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Education and Lifelong Learning

Production of Case Studies of Flexible Learning and Support Packages for Young People Who Require More Choices and More Chances



PRODUCTION OF CASE STUDIES OF FLEXIBLE LEARNING AND SUPPORT PACKAGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO REQUIRE MORE CHOICES AND MORE CHANCES

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research aims and approach

The study was commissioned by The Scottish Government (2007–08) and was intended to inform a series of papers on ‘Building the Curriculum’ being prepared as part of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The study had several key objectives:

- To identify and select five case studies of provision for young people who require More Choices and More Chances (MCMC). These were selected to illustrate a range of provision in different contexts, and identified as examples of good practice by a range of key stakeholders across Scotland.
- To gain a detailed understanding of the activities and achievements of the organisations, partnerships or programmes within the case studies.
- To identify the factors influencing success in each case study and assess how any challenges had been addressed.

The research methods varied to suit the case study contexts but generally involved interviews with providers, pupils, and parents, and scrutiny of providers’ own evaluations and monitoring information.

Policy context

The main focus of the More Choices More Chances Strategy is to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (Scottish Executive, 2006). The MCMC Strategy stresses that action is needed ‘across the education and wider children’s services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and under achievement and of leaving school with few or any qualifications’. Flexible learning and support for groups requiring More Choices More Chances sits within CfE, which is about more than just the content of the curriculum and extends well beyond schools. The Getting It Right for Every Child Framework will work alongside CfE to support services at a local level to deliver a personalised, effective response for each young person. By signing the Concordat, the Scottish Government and Scotland’s 32 local authorities have agreed to work in partnership to deliver improved outcomes for all young people.

The five case studies

The case studies are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive, rather they aim to be illuminative, highlighting examples of good practice from across the range of provision, to provide ideas and stimulate debate to help inform policy and practice. The five selected are as follows:

- **Falkirk Council:** Local authority-wide strategic approach, fully integrated with other services and involving multi-agency partnerships. Early identification of 'at risk' and spectrum of support to address needs.
- **Kibble Centre and Reid Kerr College:** Specialist school with a reputation for social and curricular innovation, in partnership with a local college. Flexible and individualised curriculum.
- **Lochend Community High School and John Wheatley College:** Provision includes 'Youth Start' programme in partnership offering selected pupils applied courses with intensive support, including anger management, counselling or esteem building.
- **MPS Training Ltd., Paisley:** Private specialist provision working with local employers and schools to re-engage disaffected young people. Strong focus on construction industry, but also includes an emphasis on academic achievement and providing broader key life skills to help access opportunities.
- **YMCA/Scottish Borders:** Innovative, intensive early-intervention mentoring programmes for vulnerable primary-age pupils. Particular focus on transition from primary to secondary school. Project works closely with young people, their families and teachers and offers longer-term monitoring and support through the initial years of secondary school.

Key features of good practice

Those young people requiring More Choices and More Chances are extremely varied, and so are their needs. This means schools and their partner organisations have to be flexible and diverse in developing appropriate responses. However, there are certain overarching features that appear to characterise effective provision. The findings from this study show that good practice in provision for those requiring More Choices More Chances is characterised by being learner-centred, accessible, participative, engaging, flexible, relevant and credible to young people. It addresses core personal and social competencies and promotes self-esteem and aspirations. It is responsive to the views of young people and involves them in the design of approaches and the setting of targets. It is able to offer appropriate assessment to recognise learners' achievements and to provide nationally recognised qualifications to provide credible accreditation for young people.

Such characteristics are synchronous with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and it is arguable that where schools and their partners are able to deliver teaching and learning that embodies these principles, the needs of all pupils, including those requiring More Choices More Chances, are more likely to be addressed.

Perhaps one of the most important findings was that good practice in provision for those requiring More Choices More Chances was facilitated by being embedded within a wider strategic framework involving various relevant

local and national partners. These partners can include schools and colleges, community learning services, social work, educational psychological services, economic development and regeneration groups, and Careers Scotland. This strategic framework facilitates the sharing of ideas, deploying appropriate resources and skills to deliver holistic and flexible provision and to offer progression pathways. This holistic provision works best when all key stakeholders/ partners are represented in the planning and decision-making.

Good practice is also characterised by being:

- Informed by monitoring that can inform strategies and approaches but which also provides 'early warning' data on attendance, behaviour and other characteristics, to identify pupils at risk of falling into the More Choices More Chances category.
- Able to use target setting for pupils and Individualised Education Plans.
- Able to draw on youth work models that are informed by expertise from working with young peoples and the challenges they face on a daily basis.
- Able to offer progression routes sideways as well as upwards.
- Able to provide small tutor-to-learner ratios.
- Supported by parents. Parents are often very supportive when they see their child's prospects and motivation improve.
- Able to offer placements for teachers and other providers to visit examples of good practice so that successful approaches can be mainstreamed.
- Able to deploy staff who have appropriate skills to deliver content and are motivated to work with young people with complex needs.

Sustaining good practice

Effective approaches to promoting the sustainability of provision for young people requiring More Choices More Chances were characterised by providers and partners working together to explore ways to embed provision with existing structures and funding streams within a wider context of the Single Outcome Agreement. Where this was working well it was usually because of leadership and direction from strategic stakeholders. While the availability of funding was seen as a key factor in sustaining practice, local authority personnel and some Headteachers highlighted that effective communication and allocation of resources were also important.

In addition to sustaining existing good practice, the case study partners were looking at ways to further develop and enhance provision for young people requiring More Choices and More Chances. These included: more personal support approaches that would track and support individuals after their participation in courses; more early intervention measures; and expansion of

links to partners who can provide support and progression routes for those leaving provision.

Challenges facing provision

Young people can have chaotic lives, and provision must have the capacity to respond to such complexity, including intensive approaches and multi-partnership working. Deploying appropriately skilled teachers/lecturers/workers, requires co-ordination, time and resources and, for some groups, specialised skills.

Promoting progression and positive transitions/ destinations is extremely important but there can be challenges in ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate follow-on and step-down support.

Curriculum for Excellence has potential to help schools introduce flexibility to address the needs of those requiring More Choices More Chances, but schools require support from local and central government to encourage them to 'take risks' to introduce innovative provision.

Innovative provision that is particularly suited to addressing the needs of young people can be provided by partners whose organisational protocols and ethos can cause tensions with those of schools and local authorities, e.g. those youth work models that place an emphasis on the young person's agenda.

Young people requiring More Choices More Chances are attracted to more practical and applied learning with a clear vocational focus. While such education can engage with target groups, providers need to ensure that broader educational outcomes and generic skills are also addressed.

There is a perception among many providers and strategic stakeholders that the range of qualifications and awards that are useful to accredit pupils' achievements such as ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh Awards 'do not have parity of esteem with those in the SCQF Framework'. Some have, therefore, adopted a tariff score approach to recognise the accumulated qualifications and awards and allocated standardised points.

Issues for consideration

The case study providers are exploring the opportunities offered by Curriculum for Excellence to create a flexible and innovative curriculum that can engage with, and address the needs of, all pupils, in other words 'trying to build a curriculum around individuals'. Curriculum for Excellence has the potential to help schools introduce flexibility to address the needs of those requiring More Choices More Chances but schools require support from local and central government to encourage them to 'take risks' to introduce flexible provision.

The provision highlighted in the case studies is very much a snapshot and it is clear that the landscape of policy and practice concerning provision for those requiring More Choices More Chances is moving quickly. While the case studies demonstrated an impact on young people's abilities and capacities, it is apparent that there is scope for developments to further enhance their provision to better meet the needs of young people and reflect the ideal models and objectives being espoused by policy.

The research raises a number of questions and issues for consideration by providers, their partners and policy makers. These include:

- What can practitioners learn from the case studies? The research highlights strategies and models of provision that can, with some care, be adapted to suit other contexts. The findings, however, perhaps also emphasise that effective provision for those requiring More Choices More Chances has also much to do with providers and their partner organisations taking risks to develop flexible approaches suited to a range of needs.
- How can we move towards a more integrated, as opposed to an alternative, delivery model? For example, young people requiring More Choices More Chances are often attracted to alternative programmes of learning that are focussed on specialised or vocational topics. It is important that these young people also get the opportunity through learning that is integrated with wider curriculum goals to develop broader skills that will enhance their capacity to cope and actively participate in a changing world.
- How can we move to a more personalised model of delivery? The case studies show that models of provision that take into account an individual's needs and circumstances and provide tailored support are effective, but this requires committing resources and often multi-agency working.
- Can we move beyond a reliance on initiative funding for the type of provision required to meet the needs of those requiring More Choices and More Chances? By signing the Concordat, the Scottish Government and Scotland's 32 local authorities have agreed to work in partnership to develop services at a local level to deliver a personalised, effective flexible curriculum and deliver improved outcomes for all young people.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the main themes to emerge from a study commissioned by the Education, Information and Analytical Services Division, The Scottish Government to highlight good practice in flexible learning and support packages for groups requiring more choices and more chances. The findings were intended to inform a series of papers on *Building the Curriculum* being prepared as part of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

1.1 Policy context

The main focus of the More Choices, More Chances Strategy is to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (Scottish Executive, 2006). The overarching aims of the strategy are to:

- Stem the flows into NEET – prevention, rather than cure.
- Have a system-wide (pre- and post-16) focus on, ambitions for, ownership of – and accountability for – young people needing more choices and chances.
- Prioritise education and training outcomes for these young people as a step towards lifelong employability, given their low attainment profile.
- Position NEET reduction as one of the key indicators for measuring the pre- and post-16 systems' success.

The strategy identified five key areas of activity as priorities for reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training:

- Pre-16 (opportunities for young people of school age)
- Post-16 (post compulsory education and training)
- Financial incentives (education, employment and training as viable options)
- The right support (removing the barriers to accessing opportunities)
- Joint commitment and action (national and local leadership, planning and delivery).

There are around 32,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 19 in Scotland who are not in education, employment or training. A proportion of these will be able to access opportunities and positive destinations without a great deal of support. However, around 24,000 of these young people require additional support to access and sustain opportunities in the labour market and play a positive role in society. Key factors that can increase the risk of young people needing more choices and more chances overlap and are inter-related, but include: poverty, dissatisfaction with education and educational underachievement. In addition to those in poverty and those having low educational attainment, certain groups identified as being particularly at risk

also include those whose life circumstances provide certain barriers to accessing opportunities; for example care leavers, young carers, teenage parents, offenders, those with physical and mental health problems, and those with chaotic lifestyles, such as drug and alcohol abusers.

While there are certain areas in Scotland that are seen as having higher proportions of young people who can be classified as needing more choices and more chances, the impact of being in this category for over six months include being out of work, having a criminal record, and increased likelihood of mental health problems.

The More Choices, More Chances Strategy stresses that action is needed 'across the education and wider children's services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and under achievement and of leaving school with few or any qualifications'. Particular objectives to address young people's needs include:

- Transforming learning experiences to ensure they are tailored to individual needs and are designed to enable every child to develop their potential regardless of their personal circumstances.
- Transforming the learning environment and improving the quality of leadership at all levels in education, in line with delivering Curriculum for Excellence.
- Raising expectations of children and young people.
- Providing flexible personalised learning opportunities with 'appropriate recognition... to support schools in tailoring teaching and learning experiences to the needs of individuals, whatever their circumstances'. Closely linked to this is the need for recognition of wider achievement: giving credit to different skills, abilities and achievements.
- Providing support for learners including those who require additional support to benefit fully from education and wider children's services.
- Developing employability: to better prepare all young people for the world of work and improve school-leaver destinations.

Developing a focus on 'outcomes with a renewed emphasis on the responsibility of schools and local authorities to consider the outcomes for all children, including appropriate monitoring as part of performance management arrangements for schools and local authorities'.

Flexible learning and support for those requiring more choices and more chances sits within Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004). This is a major programme of transformational change to ensure improved delivery of learning and teaching for all children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18, and that all young people, on leaving school, have acquired the relevant skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Curriculum for Excellence provides the framework for the values, purposes and principles of education in Scotland and aims to ensure that pupils become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

The aim of Curriculum for Excellence is, therefore, to help prepare all young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy. While Curriculum for Excellence aims to promote learning, attainment and achievement of young people, it stresses that pupils should ‘achieve on a broad front, not just in terms of examinations’. This means supporting children and young people to acquire the ‘full range of skills and abilities relevant to growing, living and working in the contemporary world’.

