

SOCIAL WORKERS AND PRIMARY TEACHERS: INTER-PROFESSIONAL
PERCEPTIONS, COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATION.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is entirely my own work.

For my father, George Muego.

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORKERS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: INTER-PROFESSIONAL PERCEPTIONS, COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATION.

This research is an exploratory study of the perceptions held by primary school teachers and field social workers of each other's profession and of co-operation between them. It is set against a background in which policy statements advocate and expect co-operation, while reports from the field demonstrate that co-operation in practice is difficult to effect. The research aimed to gather data from social workers and teachers who shared professional responsibility for primary-age children, and to discuss the findings within a theoretical framework based on a consideration of organisation and profession. Individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with 46 teachers and 26 social workers, with questions covering communication procedures, the amount and quality of co-operation over children and training for co-operation. The interview also included three more quantitative instruments, designed to elicit perceptions of role in relation to children with social and emotional difficulties and of characteristics of the two professions.

Analysis was carried out qualitatively. The data demonstrate the existence of the following barriers to co-operation: an unequal power relationship; a chain system of communication; ambivalence; incongruent perceptions. These are underpinned by lack of knowledge, different values, lack of trust and lack of respect. These findings are discussed in relation to theories of professionalism and inter-organisational relationships. In the professional arena, both teachers and social workers are seen to be caught in a dilemma whereby they are pulled towards co-operation through their common aim to act in the best interests of children, but are pushed apart by the process of professional acculturation. On the inter-professional level, co-operation between the agencies therefore involves a measure of conflict for each group. Conflict also exists by virtue of the practitioners belonging to different organisations, and the conditions for effective co-operation between organisations, equality of power, inter-dependence and intensity of contact, were not present for these social workers and teachers.

The study concludes that effective co-operation entails the recognition and negotiation of the conflict inherent in the relationship between social workers and primary teachers. The present organisational structure provides no framework within which to do so, nor are practitioners trained in the relevant skills. Change is advocated in the organisational arena and the arena of professional training, and it is suggested that training should be set within an inter-professional framework which sees the individual worker as firstly a member of a network of client/pupil welfare services and only secondly as a specialist within that service.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: POLICY AND LITERATURE

Section 1: The policy background.

During the 1960s, major government-sponsored reports in the fields of both social work and education all stressed the need for close liaison between the two professions. The Kilbrandon report in 1964 on "Children and Young Persons in Scotland" (SED & SHHD), in proposing the children's hearing system as an innovative approach to juvenile justice, spoke of the necessity for co-operation among agencies if the hearing system was to work effectively. Kilbrandon suggested that a new Department of Social Education be established as the body responsible for co-ordination of information on cases of children in need. This department would be under the Director of Education and would bring under its umbrella several child-care services previously administered by the social services. Thus Kilbrandon envisaged a very close working relationship between education and social work.

When the government considered the Kilbrandon report, it accepted the notion of the children's hearings but, instead of a department of Social Education, proposed to establish a Social Work Department which was perceived as more widely based and able to cater for the whole family rather than only the children. This was reported in the White Paper "Social Work and the Community" (SED & SHHD 1966). The educational aspects of Kilbrandon's Social Education Department were to be left as previously within the Department of Education. The organisational convergence of social work and education

envisaged by Kilbrandon did not therefore take place. However, the 1966 White Paper, on which the reorganisation of social services in Scotland was based, still stressed co-operation amongst agencies as a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the Social Work Department. In paragraph 12, the paper states that the proposed amalgamation of services under one Social Work Department would not in itself be enough to ensure effective service,

"But the new department could not hope to provide from its own resources the means of solving all the social and personal problems of those who seek its aid, and the success of much of its work will depend on the degree to which it can gain the support and influence the work of many other public and voluntary services. For example, it will have to co-operate closely with education authorities..."

Two reports which dealt only with England and Wales but which have had widespread influence, are the Plowden report, "Children and their Primary Schools" in 1966 (DES), and the Seeborn report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (1968). Again, both of these emphasised the need for co-ordination and co-operation between social work and education. This necessity was reiterated in the Pack report (SED 1977) on truancy and indiscipline in Scottish schools, where a multi-disciplinary approach was advocated in preventing and dealing with problems amongst school children. Thus, the emphasis on co-operation between agencies was one common to all the major government-sponsored reports on social services during the build-up to reorganisation of services.

Behind the general call for co-operation was an increasing understanding of the inter-relatedness of different aspects of people's lives. This is acknowledged in the following statement in the introduction to the Plowden report (op.cit),

"In recent years a growing awareness has developed of the importance to the individual of his family and social background." (para.3)

Where services were to remain organisationally distinct, yet were working with individuals whose needs were inevitably multi-faceted and inter-related, the relevance of co-operation between agencies in the interests of effective welfare provision becomes self-evident. The quotation from the White Paper "Social Work and the Community" cited above on page 2 illustrates the way in which the notion of providing effective service was perceived as closely bound to that of co-operation.

Further to this general view of co-operation being essential for effective service, was a particular aspect of service provision which necessitated inter-agency co-operation. This was the concept of preventive work, by which is meant the early detection of difficulties which could be dealt with in such a way as to arrest any escalation to crisis point. Paragraph 4 of the White Paper "Children in Trouble" (Home Office 1968), which refers to England and Wales, states,

"The Government attaches great importance to the further development of the services concerned with the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and with similar problems affecting children and their families, and to continued growth of co-operation between these services."

The Seebom report devotes a chapter to the consideration of prevention, giving it weight as a central concern of the social services. Again, for effective prevention, co-operation between agencies is seen as necessary. Paragraph 439 states,

"For early detection the personal social services must be able to draw on the help of a wide range of people who normally come into contact with families. For instance,

health visitors, general practitioners, teachers....must be encouraged to recognise and refer those whom they feel to be at special risk."

The White Paper "Social Work and the Community" (op.cit.) has a less detailed treatment of the subject but, in promoting the new Social Work departments as the spearhead of an innovative thrust into integrated community development, makes broad statements about prevention and co-operation,

"...valuable preventive work could be extended if the interests of the education, health and social work services were seen in this way not only as complementary but also as interdependent, in policy as well as in practice, and if they can combine their knowledge and efforts for the purpose." (para.17)

The importance of preventive work and the notion that the possibility of its occurrence is increased through inter-agency co-operation is repeated often in the literature discussing services for children with difficulties. Thus, Davie (1977) writes in his paper "The Interface between Education and Social Work",

"..the problem of dealing with disadvantaged children is an urgent one and needs to be tackled when children are young and that no one service can deal with in isolation." (p.48)

Several authors perceive that the school has a central role to play in prevention and that the relationship between the school and the social work department is of prime importance. This is stressed in both the Plowden and Seebohm reports (op.cit.). Katrin Fitzherbert (1977) extends the argument, reinforcing the notion that the teacher is the person who can become aware of potential difficulties earlier than other professional workers because she has an ongoing relationship with, and a profound knowledge of, the

children in her care. This is echoed by Margaret Auld (1972) in her description of school-based social work in Glasgow,

"...if symptoms are recognised by teaching staff as an early warning of social maladjustment, attention at this stage may prevent the more serious problems from developing or becoming established as an anti-social or inhibiting pattern of living." (p.217)

And in Juliet Berry's book "Social Work with Children" (1972), it is stated that,

"Since most children in this country attend school with some regularity, it is obviously one of the best places for preventive work, which requires closer co-operation between teachers and social workers than we have enjoyed hitherto." (p.103)

The above quotes are from authors writing from both the education and the social work perspectives. This indicates that an interest in co-operation as leading to preventive services is present in each. Strathclyde Region issued a paper in 1978 which took the same stance,

"The prime objective of social work and school is the welfare and development of the child, as a member of his family and community. The essential purpose of deploying social workers to schools is to exploit the very direct and personal "early-warning" system afforded by schools, in order that difficulties in the child's home upbringing may be prevented or resolved before they come to require more drastic remedies."

The notion of preventive services for school children is thus one which has been widely emphasised in the literature, and which has

been underlined by a series of child deaths due to parental abuse. A major factor in one of the most notorious of such cases, the death of Maria Colwell, was the failure of the welfare agencies involved with the family to communicate effectively with each other. In the words of the report of inquiry (DHSS 1974),

"What has clearly emerged...is a failure of the system compounded of several factors of which the greatest and most obvious must be that of the lack of, or ineffectiveness of, communication and liaison." (para. 240)

The school and the social work area team were two of the agencies involved in this communication failure.

On a level which could be seen as more mundane but which is crucial in terms of organisational and resource management, effective co-operation between services should promote increased efficiency in the deployment of resources by minimising overlap. It thus should lead to a more streamlined and cost-effective service.

Given such clear and cogent arguments for the promotion of inter-agency co-operation amongst the welfare services, it is perhaps surprising that in the Social Work (Scotland) Act of 1968, whose purpose was to implement the policies outlined in "Social Work and the Community" and the Kilbrandon report, there is no mention of co-operation as such. The wording of the Act is broad and unspecific. The general remit of local authorities is described as,

"..to promote social welfare by making available advice, guidance and assistance on such a scale as may be appropriate for their area, and in that behalf to make arrangements and to provide or secure the provision of such facilities....as they may consider suitable and adequate.." (Part 11:clause 12)

There is no sense here of a duty to promote co-operation between services or provide organisational structures through which different agencies could work conjointly. Some suggestion that co-operation might be required is contained in clause 4 in Part 1 of the Act,

"Where a function is assigned to a local authority under this Act and a voluntary organisation or other person, including another local authority, is able to assist in the performance of that function, the local authority may make arrangements with such an organisation or other person for the provision of such assistance." (Part 1; clause 4)

When writing about the new children's hearing system, there is also an implicit reference to co-operation insofar as,

"Where the reporter has arranged a children's hearing...he shall request from the local authority a report on the child and his social background and it shall be the duty of the authority to supply the report which may contain information from any such person as the reporter or the local authority may think fit." (Part 111: clause 38)

The Act, therefore, did not provide specific guidelines within which the co-operation thought to be necessary in the policy statements could easily be promoted. What it did provide, however, was a broad and permissive framework for the new Social Work Departments within which they could build their own structures in line with current trends. That the trends in theoretical terms remained heavily concerned with inter-agency co-operation is clear from the emphasis placed on it in a 1969 review of the Social Work (Scotland) Act carried out by the Department of Social Administration at Edinburgh University. The importance of co-operation is mentioned several times as, for instance, in paragraph 55,

"It is increasingly realised that school and home are inter-dependent, and that the education authority cannot succeed in its own task if it limits its interest to what happens on its own premises. Co-operation between education and the social work department will become increasingly important as the former reaches out into the family and the community." (para 55)

The framework provided by policy statements was thus one which stressed the theoretical importance of co-operation in service delivery but laid down no clear guidelines to aid its promotion in practice.

In the literature on inter-agency co-operation, the terms co-operation and co-ordination are variously employed; sometimes they are used more or less synonymously and at other times distinctions are made between them. These distinctions differ according to the particular shade of meaning that an author wishes to attribute to the words, for the dictionary definitions make almost no difference between them. They are defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as follows,

co-operate: to work together, to act in conjunction (with another person or thing, to an end, or in a work);

co-ordinate: to act in combined order for the production of a particular result;

Another word often used synonymously with these is collaboration, and the Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines this in terms of co-operation,

collaborate: to co-operate, work in conjunction with.

The definition of co-ordination may carry a slight difference in its specification of working jointly on a particular project,

rather than in a more general sense.

Where writers differentiate between the terms, they do so in different ways. Co-ordination is often used in an administrative way to denote the overseeing and managing of others by a third party, as in Kilbrandon's notion of an umbrella department which would co-ordinate the functions of its agencies. Used in this sense, co-ordination need not involve the parties in much actual contact. Davidson (1976), however, sees co-ordination as a more advanced form of co-operation, and both of these as sub-divisions of collaboration. He uses collaboration as a generic term to cover all varieties of working together, as does Tibbit (1982),

"Collaboration is used as an "umbrella" term to include a range of possible relationships between the parties concerned" (p.43)

Tibbit writes of co-operation and co-ordination as occurring within this range.

In the present thesis, it is co-operation which is employed as the generic term to include any way in which teachers and social workers are involved together in their work with children. The thesis seeks to examine the kinds of procedures and process that take place under this generic banner. In Chapter 5, as a result of the analysis of the data, the term collaboration will be introduced to denote a specific type of close, working partnership. Thus, the researcher uses the words in a directly opposite way to that of Davidson and Tibbit, with co-operation as the general term and collaboration as a sub-division within it. Co-ordination will be used to denote joint administration by a third party and is discussed in Chapter 8.

Section 2: Co-operation between social work and teaching in the 1970s.

The period between the re-organisation of the social services in Scotland which was heralded by the Social Work (Scotland) Act in 1968, and the commencement of the present study, roughly covers the decade of the 1970s. During that time, much was written about inter-agency liaison, though somewhat less in respect of liaison between education and social work than that of social work and health services. Some of the latter work will be used in this section as many of the issues are common to both areas of inter-agency co-operation. Literature on liaison can be divided into two broad types, reports of actual attempts at co-operation and more theoretical considerations of the nature of the relationship between the agencies. Both types of literature indicate that co-operation seemed no more easy, nor likely, at the end of the period than it had been at the start.

In 1974, Rose and Marshall reported their evaluation of a major project set up in Lancashire to carry out preventive work in schools. Practitioners with both teaching and social work experience were appointed to work as counsellors in five secondary schools, and their experience and the results of their work with children were monitored by a research team. At the conclusion of their report, Rose and Marshall say,

"As we write there is every sign that education and social service departments are rapidly growing apart. There is an urgent need to arrest this development."
(P.244)

In 1980, Barbara Kahan, writing about co-operation between health and social services echoes their statement,

"Co-operation is a theme which seems to have been part of

the general ethos of the last thirty years in the social services...Yet in spite of this, the call to co-operate continues to be necessary."

(p.29)

During the 1970s, several schemes were funded whereby social workers were attached to one or more schools, as a means of promoting closer inter-agency liaison. The reports of these ventures stress the difficulties the social workers found in working in this way. They suggested that it was differences between the way in which the two agencies operated that often created problems for co-operation. For instance, Kate Bond, reporting on her work as a school-based social worker (1979) states,

"Problems arise from social work involvement in schools given the fundamental difference in approach of the social worker to the child with a problem compared to that of the teacher. Various points of conflict, and difficulties in connection with differences in aims and attitudes, the function of the school as an institution etc. have to be looked at, as well as the differences between the two professions." (p.12)

Specific ways in which the two groups differ in these fundamental areas of approach, aims, attitudes and function, have been identified and are outlined below.

Mode of working:

Differences are apparent in certain fundamental areas of practice. The most salient of these in the literature is the issue of confidentiality. Social workers place great emphasis on the importance of not talking to others about their relationship with clients or divulging information given to them by clients. This is seen as a crucial aspect of the client/ worker relationship. However, if the social worker is working in a school, the teacher

may feel that her own authority is undermined by this privileged relationship with its relative secrecy. This was true of the teachers in the Rose and Marshall research (op.cit. p.184). Rosemary Watson (1978), as an attached social worker in the Paisley Community Development Project, found that teachers felt themselves to be mistrusted and not regarded as professional colleagues when social workers did not share information (p.67). Bruce (1980) emphasises the way in which confidentiality is perceived by workers as one of the major barriers to inter-agency co-operation between health service practitioners and social workers (p.199). Confidentiality was also experienced as a problem by Avery and Adamson who, writing about their work as attached social workers in Lancashire (1972), say that it is essential for teachers to become more aware of pupils' problems and their impact on behaviour and performance in school, and therefore more information must be shared; but they find themselves unable to resolve the dilemma between maintaining the boundaries of the client/worker relationship while not alienating the teachers concerned.

Another major difference in modes of working is the use of, and attitude to, punishment. Watson (op.cit.) found this in her CDP work and says,

"It would be fair to say that there is an antipathy towards physical punishment amongst many social workers. To generalise, social workers have a view that although physical punishment can have constructive use in helping children there can be other more positive ways of learning which are not always employed." (p.68)

The social workers attached to schools in the Dundee Educational Priority Area project, also found this difference difficult to work with, and mentioned it in their report (SED 1974),

"To the social workers it was very disappointing to find corporal punishment being used on children from

severely damaged backgrounds." (p.110)

Davies (1976) suggests that teachers and social workers employ generally different methods in their work with children. Teachers emphasise exposition, explanation and instruction while social workers use less directive methods such as observation, listening, questioning and interpretation (p.10).

Working context:

Differences exist also in the context within which each practitioner is working with the child. While the social worker has the wider needs of the family to consider, the teacher is concerned principally with the child outwith the family. This can lead to differing priorities for the practitioners. One of these is school attendance, which is obviously of prime importance for the teacher, who cannot begin to work with a child if he or she is not in school. Non-attendance may assume lesser significance for the social worker in the context of the whole family's situation. Watson (op.cit.) says that,

"The fact that the child's teacher works essentially with the child and not the family influences how she perceives the family and its effect upon the child. Likewise the social worker's commitment to working with the family can mean that family problems are given priority, so that the social worker may concentrate initially far more with helping the family with rent arrears or electricity bills rather than getting the child to school." (p.58)

Similarly, a teacher who sees a child suffering as a result of difficult home circumstances is more likely than the social worker to perceive the solution for the child as removal from the family. Watson (op.cit) again suggests that,

"This can mean that many of the positive aspects of the home situation are not realised by the school because it cannot have direct access to them and that the social worker's recognition of them can be seen by teachers as indulgent, unrealistic and naive." (p.60/61)

Although in terms of definition of client, it is the teacher who focusses on the individual and the social worker on the family group, in another sense, these positions are reversed because, within the working context of the school, the teacher deals with the child as part of a class group, while the social worker deals with him or her individually. Moreover, for teachers most of the pupils are not exhibiting severe emotional and social problems so that working with the child who has such difficulties is outside their normal practice. The social worker is likely to work only with such pupils. This can lead to a difference in attitude towards these children and a difference in priority afforded them. In a report on the attachment of social work students to schools in Possilpark (Allen & Malone 1977), a teacher is quoted as saying,

"Social workers should not be attached to a primary school. Children of this age have parents or guardians. They should take their duties to heart and not be provided with "wet nurses"." (p.19)

Teachers can thus view the attention paid by social workers to the deviant children in the class as inappropriate and unhelpful. Their main focus is on the child's academic development, and other aspects of the child's well-being can be seen as important mainly in terms of helping him or her to profit from the academic opportunities offered by the school. For the social worker, the priorities are reversed (Watson op.cit. p.63). Even where teachers hold what Rose and Marshall (op.cit.) call an "integrative" ideology, and view the all-round development of the child as the remit of education, the exigencies of classroom teaching with large groups and the constraints of the education system, force them to

operate on an instrumental level, where their greatest concern is the maintenance of control in the classroom (Rose and Marshall p. 174).

In the primary school, despite the fact that the teacher is working with the child as one of a large class, and may not prioritise emotional and social difficulties, she may have a closer relationship with, and greater knowledge of, the child than the social worker, by virtue of the number of hours the child spends with her every day. This is less likely to be true in the secondary school where teachers do not spend a great deal of time with a single class. Rose and Marshall (op.cit.) found that few secondary teachers in their study viewed personal relationships with pupils as a significant part of their work. Social work practice, on the other hand, takes place explicitly through the medium of relationship.

A further consequence of the working context is a difference in perception of time-scales. Teachers work closely with children for limited periods of time, which are divided into school terms and years. The social worker operates to a much wider and more flexible notion of time, not being bound by terms, years or the limits of a child's school career. This can lead to teachers having expectations of results from social workers of which the social workers are unaware. Watson (op.cit.) says,

"Teachers can criticise social workers for being too patient, of allowing problems to become too entrenched, of not acting quickly enough, sometimes with justification." (p.62)

Professional defensiveness:

The institutional nature of the school holds other constraints as well as that of time-span. It has a physical boundary which

encourages teachers to view their work remit as confined to that space whereas social workers move across many spatial boundaries as part of their job. This, again, can lead to differences in general attitude and possibly a more narrow, institutionalised viewpoint on the part of teachers. The physical boundary can become a barrier to communication. This is demonstrated in the report of a conference on links between school and community in 1978 (Committee on Primary Education). In his summing-up of the conference, Brian Ashley remarked on how threatened teachers can be when their institutional space is felt to be invaded by parents,

"First, teachers are suspicious, fearful of parents, protective of their professional interests and use the school building as a defensive device within which to carry on the process of education as they define it." (p.40)

The use of the school as a protection is likely also to extend to other professional groups, and the indications are that both teachers and social workers engage in professional defensiveness, keeping other groups at a distance to avoid potential criticism. Davies (op.cit.) suggests that such defensiveness relates to a desire to protect themselves rather than resulting from differences in practice,

"...the impregnable professional boundaries which each often draws around itself may have less to do with substantive divergencies of value, purpose and method than with self-protection." (p.10)

Blurred boundaries:

The existence of professional defensiveness can to some extent be attributed to the fact that the remits of teachers and social workers overlap. They share the common goal of the all-round welfare of the child and this leads to uncertainty as to where the

boundaries between them lie. The Social Work (Scotland) Act of 1968, in its open definition of the social work task, failed to draw clear boundaries in relation to other welfare agencies. In education also, Smith (1970) states that the "formal goals of the school are invariably diffuse" (p.76). There has been a general exhortation to teachers to consider the "whole child", from the Plowden report onwards, but there seem to be few guidelines as to how much welfare work should be contained within the bounds of education. Michael Marland (1974), writing about pastoral care in schools, stresses that the line between teaching and pastoral care is ill-defined. Some teachers see it as an integral part of education while others view it as an extra. Norman Evans (1977) suggests that either way teachers may resent the introduction of specific pastoral care systems (p.102). Marland (op.cit.) argues that pastoral care must be an integral part of education and not put in later "like the plumbing system in a building" (p.11) as this leads to dislocation between teaching and caring. However, Margaret Robinson (1978), says in discussing Marland's views,

"It seems that there needs to be a great deal of clarity about the role of pastoral care. If it is intended to provide for the total care of a pupil, this seems to imply an unrealistic goal for the school." (p.88)

Total care of the child may be an unrealistic goal for either agency. It might be more realistic to view the practitioners' role in caring for the whole child as one of monitoring, with each group having responsibility for referring difficulties to the appropriate agency. This is the position suggested for teachers by Fitzherbert (1977). However, even if the less ambitious definition of total care as monitoring is adopted, the two groups find it difficult to co-operate, as Robinson (op.cit) indicates,

"The boundaries between education and social work in fact overlap, often at the most crucial and vulnerable points. It is an indictment on both systems that too often the boundary of one is extended as if in ignorance of the

work of the other; or perhaps in rivalry, as if to indicate that anything it can do they can do better."
(p.4)

Ignorance and misperceptions:

Both ignorance and rivalry exist as components in the relationship between teachers and social workers. In 1966, E.M. Goldberg wrote,

"Sometimes, ignorance and misconception of each other's functions impede collaboration." (p.76)

The social workers in the Dundee EPA (SED 1974 op.cit) perceived ignorance to be the main cause of the difficulties in communication between themselves and the schools,

"Fundamentally teachers and social workers held in common a genuine concern for the children. The gap existed more through ignorance on both sides rather than through any antagonisms." (p.110)

Davies (op.cit.) gives the following examples of the problem,

"Thus, social workers are often unaware of the variety of demands, which, say, parents make of teachers; or of the pressures involved in moving constantly between classes of thirty; or of how over time the monotonous rhythm of the school week and year can destroy imagination and flair. Similarly, teachers may know almost nothing of the procedures involved in taking a child into care; or of the range of social service department responsibilities which can make work with children a low priority, or of how this volume of work can make caring responses very difficult."
(p.9)

Norman Evans (op.cit) maintains that misperceptions are compounded by the fact that because all adults have been to school they think they know what school is all about and what teachers are like. He says that such "confident ignorance masquerading as knowledge is highly dangerous." (p.101) The opposite tends to be true for the image of the social worker. Because teachers are unlikely to have been social work clients or to have come into contact with social workers, they are uncertain about what the social worker does and only too easily adopt the prevailing stereotypical view.

Negative stereotyping:

There is a close connection between ignorance and negative stereotyping as Robinson (op.cit.) suggests,

"This reciprocal ignorance provides a fair breeding ground for the development of prejudice and stereotyping on the part of the people within the system." (p.12)

There is much evidence that such negative perceptions of each other are rife amongst teachers and social workers. Each group tends not to value the work of the other. Another teacher cited by Allen and Malone (op.cit.) makes the following hostile comment on the attached social workers,

"It is teachers we need and not a hierarchy of social workers who make our jobs more difficult." (p.19)

A community social worker in the Borders said, in personal communication to the researcher, that many social workers hate teachers, demonstrating that negative feelings exist on either side. Robinson (op.cit.) indicates that the perceptions practitioners hold of each other can have a significant effect on their ability to co-operate,

"There is abundant evidence that schools and social

workers concurrently involved with school children and their families have allowed their stereotyped pictures of each other to influence the definition and the process of their task." (p.12)

Evans (op.cit.) describes some common stereotypes in the following way,

"To hear some social workers talk of teachers you'd think...that they [teachers] know nothing about child development or home conditions, and deliberately preserved their ignorance behind unfeeling autocracy. Correspondingly, social workers can be seen by teachers as a sloppy, inefficient, soft lot, who drink too much tea, can never be found and clearly haven't the remotest idea of what is actually happening in school." (p.101)

The prevalence of negative stereotyping among teachers and social workers can be understood as a means of self-protection against the work overload inherent in their boundaryless state. Davies (op.cit.) suggests further that, although there are too few practitioners employed to carry out the full requirements of such wide job remits, in both social work and teaching each group presents itself to the other as if it were doing the job properly. Each profession therefore concludes that the other is either incompetent or indifferent when vital matters are dealt with inadequately.

Competition for resources:

Perrow (1970) suggests that "many people problems...are really due to organisational structure" (p.viii). An organisation is dependent for survival on its environment from which it receives both its legitimacy and its resources. Other organisations are a particularly important part of the environment for they pose a threat when in competition for resources (ibid p.97). Perrow

maintains that organisations are continually in competition for resources, and this is as true of welfare organisations as for any other (ibid p.128). This has been acknowledged in respect of social work and teaching. For instance, Martin (1979), in a review of social services in Scotland, says,

"One special aspect of the problem of boundaries is that of the relations between social work and the other social services. However wide-ranging and ill-defined the role of social work, it remains a departmental function of local government and therefore clearly segregated ... even from education, which although also a regional service, may well find itself in conflict for influence and resources.." (p.102)

In fact, that both agencies are regional services may be all the more likely to cause competition for scarce local authority resources, particularly in the 1970s and 80s when financial cutbacks have become stringent.

Parker (1969) suggests that the competition for resources is complicated by the dependent nature of social service organisations, for none of them has complete control over all the resources of information, skill, services, money and goodwill. He says,

"Organisations undertaking social work are particularly dependent upon other organisations since one of their important functions is liaison or the endeavour to mobilise appropriate services to meet the needs of a family or individual." (p.22)

Again, Perrow (op.cit.) maintains that we should not be surprised that welfare organisations engage in competition at least as much as commercial ones. He gives an account of an attempt at co-ordination among delinquency programmes in the United States which failed due to the salience of "petty pride, striving for prestige,

competitiveness, vanity and suspicion" (p.128). Perrow does not find a relationship such as this surprising when agencies are in competition for resources,

"The competition for resources is a serious and deadly game among all types of organisations, and survival is vital and not to be taken for granted." (p.128)

Professional identity:

It may be, also, that teachers and social workers perceive a threat from the environment in another way. Wilding (1982) suggests that over recent years, the professions as a whole have been severely criticised by society and are in a generally defensive position. He says that professional power is being challenged; professionals have become scapegoats and the object of attack (p.85). He includes both teaching and social work in his exposition and concludes,

"..whether at an academic or a more popular level, the skills, claims and achievements of the professions are less readily accepted as self-evident than in the past and therefore form a less assured basis for the power the professions wield." (p.93)

This viewpoint implies that both groups are in an uncertain position regarding the worth they are accorded in society. This is likely to exacerbate rivalry between them, heighten competition for influence and resources and increase defensiveness vis-a-vis each other. Davies (op.cit.) suggests that these factors are the most significant in shaping the relationship between the practitioners,

"The combination of diffuse functions, external criticism and a search for professional exclusiveness may account more for inter-professional tensions than differences over essential professional commitments and approaches."

Davies is talking here about professional identity. Members of a profession tend to hold shared views about their task and, often, shared world views. For instance, Davie (op.cit) suggests that teachers and social workers have their own specialised vocabulary, a distinctive framework of professional concepts and different meanings for the same words (p.51). Picardie (1977) says that there is a fundamental difference in perception between the two groups,

"..social workers operate from a view of society that is basically more plural, more complex and possibly more alienated than teachers." (p.109)

In order to maintain their distinctive professional identity, practitioners have perforce to resist encroachment from other professional groups, particularly one with similar aims and with which there are boundary overlaps.

The relationship between social workers and teachers is thus characterised by a lack of co-operation which stems partly from differences in their ways of working with children and partly from factors outwith these practice areas and related to their membership of professional organisations. Opinions in the literature differ as to the relative importance of these factors as barriers to co-operation.

Section 3: A framework for the study of co-operation between teachers and social workers.

It is clear from the above discussion that much has been written about the inter-agency co-operation of teachers and social workers. Most of this, however, has been in the form of theoretical discussion or reports on single liaison projects. Some research has been done into attitudes (eg. Craft & Craft 1971) and two projects examining aspects of the relationship between the two groups were in train concurrently with this study - Bruce (1982) and McMichael et.al.(1984). The need for further research has been stressed by several authors. For example, Martin (op.cit.) says,

"We have been obsessed by structure and uninterested in process, have given little thought to the ways in which organisations actually function, how individuals and groups relate to one another in work situations, and how decisions are reached and carried out." (p.95)

Parker (op.cit) agrees,

"Despite such a persistent and widespread concern about co-operation between welfare organisations of all kinds, there has been little attempt to describe the circumstances in which it does or does not occur. Few have considered whether any pattern exists, and hence there has been little theorising about the problem."
(p.21)

The aim of the present research is, therefore, to explore the process of co-operation and to map out some of the ways in which teachers and social workers in the field relate to each other at the point at which their boundaries meet over work with individual children. The first part of the study will be concerned with the collection and analysis of data from the field. Subsequently, these data will be examined in the light of a theoretical framework. This

framework derives from the foregoing discussion which demonstrates a variety of factors found to inhibit effective co-operation between teachers and social workers. These include differences in method, context and focus of work, and in attitudes towards children with difficulties. Such differences are compounded by ignorance of each other's work, blurred boundaries between them, negative stereotyping and competition for influence and resources. Davies (op.cit.) suggests that these barriers can all be subsumed under three major focal areas: the inter-professional arena, the inter-organisational arena and the arena of inter-personal perceptions. This provides both a useful starting point for the examination of field data and a way forward for a greater understanding of barriers to co-operation, and will be adopted as the framework for this research. At this stage in the research, it is left as a broad outline delineating the spheres of enquiry and the tools for theoretical discussion of the empirical findings (see Chapter 7).

The design and methodology of the study are detailed next in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Section 1: Design.

This research was begun under the auspices of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) who awarded a "loose-linked" studentship in the Department of Social Administration of Edinburgh University for work related to that of Nigel Bruce on "The Social Work/ Education Interface" (reported in 1982). The present study was to be a separate piece of research under the same general heading and as such took a somewhat different direction, with Bruce employing a wide definition of social work to include all professional welfare agencies involved in the primary school while the present researcher understood the term social work in a narrow sense and focussed on field social work in the area team and its relationship to the school. Both of us defined the interface, the point at which the agencies meet, in terms of co-operation. The rationale for this, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, is evident in policy statements and in the literature where co-operation is clearly a major focus of concern.

In the sphere of inter-agency co-operation between social work and education, the literature discussed in Chapter 1 suggests the existence of a discrepancy between the importance placed by policy makers on the promotion of co-operation and the difficulties that exist in the field when practitioners attempt to work together. Three major areas have been suggested as possible roots of the difficulties: professionalism, organisational structure and inter-personal perceptions.

Reports on the practical problems in working together tend to emanate from specialist projects where social workers and teachers are operating outwith their usual spheres. There is a lack of data on the co-operation involved in the day-to-day work of the generic social worker and ordinary teacher. It is, however, from this population that the specialist workers are usually drawn and their difficulties may be more easily understood when the nature of co-operation in the environment from which they originate is mapped. Moreover, the calls for co-operation from policy-makers and writers on effective service delivery do not exclude those working in the local area team and school, and the researcher's personal experience suggested that little inter-agency contact actually takes place at this level. The role of the front-line worker in operationalising policy is increasingly recognised as crucial (Smith 1970). Consideration of the literature and personal experience thus led in the first instance to an interest in the nature of co-operation at the front-line of social work area team and school.

The literature catalogues important practical barriers to co-operation and the reports on the difficulties of working together reiterate these same problems from year to year. The useful categorisation of difficulties into those pertaining to the arenas of profession, organisation and inter-personal perceptions (Davies 1976) remains a classification only, and has not been particularly helpful in suggesting practical ways forward to surmount the barriers. Moreover, Davies' three areas have each been discussed by other authors but the relationship between them has not been explored. A further research interest provoked by the literature is the possibility of building on the work begun in understanding co-operation within the context of profession, organisation and inter-personal perception, and the extension of such an understanding to form a basis from which to suggest means by which more effective co-operation could be promoted.

The research questions on which the study is based are thus: What is the nature of co-operation between social work and education at the level of the area team and the school? Can this be understood within a framework which takes account of inter-personal perception, organisational and professional factors? Does such an understanding suggest ways of promoting increased co-operation?

The study sought to explore these questions with a sample of practitioners who worked generically in social work area teams and in primary schools, and who shared the care of specific children (hereinafter called focal children). The sample is described in detail below (page 49). Aspects which have been identified in the literature as important to the relationship between teachers and social workers, and whose relevance was corroborated in preliminary pilot work in the field (see pp.46-9 and Appendix 2, p.318) formed the focus of enquiry. These came under the general headings of:

- (a) perceptions of involvement in helping children with social and emotional problems;
- (b) the channels of communication existing between the school and the area team;
- (c) the quality of the relationship between them;
- (d) the nature of co-operation over a named child;
- (e) how far initial training had prepared respondents for co-operation with each other;
- (f) differences they perceived in the way each other worked.

Various research tools were devised to elicit responses under these headings and they were all administered through the medium of an individual interview. See Section 2 (page 35) for discussion of the research tools.

The three spheres on which the theoretical framework is based, (profession, organisation and inter-personal perceptions) have been employed in two different ways in the study. The sphere of

perceptions has formed the basis of the data collection, on the assumption that it will be the way in which the practitioners understand, or perceive, not only each other's image but also what occurs during co-operation, that will determine their attitudes and behaviour. Respondents were asked about both hypothetical and actual situations. Where questions were in respect of actual (focal) cases, the decision was made to explore only the views of respondents and not to compare their perceptions with any record of what actually happened. The assumption underlying the decision to enquire about hypothetical and actual cases in this way, was that both would tap the ways in which respondents defined and responded to aspects of their relationship with each other, and would therefore shed light on the ways in which they worked together. This assumption derives from humanistic psychology and in particular from Kelly's personal construct theory (1955) which suggests that an individual's view of the world is based on hypotheses derived from experience. The present study seeks to explore such hypotheses relative to co-operation between practitioners. The study also fits into the accumulating body of research focussing on the way in which the perceptions of front-line service-deliverers affect social service delivery, for instance Weatherley & Lipsky's study of teachers' response to innovative special education policy (1977) and Barneis' study of the way in which area team social workers define their client group (1982).

The spheres of profession and organisation form the foundation of the subsequent theoretical analysis, where the data on interpersonal perceptions and perceptions of communication and co-operation, are discussed in relation to theories of professionalisation and inter-organisational analysis.

The progress of the research is from the pragmatic to the theoretical, both in terms of the thinking behind it and its execution. The research interest began from a desire to explore what was happening between the non-specialist practitioners in the

field and to consider their perceptions of co-operation, with the general notion that organisational and professional factors would be important. At the outset of the fieldwork, the theoretical framework was limited to this broad and undifferentiated interest. After the data collection and its analysis in its own right the results were considered in relation to theories of organisation and professionalism and the flesh of the theoretical perspective built up from the data in a way which remained faithful to the data. In its generation of theory from data the research design is akin to Glaser and Strauss' "grounded theory" (1967) although it is not a pure example of grounded theory as only one stage of data collection and theory generation is completed.

Constraints:

Constraints affecting the research design arose from the nature of the research interest itself and from practical considerations. The major constraint related to the nature of the study was in finding an appropriate sample, for subjects had to be working in social work area teams and in schools and had to be in some kind of co-operating relationship with each other. In order to obtain a sample of this kind, it was decided to work from the basis of a set of children with social workers; subjects would be the social workers and the teachers involved with the children. The process of acquiring the sample is described in detail below (page 49).

Practical constraints affected the choice of methodology, both in terms of obtaining a sample and of selecting research tools. Both these areas were constrained by the fact that the research was carried out for a doctoral thesis and was therefore to be completed by a single researcher within the time boundaries of a three year ESRC grant. Although, in the event, the write-up of the work greatly exceeded this time limit, the initial constraint held for the design of the study. This affected the amount of time that was

feasible to spend on field work and the number of subjects possible to cover in that time by one person. Mobility was also affected by this structural constraint such that it was difficult to go far afield or to cover as great a geographical spread as would be ideally expected in a study which required a measure of comparison. This lack of mobility was further exacerbated by the length of time required for negotiation of access, as it was important not to spend an inordinate amount of the fieldwork time in such negotiation. Access difficulties are discussed below (page 52).

A further constraint operating on the acquisition of the sample was the goodwill of practitioners prepared to participate. Interest was not high in the field. The area of the study appeared to be peripheral to the interests of many social workers, especially when it was confined to the primary sector of education. This decision to focus only on primary schools was taken after the pilot study, for reasons which are described below (page 48). Having made this choice, it became apparent that social workers were less interested in participating in a study based on primary rather than secondary schools, and this made it more difficult to find area teams willing to take part. The section on access below documents the effect this had on the sample.

Having decided to base the sample on children known to both school and area team in order to ensure some measure of co-operation between them, it transpired that there were not many children of this age group among social work case loads. If such cases represented only a small proportion of social work clients, it is perhaps not surprising that they were seen as of peripheral interest. Conversely, the high profile given by both the social work profession and the general public, to cases involving children, would contradict the notion that low priority would be afforded to child clients, even when few in number. It is more likely that the lack of interest was in liaison with primary schools rather than in the cases themselves.

