12	0.49
		Over 12	0.28
	Parent	Under 12	0.61
		Over 12	0.39

Probability

Five or more at SCQF level 4 or above			Probability
Foster care	Child	Under 12	0.49
		Over 12	0.34
	Parent	Under 12	0.72
		Over 12	0.57
Residential care	Child	Under 12	0.11
		Over 12	0.06
	Parent	Under 12	0.25
		Over 12	0.15
At home	Child	Under 12	0.16
		Over 12	0.09
	Parent	Under 12	0.33
		Over 12	0.21

Probability

English at SCQF level 4 or above		Probability
Foster care	Child	0.42
	Parent	0.58
Residential care	Child	0.15
	Parent	0.25
At home	Child	0.14
	Parent	0.24

Probability

English and Maths at SCQF level 4 or above			Probability
Foster care	Child	Under 12	0.38
		Over 12	0.21
	Parent	Under 12	0.55
		Over 12	0.34
Residential care	Child	Under 12	0.13
		Over 12	0.06
	Parent	Under 12	0.23
		Over 12	0.11
At home	Child	Under 12	0.17
		Over 12	0.08
	Parent	Under 12	0.29
		Over 12	0.15

The Qualifications Framework in the UK

Main stages of education/employment	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	England, Wales & Northern Ireland National Qualifications Framework	National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland
Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training	Level 1 Access Level 2 Access, NPA, National Certificate Level 3 Access, Foundation Standard Grade, NPA, National Certificate	Entry level Entry Level Certificate, ESOL skills for life	Level 1 Level 1 Certificate Level 2 Level 2 Certificate
Secondary education initial entry into employment or further education	Level 4 Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ 1, NPA, National Certificate	Level 1 NVQ, VRQ, GCSEs at grade D-G, ESOL skills for life	Level 3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate
Continuation of secondary education. Progression to skilled employment. Completion of secondary education	Level 5 Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2, NPA, National Certificate	Level 2 NVQ, VRQ, GCSEs at grade A*- C, ESOL skills for life	Level 4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
Entry to higher education Qualified/Skilled worker	Level 6 Higher, SVQ 3, PDA, NPA, National Certificate	Level 3 NVQ, VRQ, A Level	Level 5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
Specialised education and training	Level 7 Advanced Higher, PDA, Higher National Certificate, Certificate of Higher Education	Level 4 NVQ Level 4, HND	Level 6 Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate
Entry to professional graduate employment	Level 8 Higher National Diploma, SVQ 4, PDA, Diploma of Higher Education Level 9 Ordinary Degree, PDA, Graduate Diploma/Certificate	Level 5 NVQ Level 4	Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree
Intermediate/higher education Advanced skills training	Level 10 Honours Degree, PDA, Graduate Diploma/Certificate	Level 6 NVQ Level 4	Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma
Professional or post-graduate education or employment	Level 11 SVQ 5, PDA, Masters Level 12 PDA, Doctorates	Level 7 Fellowships, NVQ Level 5 Level 8 Highly specialist Diploma from a professional body	Level 9 Masters Degree, Post-graduate Diploma Level 10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate

Source: Qualifications Across Boundaries, 2007.