Curriculum for Excellence is about far more than just the content of the curriculum, and extends well beyond schools. Curriculum for Excellence must therefore deliver for all young people, including those in need of more choices and more chances, and also including those whose learning takes place both within and outwith school. The Scottish Government, local authorities, schools, colleges, employers, national bodies and the voluntary sector all need to work in partnership to deliver a better learning experience for each and every young person. Ensuring a quality learning experience from the early years will be vital, as will early intervention and integrated support if there are barriers to delivering that learning experience. The Getting it Right for Every Child Framework should work alongside Curriculum for Excellence to support services to come together at a local level to deliver a personalised, effective response to each young person. Children and young people are entitled to experience:

- A curriculum which is coherent from 3 to 18.
- A broad general education, including the experiences and outcomes well planned across all the curriculum areas, from early years through to S3.
- A senior phase of education after S3 which provides opportunity to obtain qualifications as well as to continue to develop the four capacities.
- Opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well-being.
- Personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which Curriculum for Excellence can provide.
- Support in moving into positive and sustained destinations beyond school.

These aims are relevant for all those involved in promoting effective learning for children and young people from 3 to 18. Curriculum for Excellence does not prescribe inputs, but provides the framework for planning learning and support which meets the needs of all children and young people aged 3–18, ensuring a focus on the four capacities at every stage. Curriculum for

Excellence is not a top-down initiative. It presents a challenge to all those working with children and young people. The experiences and outcomes offer opportunities for young people to learn in exciting and engaging ways, within and beyond schools. They also offer opportunities for teachers and other professionals to teach and work in new and engaging ways.

The Scottish Government is committed to providing all children and young people with opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work through Curriculum for Excellence, and to giving them opportunities to apply these skills in the workplace. These skills should be embedded across all curriculum areas including more practical or applied learning and specific opportunities such as Skills for Work qualifications. In this report we have used the word 'vocational' to cover such learning opportunities because this is the phrase which is most often used by those delivering such learning. In this context the word covers the delivery of a range of skills which young people will need in their life and work, including the development of pre-vocational, enterprise and employability skills, personal skills, high levels of cognitive skills and the opportunity to put learning into a practical context.

The success of the education system will be judged on the extent to which it contributes to the national indicator on positive and sustained destinations. Skills for Scotland makes clear the Scottish Government's desire for all young people to stay in learning after 16. It makes a clear commitment to young people about the routes on offer to education, employment and training (and the support they can expect) and recognises the need to focus on particularly vulnerable groups of young people.

16+ Learning Choices is the new model for taking forward this commitment. The model will make sure there are clear, robust processes in place for ensuring that all young people completing compulsory education have an offer of a suitable place in post-16 learning, with a particular focus on providing more choices and more chances for those who need them. As such it will support the planning and delivery of a coherent and inclusive curriculum in the senior phase, irrespective of the setting.

The responsibility for delivering Curriculum for Excellence is a shared one. By signing the Concordat, the Scottish Government and Scotland's 32 local authorities have agreed to work in partnership to deliver improved outcomes for all our young people, ensuring that:

- Children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Young people are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.
- There are improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

The new relationship or Concordat, between the Scottish Government and local government, which underpins the funding to be provided to local government over the period 2008–09 to 2010–11, has important implications for local authorities, schools and partner organisations. Rather than specific ring-fenced funding allocations being provided for particular education objectives, local government will contribute directly to the delivery of key commitments that relate to agreed National Outcomes. While the Scottish Government directs these National Outcomes, local authorities have greater autonomy in how they meet these outcomes and address local needs. Every council, therefore, has a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), based on the National Outcomes which have agreed national indicators.

This means that local authorities will have to ensure that funding and resources are in place to address the National Outcomes, which include specific reference to education, lifelong learning and skills development, and employment opportunities, and articulate well with the four capacities for individuals that underpin Curriculum of Excellence: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

The aim is to create freedom and power for individual learners, teachers, other professionals and communities to encourage innovation, creativity and confidence in the education system. Effective reform should come from local authorities taking control and working with schools, teachers and other partners. Teachers and others working directly with young people are best placed to meet the needs of individual learners, but they need time to reflect and to share new ideas and practice. Headteachers and local authorities have a responsibility to provide that support, to ensure strategic leadership and to build collegiate environments.

1.2 Research aims

The study had several key objectives:

- To identify a range of examples of good practice using electronic/literature searches, desktop research and exploratory discussions with key stakeholders including the Scottish Government (TSG).
- To select a suitable number of good practice case studies from the range of identified candidates for further review. These covered a variety of different types of approaches to service provision.
- To gain a detailed understanding of the activities and achievements of the organisations, partnerships or programmes within the case studies under review.
- To identify the factors influencing success in each case study and assess how any challenges had been addressed.

- To write up the case studies in a format suitable to inform a series of papers on *Building the Curriculum* being prepared as part of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Particular areas of interest within these objectives included:
- How stakeholders defined good practice in flexible learning and support packages for target groups requiring more choices more chances.
- Examining the contributions of partner agencies.
- Explaining why and how the case study examples were successful and the extent to which they are sustainable and transferable.

The case studies are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive; rather, they aim to be illuminative, highlighting examples of good practice to provide ideas and stimulate debate to help inform policy and practice. The research has highlighted a number of challenges facing provision for those requiring more choices and more chances. Where possible, this study has reported on how providers and their partners have addressed, or are striving to address, such challenges. It also highlights stakeholders' views on broader issues facing these types of provision.

1.3 Research approach

The study adopted a number of interlinked but largely concurrent strands. These were:

- **Preparatory strand:** Inception discussion with funder and scoping activity including interviews with limited number of key informants to identify good practice candidates and issues pertinent to the research objectives.
- **Strand 1:** Literature search/desk study to identify examples of good practice: a) vocational education and b) flexible learning and support packages aimed those who require more choices and more chances.
- **Strand 2:** Five in-depth case studies of identified good practice focussing on provision for those requiring more choices and more chances. The age range to be covered within the case studies extended across the 14–19 group to reflect good practice in working with those still in compulsory education. Each case study involved gathering sufficient information to address the research objectives and could involve: interviews with key provider and partner staff, focus groups with young people involved in the provision, observations of provision and, where feasible, parental interviews (telephone and face-to-face). Often providers' own monitoring and evaluation evidence was also utilised. Typically, providers and strategic stakeholders could draw on robust monitoring data and information on provision and outcomes. In addition, local authorities, colleges and schools had also conducted focused surveys of young people and parents to better assess needs and levels of satisfaction.

- **Strand 3:** Thematic analysis and reporting of qualitative material and synthesis of key themes concerning good practice.

Appendix 1 provides details of the case studies and key informants.

1.4 Structure of the report

The report is arranged into two main sections. The first includes a preface to the case studies, looking at some of the main themes and issues to emerge across the case studies that can inform practice, but also indicating areas that require consideration by practitioners and policy makers. This section also includes findings and insights that emerged from research literature and interviews with key informants conducted during the initial exploratory stage of the research. The main focus of the report is the presentation of five case studies selected to represent good practice in provision for those requiring more choices and more chances. Within each case study, the findings are arranged under headings reflecting key areas of interest to the study: the experience of pupils and outcomes, an overview of provision, factors influencing provision and finally, future developments and sustainability.

2 THE PROVISION OF FLEXIBLE LEARNING AND SUPPORT PACKAGES AIMED AT YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDING MORE CHOICES AND MORE CHANCES

The range of groups that can be classified as requiring more choices and more chances is very broad. For the purposes of this research, the five case studies looked at a range of provision that addressed the needs of various groups of young people, including those who, for various reasons, were disaffected with learning, vulnerable and at risk of low achievement and negative destinations upon leaving school.

The cases studies have highlighted not only the different approaches used to address the often complex needs of young people, but also the considerable and often life-changing impact quality provision can have on them and their families.

Current and recent developments in education policy and practice, not least the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, were seen by many providers and partner organisations as providing the flexibility and context for more responsive curriculum development to better meet the needs of those young people who are at risk of, or who have been classified as, requiring more choices and more chances. Some stakeholders noted that such curricular developments and the changing nature of education was resulting in a blurring of the distinction between so-called mainstream education, vocational learning and provision for those requiring more choices and more chances. The resulting flexible curriculum, while geared to the needs of individual pupils, was seen by many across the case studies as welcome but challenging.

2.1 Characteristics of good practice

The various stakeholders involved in the case studies highlighted characteristics of good practice for provision for young people needing more choices and more chances that were seen as required for good teaching in general. Some stressed that while certain teaching and learning approaches were effective to promote positive outcomes, clear strategic support and policies were required for sustained success along with partnership working.

Particular characteristics or qualities of good practice in provision were felt to include the following:

- The young person should be at the centre of the provision and able to influence the approaches and targets set.
- Provision should be participative, engaging, relevant, accessible and credible to young people.
- Provision should be flexible and offer multiple options to meet the needs of pupils. It should be holistic, integrated and designed to meet the needs of young people, their families and communities.
- The provision should be built into local strategic planning with key stakeholders represented in the planning and decision-making.
- Programmes should offer progression routes sideways as well as upwards.
- Learning should provide practical skills and experiential opportunities.
- Sessions should have small tutor-to-learner ratios.
- The provision should include partnership work between schools, colleges, training providers, community education, employers and support from social work and psychological services, police etc. and should highlight the benefits of partnership working to address the often complex needs of the target groups.
- Provision should involve staff who have the appropriate skills to deliver content and are motivated to work with young people with complex needs.
- The provision should offer nationally recognised qualifications to provide credible accreditation for young people.

Overall, these characteristics are in line with the objectives set for education in the More Choices, More Chances Strategy as summarised in Section 1.1 of this report. A major theme across these case studies was that schools, colleges and their partner organisations were exploring the opportunities offered by Curriculum for Excellence to create a flexible and innovative curriculum that could engage with, and address the needs of, all pupils including those classified as requiring more choices and more chances, in other words ‘trying to build a curriculum around individuals’.

The curriculum, therefore, can deliver literacy and numeracy to target groups through different strands and there is potential for greater cross-curricular developments with teachers and pupils seeing connections between subjects. While this will benefit all pupils, Curriculum for Excellence will, it was frequently argued, particularly benefit those requiring more choices and more chances. This curriculum meant that pupils were also seeing the value of a wider range of subjects. Teachers were increasingly noting the positive impact of provision and this was being reflected in their overall teaching approaches.

2.2 Models of provision

There was variation in the approaches, or models of provision, adopted by the case study providers, but characterised by partnership working and the adoption of approaches suited to learners' needs. These included:

- a) Schools mainly sending pupils to partner colleges or centres to participate in courses delivered by lecturers or trainers. Colleges involved in this model were often involved in supporting pupils with special needs, including those with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).
- b) Schools providing learning opportunities in school for those requiring more choices and more chances, with support from local college lecturers or training providers, with some joint teaching. The type of support from colleges could vary considerably and ranged from the clearly vocationally focused to broader, personal development courses that used expressive arts, literacy and music to engage with young people and promote their life skills and confidence.
- c) Local authority strategic approach, involving joined-up multi-partnership working (including social work, college, university, employers, voluntary services and Careers Scotland) that provide supported flexible learning options. Such provision could also include monitoring of 'at-risk' groups from an early age and intervention where necessary, as well as transition support at key life events, ie the transition from primary to secondary school and transition from school.

Across the various models, partnership working, particularly between schools, colleges and employers has led to the emergence of joint staff development and sharing of good practice particularly concerning teaching and learning methods.

Programmes included full- and part-time courses primarily for secondary pupils. However, one provider had strategies and approaches in place that could be deployed from early years education onwards. Within these models of delivery, successful programmes addressing the needs of young people requiring more choices and more chances were providing content that engaged pupils in various ways. For example, young people often commented that traditional school lessons and curriculum were 'a waste of time' and not relevant to their lives. Teachers, lecturers and parents saw that the more vocationally-oriented and employability-focused content, which offered the possibility of getting employment, had proven successful in engaging with many of these pupils and sustaining their participation. This perspective featured across some of the other case studies and raises some issues for the scope of learning that will be offered to meet the needs of those requiring more choices and more chances. It can be argued that such vocationally oriented provision could be used to engage with target groups of young people and to deliver broader learning provision.