A further reason for lack of interest among practitioners was the economic situation at the time. Financial cutbacks in both social work and education meant that people were feeling very pressurised to produce more work in less time and were unwilling to spend time on this kind of research. In the schools, staff cuts meant that there were no spare teachers to cover for classes while a respondent took part in the research. Under these circumstances, the time given to the research by those who did take part was particularly generous.

Research methods:

The choice of methodology was firstly informed by the nature of the research interest in perceptions which determined the focus on asking people what they thought was happening. It was modified by the practical constraints outlined above. Some methods were of necessity ruled out. Participant observation, the classic way of studying meaning, was in this case inappropriate because of the nature of the data to be collected. Co-operation between social worker and teacher was such a small part of the everyday work of both that to take part generally in the life of the area team or school would have required many more months than were available in order to observe any co-operation actually taking place, as communication was infrequent and carried on over a lengthy time scale, sometimes several years. Moreover, the nature of the liason - infrequent telephone calls and the filling-in of report forms, with an occasional meeting - would have rendered redundant a great deal of the time spent in participant observation. Also, it would not have been possible to be in the area team and the school at the same time, and this would have resulted in serial participant observation which seemed to be a contradiction of the purpose of this method. It would have had to be carried out in several different places in order to yield enough data, which again would not have been feasible within the time scale.

A more appropriate choice would have been Kelly's Repertory Grid (Kelly, 1955 op.cit.). This is also a well researched and accepted tool for measuring meaning and can be used with individual respondents. However, it was not selected for the following reasons. It would have had to be the sole instrument used as it would have taken all the interview time to administer. The researcher was interested in trying a range of techniques and also primarily interested in the spontaneous talk of respondents, thinking that a formal instrument would distance her from the subjects. Some formality was introduced, however, in other ways as described below.

Large-scale survey methods carried out by post were not considered for, although they may have resulted in greater breadth of information from higher numbers of respondents over a larger geographical area, this would have been at the expense of the depth necessary for a consideration of meaning. Probing the answers to illuminate perceptions would not have been possible. Also, the researcher's interest was in the area of personal contact with others rather than the more arid postal techniques.

The method chosen was that of an individual semi-structured interview. This method was seen as the most likely to encompass the following requirements of the research design: the need to involve as many practitioners as possible, from as many different teams and schools as possible; the necessity of focussing only on the people involved with the focal children; the importance of talking to respondents so that they could proffer anecdotes and experiences of their own and be encouraged to elaborate on answers which seemed likely to provide more data. This latter was also the reason for the questions being open-ended rather than rigidly structured. Partial structure was, however, important as a means of aiding respondents whose knowledge and awareness of co-operation was small and who may have been unable to say much in response to a minimally focussed interview schedule. The researcher was also interested in

some measure of consistency amongst the responses as a basis for comparison.

In addition to semi-structured questions, other instruments were incorporated into the interview schedule. This had the advantage of tapping perceptions from different perspectives and provided the possibility of synthesising data from the resultant range of perspectives. This technique is described by Glaser & Strauss (op.cit.) as gathering "slices of data" (p.67). They recommend the use of a range of data collection instruments as follows,

"In many instances, both forms of data are necessary - not quantitative used to test qualitative, but both used as supplements, as mutual verification and, most important for us, as different forms of data on the same subject." (p.18)

The case study method seemed particularly likely to provide data on perceptions. The focal children were in fact social work cases and one section of the questionnaire focused on communication over the actual children. Hypothetical cases were also presented as a means of tapping perceptions of role, awareness of the other agency's work and knowledge of communication channels. The case studies are described below under "Research tools" (page 35).

Another instrument was devised to provide data on perceptions of role in relation to children with social and emotional difficulties. This was a checklist comprising a list of difficulties which might be experienced by primary school children. Respondents were asked to note the agencies they thought would be involved in dealing with the difficulties. Although both the case studies and the checklist were structured instruments, they were open-ended, permitting the subjects to respond in any way they wished. These tools were thus essentially qualitative in nature.

The final instrument used was more quantitative and was another kind of checklist, this time designed to elicit perceptions of the characteristics of teachers and social workers, rather than of their role. This tool was modelled on Osgood's Semantic Differential (see Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1975).

The four methods of data collection administered within the basic framework of the interview were thus the checklist, the case studies, the semantic differential and the semi-structured questions. These are described in more detail in the next section.

Section 2: Research tools.

The Checklist:

The checklist was used as the principle method of eliciting perceptions about the ways in which respondents understood their own profession's general involvement with children's problems and the involvement of the other profession. The checklist format was appropriate here as a quick means of acquiring a range of information which would have been unwieldy in question form. It was designed also to provide a basic set of data on perceptions of role, on which the analysis of responses to other parts of the schedule (such as the case studies and the semi-structured questions on actual co-operation and ideas about each other's profession) could build to create a rounded picture of co-operation. The checklist was designed to explore the following questions:

Which kind of problems did practitioners perceive as falling in their own sphere of involvement?

Which kind of problems did they perceive as the remit of the other profession?

Did the two groups agree as to areas of professional involvement?

How aware were members of each profession about the role of the other?

A list of eighteen items was presented, each an example of a particular difficulty that could be experienced by a primary school child, and the subjects asked to write down for each one whichever professionals they thought would be involved in dealing with the difficulty. Thus, the task was open-ended, allowing interpretation by the respondent, the rationale being that the way it was interpreted was an integral element of the person's perceptions. The items were loosely based on those in Wickman's study of teacher's attitudes to children's behaviour (1928) but extended to include difficulties that were likely to be the province of the social worker. The items covered five general types of behaviour, ranging from more obviously school related problems (eg. those of behaviour in the classroom) to more obviously social work problems such as parental neglect and the committing of offences. Subsumed under each general type were one or more different items as follows:-

School behaviour (a)disruptive:-

bullying; rudeness and defiance; disruptive behaviour; damaging school property; stealing from other pupils.

(b)non-disruptive:-

withdrawn behaviour; falling behind with school work; frequent weeping for no apparent reason.

School attendance:-

unexplained absences; parents condoning absences; arriving late every day.

Home/school contact:-

parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning problems.

Welfare problems:-

evidence of physical maltreatment at home; glue-sniffing; wandering the streets at night.

Offences outside school:-

vandalism in the local community; stealing from local shops.

The checklist was altered considerably after being piloted. In its original format, there were closed responses categories of "teacher", "social worker", "both" and "other". It was found in the pilot study that the fixed response categories encouraged respondents to suggest social work involvement where they might otherwise not do so and to use "both" as if it were a "don't know" category. It was therefore decided to leave the task open-ended so as to reduce the probability of this kind of bias. The instructions were also changed to make the task clearer and to emphasise that the task was to choose professional agencies which would be involved. This was important because respondents in the pilot study had been confused as to whether or not to mention parents.

The number of items was reduced in the final version from twenty to eighteen. This was partly for the practical reason that a second task was to be included for which space on the page was required. If two tasks were to be done, less time should be spent on the first, and eighteen items fitted the second task better than twenty (see below). The other reason for reducing the items was that some were particular to children of secondary school age and the main study was to focus on the primary age group. Items concerning sex education, smoking and promiscuity were removed and three others altered to ensure a balance between difficulties at the school and social work ends of the spectrum. The first version of the checklist is shown in Appendix 2b (page 323) and its final format is in Appendix 1a (page 310).

The task which was added to the checklist was to list the six items thought to be the most serious problems, and the six thought to be the least serious. This afforded another means of comparing the ways in which the two professions perceived children's difficulties. It was followed up during the interview with a request for the reasons behind the choices; this provided data on the ways in which respondents prioritised difficulties and thus on professional orientation. This technique was added after the pilot study as a result of discovering the work of Asquith (1980), who, as part of his case study approach to discerning frames of reference in juvenile justice, asked his subjects to pick out most and least important statements about each case. This seemed to fit well with the checklist, being simple to add and worth doing as a source of additional data on the way in which respondents viewed their role in respect of children with social and emotional difficulties. Eighteen items fitted this task better than twenty as it divided neatly into thirds, one third at each end of the continuum of seriousness, leaving a third in the middle.

Case studies:

The idea for the case studies also originated from Asquith's research, although the ones used in the present study were far less complex in their design and utilisation, being only a small part of the total interview schedule. They have more in common with the profiles of "ten naughty children" used by Rutter et.al. (1979) in their study of secondary schools. Four case studies were devised. These were very brief, only one or two sentences long, each giving a behavioural profile of a child with social and emotional difficulties. The first case study reads as follows,

"A child with a poor record of attendance and who is aggressive and difficult to control, is caught stealing from local shops."

The complete list of case studies is in Appendix 1b (page 311). The cases simulated realistic clusters of behaviour as identified through the researcher's personal experience and through discussions with practitioners during the preliminary stages of the study. A range of different kinds of behaviour was aimed for, as in the checklist. These were: poor school attendance; disruptive behaviour in class; offences outside school; signs of parental neglect; parents not responding to school; academic failure; withdrawn behaviour; non-accidental injury. These paralleled the checklist items and it was intended that the case studies would provide another way of tapping similar data but from the slightly different perspective of action that the respondent would take him or herself. The case studies acted as triggers for respondents to state how they would deal with the situation if this child was either in their class (teachers) or referred to them (social workers). They were hypothetical cases, designed to elicit general views but had the advantage of providing realistic profiles of children such that subjects frequently spoke of their actual experience in dealing with these difficulties. This was useful in ensuring the validity of their answers and was valuable in tapping attitudes which were often more apparent through anecdotes than in

answer to formal questions.

The case studies were compiled for the pilot study and were accepted as authentic by respondents who gave full and detailed answers indicating that the cases were eliciting information complementing that of the checklist. For the main study, the wording in two of the case studies was altered slightly to make the profiles more consistent in one case and more clearcut in the other.

Semantic differential:

In contrast to the focus on role in the previous tools, this instrument was designed to elicit perceptions held about the characteristics of the two professional groups, particularly in terms of how they worked, and to provide a measure of comparison between ways in which respondents viewed their own and the other profession. The format of the semantic differential (see Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum op.cit.) was used although it was not devised in the standard way by eliciting items from the subjects themselves. This again was a decision based on the fact that several tools were being used and that the purpose of this instrument was to tap perceptions from a different perspective; for its use within the interview schedule, the full-blown procedure was considered to be less important than it might be in other forms of research. A set of pre-selected paired polar adjectives or adjectival phrases was listed with one of the pair placed at each end of a six point scale. Six points were used in order to eliminate respondents choosing a neutral middle category. Subjects were asked to indicate where they saw their own profession in relation to these words and phrases. They were then asked to repeat the exercise in relation to members of the other profession. The

items for the semantic differential were culled from a variety of sources which provided evidence for the kind of words that teachers and social workers use about each other and included Craft & Craft's study on teachers and social workers (1971 op.cit), the Paisley CDP report (Watson op.cit.), and the pilot study for the present research. The items were selected as indicators of the following: acceptance of professional status; worth accorded; aspects of professional orientation; mode of working both personally and professionally. As in the checklist, several individual items were used to illustrate each category, as follows:-

1. Acceptance of professional status:

clear professional objectives/no clear professional objectives;
has a professional approach/does not have a professional approach;

2. Worth accorded:

doing useful work/not doing useful work;
overworked/not enough to do;

3. Aspects of professional orientation:

co-operation - co-operates with colleagues over problems/does not co-operate with colleagues over problems;
communication - difficult to talk to/easy to talk to;
confidentiality - indiscreet/discreet;
willing to share - shares knowledge about pupils with other professionals/ does not share knowledge

about pupils with other professionals;

4. Mode of working:

caring/uncaring;

head in the clouds/down to earth;

strict/permissive;

sticks to tried and trusted methods/tries new methods;

non-directive/directive;

encourages conformity/discourages conformity;

sensitive to the problems of other professions/

insensitive to the problems of other professionals.

The semantic differential was added to the interview schedule after the pilot study because there was a lack of information on perceptions relating to group characteristics. The items were refined over various drafts and the final version piloted informally with friends who were social workers and teachers. A set of written instructions was devised and placed on the page before the semantic differential. In the interview, the instructions were also given verbally. The semantic differential is in Appendix 1c (page 312).

Interview schedule:

The semi-structured interview covered three main areas. Firstly, respondents were asked general questions about the communication between the two agencies. Secondly, specific questions were asked about co-operation over the actual (focal) case that they shared. Thirdly, there was a short section on training insofar as it

related to preparation for co-operation. The questions were designed to tap information on three levels; to explore areas suggested as problematic in the literature eg. confidentiality; to examine the structural components of communication eg. referral systems, who talked to whom etc.; and to elicit attitudes eg. negative stereotypes. It was expected that this latter would become apparent through the language used and through experiences related in response to the other questions, and questions were not asked directly about attitudes. The following topics were covered in the interview:

Communication:

- whether or not referrals are made from school to area team;
- referral procedures;
- information sharing after referral;
- other situations in which information is shared;
- the nature of information shared;
- who is involved in liaison;
- satisfaction with liaison;
- the quality of the relationship between the agencies;
- opinions on attaching social workers to schools;
- whether or not teachers and social workers see things differently;

Focal cases :

- whether or not teachers know of social work involvement;
- opinions on where the child's difficulties lie;
- what each agency can do to help the child;
- school involvement in referral;
- contact between the social worker and the school;

class teacher involvement in liaison;
who is involved in liaison;
the nature of contact between
practitioners;
the availability of the social worker;
degree of satisfaction with liaison;
whether or not greater contact would help
and if so in what way;

Preparation for co-operation:

how initial training provided preparation for
co-operation;
adequacy of such preparation;
suggested improvements;
opinions on joint training;

The interview schedule is included as Appendix 1d (page 314). After piloting, the topics were all retained but the wording of some questions altered and some additions devised to make them more relevant to respondents' experience. For instance, it was clear from the pilot study that very few referrals were made from the schools to the area teams, so questions were added which took account of this, asking which agencies schools would refer to and which types of problems would be referred to social work. The question on frequency of referral was deleted as there were clearly so few as to make the question redundant. The original questions (for teachers) on referral procedure were:

1. Does the school refer many children to the social work area team?
2. How many per term?
3. How would you go about referring a child?

The final version was:

1. Does the school refer many children to the social work

area team?

- a) If yes - What kind of things do you refer them for?
Is there any other agency to which you refer children with social and emotional problems?
Which kind of problems go to social work and which to other agencies?
 - b) If no - Where does the school refer children with social and emotional problems?
2. How would you go about referring a child to the social work area team?

Similar clarification of issues was sought in other areas by appropriate alteration of questions. Questions had slightly different wording for social workers and teachers to make them relevant for each group. Thus the referral questions for social workers were:

1. Do primary schools refer many children to the area team?
 - a) If yes - What kind of things are they referred for?
What other agencies do schools refer children to?
Which kinds of problems are referred to the area team and which to other agencies?
 - b) If no - Where does the school refer children with social and emotional problems?
2. What are the referral procedures used by the school?

Section 3: Preliminary work and the pilot study.

During the planning phase of the research three types of preliminary work were carried out: a series of visits to individuals involved in co-operative practice, a fortnight's participant observation in a primary school, and a pilot study of the draft interview schedule and instruments.

Visits

The visits were organised by Nigel Bruce as part of his study of the interface between education and social work. The research on which this thesis is based was established originally as "loosely linked" to Nigel Bruce's work and it was therefore appropriate to accompany him on his round of visits. This provided an opportunity to compare the verbal reports of these practitioners with written material about working together. The visits were to a support teacher working with secondary school pupils in the Borders, a social worker with truanting children in the west of Scotland, an Intermediate Treatment programme in Glasgow and an after-school club for primary children in a Borders town, run jointly by a teacher and a social worker. These projects are described by Bruce (1982).

Observation in a primary school

In order to gain experience of children and teachers in the primary school setting, a two week visit was arranged to a local school. Here the researcher participated in the life of the school by taking baking sessions with the children and talked informally to teachers about their role and their perceptions of social workers. A meeting with a social worker serving the same community was arranged through the assistant headteacher. The most useful part of the visit was the opportunity to attend a staff meeting where teachers were reporting on visits they had made to local social work agencies. The thoughts and feelings expressed here corroborated much of the literature on the difficulties experienced by practitioners when they attempt to form closer relationships. A report of this experience is in Appendix 2a (page 318).

Pilot study

The pilot study was carried out in a different Scottish region to that used for the main study. Negotiations at Regional level for access to education and social work practitioners was carried out in a similar way to that for the main study described in detail below. As fewer subjects were required the process was not so lengthy but again there was not a great deal of interest, particularly amongst area teams, with the Director of Social Work suggesting that it would be difficult to find any teams willing to participate. At this stage both secondary and primary schools were included and, in all, interviews were conducted with five social workers from one area team and with fifteen teachers from five schools (three primary and two secondary) served by this team. The pilot study was carried out in order to test the feasibility of including both primary and secondary sectors of education in the main study, and the feasibility of acquiring a sample based on

focal children. It was also used to try out the interview schedule; to check its ability to elicit the desired type of information, to test the face validity of the instruments, the wording of the questions and the time taken to administer the entire schedule.

The interview was possible to carry out in an hour. The major change decided on as a result of the pilot study was to concentrate on only the primary sector. The results of the pilot study indicated that to attempt to use both sectors would be spreading the net too widely for the school systems were so different that, in effect, two separate studies would be required. The decision was made to confine the field work to either primary or secondary, and the primary sector was chosen for the following reasons. The research studentship was linked to the work of Nigel Bruce whose area of interest was the interface between social work and education at the primary school level. It therefore seemed that the present research would better complement his if the same population were involved. One of the major interests in carrying out the study was the importance placed by policy-makers on preventive services for children, and this was more readily applicable to the primary age group. Thirdly, very few data were available on co-operation between primary schools and area teams whereas the secondary sector had a much more clear-cut system which had been well documented.

Regarding the research tools, the checklist was altered considerably, being changed from fixed response categories to become open-ended, as it was clear that subjects were being channelled into making responses that they may not have thought of themselves. The task of choosing most and least serious problems was also added (see page 38 above). Subjects were able to respond appropriately to the case studies which obviously made sense to them and only minor adjustments were made to the wording. The semi-structured questions were amended to increase their relevance to practitioners in the way described above, page 44. The information elicited by the entire schedule seemed to be lacking in perceptions

of qualities attributable to each profession and it was therefore decided to add a final instrument to tap such perceptions. An efficient way of doing this was thought to be through the means of an instrument based on the semantic differential (see page 40 above) and this was added to the schedule for the main study, piloted on a few social workers and teachers who were personal friends.

A report on the pilot study was written at the time and can be found in Appendix 2b, page 323.

Section 4: The sample.

As described in Section 1, above, the sample consisted of teachers from primary schools and social workers from area teams, who were selected as being the personnel involved with a group of children who were receiving social work support. The children themselves did not take part in the study but provided the focus for selecting the sample and are therefore referred to as "focal" children. There was no selection of focal children by the researcher for there was no choice available.

In order to be able to compare different types of liaison, it was necessary to widen the sample as much as possible; however, for reasons of practicability, it was decided to concentrate on three area teams and include three primary schools served by each team. This seemed a number that could be feasibly studied in the time available. All areas were in the same Scottish Region, and in the same city, as, again, limitations of time militated against negotiations with Social Work and Education Departments in more than one authority. The Region participating in the pilot was not

asked to take part in the main study as it had been difficult to find teams and schools willing to be involved at the pilot stage and the interest seemed to be saturated.

Sampling was effected by asking each area team to identify children on their books who were attending local primary schools. Each child's social worker would then become one subject in the study, plus his or her senior and area officer - thus there were three social worker interviews per focal child. The schools attended by the children were then approached and asked to participate and, where they agreed, interviews were conducted with the child's class teacher, the appropriate assistant headteacher and the headteacher - making a similar balance of three school interviews for each child. In total, therefore, six people were interviewed in regard to a single child, representing one each of the three organisational levels of the school and area team - class teacher, assistant headteacher, headteacher, basic grade social worker, senior social worker, area officer. If a school declined to participate in the study, the focal child and attendant subjects were omitted from the sample.

Had it been possible to obtain a different set of six interviewees for every child, this design would have provided a substantial number of subjects. However, it was clear before beginning the study that this would not be possible. There could be no more than three area officers and twelve headteachers; there was unlikely to be more than twelve assistant head teachers; one class might contain more than one of the children; and it was likely that more than one child would share a basic grade social worker and, therefore, a senior. The total number of different interviewees was not possible to anticipate although the round number of one hundred was aimed for at the start. However, during the field work, the number of subjects was further truncated by time-specific factors such as the absence of teachers due to illness, teachers leaving a school and the fact that in some schools there was no assistant

headteacher in post. This meant that some of the identified children had to be left out of the study and that for others, the six interviews were not possible. It was decided to concentrate on keeping the total number of respondents at or above seventy and, while interviewing the six people for each child, to accept a good deal of overlap. Thus, a social worker or teacher was sometimes interviewed in relation to two or more children. A further overlap occurred where more than one child from a single family was part of the focal sample. These children usually had the same social worker but it was possible to interview one class teacher for each child.

It was originally hoped that five children could be identified from each of the three schools, but it became quickly evident that social workers could rarely provide five names from a single school, so whatever number was available had to be accepted. This meant that often there were schools with only one or two children to be included in the focal sample. From the point of view of the design of the study this was unfortunate as it resulted in only three sets of perceptions from the school where six or seven had been hoped for. In practical terms, however, it was very difficult for headteachers to fit the interviews into the school day due to the lack of time that class teachers had outwith the classroom, and the lack of other personnel to cover for them. In most of the schools used in the research, it would have been too much to ask for an hour's interview with each of five class teachers and two assistant headteachers as well as the head, which had been the original intention. Had this amount of time been asked for, it is likely that headteachers would have declined to participate at all. A few headteachers were extremely accommodating and in one school it was possible to interview four class teachers, one assistant headteacher and the headteacher; and in another, four class teachers, two assistant heads and the head. At the opposite extreme was a headteacher who, although only two interviews were required (herself and the assistant head who was also the child's class teacher) would only allow the researcher half-an-hour to talk to the assistant headteacher. This school was omitted from the study



due to this limitation on interview time.

As the number of interviews possible to obtain from three schools per area team was relatively small, it was decided, after commencement of field work, to include an extra school in each area, in an attempt to sustain the total number of subjects above seventy. The final sample was drawn from twelve schools serviced by three area teams. The subjects to be included in the study were negotiated in an ongoing fashion throughout the period of the field work, and the final total was seventy-two: forty-six teachers and twenty-six social workers. There were twenty-four focal children from seventeen families.

Section 5: Access.

Negotiating access for a suitable sample of social workers and primary school teachers, focused on actual children with whom both agencies were dealing, proved to be lengthy and tedious. After gaining acceptance at Regional authority level, and before being able to actually talk to social workers and teachers, a sequence of negotiations had to be carried out. Delays occurred at almost every stage and occasionally insurmountable problems meant that negotiations had to begin again for a different area team or school or child. Negotiations and completion of the seventy-two interviews took eleven months from the first meeting with area officers.

Access to social work area teams:

Negotiation for access at the local level began well with area teams in one division of the Region agreeing to take part.

However, mainly because of the decision to focus the research on primary rather than secondary schools, two of the three teams subsequently declined to participate. One team had recently been involved in Nigel Bruce's research which was related to primary schools and the area officer thought that he could not expect his team to take part in another similar study. This team backed out within a week after the initial meeting between the researcher and the area officer. The second team took several weeks to decide not to participate - their reasons seemingly being a lack of interest in the topic of the research and an antipathy to research in general. Negotiations with one team went ahead while two further teams were sought, the Divisional Officer providing the names of teams in other divisions that he thought would be likely to participate. Fortunately, the first one he suggested was happy to take part. Finding a third was more difficult and another team refused to participate before one was approached that was keen. After each team was contacted, through the area officer, the social workers had to discuss participation in the research amongst themselves at their team meetings before agreeing or disagreeing, and this meant a considerable wait for each one. In all, six teams were asked to participate with three agreeing to do so.

Participating teams were asked to provide a list of names of children on the social work books and attending local primary schools. It took some time for the teams to collect names though some teams did so more speedily than others. In practice, individual social workers tended to come forward with names of children and schools, so that within the teams choice of focal children was done in an ad hoc way, depending on the goodwill of social workers willing to provide names. Negotiation with schools was held up until the list of names was complete.

Access to primary schools:

When schools had been identified by social workers, the education authority was approached as it had guaranteed to notify each school of the education committee's approval of the research. This was invaluable as it meant that an official letter preceded the researcher's approach to schools, undoubtedly making a difference to the way in which the research was accepted in the schools. Waiting several days to allow this letter to go out - and it was always sent promptly - a letter was then written individually to each headteacher giving a brief description of the research, asking if the researcher could talk to a few of the teaching staff and saying that there would be a follow-up telephone call on a specific day to arrange a preliminary visit to the headteacher in order to discuss the research further. At this stage, one school wrote declining to participate. During the follow-up telephone call two other headteachers said that they could not take part and a fourth mentioned various difficulties which, compounded with difficulties at the social work end, made it impossible to use the school. When the headteachers were visited, another, although ostensibly willing to take part, would not allow enough staff time to make participation viable. It was thus necessary to go back to the area teams and ask for children at other schools to replace these five. A further school in the first two areas had also to be found when it became necessary to widen the sample.

By the end of the field work there had been five letters to the Education Department asking them to send out their letters of official approval to seventeen schools, twelve of which took part in the research.

When each headteacher had been visited, the next step was to go back to the area teams and ask the social workers to obtain permission from the parents of the children whose cases would be

discussed during the interviews.

Parental permission:

The notion of parental permission for the research was one which was raised by social workers at the outset of the study and they insisted that the research could only go ahead if such permission was granted. The social workers undertook to ask their clients. Although clearly important, this did cause further delays in the field work as it could take some time before social workers were able to see and ask the parents. In some cases there were delays of weeks and, inevitably, some of the parents refused or had moved out of the area and lost contact with the social workers. These children had therefore to be dropped from the study. Seven children were lost to the focal sample in this way.

The issue of parental permission was one which the experiences of the field work showed to be an important area, although not one which had been thought through before the study began. There were instances where the schools were not aware of social work involvement with a family, and it seemed unethical that the researcher would inform the school without the parent's knowledge. It also seemed important that it was the social worker who asked permission rather than the researcher. Although one or two parents may have refused through identification of the researcher with a social worker whom they viewed negatively, it would have been just as likely, if not more so, that they would have perceived just as negatively a total stranger requesting such permission. The issue of where the researcher had obtained their names would still have been relevant and the Social Work Department therefore involved. Moreover, social workers would have had to breach confidentiality further by giving out addresses as well as names.

Interviews with social workers and teachers:

Having gone through the sequence of negotiations described - area team, lists of children and schools, headteachers, parents' permission - interviews were set up. This was relatively easy but tended to take some time due to the exigencies of the subjects' jobs. Social workers usually had no problem fitting in an interview to their working week; the difficulty here was actually getting them on the telephone to arrange the interview. Naturally, they were often out of the office in the course of their work, and often they were on holiday at the particular time scheduled for interview. Holiday times were also a problem with schools as during them no interviews could be arranged with any school personnel. The periods before and after holidays were always "bad times" for schools and the biggest difficulty was the fact that staffing levels were not high enough in many cases to enable teachers to have time off to talk to the researcher. Interviews had to be fitted in when possible and several times teachers were interviewed in a class full of children. Schools were under more pressure during part of this period as it coincided with a time of financial constraint and staff cutbacks. Because of this lack of time, teacher interviews usually had to be kept within the scheduled hour which meant that they were less exploratory than had been hoped. Interviews in which the fullest information was gathered tended to take at least one-and-a-half hours.

Interviews were recorded in long-hand and typed up afterwards. This method of recording was chosen largely because the researcher had no experience of tape-recording and wished to avoid the added anxiety of coping with technology. It was also thought that subjects might find tape-recording inhibiting. There were certainly disadvantages in recording by hand. Some interviewees' comments were missed and it was more difficult to ask relevant follow-up questions while concentrating on getting the answers down on paper. The transcripts would probably have been of better

quality had the interviews been tape-recorded.

Section 6: The interview.

A fairly standard approach was adopted at the outset of each interview although the stance of the researcher depended to some extent on who was being interviewed. A subject who had already been contacted necessitated a slightly different opening gambit from a person not previously known. Generally, the introduction included a brief statement on the interest of the researcher in exploring how teachers and social workers saw children's problems and how much contact there was between the agencies. The respondent was told that there would be some questions about the particular child towards the end of the interview but that most of the questions were general. He/she was then asked to give a few details of personal background after which the checklist was introduced. The respondent was given the checklist sheet and asked to write in opposite each item which professional agencies might be involved in dealing with the difficulty. At the end, the subject was asked to list the six most important and six least important problems. He/she was then asked for the reasons for the choices and these were recorded by the researcher on a separate sheet. The case studies were presented next and the interviewee given a sheet of paper listing the four cases and asked for each one in sequence, how he or she would respond if this situation occurred - teachers, if they had a child like this in their class or school; social workers, if a school contacted them about this child. The researcher recorded the responses on a duplicate sheet. The semi-structured questions were then gone through in order, from general to specific, allowing respondents to elaborate as they wished and probing where necessary. Finally, the semantic differential was administered, and this was filled in on the sheet by the respondent, firstly in respect of his/her own profession and then for the other

profession. The interview took varying amounts of time depending upon the number of focal children involved, the amount of knowledge held by the interviewee and the number of anecdotes that he or she related and the time available to the respondent. The longest one took two separate sessions totalling two-and-a-half-hours with a headteacher who had many areas of discontent to air, and the shortest were with some class teachers who could barely manage a full hour due to classroom commitments. Pressure of time meant that some interviews were less fully probed with the minimum responses accepted in order to complete all the instruments and this undoubtedly led to paucity of data in several cases. When all the interviews from a school or area team were finished, a letter of thanks was sent.

Section 7: The analysis.

The analysis of data has been carried out qualitatively for the following reasons. The nature of the study lends itself primarily to qualitative analysis with its emphasis on perceptions and its open-ended research tools. The nature of the sample also creates difficulties for statistical analysis, firstly because of the low numbers and secondly because it is not truly random, the teachers and social workers being linked through the focal children. No statistical analysis has been used except in the case of the semantic differential (see below). Within this basically qualitative orientation, quantification has been employed in two major ways in order to provide a means of examining the data and comparing responses among respondents. Where the instrument used provides clear categories, such as the checklist, replies in each category have been summed. Because there are usually uneven numbers of subjects to be compared, raw scores have been converted to percentages wherever possible despite the relatively low numbers under discussion. Where numbers are very small, raw scores are

retained. Where the data arise from open-ended questions, categories have been derived from the data in the following way. All the responses to a question were written out, separately for teachers and social workers. By inspection, common modes of response were identified and the answers grouped under appropriate headings such that every answer was included. These groupings were then collapsed into fewer major themes which form the basis of discussion in the analysis chapters.

An example of the qualitative analysis

In order to demonstrate the way in which qualitative analysis was carried out, the process of analysing responses to the question "What can the teacher do to help the [focal] child?" is reproduced below. Responses from the fourteen basic grade social workers are used as an example as to itemise all seventy-two would be tedious and unwieldy here.

1. The responses:

BG W1: Problems are home-related. The school has been very fair with the kids. Offered them stability. Sympathetic.

BG W2: Child A - Nothing specially because of this particular situation.

Child B - Keep an eye on her in school. She's due to go to secondary school soon which will be a difficult time. They can help in school to make an assessment.

BG W3: The child was quite depressive, under-confident, attention-seeking at home though not at school. The teacher could be useful in giving him

responsibilities and extra praise. Positive encouragement. Just letting the social worker know about clothes and smell and when they are particularly sleepy and upset.

- BG W4: Only be aware of how he is and how he is coping but the root of the problem lies with his mother. Teacher should be aware so that he won't get punished as that raises his anxiety. Emphasis is on mother.
- BG W5: At the moment things are okay but at first they had to take him out of class to sit with the headteacher and dealt with him in that way. They contained him quite well. The school doesn't have a lot of kids like him. They have some awareness of the problems and how to deal with them.
- BG W6 I think that its just recognition of the difficulties he has at home and taking it into account. Understanding. They need patience.
- BG Y1 I think they can spend some extra time and attention to bring her along and make extra effort with her. They do this anyway.
- BG Y2 Not decided yet.
- BG Y3 Child A - Their responsibility is to inform us if there are any immediate problems and they do this. The school nurse is quite frequently in touch with me.
Child B - Treat him as normal.
Children C - Should be neutral figure and accept as ordinary children. Take each kid as he/she comes.
- BG Y4 Treat him as normal.
- BG Z1 It's the relationship between him and his mother that has to be resolved. Not too sure what school can do.
- BG Z2 It's quite separate; there's nothing they can do.
- BG Z3 Child A - At all times it's been seen as a home-based problem not a school one. [School] gave him

a stable, supportive background. They were pretty lenient and made allowances and were tolerant with me.

Children B - Headteacher keeps me informed of attendance. The school will pick up problems quicker than I can. It's important to link with the school. It's the family unit I am trying to help and Mrs.G. that needs support. The school should pick things up and liaise with me. The school should deal directly with Mrs.G. and not with me. I want her to be independent.

Children C - They have been labelled by the school. I think the school are doing quite a lot for them in terms of offering them something stable and not stressing their problems too much. There is a danger of the social worker and school being manipulated by the client so that each one is blaming the other. It's important to keep in touch as the school gets to know from one of the children if things are going wrong; they are reflected clearly at school.

BG Z4 Nothing.

2. Initial categorisation:

By inspection of the the above responses they were categorised as follows:-

- BG W1 emotional help
- BG W2 nothing (child A)
monitoring; help social worker to make assessment
(child B)
- BG W3 emotional help; passing on information to social
worker
- BG W4 emotional help

BG W5 handling behaviour
BG W6 emotional help
BG Y1 emotional help; educational help
BG Y2 -
BG Y3 passing on information to social worker (child A)
 treat child as normal (child B)
 treat child as normal(children C)
BG Y4 treat child as normal
BG Z1 don't know
BG Z2 nothing
BG Z3 emotional help (child A)
 passing on information to social worker (children B)
 emotional help; passing on information to social
 worker (children C)
BG Z4 nothing

3. Combining categories:

In this case most of the categories were kept discrete as they represented quite separate types of response. The exceptions are the response "treat the child as normal" which was categorised for the final analysis under "emotional help" as the reasons for suggesting it seemed to be related to the emotional wellbeing of the child, and "help social worker to make assessment" which was subsumed under a category named "back-up to social work". The results of the analysis of this question are discussed in Chapter 3 and shown in Table 3:13, page 118.

Analysis of the semantic differential

The semantic differential has been analysed differently from the rest of the data and has been statistically treated using factor analysis. This has been done despite the nature of the sample as not strictly random (see page 49 above) as the usual method for

extremely cumbersome and comparison of respondents' perceptions difficult to formalise. Although the lack of randomness in the sample does create difficulties for the confidence with which conclusions can be inferred from statistical analysis, some interesting results nevertheless emerge and are therefore included in the discussion of data. The factor analysis was carried out by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data yielded three factors which correspond to the semantic differential items as follows.

Factor 1 - sticks to tried and trusted methods/tries new methods
strict/permissive
encourages conformity/discourages conformity
non-directive/directive
head in the clouds/down to earth

Factor 2 - caring/uncaring
doing useful work/not doing useful work
overworked/not enough to do
no clear professional objectives/clear professional objectives

Factor 3 - co-operates with colleagues over problems/does not co-operate with colleagues over problems
sensitive to the problems of other professions/
insensitive to the problems of other professions
shares knowledge about pupils with other professionals/does not share knowledge about pupils with other professionals
difficult to talk to/easy to talk to
indiscreet/discreet

The factors have been named according to the items they comprise: professional hardheadedness, committed and caring professionalism, sensitive co-operation. For each factor, differences in perception were tested for significance in two ways. Firstly, each group's perceptions of their own profession were compared with their perceptions of the other profession (teachers' perceptions of teachers compared with their perceptions of social workers, and vice versa). The test of significance used here was the Wilcoxon matched pairs test (Siegel 1956). Secondly, each group's perceptions of their own profession were compared to the other groups' perceptions of them (teachers' and social workers' perceptions of teachers compared, and then their perceptions of social workers compared). The test of significance used for this was the Mann-Whitney U test (Siegel op.cit). The results of these tests are discussed in Chapter 3 and shown on Table 3:15 (page 119).

Coding of respondents

For reasons of confidentiality, names of respondents, schools and area teams have been omitted from the thesis. For ease of reference, they have been coded in the following way. Schools are labelled A to M (omitting I), area teams are W, Y and Z. Respondents each have a school or area team coding appropriate to their place of work. They are also labelled according to their position in the organisation ie. headteacher = HT; assistant head = AHT; class teacher = ClassT; area officer = AO; senior social worker = Senior; basic grade social worker = BG. Where there is more than one person of each designation in a school or area team, the code also has a number. Thus, the first of four class teachers from school G is coded ClassT G1, and the third basic grade social worker from area team W is coded BG W3. Codes are shown in full in Tables 2:1 and 2:2 (page 66,67). Names appear in the text when

referring to schools, teams or individuals who are not part of the sample. In all these cases, the names have been changed.

The analysis chapters.

The data have been divided into three areas for discussion:

- (a) those relating to inter-personal perceptions held in relation to own and other profession's role, mode of working and professional characteristics;
- (b) to perceptions of how communication takes place between the agencies in a general way;
- (c) to perceptions of the nature of co-operation over the focal cases.

Each of these three areas forms the focus of one of the following three chapters. In chapter 6, the previous analysis is further refined to provide a way of inter-relating the data. It is important to bear in mind while reading the analysis chapters that the numbers of respondents on which the analysis is based is small and that the results and conclusions must be viewed as preliminary and exploratory. Tables are placed at the end of the chapter to which they pertain. Figures are integrated into the text.

TABLE 2:1

Coding of Social Workers

<u>Area Team</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
W	Basic grade social worker	BG W1
		BG W2
		BG W3
		BG W4
		BG W5
		BG W6
	Senior	Senior W1
		Senior W2
		Senior W3
Area officer	AO W	
Y	Basic grade social worker	BG Y1
		BG Y2
		BG Y3
		BG Y4
	Senior	Senior Y1
		Senior Y2
		Senior Y3
	Area officer	AO Y
	Z	Basic grade social worker	BG Z1
BG Z2		
BG Z3		
BG Z4		
Senior		Senior Z1
		Senior Z2
		Senior Z3
Area officer		AO Z

TABLE 2:2

Coding of Teachers

<u>School</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
A	Class teacher	ClassT A1
		ClassT A2
	Assistant head	AHT A
B	Headteacher	HT A
	Class teacher	ClassT B1
		ClassT B2
C	Assistant head	AHT B
	Headteacher	HT B
	Class teacher	ClassT C
D	Assistant head	AHT C
	Headteacher	HT C
	Class teacher	ClassT D1
E		ClassT D2
	Headteacher	HT D
	Class teacher	ClassT E
F	Assistant head	AHT E
	Headteacher	HT E
	Class teacher	ClassT F
G	Assistant head	AHT F
	Headteacher	HT F
	Class teacher	ClassT G1
H		ClassT G2
		ClassT G3
		ClassT G4
J	Assistant head	AHT G
	Headteacher	HT G
	Class teacher	ClassT H
K	Assistant head	AHT H
	Headteacher	HT H
	Class teacher	ClassT J
L	Assistant head	AHT J
	Headteacher	HT J
	Class teacher	ClassT K1
M		ClassT K2
	Assistant head	AHT K1
		AHT K2
N	Headteacher	HT K
	Class teacher	ClassT L1
		ClassT L2
O		ClassT L3
	Assistant head	AHT L1
		AHT L2
P		AHT L3
	Headteacher	HT L
	Class teacher	ClassT M
Q	Headteacher	HT M

CHAPTER 3

INTER-PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

Introduction.

This first analysis chapter identifies inter-personal perceptions held by teachers and social workers in the sample. The analysis is based on data from the checklist, case studies, semantic differential and two of the interview questions - on whether or not teachers and social workers see things differently and on ways in which each practitioner could help the focal children. The more quantitative instruments are analysed through comparison of percentage responses, and the qualitative data through categorisation by inspection. The semantic differential has been factor analysed and differences between social workers' and teachers' perceptions tested for significance. The small sample (46 teachers and 26 social workers) must be taken into account and the findings cannot be seen as definitive in any way. They provide some exploratory statements which may serve to illuminate some aspects of co-operation between teachers and social workers. Although percentages have been used for ease of comparison, the raw numbers that they represent are very small, with each teacher accounting for just over 2% and each social worker for just under 4%. Thus, for example, 50% of teachers would be 23 respondents and 50% of social workers 13 respondents. 26% equals 12 teachers or 7 social worker and 11% equals 5 teachers or 3 social workers.

The data on inter-personal perceptions fall into five categories and the chapter is sub-divided according to these: spheres of involvement in relation to children with social and emotional

difficulties; nature of this involvement; differences in task and mode of working; characteristics of own and other profession; stereotypical images of each other. Through comparison of perceptions held, areas of consonant and dissonant perceptions are identified and features of the relationship between the agencies discussed.

Section 1: Spheres of involvement.

Teachers

Examination of teachers' and social workers' responses to the checklist and case studies gives some indication of the difficulties with which each agency was seen to be involved. In the first part of this section, the spheres of involvement seen by both groups as relevant for teachers are described. As indicated in Chapter 2 (page 36) the checklist items divide into examples of five different types of problem as follows:-

1. Problems involving school behaviour - disruptive:

item 2	bullying
6	rudeness and defiance
10	disruptive behaviour in the classroom
14	damaging school property
17	stealing from other pupils

Problems involving school behaviour - non-disruptive:

item 3	withdrawn behaviour in the classroom
8	falling behind in school work
11	frequent weeping for no apparent reason

2. Attendance:

item 7	unexplained absences from school
12	parents condone absences from school
16	arriving late at school every day

3. Home/school contact:

item 18	parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning problem
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4. Welfare problems external to school:

item 1	inadequate clothing
4	glue-sniffing
13	wandering the streets at night
15	evidence of physical maltreatment a home

5. Offences outside school:

item 5	vandalism in the local community
9	stealing from local shops

Table 3:3 (page 109) shows the percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting school involvement as appropriate for each item. The difficulties in the first group, those relating to behaviour in school, rank as the eight with the highest percentage of "school" responses among teachers, ranging from 70% for frequent weeping to 98% for withdrawn behaviour. Problems related to classroom behaviour and management were thus most clearly seen by teachers as meriting their involvement. This was borne out by teachers' responses to the case studies incorporating classroom behaviour.

Case study 1 concerned a child who was "aggressive and difficult to control in class" and the subject of case study 3 fell behind in school work and was very withdrawn. In response to both of these, almost all teachers gave details of classroom management of the problems, and suggested this as the major way to deal with them. Typical responses included,

"Again, a great deal of talking with the child to see if he is unhappy at school, without trying to pry. Give the child a chance to talk. Go to the headteacher - must do this before it's referred on. I'd expect to go to the child psychologist but would try to work it out myself first." (Class T F: case study 3)

In terms of the items seen as most likely to warrant teacher involvement, social workers' responses show a similar pattern to those of teachers. Six of the classroom behaviour problems attracted the highest percentage of "school" responses and there was clear accord between the perceptions of teachers and social workers that teachers would be involved in children's problems where these are manifested as behavioural change in the classroom. A difference in pattern between teacher and social worker responses occurs in relation to two of the classroom behaviour items, item 11 - frequent weeping, and item 14 - damaging school property. Although attracting a high number of "school" responses (73% each), in terms of rank these were lower than two other items, unexplained absences (item 7) and parents not responding to invitations to talk about child's learning difficulties (item 18). This indicates a discrepancy between the perceptions of social workers and teachers in relation to these items. This is discussed further below.

The second group of checklist items illustrates problems of school attendance and here there is a marked difference in the proportions of teachers and social workers suggesting school involvement, with a far higher percentage of social workers than teachers giving this

response. Attendance is undoubtedly a school problem but the three attendance items were only seen by a relatively small percentage of teachers (22% - condoned absences, 43% - unexplained absences, 46% - arriving late every day) as ones in which they would be involved. The explanation for this seeming anomaly may lie in perceptions of the attendance service (see Table 3:5 page 111). For each of these items, a high proportion of teachers mentioned the involvement of the attendance service, whereas a much lower proportion of social workers did so, a reverse of the trend in use of the response "school". This suggests that while teachers saw this problem as hived-off from their own duties to a specialist service, social workers tended not to make a distinction between the school and the attendance service. Although it is not surprising that teachers were aware of the attendance service as the appropriate agency here, it is interesting to note the corresponding decrease in suggested teacher involvement. A possible explanation for this, corroborated by evidence from case study responses, involves the system of referral to the attendance service. There was a clear-cut procedure in the primary schools for dealing with a child's failure to attend. The procedure would be set in motion by the class teacher who noted poor attendance on a pink card which was handed to the attendance officer (recently re-named educational welfare officer but usually referred to by respondents by the old title) whose job it was to contact the parents. Class teachers therefore saw their part in the proceedings as passing on the problem to the appropriate agency. It was a simple procedure known to all teacher respondents and treated very matter-of-factly such that teachers often merely spoke of using "the pink card" in response to case study 1, eg.

"Attendance - the pink card. It's the done thing; attendance officer - welfare officer. I presume they see the parents first. Teachers are more or less reporting and its out of their hands after that." (Class T F)

"Look for a pattern in the absences. Put in a pink card"
(AHT B)

The very ease of referral to the attendance service, seen as part of the everyday work of the class teacher, could facilitate for some teachers the notion that any further part in attendance problems was not their job. Certainly, they tended not to see the passing on of the problem through the use of the pink card as a form of involvement in dealing with the problem.

Attendance difficulties involve contact between home and school and, although teachers were content to leave this to the attendance officer in that instance, case study responses show that in most of the difficulties concerning behaviour in school, one of the first courses of action was contact with the home. This was particularly true in respect of case study 3. Here, 74% of teachers mentioned a talk with the parents as the major method of dealing with the withdrawn child falling behind in school work. In case study 1, 61% of teachers said that the school would contact the parents. The common method of making contact was to write to the parents inviting them to come to the school to discuss the child's difficulties, eg.

"..if I was really concerned I would get the parents in."
(Class T K1: case study 3)

"The first thing is to get the parents up and find out why." (HT B: case study 3)

However, in response to case study 2, where it was explicitly stated that parents were not responding to such invitations, teachers were unable to see any other direct action that the school could take. Instead, they suggested referral to other agencies, notably social work (67%) or school doctor (54%). For example, class teacher C said,

"Presumably we could send someone out to see them - probably the social worker or welfare officer. I'm pretty

sure it wouldn't be the teacher - not me anyway." (Class T C)

This parallels responses to checklist item 18, on parents not responding to invitations to come to school to discuss the child's learning difficulties. Only 56% of teachers mentioned school involvement here. 5 teachers (11%) were unable to give any response to item 18, and uncertainty about parental non-response is illustrated by the following comment from class teacher D,

"If I have written to a parent about it then it is up to the headteacher. I don't really think... He would probably write to the parents and if there was no reply would contact... I don't know who. Does somebody not go out to the houses?" (Class T D : case study 2)

Most teachers were thus very ready to discuss problems with parents but only if the parents responded to written invitations to come to the school. Anything beyond this was not seen as the remit of the teacher, particularly by class teachers. Two headteachers, however, did suggest a further strategy, that of exclusion of the child from school which was used as a means of frightening parents into attending school for discussions in extreme cases. One headteacher did speak at length about the importance of wording letters to parents carefully in order to encourage co-operation but this was not evident as a general concern. Most teachers thought, in fact, that parents did usually respond to invitations from the school and that this kind of problem was rare, which perhaps explains their lack of strategies for dealing with it.

A far higher proportion of social workers (81%) than teachers expected the school to be involved in taking further action when parents did not respond to invitations to talk with teachers. There were thus dissonant perceptions about the role of the teacher in

home/school contact where initial overtures by the school had met with no parental response.

In respect of the welfare problems, the proportion of teachers and social workers suggesting school involvement was generally similar. Only in relation to item 1, inadequate clothing, was there much difference in response pattern. More teachers than social workers anticipated school involvement here - 30% of teachers and 15% of social workers. Some of this difference is due to social workers suggesting that the appropriate place for help with this was the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) rather than the school. Many teachers said that clothing would be provided by the school either by individual teachers or from a central store, and possibly social workers did not perceive teachers as giving this kind of personal, practical assistance.

"School" responses to the welfare problems were highest in the case of glue-sniffing (50% from both teachers and social workers), and lowest for wandering the streets at night (13% of teachers and 12% of social workers). The differences among the items may be attributable partly to their relative salience in school. The fact that they all attracted substantially lower responses than the school behaviour problems substantiates this suggestion. Inadequate clothing would undoubtedly impinge upon the teacher's eye as would evidence of maltreatment at home whereas wandering the streets at night would be far less visible at school. School involvement responses tended to decrease with the level of obviousness of the problems in school, with the exception of glue-sniffing where the highest percentage of both teachers and social workers, in response to welfare items, expected school involvement. There are two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, glue-sniffing is something that the child engages in actively, and as such is closer to the problems of behaviour in group 1 and is also something amenable to discussion between teacher and child. The other welfare difficulties involve the parents rather than the child. On the

other hand, glue-sniffing had a very high profile at the time of the research, receiving a great deal of publicity about its dangers. It was viewed as an extremely dangerous practice by most teachers. As a relatively new phenomenon, particularly in primary schools, there was no body of previous experience or accepted practice on which to base responses to the checklist item. Social workers, also, were uncertain of their own agency's policy towards glue-sniffing and this is reflected in the high percentage of them who suggested school involvement here in comparison with the other welfare items.

In contrast to responses to glue-sniffing was the lower expectation of school involvement in respect of non-accidental injury (NAI) which was the focus of item 15 - evidence of physical maltreatment at home. Although this was generally perceived as the most serious of all the checklist items by respondents from both agencies, it received less "school" responses from both teachers and social workers (30% and 35% respectively). This could be because established procedures were in existence for alerting outside agencies to the possibility of NAI, and as a result teachers, as in the attendance problems, were clear about their role in passing on the problem to appropriate outside agencies.

The similarity in percentage of both sets of practitioners suggests a consonance of perceptions as to school remit in this situation.

The final group of checklist items comprised offences outside school, vandalism (item 5) and stealing from local shops (item 9). These are problems ostensibly least likely to be evident in school. As the overt school behaviour attracted the greatest "school involvement" responses, the expectation would be that offences outside school would attract the least. This was certainly true of social workers' responses with 15% mentioning school involvement in vandalism and 11% in stealing, but not true of teachers' responses,

although they were at the lower end of the response ranking. Moreover, there was a clear difference in response to the two items. More teachers (46%) saw the school as involved in dealing with stealing than with vandalism (26%). It is difficult to speculate on reasons for this, unless teachers again saw stealing as more amenable to discussion with the child, or perhaps saw the results of stealing as impinging more upon the school, for instance shop keepers might complain to the school or children might be discovered with stolen goods on school premises. In response to case study 1, where a child was caught stealing from local shops, 63% of teachers gave details of steps that they would take as teachers; talking to the child, making stealing a subject for classroom discussion, seeing the parent or even taking the child back to the shop or informally involving the local police constable. Unfortunately, vandalism was not featured in the case studies, for comparison of the treatment of the two offences would have clarified the difference apparent in the checklist responses. All that can be concluded is that more teachers saw themselves as being involved in dealing with stealing in the local community than with vandalism, and that more teachers than social workers expected school involvement in offences outside school.

In summary, the areas of agreement in perception as to teachers' involvement with children with social and emotional difficulties, were mostly those related to behaviour in school. Dissonant perceptions were apparent in the spheres of attendance and home/school contact, where more social workers than teachers suggested school involvement and in the spheres of offences outside school and two of the four welfare problems, where this position was reversed.

Social workers

Comparison of proportions of teachers and social workers suggesting social work as an appropriate agency in dealing with the eighteen checklist problems, shows a generally consistent pattern with more social workers than teachers mentioning social work involvement (Table 3:4 page 110). Only a very small percentage of teachers perceived social work involvement as appropriate for any of the items concerned with classroom behaviour and management, ranging from none to 6% for damaging school property. A consistently higher percentage of social workers envisaged their agency as being involved, with the greatest involvement seen in relation to withdrawn behaviour (31%). Although in the case studies, many teachers suggested that general family problems lay behind such behaviour disturbances, their checklist responses did not show an awareness of the social work role in relation to these. Teachers were treating the problems as ones of classroom management, while social workers were looking to the possibility of causal family difficulties appropriate for social work intervention. This theme will be returned to later in the chapter, in the discussion of choices of most and least serious problems.

Responses to items in groups 2 and 5, attendance problems and offences outside school, show a similar pattern insofar as a higher proportion of social workers than teachers saw social work involvement as appropriate.

The one area where teachers tended to see a substantial likelihood of social work involvement was in the realm of welfare problems (group 4). The highest percentage of social workers mentioning their own agency involvement was also in relation to this group, showing agreement amongst practitioners as to the appropriateness of social work involvement in these. However, teachers still lagged behind social workers in the percentage of respondents mentioning

the possible involvement of social work (save in the case of inadequate clothing, discussed below).

Item 15, evidence of physical maltreatment, is an area where social workers have a statutory obligation to become involved. It was the only item to attract 100% mention of social work involvement by social workers. Although second highest in ranking among teachers, the percentage of "social work" responses was only 72% suggesting a certain lack of awareness of the statutory duties of social workers in this area. For none of the items did teachers suggest social work involvement in equal proportion to their perception of school involvement in classroom behaviour problems. This suggests that more teachers were clear about their own sphere of interest than were about that of social workers.

Item 1, inadequate clothing, was exceptional as the only one where the pattern of responses was reversed, with a substantially greater proportion of teachers than social workers suggesting social work involvement as appropriate (80% teacher responses and 46% social work responses). It also attracted the largest percentage of teachers' "social work" involvement responses and was thus the area perceived by the largest number of teachers as a social work task. Social workers' responses indicated inadequate clothing as the lowest priority amongst the welfare problems. The importance of this divergence in perceptions lies in the fact that inadequate clothing was something clearly apparent in schools and therefore an area where teachers saw referral from school to social work as appropriate. In fact, it was one of the few areas seen thus. It was therefore something over which the two agencies were likely to be in contact yet was an area over which they disagreed as to the appropriateness of contact. Case study responses indicate that social workers often did not perceive inadequate clothing as a priority, particularly as assessed by the school. It is possible to speculate as to why social workers did not see inadequate clothing as a high priority. It may have been because they were reluctant to

view their role in instrumental terms, as attending to material needs of clients, preferring the traditional "case work" model of social intervention. Possibly, they viewed inadequate clothing as a relatively minor issue in relation to the whole spectrum of emotional and material disadvantage with which they commonly dealt. Commenting on whether as social workers they would take up a referral such as case study 2, typical answers included,

"People have different perceptions about inadequate clothing and I might be coloured by how I perceive the teacher." (Senior W2)

"I'd need to check out what the school means by inadequate clothing and underfed, and see if they have the same perceptions as my own." (BG W6)

Such responses pertaining to the social work role in relation to inadequate clothing brings into focus a tendency among social workers to distrust judgements made by schools. This and other areas of mistrust were salient features of the relationship between the two agencies and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

A further sphere where teachers were likely to perceive a role for social work that was not necessarily reciprocated by social workers themselves, was in making contact with parents. The proportion of teachers suggesting that social work involvement was appropriate for checklist item 18, suspected NAI, at 17% was higher than for other directly related school problems. Although the proportion of social worker responses (19%) was similar to that of teachers, it was not higher than the other school behaviour problems, ranking only fourth highest. Responses to the case studies illustrate more clearly that some teachers thought that social workers could take on difficulties of parental contact experienced by the school whereas social workers did not see this as their job. Area officer Y stated this explicitly in relation to case study 2,

"It's not the team social worker's job to go in if another agency can't make contact, especially if it's not a problem that's our remit anyway. I don't see us being used as a postbox. I'm not sure that we could do a lot with this." (AO Y)

Teachers tended to think that social workers could visit homes in a way that teachers could not,

"We can only ask someone with direct access to the home and that's the social work department." (HT K: case study 2)

Although social workers did define certain situations, notably NAI, as ones in which they could go "cold" into a family, they generally did not think that they had direct access to homes. This comment was made in response to case study 2,

"It's a difficult decision, almost like NAI, to know whether to approach parents or not. I would want to know about it but couldn't take any action. You could have the health visitor involved and she could feed back information. You could get someone with access to the house to let you and the school know." (BG Y4)

In relation to case studies 1 and 2, social workers said that if a school requested social work intervention, and social workers thought this to be appropriate, then it was the school's job to contact parents to inform them of referral to social work, even where the school had been unable to make previous contact with the home, eg.

"I wouldn't accept the referral unless the school had spoken to the parents." (BG Y1: case study 2)

"It's very clearly the school's job to contact the parents." (Senior Z1: case study 2)

One headteacher said that social workers were not able to go straight into homes but this was not generally acknowledged by teachers; neither did they suggest that in passing on the problem to the area team the school had a specific role to play in contacting the parents. Although it may be that headteachers would have done this, the obvious difference in responses here between the consistent mention by social workers of the importance of the school contacting the parents and the corresponding lack of its mention by teachers, suggests a real difference in perception as to the roles of social work and school in communicating with parents.

In summary, the main area of agreement as to social workers' sphere of involvement was over welfare problems, which a high percentage of both teachers and social workers saw as appropriate to social work involvement. Dissonant perceptions existed in respect of inadequate clothing and contacting parents, both of which were seen more often by teachers than social workers as areas warranting social work intervention. Conversely, teachers did not expect social workers to be involved in difficulties of school behaviour, attendance or offences outside school while social workers were more inclined to anticipate involvement here. With the single exception of inadequate clothing, social workers perceived themselves as having a wider sphere of involvement than teachers did. This suggests that teachers lacked knowledge of the social work role and the potential for social work involvement with children in difficulties. Such lack of knowledge would be likely to lead to either inappropriate referral which would exacerbate social workers' poor opinion of teachers' judgements, or to little referral at all as teachers were not aware of the range of possible social work involvement. Reasons for the lack of knowledge are suggested in the next section.

Passing on the problem and the chain of referral

Two central features of the relationship between field social workers and primary teachers can be deduced from the foregoing discussion, the role of teachers in passing on problems and the existence of a chain of referral. The tendency of teachers to view their part in problems in which other agencies were involved as restricted to passing on the problems to these agencies, was mentioned above in relation to attendance problems and suspected physical maltreatment at home. This limited perception of their role would tend to preclude any joint work between the agencies, for once it was passed on, the school took no more part in the proceedings. That this notion underpinned perceptions of such referrals was evidenced both by the type of comment quoted above in Section 1 (eg. pages 71,73,73) and by the apparent reluctance of schools to make referrals. There was a preference for containing problems in school until a stage was reached where teachers could no longer handle them. Evidence for this practice is provided by such comments as,

"Naturally I would try to deal with it myself" (HT D: case study 1)

"I don't like to call in these people. Teachers have a mother instinct and get their teeth into it." (HT H: commenting on referral)

Social workers also thought that schools were reluctant to refer on,

"Schools cover up a lot. They carry on and feel that they can deal with it. The problems that arise can wait until secondary. I can't believe that the low referral rate reflects the level of problems in society and it all breaks apart in secondary..... It seems things have to be

pretty extreme before they refer." (Senior W1)

Four social workers thought that primary schools did not refer to any outside agencies, eg.

"I'm not sure where they refer. I wonder if they are referring anywhere?" (BG W2)

"A lot [of primary schools] would probably say that they are dealing with the problem themselves." (AO Y)

Such a system of dealing with children's difficulties, where outside referral is not made until the school feels that it has exhausted its ability to help, encourages the stance of "passing on" problems and decreases the likelihood of co-operation between agencies. By the time at which the referral is made, the school is ready to hand over to somebody else.

Two teachers thought that social workers encouraged the passing on of problems,

"They [social workers] respond better here and will tell you if they've taken a case on. But it becomes their baby and communication would not be continuous." (HT L)

"Social workers can be resentful and not always helpful. They think we are treading on their toes." (AHT C)

Comments from two social workers on the other hand, suggested that schools telephoned the area office with unclear expectations as to what the social worker could do and with the general wish for the social worker to take on the problem. The low level of teachers' awareness of spheres of possible social work involvement and the

degree of dissonant perceptions between the agencies as to appropriate involvement suggest that a great deal of uncertainty did exist among teachers as to the social work role. The expectations held by teachers were often not upheld by social workers. Senior Y1, giving anecdotal evidence of an inappropriate referral, said that the school's expectations had been,

"...not clear and the school had not realised that they had a part to play."

Thus members of each agency thought that the other agency was to some extent responsible for encouraging the passing on of problems.

The notion of passing on the problem pertained even more clearly within the school itself. Class teachers were often uncertain of the school's role in dealing with children's difficulties where this went beyond classroom management techniques, and of the school's relationship to outside agencies. There was a tendency for class teachers to refer "up the system", saying that they informed the assistant head or headteacher of the problem and that it was up to them to deal with it. They seemed to see themselves as having no further part to play. Examples of this kind of response were,

"Stealing is out of my hands. It's the headteacher's situation. I would report it to him." (Class T J: case study 1)

"I'd contact the head; that's the normal procedure. Go to the head and then it's up to her." (Class T M: case study 4)

Within the school, the passing on took place within a hierarchical structure of school management with class teacher passing up the hierarchy to the assistant head who passed on up to the

headteacher. The internal organisational structure of the schools which encouraged the passing on of problems within the agency will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. It is mentioned here to illustrate further the prevalence of the system of passing on problems. It shows that two parallel systems of "passing on" were in operation. It may be also that where such intra-agency passing on occurred, it was likely to encourage passing on between agencies.

Checklist responses demonstrated a lack of awareness of potential social work involvement amongst teachers. The agency mentioned most often in relation to attendance problems was the attendance service (Table 3:5 page 111) and it was police for offences outside school (Table 3:8 page 114). Teachers were aware of an outside agency as first point of referral but not clear about agency involvement beyond that. Their tendency to pass on the problem to the agency referred to directly by the school and leave further action to that agency indicates the existence of a chain of referral.

In this chain, the school is situated at the beginning and the area team at the end. That social workers tended to speak of possible involvement as occurring only after assessment by another agency corroborates this notion. For instance, in response to case study 3, which involved a withdrawn child, although both teachers and social workers saw the child guidance service as the most appropriate non-school agency, social workers said that their involvement would only come after assessment by child guidance,

"I would be saying to the school, have you not involved child guidance? It would only be a social work problem if the psychologist thought it relevant." (Senior W2)

A clear chain of referral existed in respect of attendance problems; from school to attendance officer to the attendance sub-

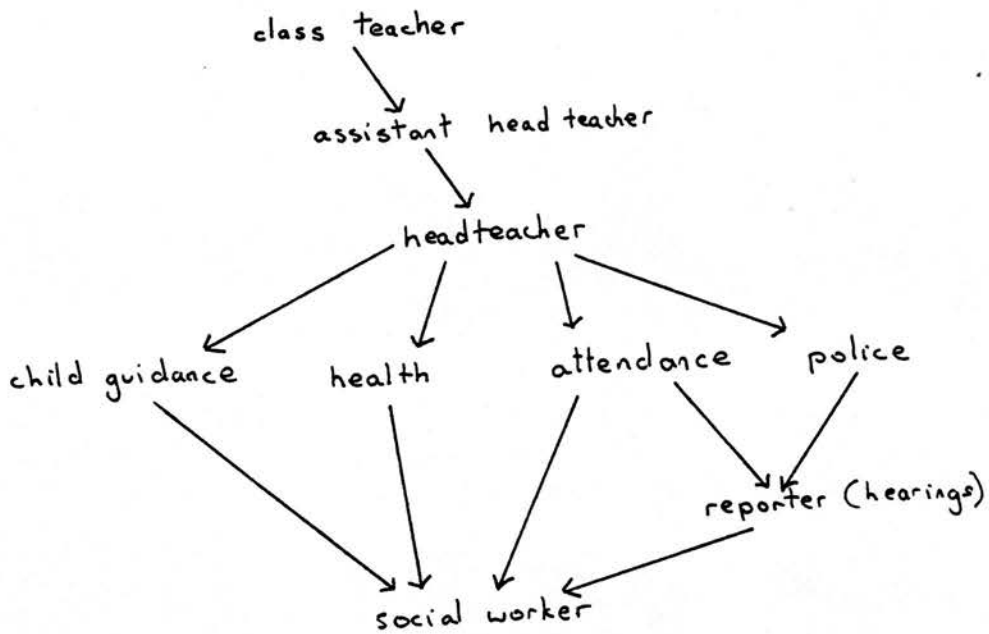
committee of the school council to the reporter, hearing and social worker. The teachers who were clear about referral to the attendance service rarely mentioned any of the other agencies likely to be subsequently involved. Social workers, however, at the other end of the chain, were aware of the possibility of involvement via the reporter and the hearing system.

Looking at the overall patterns of responses of teachers and social workers to checklist items (Tables 3:1 and 3:2, pages 107 and 108), it can be seen that teachers used more frequently than social workers the agencies with closest connections to the school - health and attendance services, whereas social workers used more frequently the reporter or hearings and DHSS. Police and child guidance were suggested in similar proportions by both agencies, indicating their position as connected equally to both school and area team.

Case study responses show a similar pattern. In case study 1, 67% of teachers but no social workers mentioned the attendance service while 88% of social workers but only 11% of teachers mentioned reporter or hearings. This illustrates the closeness of the attendance service to school experience and that of the hearings system to social work experience. In case study 2, school medical services were suggested by 54% teachers but by only 15% of social workers. The chain of referral can be diagrammatically represented as follows.

FIGURE 3:1

The chain of referral



The organisation of the referral relationship between school and area team in a sequential chain, contributed to the lack of knowledge held by teachers as to the social work role and to the limited role taken on by teachers in relation to social work with children. This is exacerbated by a parallel system of passing on problems up the school system from class teacher to headteacher.

Spheres of involvement and the seriousness of problems

Checklist responses showed a general agreement amongst teachers and social workers that the major sphere of involvement for teachers was classroom management of behaviour, and for social workers, welfare problems. After filling in the checklist, respondents were asked to indicate the six most serious items and the six least serious. Data from this task also demonstrate shared perceptions that the types of problem dealt with by teachers were among the least serious while those dealt with by social workers were the most serious. From Table 3:10 (page 116) it can be seen that both teachers and social workers chose most often as serious the three welfare problems generally seen as the concern of social work; physical maltreatment, glue-sniffing and wandering the streets at night. Correspondingly, both groups chose most often as least serious, items concerned with classroom behaviour (plus arriving late at school). Moreover, among the reasons given for the least serious choice (Table 3:12 page 117), the largest proportion of both teachers (70%) and social workers (42%) said that the items chosen were least serious because they could be dealt with in school. Thus, there was a clear indication of a shared perception over the relative seriousness of problems and whose sphere of involvement they came into; teachers are concerned with less serious problems and social workers with more serious ones. This is consonant with the notion of the chain of referral and of passing on the problem. Teachers, at the beginning of the chain, pass up the referral chain difficulties of a more serious nature.

Section 2: The nature of involvement.

Responses from the section of the interview concerned with the focal children provide information as to how teachers and social workers saw the nature of their role in helping children with social and emotional difficulties. In Tables 3:13 and 3:14 (page 118) responses to the questions "What can you do to help the child?" and "What can the other agency do to help the child?" have been listed and categorised according to the common themes in the way respondents saw each other providing help. Because the answers related to only 24 children in 17 families, and the number of teachers and social workers responding in relation to each child were not always similar, the data can only be examined in respect of broad differences.

Given this proviso, certain broad differences, and similarities, are apparent. Table 3:13 (page 118) shows that the highest proportions of both teachers (59%) and social workers (50%) saw teachers as providing emotional support for children. Typical responses were,

"Try to build up a relationship. Give a lot of extra attention." (AHT G)

"The school gave him a stable, supportive background."
(Senior Z3)

Teachers also saw themselves as providing educational help (43%), something hardly mentioned by social workers. It seems unlikely that social workers would have been unaware of the educational role of the school though they may not have been aware of the educational needs of the children in their care and therefore lacked knowledge of specific help being given. Of eight families where either the class teacher or the headteacher spoke of giving

educational help to the children, in five cases the basic grade social workers knew of the educational difficulties and in three they did not. None of them, however, mentioned help with educational problems as part of the teacher's role in helping the child generally. It therefore seems that for social workers, dealing with educational needs did not constitute "help" for children with social and emotional difficulties.

Two other ways of helping were indicated by several teachers but not by social workers. Firstly, 19% of teachers mentioned handling behaviour and attendance difficulties. Again, it is likely that social workers did not perceive these as modes of helping. This may have some connection with the checklist responses which showed that social workers did not generally perceive behaviour problems in school as a priority, and suggests, again, a lack of importance accorded to school experience. Some social workers (17%) saw certain behaviour problems not only as unimportant but as manufactured purely by the school system or as a function of cultural differences between the home and the school (21%). Dealing with these would not be likely to be seen by these social workers as aiding the child's deeper problems.

Secondly, 15% of teachers spoke of helping children's social development. It is perhaps more surprising that this should be seen as unimportant by social workers. However, as few of them thought that they themselves helped in this area (Table 3:14, page 118), it may also have been an area of low priority for them. Possibly social workers were unaware that schools could help here or possibly they did not differentiate between help with social problems and help with emotional problems. Certainly, social workers' suggestions as to how teachers could give emotional help were couched rather vaguely, eg. talking of the Bell family, Senior Y3 said,

"The teachers should support them."

Whereas the class teacher involved with one of the children in the family gave a detailed description of the way in which she helped her on a social and emotional level,

"She needs to be a member of the class, joining in and being accepted. She's good at P.E. She likes to be praised. I give her encouragement and want her to accept that I am on her side and that anything I am doing I am doing for her." (Class T G3)

Turning to perceptions of the nature of the social work role (Table 3:14, page 118), again there was general consensus among social workers and teachers that the major way of helping the children was through involvement with the family. 69% of social workers and 50% of teachers gave responses in this category. More social workers than teachers saw social workers as providing help in almost all the other categories mentioned. This was particularly true of emotional support where virtually the same number of social workers saw their own agency as providing help as saw this as part of the teacher's role. Far fewer teachers thought that social workers gave emotional help to the children.

Several teachers were uncertain how the social worker could help the child and ten (22%) gave "don't know" answers. Others who were uncertain still suggested something, for instance,

"Very little. I don't know what she does but there is little she can do. She can't take away the mother's inadequacies or change the father's type or the fact that she has been molested. The social worker can just monitor." (Class T E)

Responses that related to liaison between the agencies were very few. Two headteachers spoke in general terms - HT M said that the

social worker provided "a link with the school" and HT G said that there was "personal liaison" between school and social worker. One teacher and one social worker talked of one agency backing up the work of the other, the teacher saying that the social worker should back up the school and the social worker that the school should provide back up for the social worker.

More common was the suggestion that teachers should pass on information to the social worker, but it was mostly social workers who mentioned this (27% - 7 respondents) and only one teacher. Among social workers' responses this was the second most frequently mentioned aspect of the teacher's role. Such comments included,

"Just letting the social worker know about clothes and smell and when the children are particularly sleepy or upset." (BG W3)

"They should take note of anything going on so that it can be referred to the social worker." (Senior Y3)

Only one teacher said that social workers should pass information on to schools.

Co-operation between the two agencies was thus not perceived as an integral part of help for the individual child. The comments related to co-operation were from social workers who saw the school as helping the social work task by providing information. This was not something perceived by teachers as part of the nature of their help to the focal children.

In summary, there was consonance of perception as to the major aspects of the teaching and social work role in helping the focal children, with teachers providing help with emotional difficulties and social workers involved with the family. Each group envisaged a

narrower range of involvement for the other agency than for themselves. In particular, social workers did not acknowledge educational and social help given by teachers, and teachers similarly were less aware of emotional help given by social workers. A substantial proportion of teachers were uncertain of the nature of social work intervention. Social workers were less uncertain, but more thought that neither teachers nor social workers could do very much to help, which could be construed as a higher level of cynicism or, possibly, of realism. Neither group mentioned co-operation with each other although social workers suggested that teachers could be helping social workers by providing information. The picture that emerges is of the two agencies working quite separately, both trying to support the child emotionally but in the different contexts of school and family. Links between them were not seen as part of the work to help the child. Each group had a generalised view of the other's work which fitted the actuality but lacked understanding of the range and detail of the other's involvement.

Section 3: Differences in task and mode of working.

The nature of involvement of teachers and social workers as perceived by each other, is further elucidated by responses to the question "Do teachers and social workers see things differently?". This was answered in two ways, either with reasons for the two groups seeing things differently, or with ideas on differences in mode of working.

The most commonly cited reason for practitioners seeing things differently was that of differences in the focus and context of their work. Thus, the teacher's concern with education was mentioned by 26% of teachers and 11% of social workers. This was

contrasted with the focus of social work which was seen variously as family-oriented, concerned with general or physical well-being or not defined save insofar as not being educational. For example,

"Social workers seem to be more concerned about the physical welfare of the child and teachers with educational welfare." (Class T D)

"Yes, we look at the child from a different angle. They don't see the child's educational needs." (Class T G4)

A second difference in focus mentioned by 19% of teachers and 27% of social workers was that of group versus individual work with children, where the teacher was seen as constrained by the necessity of working with groups in the classroom environment. This, by definition, entailed the adoption of a stance concerned with the group interest rather than that of the individual, and with control and discipline, in a way not true for the social worker, eg.

"Teachers are working with a group and trying to get the best for everybody in the whole group. If a particular child or two or three particular children stick out at the edges a bit one is more likely to want to poke them back into place for the good of the others. Social workers work one-to-one..." (Class T G1)

"Yes. I think some teachers see disruptive children as a sort of management problem. That's not a criticism - I would too. The social worker is seeing children as individuals rather than as part of a group." (BG Y3)

In contrast, a third difference in focus stressed the teacher's concern with the individual child as opposed to the social worker's interest in the child as part of the family group. This apparent

contradiction is mentioned in the literature and was discussed in Chapter 1, page 14. It seems like a reversal of the previous difference where the teacher's concern was the group and the social worker's the individual. Both practitioners actually worked with the child in the context of a group, but respondents usually only saw one side of this, and this usually the other practitioner's group context where they saw negative effects for the individual child. Thus, the nine teachers (20%) who spoke of the social worker's focus on the family tended to see this as at the expense of the child, eg.

"Social workers go overboard to identify with parents and their problems to the extent that sometimes they don't put the needs of the child first. They try so hard to be friends with the parents." (Class T D2)

Social workers, on the other hand, saw this difference as positive and as providing them with a wider view of the child, eg.

"Schools treat the person in isolation from the family. Social workers through necessity are expected to have the whole problem before them - child, family and environment." (Senior Y1)

Each group saw the group context within which the other worked with the child as detrimental to the needs of the individual child.

Differences in mode of working often followed from the mention of differences in focus, the one being seen as consequent upon the other. Mode of working was most often expressed in adjectival phrases. The most commonly mentioned difference was that teachers were more practical or positive (9% of teachers) while social workers were more relaxed, tolerant or sympathetic (13% of teachers and 35% of social workers). Some of these social workers suggested

that, in contrast to the relaxed attitude of their own group, teachers were concerned with control and conformity. Teachers, however, viewed themselves as practical or positive, rather than controlling and conformist. Examples of these responses were,

"Very much so. Teachers look at problems generally in a fairly positive way. Social workers are aware of constraints and constrictions and look at life in a rather negative way." (Class T E)

"The teacher controls the classroom and the child is included in the class. The social worker is concerned more with the individual and the family. This creates a major difference to do with control, conformity and emphasis on the school as being of major importance." (BG W4)

A less often mentioned difference (2 social workers and 3 teachers: 8% and 7% respectively) was the teacher's lack of personal involvement compared to that of the social worker. This was couched in terms of teachers using the restrictions of the school day to avoid greater involvement,

"There are bound to be differences. Social workers are more personally involved. Teachers leave things to one side - it's not my problem, leave it till 3.15. If it is very serious, get the AHT and take it out of the teacher's hands." (Class T L2)

"I think the majority of teachers I know don't see too far past the school. On a personal level they are not interested in being involved in anything outside school as a 9-5 job. Social workers are more directly involved." (BG Z2)

Some respondents thought that differences in the way teachers and social workers saw things could not be attributed to membership of an occupational group, but was dependent on the particular individual concerned (6% of teachers and 19% of social workers), and a few emphasised that differences were both necessary and useful. Only two social workers and one teacher thought that teachers and social workers essentially saw things similarly.

In summary, both teachers and social workers thought that they saw things differently. This was mainly due to the differences in focus necessitated by the different contexts within which they worked, which led also to differences in mode of working. In general, each group perceived the effects of the working context to be deleterious to the way in which the other profession worked but not to their own.

Section 4: Characteristics of social workers and teachers.