Pupils, teachers, employers and parents often reported the positive impact of such provision on young people's vocational and generic skills, as well as improved self-confidence, which helped progression to positive destinations. In some cases, programmes actively included articulation to Modern Apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities. These were particularly popular with young people and their parents and directly helped to access positive destinations and so address key factors affecting young people in need of more choices and more chances. The evidence provided for such outcomes varied across the case studies but was usually based on sound monitoring of destinations, pupil surveys, and increasingly diverse and often qualitative methods to gather the views of young people on their learning experiences. For example, video interviews were conducted, which compared the views of pupils, parents, trainers and employers.

Other types of innovative provision engaged with young people by offering dynamic and participative teaching and learning approaches, and content that offered pupils the opportunity to demonstrate skills and attributes that they were unable to demonstrate within 'conventional' lessons. When this was provided by skilled and often inspirational lecturers and teachers, shy and reluctant pupils would engage and see their self-confidence and social skills develop significantly. One provider used such an approach with the co-operation of skilled local college lecturers to re-engage with young people disaffected with literature by dramatically relating the content to their lives. Thereafter, this group became interested in reading by themselves and the provider used this to address wider issues such as empowerment.

2.3 Views on the outcomes of tailored provision

Across the five case studies in this research, there were examples of innovative approaches to address the needs of young people needing more choices and more chances. In every case study there was evidence from pupils, teachers, parents and, in some instances, employers to indicate that many participating young people had demonstrated:

- Improved achievement
- Self-confidence
- Improved social skills
- Reduced anti-social behaviour, in and out of school
- Improved relationships with peers, teachers and family members
- Improved motivation to learn
- Raised aspirations
- Positive destinations.

In one particular case study, interviews with parents and pupils highlighted that the improved quality of participating young people's behaviours and improved opportunities often meant that the quality of life for their parents and families was enhanced.

A common theme emerging from young people was that their participation and outcomes meant that this was the first time they had received praise for anything they had done in school or education. Teachers have been able to see the impact on pupils' skills and motivation and this has promoted their awareness of the value of such programmes and teacher buy-in.

2.4 Factors influencing success

The main factors that affected the ability of providers to provide successful courses and programmes included:

- Having provision for young people needing more choices and more chances as part of a wider strategic framework involving various relevant local and national partners (such as schools and colleges, community learning services, social work, educational psychological services, economic development and regeneration and Careers Scotland) in order to deploy appropriate resources and skills to deliver holistic and flexible provision and offer progression pathways. Such communication between partners facilitates sharing of ideas and data that further enhances provision.
- Securing the support of employers and other partners such as voluntary organisations. This can help raise the awareness of pupils requiring more choices and more chances of what is needed to access positive destinations such as securing and sustaining employment, as this group may sometimes need someone who is not a teacher to get them to reflect. Other organisations can help by providing specialised input to empower young people, promote their self-confidence and leadership skills.
- Evaluation and monitoring that can constantly inform strategies and approaches. This is particularly effective when integral to 'early warning' systems to identify pupils at risk of falling into the category of young people requiring more choices and more chances.
- Having holistic early intervention programmes to address needs, rather than waiting until secondary school.
- Deploying learner-centred quality educational opportunities (see Section 2.1).
- Having placements for teachers and other providers to visit examples of good practice so that successful approaches can be mainstreamed.
- The motivation, commitment and skills of those delivering, planning and managing programmes.

- Having appropriate forms of assessment in place to recognise learners' achievements, stakeholders raised similar issues concerning assessment. The overall theme was that a range of qualifications and awards that were useful to accredit the achievements of pupils in need of more choices and more chances, such as ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh Awards, did not have parity of esteem with those in the SCQF Framework. Within one case study, a tariff score approach was adopted to recognise the accumulated qualifications and awards and allocate standardised points.

2.5 Sustaining good practice

Effective approaches to promoting the sustainability of provision for young people needing more choices and more chances were characterised by providers and partners working together to explore ways to embed provision with existing structures and funding streams within a wider context of the Single Outcome Agreement. Where this was working well it was usually because of leadership and direction from strategic stakeholders. While available funding was seen as a key factor in sustaining practice, local authority personnel and some Headteachers highlighted that effective communication and allocation of resources were also important. For example, one Quality Improvement Officer stressed that 'it doesn't have to be about money: expertise and opportunities are also as important'.

Some examples of measures adopted across the case studies to promote sustainability included:

- Promoting partnership working to sustain and fund aspects of the various pre- and post-16 strategies to address the needs of those requiring More Choices More Chances. While partnership working presented challenges, it was seen as more effective than one service trying to address a range of needs.
- While there was usually a mix of models to deliver courses to young people needing more choices and more chances, providers and strategic partners were looking at ways to increase the capacity of schools to provide more inclusive content and teaching approaches and reducing the amount of input from external partners such as colleges where appropriate. However, some stressed that many of the pupils had issues with teachers as authority figures and that involving external providers could help address this initially.
- Bidding for other sources of funding available locally such as the Fairer Scotland Fund to promote targeted provision for particular target groups requiring More Choices More Chances, for example within the context of tackling area-based disadvantage and individual poverty, and helping particularly disaffected groups to access and sustain employment opportunities.

- The Fairer Scotland Fund, worth £435 million over 2008–11, replaces seven previous funding streams,¹ and aims to give Community Planning Partnerships

a clearer picture of the money available to them for tackling poverty and deprivation and give them greater flexibility to direct cash towards projects that will make the biggest difference to people's lives - particularly those which help to improve employability, skills and self-confidence, to get at the root causes of poverty.

Scottish Government (2008)

In addition to sustaining existing good practice, the case study partners were looking at ways to further develop and enhance provision for young people needing more choices and more chances. These included: more personal support approaches for groups that would track and support individuals after their participation in courses; more early intervention measures and expansion of links to partners who can provide support and progression routes for those leaving provision.

1 Community Regeneration Fund, Community Voices Fund, Working for Families, Work force Plus, More Choices More Chances, Financial Inclusion and Changing Children's Services. Allocation of 75 per cent of the fund is based on area measures of deprivation from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006. 25 per cent of the fund's allocation is based on individual measures of deprivation using the income domain of SIMD 2006.

1. Falkirk Council: Innovative council-wide multi-agency approach

Key aspects

- Flexible school-, college-, and Educational Training Unit-based provision, focusing on individual needs with early identification of 'at risk' children.
- Local authority-wide strategic approach, fully integrated with other services and involving multi-agency partnerships.

The success of various programmes in Falkirk focusing on young people in need of more choices and more chances has facilitated a growing awareness across school staff and partner services of the benefits of a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances

In 2003 Falkirk Council recognised that there was a significant issue with 28% of young people leaving school and becoming not in education, employment or training and similar high levels of youth unemployment above the Scottish average particularly for young males. Falkirk Council therefore included specific targets and measures within the Corporate Plan and Service Plans aimed at:

- Reducing the number of young people needing more choices and more chances.
- Reducing youth unemployment.
- Increasing the quantity and quality of work based training.
- Increasing the number of individuals with additional support needs continuing in post-compulsory education and/or training.
- Ensuring all school leavers understand the world of work.

Since 2003, the combined strategies have made a dramatic and positive impact on positive transitions and those requiring more choices and more chances, with a 6% drop over the past three years in those young people who leave school and fail to find employment or access further learning opportunities. Stakeholders stress that figures are still an issue, but progress continues to be made.

The More Choices, More Chances Strategy includes strong links between education services and the economic development and regeneration aspects of the Falkirk initiative 'My Future is in Falkirk' and community education services. The Council's Employment and Training Unit (ETU) is a key provider for pre- and post-16 programmes to engage with young people and improve prospects for positive destinations and employability. Pupils are referred to the ETU in S4 and can follow a full-time programme from August to

leaving school in May. There is also a model where pupils spend part of the time in school and part in the ETU.

This has proven very successful in engaging with young people and improving positive destinations and has been used in Braes, Grangemouth and Falkirk High Schools. In 2007, approximately 100 S4 students followed full- or part-time education and work-based programmes with the Employment and Training Unit and, in addition to valuable practical experiences, gained a range of either nationally-recognised or local training certificates in areas such as health and safety, first aid, manual handling, pipe fitting and welding.

Flexible options are increasingly being used to the benefit of the young people needing more choices and more chances. However, some education stakeholders believed that there was a tension between the promotion of increased flexibility and the drive to increase school attainment as currently measured. However, Education Services considered it was important that the achievements of all of pupils were recognised.

A short programme can also be provided in the run-up to leaving at the end of S4 where young people who are referred receive extra support from ETU. The programme builds guarantees, such as a place in the Get Ready for Work Programme or options around Modern Apprenticeships, to provide incentives for young people to attend and do well. The Council is keen to develop progression pathways for young people whether in ETU, school-based or College provision.

The overall focus of provision for young people needing more choices and more chances in Falkirk and indeed education overall reflects an underlying principle:

How education can engage with young people using different options and programme models...the strategy is about providing more flexible options and more children having more opportunities within the norm of the curriculum.

Head of school improvement/ Curriculum Adviser

The strategy emphasises a flexible, holistic approach and ethos aiming to improve the experience for all children. Stakeholders believe that this has been facilitated in recent years by Determined to Succeed and Curriculum for Excellence. The strategy, therefore, aims to provide a more enterprising and more active learning experience for young people to promote engagement and achievement.

Our hope has to be that by having this flexible curriculum and range of options and different forms of accreditation we get young people more engaged and we need types of support outside of the mainstream for those who don't make positive transitions. So by time in S4 we will have fewer young people who need more choices and more chances..

Headteacher

A key feature of the approach is monitoring and early intervention from nursery and primary school onwards. Attendance, behaviour and other characteristics are monitored with careful attention given to transition points and those pupils with additional support needs. Where necessary, there can be target setting for pupils and Individualised Education Plans. Primary schools also have World of Work events emphasising that vocational and provision for young people needing more choices and more chances are all part of a holistic quality education experience.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances at secondary school is also supported by school-college collaboration. The local college has allocated 160 places for S3 moving into S4 across a range of curricular areas. The introduction of Skills for Work qualifications has been successful, with children and parents seeing this as a normal part of the curriculum.

There are links with Stirling University in order to promote young people to access higher education who would not traditionally do so. As the local figures for those requiring more choices and more chances are declining and there has been success in a range of positive destinations, there has been no corresponding increase in access to higher education. Schools are, therefore, trying to encourage some young people to consider university courses.

A local special school has also developed very innovative approaches including some pupils with complex needs setting up a café in the local country park where they can develop skills. Carronrange Catering at Carronrange School was initiated in 2007 to provide a working environment for the pupils. Drawing on pupils' enthusiasm, the business has taken off quickly and now boasts 'highly regarded and professionally run catering and conference services on site at the school for customers from the local authority'. The students at Carronrange are involved in all aspects of the business from the sourcing of supplies to providing face-to-face hospitality services. The value of these transferable business skills as well as the improved self-esteem that Carronrange Catering provides its members, has proven to be a real bonus for the school. It is now a social enterprise firm that is already looking to expand its scope. The initiative has received much support from partnerships including community education and local businesses etc. There has been a notable improvement in participating young people's skills and confidence and access to opportunities.

A further partner over the past three years has been Skill Force, which operates in four secondary schools. Skill Force is a voluntary organisation which works with schools to deliver programmes that promote life skills and employability skills. It aims to promote young people's attendance, attitude and attainment 'across the whole school environment and beyond' and to increase the number of young people entering education, employment and training on leaving school. The courses provide a wide range of recognised qualifications, community work and life skills in the classroom and through outdoor activities. These include, ASDAN vocational awards, Duke of

Edinburgh awards, a Junior Sports Leader award, and various employability and citizenship-related courses. Instruction and mentoring is provided mainly by ex-armed forces personnel, who develop a close working relationship with individuals and instil a culture of respect and mutual support.

The pilot for Skill Force in the local authority has highlighted the benefits of the outdoor learning experience and has proven very useful in engaging with young people and developing their life skills and confidence. The benefits of outdoor residential experiences in addressing the kinds of issues faced by those requiring more choices and more chances and in promoting a more relevant curriculum for them has also been recognised by local primary schools. The primary schools provide outdoor residential experience for the P7 year group as preparation for going to secondary school, with pupils responding very well.

The impact of outdoor residential learning for all and not just for those requiring more choices and more chances means that this will be mainstreamed into the secondary school curriculum for S3–S4. The opportunities offered by providing a ‘different kind of challenge’ has allowed many pupils who do not often engage to take the lead in school and other activities, and has also promoted their leadership capacity.

Overall, there is a growing sense that schools and their partner services can ‘exploit the opportunities for flexibility’ to explore innovative ways to enhance the curriculum and learning experience for pupils. A change in school culture is seen as facilitating this, built on a recognition of the value of flexible learning and a broader understanding of achievement.

About three years ago college links and vocational options were seen as very risky, schools were worried about how they would be judged...exam passes etc., these young people [those requiring more choices and more chances] were seen as achieving, but teachers were still worried about exam profiles... but now this culture has changed in community and vocational options and wider achievement are seen as very valid with Skills For Work courses and others like ASDAN having credibility and respect.

Quality Improvement Officer

The provision of ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh Award programmes has increased to provide learning opportunities for those pupils requiring more choices and more chances, and accreditation to recognise their achievements. Importantly, employers value these courses, even when pupils do not always have a range of Standard Grades. Parents have become aware of this and are now more likely to support such provision. Business and employers are encouraged to come into school to talk to parents’ meetings. Parents value their accounts over those of careers advisors.

Young people's experience and outcomes

Evidence from pupils, teachers and parents indicates that young people involved in a range of pre- and post-16 programmes in Falkirk to address the needs of those requiring more choices and more chances have demonstrated improved achievement, self-confidence, raised aspirations and positive destinations. For example, work done at Braes High School involving support from the Educational Training Unit (ETU) included pupils developing and landscaping the school's courtyard. This has had a notable impact on pupils and the perceptions of their teachers. Pupils, now in S4, reported that this work was the first time they had received praise for anything they had done in school. Teachers have been able to see the impact on pupils' skills and motivation and this has promoted awareness of the value of such programmes and teacher buy-in.

Some of the young people have participated in programmes that have involved residential events, particularly visits to Columba 1400. Columba 1400 is a UK charitable, non-political, non-denominational organisation, based at Staffin on the Isle of Skye. The organisation delivers residential leadership development experiences, with the core of the work being conducted with young people from 'tough realities', i.e. those who have experienced significant personal and social challenges. These young people reported a change in their attitudes and positive behaviours. On returning to school, many have been actively involved in leadership and promotional activities that have had a positive impact on the ethos of their school.

The success of various programmes in Falkirk focusing on the needs of young people requiring more choices and more chances has facilitated a growing awareness across school staff and partner services of the benefits of a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. There are now opportunities for greater cross-curricular developments; for example enterprise projects, that provide 'rich tasks' for young people, with teachers and pupils seeing connections between subjects. Literacy and numeracy can be delivered to target groups through different strands, and teachers are beginning to see that children can benefit from the provision and this is being reflected in their teaching approaches. Pupils are also seeing the value of a wider range of subjects.

While various aspects of provision in this case study were addressing the needs of young people, the programmes run by the ETU were particularly praised by teachers, parents and employers as having a wide range of positive outcomes for young people. For example:

The big difference about the young people from the ETU was they were coming with some experience...most of the work they've done here has been absolutely fantastic...The ETU has given them the first step up the ladder...The skills they've gained from this course has to

be useful to all employers... employers don't have to spend time on developing skills...they've already got them...Compared to other school leavers, the ETU group the difference is unbelievable. The skills they're learning at ETU are head and shoulders above other school leavers we've had...It has been so beneficial to us to have kids from the ETU group...it's been a success for us... They come to their work... do their work, their timekeeping is impeccable...They're well on their way to becoming effective trades people.

Local employers

As a parent...it seems fantastic...well worth it...you can see that they can now work in the grown up world – he's more grown up mature...many kids like J need encouraged and helped. At times his behaviour was terrible both at school and at home...wouldn't do this wouldn't do that, keep taking a strop. The change now has absolutely been absolutely... stunning...Its brought him on 100% he does things around the house on his days off from his own work. His attitude has totally changed in looking to do jobs...I'm amazed at some achievements and proud of others... Before I thought he's not going to go anywhere but now he's planning for a future.

Without doing the course I hate to think what he'd be doing... I'd recommend the course for the discipline that it gives, self-confidence. From what I've seen 99% of those on the course have done very well. It gets them ready for the work place. I wish we had it when we were young.

Father of ETU participant

I'm really proud of what we've done. If I hadn't done ETU group I'd still be looking for a job. Now I've got one. I found it was better than school...couldn't see the point of school it but I can now. I think teachers had more respect for me. After me no liking them and them no liking me, we've got respect for each other again. I also get on better with my mother.

Before I joined my behaviour was bad, never got on with teachers, got excluded every month The ETU group helped me...it was brilliant got me an apprenticeship...I've got respect for others and teachers. Teachers started to like me more...I speak a lot more to my ma and dad now...I get on people at work better...I've grown up more. I though when I was at school I wasn't going to be anyone, now I'm doing an apprenticeship. Without the ETU I'd be in the house doing nothing, being on the bru getting money from people rather than making it. I liked getting out working not being in the same place every day...practical stuff. It was that course that totally changed me...changed everything.

I had destructive behaviour, I thought school was a waste of time. I didn't want to go to school just dogged it. But on the ETU I was treated like an adult. Well it's helped my attendance, confidence , it has helped me work with others I've focused on my life helped and it's get me a job. The ETU group...and there was less fights in my house. If I hadn't done the ETU I'd just be working in a supermarket...I feel it was worth it...it was fun not like being in class...I learned a lot...The ASDAN was good... I'd strongly recommend it. The outdoors work was good doing the gorge walk made me feel good about myself.

ETU participants

Key factors involved in success

Many of the main reasons for the success of provision for those requiring more choices and more chances in this case study were seen as being related to the overall strategic framework, the various partnerships involved and the holistic and flexible provision. As one strategic stakeholder stated 'Flexibility in what we offer is key to our success in fitting the programme to the young person'. Other factors can be summarised as:

- Strategic links and partnership working between education, community learning services, the ETU, social work and economic development and regeneration within the overall local policy framework of 'My Future is in Falkirk'. For example, regular working group meetings and close links between strategy group representatives for pre- and post-16 support for those requiring more choices and more chances has been crucial in securing commitment to facilitating positive destinations for young people. This includes developing provision and intensive support for those about to leave school to secure a training place or modern apprenticeship.
- Strong links with Careers Scotland. The input from Careers Scotland has helped schools recognise how to address the range of support pupils need to reach their potential.

We've now got more careers information and PSE information being provided by the My Future is in Falkirk careers team geared to local opportunities and delivered across schools to raise awareness of local opportunities. There is a need to get handle on local labour market...what are realistic aspirations but we need to also equip the young people with skills and confidence to make the most of opportunities.

Secondary Pupil Support Manager

- Support from employers and business. For example, employers including British Petroleum (BP) have done much work with young people, including simulated job interviews and employability discussions. This is seen as increasing the awareness of pupils requiring more choices and more chances of what is needed to secure work and sustain it: sometimes this group are felt to need someone who is not a teacher to get them to reflect.
- College working. Forth Valley College has a long history of working with S5/S6. In 1999–2000, all schools have a standardised timetable which facilitates schools to allow young people to access courses in S5/6 or to take up college courses with a vocational focus at Intermediate level or Higher level.
- Evaluation and monitoring constantly informs strategies and approaches. Monitoring is in place from nursery and primary school age to identify risk of needing more choices and more chances, and holistic early intervention programmes seek to address needs, rather than waiting until secondary school. For example, in addition to individual educational and social work

support for pupils seen to be at risk, broader integrated and multi-faceted approaches to build emotional resilience have been adopted in one school cluster. Other measures that providers in Falkirk believe have been effective include providing outdoor learning experiences for primary pupils to promote self-confidence prior to going to secondary school. Such measures often focus on the transition from primary to high school.

- Transition meetings across the partnership to address the risk groups on an individual-by-individual basis, to address how to provide targeted support. This is time-consuming and complex but the panel of key people with pastoral and other roles develop more effective approaches and plans.
- Placements for teachers to visit business partners have been undertaken and have helped to promote their awareness of what chances and choices are available locally and what developments were occurring within the 'My Future is in Falkirk' strategy. This then can be addressed in their teaching.
- Being prepared to change approaches and systems that are judged as not effective or require adapting.
- The motivation, commitment and skills of those delivering, planning and managing programmes. Relationships between stakeholders are very important.
- The political will and commitment from local councillors to see all young people raise aspirations and do well is seen by education stakeholders as an important source of support in driving forward innovative education provision.

Future developments and sustainability

The provision for young people needing more choices and more chances continues to be developed and enhanced with the whole spectrum of needs being addressed. Most stakeholders believed that partnership working helped to sustain and fund aspects of the various pre and post-16 strategies to address the needs of young people requiring more choices and more chances. While partnership working presented challenges, it was seen as more effective than one service trying to address needs. One Quality Improvement Officer stressed that 'It doesn't have to be about money, expertise and opportunities are also as important'.

Currently there is a mix of models with some pupils going to college and others where college and other providers such as ETU come into schools. This is seen as helping to prepare for transitions and adult life for older pupils but there are some reservations about the experience for S3 pupils. It is hoped that there will be more in-school delivery of courses for pupils in the future that is delivered by college and teachers.

The local college has had some specific funding to support school-college working if this continues to be effective it could become an established part of the funding of the College. The partnership have successfully bid for funding including the Fairer Scotland Fund² which is used to enable local authorities and community planning partnerships to tackle area based disadvantage; individual poverty; and help more people to access and sustain employment opportunities. The Council will draw on such funding to help to sustain the transitions programme.

The funding of successful programmes and their mainstreaming is being considered by the Council. It is hoped that tracking of those involved in various provision will help assess any impact on people's attitude to learning and positive outcomes.

Other developments include:

- More personal support approaches are being developed for groups based on the concept of 'multiple re-engagement and picking up' when some repeatedly struggle to make positive destinations.
- A 'My Future is in Falkirk' transition project, still at early stage, looking at P7 and S1 involving cross-sector working to develop skills awareness in primary school pupils that will articulate with what they do in secondary school.
- A programme to develop teaching methodology in line with flexible approaches to pupils' needs has just started in the authority but every school will eventually be involved.
- The ETU has managed to get an agreement from those new developers who come into the area so that they are committed to offering new apprenticeships. The Council is seeking to expand this. The Council also has a commitment to offer new apprenticeships as one of the biggest employer in area, but is still looking at even more employer interaction.

² For details, see Scottish Government (2008) *Targets to Tackle Poverty* [Press release]. Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/01/31112502>

2. Kibble Centre and Reid Kerr College

Key aspects

- Specialist school with a reputation for social and curricular innovation, in partnership with local college.
- Provision for young people with a complex mix of social, emotional, educational and behavioural problems.
- Adapted and individualised curriculum based on a secondary school model.
- College lecturers provide school-based delivery in areas of the curriculum known to be effective in engaging with young people and promoting their life skills and employability. Where appropriate, content can be delivered at College.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances

The Kibble Education and Care Centre in Paisley is one of Scotland's largest social enterprises, working with young people who have a complex mix of social, emotional, educational and behavioural problems. The Kibble Centre provides education for young people aged 12 to 16 within seven educational facilities. Many of the young people have had a 'turbulent educational history, which has resulted in significant gaps in their overall levels of achievement'. Kibble staff routinely conduct an assessment of educational needs to determine the most suitable educational response. Kibble places emphasis on young people engaging with an 'adapted and individualised curriculum based on a secondary school model'.

Placement in units is streamed on assessment of need. In April 2007 the Centre opened a secure provision unit for pupils aged 12–18 with a secure order. The Centre works with an extensive range of partner agencies and services to support young people. Class sizes are a maximum of four or five pupils and the majority of classes are supported in learning by classroom support workers. All pupils have Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) which incorporate targets set in all subject areas with progress assessed through regular key-tutor, key-worker and pupil monthly meetings. To address the range of complex needs of pupils, the curriculum has to be broad but with a high level of personalisation. Recent innovations in the curriculum include vocational learning, careers, ICT, personalisation and flexibility. The various aspects of provision and services provided include:

- A 24/7 campus with residential, educational and training resources, community outreach, day centres and sports, leisure and recreational facilities.
- A full secondary education including learning support.