Data from the semantic differential link with the previous section. Here respondents rated each other's profession on a series of characteristics which included phrases similar to those used by respondents when commenting on differences in mode of working (see Section 3 above). Semantic differential items also incorporated aspects of professional status and orientation. For a full description of the items and their analysis see Chapter 2 (page pp.62-64) and Appendix 1 (page 310). Table 3:15 (pages 119-20) shows the the results of the factor analysis of the semantic differential.

When factor analysed, responses to the semantic differential revealed three distinct factors. The first comprised items concerning strictness, encouraging conformity and directiveness.

This factor is therefore comparable to the controlling/relaxed dichotomy mentioned by respondents in relation to the question "Do teachers and social workers see things differently?". The factor has been given the title "professional hardheadedness", and both teachers and social workers perceived teachers as higher on this factor than social workers. Something not apparent from the semantic differential but which can be inferred from the discussion on page 97 above, is that hardheadedness had a different meaning for teachers and social workers, being seen in a positive light by teachers and more negatively by social workers.

The second factor comprised items related to commitment, caring and professionalism and has therefore been titled "committed and caring professionalism". Here, social workers rated both groups similarly, but teachers saw themselves as more committed and caring than social workers. On factor 3, which included items on "sensitive co-operation" each group rated their own profession higher.

The semantic differential results, particularly when the notion of hardheadedness is seen as having different meanings for each group, suggest again, that differences in mode of working were perceived by respondents.

A further characteristic which may be linked to mode of working is suggested by responses to the "most and least serious" task given to interviewees after they had completed the checklist. Respondents were asked to select the six most serious problems from the checklist, and then the six least serious, and to give reasons for their choices. When the reasons given were inspected, they could clearly be categorised according to their child-centredness or task-centredness (Tables 3:11 and 3:12, page 117). Both child and task-centredness were evident in each group. However, an interesting difference occurs in the type of reason proffered.

Among child-centred responses to the "most serious" task, many more social workers (69%) than teachers (18%), suggested that problems were serious because they were symptomatic of underlying difficulties. This difference in emphasis is a possible explanation for the far higher percentage of social workers choosing as most serious the two classroom behaviour problems of withdrawn behaviour (42%) and frequent weeping (77%). See Table 3:10 (page 116) for the items chosen as most and least serious.

In the "least serious" part of the task, both teachers and social workers gave child-centred responses suggesting that the difficulty was a normal part of a child's development - 16% of teachers and 21% of social workers.

Task-centred reasons related the seriousness of the problem to its relevance for the agency. Again, for the most serious items, the type of task-centred responses differed between the practitioners. For social workers, the most frequently cited reason was simply that the problems were appropriate for social work intervention (50%). Teachers' responses showed two distinct, and opposing, trends. The majority of the teachers giving task-centred reasons (29%) focussed on the problem's seriousness in relation to its effects on the school, including effects on other children and difficulties presented to the teacher in handling the problems. A further 16%, however, gave task-centred responses of a different order, saying that the seriousness of the problems lay in their being beyond the influence or control of the school. The existence of two opposing kinds of task-centred responses indicates that among teachers there was a contradiction in priorities between problems that created difficulties of management in the classroom, and those that affected the child perhaps more profoundly but not in a way amenable to help through the teaching task. Thus, some teachers saw problems affecting their task in school as most serious while others saw as most serious those difficulties not approachable by the school.

Looking at the task-oriented reasons for least serious problems, the proportions are reversed. Overwhelmingly, teachers saw least serious problems as those dealt with in school (70%), while 16% said that they were least serious if they were not the responsibility of the school. Teachers were divided between perceiving importance to the teaching task as a criterion for "most" serious and as a criterion for "least" serious. Problems involving classroom management were most serious for the teaching task but least serious because they could be dealt with in school. Such contradictions were not apparent among social workers' responses which indicated more of a shared perception that the problems affecting the school and dealt with in school were least serious.

An interesting difference occurs in the "least serious" task, for a further category of responses was found among social workers but not among teachers. These have been categorised as "sociological explanations". Five social workers (21%) suggested that problems were due to a difference in culture between the family and the school and four that it was the school system itself which generated difficulties. Such items were therefore not seen as intrinsically problematic. As no reasons of this kind were proffered by teachers, it suggests a further difference between the two groups in ways of looking at the world.

In summary, differences existed in respondents' perceptions of their relative position on the characteristics of committed and caring professionalism and sensitive co-operation. Although both saw teachers as more hardheaded than social workers, this is likely to have had negative connotations for social workers and positive ones for teachers. Both groups were at times task-centred and at times child-centred but social workers were far more likely to view children's difficulties as symptomatic of underlying difficulties and some used sociological explanations for behaviour, in a way not apparent among teachers.

Section 5: Negative stereotyping.

A final set of data relating to inter-personal perceptions was culled from spontaneous remarks made during interview. As these were general comments made about the other profession and were invariably negative, they are categorised as negative stereotypes. Among teachers, the comments were focussed on two aspects of social workers, their physical appearance and their mode of working. Five teachers (11%) made comments on appearance and 7 (15%) on mode of working. The following are examples of teachers' negative stereotypes of social workers,

"Quite a number of social workers are of the hippy brigade and this doesn't give you confidence in them whether or not they are good social workers. I've seen them dirty, untidy, with dresses down to the ground, no stockings, dirty toenails, sandals. I feel this can't give the people you are supposed to be helping much confidence. Maybe I'm just old-fashioned. The average social worker doesn't look professional - slovenly, sloppy, untidy." (HT B)

"Professionally, I would avoid them like the plague. Teachers are in a traditional establishment with order etc. Social workers don't conform in dress etc. They're less formal in dress and language. Physically they appear not as caring although their attitude may not be like that. I would describe some I've seen in the children's Home as weird; up in the clouds." (Class T K1)

"My idea of a social worker is weird - nosying about"
(Class T G1)

"Teachers have an image of social workers - I've been guilty of it myself. They have the image of it being all

talk and no do." (Class T F2)

The comments focussing on appearance were based on some actual experience of social workers. The teachers tended to equate outward appearance with professionalism, making judgements as to the social worker's proficiency according to the acceptability or otherwise of her dress. The comments on mode of working were characterised by uncertainty as to social work role couched in negative terms.

Social workers' stereotypical views of teachers were concerned with characteristics and modes of working, particularly the narrowness of teachers' views and their propensity to make value judgements. 30% of social workers made such comments, eg.

"They are inclined to be a bit punitive and see things in terms of school issues rather than wider ones." (BG Z4)

"You walk into a staffroom and prejudice seems to know no bounds. Teachers work very much from a personal value base all the time." (Senior W1)

"Teachers categorise all sorts of performance meaninglessly." (BG W5)

Both groups thus made generalised and negative statements concerning the way in which the other professionals presented themselves and practised, although the number of respondents making stereotypical comments was not high. Each group focussed on different aspects of the other, teachers being concerned with lack of professional presentation and affected by their uncertainty as to the nature of the social work task, while social workers made judgements about the judgements made by teachers.

Section 6: Conclusion.

The major areas of consonant and dissonant perceptions can be summarised as follows:

(a) consonance: teachers were mostly involved with behaviour problems evident in school; social workers were mostly involved with welfare problems; teachers dealt with less serious problems and social workers with more serious ones; teachers mostly provided help of an emotional nature; social workers were involved primarily with families; differences in focus existed with teachers concerned with education and social workers not, teachers working with the class group and social workers with the family group; teachers are more hardheaded than social workers.

(b) dissonance: both groups expected the other's involvement in areas not accepted by that group; conversely, each group perceived itself as having a wider range of involvement than the other anticipated; similarly, in relation to the nature of involvement, each profession perceived itself as having a wider remit than the other knew about; social workers expected teachers to pass on information as a means of helping children; each profession perceived the group context of the other as a more negative feature of practice than in their own case; hardheadedness was seen as positive by teachers but not by social workers; teachers saw themselves as more committed and caring than social workers did; each profession saw itself as more sensitively co-operative than the other; social workers were concerned more than teachers with behaviour difficulties as symptomatic of deeper problems; social workers held sociological concepts to explain problems as situationally defined; social workers saw teachers as narrow and operating on value judgements; teachers saw social workers as presenting in an unprofessional manner.

Other aspects of the relationship between the two groups have been revealed through the analysis of inter-personal perceptions. Both groups lacked detailed knowledge of the spheres of involvement and nature of involvement of the other. This was exacerbated by the existence of a chain of referral with the school at the beginning and social work at the end. The system of referring on by passing problems up this chain meant that distance remained fixed between the two agencies. A parallel system of passing on problems existed within the schools. Teachers were uncertain about both the school's part in working with children's difficulties once they were passed on, and the role of the social worker. Social workers were less uncertain but their perceptions did not necessarily accord with those of teachers. Teachers held two differing perceptions about the seriousness of problems with their concern with task conflicting with that of the needs of the child. This was not so for social workers whose task was overtly concerned with more serious problems.

One factor which has been clearly shown from the foregoing discussion to underlie the existence of dissonant perceptions between social workers and teachers, is lack of knowledge about the other person's remit. For instance, where teachers thought that social workers dealt with inadequate clothing and social workers were less likely to say they did, the mismatch in perception is clearly the result of teachers' lack of knowledge. However, it also has a further component, related to a difference in the meaning that the idea of inadequate clothing held for members of each group. One reason for teachers suggesting that social workers would deal with inadequate clothing is that teachers saw this as a serious welfare problem, and the remit of the social worker was involvement in serious problems. For the social workers, however, inadequate clothing was not so serious; it held a different meaning for them. This difference can be defined as one of value, taking the definition of the term as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or or converse mode of conduct or end-

state of existence". (Rokeach 1973, cited by Reich & Adcock 1976, p.18). Teachers and social workers differed as to the extent to which they perceived adequate clothing as an end-state worth pursuing.

The difference in value placed on clothing is further exemplified by the stereotypical comments of teachers which focussed on social workers' seeming lack of attention to standards of dress and presentation expected by teachers. Other value differences are indicated in the other areas where respondents differed in importance placed on children's problems. For instance, parent-condoned absences were seen as more serious by teachers while unexplained absences were more often seen as serious by social workers. This indicates an underlying value difference relating to desired end-states which could be inferred as "it is preferable that parents do not act against the school" (teachers) versus "it is preferable that parents know that their children are not at school" (social workers). Teachers and social workers also differed as to the extent to which they valued education and the importance placed on the child's experience in school, both of which held less value for social workers.

Two underlying causes of dissonant perceptions can thus be identified, lack of knowledge of each other's work and differences in values held by practitioners. These themes will be taken up in Chapter 7.

TABLE 3:1

Percentage of social workers mentioning agencies as involved in checklist items.

n=26

<u>agency</u>	<u>item</u>																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
School	15	96	88	50	15	81	81	96	12	96	73	62	12	73	35	65	92	81
Social work	46	12	31	73	46	12	35	4	73	19	42	58	96	15	100	19	23	19
Health	-	-	8	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	-	-	-	35	4	-	-
DHSS	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Police	-	4	-	42	73	-	-	-	73	-	-	-	36	62	15	-	27	-
Reporter	-	4	-	12	23	-	8	-	35	-	-	46	-	23	19	-	19	-
Attendance	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	27	-	-
Child Guidance	-	8	73	8	-	4	-	23	-	31	27	-	-	4	-	-	-	27
Youth & Community	-	-	-	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Community Groups	-	-	-	4	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education Authority	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Voluntary Orgs.	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	8	-	-	-
Councillor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Psychiatrist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
None	12	4	-	4	-	15	8	-	-	4	8	-	-	-	-	15	8	-

NB. For content of checklist items see Table 3:3 page 109.

TABLE 3:2

Percentage of teachers mentioning agencies as involved in checklist items.

n=46

<u>agency</u>	<u>item</u>																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
School	30	96	98	50	26	91	44	87	46	97	70	22	13	74	30	46	91	57
Social work	80	-	4	22	9	2	9	-	13	4	4	9	70	7	72	9	2	17
Health	17	-	9	30	-	-	-	11	-	-	48	-	-	-	63	-	7	4
DHSS	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Police	7	-	-	48	85	-	-	-	72	-	-	2	39	50	7	-	11	-
Reporter	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	17	2	-	2	-	-	-
Attendance	-	-	-	-	-	-	93	-	-	-	-	91	-	-	-	65	-	2
Child Guidance	-	11	57	2	2	4	-	26	2	46	15	4	2	9	2	-	13	30
Youth & Community	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Groups	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Education Authority	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	2
Voluntary Orgs.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	8	-	-	-
Councillor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Psychiatrist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
None	4	4	-	7	4	7	7	9	4	-	2	-	9	7	-	13	9	2

NB. For content of checklist items see Table 3:3 page 109.

TABLE 3:3

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
school involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWs</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	96	96
6. rudeness and defiance	91	81
10. disruptive behaviour	96	96
14. damaging school property	74	73
17. stealing from other pupils	91	92
3. withdrawn behaviour	98	88
8. falling behind in school work	87	96
11. frequent weeping	70	73
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	43	81
12. condoned absences	22	62
16. arriving late every day	46	65
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	57	81
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	30	15
4. glue-sniffing	50	50
13. wandering the streets at night	13	12
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	30	35
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	26	15
9. stealing from local shops	46	11

TABLE 3:4

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
social work involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	$\frac{\%Ts}{n=46}$	$\frac{\%SWS}{n=26}$
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	-	11
6. rudeness and defiance	2	11
10. disruptive behaviour	4	19
14. damaging school property	6	15
17. stealing from other pupils	2	23
3. withdrawn behaviour	4	31
8. falling behind in school work	-	4
11. frequent weeping	4	42
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	9	35
12. condoned absences	9	58
16. arriving late every day	9	19
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	17	19
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	80	46
4. glue-sniffing	22	73
13. wandering the streets at night	70	96
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	72	100
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	9	46
9. stealing from local shops	13	73

TABLE 3:5

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
attendance service involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWs</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	-	-
6. rudeness and defiance	-	-
10. disruptive behaviour	-	-
14. damaging school property	-	-
17. stealing from other pupils	-	-
3. withdrawn behaviour	-	-
8. falling behind in school work	-	-
11. frequent weeping	-	-
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	93	31
12. condoned absences	91	23
16. arriving late every day	65	27
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	2	-
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	-	-
4. glue-sniffing	-	-
13. wandering the streets at night	-	-
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	-	-
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	-	-
9. stealing from local shops	-	-

TABLE 3:6

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
health agency involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWS</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	-	-
6. rudeness and defiance	-	-
10. disruptive behaviour	-	-
14. damaging school property	-	-
17. stealing from other pupils	7	-
3. withdrawn behaviour	9	8
8. falling behind in school work	11	-
11. frequent weeping	48	27
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	-	-
12. condoned absences	-	-
16. arriving late every day	-	4
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	4	-
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	17	-
4. glue-sniffing	30	12
13. wandering the streets at night	-	-
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	63	35
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	-	-
9. stealing from local shops	-	-

TABLE 3:7

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting reporter or hearings involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWs</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	-	4
6. rudeness and defiance	-	-
10. disruptive behaviour	-	-
14. damaging school property	-	23
17. stealing from other pupils	-	19
3. withdrawn behaviour	-	-
8. falling behind in school work	-	-
11. frequent weeping	-	-
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	2	8
12. condoned absences	17	46
16. arriving late every day	-	19
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	-	-
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	-	-
4. glue-sniffing	2	12
13. wandering the streets at night	2	-
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	2	19
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	-	23
9. stealing from local shops	2	35

TABLE 3:8

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
police involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWS</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	-	4
6. rudeness and defiance	-	-
10. disruptive behaviour	72	73
14. damaging school property	50	62
17. stealing from other pupils	11	27
3. withdrawn behaviour	-	-
8. falling behind in school work	-	-
11. frequent weeping	-	-
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	-	-
12. condoned absences	2	-
16. arriving late every day	-	-
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	-	-
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	7	-
4. glue-sniffing	48	42
13. wandering the streets at night	39	36
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	7	15
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	85	73
9. stealing from local shops	72	73

TABLE 3:9

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting
child guidance involvement for checklist items.

<u>item</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%Sws</u> n=26
group 1: classroom behaviour		
2. bullying	11	8
6. rudeness and defiance	4	4
10. disruptive behaviour	46	31
14. damaging school property	9	4
17. stealing from other pupils	13	-
3. withdrawn behaviour	57	73
8. falling behind in school work	26	23
11. frequent weeping	15	27
group 2: attendance		
7. unexplained absences	-	-
12. condoned absences	4	-
16. arriving late every day	-	-
group 3: school/home contact		
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	30	27
group 4: welfare problems		
1. inadequate clothing	-	-
4. glue-sniffing	2	8
13. wandering the streets at night	2	-
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	2	8
group 4: offences outside school		
5. vandalism in local community	2	-
9. stealing from local shops	2	-

TABLE 3:10

Percentage of teachers and social workers suggesting checklist items as "most" and "least" serious.

<u>item</u>	<u>most serious</u>		<u>least serious</u>	
	<u>%T</u> n=44	<u>%SW</u> n=26	<u>%T</u> n=37	<u>%SW</u> n=24
group 1: classroom behaviour				
2. bullying	11	15	41	42
6. rudeness and defiance	23	-	57	67
10. disruptive behaviour	32	12	16	33
14. damaging school property	20	4	22	29
17. stealing from other pupils	16	15	30	30
3. withdrawn behaviour	27	42	24	13
8. falling behind in school work	9	-	43	71
11. frequent weeping	27	77	16	8
group 2: attendance				
7. unexplained absences	16	31	27	33
12. condoned absences	25	12	22	25
16. arriving late every day	2	-	84	67
group 3: school/home contact				
18. parents do not respond to invitations to discuss child's learning difficulties	30	19	30	42
group 4: welfare problems				
1. inadequate clothing	32	15	30	50
4. glue-sniffing	73	73	5	4
13. wandering the streets at night	61	92	5	8
15. evidence of physical maltreatment at home	93	100	-	-
group 4: offences outside school				
5. vandalism in local community	48	35	8	13
9. stealing from local shops	27	27	22	13

TABLE 3:11

Reasons given for "most serious" choices. Percentage of respondents.

<u>reason</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=44	<u>%SWS</u> n=26
(a) child-centred		
physical/emotional effects	57	51
future consequences	23	21
symptomatic of underlying problems	18	69
(b) task-centred		
problem affects school	29	4
not a school problem	16	8
a social work problem	-	50

TABLE 3: 12

Reasons given for "least serious" choices. Percentage of respondents.

<u>reason</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=37	<u>%SWS</u> n=24
(a) child-centred		
normal phase of development	16	21
(b) task-centred		
can be dealt with in school	70	42
not responsibility of the school	16	-
easily dealt with	-	8
(c) sociological explanations		
cultural	-	21
function of school system	-	17

TABLE 3:13

The nature of teachers' involvement in helping children with social and emotional difficulties. Percentage of respondents.

<u>type of help</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=46	<u>%SWs</u> n=26
educational	37	4
emotional	59	50
social	15	4
with family	4	4
handling behaviour/attendance	20	4
physical needs	4	4
passing information to social worker	2	27
back-up to social work	-	4
monitoring situation	-	8
nothing/very little	7	23
don't know	-	-

TABLE 3:14

The nature of social workers' involvement in helping children with social and emotional difficulties. Percentage of respondents.

<u>type of help</u>	<u>%Ts</u> n=26	<u>%SWs</u> n=46
educational	-	-
emotional	11	46
social	-	12
with family	50	69
handling behaviour/attendance	2	4
physical needs	7	12
financial/housing	4	23
passing information to school	2	-
back-up to school work	2	4
monitoring situation	15	12
formal intervention/legal aspects	4	8
removing child from home	11	38
liaising with other agencies	7	8
helping school to contact parents	2	-
nothing/very little	9	23
don't know	22	-

TABLE 3:15

The semantic differential - characteristics of social workers and teachers. Results of tests of significance of difference among respondents' perceptions.

<u>factor</u>	<u>significant *</u> <u>at .01</u>	<u>description</u> <u>of result</u>
1. Professional hardheadedness		
T's perceptions of T and SW	yes	Ts see Ts as more hardheaded than SWs
SW's perceptions of Ts and SWs	yes	SWs see Ts as more hardheaded than SWs
Ts and SWs perceptions of Ts	no	No sig. difference in way Ts are perceived
Ts and SWs perceptions of SWs	no	No sig. difference in way SWs are perceived
2. Committed and caring professionalism		
T's perceptions of SWs	yes	Ts see Ts as more Ts and committed and caring than SWs
SW's perceptions of Ts and SWs	no	No sig. difference in way SWs see Ts and SWs
T's and SW's perceptions of Ts	yes	Ts see Ts as more committed and caring than SWs do
T's and SW's perceptions of SWs	no	No sig. difference in way SWs are perceived

cont...

TABLE 3:15 continued.

<u>factor</u>	<u>significant</u> * <u>at .01</u>	<u>description</u> <u>of result</u>
3. Sensitive co-operation		
T's perceptions of Ts and SWs	yes	Ts see Ts as more sensitively co-operative than SWs
SW's perceptions of Ts and SWs	yes	SWs see SWs as more sensitively co-operative than Ts
T's and SW's perceptions of Ts	yes	Ts see Ts as more sensitively co-operative than SWs do
T's and SW's perceptions of SWs	no	No sig. difference in way SWs are perceived

* All are one-tailed tests of significance

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNICATION

Introduction.

This chapter focusses on the patterns of communication found among the schools and area teams in the sample. Data from the semi-structured interview questions on general liaison are used to formulate a description of communication patterns. Issues arising from this description are then discussed. The chapter is divided into the following sections: description of liaison procedures and the contexts in which contact was made; issues relevant to information sharing; the role of the class teacher in inter-agency communication; conclusion to the chapter.

Section 1: Liaison procedures and their context.

Two types of contact were in evidence among the area teams and schools; contact between individual social workers and schools over a particular child, and more general contact unrelated to specific cases. These will be discussed separately in this section. As only the first occurred with any frequency or regularity, it can therefore be said that the type of liaison generally practised by all the area teams and schools in the sample was contact between individual social workers and schools in respect of specific children known to both.

1. Contact over the individual child.

(a) Liaison procedure.

The contact person in the area team.

School liaison was the remit of the basic grade social worker who communicated with teachers over particular children on their case loads. Senior social workers possibly met teachers at child care reviews and case conferences but otherwise, like area officers, had little or no direct contact with primary schools.

The contact person in the school.

Unlike the area team, school organisational structure was such that the person dealing with the child most directly ie. the class teacher, was not the one who liaised with the social worker. Instead, the headteacher, in all but two of the schools, was the contact person. This meant not only that contact was lopsided in organisational terms with the highest tier in the school (headteacher) relating to the lowest level in the area team (basic grade social worker), but that the two front-line workers, basic grader and class teacher, had no direct line of communication. The class teacher's contact with, and knowledge of, the social worker and her work with the child was dependent upon the stance taken by the headteacher, who could facilitate direct contact between social worker and class teacher or withhold this opportunity. She could also keep the class teacher fully informed of the contact she herself had with the social worker or she could provide selective information or none at all. Practice among headteachers differed in the extent to which class teachers were included in liaison procedures. The relevance of class teacher participation will be discussed below.

Exceptions to the general pattern.

In school A there appeared to be direct contact between one class teacher and the social worker, not channelled through the head who thought that there was no contact. As the class teacher and social worker were personal friends, the only two such in the study, their liaison pattern may have been a function of this friendship. The headteacher was also relatively new to the school and the liaison was a longstanding one which may have been known to the previous headteacher.

School L was the only one in which liaison had been delegated to the assistant head, although the headteacher thought that this function would have to revert to himself in the near future due to reduction in staffing levels. There were three assistant heads in this school which probably facilitated the delegation. In the majority of schools, the AHTs had very little knowledge of liaison procedures and of existing contact with social workers as this was generally not seen as the remit of the assistant head.

Reasons for the headteacher being the contact person.

The most obvious reason for the headteacher taking responsibility for liaison is that of practicability. The class teacher's working day is spent in the classroom, with no time allocated for work other than direct teaching. She has no ready access to a telephone. Incoming calls are directed to the headteacher who is not teaching and has an office with a phone on her desk. Where additional staff were available to take classes, so releasing the class teacher from the classroom, these difficulties would be somewhat eased but were most often cited as the reason for lack of contact between class teacher and social worker. However, there are more ideological reasons. Firstly, the notion that the task of the

class teacher is only to teach, such that any interruption to this work is seen as detrimental, was held by many teachers in the sample. A teacher called to the telephone or to speak to a visiting social worker is not only not fulfilling her duty to her class, but is also doing something that is not her job. The headteacher, in protecting the class teacher from such interruptions, is enabling her to carry out her job properly. However, the headteacher could also be said to be maintaining personal control over outside liaison by engaging in it herself. This is discussed by Coulson (1976) as attributable to the tradition of the primary headship as a patriarchy. Coulson suggests that such a patriarchal mode of management is no longer relevant in contemporary primary education. The apparent reluctance amongst the headteachers in the sample, both to delegate liaison duties to assistant headteacher who were not bound by classroom duties, and to facilitate the inclusion of class teachers in liaison, indicates its continued existence in primary schools. Headteachers in the sample differed in the degree to which they involved their teaching staff in liaison, and this was not always in direct relation to the availability of extra covering staff. This suggests that practical difficulties can be overcome if an orientation favouring such practice exists.

b) Contexts in which contact was made.

Referral from school to area team.

No formal referral procedures were in use and referral was by telephone from the headteacher to whichever social worker was on duty at the time. One area officer said that written referral was preferred but, although its possibility was mentioned by two social workers from the team, it was not an expectation among the team members interviewed. All three teams operated a similar system with regard to allocation of referrals. The referral was passed from the

duty worker to a sub-team where a decision was made as to whether or not a social worker would become involved in the case.

These procedures were well understood by headteachers and most assistant heads but not by class teachers where there was a high level of uncertainty. Only 7 of 21 knew the manner in which referrals to social work were made. When respondents were asked if the school made referrals to the area team, a further 7 class teachers did not know.

The level of uncertainty amongst class teachers, and the ambivalent position of assistant headteachers who were aware of referral procedures but took little part in them, suggest that the responses of headteachers will give the clearest indication of the reality of referral. Of the 12 heads, 5 said that they did not make referrals to social work, 3 that they did and 4 that they did but only occasionally. This gives a strong indication that referral from these schools took place infrequently where it took place at all. Social work responses on referral related to primary schools in general and not to those in the sample but they corroborated this notion, with the highest number (14 of 26) saying that schools did refer but only occasionally.

Respondents were not specifically asked for reasons for referral practices but some did give indications which can be described as of two types. Firstly, low referral rates were attributed by 2 social workers to uncertainty in schools as to the remit of the social work department, eg.

"They don't refer as they don't know what we deal with."

(BG Y1)

More commonly, both social workers and teachers suggested that schools tended to refer through a third agency rather than straight

to social work. Four headteachers and two social workers gave such comments, eg.

"Immediate referrals go to child guidance or the school doctor or possibly to the reporter." (HT J)

"They refer to their own system - special education and child guidance." (Senior W1)

These responses corroborate the idea of the chain of referral discussed in Chapter 3. They suggest also that teachers tended to define the problems that were referred outside the school in terms of either health or child guidance rather than social work. It is possible, of course, that problems appropriate to social work did not exist in some of these schools, as was suggested by HT C,

"The type of child here we don't need to refer to social work."

However, he went on to say that pupils in the school did have social workers but that social work contact predated the child's attendance at school. This contradicts his suggestion that social work problems did not exist in the school and rather indicates that the initiation of social work contact was something outwith the experience of the school. This illustrates a situation common to several of the schools. Headteachers said that when they phoned the area office to make a referral, they usually found that there was a social worker already involved with the family or with the child. Five headteachers mentioned this. Thus referral tended to be redefined as "phoning to see if there is a social worker involved".
eg,

"If there is a problem we find out if the child is on the social work records. Usually the child is." (HT K)

As these comments were included in discussion of referral, it becomes clear that in very few cases were "genuine" referrals made

from primary school to area team ie. requests for social workers to investigate a case hitherto unknown to them. Such referrals as did take place were usually in relation to a child already known to social work. The term referral in this thesis will therefore include any first approach from school to social work on behalf of a child, whether or not previously known to the area team.

There was a strong suggestion from social workers that teachers tended not to refer on until a problem had reached crisis proportions. The area officer from team Z said,

"Referrals are generally appropriate as they are so infrequent that they are in extremis."

Senior Y3 gave an anecdotal account of an occasion where a school had not referred on a child obviously at risk,

"We felt that the school might be worried about the children and we did contact the school, and they had a lot of information that indicated to them that the children were at risk. I was surprised that they had not contacted us. Their tolerance of problems must be high. They hadn't done anything else."

Several social workers said that referral from schools was facilitated where there was some kind of personal contact, eg.

"Referrals are more likely if they get to know you." (BG W4)

Social worker informing school of involvement with pupils.

From the data described above, it seems that children of primary

school age with social workers were only infrequently referred from the schools. Social work involvement was often only discovered by the school when teachers became concerned about a child and thought that social work was the appropriate agency. Responses described above suggest that a particularly high level of concern had to obtain before the school contacted the area team. Unless their concern about a child encouraged the school to contact the area team, teachers relied on social workers to inform them of their involvement. Co-operation between the agencies could obviously only occur where each knew of the other's involvement.

Social workers did not as a matter of course inform schools of their involvement with children. Only one social worker (BG Z3) said that he would do so. Rather, the reverse was true with social workers maintaining that they did not inform schools unless obliged to do so. The two occasions where they were generally agreed that such an obligation existed were when requiring a school report for a children's hearing and when inviting teachers to attend a review for a child in care.

In other cases, social workers started from the standpoint that information regarding their involvement would not be given to the school unless there were particularly cogent reasons for doing so. This standpoint was based on three inter-related notions which dictated the amount and quality of information shared in this and other areas. These were the notions of confidentiality, stigmatisation and the assessment of what the school needs to know.

The principle of confidentiality was evoked by 11 social workers as a reason for not informing the school of involvement with a child. Of these, 5 said that they might tell the school with the parents' permission. Confidentiality as a major issue is discussed below (page 146).

The second reason was a fear that teachers would misuse information and stigmatise children. Although only 4 social workers spoke of it in this context, the notion recurred in all discussion with respondents about sharing information with schools. BG W3's response provides an example of this viewpoint,

"It may be stigmatising if teachers know when it is not necessary. My experience is that children are singled out by teachers. They check on general behaviour and children are looked at more closely."

The method by which social workers decided whether or not it was necessary to give some information to the school, was to assess by the nature of the problem, what the school needed to know. Social workers said that where a problem was home-based or concerned with particular difficulties of the parents, it would not be appropriate for the school to know of social work involvement. Where a problem was perceived as affecting the child's behaviour at school, three social workers said that they would give the information even if it was basically a home-based difficulty, eg Senior Z3,

"If I felt that the child was going through a bad time or going to be under stress, I would let the school know so that they could be aware there might be difficulties."

This was a minority viewpoint with most social workers suggesting that only where the problem was specifically defined in terms of behaviour at school would it be appropriate for the school to know of their involvement.

Teachers, on the other hand, thought that home difficulties were almost inevitably reflected in school behaviour, even when they were of the type seen by social workers as most clearly irrelevant to school eg. financial or marital problems. They said that only if they knew of a difficult home background could they make appropriate allowances for the child,

"If a child has problems outside school - and they are reflected so often inside school - the teacher should know. If you don't know there are problems at home you would be too severe on a child." (Class T L1)

Teachers can worry about children in their care who are exhibiting behaviour indicative of some kind of difficulties at home. The knowledge that a child has a social worker can allay such worries. AHT L3 said,

"We should be aware if there have been problems previously so if anything arises you know it has already been noted and dealt with."

And, of course, the knowledge of social work involvement means that the school can contact the social worker as soon as teachers become concerned rather than waiting until a situation reaches crisis point and warrants a referral, or directing a referral through a third agency who may also be unaware of the involvement of social workers. It was this kind of inter-agency blindness that was heavily criticised in the events leading to the death of Maria Colwell (see Chapter 1, page 6).

Feedback.

The third type of contact made over individual children was feedback, either after a referral or request for action from the school, or after a hearing for which the social worker had asked the school to report on the child. Overwhelmingly, teachers were unhappy with the frequency and quality of feedback from social workers.

Most teachers thought that after referral from the school, there

was onus on the social worker to come back to the school with information as to action taken, and there was a general feeling that this was inadequately done. Again, because of the monopoly of headteachers on the access to information, it is correct not to take class teachers' responses into account here, as information could have been reaching heads but not filtering through to class teachers. Of the twelve headteachers, 2 were happy with feedback from social workers and for one it was irrelevant as this headteacher had had no contact with the area team. Two said that they received information when attending child care reviews and the other 7 said that the amount of feedback varied between individual social workers, between teams and in the same team over time,

"A lot depends on the social worker and how big his case load is. They very often will phone back and they call in sometimes. But others don't even let you know if they've done anything. At the moment its pretty good in this area but in other areas schools don't even know that the social work department exists" (HT J)

Social workers often agreed that they did not provide as much feedback as they should, and 8 social workers admitted to this, either personally or generally, eg.

"Social workers should do more phoning but it doesn't always happen as we're too busy. I feel guilty at not contacting X school more often but I don't feel like that about other schools" (BG W3)

The majority of social workers (15 of 26) said that the amount and type of feedback varied according to one or other of three factors - the nature of the school, the nature of the child's problem and individual social work style. This last accords with teachers' perceptions of the idiosyncratic nature of feedback. Senior Y3 said,

"Some social workers are better than others at working

with schools"

The implication from social workers' responses that amount and type of feedback was up to the individual social worker, and the recognition among some social workers that it was not carried out as frequently as it could have been, demonstrates that a lack of priority was afforded this form of inter-agency liaison. Senior W2 said that his team used to have a formalised procedure, a standard letter to send out to schools, but that its use had "fallen away". This indicates an absence of importance placed on such a procedure and the inter-agency relationship it promoted.

Some social workers made deliberate judgements in individual cases according to their perceptions of the nature of the problem, and these assessments were similar to those mentioned above in relation to informing the school of social work involvement (page 128). Seven social workers mentioned the nature of the problem as a condition upon which feedback depended. There was general consensus that where a problem was overtly concerned with the school - notably non-attendance or disruptive behaviour - feedback would be provided,

"If there is a clearcut situation like truancy the school has expectations and we fulfil them. If it's things happening in the family there will be less contact." (BG 25)

Where the problem is less clearly related to the school the social worker was engaged in a process of assessment as to how much knowledge it was appropriate for the school to have,

"It depends on what kind of case it is and what the school needs to know. We're into value judgements here I know." (Senior W2)

The problem, even if referred from the school, may be redefined by the social worker such that school liaison does not seem relevant,

"I couldn't guarantee that even initial feedback is made. It depends on what is going on in the case and the focus of the case may be different so school liaison is not seen as important." (Senior Z3)

The third deciding factor in the question of whether or not to give feedback and what information to give, was the nature of the school. Three social workers indicated that assessments were made in terms of the school's (effectively the headteacher's) sympathy towards the child and towards co-operation with the social worker. Thus BG Y1 said,

"Sometimes it depends on the school; on how much co-operation you feel you will get from the school. There are differences between schools."

And Senior Z3,

"It depends...on the way the problem is referred and the kind of thing the school says - whether they are understanding or angry and derogatory. If the latter, the social worker will find it more difficult to keep in touch."

Confidentiality was mentioned again in this context by three social workers. Also, the school's attitude as perceived by the social worker was related to mistrust as to the manner in which the school would handle information, and the fear of stigma was again apparent,

"...there is a difficulty because of stigma. It depends on how you view the teacher and if you can maintain

confidentiality, and if it would be adverse to the child if the teachers don't understand issues." (Senior Y1)

Social workers tended to make a distinction between initial and ongoing feedback, that is between an immediate response to a referral to say whether or not action had been taken, and continued liaison over time. It was the general opinion that initial feedback was provided more frequently than ongoing contact, except in the case of children subject to child care reviews to which teachers were invited at intervals of approximately six months. This was particularly seen to be true after children's hearings when schools were notified of the outcome by the reporter's department but where any further contact was dependent upon the stance of the social worker concerned. Some basic grade social workers said that when a child was put under supervision they would inform the school of the social worker's name. This response from BG W5 shows a typical situation of such good intentions not always carried out,

"I would phone up the school personally as a matter of common courtesy - and it keeps the relationship going. Though sometimes I forget as there are so many."

Being informed of the social worker's name was a tacit invitation to make contact if the school felt the need, giving the school an opening for continuing liaison. However, this did not always happen and some headteachers even said that they were not informed of the outcome of the hearing itself, and did not know if there was continued social work involvement. Surprisingly, among social workers also there was confusion over whether or not schools were officially told of the outcome of a hearing, eg.

"Social workers send out forms with the results of hearings to schools but sometimes the forms don't come to the social workers." (BG W5)

"There is no procedure set down for feedback - it depends on the social worker being in touch. I hope it happens but wouldn't put money on it. There is no official feedback from the reporter - schools might like this."
(Senior Z1)

The data on feedback after hearings thus again demonstrate the idiosyncratic nature of procedures and the general lack of priority given to such forms of liaison.

There were some comments made by social workers as to the importance of providing feedback to schools. For instance, Senior W2 said,

"Apart from good manners, the school is involved with the problem and should be contacted."

Such comments were few, however, in comparison with those which stressed the need for the social worker to make judgements as to the appropriateness of sharing information with the school.

2. Contact unrelated to specific children.

Amongst the sample were found instances of a different kind of contact, a more generalised liaison unrelated to specific children. Three modes of such contact were in evidence: the existence of a liaison social worker for one of the schools, social workers taking part in school in-service training, and teachers and social workers meeting outside the school to discuss topics of mutual interest.

a) The liaison social worker.

In area team Y, one of the social workers (BG Y1) with a client at school E, had elected to become liaison social worker for that school. The area officer of the team had herself been a school liaison worker and was interested in closer contact with schools but it was not actual team policy to have liaison workers,

"There is no team policy but in most of the patches you will find that there is someone linked to each of the schools." (AO Y)

The researcher did not find this to be the case, although only a few social workers were interviewed from only two of the three geographical patch sub-teams. No mention was made in the second patch of social workers operating as liaison persons with the three schools in the sample or with any others but in the patch in which BG Y1 worked, attempts at liaison work of this kind with three schools were mentioned. Only one of these was still in operation. It seemed, from this small amount of data, that one patch sub-team was more concerned with, and involved in, general liaison with primary schools than the other. Even within this sub-team, liaison work was seen as something adopted by individuals on their own initiative and if they were particularly interested in it. The Senior (Y1) said,

"Initiative for contact with school E was that of the social worker herself. She wanted to do it."