- Residential units providing a range of approaches to individual problems.
- A Community House in Paisley for care leavers.
- Kibble Works – enterprise and employment opportunities for young people preparing to leave care and young people who have been in care.
- Community outreach services providing family support, alternatives to residential care, mainstream school support programmes and evening and weekend group work with ‘at risk’ young people.
- Intensive fostering service.
- A safe centre (secure children’s home with education).

While the provision reflects each individual’s needs and circumstances, the overall focus of much of the learning includes an emphasis on:

- Problem-solving Skills
- Consequential Thinking
- Social Skills
- Emotional Competences
- Conflict Resolution
- Vocational learning

Recent innovations in Kibble’s curriculum include enhancements in vocational learning, careers, ICT, Skills for Work courses such as crafts, mechanics and home economics for pre-16 pupils have demonstrated ‘tremendous success’ in engaging with young people. Cooperative teaching, external lecturers, quality resources, educational visits, cultural experiences and summer programmes expand the learning and teaching opportunities for both staff and pupils.

Kibble has developed a reputation for social innovation and has won numerous awards recognising achievements in professional practice, staff development, business and enterprise, equality and a strong track record of collaborative and partnership working. The range of services incorporates community outreach programmes, residential care, social welfare, full secondary education, through-care and aftercare, intensive fostering, and secure care. These services are sold to local authorities across Scotland and the North of England.

Partnership with Reid Kerr College

Kibble staff recognised a need for partnership work with other education providers to enhance their provision to better engage with young people and meet their needs. One such partner has been Reid Kerr College. For a number of years, the Centre has had an effective relationship with Reid Kerr College. In recent years they have had lecturers come to the Kibble Centre to

deliver areas of the curriculum that Kibble staff could not deliver alone, including vocational courses, and drama and expressive arts.

Reid Kerr College has played a major role in Renfrewshire Council's New Directions programme which was established to provide vulnerable and disengaged young people with a learning experience outwith mainstream school to 'offer seriously disaffected and under-achieving young people the opportunity to stimulate or rekindle their enthusiasm and help realise their potential'. In that initiative, each student is allocated a key worker who will help them develop and facilitate an Individual Learning and Support Plan (ILSP). Such experience, helped develop a core of expertise in the college that could support partner providers to deliver effective learning programmes to those requiring more choices and more chances.

Centre staff believe it is important that some of the young people get 'a taste of college life'. So, where possible, students have attended college with a teacher present. Staff at the Centre saw this as invaluable in allowing the young people to 'taste the climate and ethos in a very good college'. For the majority of pupils, however, they are unable to go to the College, therefore, lecturers have come to the Kibble Centre to deliver courses.

The College has been an extremely effective partner in helping to develop pupils' capacity to produce and perform in biannual shows, annual talent and pantomime events including supporting video and media skills. College and Centre staff believe that these subjects and activities have had a notable impact on pupils' self-confidence and skills.

For example, hands-on crafts, mechanics and home economics courses have proved popular with young people and helped to promote their engagement with learning. In partnership with Reid Kerr College, the Centre has been able to build on this to develop their provision of Skills for Work qualifications. This has allowed pupils to access courses that will promote their employability and chance of positive destinations.

College lecturers have been involved in training Centre teachers to provide Skills for Work qualifications in certain subjects. Therefore, supported by Reid Kerr College, the Centre's capacity to provide Skills for Work for pre-16 pupils has been greatly enhanced. The Centre has now developed the Kibble Works Free programme whereby a number of Skills for Work courses are provided on the premises, including painting and decorating, electrical, roofing and plumbing for those young people in the secure unit who cannot access college. Centre staff believe that there will still be a need to continue to work with the college.

Kibble Staff and Reid Kerr lecturers have recently been praised by HMIE for their work with some of the most demanding young people in Scotland, and stakeholders report that Kibble staff and Reid Kerr lecturers have benefited in terms of developing their professional practice, but that the interaction has also made the learning experience for young people richer.

Young people's experiences and outcomes

Internal evaluation by the Kibble Centre has shown that their provision has resulted in a significant reduction in total level of risk of re-offending (high risk–moderate risk), a significant reduction in total criminal sentiments score, as well as revealing a significantly lower identification with criminal others, and a significant reduction in total behavioural difficulties, conduct difficulties and an increase in pro-social behaviour.

If I hadn't come here I would have carried on offending and would have ended up being behind bars.

Young person participating in the Kibble Works

My childhood was a nightmare made a bit better by the school and the staff who worked there. I would like to wish them all the success in the world. They have a good strong team there who need to be told how good a job they do.

A former Kibble student

The panel members who attended were most impressed by the Centre and the overall atmosphere and the attitude of staff. The young people, who openly expressed their own views that the centre had made a difference in their lives, speaks volumes as it was the young people's own voices which we heard.

Glasgow Children's Panel

Despite such clear progress, the college staff were eager to improve their capacity to promote problem-solving skills and develop more vocational courses that would engage with pupils. This led to the Centre seeking a more active partnership with Reid Kerr College.

College lecturers come to Kibble to deliver areas of the curriculum that have been shown to be particularly effective in engaging with young people and promoting their life skills and employability; for example, through performing arts – drama and dance, including developing musical, video and technical skills to support shows. Other vocational areas such as painting, decorating, construction, roofing etc., are also popular with the pupils.

Developing responsible citizenship...re-engagement in education...get a focus to their lives in order to be able to sustain their job and role in society. For me this is at the heart of it. Our initial support with Reid Kerr was the expressive arts and video work etc....here we see a particular impact on young people when they go on stage for the first time in their lives and the positive feeling of achievement. They then associate this with learning and doing things for work but also wider life... Develop appropriate confidence and an 'I can do that' philosophy.

Kibble teacher

College lecturers have also helped to inspire and engage young people who are disaffected with learning.

I was reading in the safe centre [part of the Kibble Centre offering a secure children's home facility, with education] reading Blood Brothers by Willy Russell...then our Head of Education, brought [Reid Kerr lecturer] who works in drama and supports our shows, and when he

came in he seamlessly got into character and he was so talented in dramatic ability that together, we got the pupils hooked into reading again. I'm passionate about encouraging reading especially for some of these in the secure centre some who have a long time to serve. Literature is chosen to reflect positive moral messages

Depute Headteacher

Kibble staff believe that developing the links with Reid Kerr has greatly helped them to promote the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

I would like to think that in developing the links with Reid Kerr we're getting underneath the four capacities for young people, it's not just a token gesture. We're seeing the development of real skills and it's allowing them a springboard to be successful learners. It's also developing their confidence vocationally and broader, they see it as worthwhile...they're becoming effective contributors, with appropriate skills and attitudes, self-discipline.

Kibble teacher

Partnership working and joint teaching also benefits lecturers and teachers.

It's another route for self-reflection and self-evaluation for both college and Kibble staff. Learning new ways of working with, and engaging disaffected pupils...benefits for developing professional practice...of learning what works.

Lecturer

Other positive outcomes include promoting employability skills and motivation to learn and apply themselves to work routines and duties.

We have a team of young people who go on a more advanced class on Wednesday evenings where the Reid Kerr lecturer has an excellent working relationship with our mechanical tutor. We've developed a strong work ethic and self-discipline among the group...they are very motivated to participate.

Kibble teacher

A further benefit for young people to emerge from the partnership has been the impact of lecturers as positive role models for some students.

Big thing for us is role modelling...most lecturers from the college are young males who are not afraid to act differently and be effervescent in their skills such as in drama and music and have a 'can do' attitude. Our relationship with Reid Kerr has provided positive role models who can encourage young people to bring out skills that no one has recognised before.

Key factors involved in success

The main factors and reasons seen by stakeholders as responsible for the success of the partnership working in addressing pupils' needs include:

- Excellent training for staff to work with vulnerable young people, including Life Space crisis prevention training.
- Reid Kerr lecturers providing training in vocational subject skills which allows Kibble Centre staff to deliver Skills for Work qualifications.

- Skilled and committed staff at the Centre and college, including the college's Schools Liaison Officer, all of who have 'an excellent understanding of the needs of young people and staff at the Centre'.
- Monitoring of young people's progress and transition destinations, which feeds back into provision. The views of pupils, parents and carers are also key to the Centre's evaluation process.
- Careful selection of college staff to work with the young people at the Centre; again the skill of the college's Schools Liaison Officer is important here. Certain qualities and skills are seen as necessary for teaching the Centre's young people. 'It is important to recruit well qualified staff but [they] also need certain qualities – resilient, positive, someone who can be divergent in their thinking about teaching young people'.
- Clear and transparent communication across the Centre's departments and with the college.

Future developments and sustainability

A key dimension in the Kibble Centre's measures to promote sustainability is enlisting the support of Reid Kerr to train some teachers to deliver some of the Skills for Work qualifications at the Centre. This will increase the capacity of the Centre to provide vocational learning which not only has potential benefits for students' employability but also promotes wider benefits such as self-esteem. The college is still likely to provide other courses on-site and at the college, and there will an accreditation and quality assurance role for those Skills for Work qualifications provided by teachers at the Centre.

A key area of concern for the Centre is to improve the support for those leaving the Centre. Many young people move from intensive support to vulnerable housing and hostels. Staff believe that too many enter into the penal system after leaving residential schools. Appropriate step-down education, employment support and further training are required. They see a role in this for partnership with a number of agencies and key workers, including Careers Scotland.

3. Lochend Community High School and college partners, Glasgow

Key aspects

- ‘Youth Start’ programme involves a close working partnership with John Wheatley College, offering carefully selected pupils predominantly college-based, largely vocational, learning but includes a focus on developing wider life skills.
- The school continues to provide pastoral care, as well as support and teaching relating to employability skills and preparation for employment.
- For young people experiencing particular difficulties, the school provides support in the form of anger management, counselling or general esteem building.
- Chronic non-attenders are offered intensive support.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances

The school is involved in a number of initiatives within the area aimed at supporting young people and their families. The pupil population consists of a high number of young people who are carers for their parents or other relatives. Forty-one percent (41%) of the school's intake come from families classified as income deprived, and health issues are 10% above the national average. In addition, Easterhouse contains the highest number of looked after children in Glasgow and the suicide rate among young people is 68% higher than the national average.

The school has links with colleges in Glasgow's Vocational Programme, in particular, John Wheatley College. This partnership forms the basis of the Youth Start programme. Those pupils (mainly in S4) who are part of the Youth Start initiative attend college for most of their school week. The most popular courses taken by pupils whilst at college are Construction, Hair and Beauty, and Hospitality. Whilst in school, they work alongside a teacher and college lecturer on Employability Skills and on preparation for employment. The school continues to provide pastoral support for young people on this initiative and their families, thereby maintaining a strong school link.

The School is also involved in the GOALS project which raises pupils' awareness of the benefits of a university education. This is a major widening participation project coordinated by member Higher Education Institutions of the West of Scotland Wider Access forum. It is delivered in approximately 290 schools across 11 Local Authorities in the West of Scotland and aims to raise awareness about Higher Education and encourage pupils from schools with low participation rates in HE to consider Higher Education as an option. The project 'offers a continuum of activity from P6 to S6, which in turn comprises 15 elements involving a mix of in-school and on-campus events. Around 180 pupils participated from Lochend during the period 2005–06. Teachers and lecturers see the project as having played a key role in the

wider strategy of raising young people's awareness of opportunities and aspirations concerning further study.

The school has a cultural coordinator partly funded by the Arts Council who is responsible for work within the Learning Community. The school also has a Health Coordinator partly funded by the Learning Community and the NHS. For those young people who might be experiencing difficulties, the school provides support in the form of anger management, counselling or general esteem building. Similarly, chronic non-attenders are offered intense support. This support has been developed over a number of years and has been recognised nationally as being a model of best practice.

The school is an integrated community school and has, therefore, a strong emphasis on partnership working with a joint-planning forum or executive group which bring together representatives from the school, social work, children's panel, health, police and other partner organisations including the voluntary sector. There is also a focus on promoting greater involvement of parents and local businesses and a commitment to listening and involving children. This helps to promote effective and more integrated services for young people, particularly those needing more choices and more chances.