Liaison work with school E had been in train for only a few weeks at the time of the research and therefore its effect on co-operation between the agencies was not yet evident. It had instigated, however, even in such a short time, an opening up of channels of communication where previously the school had been

reluctant to communicate due to some earlier negative experiences of social work. The social worker found on her first visit to talk to teachers that there was "incredible anger" about social workers among the teachers, and class teacher E reported,

"The social worker was told at the meeting by the AHT that the past record of social workers has not been great."

Against this background, liaison work was initiated when the social worker, having a client in the school, and finding the headteacher "resistant" to her attempts at involvement with the school, wrote suggesting a formal link, to which the head responded positively. The form this link should take seemed to be decided by the headteacher and was that the social worker should attend monthly staff meetings. Only one had taken place at the time of the research and the next was scheduled to include the social worker and a colleague presenting formally information on the role of the area team social worker. So far, this was seen by the headteacher as a means of improving the level of communication with social workers, particularly feedback from the area team and the communication to social workers of what he saw as important,

"In the past they have been remiss here [providing feedback]. This is one of the reasons for encouraging the social worker to visit every month...The letter from Miss..... sparked off better liaison. We felt that too much time was being wasted on minor things and when we wanted a serious investigation we didn't get it." (HT E)

The assistant head (early years) also saw the new liaison work as leading to improvements in a previously poor relationship between the school and the area team. She thought that contact would improve if,

"..they came in and out of the school. Miss...is apparently going to do that. I had a frank talk to her and relations should improve." (AHT E)

However the only class teacher in the sample from school E was sceptical about the ameliorative effects of this type of contact,

"There has been a young social worker - a peripatetic girl I think - comes now to staff meetings. I was surprised to find that she didn't say anything about specific children. I thought she would come armed with case notes. I think she said to the headteacher that she would give a general talk on the functions of the social worker next time. This is too general. I'd rather she came about a specific child to the teacher for 10 minutes...I don't see any benefits from having a social worker attached to schools especially if she is going to give little talks!" (Class T E)

The social worker also, but for different reasons, perceived this type of liaison as inadequate. She said,

"The headteacher sees us as having a limited role. I go to the staff meeting once a month and have a free rein there but I think a vast amount of explanation is needed in telling the staff how we work. There is anger about the lack of feedback." (BG Y1)

Although feeling that her work in the school was constrained by the limited expectations of the headmaster, she was certain that the notion of a single liaison worker was an improvement on the usual system,

"In the whole department, teachers are dealing with

twenty different social workers which they find confusing. Its much better to be one person - one link person - a go-between who can refer on." (BG Y1)

One element which would make her job difficult in this particular school was the fact that her area team was not the only one which served the school. That this was not clear to teachers was evidenced both by the way in which they generalised their anger over previous experiences to all social workers no matter from which team, and by class teacher E's remarks about bringing case notes for specific children, something which would be impossible where the children were clients of a different area team. The social worker was well aware of this difficulty,

"I think it would be good to have some contact with other teams so that we could convey a consistent policy. I'm going to write to the area teams and get comments on how they deal with referrals. At the moment, if the problem is with another team, I can't do anything about it." (BG Y1)

She was going to have to liaise with other area teams as well as with the school in order to provide effective social work/school liaison.

A second social worker (BG Y2) from the same patch gave the following description of her own experience as a liaison worker with another school not in the sample, and of an abortive attempt at liaison with yet another school:-

"For a while we were attempting to do school liaison and I was doing it at Bridge Street primary school. Often children were referred to me for advice on what to do or to ask if the social work department knew them. It's been dropped at the moment due to pressure and the

reorganisation of the patch. After talking about a child the headteacher would say that she didn't need to refer the child now as her fears had been allayed just by talking about it to the social worker. I did the liaison for two full terms. We didn't have formal meetings but arranged a suitable time to come down to the school. I was not asked to staff meetings. I tried to go to the school every two months - a bit infrequent. I was feeling my way. This type of liaison may be adequate in a small school. I would have liked to have felt more at home in the school and been able to talk to other teachers - I only saw the headmaster. In between meetings, the school did feel more able than previously to phone up the school. Some schools don't want to know about liaising. This makes us feel discouraged about continuing with the idea. It was attempted with St. Benedicts by writing and saying that we are happy to be consulted or have some contact but it has not been used at all. We did have one child there at the time."

This social worker saw some positive results from her work, notably the success of the consultative aspect which helped the headteacher to decide on the appropriateness of referral and encouraged him to phone the area team. However, as with BG Y1, she thought that liaison procedure was dictated by the headteacher and was confined to contact with him, and she did not feel particularly welcome in the school. Contact was maintained for only two terms which may have meant only three visits altogether.

The patch Senior's comment was,

"Liaison with schools has always been needed and we have always been aware of it. But priorities depend on the social worker who must be committed. At Bridge Street school, the social worker ran out of time, steam and energy." (Senior Y1)

These experiences suggest that liaison work with schools was seen as a difficult, time-consuming task requiring a high degree of commitment from the social worker concerned and again dependent on the interest of the individuals and not on team policy, although there was clearly a general interest in school liaison held by the area officer and prevalent in one patch sub-team. The experiences described above also show the importance in any liaison work of the attitude and policy of the headteacher. Thus, the individual interest of both school and social work personnel is crucial in setting up and maintaining such contact.

b) School in-service training.

From each area team, one social worker spoke of occasions when a social worker had gone to a primary school and given a general talk on social work practice. In two cases these talks had been arranged as part of a two-day in-service training period for teachers at the beginning of the school term. These occasions are described as follows:-

In relation to school F,

"There have been one or two quite positive things like the opportunity to discuss with teachers at their extra preparation days at the beginning of term. This initiative developed as a result of negotiations about an ongoing relationship with the headteacher.. The suggestion of addressing the teachers came from me. We suggested also that different agencies could discuss roles etc. generally. This got turned into a competitive thing with the liaison committee of the local secondary school. It came out as very formalised and involved other agencies in too much resources and did not get anywhere."

(Senior Y2)

Class T F1 gave this account of the experience,

"We did have a talk here when two guys from the social work department talked about problems and liaison. The idea is good but I don't think anything changed. They made us aware that they were available. It was a community relations exercise - worth it though nothing came of it. It depends on their role and how they see ours." (Class T F1)

Similarly, in relation to school D, Senior W3 said,

"Bill went to school D to discuss with teachers and some of the parents about problems social workers deal with. We didn't feel it went well - the request for someone to speak was vague and the purpose of it vague. It would be better if we sorted out exactly the topic and how it should be aimed, even if only from this side." (Senior W3)

These comments show that the opportunity to make contact through formal talks to teachers was not seen as entirely successful. There was no mention of any follow-up exercise after either occasion, neither of which was perceived as an effective attempt to improve communication.

c) Contact outside the school.

Social workers from each team mentioned occasions when schools had been invited to attend meetings on topics of mutual interest. In

each case it was felt that the schools had not availed themselves of this opportunity to forge closer links. In team W, senior W2 spoke of monthly community lunches in one secondary school attended by representatives from schools and the area team,

"At Lamberton secondary school we run community lunches once a month and the schools are invited. Primary schools don't come with any regularity. Mr.P. from school C comes occasionally. It's a forum to get social workers and teachers talking and sharing perceptions and views and sort out misunderstandings. There are often misunderstandings about functions. Lack of knowledge can lead to a lot of frustration."

A second senior (W1) from that team said that a good relationship with a primary school not in the sample had developed from a similar monthly meeting,

"Dock Lane school is different. They are motivated to make contact. The headteacher is keen to have association with the team. It started through the need to refer on and we had a forum at lunchtime monthly at which we encouraged doctors and teachers to come. The head at Dock Lane came but not the one from school A. There is a difference in awareness among the staff - the headteacher at Dock Lane is socially aware. The forum stopped due to the motivation in the team sinking. Energy disappeared from the social work side." (Senior W1)

The area officer from this team did not know about this series of meetings and thought that it must have taken place before he joined the team. He had had previous experience in another area team of monthly meetings attended by teachers from primary schools, one benefit of these being that teachers were able to get to know at least one social worker by name. However, he thought that the practical use of such meetings could be overrated,

"Finding topics is difficult and being honest with people - saying that teachers are rubbish. It often gets just tedious. Meetings as a kind of panacea for everything doesn't work. Just having a person's name is important - knowing who to ask for helps." (AO W)

The usefulness for the area officer of the meetings lay in the opportunity to make personal contacts, which was generally seen by respondents as an aid to liaison.

Teams Y and Z had also had experience of inviting teachers to attend meetings but with little response from primary schools,

"We have organised things like seminars on NAI and bi-monthly panel meetings but the primary schools don't come. We have made the effort." (AO Z)

"Four or five years ago we invited primary teachers up to the team and only two came. The meeting was not good; it didn't go off well. We are about to have a meeting on NAI - an inter-professional workshop - to which primary and nursery teachers are invited, but school E didn't want to know. We have tried ways to get in touch with other professions." (Senior Y1)

In a later communication with senior Y1 she reported that in fact only one teacher had attended the meeting on NAI.

Pervading these descriptions is a sense that social workers perceive the failure of primary teachers to attend meetings when invited as an indication of general lack of interest in communication and co-operation. There was a sense in their comments of resentment because their overtures had been rejected, and that once rejected they would not try again.

However, from the standpoint of the schools, a similar sense of rejection was apparent, firstly when referrals or reports were not acknowledged by feedback from social workers, and secondly when invitations from teachers were seen as not responded to appropriately. This latter was exemplified in relation to school L where the headteacher perceived as rejected his attempts to initiate a meeting between school and area team,

"There is not good liaison - we've made a lot of suggestions on this. One and a half years ago I wrote to the social workers asking for a meeting to enlighten us about how to go about general organisational procedures, how we might better ease communication and better benefit from them and respond better to their needs - general organisation of social work. There was no reply. Later on there was a letter asking me and other schools to have a meeting. I said yes but it was then cancelled as other schools were not interested. I wrote and said I was still interested and got no reply. I saw the area officer six months ago and he said he would reconvene a meeting - nothing. I have spoken to various social workers and they agree but still nothing happens. Liaison is now piecemeal." (HT L)

This headteacher had also invited social workers to engage in a more informal type of liaison, coming into school to chat to teachers over coffee etc. and this also had had no response. The team was the same one whose area officer (AO Z) was quoted above saying that primary schools were not interested in attending meetings. Personnel from both agencies perceived that the efforts they made to forge closer links as not complied with, and they tended to conclude that the other profession was therefore uninterested in improved liaison and that further overtures would be pointless.

Section 2: Issues pertaining to information-sharing.

In addition to the questions on referral procedure, feedback etc. respondents were asked about information-sharing in general - what kind of information was shared and how far teachers and social workers could share information. All the themes mentioned above were apparent also in answers to these questions, with some additions, and this section is a general overview of the issues mentioned in relation to information-sharing. The issues cluster under four headings: criteria for sharing information; perceived purpose of sharing information; level of satisfaction with information shared; the effect of personal contact on information-sharing.

Criteria for sharing information.

The criterion most often cited was that of confidentiality although its relevance for information sharing was perceived in different ways by respondents.

It was the information held by social workers that was most often seen as confidential and it was in relation to the social worker sharing information that confidentiality was usually seen as an issue. Although some teachers and social workers saw both agencies as having confidential information, there was a general feeling of one-sidedness, an inequality in the relationship between the agencies due to the social worker's possession of confidential information. The divulging of social work information was therefore something to be negotiated. Awareness of this led to some feeling of resentment among teachers, eg.

"We ask for information but they don't divulge it as it's confidential. We feel our information can be given to

other professionals but they don't." (HT L)

Amongst teachers, half the respondents said that all information could be passed on and half that certain kinds should not be shared. Eleven of the thirteen teachers who thought that information should all be shared commented that confidentiality between social worker and client was something that the teacher could share in. This could be called "group confidentiality", a term used by one area officer. An example of this kind of response comes from class teacher Al,

"We should pass on all information. You can't keep anything back. As long as its strictly in confidence. The social worker is bound by the confidentiality thing but if the teacher is involved there should be complete sharing of information." (Class T Al)

Some teachers said that social workers and themselves could share information because they were both responsible professional people, the implication being that confidentiality between client and social worker (or teacher) could be extended to the other agency by virtue of its members' professional status, eg.

"Social workers keep things back and it depends on the social worker. As a professional myself, I don't broadcast information - same as the medicals, social workers shouldn't keep things back. Both of us are professionals and need to know as much as possible." (HT H)

An opposing view of confidentiality was suggested by a smaller number of teachers who thought that information given in confidence by the client to the social worker should be respected and not shared, even with other professionals. HT J said,

"..I understand their restraint if they have been given information in confidence." (HT J)

Social workers were also split in their attitudes towards confidentiality. However, the larger number of them saw it as a clearcut barrier to sharing information. They made comments such as,

"I would like to think that we could share most things but you get information from parents and other professionals in confidence and you can't pass it on. You build up a relationship with parents so they will tell you things. You are flouting responsibility if you pass it on to anybody." (BG Z1)

A smaller number of social workers said that confidentiality need not be a problem. However, unlike teachers, they did not mean that they could openly share all information, rather that the constraints of confidentiality could be circumnavigated, firstly by including the clients either by telling the parents that information was going to be disclosed or by encouraging the parents to give information to the schools themselves. Secondly, some social workers thought that they were able to pass on enough information within the bounds of confidentiality, mainly by presenting it in a generalised way.

Confidentiality was mentioned by most respondents as an important factor in the sharing of information between the agencies. However, while social workers tended to see it as a reason for not giving information, teachers were more inclined to a view of group confidentiality - that they could share in the confidential relationship between client and social worker.

Given the constraints of confidentiality, the main concern of respondents was the adoption of criteria not for sharing all information but "enough" information. This involved an assessment of how much equalled enough and the most commonly cited measure for this was "relevance". Teacher responses included these examples,

"The social worker doesn't pass on to the headteacher severe cases - prison records etc. This is correct. They give relevant information eg. that this is a violent person." (Class T G)

"Important things should be shared both ways. The social worker should only pass on what is helpful for the child in the school situation." (HT D)

And typical social work responses included,

"I would pass on particular things that were related to the concern of the school eg. attendance." (BG W3)

"I'd share as much as possible. There is client confidentiality but I'd be willing to put teachers in the picture as much as possible about family circumstances relevant to the child. I'd pass on just what was directly relevant to the child. I wouldn't chatter on..." (BG Y)

However, such a measure is highly dependent upon the perceptions of "relevance" held by those using it. Although both teachers and social workers employed this yardstick, the kind of information regarded as relevant by one agency was not necessarily seen thus by the other. The information seen as important in this context was most often that held by the social worker and it was the social workers who made assessments as to the information needs of schools. As was found in respect of informing schools of social worker involvement, here again social workers took it upon

themselves to decide the relevance of information to schools. There was no suggestion that schools played any part in decisions as to their own needs as the following comments demonstrate,

"Confidentiality is not a problem. The school gets told what it needs to know." (BG Z3)

"It depends on what is necessary for the school to understand." (BG W2)

This would perhaps be unimportant if both teachers and social workers shared a similar view as to the school's needs. And in a sense they did as both groups thought that anything affecting the child in school should be shared. The difference arose in what was perceived as affecting the school and the child's life in school. In general terms, teachers thought that any problem in the child's life was relevant to school whereas social workers were more discriminating as to which problems were appropriate, along the lines that general domestic difficulties were usually not relevant and ones to do with the child's behaviour were. This difference is illustrated by the following quotations which show a dissatisfaction as to the amount of information thought by the social worker to be relevant,

"They should share information; should pass on the fact that the child has a difficult home background. Only after something has happened do you find out that something is going on at home and you have been too hard on the child and are expecting too much. There are reasons for his behaviour."

(AHT A)

"I would like to know more than we get. It takes a while to get to know the home circumstances so you lose time. Home background affects learning to such an extent."

(Class T M)

Teachers and social workers thus disagreed as to the extent of information that was relevant to the child in school and therefore important for the school to know.

Similar to the criterion of relevance was that of "the best interests of the child". This and other "well-intentioned" phrases were employed by both teachers and social workers as a rationale for the sharing of information,

"We should share and work on the basis of having the child's interest at heart." (BG W1)

"There is nothing that you wouldn't pass on, not if everyone is working for the child. If the social worker knows then the school should know if there are problems at home." (Class T B)

However, again, the language masked crucial differences among respondents. Whereas most teachers thought that having the interests of the child at heart entailed a high degree of pooling of information, for some social workers it meant quite the opposite. This was particularly true where they perceived schools as potentially misusing information to label, stigmatise or otherwise damage a child, and in such cases they saw the best interests of the child as served by the withholding of information. The possibility of teachers misusing information led social workers to make assessments of individual schools and teachers before deciding to provide information,

"It depends on the individual relationship and your knowledge of the teachers. Some teachers you would not tell as much as you would others. Some teachers are more insightful and sensitive to family problems than others; teachers have different perspectives on their role." (BG W2)

"With a non-co-operative school I am careful as I am not sure what they do with the information. Sometimes they feed it back to the child and use it to highlight difficulties or to stigmatise the child." (BG Y1)

Thus, although both teachers and social workers employed the same well-intentioned language, the meaning for co-operation could be very different in each agency.

A final criterion, and one used only by social workers, concerned the way in which they perceived their position in the triumvirate of school, client and social worker. Two opposing perceptions were apparent, leading to differing notions on the role of teacher/social worker communication. One view was that social worker and teacher should not communicate without involving the parent, for to do so takes control and responsibility away from the parent. The other view was that close communication between teacher and social worker was useful as a means of preventing the parent from manipulating the practitioners and from playing off one against the other. Only three social workers spoke of the relationship between parent, school and social worker in this way, although in general they had a far greater awareness than teachers of the place of the parent in inter-agency liaison. This was clear from the high number of times that social workers mentioned parental involvement in relation to the checklist items.

In summary, both teachers and social workers used a set of criteria to determine the amount and type of information that should be shared. The criteria were those of confidentiality, relevance, "the good of the child", potential misuse of information by teachers and the place of parents in inter-agency communication. Although used by both agencies, the criteria held different meanings for each group, with teachers in general expecting a greater sharing of information than social workers did. As it was usually information

held by social workers to which the criteria were applied, their view prevailed and they made decisions as to the amount and kind of information which schools should receive.

The purpose of sharing information.

Respondents were not asked to specify their reasons for wanting information from the other agency but many did so in the course of discussion on information-sharing. As the focus of such discussion tended to be information held by social workers, it is not surprising that it was teachers who most often proffered reasons for wanting information. Reasons given were all variations on the theme of information being necessary to enable teachers to help the child. Four variations were evident - firstly, a general statement that information helped the school to help the child; secondly, three ways in which the teacher was thus enabled to help, by understanding the child, by being less punitive towards him than they would otherwise be, by preventing damage to the child. The four quotes below provide an example of each variation,

"The social worker should give you an idea of the background and reasons for certain behaviour so you can react better and help." (Class T J1)

"They are not under any oath; I don't feel that they should keep anything back. The more information we have the more easily we can understand and be supportive and treat the child properly in an educational way." (HT G)

"It would make you more aware if you knew the child had a social worker. Even if you're not told what the problem was you might treat the child differently; not reprimand him so much and add to the burden. You can do a lot of

moral teaching and tell stories that will help the child. Its easier to do this in the infants." (Class T L3)

"Social workers possibly feel that it doesn't benefit the child for the teacher to know ; that it's not necessary for the teacher to know. But the teacher is not involved just in the academic development of the child, she is responsibe for social development and could say things that are damaging to the child in class." (AHT L1)

Each of these reasons relates to the handling of the child in school. The ways in which teachers perceived themselves being able to help the child involved adjusting their handling of the child to take into account his difficulties at home. It is interesting that social workers saw the main work of teachers in regard to children with emotional and social problems as giving emotional support (see chapter 3, page 90), yet they did not think that in order to do so teachers should have access to the type of information on family circumstances held by themselves. Teachers did think that access to such information was a necessary condition for help through more appropriate handlng of the child. These teachers perceived the acquisition of information as lessening the potential of teachers to damage children by saying the wrong things and handling them badly, in contrast to the common view of social workers that teachers in possession of such information were more likely to inflict damage by labelling and stigmatisation.

Six social workers made comments suggesting awareness of the teachers' point of view, for example BG Y2 said,

"Teachers get angry as they are expected to do a good job with children without information. I will share provided the information is not going in the records." (BG Y2)

For this social worker, it was possible to circumvent the misuse of

information by keeping it out of written records, although other respondents thought that verbal information was equally open to misuse.

With regard to information passing from school to area team, five social workers mentioned its usefulness, suggesting that it provided another picture of the child or was a source of information about the family not already known to the social worker,

"They generally say how they find him or her. Its just good to get someone else's picture. The child could be completely different at school." (BG Z1)

"Schools know children and they often tell the teachers a lot about what they are feeling etc. Often there is classroom discussion about families." (BG W3)

These comments were a recognition of the equal value of information held by the school. None of the social workers, however, suggested that such information might be confidential to the school.

Satisfaction with information shared.

Respondents were divided as to whether or not they found satisfactory the amount and type of information provided by the other agency. The following are examples of comments from teachers suggesting that adequate information was passed on by social workers,

"It depends on the department. Good ones give quite a bit of information on what they are doing. They do observe

professional secrecy in things they don't think we need to know but they try to put our minds at rest and show us that something has been done so we needn't worry." (AHT F)

"Social workers tell us whether the parents are capable of budgeting; do they drink; their background; the kind of house they live in; what back-up they are getting and what the school can do to help." (HT F)

These teachers were describing the practice of a "good" area team and the assistant headteacher was suggesting that not all were as forthcoming. Most teachers who said that information was satisfactory qualified their answers in some way to suggest that this was not always the case. For instance, HT M thought that contact when made was good but that it was not always there,

"I get anything I ask for once contact is made. Once it's made it's very good. It's a sin of omission rather than commission." (HT M)

Other teachers saw the information they received as generally inadequate,

"They are fairly forthcoming but I think they tell me what is good for me. They think we're not professionals and likely to give away information. My general feeling is that we're not informed as much as we should be." (HT K)

And some felt dissatisfied because there was no information at all coming from social workers,

"Social workers are not giving anything. They only phone or come to enquire to get information. There is a lack of mutuality." (HT L)

This perception of social workers as only making contact to request information was mentioned by several teachers and corroborated by two social workers as follows,

"I probably would contact the school to find out what they know." (BG Y4)

"I make a habit of phoning the school when I am doing a report." (BG Z2)

From the teachers' point of view then, there was evidence of satisfaction where information was felt to be forthcoming in a way that satisfied the school's own perceived needs ie. giving the school some idea as to the nature of the difficulty such that they could see how to help the child, and generally "putting our minds at rest". Dissatisfaction resulted from the feeling that social workers were deliberately withholding useful information or were merely making contact to request information, not actually sharing any themselves.

The fact that no social workers said that they would not be given information from the school lends weight to the notion that in the negotiation of information-sharing, social workers held the greater power. They could withhold information on the grounds of confidentiality etc. whereas teachers, although possibly unhappy at being asked for information, did not withhold it.

Even though schools were generally seen to provide information, social workers made adverse comments about the quality of information received from schools. Some such comments centred round a lack of confidence in the judgements of teachers, eg.

"There is a qualitative variable, a conjectural or personal opinion, like what constitutes inadequate

clothes. The moral judgements schools sometimes make are ludicrous eg. because fingernails are dirty or shoes not polished... Information regarding parents is sketchy - if the parents keep in contact with the school, the school tends to see parents in a favourable light even if they are not good for the child." (BG W5)

"It varies from case to case...the smell of the child always comes up." (Senior Z1)

Others focussed on an element of blandness apparent particularly in reports for hearings,

"No I'm not satisfied [with hearings reports]; they leave a lot to be desired. They are very non-eventish, three-liners. You wonder what teachers' perceptions are - if they know the children in their class. They tend to generalise. Some are excellent." (Senior W1)

Schools were seen by social workers to vary in respect of the information provided much as social workers were seen to vary by teachers. The difference in response pattern was that social workers were seen to withhold facts so that it was the quantity of information that was thought to be lacking while information from teachers was perceived as lacking in quality.

Personal contact.

The most frequently mentioned method of facilitating and improving information-sharing was personal contact. Four social workers spoke of personal contact as a means of establishing a relationship of trust with the other agency within which greater information

would be shared than would otherwise be the case. For example, Senior W2 said,

"We are franker with schools than social workers lead you to believe. You're building up a relationship and you give bits that you didn't think you would." (Senior W2)

It was also mentioned in relation to facilitating referral (see page 127). The theme of personal relationships as an element in co-operation will be taken up again in the next chapter.

Section 3: The role of the class teacher in inter-agency communication.

One salient feature of the communication patterns described above is the low level of participation among class teachers. This was evident in all aspects of communication from knowledge of, and involvement in, referral procedures, to contact with social workers and sharing in the information received from social workers.

The lack of involvement in referral procedures was discussed in Section 1 of this chapter and also previously in Chapter 3. The role of the class teacher was to inform the headteacher of her worries over a child and take no further part in referral to other workers. Class teachers used such phrases as "it's out of my hands" and "it's up to her" indicating both lack of knowledge and lack of involvement. This passing-on of the problem within the school parallels that occurring between the school and the area team (as described above in chapter 3) so that communication operated in a chain of class teacher to headteacher and headteacher to area team.

Once liaison had been initiated with the social worker, contact between class teacher and social worker was at the discretion of the headteacher. This was true despite the commonly expressed idea among respondents of both agencies that class teachers and social workers should have contact. 31 of the 46 teachers and 19 of the 26 social workers agreed to this, with 7 teachers disagreeing and 7 teachers and 6 social workers saying that it would depend on circumstances.

The reason given for the advocacy of class teacher/social worker contact was that it was the class teacher who was dealing with the child every day and who was therefore in possession of the most and best information about him. Both social workers and teachers thought this to be so,

"I think it does help. A lot of children behave differently outside from in the classroom. It's useful from everyone's point of view but basically from the point of view of the social worker and the child so the social worker can build up a better picture of the child - how he relates to peers and how he is thought of in school. This directly helps the child." (Class T A1)

"It's an obvious thing. The class teacher has day to day experience of how the child performs and gets on with other children. In a primary school sometimes a child has the same teacher for a couple of years and the quality of the relationship is crucial." (BG W5)

Not only was the information held by the class teacher seen to be of higher quality because of her proximity to and knowledge of the child, but it was thought that acquiring information directly from the class teacher was preferable to hearing the headteacher's version of the class teacher's information,

"It's very important. Class teachers are dealing with the child. Every fixed point in the communication chain distorts it. Instead of the teacher's impressions you get the headteacher's perception of the teacher's impressions." (AO W)

Class teachers also mentioned this in relation to information passing to them from the social worker via the headteacher,

"Yes, the headteacher is not the one who has got the child. I don't want the headteacher's version as she might cut out more information." (Class T K1)

Class teachers gave a further reason for the advisability of communication directly with the social worker when they said that it would help the teacher to handle the child more effectively,

"Yes, it would help the teacher to know just what is going on and this makes it better for the child in the long run." (Class T H)

These responses are similar to those related to information-sharing in general and suggest firstly that these class teachers saw contact with the social worker as a means of providing or of acquiring information, and secondly that the information was preferably shared through direct contact rather than through the medium of the headteacher.

The reason most often cited by teachers who thought that contact between class teacher and social worker was not desirable, was the practical difficulty of creating time for them to meet, and the fact that time taken up in this way was time taken from the teacher's classroom duties. Five headteachers and one class teacher mentioned this, eg.

"The odd social worker sees the teacher on parents night but not generally; they're busy. Yes, a chat between the two would help but time is the problem." (HT G)

Two social workers acknowledged these difficulties and another thought that it was the social worker who lacked the necessary time. Others referred again to the problematic issue of misuse of information, suggesting that talking to the class teacher would not be a good thing where information might be used against the child. In the main, however, both teachers and social workers saw it as advantageous for the class teacher and the social worker to communicate.

In practice, teachers were divided in the extent to which they perceived contact taking place between class teacher and social worker. Five headteachers said there was none, five that it happened occasionally and two suggested that it was fairly frequent. Among assistant headteachers, the nine who said that there was occasional contact made it clear that it was a rare occurrence and depended either on the social worker asking to see the teacher or on a decision amongst the promoted staff that the class teacher should speak to the social worker. Only two said that it depended on the class teacher asking to see the social worker and both these respondents thought that class teachers tended not to ask. AHT A thought that contact between class teacher and social worker might occur without being channelled through promoted staff, as in fact it did in his school.

Given the general tenor of these responses, that contact between class teachers and social workers was rare, a surprisingly large number of class teachers said that they had actually had some kind of contact with social workers - 15 of 21. However, the type of contact varied considerably. Five class teachers had attended meetings (case conferences or child care reviews) although four of

these teachers were from the same school and attended reviews for the same family. Five teachers had had a single meeting with a social worker relating to a particular child and four had had more than one meeting. In respect of the focal children in the study, of the seventeen families, in seven cases the class teacher had met the social worker to discuss the child though in only one case had there been more than one meeting.

Although, on examination, there existed a greater degree of contact between class teachers and social workers than was suggested by some of their comments, there was a general air of dissatisfaction amongst class teachers about their role in liaison. In only one case was the class teacher involved in any ongoing relationship with the social worker. The others who had had contact, had met with the social worker only once or in the context of a general meeting.

One feature which masked the actuality of contact was that often a social worker would say that she had met the teacher, but in fact had spoken to a previous class teacher and not the one currently working with the child. This led to misperceptions about contact between class teacher and social worker. The problem of time and the necessity of taking the teacher away from the class, the most frequently mentioned reason for lack of contact, was not impossible to surmount. Although, obviously, a school well-staffed with assistant heads can provide cover more easily, headteachers themselves can do this if they are motivated to do so, or other temporary measures can be taken. Visits from social workers can be arranged for after school hours. The fact that most headteachers in the sample were willing to allow staff to leave their classes for an hour to take part in this research, showed that they did not find it impossible to provide covering staff when they deemed it necessary. That some headteachers were more willing than others to give the researcher time indicates a difference amongst them that would undoubtedly extend to time allotted for liaison with social

workers. This suggests that the major factor is the difference in headteacher style and priorities. The organisation of the primary school is such that the headteacher can make the decisions as to how much her staff is included in liaison practices.

The power of the headteacher is equally apparent in the third area of class teacher non-participation, the sharing of information given by the social worker. As it was the headteacher who was in contact with the social worker, she had control over the information and could be selective in what was shared within the school. When asked if class teachers were kept informed of communication with the social worker in respect of the focal cases, all but three headteachers said that they passed on all the information. However, although most heads were sure that they shared the information, both class teachers and assistant heads thought that this was not so, eg.

"I don't know. Personally I've never heard anything. Whether the headteacher has I don't know. Teachers are kept in the dark. Information is not coming to the school and if it does, we don't get it." (Class T H)

There is a parallel here between schools perceiving information as not forthcoming from social workers, and within the school, class teachers' perceptions that information was not being shared by the headteacher. This parallel extends further on examination of comments made by the three headteachers who admitted to the selective sharing of information, for they used the same criteria of relevance, confidentiality and misuse of information in relation to their teaching staff that social workers used in respect of headteachers.

The organisational structure of the primary school allows a great deal of flexibility in the way that individual headteachers conduct

liaison with outside agencies. Their beliefs and style therefore determine the part that the class teacher is able to play in communication with social workers, and as a result effects the way in which teachers perceive the social work role in relation to children in their care. The class teachers in this sample had little awareness of and contact with the social workers and were not in a position to engage in the personal relationship acknowledged as an important element in promoting understanding and trust. Through her position as liaison person, the headteacher could either exacerbate or ameliorate this situation.

Section 4: Conclusion.

The foregoing discussion highlights major themes in the communication between teachers and social workers. The most usual pattern of communication was contact between individual social workers and headteachers over individual children known to both agencies. Some communication of a more general nature took place sporadically. Most communication took the form of information-sharing with social work information holding higher status than that of teachers. Criteria were employed to decide how much information to share and teachers generally wished for more than social workers provided. Social workers agreed that teachers passed on information but that it lacked in quality. Social workers held the balance of power in relation to information-sharing as their information was perceived as more confidential. A parallel situation occurred within the school with power residing with the headteacher who, in the role of liaison person, controlled the flow of information to the class teacher. The two front-line workers, basic grade social worker and class teacher, were rarely in direct communication.

CHAPTER 5

CO-OPERATION

Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and evaluate the type and quality of co-operation that existed between members of the school and social work agencies studied. The chapter is divided into two sections each using a different set of data to examine the area. The analysis in the first section is based on data related to the sample of focal children known to both agencies and that in the second section draws on information from the rest of the interviews.

Because of the small number of focal children in the sample, the analysis based on them is highly specific. It is possible that other examples of inter-agency co-operation involving these same practitioners could have revealed different characteristics and the present descriptions can only be treated as a series of cameos. However, if accepted with the above proviso, these can provide a useful insight into the realities of a limited number of co-operative situations.

For the purposes of analysis, the 24 focal children on whom the sample of teachers and social workers was based, have been treated in units of families, which reduces the number of cases to 17. The rationale for this is that in a few instances there were two or more children from one family in the sample. The experiences of each child in the family were essentially the same as regards social work intervention and the co-operative situation was essentially the same due to the same personnel being involved

(except for the class teacher). To have counted each child as a separate case would have over-represented those co-operative experiences in relation to the total sample. Table 5:1 (page 205) shows the breakdown of respondents in relation to the focal cases.

Data relating to the 17 cases have been summarised as case descriptions in Appendix 3 (page 342). These descriptions are based mainly on information from headteachers, class teachers and basic grade social workers for, although assistant heads, senior social workers and area officers were interviewed in respect of the children, they rarely knew much about the cases or about liaison pertaining to them. Where they did submit relevant information, it has been included.

In Section 1 below, the cases are examined in relation to characteristics apparent in the co-operation, some derived from the data and others given features of the situations ie. the type of case, the school involved and the area team involved. Patterns in co-operation are identified. Section 2 considers the meaning of co-operation for the participants.

Section 1: Characteristics of co-operation.

Communication type.

"Co-operation" is defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as "working together for the same end". In order to explore the extent to which the teachers and social workers were working together, data relating to co-operation over the focal cases were examined and, from inspection, features that characterised the co-operation, and were common to the situations, were identified. The first of these pertained to the kind of communication that took

place between the participants. The majority of the cases fell into three types. These are described below and examples given. The remaining cases are discussed on page 174. The way in which each case was categorised is included in the case descriptions in Appendix 3, page 342.

Type 1. Open Channels - Conditions for co-operation established but not used. This includes cases where the teachers and social workers concerned knew of each other's involvement but had had no actual contact, or where the channels of communication had been opened in relation to a previous case such that the practitioners felt able to renew contact if necessary. Cases where there had been very brief telephone contact in the past were also included. Two cases, 11 and 12, came into this category.

Example: Case 11

This child was fostered and the headteacher only became aware both of the fostering and of social work involvement when told by the foster mother on the one occasion she had visited the school. There had been no contact between school and social worker, the latter believing that contact with the school should come from the foster mother. He did not know that the foster mother had almost no contact with the teachers. The headteacher and the social worker were content with the lack of contact but for different reasons: the head thought liaison to be unnecessary as the child was not a problem in school and the social worker for the reason already stated. The assistant head and the class teacher thought that contact would be helpful. There was some confusion in school about the child's family background. Anomalies were apparent, notably the difference in skin colour between this child and other siblings but the teachers

did not know that he was fostered. The child was known by different surnames by the school and the social worker.

Type 2. Emergency contact - One or other of the agency personnel makes contact with the other when an emergency or crisis arises. This would include contact for formal requirements such as children's hearing reports or review reports. There were six examples of Type 3 co-operation among the sample; in two cases (7,8) liaison had taken place over a single emergency and in the other four cases (3,9,14,16) there had been a considerable history of communication over the children and the nature of the contact had changed, and could be said to have decreased, being at the level of emergency contact only at the time of the research.

Example: Case 8

The mother rather than the child was the social work client in this case and the single emergency contact had been initiated by the social worker after complaints by the mother about the school. The social worker had visited the school, met with the class teacher and found that they were both in substantial agreement about the nature of the case. Both parties were content to have no further liaison. The child was presenting no problems in school so the teachers saw no need for communication. This fitted with the social worker's perception that as the child was not the client, there should be no inter-agency contact.

Example: case 9

The child was on social work supervision due to parental

neglect and the case was a long-standing one with a history of inter-agency contact. The social worker was relatively new to the case and it had been the headteacher who had contacted him when he took over, knowing that a change was to take place. The mutual expectation of both was that contact would be made if an emergency arose although the headteacher would have liked contact to be initiated more often by the social worker and for the social worker to provide regular reports. The class teacher had had no communication with the social worker and thought it would be useful in order to help her relate appropriately to the child. The child was not a problem in school and the situation at home at this time was fairly static requiring monitoring from the social worker rather than intervention.

Type 3. Ongoing contact - Contact is made at times other than emergencies by either party and tends to be on an informal basis. Contact is not confined to occasions that necessitate it on a formal level. Four cases exemplified this kind of co-operation. Two of these (10,13) were the two cases where the children were in residential care and the Home staff were involved in liaison with the class teachers while the area team social worker also kept some measure of contact with the head. Case 17 was a very recent one where the conditions for ongoing liaison seemed to be set but it was too soon to assess whether or not it was being carried out. The fourth case (4) will be used as the example.

Example: case 4

This child was on supervision for non-attendance at school and his change to this school had been negotiated by the social worker and headteacher. There was thus a history of contact which had decreased over time from

frequent face-to-face meetings between social worker and headteacher to less frequent but still regular telephone calls from social worker to school. The head had a high opinion of the work done by the social worker. Both were happy with the amount of contact although the social worker would have liked the headteacher to make contact more often instead of leaving it all to her. The class teacher had experienced a relatively high level of involvement in the co-operation as he had had two meetings with the social worker, but he wanted regular meetings and thought that he should have met the social worker earlier.

The three communication types described represent a progression from a low level of contact as in the "open channel" cases where there was virtually no communication, to the highest level of contact in the "ongoing" cases. One major feature which distinguishes the high from the low levels is the investment of time in the co-operation. To some extent ongoing co-operation requires a greater amount of time, although this is not necessarily so as a case with emergency contact only may have a high frequency of emergencies and therefore involve a high amount of time spent on it. The difference in respect of investment of time is rather a difference in use of time. Time spent on emergency contact is of a different order to that put into ongoing liaison - there is a degree of compulsion in the emergency situations whereas the ongoing contact suggests that the workers have chosen to spend their time in this way. Choosing to spend time on liaison implies that the personnel are prioritising this kind of work. In addition to the element of choice, the time spent in ongoing liaison is deployed in a different way. There is a sense in which the emphasis here is on building a relationship between the co-operators over and above co-ordinating the practical measures necessary for emergency intervention. There is thus a qualitative difference in the use of time between low and high co-operation.