Young people's experience and outcomes

In addition to the academic curriculum, the school offers a range of activities, including charity work, work within the community, working with older people. For S5 and S6 pupils some kind of community project is compulsory.

Pupils are also encouraged to organise their own projects within and for the school. For example, one group organised a school prom, another runs a Credit Union within the school and another organises initiatives around significant themes such as health.

Monitoring by the school and its partners of the impact of their provision on young people reveals that there are significant challenges concerning levels of young people who are staying on and achieving qualifications compared to the national average. Nevertheless, the monitoring shows that 82% of school leavers go on to positive destinations and a further 17% continue to engage with a school/careers adviser. Only 1% of Lochend school leavers had 'disengaged'. Many of these leavers appear to be accessing training and other education opportunities.

A particular initiative available through the schools is the Youthstart Programme. The Youthstart Programme is run in partnership with John Wheatley College and has been evaluated by the partnership and found to be effective in promoting the following positive outcomes:

- Effectively addressing individual pupils' learning and support needs.
- Improving pupil motivation, particularly with pupils gaining qualifications within the first few weeks of the programme. Pupils also realise that what

they are learning and their new skills have wider currency in the world of work and life in general.

- Enhancing maturity among pupils as they work with pupils from other schools and are in the company of local young adults who have returned to learning.
- Promoting attendance among pupils who would otherwise have not attended classes. In some cases there has been an increase of 20% in attendance.
- Providing individual progression routes which are particularly well suited to those requiring more choices and more chances, with the support of various partner services, to promote continued development to achieve positive outcomes for participants.
- Providing certification in core and vocational skills as a 'realistic alternative to Standard Grades'. Vocational courses are typically chosen by pupils first and then core/ generic skills are used to support study.

While the Youth Start programme is essentially vocational, it has been effective in addressing the needs of groups of pupils requiring more choices and more chances.

The young people's experiences of learning at Lochend is, therefore, not confined to school. Indeed, the school actively pursues a policy of encouraging the young people to develop a sense of themselves and others in the community.

...there's a strong belief in the school that getting youngsters out of school and involved in a range of activities and community activities, and how that contributes towards the development of the four capacities.

High School teacher

The local authority and teachers report that destination statistics for school leavers are 'reasonably positive' and the school works closely with Careers Scotland. Equally, the teacher interviewees offered evidence of improved attendance, enhanced self-esteem and greater self-confidence among the pupil population.

Key factors involved in success

The key factor in the success of the Youth Start programme is seen by teachers as the partnership with John Wheatley College. The close working partnerships, including the exchange visits that have developed have contributed greatly to promoting the exchange of ideas and information across all staffing levels. The resulting joined-up thinking is reflected in the delivery of the programme, involving shared teaching practices, joint monitoring procedures, regular updates and evaluations which have informed short- and long-term recommendations for development. This success has been recognised by the Council who are seeking expansion of the college's provision on the basis of the experience of Youth Start.

Another important aspect of the programme's success is the clear selection criteria for participants and the rigorous interview process that they and their parents undertake. The selection process is supported by the school through the preparation of pupils for choosing their vocational options and the undertaking of the interviews.

A third significant factor is the pupils' sense of themselves as belonging to the school:

...every youngster should get the chance to [do something of their own choice outside the school]. That could just be going on a cinema trip, when they're out there and they're representing the school. It's my belief that every youngster in S1–3, for example, should get the opportunity to represent the school at least once.

High School Headteacher

The distributed management style in which the school operates, and the excellent relationship and skill sharing between school and college staff, are both seen as vital factors in the success of Youth Start.

There have been challenges for the school in its partnership with both the college and the Youth Start programme. Initially, some pupils saw their involvement in the programme as being 'dumped by the school'. Peer pressure and associated factors were an issue in driving some disruptive behaviour. Teachers and college staff have drawn on the support of specialist services to address social and extended family matters that influence pupils' learning and behaviour. Even with additional support, it has been recognised that for some pupils, involvement with the college is unsuitable and other viable alternatives have to be sought. Other reported challenges include:

- Targeting resources on the most deprived data zones.
- Recognising and taking account of territorial issues within deprived areas which can limit access to opportunities.
- Providing more direct support for the "6 year+ degree".
- Reviewing the impact of existing programmes e.g. GOALS programme.
- Reviewing pastoral support mechanisms within HE/FE .
- Measuring learner achievement in terms of 'value-added'.
- Recognising and supporting the role of 'non-standard programmes'.

Future developments and sustainability

Teachers believe that closer alignment of courses such as ASDAN with SCQF in the future will enhance the standing of these courses in the community and with employers.

The Headteacher and all staff in the school are currently reviewing provision. The nature and balance of the generic skills component of courses is being examined to assess how this can be enhanced. They are also in the process of developing an entitlement model for all pupils in S1–S3 and S4–S6. For example, all pupils are entitled to experience Outdoor Education or have a residential experience at some point. A working group has been formed who are considering what should be part of entitlement in S3, and a different set of entitlements for up to S6. Improvements in reporting and liaising with parents are also in development.

The school's initiatives will remain sustainable providing current flexibility among staff continues to be adequately resourced. The relationship with the college is not funding-dependent.

4. MPS Training Ltd., Johnstone and Clydebank

Key aspects

- Private specialist provision working with local employers and schools.
- Provides learning in three sites with a view to reintegrate individuals back into school where possible.
- While the curriculum is specialised, in that it provides students with a strong foundation for a Construction Industry career, it also includes content that aims to provide broader key life skills that will help them access opportunities.
- Emphasis is also placed on academic attainment.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances

MPS training was founded by Willie Cosh and his brother. Mr Cosh was previously Head Teacher of the Kibble Education and Care Centre in Paisley for about five years. During this time there he identified a gap in provision (social enterprise) which he has tried to fill through the establishment of MPS as a school. The MPS training programme is aimed at young people who have previously had problems in school, due to behavioural and/or academic problems, where their education may have been disrupted by periods of exclusion and/or other factors. These young people are referred to MPS by educational psychologists in local schools who are very familiar with the provision it offers. The organisation also deploys social carers to further support young people when necessary.

MPS is a partner organisation with three colleges and there is cooperation which supports joint training and the colleges can place HNC students at MPS for seven months to develop their skills but also support young people at the centre. This 'energises the organisation and addresses the issue of gender balance among the staff'.

The training programme prospectus claims that the approach is unique and aims at:

re-focussing young people who have had problems maintaining a place in mainstream education. The approach uses Technical Education as the main medium in a carefully designed physical environment and as a means of re-focussing socially excluded and disaffected pupils. The ultimate objective is to help these young people achieve their stated goals of gaining apprenticeships in the Construction Industry

While the provision might be seen as vocationally focussed (in particular, on construction and motor maintenance etc.), management stressed that the aim is to strike a balance between 'academic and social aims'. Also, care has been taken to address wider skills including communication, literacy, numeracy, ICT, citizenship and personal development. A key strength of this provision is seen by staff as facilitating a commercial environment rather than

a merely a training environment and this, it is claimed helps motivate the young people to achieve. MPS is now working with Barnardos, which wants to explore ways to adopt aspects of the MPS approach. Other partnerships include helping the Secure Accommodation Services in Arbroath to develop their provision.

Specific objectives of the programme are to:

- Improve the self-esteem and happiness of its students and help them plan and achieve a future in the working world.
- Increase the potential for academic achievement in its students.
- Ensure the improved attendance of the students as a first priority.
- Improve the literacy and numeracy of its students using practical, realistic and relevant problem solving.
- Reintegrate students back into mainstream education in line with the national policy of inclusion in schools, where appropriate.
- Give students the personal confidence and interpersonal skills necessary to succeed in the world of work and life in general.
- Increase the chances of students entering further or higher education.
- Improve the health and fitness of students through organised sport, health education and healthy lifestyles.

Management highlight that provision articulates with the curriculum, that it is inclusive, innovative and aims to address the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and is in line with requirements of HMIE and the Local Authority. The Director of MPS revealed that Native American principles had helped inform their underlying educational philosophy and ethos. This emphasises:

- Being accepted and accepting others including the wider community.
- Mastering skills and acquiring knowledge.
- Fostering independence drawing on work experience, outdoor education and experiences and excursions abroad. This also helps young people deploy the skills and knowledge they have acquired in different contexts.
- Developing their generosity and ability to share with others.

The MPS Training programme approach, is similar to a trade apprenticeship that involves a college course. However, young people join the programme at a younger age and are taught in much smaller groups. A particular strength of the approach is said by MPS to be the 'added value of real vocational experiences within MPS Construction. Technical instruction can be more thoroughly presented within a safer environment where the young people get more attention and assistance'. Young people will regularly encounter 'real tradesmen working on real problems within the real world'. While the curriculum is specialised, in that it provides students with a strong foundation

for a construction industry career, it also includes content that aims to provide broader key life skills that will help them access opportunities.

MPS operates over three sites in Johnstone, Clydebank and Greenock. These sites offer a mixture of vocational skills and schooling including building and construction and motor engineering. Programme content includes: Art & Design, English, enterprise through craft, mathematics, PC Passport and practical craft skills.

The organisation has had HMI initial and full registration inspection for the schools in Clydebank and Johnstone. Greenock has had the registration inspection and it will undergo the full registration in the near future.

The Johnstone school recruits young people from Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire. The Clydebank Centre serves the Isle of Bute and West Dunbarton, and the Greenock Centre is currently exclusive to Greenock.

The schools have normal parents nights, and a number of protocols to support parents as well as their children. If parents do not turn up they are telephoned and can be collected by school staff to promote their participation.

We chap their doors and get them out of their bed if they are in. The social carers are very, very experienced at negotiating with families to get them in and we are doing a lot of stuff for them as well, you know. I suppose we are actually sort of role models with parenting skills that they might have to exhibit.

MPS Director

Staff within the organisation are chosen for their skills but also their personal qualities and dispositions. Some of the staff are currently undertaking training and education and, as such, are seen by management as providing role models for the young people. The organisation has an arrangement with Stirling University which allows student teachers to work at the schools whilst studying part-time for their teaching qualification. One member of staff has featured in a case study presented by the Education Minister and was awarded the accolade of Scottish Learning Employee of the Year.

Young people's experience and outcomes

Roughly a third of the school life consists of core skills and computer skills and academic subjects, a third is technical, including work experience within their own construction company, and the final third is sport and outdoor education. In addition, and equally importantly from MPS staff's perception, is the attention paid to the development of what they refer to as the 'soft' skills of 'cooperating with others and developing a sense of themselves as independent and autonomous individuals'.

The young people referred usually have had problems in school, usually behaviour problems and can be classified under four types. The first group are young people who have been referred because of a lack of motivation:

they are lethargic, they would stay in their bed given the chance and they probably have never been involved in school because they have not been there so they are needing Energised so that is the first group. I would say they probably make up about 25%.

MPS Trainer

The second group consists of young males on the periphery of gang and drug culture and the aim of MPS is to help them develop other role models and 'heroes' who might be members of staff. The third group were described as 'amateur lawyers' who know their rights and who had most likely been responsible for the type of low-level disruption and challenge that schools find difficult. These young people's experiences at MPS can be gleaned from the optimistic view in which they are held by the MPS Staff:

...these kids are often very entrepreneurial because they understand how to negotiate... because they understand, you know, the give and take of the world...they are really interesting kids because if you can skew the Entrepreneurialism in a different way...

I don't necessarily mean they will be self-employed... but they will always have an urge to do something for themselves...

The fourth group of young people consists of young people with Asperger's Syndrome. The routine and timetable in the school appears to help meet the needs of this group, although they do not integrate with the others as well as staff would like. MPS staff and partners considered that the important experience and outcome for this group of young people was their personal development:

... one of them actually said that, you know somebody... came in and did a wee bit of research and said, 'What do you get out of this place?' and he said, 'Well I used to be Asperger's but I have a sense of humour now'.

MPS Manager

The staff employ a process model of first helping young people to feel they belong and are valued, being encouraged to develop their education and skills, to develop a sense of independence and finally to give something in return to the community and others. The experience of the young people can be summed up in the ethos of this provision which is caring, understanding, purposeful, humorous and enterprising. In the young people's own words:

It is more relaxed, but everyone is really nice and we work hard.