Similar typologies have been described by other writers and it may be useful to compare the present data with that found in other studies. Both Bruce (1980) and Davidson (cited in Tibbit 1982) make the same point that co-operation can be seen as a continuum "running from zero to total co-operation and every relationship between professionals could be placed somewhere on this dimension..." (Bruce p. 101) Bruce identifies three types of co-operation in his study of the health service/social work interface. These varied according to level of frankness, regularity and mutuality. He calls his types "nominal", "convenient" and "committed". In nominal cases there was very little contact, no "substantial content" (ibid. p.101), contact was irregular and not face-to-face. The convenient co-operation held greater substantial content but contact was still occasional and limited in scope, being made only when "there were strong reasons for them and when the rewards for co-operation were expected to outweigh the costs" (ibid. p.102). Committed co-operation involved regular, face-to-face and fruitful contact, not related to a balancing of rewards and costs. Bruce found fewer instances of committed co-operation than the other two but suggests that the practitioners engaged in it had greater work satisfaction and provided a better service. This typology, although described in somewhat different terms, is very similar to the one devised from the present research with one major difference. While open channels and emergency contact are roughly equivalent to Bruce's nominal and convenient co-operation, the ongoing communication described here does not correspond to committed co-operation for it does not fulfil all the requirements of total co-operation (see p.184 below), and is therefore less far along the continuum of co-operation than Bruce's examples of committed liaison.

Davidson's typology contains five categories. These are communication/consultation; co-operation; co-ordination; integration/teamwork; merger. Merger occurs when the two parties join to form one organisation and is therefore not relevant in the present study. His other categories are described by Tibbit as follows,

"Communication/consultation: interaction consists of no more than talking together, sharing information, and informing others of decisions and developments of mutual interest.

Co-operation; in which parties agree to common high level goals, but in which the relationship is characterised by a high degree of informality and lack of precision in the operational goals of each service and how they contribute to the generally desired direction;

Co-ordination: arrangements are more formalised and the tasks of each party more defined. Resources are programmed to take account of each other's development plans but there are no sanctions for non-participation in the collaborative arrangements;

Integration/teamwork: where parties act on the basis of common policies and priorities and produce mutually agreed plans, tasks are more precisely defined, and there are clear arrangements through which it is intended action should occur. There is some willingness to concede some autonomy and accept some accountability to a joint structure." (p.43)

A rough equivalence can be seen between Davidson's first three categories and those found in the present study, although some of the characteristics of co-ordination were not true of ongoing contact in this study. Aspects of Davidson's typology such as definition of tasks and taking account of each other's work were only minimally present in any situations in this study. These and the integration/teamwork type indicate the possibility of a higher level of co-operation than that found here and is analagous to what the present researcher has called "collaboration". The way in which the notion of collaboration derives from the data will be described on page 184.

One way in which the present sample differed from the situations described by both Bruce and Davidson, is in the existence of four cases which could not be categorised in respect of communication type as described above, not because they did not fit the typology, but because the respondents did not agree as to the level of communication. This difficulty in categorisation stems directly from the nature of this research as being concerned only with the participants' perceptions of what was happening rather than with objective reality, which could have been identified through reading the case records. However, given the focus on perceptions in the study, it is also particularly interesting to find incongruent perceptions of this nature in the co-operative situations. These cases were all characterised by this incongruity of perceptions between social work and teaching staff as to the level of communication existing between them, and they have therefore been placed in a special category of "dissonant perceptions". The category and an example are described below:-

Type 4. Dissonant perceptions - Four cases were of this type (1,2,5,6). In cases 5 and 6 there had been a history of liaison over the child in which contact had decreased over time. The social worker in each case perceived present liaison to be greater than was experienced by the school. This was also true of case 2 but not of case 1 where it was the school which perceived the higher level. Case 1 was peculiar in that it was the only one in the entire sample where the class teacher was involved in liaison rather than the head, although it is difficult to see that this has any connection with the difference between this case and the others in this category in respect of who saw the communication as greater. In three cases, there had been social work involvement with other members of the family and this may have affected perceptions.

Example: case 6

This child was under social work supervision for an offence. Communication had decreased over the two years of the case to the present situation; described by the headteacher as virtually none with any contact being instigated by the school. The social worker said that contact was made each term by himself. The social worker was more satisfied with the liaison (though not entirely so) than the headteacher. The level of co-operation was seen by the headteacher as type 3 (emergency) and as type 4 (ongoing) by the social worker. Moreover the social worker had suggested a closer general liaison with the school which had not been seen as necessary by the headteacher. He, on the other hand, wished for closer liaison over the actual cases. Each of them wanted some kind of closer contact not acknowledged by the other. The class teacher was worried about the child and had asked for contact to be made with the social worker. Because there had been no response, the school perceived there to be no help forthcoming from the social worker and did not intend asking again.

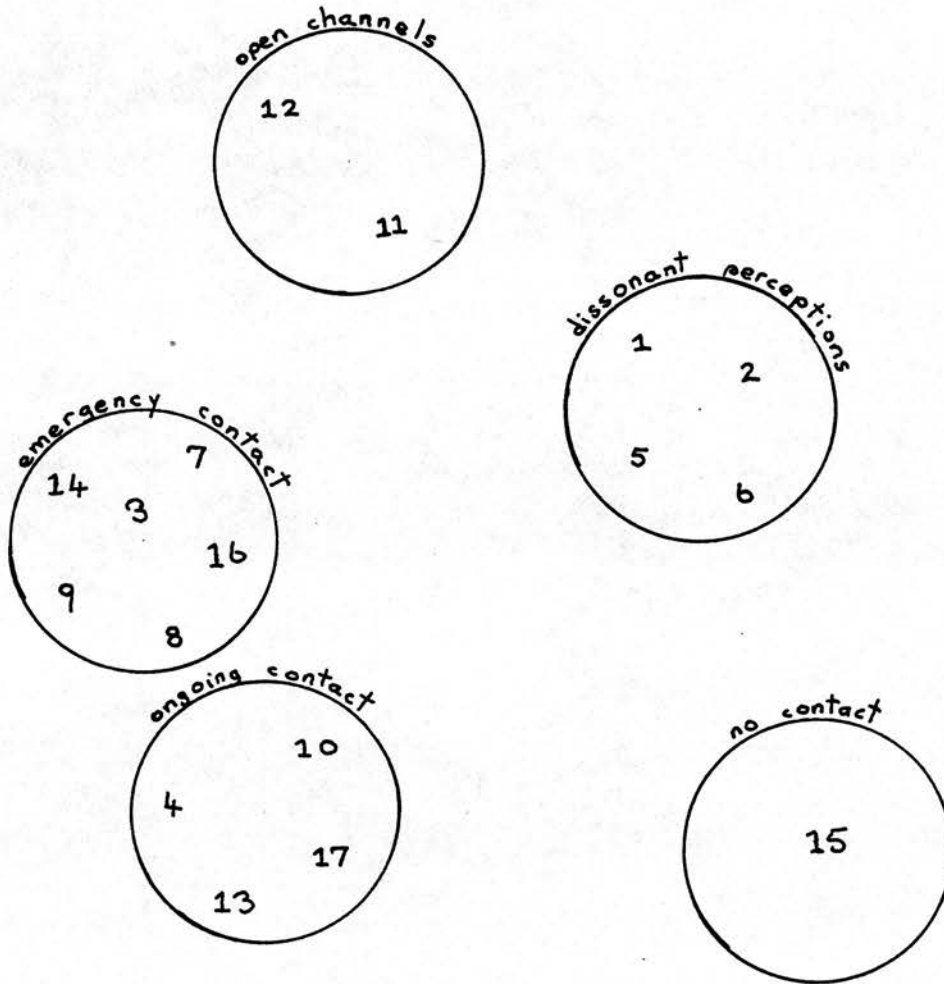
The existence of situations where perceptions differed as to type of communication is evidence of a lack of adequate contact between the parties during which such perception differences could be aired and resolved. The "dissonant perceptions" category also illustrates a major problem in the use of a typology of communication in that it entails the imposition of a static measure on what is essentially a process. Each situation has had to be "freeze-framed" as at the time of the research in order to impose the measure. However, in many cases, there was no communication taking place at the time of the research so that respondents were drawing on their view over a period of time and their perceptions of present liaison may have been compounded by those of the entire history of the case. In a few situations, contact related to a

sibling or feelings about previous social workers affected perceptions.

The categorisation of cases according to communication type is illustrated in Figure 5:1 overleaf. There was one case where there had been no contact and where the school did not know of social work involvement. This case has been categorised separately under the heading "no contact". Figure 5:1 is the first of a series of diagrams in this section which illustrate the characteristics of co-operation and the relationships between them. In each of these figures, the type of communication is represented by a circle. The numbers inside each circle denote the case numbers whose co-operation exemplified the communication types. It is because of the future use of Figure 1 as the foundation on which the other diagrams are built that the categories are arranged non-linearly and with the case numbers in particular positions within the circles. These have no significance for this first figure. Figure 5:2 is not part of the sequence.

FIGURE 5:1

Types of communication in focal cases.



Key: ○ = communication type
1-17 = case numbers

Difficulty type.

In addition to the variety of communication types, the co-operative situations differed in another important way. The cases were characterised by features which seemed to be impediments, or potential impediments, to the practitioners working together. These have been categorised as different types of difficulty and seven examples were consistently found:-

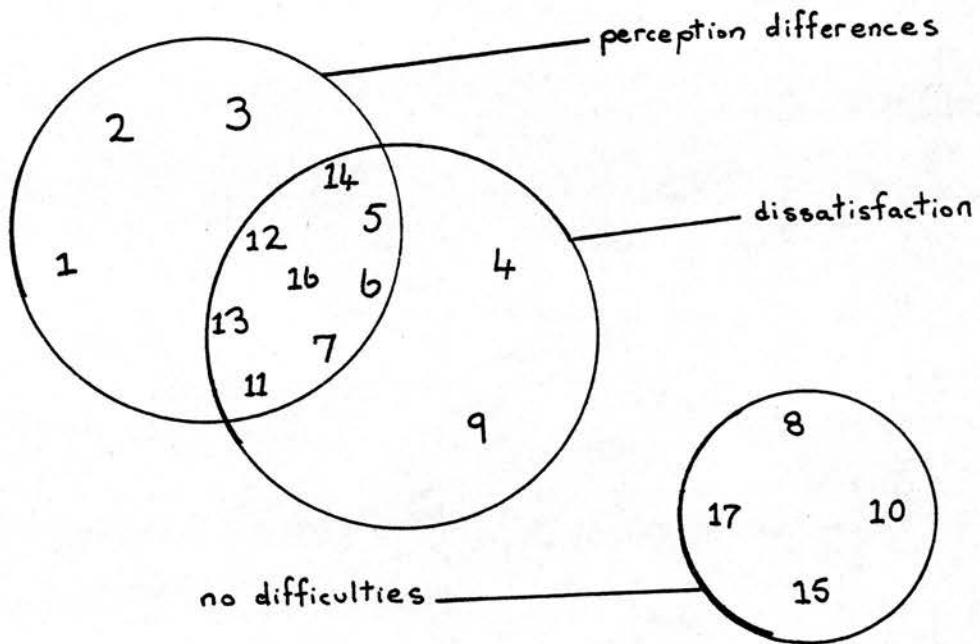
1. Social worker and headteacher disagree over the nature or the handling of the case. (4 cases)
2. Social worker and headteacher differ in perceptions as to the amount and frequency of contact. (5 cases)
3. Social worker unaware of school's anxieties about child. (4 cases)
4. Some confusion in school as to social work involvement with child.(3 cases)
5. Social worker dissatisfied with liaison. (2 cases)
6. Headteacher dissatisfied with liaison. (5 cases)
7. Class teacher dissatisfied with liaison. (10 cases)

The seven difficulty types are not mutually exclusive with several cases exhibiting more than one. The difficulties apparent in each case are documented in Table 5:2 (page 206). The list of difficulties divides clearly into two sub-groups, those involving differences in perception, numbers 1 to 4, and those relating to dissatisfaction, numbers 5 to 7. In Figure 5:2 the relationship between the two sub-groups of perception differences and

dissatisfactions is shown.

FIGURE 5:2

Perception differences and dissatisfaction in focal cases.



Key: ○ = difficulty type
1 - 17 = case numbers

Four categories emerge from Figure 2: the main group of eight cases which had a combination of both types of difficulty; a group of four cases where there are no difficulties; and two intermediate groups of two and three cases respectively, which exhibited only one of the difficulties. An examination of these four groups may suggest variables involved in the effectiveness of co-operation. Comparison of the two groups of cases at the opposite ends of the difficulty continuum is likely to yield the most useful information. The other, more peripheral cases will be discussed first.

(a) Peripheral cases with one difficulty only; cases 1,2 and 13 (differences in perception), cases 4 and 9 (dissatisfaction)

In the cases with differences in perception only, there was no dissatisfaction as all participants agreed (although sometimes for different reasons) that the level of liaison was adequate. In the cases with dissatisfaction only, class teachers wanted to be included in liaison and the headteacher in case 9 wanted more contact from the social worker.

(b) Perception differences and dissatisfaction: cases 3,5,6,7,11,12,,14,16

In these cases the dissatisfactions were clearly connected to the differences in perception and some general patterns emerge. Where contact had decreased over time, teachers were not aware that social workers perceived this to be a natural progression of the case and this caused resentment on the part of the school personnel. Lack of contact from social workers was seen as particularly unsatisfactory where teachers were worried about the child, although class teachers often wished for contact even when

the child was not presenting problems in school. Social worker dissatisfaction was related to the clash in priorities over children which also led in case 14 to dissatisfaction with the level of communication from the school. The practitioners involved in these cases did not seem able to connect with each other in order to resolve the perception difficulties; dissatisfactions led to even less contact rather than more such that, in an extreme example, the social worker in case 14 was going to lift the supervision order on the children in order to stop the headteacher from making such frequent contact with the area office. These cases are thus characterised by a negative spiral whereby dissonant perceptions about the nature of the case or the adequacy of the type of communication promoted dissatisfaction and resentment, which in turn led to decrease in communication between the practitioners. They were not able to break this spiral and negotiate their differences, in order to facilitate an increase in liaison.

(c) No difficulties: cases 8, 10, 15, 17

In three of these cases there had been very little inter-agency contact. Because the children were not seen as problems in school, this was satisfactory to all concerned. In these three cases also, the mother was the social work client rather than the child and the fact that the children were not presenting difficulties in school and the teachers were therefore not looking for help, fitted with the social workers' ideas that schools should not be involved in such cases. In one of the cases, (case 8), there had been one meeting between social worker and class teacher at which they had been in agreement as to the nature of the case and their liaison. In the fourth situation, case 10, there had been considerable contact. The children were in residential care and the class teachers were in contact with Home staff and attended child care

reviews. The area team social worker maintained ongoing communication with the headteacher by popping in to see her occasionally to discuss the family.

From this examination of the cases in terms of difficulties, it can be concluded that problem-free liaison existed where the participants agreed on the level of contact necessary. Where they did not hold congruent perceptions on level of contact, dissatisfactions followed, often accompanied by resentment and retrenched positions. Incongruent perceptions as to amount of contact resulted from a decrease in intensity of liaison over time which was not understood by the school, or from anxiety about the child in school to which the social worker was not seen to respond. Differences in perception as to priorities in the case seemed to cause more social worker than teacher dissatisfaction. This in itself may have also resulted in the less frequent contact from social worker to school about which the teachers were discontented. The high level of class teacher dissatisfaction in the sample suggests the importance of including them in liaison and this is borne out in the no-difficulty cases where there was a higher level of class teacher involvement. The problem-free cases also indicate that face-to-face contact helps, especially if it is informal.

Difficulty type and communication type.

The difficulties outlined above seem to be connected in some way to the quality of communication. In order to explore any relationship with the types of communication identified through the typology, data on both dimensions are combined below in Figure 5:3.

From Figure 5:3 it can be seen that cases with both perception differences and dissatisfaction do not occur in ongoing liaison. This suggests that there is some connection between difficulty type and communication type, with the higher level of communication resulting in less difficulties. However, the most important factor appears to be the ability to resolve incongruent perceptions, as unresolved differences lead to dissatisfaction and decreased liaison. This suggests that the optimum co-operative situation would involve participants working together to understand each others' viewpoints, negotiate their differences and reach joint decisions on the care of the child. Co-operation of this type is called here "collaboration" to distinguish it from the other categories already identified. It was not found in the sample. Cases 4 and 10 may have contained some elements of it as the social worker and the headteacher appeared to hold mutual understanding of the case but this may not have come about through negotiation and joint decision-making but rather as a result of both coming to the case with similar outlooks. Where social workers commented on differences of perception as to nature of case and social work role, and where teachers were dissatisfied with the amount of contact, there was only one example of attempts to negotiate these differences. In respect of case 16, social worker Z3 spoke of differences in perception about the social worker's power and said that "we sorted that one out." However, other incongruent perceptions were not sorted out,

"I wanted to hold off. The school wanted something done quickly. They were delighted when we got him moved."

Three social workers were aware in retrospect that liaison could have been improved through greater collaboration. Thus, Z3 again said,

"We probably should have related as a team. It would have been helpful to meet to talk about the things we've been talking about here. Schools are sometimes vague about

what social workers can do and do do... we could have worked out a plan for the improvement of K. The clothes and attendance bugged the school."

Ironically, the headteacher also wanted a collaborative type of liaison and, although it had occurred to some extent in this situation according to the social worker, the head did not perceive it as such. The headteacher and the social worker were clearly unaware of the similarity of their perceptions - it is evidently not enough to hold congruent perceptions; communication must be such that the fact of their congruence can be shared. This lends weight to the notion that effective co-operation involves a more complex form of liaison than was evident even in cases with ongoing communication. Although the investment of time is important in building up the co-operative relationship, as suggested on page 171, it is clearly also essential that a particular kind of relationship is built, one that allows for the resolution of differences and the surmounting of resentment caused by such differences. This requires investment of the personal and professional resources of confronting, risk-taking and ability to negotiate.

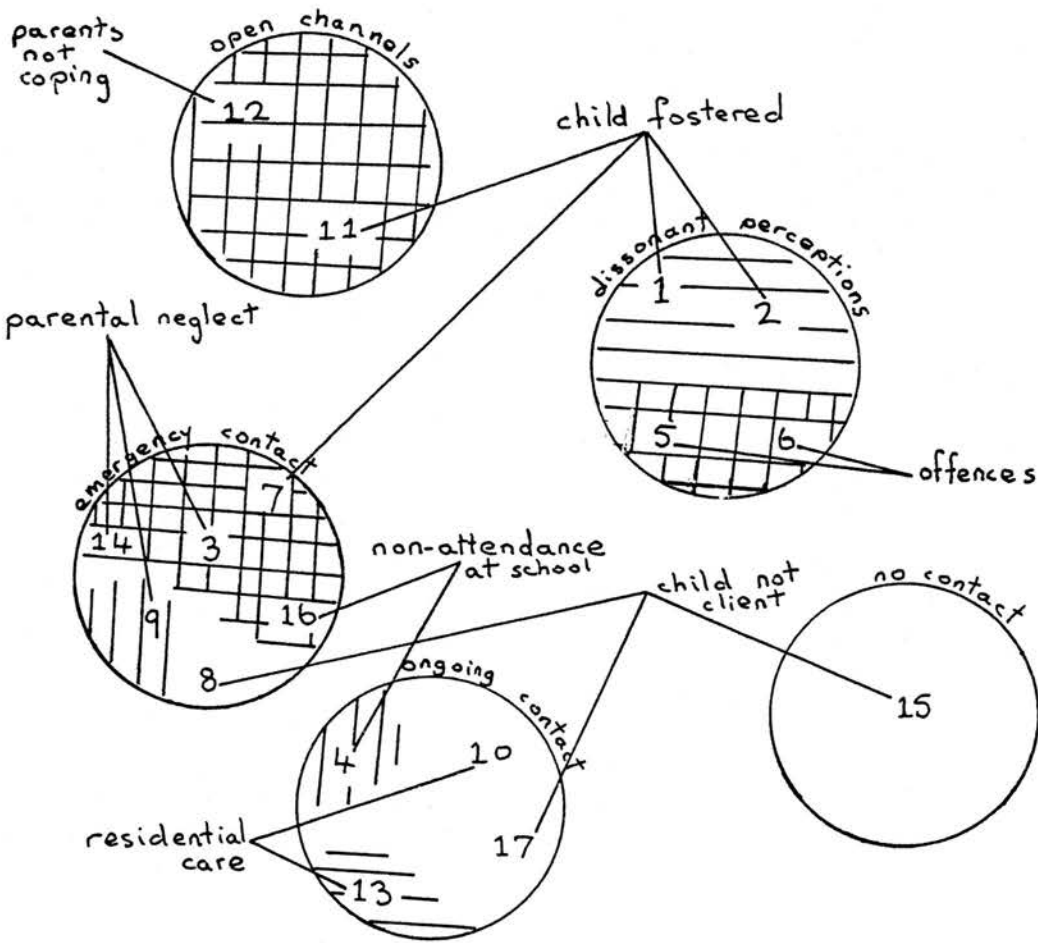
Case type.

A further aspect of the the situations studied which may have had a bearing on co-operation was the reason for social work involvement in the case. The pattern of co-operation may have differed as a consequence of case type rather than anything else. Table 5:3 (page 207) shows the range of case types and the number of cases of each type. There were seven different reasons for social work involvement: child fostered; in local authority care; on supervision for an offence, for non-attendance at school, or for parental neglect; on voluntary supervision due to the parents being

unable to cope with the child. The final category comprised cases where the mother rather than the child was the social work client. In Figure 5:4 data on case type are added to the diagram showing communication level and difficulty type, in order to explore any possible relationships.

FIGURE 5:4

Case type, difficulty type and communication type in focal cases.



Key:
 ≡ = perception differences
 ||| = dissatisfaction
 ≡||| = both perception differences & dissatisfaction
 — = case type

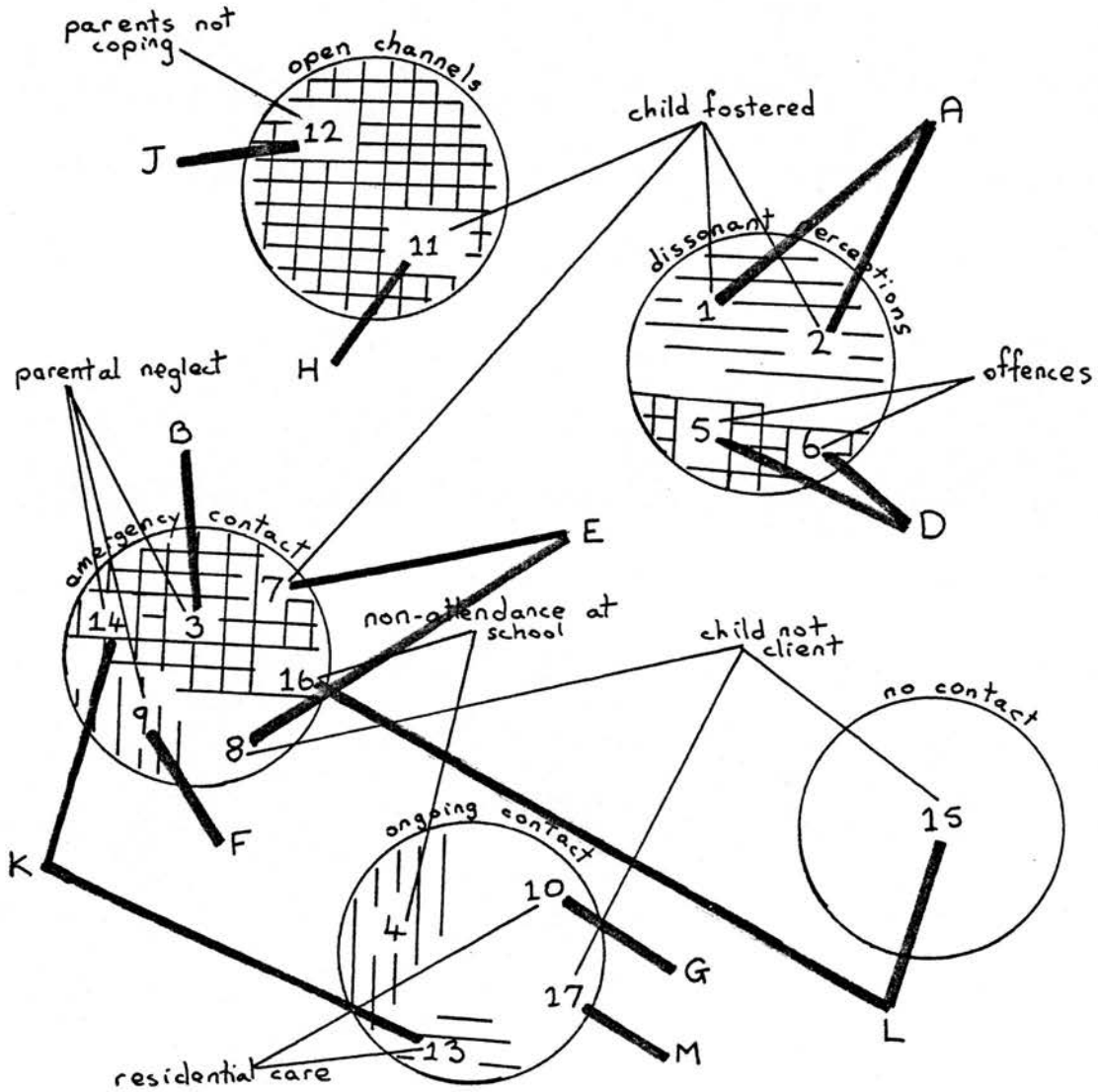
Some clear relationships between case type and communication level emerge from Figure 5:4. Where the child was on supervision for offences there were dissonant perceptions about communication level. Communication over children in residential care was of the ongoing type while cases of parental neglect were at emergency level. Case type therefore appears to have some effect on the kind of communication which takes place. In respect of difficulty type, both cases involving offences had perception differences and dissatisfactions. In all the cases where the child was not the client there were no difficulties apparent in liaison. Agreement as to the appropriate level of communication (as discussed on page 182) seems to be most easily acquired where the child is not the social work client and where communication is at a very low level.

School and area team.

These were also given variables in the situations, and the quality of co-operation may have been a function of the particular unit or individual in that unit who was involved. As far as the schools are concerned, because there was one headteacher per school and he/she was the person involved in liaison, both unit and individual can be represented together. This is not so for the area team, and here both team and individual differences need to be investigated. Figure 5:5 shows the schools that were involved in the focal cases, and Figure 5:6 the area teams and social workers.

FIGURE 5:5

Schools involved in co-operation in focal cases.








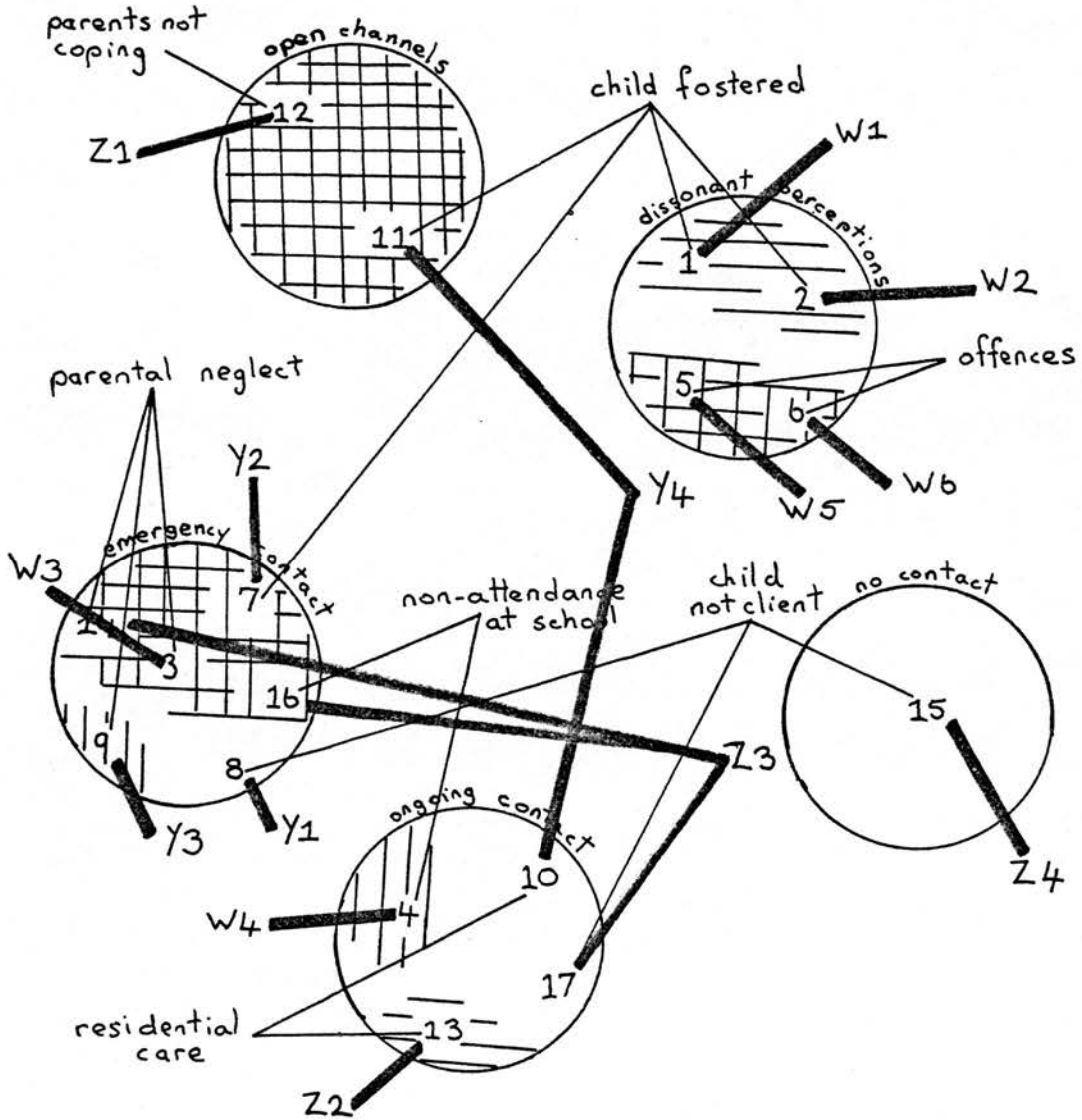
- Key:
-  = perception differences
 -  = dissatisfaction
 -  = both perception differences & dissatisfaction
 -  = case type
 -  = school

FIGURE 5:6

Area teams and social workers involved in co-operation in focal cases.



- Key:
- ≡ = perception differences
 - ||| = dissatisfaction
 - ▣ = both perception differences & dissatisfaction
 - = case type
 - = area team & social worker

Where schools, teams and social workers are involved in more than one case there may be evidence of some possible connections among the variables. Schools A, D, E, K and L come into this group. Communication level was the same for both cases in schools A,D and E, suggesting a possible link here, although in A and D the cases were also of similar case type. In terms of difficulty type, again the cases in schools A and D shared the same pattern although those in E, K and L did not. The individual school may thus have had some effect, but it is likely to have been particular schools. It is notable that schools A and D were the ones operating with dissonant perceptions of communication. On examination of the interview transcripts, the only aspect common to both schools and which might relate to this dissonance is the existence of confusion within the school. In school A, the headteacher did not know about the contact between class teacher and social worker over case A. Although relatively new to the school, she had been in post for four terms. This suggests lack of clear communication within the school as well as low priority afforded to sharing information of this type. In school D the headteacher had not provided support for the class teacher in her difficulties with the focal child, according to her perceptions. Headteacher D was himself ambivalent about his relationship with the social workers, saying that the school had a good relationship with the area team while he was also resentful about the poor liaison over the cases in the sample and had decided that it was not worth while to try to enlist the help of the social worker in one case.

Each area team had several cases in the sample. Team W contained both schools and all cases with dissonant perceptions of communication but apart from this there seems to be little connection between team and communication level. Similarly, the different permutations of difficulty are spread among the teams. Team may thus have affected clarity of perceptions about communication but in these cases the schools may also have been important. There did not seem to be anything specific to team W that would account for the prevalence of dissonant perceptions

about communication. There were some indications from the individual social workers and teachers of areas where they misunderstood each other. For instance, BG 5 perceived the lack of contact from the school as an indication that all was well. BG W6 was aware that he had not responded to the school's most recent communication but did not know that this had been interpreted by the headteacher and class teacher as complete lack of interest on his part such that they had decided that it was not worth contacting him. These misinterpretations cannot be blamed on one party or the other for neither was prepared to pursue the contact, being content to base their ideas on assumptions of the other's position.

Only two individual social workers had more than one case (Y4 and Z3). Their cases were at different communication levels and differing types of difficulty although two of Z3's three cases exhibited both kinds of difficulty.

Summary of findings in relation to characteristics of co-operation.

In this section, data on co-operation over focal cases have been classified in terms of communication type, difficulty type, case type, school and area team. Links have been explored between these variables. Such conclusions as can be drawn from a small number of cases with few clear trends suggest that the type of case has some relationship with the kind of communication and to a lesser extent to the kind of difficulties experienced in co-operation. The most consistent finding is the importance of agreement as to the appropriate level of contact between agencies for dissonance here leads to resentment, less frequent contact and consequently no attempt to discuss and resolve differences. This militates against the workers being able to work together effectively and serves to widen gaps between them.

Section 2: The meaning of co-operation.

Compliance.

From the foregoing analysis of liaison patterns, it can be seen that there was little evidence of collaboration between the two agencies. Communication was most often at the level of emergency contact only. The analysis of co-operation is now taken further to explore how respondents themselves viewed co-operation with each other. Because there were no questions in the interview schedule where the interviewer actually used the word "co-operation", data have been gathered through culling the replies to all the semi-structured questions for any comments that related to co-operation. All respondents can be included in this part of the analysis as it includes general perceptions as well as those related to focal cases.

Three teachers and seven social workers used the word "co-operation" in their replies. Five of these comments were in response to the question on the general relationship between the school and the area team, eg:-

"The local social work department is co-operative with us. They are willing to pursue matters we refer to them."

(HT K)

"The school is very co-operative, open and willing to discuss children. They are available for hearings and case conferences." (BG W4)

Three social workers spoke of co-operation in relation to their satisfaction with liaison over the focal child. For example, BG W5 said,

"On the whole it's satisfactory because they co-operate and because difficulties have been coped with by the school." (BG W5)

Headteacher F mentioned co-operation when talking of differences found amongst social workers,

"There are individual differences between social workers. I get greater co-operation from one area than from the other."

One social worker, BG W6, mentioned co-operation in relation to the sharing of information, saying that he gave background information "if it is a co-operative school" but that "with a non-co-operative school I am careful as I am not sure what they do with the information - sometimes they feed it back to the child and use it to highlight difficulties or to stigmatise the child." For this respondent it seemed that a school is suspected of misuse of information if it does not "co-operate" with the social worker.

What is noticeable about the comments mentioning co-operation is that respondents talk of the other agency co-operating with their own. Co-operation seems to mean the other agency's compliance with their own agency's requests or requirements; them doing what we want them to do. There is no suggestion of co-operation as a joint enterprise.

This notion of co-operation as compliance is corroborated by responses which, although not using the word "co-operation", give clear indications of how people perceived themselves as working together. The comments quoted below are representative of these responses, most of which were from teachers. They include replies to a range of questions. The topic of the question is in brackets after each quote.

"It's good. The staff are always willing to discuss with the social work department on the whole and give them any help they ask for." (Class T A1 - relationship with area team)

"It's satisfactory. There's never been any time when contact was needed and it was not possible to get it, though you needed persistence with the previous social worker." (HT F - contact over focal child)

"When we do contact them teachers are eager to help."
(Senior W3 - relationship with school)

Only two social workers, compared to eight teachers, made such comments, but more social workers used the word "co-operation" in their descriptions of inter-agency liaison, and altogether 9 social workers (35%) and 11 teachers (22%) made comments indicative of co-operation being perceived as the compliance of the other agency with one's own agency's viewpoint or requests. Occasionally, on the part of teachers, co-operation was spoken of in terms of the compliance of their own agency with the requirements of the other.

Further data suggest a certain equivalence perceived between the passing of information and co-operation. Six teachers based their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with contact on the perceived flow of information, either in respect of the focal child or of general inter-agency relations, eg:-

"Satisfactory; no necessity for any more. There is little we could have added to her knowledge. There is no other purpose to liaison except the exchange of information. Our remits are different." (HT J - contact over focal child.)

"We never have any difficulty in approaching and getting

information from them." (AHT A - relationship with area team)

"I would like it to be free from the secrets game - the esoteric nature of knowledge. As certain matters only exclusive to social workers. I would like to see them achieving a more open stance to schools and a greater confidence in the way teachers use information." (HT L - relationship with area team)

Two teachers thought that one way to improve the relationship between school and area team would be an increase in the amount of information from the social worker, eg.

"More information coming back from the social worker and the social worker coming to meet the the headteacher if nothing else" (HT F)

When asked their opinion on having social workers attached to schools, two teachers saw the main benefit as increased information, eg.

"The social worker could keep us up to date with home background problems."

Five social workers made similar comments about teachers passing on information to them, four of them in response to the question on what the teacher can do to help the focal child. For BG Y4, passing information was the only role for the teacher; other social workers saw this as one aspect of their role,

"Their responsibility is to inform us if there are any immediate problems." (BG Y4)

"Normal practice is to have the school at the review. Yes, you need the school's report to make a full assessment." (BG W2)

The remark by BG W2 above and that by Senior W3 below (in connection with hearing reports) illustrate the expectation that the school takes no part in decisions pertaining to the child's future but merely provides descriptive information on which others can base the decisions.

"Some teachers try to understand the other side of a child's life too much. They should give a picture of what the child is like in class. Sometimes they try to make guesses about why." (Senior W3)

This theme, apparent amongst responses of both social workers and teachers, and occurring in 15 interviews with teachers (33%) and eleven interviews with social workers (42%) suggests that for many, inter-agency co-operation essentially meant the sharing of information. Satisfactory liaison occurred when the other agency passed on the information you wanted. Co-operation thus equalled compliance with expectations of information-sharing.

Collaboration.