You don't have to like call them Sir and Miss and stuff like that.

I want to go to College now. [The Director] will help to get you in.

The outcomes for young people are also realised in the 'hard' targets of National Qualifications. For example, of the last session's 21 leavers, 13 had 5 passes in national courses and the remaining 8 achieved 6 passes. In addition, 2 boys attained upper A grades for Woodwork. MPS also draws on specialist staff such as their psychologist to help assess and evaluate the impact on young people including 'softer' indicators such as personal development, self-confidence and aspirations.

Key factors involved in success

The main factors underpinning the success of the Programme were seen by MPS staff to be:

- Having close links with relevant businesses which allows access to skills and practical experiences for pupils:

One of the great advantages of the partnership between the school and the Building Company is that we can do our own work experience or we can do work experience with people we know very well... The one thing that is coming out of that is the fact that it is a real Commercial Environment rather than a Training environment and the youngsters are really thriving within that.

MPS Director

- Having a good mix of skilled and committed staff who can work with young people with a range of complex issues and difficulties.
- Adopting a proactive approach to building rapport and constructive relationships with parents.
- Close links with the local authority and specialist services.
- Having the opportunity to work with Stirling University and draw on the skills of student teachers as well as their capacity as role models. The student teachers are also seen as benefiting from working with MPS staff and young people.
- Having three centres in different locations which promote access for young people.

The success and innovative methods used in this provision have been recognised in their achievement of a UK Award Social Enterprise of the year award and financial support from Investors in People and Scottish Enterprise.

Future developments and sustainability

The organisation has developed a template which could be used for a range of other vocational areas, and have begun to test it. The immediate aspiration is to introduce Care Work and other provision particularly aimed at girls.

In order for MPS to progress as an organisation, the development of partnerships, especially with larger organisations (who can also act as critical friends) was seen as crucial.

Most importantly, however, the continued success of the enterprise was seen as dependent on developing an entrepreneurial spirit in the young people. The interviewee, in accounting an experience in which a group of young people from Clydebank had been taken to see the QE2 and to whom it was 'just a big boat', expressed his hopes for the schools as follows:

The aim would be the next generation would never have that problem [of not being impressed]... they would be wanting to build the next QE2.

5. YMCA/Scottish Borders

Key aspects

- Innovative intensive programmes for vulnerable primary-age pupils, provided by voluntary sector youth workers in partnership with schools.
- Focuses particularly on early intervention by reducing problems associated with the transition from primary to secondary.
- The project works with young people on a very personal, youth work-oriented level, and the involvement of the child's family is actively encouraged.
- The scheme is able to offer longer-term monitoring and support through the initial years of secondary school.

Provision for those requiring more choices and more chances

In 2007, YMCA Scotland launched a pilot project in partnership with three primary schools in the Borders. The programme emerged from ideas on how to support and provide positive learning for teenagers disengaged from high school. The YMCA project adopted an early intervention strategy aimed at preventing young people from disengaging through building relationships at an early stage and providing support to the child and family throughout adolescence.

The YMCA project in the Borders was influenced by the organisation's observation that supporting disaffected teenagers was costly and was too late in terms of intervening to promote the best interests of the young people, i.e. when behaviours were both established and complex. The YMCA had identified particular early risk factors in the backgrounds of the teenagers from the high school which were considered in the selection process. The YMCA, therefore, decided to engage with children at P6 stage who were showing early signs of these risk factors in order to help reduce the risk of these individuals 'becoming the complex case studies of tomorrow'.

In partnership with three local primary schools the project, entitled Achieve Your Potential, children with very low self-esteem and confidence were selected to participate in an eight week programme designed to raise self-esteem and establish a relationship with children and parents. The project is a Borders Youth Trust initiative. Achieve Your Potential is particularly focused on young people in P6 and P7 (10 year olds) whose teachers are concerned about their ability to make the transition to, and remain in, secondary school, primarily as a result of their behaviour.

The work of the YMCA and its partners in the Scottish Borders is particularly salient given the fact that it has been known for some time that young people in rural locations can face distinct challenges. In 1999 the Excluded Young People Strategy Action Team highlighted that:

Young people on low incomes in rural areas suffer particular disadvantages...[and] a number of studies have drawn attention to the difficulties faced by all young people growing up in rural areas, regardless of income. These difficulties are often couched in terms of problems in accessing services, including education and leisure, training and employment, transport and housing. The growing awareness of the impact of the project in the community is promoting greater support and buy-in from the community.

YMCA recruit volunteers for the Project, train them and facilitate a one-to-one relationship between a volunteer and the young person. The project workers are also able to draw on a community network that they have helped to set up which often includes local businesses these can help support the costs of travel and telephone. The project workers can also conduct activities to generate funds and resources from across the local community.

The nature of the work means it is relatively small scale but intensive. Only eight of the highest risk young people aged 10 years from three primary schools receive this intensive support over an eight-week programme designed to build their self-esteem. Care is taken to avoid identifying participating young people and thus, the project does not label participants. The workers spend time building a relationship with the children and their parents, and parents are encouraged to engage in project work.

At the end of the course, there are a series of celebrations that also serve to build participants' confidence and self-esteem. After this, the workers reduce the level of support but still monitor the family (becoming 'Family Monitors') and will be available if the young people and parents require support thereafter. This relationship can last for a number of years. The Project has embedded Family Monitors in 17 families referred to the programme.

In addition to early identification of need the YMCA is, therefore, providing long-term monitoring and support for the children in order to measure outcomes such as their effective engagement in high school and their positive development as active citizens. The YMCA workers believe that close working with families over time promotes trust and honesty between the families and the worker and this is a key factor in the success of the work.

Young people's experience and outcomes

Young people in three primary schools in the Borders who have problems that are often experienced by those who are disengaged from school, including family dysfunction, bullying and low self-esteem have benefited since 2006 because of this innovative YMCA programme that provides mentoring and support. A particular feature of the provision is that it intervenes at Primary 6

in order to reduce the impact of chaotic lifestyles on behaviour and engagement.

The programme includes close monitoring, with the agreement of parents. This helps the early identification of developing problems and challenges. The YMCA workers have a special relationship with the pupils and their families and their monitoring role means that they obtain a very good picture of developments over time. Since the introduction of the project, feedback from the workers has shown that pupils and parents generally believe the presence and support from the worker has been very beneficial.

Piloting research conducted by the YMCA found that by age 16 or even 13, many of those young people who were disengaged were already 'violent or already resenting authority and very, difficult to re-engage and re-divert and employ'. The YMCA's own internal monitoring data reveals that participating pupils stay with the project. Year one evaluations involving head teachers, parents, participating children and the volunteers highlight the impact of the relationships that have been established with families which has facilitated meeting the project's goals.

Insights from the workers illustrates that while teachers might still see some pupils as 'problematic', the young people themselves are transforming their views and aspirations concerning secondary school.

One of the kids who was about to go to the High School, his P7 teacher told him he was a nightmare, totally disengaged, totally disruptive and the conversation was ultimately he said to the family monitor [YMCA Project worker] 'when I go to High School I want to have a fresh start'.

YMCA project worker

One young person involved in the project, asked after a difficult meeting with his mentor what, if anything, he had learned, replied: 'I realise that I've had my last chance and it's up to me now'. This highlights the challenges facing this type of intervention, the key role played by the mentor but also the fact that the mentors can reach and engage with these vulnerable young people.

Other positive outcomes for young people and their families as summarised by YMCA managers includes:

- The first group of pupils referred by the primary schools in 2006 were assessed as being most at risk of later dysfunction. The YMCA have just completed a review of each of these young people now that they have been in high school for some time and all reviews completed so far show 'a very positive stable engagement'. The mentor is likely to withdraw from two of the first young people from the first intake, because they are deemed to be doing so well. However, the mentor will offer a way back in to the parents if it seems necessary at a later point in time.
- A significant increase in young people's confidence and self worth leading to a growing self-belief in what they can achieve. This outcome is seen as particularly important given that it is helping to building the aspirations of

young people who are ‘increasingly struggling to believe they can achieve anything in school let alone after school’. YMCA senior management believe that unless this issue is addressed ‘we will struggle with the 16+ agenda’.

- In one case, the Youth Trust has been working with separated parents to mediate over differences that are causing tensions for their child. This is an example of the flexibility of the Project in identifying the needs of a child whatever the source and responding appropriately in the best interests of the child.
- A belief that young people are now more valued and cared for by the wider community
- Parents will phone the YMCA Youth Trust when there are crises because they trust the service and cannot think of anyone else to turn to.
- A success of the ‘rapid reaction force’ to challenge and address young people’s deteriorating behaviour. For example, one 13-year-old was arrested twice over the summer of 2008, received a final warning letter from the Hearings system and was suspended for three out of the first five days at school in August. Only his mentor was able to see the whole picture and its possible consequences leading to a critical engagement with this young man to divert his course away from statutory routes.

Parents report their children have notably increased confidence following their involvement with programme. Importantly, YMCA feedback indicates that parents and teachers have seen reduced problems during the transition from primary to secondary school. One young person involved in the initial Project has shown to be doing ‘exceptionally well’ in contrast to their previously disengaged and disruptive behaviour.

The wider impact of the project on participants’ learning is highlighted by project workers with one reporting that ‘part of young people becoming an “effective contributor” is they build their confidence and that enables them to learn successfully’.

Every participant conducts a project through the programme that involves his or her parents. Young people choose their own subject and this is believed to help promote their motivation and engagement. For example, a young girl did a project on food, and a local hotel helped by providing access to a senior chef who gave up his kitchen for an afternoon. The young person was able to cook a meal with the chef and then jointly served it to her parents and family. In addition to promoting the child’s confidence, this is seen by project workers as promoting bonds within families. Other examples of similar support from business include a zoo, football teams and radio stations.

YMCA project workers have been active in responding to calls for help and advice from some of the parents and specific interventions have been developed in response to concerns expressed by parents and Headteachers related to transition periods in pupils’ lives.

The pastoral care and pupil support staff at the local secondary school have been eager to engage with the volunteers and the Youth Trust as the children graduate from the project in 2008. The S1 liaison teacher stressed the contribution the project has made to the stability and confidence and behaviour of the participating young people. One primary school Headteacher reported that

The YMCA is a very professional group of people who are very caring and the children trust them. It is another great source for me as a Headteacher to tap into for support.

The project works with young people on a very personal level, based on youth work principles and articulates with policies such as Curriculum for Excellence, but with a distinct adaptation:

So there is a particular approach that comes from the youth work profession and one of the significant differences is I will not work with a young person as a youth worker, I will not work with a young person unless that young person chooses to work with me. So a Children's Panel, a school or police might refer a young person to me as a youth worker but the first thing that I will do will be to explain to the young person that I am not any of these other people, that I am there for their outcomes rather than my own agenda and about the confidentiality of our relationship there is no parallel relationship and do you choose to engage with me. If the answer ultimately is no from the young person, youth work can do nothing but when they say yes, that just opens a huge door and makes a huge difference about engaging. The young person has made their own choice.

A main aim for the project is when these kids reach 15 or 16 they are successful learners...therefore there should be an early investment in the confident individual so that we create a foundation for them to achieve the other three capacities.

YMCA Project co-ordinator

Following the eight week programme an evaluation was completed in June 2007 with the children, their parents, the volunteer team and the schools. Feedback from the children was enthusiastic and confirmed that a firm basis of friendship had been established with Youth Trust volunteers. Parents unanimously agreed that YMCA could continue to monitor and support their children through P7 and the early years of secondary school.

Key factors involved in success

Key factors in the success of the partnership are seen as:

- The engagement of the community in supporting children young people and families. This includes working closely with social work, children's panel, health, police and other partner organisations including other voluntary sector agencies.

- The partnership with parents in supporting the growth and success of their child.
- The non stigmatised voluntary sector approach.
- The expertise of the YMCA organisation in terms of a young person's self esteem and development.
- A redefinition of risk away from a culture of risk avoidance to effective management of risk.

Perhaps one the most important of these factors in the success of the project is seen as youth worker/mentor's ability to build the relationship between them and the young person and her or his family.

And I think part of our secret is we have a positive presentation of 'we want to journey with you. You are not a problem as a parent and we don't give you any indication of that at all. We want to journey with you, to invest in your child, to achieve their goals'. And it's also them seeing that it's a volunteer, so they are asking, 'Why they are doing this?' and it's a genuine commitment that is long term.