Although it is maintained here that a perception of co-operation prevalent amongst personnel of both agencies was that the onus in co-operation lies with the other agency and that co-operation was often seen as the passing of information when requested, it would be incorrect to suggest that collaboration, as defined in section 1 above, was not mentioned at all by respondents. Comments that can

be categorised as pertaining to collaboration were in fact made by thirteen teachers (28%) and thirteen social workers (50%). However, only 2 teachers and 5 social workers spoke of actual examples of collaboration. For the others, it was something that they would like to see happening, either in respect of liaison over the focal child or in a general way. Thus for most of these respondents, collaboration was an ideal rather than an actuality. A further two teachers spoke of the difficulties that might exist in a collaborative situation. Representative comments are quoted below:-

Comments related to existing collaboration:

"Over the years we have got to know each other well and have personal links. We basically agree on what's best for the child." (HT G - relationship with area team)

"Some are excellent [school reports] with a lot of detail; maybe on cases where there has been a lot of contact between school and social worker and there is a joint plan in going to the hearing - aiming for something" (Senior Z3 - school reports)

Comments related to desired improvement in liaison over focal children:

"I would have liked a meeting with the social worker, headteacher, granny and dad to consider problems over the months and how the child is doing at school and how we could react to his need. The headteacher could have made a proposal to help with school and make school more meaningful for the child - make it a more rational place. The social worker could have gained insight into school and seen it is not a rigid institution where kids have to jump through hoops. The school would realise the problems of the social worker. You would get a

sympathetic viewpoint and a multi-professional approach."
(HT L)

"The social worker could have been more concerned with the school earlier and taken more direct action earlier and pushed a bit harder in relation to joint discussions taking place." (Senior W1)

It is interesting to note that in the above comments, as in all those in this category, the initiation of such desired collaborative practice was seen by both teachers and social workers as the province of the social worker.

Comments related to collaboration as a general ideal:

"The social worker should make a point of coming down in the first instance to come and meet the class teacher to take her views and get as much of the behaviour and background as she can from the class teacher. Then she should say to the class teacher what she intends to do with the information, then come back and say what she has done and they can discuss what is going to happen next."
(Class T E)

"There is a lot more we could do if we could get together." (Class T K2)

"If the school is teaching a child and we are working with him, we should be doing it conjointly." (AO Y)

Three teachers and one social worker talked about the advantages of attaching social workers to schools in terms of collaboration, eg:-

"...if the child saw the social worker around he would realise that everyone is working together, not just in our own little boxes. We might get help from him or find out how we can help." (Class T L3)

"It would result in joint work with teachers." (Senior Z3)

Difficulties foreseen in collaboration:

Attachment was seen to bring clashes of perception by Class T G1,

"If there was an attached social worker, the teacher and the social worker together would have to decide on appropriate treatment for any child and I don't think its on to give the fairy godmother treatment to children with behaviour problems." (Class T G1)

Lack of time was seen to militate against collaboration by AHT F,

"You need to increase time given to teacher and social worker then they'd get together better and become a team but we haven't time."

Most of the above comments mention collaborative procedures in a broad and unspecific way. They evidenced a general attitude of willingness to collaborate but mostly in relation to an ideal situation and not in terms of something that they thought they could bring about given the present state of liaison practices. Few of them had any actual experience of collaboration. Those who had, tended to be more aware of the practical problems than respondents whose attitudes were based on wishful thinking. For instance, AHT F said,

"I'm all for attachment. It increases co-operation. But it depends on the social worker - there are some I wouldn't want to be about the school. Some have an approach I think is wrong - slovenly and lackadaisical. They turn up here in filthy clothes."

Senior Z1, who had himself worked as an attached social worker at a secondary school, thought that close liaison was possible only where the philosophy of the school (in effect, of the headteacher) was conducive to shared perceptions.

Thus, although many respondents talked of elements of collaborative practice, only a few had operated it themselves or felt able to do so. Most spoke of it as something that could be done if conditions, or other people, were different. Some were convinced that the two agencies were too far apart for such close liaison to work.

Prevention.

One of the major reasons for the promotion of increased co-operation between education and social work in such documents as the 1968 White Paper "Children in Trouble" is the notion that early detection of problems can lead to prevention of such things as child abuse and delinquency (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of this). Correspondingly, the collaborative ideal defined in Section 1 of this chapter and mentioned by some of the respondents as described above, implicitly contains the notion that with this level of co-operation there would be more possibility of preventative work. Therefore, as in the discussion above of the meaning of co-operation for practitioners, it is useful to explore the transcripts to see whether or not those who mentioned

collaboration held ideas about prevention as a goal of co-operation.

Only 7 respondents mentioned prevention, 6 social workers and one teacher, and mostly as a possible function of an attached social worker who could pick up problems before they reached crisis proportions and either refer on to the area team or reassure the teacher and prevent unnecessary referrals. One of the social workers thought that a liaison social worker could do this and another was in favour of a joint early-warning system. The area officer from team Z stated that "the whole emphasis in this team is on prevention" but of the seven people interviewed in this team, only one spoke of school liaison in terms of preventative work. Only one social worker in the sample (from area team W) suggested that the primary teachers themselves were skilled at identifying problems. He thought that it was the lack of formal liaison procedure that militated against their referral,

"In a general way, a more formalised type of liaison is better. This is more crucial at primary school level than at secondary as you can identify problems at an earlier stage. Primary teachers are skilled at identifying them and its a pity that we can't tap into it more." (BG W5)

This low level of interest in prevention and almost entire lack of any notion of the teacher's potential role in it, is interesting when viewed in relation to Fitzherbert's book "Child Care Services and the Teacher". For she presents a vivid picture of the unique position of primary teachers in their day-to-day relationships with children, being the obvious people to operate an early-warning system and pick up potential emotional and social problems among the pupils. The single spontaneous response acknowledging this illustrates how far were the respondents in the sample from enacting a system of child care that took cognisance of such potential in the primary school. The possibility of preventive work

was mentioned in only one of the focal cases (Case 1) where the social worker thought it to be impossible due to the pressure of recurrent crises among other members of the family. The headteacher saw the role of the social worker as preventing the child "following his older brothers". Both parties viewed prevention as the remit of the social worker rather than that of the school or as a joint enterprise.

Thus, although prevention was mentioned by a few respondents as part of an ideal situation of collaborative practice, it could not be said to be the main aim of collaboration for the practitioners who talked of this kind of co-operation. In fact, amongst the comments categorised as relating to collaboration, there were few stated aims. Those mentioned fell into two groups, either emphasising the importance of joint action to help a child (mentioned by both social workers and teachers) or suggesting the importance of discussion to prevent or clarify mismatches in perception (mentioned by social workers only). There was also apparent amongst collaboration-oriented comments an expectation that the results of working together would be help for one's own agency, particularly among teachers (see quotes above on attached social workers). This is reminiscent of the perception of co-operation as information acquisition. The aim that appeared to be held most in common was that of information-sharing as an aid to their own agency's work; and not negotiation and shared decisions, either for prevention or treatment.

Summary of findings on the meaning of co-operation.

In this section, the way in which respondents' understood co-operation has been explored and discussed in relation to the notions of collaboration and prevention. It is concluded that the most commonly held perception was of co-operation as an

information-sharing exercise which was most satisfactory when the other agency complied with one's own expectations of information required. For teachers, it was also sometimes the case that they expected to comply with social worker's requests for information. Collaboration was seen as something desirable but idealistic and for some respondents as something undesirable. Where respondents spoke of the possibility of collaboration, the aim seemed still to be increased effectiveness of their own agency's work rather than the serving of a jointly negotiated goal. Prevention was not a feature of responses in the interview.

Section 3: Conclusion.

The main conclusions from each section have already been outlined in the section summaries. The caveat suggested in the introduction to the chapter must be reiterated; the sample comprises only seventeen cases and only a few of the co-operative situations in which these practitioners would be involved, therefore conclusions must be viewed as exploratory in nature. This is particularly true of the analysis in Section 1 where the low numbers meant that some of the features of co-operation identified were difficult to test as there were not enough cases to compare, eg. few social workers had more than one case. The most clearcut result was in relation to case type which may have some connection with type of communication and with the kind of difficulties experienced in co-operation. A more consistent finding is the importance of congruence of perceptions for lack of agreement as to appropriate level of contact was clearly related to low co-operation. Section 2 was able to draw upon a wider set of data and the conclusions are consequently stronger. Here, it was seen that co-operation was perceived in terms of compliance with requests for information, with the overall aim that of furthering the work of one's own agency. Prevention was not an issue for these practitioners, and collaboration in the sense in which the term is used in this

thesis, to denote a relationship in which practitioners work towards understanding each other's viewpoint, negotiating differences and reaching joint decisions, was neither experienced by these practitioners, nor expected by them.

TABLE 5:1

Personnel involved in focal cases

<u>case no.</u>	<u>no. of children in sample</u>	<u>school</u>	<u>no. of teachers in sample</u>	<u>team</u>	<u>no. of SW in sample</u>
1	1	A	3	W	W
2	1	A	3	W	3
3	2	B	4	W	3
4	1	C	3	W	3
5	1	D	2	W	3
6	1	D	2	W	3
7	1	E	3	Y	3
8	1	E	3	Y	3
9	1	F	3	Y	3
10	4	G	6	Y	3
11	1	H	3	Y	3
12	1	J	3	Z	3
13	1	K	3	Z	3
14	2	K	5	Z	3
15	3	L	6	Z	3
16	1	L	3	Z	3
17	1	M	2	Z	3

NB. Some personnel were interviewed in relation to more than one case, notably the promoted staff of each agency.

TABLE 5:2

Difficulty types found in focal cases

<u>case</u>	<u>difficulty type</u>						
	<u>differences in perception</u>				<u>dissatisfaction</u>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1		*					
2		*	*				
3	*	*				*	*
4							*
5		*	*			*	*
6		*	*			*	*
7	*						*
8							
9						*	*
10							
11				*			*
12			*	*			*
13				*			
14	*				*		*
15							
16	*				*	*	*
17							

Key to difficulty type:

- 1 = disagree over nature or handling of case
- 2 = differ in perception as to amount and frequency of contact
- 3 = SW unaware of school's anxieties about child
- 4 = school confused about SW involvement
- 5 = social worker dissatisfaction
- 6 = headteacher dissatisfaction
- 7 = class teacher dissatisfaction

TABLE 5:3

Case types found in focal cases

<u>Case type</u>	<u>Case number</u>
1. Child fostered	1,2,7,11
2. Child in residential care	10,13
3. Child under supervision for offence	5,6
4. Child under supervision for non-attendance at school	4,16
5. Parental neglect	3,9,14
6. Voluntary supervision due to parents not coping	12
7. Parent is client and not the child	8,15,17

CHAPTER 6

INTER-PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS AND CO-OPERATION

Introduction.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the possibility that there is some connection between co-operative style and perceptions of own and the other profession. To this end, data on co-operation described in Chapter 5 are compared with data on perceptions discussed in Chapter 3.

Because of the difficulty in quantifying co-operation, which is essentially a process (see page 175), the typology of communication devised in Chapter 5 was used as an indicator of co-operative style. It was possible to rank respondents as high or low co-operators using this typology. The four categories of the typology were regrouped into "low" and "high" co-operators with type 1 (open channels) becoming the low co-operation group and type 3 (ongoing contact), the high co-operation group. The middle type, emergency contact, was omitted from this analysis to give a clearer distinction between the high and low categories. The teachers and social workers who had dissonant perceptions of communication were included as low co-operators because of the difficulties caused for co-operation by their lack of agreed perceptions. The possibility that the inclusion of these practitioners as low co-operators may cause bias in the results is discussed below on page 226.

Only the grades of personnel who were actually involved in the co-operation process were used for this analysis i.e. headteachers

and basic grade social workers. There were four headteachers in each of the high and low co-operator groups; four social workers in the high category and six social workers in the low category. This creates a major difficulty in comparing the data; firstly because the number of subjects is so small and secondly because of the imbalance of people in the groups. The very small numbers are particularly problematic regarding the inference of conclusions from the data. While a positivistic framework has been adopted to allow clear analysis to be carried out, conclusions can only be exploratory in nature.

The high and low co-operating teachers and social workers were compared on a number of "perception indicators" culled from the data described in Chapter 2. The perception indicators were selected using the following criteria:-

- a) They should demonstrate perceptions of own profession and the other's profession.
- b) They should represent as far as possible the major areas of inter-personal perceptions identified in Chapter 3.
- c) They should exclude any perceptions that were directly related to the people involved in the focal cases. As the cases were the basis of the co-operation analysis, this exclusion was important in ensuring that the two measures were distinct.

The perception indicators used were:

1. Perceptions of own profession.

- a) Involvement of own profession in dealing with children's social and emotional problems. This was calculated by counting the number of times own profession was mentioned as being appropriately involved with the problems itemised on the checklist. As there were

18 items on the checklist, the highest number of mentions could be 18. Each individual's number was checked against the median number of teachers or social workers (as appropriate) and assigned a score of H (high) if his/her number of mentions was above the median, or L (low) if below. Those who fell on the median itself were randomly distributed between the high and low categories. This was done for each indicator where the median was used. The median for teacher mentions of own profession was 11 and for social worker mentions of own profession was 7.

b) Task or child centred. Respondents had been categorised as task or child centred in the discussion of perception of characteristics of each group in Chapter 3 (see pages 99-101). This categorisation was used in exactly the same way here, and teachers and social workers assigned T or C accordingly.

c) Perceptions of own profession on the semantic differential. For each of the three factors identified through the analysis of this instrument, each individual's position was calculated by adding up his/her score for each item involved in the factor, again assigning a high (H) or low (L) score in relation to the median score for their professional group. The median for each group was calculated as the midpoint of actual scores for the total sample of teachers and the total sample of social workers. The median scores for teachers' perceptions of their own profession were 22 for Factor 1, 22 for Factor 2 and 25 for Factor 3. For social workers' perceptions of their own profession, median scores were 18 for Factor 1, 20 for Factor 2 and 23 for Factor 3. For the purposes of the analysis, scores at the median were randomly distributed across both high and low categories.

2. Perception of other's profession.

a) Involvement of their profession in children's social and emotional problems. This was calculated as described above under

l(a) for own profession but in relation this time to the number of times the other profession was mentioned in response to checklist items. The median for teacher mentions of social work was 3, and the median for social worker mentions of school was 11.

b) Anecdotes and opinions. These were gathered as evidence of positive or negative feelings towards the other profession and scored P (positive) or N (negative) according to a qualitative assessment of the affective tone. Some examples are given here to indicate how individual comments were assessed:-

negative

"The moral judgements schools sometimes make are ludicrous" (BG W5)

"My experience is that they [children] are singled out by teachers. In one case I discharged the supervision order because of the stigmatising effect on the child and continued to work with the family on a voluntary basis." (BG W4)

"The wishy-washy young ones [SWs] full of theories won't do this [show client how to wash a floor]" (HT J)

positive

"Social workers have a difficult job; they're faced with the worst side of society." (HT K)

ambivalent

One headteacher evidenced both positive and negative affect in his

general comments. viz.

"You've got to hand it to the social work people" (HT H) -
positive

"There are a few like dilletantes with the correct voice"
(HT H) - negative

This headteacher has been categorised as ambivalent.

c) Perceptions of differences in mode of working. In Chapter 3 perceptions of differences in mode of working were identified and here they are re-examined in respect of the affective content apparent in the responses. Responses fell into two categories of affective tone, either neutral, where they stated their opinion on differences but proffered no value judgement as to whether this was good or bad, or negative, where differences were expressed with negative connotations. Categories are labelled "Neu" for neutral affect and "Neg" for negative affect. Examples of the categorisation are as follows:-

"Neu"

"SWs and teachers have different functions - the teacher controls a class and the child is included in the class; the social worker is more concerned with the individual and the family. This creates major differences to do with control, conformity and emphasis on school as being of major importance.The differences are because of remit - there is not one good and the other bad." (BG W4)

"Neg"

"Yes. In the question of authority; social workers give me

the impression that they don't like authority. Teachers must have authority..teachers must be in control of the learning situation. Social workers let children off with more than teachers..Children have got to live in society and one child can't have a separate set of rules." (HT J)

d) Perceptions of the other profession on the semantic differential. This was scored High and Low in the same way as for perception of own profession above in 1(c) but this time in relation to how the other profession was seen. The median scores for teachers' perceptions of social workers were 17 for Factor 1, 20 for Factor 2 and 23 for Factor 3. For social workers' perceptions of teachers, median scores were 22, 19 and 20 on Factors 1,2 and 3 respectively.

Tables 6:1 and 6:2 (pages 230 & 231) illustrate the scores on these perception indicators for low and high co-operating social workers and teachers. Due to the small numbers and imbalance between groups, the comparison has been made on the basis of inspection. Differences between the low and high co-operating groups are discussed, bearing in mind the difficulties in forming conclusions from such small numbers.

Section 1: Perception indicators and level of co-operation.

The following question is addressed in this section: Do any of the perception indicators distinguish low co-operators from high co-operators? Each of the perception indicators is examined in turn.

It is important to reiterate the caution with which the following analysis must be viewed. The very small numbers in the categories

mean that any discussion of comparisons must remain tentative. However, in order to explore the possibility of links among the data, comparisons are made and the differences discussed where they are greatest. Percentages have not been used because they would obscure the small size of the groups.

Two kinds of results are accepted as indicating tentative possibilities that links exist between the perception indicators and co-operation. Firstly, where the trends on a indicator are in opposite directions between low and high co-operators, this is identified as indicating the stronger of the two possibilities, although tentative. Secondly, where the trend is in the same direction but in one group is present in substantially more cases than in the other, this is accepted as a weaker possibility of links. This second must be treated as weaker because the analysis is done by inspection on very low numbers and cannot be tested for significance.

1. Perceptions of own profession.

a) Involvement with social and emotional problems.

	Low Co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	3	1	1	3
SW	1	5	2	2
Total	4 of 10	6 of 10	3 of 8	5 of 8

Trends are in the same direction, towards high involvement for both high and low co-operators, with little difference in proportion. This suggests that there is no difference between the groups on this indicator.

b) Task or child centred.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Task	Child	Task	Child
HT	3	1	3	1
SW	1	5	3	1
Total	4 of 10	6 of 10	6 of 8	2 of 8

Trends are in opposite directions with low co-operators tending towards child-centredness and high co-operators towards task-centredness. This indicator may therefore distinguish between the groups.

c) Semantic Differential : own profession.

Factor 1: Professional hardheadedness.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	1	3	4	0
SW	3	3	3	1
Total	4 of 10	6 of 10	7 of 8	1 of 8

Trends are in opposite directions, with low co-operators tending towards perceptions of their own profession as high in hardheadedness and high co-operators tending towards perceptions of themselves as low in hardheadedness. This suggests that this

indicator may distinguish between the groups.

Factor 2: Committed and caring professionalism.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	3	1	2	1
SW	4	2	2	2
Total	7 of 10	3 of 10	4 of 8	3 of 8

The trend is the same for both groups, tending towards perceptions of themselves as low in committed and caring professionalism. The tendency is somewhat greater among low co-operators so there is a weak possibility that this indicator may distinguish the groups.

Factor 3. Sensitive co-operation.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	1	3	-	4
SW	-	6	1	3
Total	1 of 10	9 of 10	1 of 8	7 of 8

The trend is the same with both high and low co-operators tending towards perceptions of themselves as high on sensitive co-operation. Proportions are also similar in each group suggesting that there is no difference between the groups on this indicator.

2.Perceptions of the other profession.

a) Involvement with social and emotional problems.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	3	1	2	2
SW	2	4	3	1
Total	6 of 10	5 of 10	5 of 8	3 of 8

Scores are fairly evenly dispersed in both co-operation groups, suggesting no differences between low and high co-operators on this measure.

b) Anecdotes and opinions.

	Low co-op.			High co-op.	
	Pos.	Neg.	Ambivalent	Pos.	Neg.
HT	-	1	1	1	3
SW	-	5	-	-	3
Total	0	6 of 10	1 of 10	1 of 8	6 of 8

In both co-operation groups there is a trend towards negative opinions and anecdotes, but a greater proportion of low co-operators (7 of 10) than of high co-operators (4 of 8) proffered such comments. The headteacher with ambivalent opinions can be

added to the negative category for the sake of analysis as he did express negative feelings, and this strengthens the difference somewhat. There is some reason for supposing that negative affect expressed in anecdotes and opinions is related to low co-operation, but the possibility is of the weaker type.

c) Affect expressed in relation to differences in mode of working.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Neu	Neg	Neu	Neg
HT	2	1	3	1
SW	3	2	3	1
Total	5 of 10	3 of 10	6 of 8	2 of 8

The trend is the same in both groups with a tendency towards neutral affect in statements about differences in mode of working. Similar proportions in each group commented with negative affect. There is no difference between the groups on this indicator.

d) Semantic Differential : other's profession.

Factor 1: Professional hardheadedness.

	Low co-op		High co-op	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	2	2	-	4
SW	-	6	1	3
Total	2 of 10	8 of 10	1 of 8	7 of 8

The trend was the same in both groups, with a tendency towards viewing the other profession as high on hardheadedness. Proportions were similar in each group suggesting that this indicator does not distinguish between the groups.

Factor 2: Committed and caring professionalism.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	2	2	2	2
SW	3	3	4	
-				
Total	5 of 10	5 of 10	6 of 8	6 of 8

Scores are evenly spread among low co-operators with a trend towards low among high co-operators. This can be categorised as a slight difference between the two groups and a weak possibility that the indicator distinguishes between them.

Factor3: Sensitive co-operation.

	Low co-op.		High co-op.	
	Low	High	Low	High
HT	1	3	0	4
SW	1	5	4	0
Total	2 of 10	8 of 10	4 of 8	4 of 8

Scores are evenly spread among high co-operators and there is a

trend towards high scores among low co-operators. This suggests a weak possibility that this indicator distinguishes the groups.

Summary of findings on perception indicators and level of co-operation.

Two measures demonstrated enough difference between the low and high co-operator groups to indicate that some consideration might usefully be given to them as factors distinguishing the two groups. These are the indicators where response trends among low and high co-operators were in opposite directions. The indicators are:-

a) Task/child centredness. Low co-operators tended to be child-centred and high co-operators to be task-centred.

b) Perceptions of the other profession in terms of hardheadedness as measured on the semantic differential. Low co-operators tended to see the other group as high on hardheadedness; high co-operators tended to see the other group as low on hardheadedness.

Four indicators demonstrated a weaker difference. Trends were in the same direction but greater in one group than the other (a and b below), or scores were evenly distributed in one group but in the other exhibited a trend (c and d below). These indicators are:-

a) Amount of involvement of own profession in children's social and emotional difficulties. The high co-operators showed a greater tendency to perceive their own involvement as high.

b) Perceptions of own profession in terms of committed and caring professionalism as measured on the semantic differential. Low co-operators had a greater tendency to see themselves as less committed and caring.

c) Perceptions of other profession in terms of committed and caring professionalism as measured on the semantic differential. High co-operators had a greater tendency to see the other as low in committed caring.

d) Perceptions of the other profession in terms of sensitive co-operation. Low co-operators had a tendency to see the other profession as high in sensitive co-operation.

The remaining indicators did not distinguish between the groups in any way.

Discussion.

In relation to task and child-centredness, it is interesting that it was the low co-operators who were child-centred rather than the high co-operators. This may reflect the fact that child-centredness took several different forms (see pages 117,151), such that two child-centred practitioners could hold quite different views of the best interests of the child. This would be likely to lead to the incongruent perceptions found to be one of the features of low co-operation in relation to the focal cases (see page 182).

Among the weaker indicators, two of the results seem unlikely from a common-sense point of view. High co-operators saw the other profession as low on committed and caring professionalism where one might expect the opposite to be true. Possibly, high co-operators do not have unrealistically high expectations and are therefore more able to work with the imperfections they find in actual situations. Regarding sensitive co-operation, the result was also unexpected with the low co-operating group viewing the other profession as high in this area, and there seems no logical

explanation for this. As these were the weaker indicators, the results may be an artefact of the very small numbers in the analysis and not indicative of differences between low and high co-operators.

The results of this analysis suggest that two aspects of the interpersonal perceptions studied may possibly be linked to co-operative style, perceptions of hardheadedness and child/task centredness. With four other indicators, there is a weaker possibility of some link existing.

For the purposes of the foregoing analysis, teachers and social workers in each group were treated as a single unit. However, if the measures do differentiate low and high co-operators, they must be seen to differentiate both professions in the low group from both professions in the high group. This will be addressed in the next section.

Section 2: Comparison of teachers and social workers in each co-operator group.

The question addressed in this section is "Do social workers and teachers in the same co-operator group have scores in common?", the hypothesis being that where perception indicators demonstrate an inter-group difference, this difference will be consistent among both teachers and social workers. The measures that did suggest such a difference are examined first (see previous page). Scores within each professional group are considered consistent if all fall into the same category - due to the small numbers anything less than this cannot be accepted. If, however, most respondents

come into one category, this is discussed in terms of a trend.

Stronger indicators:

a) Task/child centredness. In the low co-operator group, neither teachers nor social workers show consistency although both demonstrate trends (3 HTs - task, 1 HT - child: 1 SW - task, 5 SWS - child). The trends, though, are in opposite directions with the preponderance of teachers task-centred and most social workers child-centred. There is thus no congruency between the professions in the low co-operating group which could distinguish them from the high co-operators. In the high co-operator group, again consistency is absent while trends are apparent - 3 HTs task-centred, 1 HT child-centred; 3 SWs task-centred, 1 SW child-centred. Here, the trends are the same for both professions. The difference between co-operator groups is thus in the area of incongruent perceptions, for low co-operating teachers and social workers exhibited opposite trends whereas with high co-operating practitioners trends were in the same direction for both groups. Low co-operation was characterised by incongruency of perceptions between teachers and social workers.

b) Hardheadedness - own profession. There was no internal consistency between teachers and social workers in each co-operator group. Among low co-operators, three headteachers had high scores and one had low, while three social workers fell into each category. Here again, therefore, there was incongruency of perceptions among practitioners in the low co-operator group. High co-operating social workers had consistently low scores and there was a pronounced trend in the same direction among the teachers (3 teachers low and one high). Again, incongruency is a feature of low co-operation.

The two stronger indicators do not demonstrate the expected

consonance of perception between the teachers and social workers in each co-operation category. However, trends among high co-operators are in the same direction and consistency is almost achieved, particularly regarding perceptions of hardheadedness. This suggests that there may be a link between task/child centredness and high co-operation and between perceptions of own profession as hardheaded and high co-operation. Trends among low co-operating personnel tend to be in opposite directions for teachers and social workers suggesting that low co-operation is characterised by incongruent perceptions.

The weaker indicators will now be examined to see if they can provide any further useful data.

Weaker indicators:

a) Involvement of own profession in children's social and emotional difficulties. There was inconsistency here in both groups. Among low co-operators, there were 3 teachers and 1 social worker with low scores; 5 social workers and one teacher with high scores. Among high co-operators, there were 1 teacher and 2 social workers with low scores, and 2 each with high scores. Incongruent perceptions thus characterised both groups.

b) Committed and caring professionalism - own profession. Amongst low co-operators there was no consistency. A trend was apparent among both teachers and social workers towards low scores (3 teachers; 4 social workers). No clear trend was apparent in the high co-operator group with 2 teachers and 2 social workers low and 1 teacher and 2 social workers high (one missing value). Results for this indicator thus do not follow the pattern found in the stronger measures of greater incongruency in low co-operation. There was slightly greater incongruency among high co-operators.

c) Committed and caring professionalism - other profession. No

internal consistency is found among low co-operators (2 teachers and three social workers low; 2 teachers and three social workers high) and scores are evenly spread. High co-operating social workers were consistently low on this measure but teachers equally dispersed. There is thus inconsistency in both groups.

d) Sensitive co-operation - other profession. No consistency exists among low co-operators but a clear trend towards high scores (3 teachers and 5 social workers). Among high co-operators there is consistency within each group but it is in the opposite direction - all teachers with high scores and social workers with low scores. On this indicator, it is high co-operation which is characterised by incongruent perceptions.

Summary and discussion of comparison of teachers and social workers in co-operator groups.

The hypothesis that there would be consistency among teachers and social workers intra-group, and that these similarities would contrast with those in the other group, is not borne out by the findings. There is no complete internal consistency on any indicator. Clear trends were apparent among high co-operators on the stronger indicators, however, suggesting some slight possibility that there is a link between task-centredness and high co-operation, and between perceptions of one's own profession as low on hardheadedness and high co-operation. The stronger indicators also demonstrate that the groups differed on another dimension; incongruity of perception was found to be a feature of low co-operation. It can therefore be concluded, albeit tentatively, that incongruity of perceptions may have some link with low co-operation.

The weaker indicators did not bear out either of the above results, incongruity being a feature of both low and high co-operation on

three of the four measures. On the fifth, perceptions of the other profession in terms of sensitive co-operation, incongruity was found to characterise high, rather than low, co-operation. This result indicates that incongruity of perception is not necessarily a feature of low co-operation, and suggests that it may, in some areas, facilitate rather than impede co-operation. However, it is useful here to explore the meaning of low and high scores on this measure. Low co-operators tended to see the other group as sensitively co-operative, which contradicts what one would expect from a common-sense viewpoint. Perceiving the other group as co-operative would surely enhance ability to co-operate. It is difficult to understand how it could contribute to poor communication. It is more likely that this measure, one of the weaker of the perception indicators, does not have much relationship with co-operation, rather than dissonant perceptions actually aiding co-operation.

Regarding the tentative finding that low co-operation may be characterised by incongruent perceptions, it may be thought that this result was biased by the inclusion in the low co-operator group of the practitioners who had already been identified as holding dissonant perceptions. Such bias is, however, safeguarded against by the fact that the perceptions found to be incongruent previously were related to the specific co-operation over focal children, and were not included in this analysis which dealt with general perceptions. It can rather be suggested that the lack of congruence found previously in relation to the focal cases, is shown here to extend to perceptions of each other in more general terms; in addition to incongruity in relation to perceptions of the nature of a specific case and the history of a particular co-operating relationship, these practitioners also held dissonant perceptions about each other's professions.

It is possible to corroborate the argument that the inclusion of the dissonant perceptions group as low co-operators did not

contaminate the data, by removing them from the analysis. Doing so unfortunately leaves only two respondents in each cell, which reduces the validity of the findings even further, but does illustrate that inconsistency remains when the dissonant perceptions category of the communication typology is removed from the figures. The remaining data are set out below.

Data from low co-operators without the dissonant perceptions group.

1. Perceptions of own profession.

a) Involved in problems.

	low	high
HT	2	-
SW	1	1

b) Task/child centred.

	low	high
HT	2	-
SW	-	2

c) Hardheadedness.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	1	1

d) Committed and caring.

	low	high
HT	2	-
SW	1	1

e) Sensitive co-operation.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	1	2

2. Perceptions of other profession.

a) Involved in problems.

	low	high
HT	2	-
SW	-	2

b) Anecdotes & opinions.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	-	2

c) Mode of working.

	neu	neg
HT	1	1
SW	1	-

d) Hardheadedness.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	-	2

e) Committed and caring.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	-	2

f) Sensitive co-operation.

	low	high
HT	1	1
SW	1	1

The small number of respondents in this analysis must always be borne in mind and any results must be viewed as exploratory. The lack of more clearcut results may also be an artefact of the small sample. Moreover, it is useful to remember that even those practitioners classed as high co-operators in this analysis, were not operating to a very high level of co-operation in comparison to the collaborative ideal discussed in Chapter 5, page 184. It may be that the incongruent perceptions found among both high and low co-operators on the weaker indicators merely reflects the fact that all the respondents in the total sample could be classed as fairly

low co-operators. There may thus not be enough difference in their co-operative style to show up links between inter-personal perceptions and level of co-operation. Another possibility is that the relationship between perceptions and co-operation is more complex than was allowed for in this part of the analysis. However, the tentative suggestion that incongruent perceptions are related to low co-operation is certainly consistent with data reported in the previous analysis chapters and this, and other features of co-operation, will be discussed in the next chapter where their analysis is furthered within a theoretical context.

TABLE 6:1

Low co-operation and perceptions

R	Perceptions of own profession			Perceptions of other profession							
	<u>inv'd</u> <u>probs.</u>	<u>T/C</u>	<u>semantic diff.</u>			<u>inv'd</u> <u>probs.</u>	<u>anec-</u> <u>dotes</u> <u>etc</u>	<u>mode</u> <u>of</u> <u>working</u>	<u>semantic d.</u>		
			<u>F1</u>	<u>F2</u>	<u>F3</u>				<u>F1</u>	<u>F2</u>	<u>F3</u>
HT A	L	C	H	L	H	L	-	neu	L	L	H
HT D	L	T	H	H	H	L	-	-	H	H	H
HT H	L	T	H	L	H	L	A	neu	H	H	H
HT J	L	T	L	L	L	L	N	neg	L	L	L
BG W1	H	T	H	L	H	H	N	neg	H	L	L
BG W2	H	C	L	H	H	H	N	neg	H	H	L
BG W5	L	C	H	L	H	L	N	neu	H	L	L
BG W6	L	L	C	L	L	H	H	neu	H	L	L
BG Y4	H	C	L	L	H	H	N	neu	H	H	L
BG Z1	L	C	H	H	H	H	N	-	H	H	H

Key: R = Respondent; inv'd probs = involved in children's problems; T/C = Task or child centred; semantic differential factors are, F1 - professional hardheadedness, F2 - committed and caring professionalism, F3 - sensitive co-operation.

L = Low score, H = High score; N/neg = negative; P = positive, neu = neutral; A = ambivalent.

TABLE 6:2

High co-operation and perceptions

Perceptions of own profession						Perceptions of other profession					
R	<u>inv'd</u> <u>probs.</u>	<u>T/C</u>	<u>semantic diff.</u>			<u>inv'd</u> <u>probs.</u>	<u>anec-</u> <u>dotes</u> <u>etc</u>	<u>mode</u> <u>of</u> <u>working</u>	<u>semantic d.</u>		
			<u>F1</u>	<u>F2</u>	<u>F3</u>				<u>F1</u>	<u>F2</u>	<u>F3</u>
HT C	L	C	L	L	H	L	-	neu	H	L	H
HT G	L	T	L	H	H	L	-	neu	H	H	H
HT K	H	T	L	L	H	H	P	neg	H	H	H
HT M	H	T	L	-	H	H	N	neu	H	L	H
BG W4	L	T	L	H	H	L	N	neu	H	L	L
BG Y4	H	C	L	L	L	L	-	neu	H	L	L
BG Z2	H	T	H	H	H	H	N	neg	L	L	L
BG Z3	L	T	L	L	H	L	N	neu	H	L	L

Key: R = Respondent; inv'd probs = involved in children's problems; T/C = Task or child centred; semantic differential factors are, F1 - professional hardheadedness, F2 - committed and caring professionalism, F3 - sensitive co-operation.

L = Low score; H = High score; N/neg = negative; P = positive; neu = neutral; A = ambivalent.

CHAPTER 7

BARRIERS TO CO-OPERATION: PROFESSION AND ORGANISATION

Introduction.

This chapter is concerned with describing, and discussing within a theoretical context, the factors which militated against effective co-operation between the social workers and primary teachers who took part in the study. In the first section, four main barriers to co-operation are identified from the research findings: unequal power relationship, chains of communication, ambivalence and incongruent perceptions. These are underpinned by lack of knowledge, the holding of different values, lack of trust and little respect for the other. They are then discussed, in the second section, in relation to a theoretical framework based on a consideration of professionalism and inter-organisational analysis.

Section 1: Barriers evident in the data.

The difficulties related to co-operation that were identified in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 can be subsumed under four headings: unequal power relationship, chains of communication, ambivalence and incongruent perceptions. These constitute the major barriers to co-operation found amongst the social workers and teachers studied. Each of these is described below.

Unequal power relationship.

There was inequality in relationship in two respects, inter-agency - between teachers and social workers, and intra-agency - within the primary school. Both are relevant in relation to the effectiveness of inter-professional co-operation.

a) Inter-agency

The co-operating relationship between social workers and teachers was based mostly on the passing of information and the way in which this was done demonstrates that social workers held the balance of power. Schools had a statutory obligation to provide information to social workers, for hearing and review reports. There being no such obligation in the other direction, this meant that social workers could withhold information while teachers could not. Moreover, the information held by social workers was seen by both groups as more confidential (Chapter 4, p.146). Holding this confidential information, the social worker controlled the sharing of it with the teacher, making judgements as to what was relevant for schools to know and whether particular teachers could be trusted not to misuse information (Chapter 4, p.129,151). On the whole, teachers agreed with social workers that the basis of their liaison was complying with social workers' requests for information (Chapter 4, p.157): social workers were satisfied with this, teachers often were not (Chapter 4, p.157). Schools rarely initiated contact except for referral and social workers usually initiated contact to ask for information. When expected to provide feedback as a follow-up to the passing of information from the school, social workers often omitted to do so (Chapter 4, p.131). Thus it can be seen that social workers were very much in control of the flow of information between the professions and that this promoted an inequality in their relationship. The system of referral, where the school passed on to the area team, fed into this inequality with social workers, in effect, "taking over" the problem from the school.

b) Intra-agency.

Within the school, the headteacher acted as the gatekeeper in terms of information flow between the two front-line workers, class teacher and basic grade social worker (Chapter 4, p.122,164). Her position in relation to class teachers was similar to that of the social worker in relation to herself. The headteacher received information from the class teacher and was the point of referral to social work. She was then, in almost every case, the person who liaised with the social worker and decided whether or not the class teacher would have any contact. The headteacher controlled information coming from the area team and decided how much to pass on to class teachers, again on the basis of judgements as to relevance and possible misuse of information (Chapter 4, p.164). The chain of referral within the school was upwards from class to head teacher who took over responsibility for referred problems, so parallelling procedure for referrals between headteacher and social worker (Chapter 3, p.85,88). Although some headteachers were able to operate to a different philosophy and allow the class teacher to have liaison time, the class teacher's task was generally defined in a way that maintained the chain of referral and the control of information by the headteacher, as it was perceived to be important that she spend all her time in the classroom and that she spread her attention evenly amongst all the children in her care (Chapter4, p. 124; Chapter 3, page 95). This intra-school inequality of relationship regarding involvement with children's social and emotional problems was significant inter-organisationally as it prevented, in most cases, contact between the two front-line workers, led to ignorance among class teachers as to the social work role and task, exacerbated stereotypical images of social workers and provoked resentment and dissatisfaction with the liaison procedures between the agencies.

Chains of communication.