YMCA Project co-ordinator

This relationship is centred on the child's and family's issues and concerns, and is enhanced through the support that the project has in the community. For example:

Just one example. Every child does a project through the programme and that involves the parents as well but they are choosing their own subject that they are interested in. That's their 'passion' as well we call it and we then produce a really special experience to do with their passion. So the young girl who did her project on food, the X Hotel... there is a very good chef in there and he gave up his kitchen for an afternoon. [Girl] came in and they cooked and prepared a meal together and then they jointly served it to her mum and dad and sister who had a lovely meal in the hotel that night and [Girl] swelled with pride.

YMCA Project worker

The Achieve Your Potential programme is one of a number of initiatives that YMCA Scotland is actively developing with several local communities across Scotland. The local model of management and delivery and the tailored response to local needs is seen by the organisation as a key factor in the success of the YMCA's work in these areas in helping local people to 'effect positive change in their own locality'. The pairing of a local focus with the 'central expertise and guidance available from YMCA Scotland, provides a model that is effectively supporting local community capacity-building'.

The YMCA Scotland's National Secretary has stated that the growth in demand for the YMCA's model of working reflects 'local community support for our value base and for our package of central supports'. The organisation has identified a number of lessons learned and factors that promote the success of this and similar programmes. These include:

- To create successful learners there is a need to support the whole person in 'new and different ways' working in partnership with schools and youth workers.
- Young people with complex needs can be supported to succeed if their education identifies and addresses personal and social issues that affect their potential. This process is enhanced by partnership working involving schools and youth work agencies.
- The mentoring volunteers who go on to become family monitors are given appropriate training before embarking on supporting families. In addition, the role of the support worker is enhanced by YMCA Youth Workers in a role that might be understood as mediating between family and school, resolving differing perceptions of pupils and teachers, and transcending different cultures.
- An essential factor was seen as having a co-ordinating organisation (here the YMCA) that can understand and deals with particular challenges and risks and facilitates networks.
- Schools' ethos, culture and structures and how these articulate with the ethos of the YMCA and similar agencies are seen as important factors that can facilitate or hinder effective partnership working.
- Supporting the young person during the first three to six months of secondary school is seen as critical for vulnerable young people. Workers have to ensure that relationships are sustained and effective and work with school guidance staff to facilitate this. Project workers help identify pupils' areas of interest that motivate them and then work with schools to build on this as the young person moves into secondary school.
- The school setting alone will not always suit all pupils; therefore, schools and youth work agencies can work together to adapt provision to re-engage with young people and support them to deal with any issues limiting their potential.
- There is a perception amongst some of the participants' peers that they are 'the bad boys and girls and they are getting rewarded'. Such perspectives have to be managed by teachers to avoid tensions in the class.

Future developments and sustainability

The programme has now become a partnership between the YMCA and parents seeking to provide the best possible opportunity for these children to develop into successful and confident young adults. Trained volunteer family monitors have been appointed to liaise with each family and child over the long term. The YMCA will monitor behaviour and attitude at school as the children move through P7 this year and on into secondary school.

The Headteachers of the three primary schools have also recognised the contribution of the programme to the confidence and wider educational potential of the pupils, expressing their desire for an extension of the pilot and are now embarking on selection of the 2008 cohort.

The YMCA Youth Trust have been formally invited by the local Children's Multi Agency team to provide volunteers to support parents attending the MEND programme. This is a community-, family-based programme for children between 7 and 13 and their families, which uses a train-the-trainer approach. The multi-disciplinary programme places equal emphasis on healthy eating, physical activity and behavioural change, empowering the child, building self-confidence and personal development.

Sustainability is particularly affected by the availability of volunteers. This is seen by the organisation as non-problematic in the short term, but more difficult to predict in the longer term. One aspiration is to be able to provide monitors who will work with a young person throughout his or her school career.

The project is also dependent on funding raised by local individuals and organisations. The local authority has also provided some funding. One way of promoting sustainability proposed by the YMCA involves encouraging new partnerships between schools and youth workers across Scotland. This is seen as important to 'bring together the skills and supports needed to achieve success as learners, confidence as individuals, responsibility as citizens and effectiveness as contributors.

Crucially, though, sustainability is dependent on the ability of the YMCA Youth Trust (especially in the form of Achieve Your Potential) Youth Work and schools to transcend the different needs and cultures of school, youth work organisations, community and family.

Trust is a big one between the culture of school and youth work, so there are lots of issues. Things like, the schools are insisting that we meet the head teachers at a particular time and we are all voluntary. Yet, the high schools are insisting that, well, if you are going to work with us you have got to be at the team meeting. The last one X went to - and you know, we just don't have the resource it's a voluntary project - so we made an effort. They had a list of 13 kids who were struggling in the High School. I remember we got to child 9 and the bell went and everybody left. I could not believe it.

YMCA project worker

As the first group of children involved in the programme progress through P7 and into secondary school, the family monitors will move with the children, engaging with the appropriate teacher or guidance staff. The programme has been selected for filming as part of HMIE's *Journey to Excellence* publication.

The YMCA has recently launched a National Youth Work Strategy (Moving Forward) which provides a framework for partner providers to follow. The YMCA leadership believes that this strategy articulates well with Curriculum for Excellence and shares the same priorities and goals. However, they state

that the 'four elements of A Curriculum for Excellence cannot progress in tandem unless the foundation of the confident individual has first been laid' (YMCA Scotland, 2007).

The recently formed Youth Work and Schools Policy group working under the remit of the policy forum within Youth Link Scotland possesses a wide membership including: schools, Children's Services, Learning and Teaching Scotland, ADES, Positive Futures, Youthlink Policy Forum, HMIE, Careers Scotland, Voluntary youth work sector, Dialogue Youth, Further Education, Community Learning and Development Managers and Community Planning. This working group will be a key driver in future YMCA policy development.

While the YMCA programme seeks to support younger children and their families who require more choices and more chances, there is some debate in the wider YMCA about whether the organisation has the resources to expand its provision to cover this age group, and whether youth work approaches which typically emphasise the autonomy of young people and their capacity to judge are appropriate for work with young children.

The YMCA leadership have highlighted that there are concerns about sources of funding to sustain good practice. Some feel that school budgets will have to accommodate new or further partnership work, and the YMCA membership is anxious about the lack of 'an effective and shared funding stream' which could limit the development of recognised good practice. The YMCA report *The Task Ahead* (YMCA Scotland, 2008) suggests that one option could be to have a funding model that engages the financial and measurement contribution of the private sector.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Those groups requiring more choices and more chances are extremely varied; and so are their needs. This means schools and their partner organisations have to be flexible and diverse in developing appropriate responses. However, there are certain overarching features that appear to characterise effective provision. The findings from this study show that good practice in provision for those requiring more choices and more chances is characterised by being learner-centred, accessible, participative, engaging, flexible, relevant and credible to young people. It addresses core personal and social competencies and promotes self-esteem and aspirations. It is responsive to the views of young people and involves them in the design of approaches and the setting of targets. It is able to offer appropriate assessment to recognise learners' achievements and provide nationally recognised qualifications to provide credible accreditation for young people.

Such characteristics are synchronous with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and it is arguable that where schools and their partners are able to deliver teaching and learning that embodies these principles the needs of all pupils, including those requiring more choices and more chances, are more likely to be addressed.

Perhaps one of the most important findings is good practice in provision is more likely to be evident and effective when it is part of a wider strategic framework involving various relevant local and national partners. These partners can include schools and colleges, community learning services, social work, educational psychological services, economic development and regeneration and Careers Scotland. This strategic framework facilitates the sharing of ideas, deploying appropriate resources and skills to deliver holistic and flexible provision and to offer progression pathways. This holistic provision works best when all key stakeholders/ partners are represented in the planning and decision-making.

The case study providers are exploring the opportunities offered by Curriculum for Excellence to create a flexible and innovative curriculum that can engage with, and address the needs of, all pupils, in other words 'trying to build a curriculum around individuals'. Curriculum for Excellence has the potential to help schools introduce flexibility to address the needs of those requiring more choices and more chances, but schools require support from local and central government to encourage them to take risks to introduce flexible provision.

The provision highlighted in the case studies is very much a snapshot and it is clear that the landscape of policy and practice concerning provision for those requiring more choices and more chances is moving quickly. While the case studies demonstrated an impact on young people's abilities and capacities, it is apparent that there is scope for developments to further enhance their provision to better meet the needs of young people and reflect the ideal models and objectives being espoused by policy.

Finally, the research raises a number of questions and issues for consideration by providers, their partners and policy makers. These are:

- What can practitioners learn from the case studies? The research highlights strategies and models of provision that can, with some care, be adapted to suit other contexts. The findings, however, perhaps also emphasise that effective provision for those requiring more choices and more chances has also much to do with providers and their partner organisations taking risks to develop flexible approaches suited to a range of needs.
- How can we move towards a more integrated, as opposed to an alternative delivery model? For example, young people needing more choices and more chances are often attracted to more practical and applied learning which has a clear vocational focus. While such education can engage with target groups providers also need to ensure that broader educational outcomes and generic skills are addressed.
- How can we move to a more personalised model of delivery? The case studies show that models of provision that take into account an individual's needs and circumstances and provide tailored support are effective, but this requires committing resources and often multi-agency working.

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Appendix 1: Overview of evidence and case studies

Range of evidence from Phase 1

This Phase focused on gathering insights and providing an overview of flexible learning and support. The interviews in particular elicited information on examples of good practice, and confirm/ consolidate criteria for determining good practice and the contextual issues concerning the research topics. This information also highlighted case study candidates for Phase 2.

- a) Examination of literature to inform research questions and instruments
- b) Electronic pro-forma focussing on criteria for good practice and candidates received from:
 - Maureen Tait (Falkirk Council)
 - Judy Waterman (The Scottish Government (TSG): Youthwork)
 - John Bisset (TSG: Parental involvement)
 - Gill Stewart (SQA)
 - Tom Watson (Fairbidge)
 - Shirley Laing: (TSG: Looked After Children)
 - Colin Brown (TSG: Curriculum for Excellence)
- c) 'Informal' information provided via email:
 - Tom Harrison (Falkirk Council)
- d) Semi-Structured interviews focussing on criteria for good practice, key issues and candidates conducted with the following Key Informants:
 - Melanie Weldon (TSG : More Choices More Chances Strategy Team)
 - Peter Hancock (TSG, Qualifications Assessment & Skills)
 - Boyd McAdam (Getting it Right for Every Child)
 - Tam Baillie (Barnardos)
 - Julie-Ann Jamieson (Careers Scotland)
 - Chris Sutherland: SQA: More Choices and More Chances
- e) Telephone interviews focussing on criteria for good practice, key issues and candidates conducted with the following Key Informants:
 - Peter Connolly (HMIE)
 - Bill Geddes (HMIE)
 - Tom Watson (Fairbridge)
 - Donald Paterson (SQA)

Phase 2: The Case Studies

Case Study	Model adopted	Sources of evidence
1. Falkirk Council	Innovative Council-wide multi-agency approach	Interviews with Head of School Improvement, Secondary Pupil Support Manager, Quality Improvement Officer, Headteacher. Qualitative pupil, parent and employer interviews. Use of internal evaluation findings and documentation
2 Kibble School and Centre partnership with Reid Kerr College	Specialist education provision working closely with a local college to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.	Interviews with Depute Headteacher, College lecturers. Use of internal evaluation findings and documentation (Particularly that concerning the views of parents and pupils)
4. Lochend School, Easterhouse	School College partnership and development of programme to enhance pupils' opportunities	Interviews with Headteacher, College co-ordinator, visit to various workshops, classrooms, discussion with pupils, group discussion with Employability Skills Group Co-ordinator, Careers representative, Use of internal evaluation findings and documentation.
5. Willie Cosh. MPS Construction and Training	Example of private vocational learning provision working with local employers and schools	Interviews with Director and trainers. Observation and discussion with young people. Use of internal evaluation findings and documentation.
6. YMCA Scottish Borders	Voluntary organisation providing innovative intensive package model for vulnerable pupils and their families	Interview with strategic representative and local manager. Use of extensive internal evaluation findings and documentation.

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