These have already been mentioned with regard to referral both within the primary school and between school and area team, promoting inequality in control over information. Such a system meant that communication always involved only the two people adjacent to each other in the chain ie. class teacher and headteacher or headteacher and social worker. This extended to the relationship with the child and parent also, such that the client was always communicating with either school or social worker and three-way communication did not take place. The exception to this was at child care reviews or case conferences but these were invariably called by the social worker (although case conferences need not be) and teachers rarely attended them, so that their use emphasised the power of the social worker in the liaison. There was a reluctance among teachers to pass on cases to the area team as they saw themselves as dealing with a child's problems within their own system and only referring on as a last resort (Chapter 3, p.83); the fact that the two agencies operated in chain rather than together encouraged this pattern. Referrals, when they were made, were sometimes inappropriate as consultation to determine what would be appropriate did not take place. The chain style of communication made it easy for contact to be by telephone rather than face-to-face, something that would be necessary for simultaneous communication between more than two parties, and something thought to be preferable by many teachers (Chapter 4, p.161). It also encouraged the retrenched position that both parties adopted at times, when advances they had made had appeared to be rejected; this position being expressed in such statements as "we asked them to a meeting and they didn't come so we are not asking any more." (Chapter 4, p.144-5). The chain of communication was complicated by schools being served in some areas by more than one area team, so that they were operating with more than one chain within the same agency and at times were not clear that this was so (Chapter 4, p.139).

Ambivalence.

Much of the relationship between these two professional groups was characterised by ambivalence both in terms of their views of their own jobs and in terms of their expectations of the other agency. Each profession wanted co-operation but wanted it to be on their own terms. Co-operation was seen as satisfactory when the other agency passed on information to suit the perceived needs of one's own agency (Chapter 5, page 196). Social workers said that they wanted schools to refer cases but were unhappy if they received too many referrals or if referrals seemed inappropriate (Chapter 3, p.80). They wanted schools to take more part in maintaining contact after a referral was made but were dissatisfied if the contact was related to things that they did not prioritise (Chapter 5, p.181). Teachers held conflicting views of social workers (Chapter 5, p.190; Chapter 6, p.212). Teachers suffered from role conflict between education and pastoral care. The expectation among contemporary educationalists that schools should be involved in the welfare of the "whole child" produced ambiguities over role boundaries for some of these primary teachers who felt that they were being expected to become some kind of social workers. Resistance to this encouraged the formalisation of clear structures such as the chain method of "passing on the problem" which then masked the ambivalence inherent in a teaching task that copes with the whole child.

Incongruent perceptions.

Incongruity of perceptions was another major characteristic pervading liaison between social workers and teachers, occurring in several different areas. They tended to have different criteria as

to what information could be shared between them, with teachers taking a broader view of confidentiality than social workers, and teachers thinking that a greater amount of information was relevant to their position than social workers admitted (Chapter 4, p.148,150). It was generally true that those who held the information (social workers) thought that they were sharing it adequately, while those receiving it (teachers) did not think so. Perceptions differed as to involvement of each other's profession in children's social and emotional problems, with each seeing themselves involved more than was supposed by the other (Chapter 3, p.82,104). Conversely, each expected the other to be involved in ways not perceived by the other (Chapter 3, p.77,104). Styles of working were sometimes perceived differently, for example, where teachers saw themselves as "practical", social workers thought they were "controlling" (Chapter 3 p.97). In a similar vein, but operating in exactly the opposite way, the same words would be used by each group to describe what they were doing, but the words did not necessarily hold the same meaning. Thus both teachers and social workers spoke of their intentions as "in the best interests of the child" and "for the good of the child" but often were suggesting opposing methods of handling problems (Chapter 4, p.151). Such phrases were used to justify both teachers being given information and social workers withholding it (Chapter 4, p.151). In relation to the focal cases shared by the teachers and social workers in the sample, they sometimes differed in their perceptions of the liaison process itself, the nature of the case and the best way to handle it, and had different priorities relating to the children's problems (Chapter 5, p.174,178). The expectations they held of the other worker's role in the case was often different from that worker's own perception, and there was a tendency to attach little value to the other's involvement with children with social and emotional difficulties (Chapter 3, p.94). The analysis in Chapter 6 gave some further weight to the suggestion that incongruent perceptions are characteristic of low levels of co-operation.

Knowledge, values, trust and respect.

Underpinning these four areas of difficulty were a lack of knowledge of the other's role and sphere of involvement, a difference in value base, a degree of mutual distrust and, consequent upon these, a lack of respect afforded to the other profession's work.

Section 2: Professionalism.

Fundamental to the working relationship between social workers and teachers is the fact that they are operating as professional groups. The concept of professionalism has been the focus of much theoretical debate and has been shown to be related to specific ways of working and relating to others (Friedson 1970, Hughes 1958, Illich 1977, Johnson 1972). The professionalism of teachers and social workers may therefore be an important variable in their co-operating relationship. The literature on professions includes three perspectives useful in a consideration of teaching and social work: the attribute, or trait, approach; the concept of the semi-profession; and the notion of professionalisation as an ongoing process. The attribute approach tends to result in a profile of an ideal type which is adhered to by few except the old established, original professions like law and medicine. Greenwood (1957) says that all professions possess the following: a body of systematic theory, authority invested in their expertise by the clientele, the sanction of this authority by the community through the conferring of power and privileges, a regulative code of ethics and a professional culture.

Such lists of professional attributes vary but a few core traits appear consistently as Toren (1969) suggests,

"However, most writers agree that the core characteristics which distinguish the professions from other occupations are that they are based on a body of theoretical knowledge, that their members command special skills and competence in the application of this knowledge, and that their professional conduct is guided by a code of ethics, the focus of which is service to the client" (p.142)

When compared with the ideal type, many occupational groups commonly thought of as professions, do not fulfil the criteria suggested by such lists of attributes. A more sophisticated view of professionalism has been developed, notably by Carr-Saunders (1955), which takes account of this factor. Carr-Saunders devised a typology of professional groups which allowed them all the title "professional" but proposed a hierarchy of professionalism within which only the established professions needed to fulfil the basic trait criteria. The typology consisted of:-

- 1) Established professions - those sharing the two basic attributes of theoretical knowledge and an ethical code of behaviour ie. law, medicine and the Church.
- 2) New professions - based on their own fundamental studies eg. engineering, chemistry, accounting and the natural and social sciences.
- 3) Semi-professions - based on technical skill rather than theoretical knowledge eg nursing , pharmacy and social work.
- 4) Would-be professions - requiring neither theoretical study nor technical skill but a familiarity with administrative practices eg. managers of hospitals or industrial works.

Carr-Saunders clearly placed social work in the category of semi-profession, a position subsequently endorsed by other writers such as Etzioni (1969) and Toren (op.cit.). Teaching, too, has been

assigned a similar place in this kind of typology (see Johnson 1972 p.30). Writers on semi-professions differ as to their reasons for placing occupational groups in this category. For Johnson, teaching is there by virtue of the low status of its clientele; Toren says that the knowledge base of social work is not sufficiently theoretical nor exclusive to that occupational group, and for Carr-Saunders, the most salient feature of the semi-profession is that of the lack of professional autonomy caused by working in a bureaucracy.

Further insight into the phenomenon of professionalism is provided by the notion that although professional groups can be ascribed a position in the professional hierarchy at any one time, this is not a static situation and occupations are continually engaged in a process of change (Bucher & Strauss 1960). This process of change is one which tends to shift them further along the continuum towards full professional status. Thus Toren suggests that "at present" social work should be classified as a semi-profession and that "new changes are taking place now, so that the categorisation of social work as a semi-profession is limited to the present time period" (op.cit. p.148). Greenwood (1957) does not utilise the idea of the semi-profession but has a similar notion of the developing professionalisation of occupations when he says that although social work is a profession, there are degrees of professionalism that it has not yet reached but to which it can, and does, aspire:

"Social work is already a profession; it has too many points of congruence with the model to be classified otherwise. Social work is, however, seeking to rise within the professional hierarchy, so that it too, might enjoy maximum prestige, authority and monopoly which presently belong to a few top professions." (p.54)

Similarly, in respect of teachers, Marcus begins his chapter in Freidson (1971) with the following sentence,

"Any discussion about professionals, or sub-professionals, must include teachers as an example of a group being denied full rights and privileges, full entry into the exalted circle of true professionals." (p.191)

Whether social work and teaching are seen as belonging to a subgroup of semi-professions, or as in the middle of a professional continuum, there is clear agreement that such occupations are engaged in the process of continuing professionalisation. It will therefore be useful to examine what such a process might involve and in what ways it could influence relationships between the two professions.

The process of professionalisation necessitates an occupational group carving out for itself a particular area of practice over which it is accepted as holding a monopoly, and within which it has the sole right to control training and practice. Building up this specialism and maintaining the monopoly once acquired involve the adoption of a clear and separate professional identity, one of the marks of professionalism being the ability to prove that the occupation can do something that nobody else can. Thus Toren (op. cit.) says that one reason for social work remaining a semi-profession has been its inability to prove "exclusive competence based on special training and knowledge in the treatment of clients" (p.146). Having established its own sphere of influence, what Parsons (1939) calls its "functional specificity", a profession must confine itself to operating within this boundary. To do otherwise would be to interfere in another group's domain, as Greenwood (op.cit.) suggests,

"The professional cannot prescribe guides for facets of the client's life where his theoretical competence does not apply. To venture such prescriptions is to invade a province wherein he himself is a layman, and, hence, to

violate the authority of another professional group."

(p.48)

Aspiring professional groups are therefore engaged in a process of demarcating boundaries between themselves and other occupational groups, maintaining differences between them, and demonstrating that their group alone has expertise in particular areas. One of the major means of doing this is through adopting a particular definition of the area over which professional groups are competing for exclusive control. Freidson (1971) refers to Kuhn's concept of a paradigm as a useful description of the way in which each profession holds a different world view, defines the situation differently and tries to persuade the community at large of the relevance of its particular definition,

"Embedded in the claims of each of the professions is what Thomas Kuhn (1962) called a "paradigm", a taken-for-granted conception of what the issue is, and how it is solvable. Each tends to see the world in terms of its own characteristic conception of problems and solutions, and in the political arena each tries to argue for more resources as a way of advancing the general good. Thus the competition between professions for jurisdiction over a particular area may be analysed as conflicting definitions of the nature of the problem or activity each is seeking to control, and claims about the best way it can be carried out." (p.31)

That teachers and social workers are both in this position will be argued throughout this section. Although there is evidence that professional groups are not completely homogeneous (Bucher & Strauss 1960, Freidson 1970, Shaw 1981), it is maintained here that differences and conflicts within a profession exist as differences inside the general parameters that keep one professional group separate from another. Thus, although there may be differences between primary school and secondary school teachers, these

differences will be contained within more fundamental differences which distinguish both primary and secondary teachers from social workers.

The literature on professionalisation suggests that the process of demarcating boundaries and adopting a professional identity is carried out through certain normative procedures that are characteristic of professions (hence, the rather circular definition of a profession as an occupational group which is engaged in this process). Two of the major ways through which professional groups acquire and maintain their identity are training and acculturation.

By providing lengthy training through which entry to the profession is channelled, the profession seeks to prove to the community at large that the performance of the occupational skill requires specialised education and that those who possess this education deliver a service superior to those who do not (Greenwood op.cit.).

Through its training programme, the profession imparts to the novice its specialised body of knowledge and skills and thus initiates him or her into the particular way of perceiving the world adopted by that group. By controlling entry to the occupation through the training, the occupational group comes to consist only of people who have received training and who therefore share the perspective thus inculcated. In terms of the knowledge base, this perspective will differ from that of other professions only insofar as the body of knowledge differs, and here there is a difficulty for teachers and social workers as to some extent they share the same theoretical base of social science, and psychology in particular. This makes it less easy to differentiate the professions on the grounds of their theoretical base per se. However, it is not only knowledge which produces professional identity. The very fact of such a "uni-portal" method of entry to a

profession (Johnson op.cit. p. 54), creates a similarity of experience which in itself is an integral part of the process of socialisation into the particular culture of the group, and the culture is rooted also in a value system and a set of behavioural and symbolic norms. The socialisation of a professional involves not only the acceptance of a theoretical perspective, but also of a set of beliefs and values and participation in a shared world of behaviours and symbols.

"...the transformation of a neophyte into a professional is essentially an acculturation process wherein he internalises the social values, the behaviour norms and the symbols of the occupational group." (Greenwood op.cit. p.53)

Greenwood says that professions have behaviour norms covering "every standard interpersonal situation likely to occur in their professional life", from the procedure for seeking admittance to the group to that of acquiring, dismissing, questioning and treating clients. Knowledge of these procedures effectively separates members of the group from non-members. On the symbolic level, and of great effectiveness in maintaining the select membership of the group, is the use of language, where words in general use can come to have particular meanings specific to the profession, and new words and forms of speech are invented and used solely by those within the group. Such jargon serves also to "mystify" the work of the profession (Esland 1971, McNight 1977) and thus enhance its monopoly. Johnson (op.cit.) says that,

"A highly developed community language or jargon performs the double function of maintaining internal homogeneity and increasing autonomy from outsiders, both competing specialists and laymen." (p.56)

Turning to a consideration of teaching and social work in relation to the above points, it has already been said that in terms of the knowledge base, there is some overlap between them. This is also true of other aspects of their work. Both professions share a client group, wherever social workers are dealing with school-age children, and the overall aim or goal of their work is often said to be the same. Not only do they share the overall focus of the "service ideal" common to all professions (Toren, op.cit.) but in respect of the children they serve are variously seen as both socialising agents (Robinson 1978), both operating with person-centred goals such as self-realisation and self-determination (Davies 1976), both helping individuals to reach their potential (Watson 1977) and both concerned with the best interests of the child. Social workers are concerned with the child in his or her environment, which includes both family and community - the school being part of the community - and education is increasingly seen as involved in the development of the "whole child". Thus, Avery and Adamson (1972) say that education at its fullest is concerned with the total development of children - intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral. Kellmer-Pringle (1969) states that social work and education share the common goal of child care to "enable each child to develop to the fullest his potentiality for physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth so as to take his place eventually in society as a citizen, worker and parent..." Auld (1972) says that the two professions of teaching and social work share a common belief in the potential within the individual and in the ability to grow and change.

With such similarities of client group and broad aims, it is not surprising that where each profession's functional specificity lies is not always clear, and that their professional identities suffer from blurred boundaries. How can teachers be involved with all aspects of the child's welfare without "invading the province" of the social worker, and how can the social worker concern herself with the child's total environment without "violating the authority" of the school? How can each be seen to be of unique

importance in a discrete area of competence if there is none demarcated? In "Social Services in Scotland" (1979), Martin calls the social work role "wide-ranging and ill-defined", and says that this produces particular problems in relations between social workers and other service professionals. Writing of social work in the United States, Richan and Mendelsohn (1974) maintain that,

"..its lack of clear boundaries, and thereby the inability to establish exclusive claim to any territory, has shot social work through and through with anxiety about its identity and worth." (p.12)

Such blurring of boundaries between groups aspiring to greater professional status is likely to lead to the defensiveness associated with uncertainty and insecurity. Where boundaries are unclear, other workers are more readily experienced as encroaching on one's own perceived area and their interest can appear threatening to professional autonomy rather than helpful.

The establishment of social identity has been shown to be important for any group (Tajfel 1981, Tajfel 1982) and the above discussion suggests that this is particularly problematic for occupational groups aspiring to enhanced professional status where their boundaries with other such groups are unclear. Acculturation into the profession thus must involve ways of asserting and maintaining a sense of difference from other similar groups. One method of doing so is described by Dingwall (1977) in his study of health visitors in training. Health visitors and social workers are in a similar position regarding blurred boundaries as teachers and social workers. The trainee health visitors in Dingwall's study circulated stories about social workers which criticised them and accentuated their lack of ability in the areas where health visitors were skilled. Social workers were presented as,

"...slow, as lacking in practical knowledge, and, in

consequence, guilty of making erroneous motive imputations and questioning medical judgements, as having a slack attitude towards confidentiality, and as being both possessive about clients and unpopular with them." (p.150)

Rather than seeing differences between the occupational groups as an indication of different but equally respected areas of expertise, the health visitors used the stories to bolster their sense of self-worth at the expense of the social workers. They defined social workers as lacking in skills that they themselves possessed rather than as accomplished in others. They frequently made reference to the fact that clients liked their health visitor and disliked their social worker. It seemed to be important to develop a sense of one's own profession as better than the other. The stories were a means of promoting self-identity through denigration of an out-group. They became a short-hand means of promoting group cohesion, such that at the mere mention of "going down to the Social Work Department " the entire group would burst into laughter (p.151). Dingwall found that the telling of such stories was sanctioned by the trainers, and fieldwork teachers in particular actively coached the students in telling the stories (p.151). Thus, he shows how acculturation into a profession involves promotion of identity through adoption of disparaging views of other groups whose boundaries you share.

Few of the students had had personal contact with social workers but during training they learned to adopt a particular stance towards them. This not only served to establish identity but promoted a negative view of the other group which would inevitably have repercussions for co-operation between them in the field. Dingwall indicates the importance of this aspect of acculturation in relation to future working relationships,

"These stories present a version of events which students are required to master and use in order to achieve recognition as competent members of the group. They are

also available to serve as orienting principles for relations between members of one group and members of another. In this respect, stories may become self-fulfilling." (p.155)

It is interesting to note the terms in which Dingwall's health visitors spoke of social workers and to compare them to the comments made by teachers in the present study. The health visitors were critical about social workers' lack of practical knowledge, lack of respect for medical judgements, attitude towards confidentiality and possessiveness over clients (see quote on page 246). Teachers did not refer to medical knowledge to which they did not themselves aspire, but rather to aspects of the social workers' way of working which contrasted with their own. Thus, for instance, ways of dealing with children on an individual, as opposed to a group, basis were criticised, eg.

"You've got to look after the welfare of the rest of the group. I have heard of social workers who have dealt with disruptive kids in the classroom by giving them seaside holidays. That's not fair to the others as far as the teacher sees. To have such a child singled out for a reward could be very frustrating." (Class T G1)

While possessiveness over clients was something mentioned by teachers, social workers' attitude to confidentiality was seen quite differently. The health visitors thought that social workers were "slack"; teachers thought that their rules were too strict. The perception of the other profession thus tends to be based on a comparison of the other in relation to the value systems held by one's own profession, rather than on any objective assessment based on a wider world view. Health visitors and teachers clearly held differing values which were, again, both different from those of social workers.

The adoption of a specific set of values is another major aspect in the process of professional acculturation and the formation of a distinctive professional ideology. It has been suggested that people entering teaching and social work already have different values. McMichael, Irvine & Gilloran (1984) researched student social workers, community workers and teachers training at the same college and found that considerable value differences existed between the student groups on arrival at the college. Tajfel (1981 op.cit.) suggests that people choose particular careers which will reinforce the social identity they have already adopted. As far as teaching is concerned, Hoyle (1969) says that the socialisation process may begin during an individual's own schooldays when exposure to their own teachers makes individuals "become aware of some of the expectations of the role" (p.37). Applicants for training may also be selected according to certain characteristics which indicate that they share the values of professional practitioners. In Dingwall's study of health visitors, he shows how the wording of references for applicants to training reflects the accepted values as, for instance, in one being described as "an exceedingly nice, quiet well-mannered, young man." (p.184)

During training, the relevant values are reinforced. Hoyle says of teachers,

"Later, during his training as a teacher, he will have undergone a process of professional socialisation in which he will have acquired the behavioural style expected of a teacher and also internalised the values of his profession" (p.37)

McMichael et.al. (op.cit) found that the value differences between the occupational groups had increased by the time the students graduated, and the way in which Dingwall's health visitors defined social workers as an out-group can be seen as a reinforcement of their own values.

Acculturation continues and is strengthened once workers reach the field where they are exposed to established norms of seasoned practitioners (Waller 1967, Shaw 1981). The process of entry into a profession, training, and initiation into practice all serve to define and maintain a set of values particular to the professional group.

The kinds of value differences that exist between social workers and teachers are documented in the literature. Merdinger (1980) quotes a study by McLeod and Meyer (1969) where they found that social workers differed significantly from teachers on a set of values that included individual worth, personal liberty, group responsibility, innovation, diversity, interdependence and individualisation, all of which were held to a greater extent by social workers. These results are borne out by other writers. Picardie (1977) says that social workers tend to be idealistic while teachers are more cynical and accepting of what is wrong in society, and that teachers "stand by the average" while social workers are more individualistic. Craft, cited by Goodacre (op.cit.) says that social workers are more accepting of people as they are than teachers can be because the teaching task necessitates "adjudicating between the conflicting needs of pupils". Evans (1977) agrees that teachers are conformist while social workers are not. Langford (1978) suggests that teachers are inevitably paternalistic,

"I do not intend to argue here for or against paternalism, beyond pointing out that it is a point of view which one would expect most teachers to share to a large extent."
(p.95)

He contrasts paternalism with "the liberal or self-deterministic view" (p.96), one often attributed to social workers. There are also differences in the way in which children's difficulties are perceived. Rose and Marshall (1974) quote Wickman's 1928 study where he found that teachers and social workers had differing

understanding of maladjustment in children, and Stouffer & Owen's findings (1955) that teachers over-emphasised anti-social and disruptive behaviour. Davie (1977), suggests that social workers have different attitudinal "centres of gravity".

That teachers and social workers generally do not share a basic value system is borne out by the reports of social workers who have been attached to schools and have found difficulty in working within the teaching value system (Bond 1979, Dinnage 1979, Saltmarsh 1973, Watson 1977). Where relationships have been easier, individual teachers appear to have held values closer to the typical social worker's, and often, in a particular setting, the teaching task has been redefined to become nearer to that of the social worker. For instance, in Meyer et al's study, as discussed by Lees & Lees (1972), teachers who worked in schools with innovatory projects related to community involvement, held values akin to those of social workers.

In the present study, although values were not explicitly researched, some evidence of differences was found. Teachers tended to view hardheadedness as positive while social workers did not (Chapter 3, page 97). Teachers had standards of dress and presentation not shared by social workers (Chapter 3, page 102), but true also of Dingwall's health visitors (op.cit. p.127). They had differing views as to the severity of some children's problems, notably inadequate clothing (Chapter 3, page 79). They held a respect for schooling in a way not always accepted by social workers, some of whom held negative views of the values they saw schools as promoting (Chapter 3, page 103).

One practical reason for the adoption of different values is their relationship to the context in which practitioners work. The constraints of setting tend to lead to particular emphases which may influence the values adopted. Freidson (1970) suggests that

difference in work setting is the most significant factor engendering differences in professional behaviour. Although both teachers and social workers are dealing with the same children, the contexts are such that these children are the deviant ones in the teacher's setting but the norm for the social worker. The standards of behaviour expected of children are therefore likely to be different. Because social work clients are often subject to the worst inequalities in society, social workers are more likely to hold world views which champion such social casualties; teachers, as was true of Class teacher G1 quoted above (page 248), are likely to see this as rewarding deviance rather than compensating for deprivation. This kind of difference is described by Robinson (op.cit.) as follows,

"Schools may well regard the children of a multiple problem family which is "ticking over" quite well in social work terms as being let down by their feckless parents. Or the children of an ex-prisoner, who seems to be committing further but legally undiscovered offences, may be viewed by teachers as victims of a soft probation officer. Social workers, on the other hand, may consider that the teacher's preoccupation with the child's cognitive development is unrealistic, particularly perhaps in situations where the social worker considers that the child's emotional needs are not being met at home." (p.11)

Perhaps the most salient aspect of context in terms of promoting obvious difference in values, is the group/individual difference, where the teacher has to maintain discipline over a large class group. That this is a central concern of teachers is emphasised by Hoyle (op.cit.) in his description of the role of the teacher. He says that,

"The element of control is fundamental to all sets of expectations concerning the role of the teacher." (p.42)

This fundamental concern of teachers leads them to value conformity, discipline and the ability to maintain authority over their charges. The necessity to control a class of children encourages an instrumental approach whereby a wider educational philosophy is operationalised in a much more restricted task-based form (see below, page 254). In an analysis of the 1965 Memorandum on Primary Education in Scotland (SED), hailed as a progressive statement and the basis of recent changes in primary schools, McEnroe (1983) suggests that,

"The memorandum, in spite of frequent references to liberal sentiments, envisages education as an instrument for promoting the value system of a reified society."
(p.244)

Although social workers, too, are engaged in social control and socialisation (Robinson op.cit), they tend to adopt a more relativistic view of culture which accepts the client's values and mores as valid and valuable (Davies op.cit); and they are able to do socialise through less explicitly authoritarian means, partly because they do not have to work with such large groups. Moreover, the conflict between adult and child which Waller (1967) sees as an inevitable part of schooling (p.104) is to some extent absent for the social worker who is able to adopt a less authoritarian approach.

Working context is closely related to another difference which helps the two groups to maintain separate professional identities, and both leads to, and sustains, their adoption of separate value systems. This is the way in which they redefine their broad aims, focussing on a particular aspect which allows them to delineate a narrower task and thus circumscribe their overall purpose. This can be called the identification of the "primary task" (Rice 1963) for social work and teaching. Robinson (op.cit.) defines the primary task of each group as follows,

"The primary task of the school is to reinforce and extend the socialisation processes begun within the family system. The primary task of the social work system is to engage in compensatory or resocialisation processes..." (p.24)

In defining such a primary task which enables the professional group to demarcate itself from the other, both teachers and social workers minimise those aspects of their broad aim which are closest to the other's work. Teachers tend to marginalise their welfare role by not including it as a central part of education. Thus, although Marland (1974) says that pastoral care is an integral part of education he goes on to suggest that the school cannot actually provide the total care implied by such a notion. And it appears that teachers do indeed perceive their task as somewhat less than the comprehensive development suggested by educational theorists (see page 245 above). For instance, Musgrove and Taylor (1965) found that all the teachers in their study defined their task solely in intellectual and moral terms. Teachers in this research also, clearly saw education as something quite distinct from welfare work, eg.

"The teacher is not a social worker and ought not to be regarded as such - our job is to educate." (AHT F)

Similarly, although social workers are concerned with the child's whole development, practitioners in the present sample tended not to view school life as a central aspect of the child's experience, again marginalising it in terms of the social worker's remit (Chapter 3, page 91). A further difference suggested by Meyer et al, and cited by Goodacre (1970), is that the teaching task is generally defined as the transmission of accepted forms of knowledge and values, sanctioned by society, while social workers are often attempting to change personality where change is not so clearly socially sanctioned. Teachers also have greater authority over the children in their care than social workers have over their

clients.

In summary, this section has demonstrated that the process of continuing professionalisation involves social workers and teachers in striving to maintain separate identities within a broadly similar area of work, where boundaries are blurred. Distinction between the two groups is emphasised by the differing contexts within which they work, by operational definitions of task which divide the general aim into narrower areas of primary task, and by separate underlying value systems and attitudes leading to discrete professional cultures socialised through separate training. In an environment where two professional groups have similar aims, maintenance of professional identity involves the denigration of the other group.

Social work and teaching are thus caught between the service ideal of working together for the good of their clients which is encouraged by their sharing a broad aim, and the drive towards separation inherent to the process of professionalisation. Co-operation between the two will thus be influenced by the conflict between their common aims and their uncertain professional position, which latter encourages defensive separateness rather than integration.

Section 3: Inter-organisational factors.

The teachers and social workers in the present sample worked within the particular organisational settings of the primary school and the area teams. It is this level of organisation on which the following discussion is based, and the two professional groups of social workers and teachers are now considered from an inter-

organisational perspective. Four major aspects of inter-organisational analysis will be discussed: exchange, power, interdependency and conflict.

The understanding of interaction between groups in terms of exchange stems from the work of Mauss (1955) and Blau (1964) and has been fruitfully applied to the study of interaction among social service organisations (Levine & White 1961; White, Levine & Vlasak 1969; Adamek & Lavin 1969). The model posits interaction as reciprocal exchange of resources where each party benefits to a roughly equivalent extent. Levine & White found that exchange between health and welfare organisations, at a systems level, could be understood as a function of scarcity, such that lack of resources in an organisation motivates exchange with other organisations. In Adamek & Lavin's study of exchange of clients among organisations working with disabled people the findings were exactly opposite; that it was the organisations with greater resources which more often engaged in exchange. The resources they examined were clients, staff and finances. The researchers offer an explanation for their results consistent with exchange theory by suggesting that although at the systems level there might be high motivation to exchange in a situation of scarcity, at the level of the individual organisation, factors other than motivation come into play. These factors relate to equality between the organisations where inequality in resources will decrease the likelihood of exchange because the less-favoured organisation will be unable to reciprocate and find such exchange unrewarding and demoralising. Thus, for the organisation with less to share,

"Rather than being rewarding, exchange may seem to promise only further loss of prestige, encroachment by other agencies, and loss of community support" (p207)

They conclude their analysis with the following,

"Those [organisations] who are relatively well endowed

with various resources, who have the apparent support of others, and who might be considered as enjoying high status and self-esteem are more likely to be secure and feel free to engage in frequent interactions with their fellows, and to find such interaction rewarding. Those less well endowed, on the other hand, who lack support, and who may be considered as having low status and self-esteem, find social interaction unrewarding and even somewhat threatening." (p208)

The co-operating relationship between the social workers and teachers in the present study can be examined in terms of exchange and scarcity. In terms of their professionalism and the uneasy boundaries between them, both groups can be considered as in the low-status and low-self-esteem position, which suggests that interaction is threatening to both parties. However, given the nature of the exchange, teachers are likely to be in the more insecure position. It was clear from the analysis of data (Chapters 4 & 5) that the major resource exchanged was that of information and it was shown that a situation of inequality did exist in terms of richness of this resource. Schools were in the position of having less valuable information insofar as theirs was not perceived as confidential. They would be likely to find information exchange less rewarding in Adamek & Lavin's terms. Scarcity was a spur to exchange as it was usually the social worker's lack of information required for hearings, reviews or case conferences that provoked interaction. A second resource exchanged was clients, as in Adamek & Lavin's study. In almost all cases, problem children were passed on from the school to the area team, and thus, here again, there was inequality. Using Adamek & Lavin's analysis, it would seem that the organisation with the resources to share would be the one in the superior position but this was not so here, for, in the case of schools, it was the very need to pass a problem to another agency that promoted "loss of prestige and encroachment of other agencies". It was important to the teachers' view of their service that they saw themselves as able to deal with problems and

there was some resentment to social workers' apparently taking over from them. Despite this situation appearing to contradict Adamek & Lavin's hypothesis, they provide a parallel example (the difference being that in their study, both organisations had clients to exchange), saying,

"..referring clients to more favoured agencies may be seen by the less favoured agency as a reflection on its own effectiveness and worth...." (p207)

In this case, the need to refer constituted being "less-favoured". It may be that clients, in this study, do not act as a resource in the same way that is indicated by the other research, because they are not perceived as desirable commodities. This is probably due, on the part of social workers, to the opposite of scarcity, an overabundance of work (one of the fears of increased contact with schools was that too many referrals would result), and on the part of schools to the fact that their service did not operate on a referral system and there was never any lack of pupils. Levine & White's findings on scarcity make sense here for, in a situation where there were not enough clients to justify the service, it is likely that both organisations would be keen to acquire them in order to continue as a viable concern, and in such a situation they would be redefined as desirable. In a very small minority of the children studied, cases were passed from the social worker to the school (cases 4,5 and 6) and this occurred when a child had been excluded from one school and the social worker asked another school to accept him. The co-operation pattern in these situations tended to have a different emphasis with considerable school involvement at the beginning, gradually reducing over time. Moreover, where social workers passed clients to schools, there was no lessening of their own involvement and thus no attendant feelings of the other agency encroaching and taking over. Social workers did not experience this threatening aspect of exchange.

A third resource involved in the interaction between the agencies

was that of time. The scarcity of this commodity was a factor in both organisations and led in each case to less rather than more interaction; less frequency and less face-to-face contact, less contact between front-line workers, all of which have been shown to be of importance in co-operation, both in the present study and by other writers. Hall et al. in their study of agencies dealing with problem youth (1978) state that frequency is one of the three bases of co-ordination between organisations: the greater the frequency of interaction, the more likelihood of increased co-operation. He also suggests that organisations will only interact if such interaction is important to them and it has already been suggested here (page 171) that the actions to which agencies devote the scarce resource of time can be seen as an indication of priority, and thus of the degree of importance imputed to those actions. Aldrich (1969) also suggests, following Mayhew (1971), that frequency of interaction is a measure of investment in relationships with others. For most teachers and social workers in this study, a minimal amount of time was devoted to their interactive relationship.

Exchange between the area team social workers and primary teachers in this study took place through the sharing of information, the passing on of clients and the investment of time. Inequalities of the first two put teachers in the position of having less of value to offer and thus was likely to decrease their desire to engage in unrewarding exchange. Scarcity of resources operated to increase interaction in the case of information but this was counteracted by the position of inequality. Scarcity of time decreased the likelihood of interaction as did pressure due to a surfeit of clients (the opposite of scarcity). Thus, the exchange dimension of the relationship in the main acted as a barrier to co-operation between teachers and social workers.

The concept of exchange implies that nothing is exchanged without reciprocity of some kind being involved though, as White, Levine

and Vlasak (op.cit.) say, citing Mauss (1955),

"Mauss proposed an explanation for the seemingly one-way transfer of resources when he pointed out that the receipt of the gift created an obligation in the recipient. The gift, therefore was frequently based not on altruism, but in the expectation of a deferred repayment in some form.....Later repayment in some form could be expected." (p184)

Viewing the exchange procedure among the teachers and social workers in the present study as such a long term sequence of reciprocity, it can be seen that the social worker requests information to which the school complies but in the expectation that the social worker will reciprocate with continued contact and the provision of information in the future. When the social worker does not reciprocate in the way desired by teachers, they find the exchange unsatisfying, and in this way also, become the "less-favoured" organisation. This explains the reluctance among headteachers to initiate the further contact if they perceive it as the social worker's part of the bargain.

Inherent in the consideration of inequalities in the exchange relationship is the notion of power, where the organisation possessing the more valued resources, or a greater abundance of equally important resources, holds the greater power. The balance of power as regards information sharing has been shown to lie with the social workers in this study, partly because they had a near monopoly on confidentiality, and also because they were able to make decisions as to the needs of teachers regarding information (see pages 132,150 above). This situation puts teachers in a position akin to that of client, where they have relinquished to the expert control over assessing their own needs. Writing of the client/professional relationship, Johnson (op.cit.) says that there is a degree of uncertainty inherent in the relationship which will

be reduced at the expense of the party with the lesser power. However, if, as Aldrich suggests (op.cit.), "power resides implicitly in one actor's dependence upon another", then the power relationship is more complex than this. For, on the face of it, social workers were in a more dependent position than teachers, being obliged to acquire information from schools when producing the above-mentioned reports. Teachers were under no such obligation to acquire, but rather felt one to respond. This is borne out by the way in which both teachers and social workers in the study tended to perceive co-operation as teachers' compliance with the information requests of social workers. It seems, therefore, that the power held by teachers here was dissipated by their responsibility to respond: it may be, however, that the power was not held by the giver of the information but by the requester, particularly as the social work requests were sanctioned by the authority of the reporter and the hearings system and by the formal social work procedure of reviews and case conferences. The school had access to no such structural devices of its own organisation.

Teachers are dependent upon social workers in the sphere of referral also, cases being passed from school to social work through the referral chain. However, among the schools studied, very little use was made of this aspect of their relationship, with headteachers most commonly referring on within the education system to school doctors or psychologists or to the attendance officer. It often occurred also that, when a school did refer straight to social work, it turned out that the child or his/her family was already a social work client. This would not be likely to enhance the school's self-image as a valuable referring agent and more so if, as suggested above (page 84), new referrals were not always welcomed.

Interdependence is seen as a condition for exchange relationships (Litwak & Hylton 1961, White, Levine, & Vlasak 1969, Hall et.al. 1978) and the literature on relations among social service

agencies, including teaching and social work, often supposes a high degree of interdependence (SED & SHHD 1966; Kellmer-Pringle 1969). However, the discussion of professionalism above suggests that one way in which these two groups attempt to emphasise their separate identities is through defining their tasks in such a way that they serve areas as mutually exclusive as possible. In the present study, schools and area teams were not mutually dependent to any large extent. The only necessary communication was for social workers to acquire occasional reports, and for referral which was infrequent and often consisted of a single phone call. Co-operation was therefore peripheral to the day-to-day working of the agencies. The way in which tasks were defined encouraged this. The teacher's job was to be in the classroom giving attention equally to each child and the school held on to problems and dealt with them internally because of its pastoral care role. A central feature of the social worker's task was to maintain confidentiality which provided an acceptable reason not to share with other professionals, and social workers tended not to see their remit regarding the child's welfare as including problems at school, whether educational, social or emotional. None of the respondents viewed their task in terms of prevention which is one of the most commonly suggested reason for interdependence in the literature (eg. Fitzherbert 1977; Kellmer-Pringle op.cit.). These task definitions were upheld and formalised by the chain system of communication whereby boundaries between them were demarcated by the procedure of referring on.

A final factor crucial to the analysis of inter-agency co-operation is the way in which conflict is managed. Litwak & Hylton (op.cit.) maintain that different organisations must, by virtue solely of being different, hold differing values. Society avoids having to choose one set of values at the expense of the other by designing separate organisations to house each. The value systems of two organisations will be distinct and therefore likely to be in conflict so that in any inter-organisational relationship must be presupposed the existence of conflict,

"This conflict between organisations is taken as a given in inter-organisational analysis, which starts out with the assumption that there is a state of partial conflict" (p.340)

Not only is such conflict inevitable but it is also necessary, for without different values, there would be no reason for separate organisations to exist,

"..the elimination of conflict is a deviant instance and likely to lead to the disruption of inter-organisational relations" (p340)

However, conflict must be only partial for, again, total conflict would result in the elimination of the separate organisations through its expression in some destructive way. The authors suppose that where partial inter-organisational conflict exists, there will exist also procedures for ensuring " the individual organisations their autonomy in areas of conflict while at the same time permitting their united effort in areas of agreement". Hall et.al. (op.cit.) go further in suggesting that it is only through conflict resolution that the co-operation increases, and a partial state of conflict is included as another of their fundamentals of co-ordination. Optimum conditions for effective co-operation will therefore require the recognition of areas of conflict and the resolution of this conflict through procedures designed to promote the negotiation of difference.

In the next section, the relationship between teachers and social workers is examined in relation to the notion of conflict resolution as the crucial component of co-operative interaction.

Section 4: Teachers, social workers and conflict.

It is contended here that the major barrier to effective co-operation between social workers and teachers lies in their reluctance to jointly acknowledge areas of conflict and in the lack of appropriate procedures through which to do so.

The existence of potential conflict is recognised in the literature on teaching and social work. For instance, the evidence provided for the Pack report (SED 1977) revealed conflicting points of view; Dinnage (op.cit.) says that social workers and teachers "need to resolve their conflicts"; reporting to the BASW conference on child and family care in 1979, Bond stated,

"Various points of conflict, and difficulties in connection with differences in aims and attitudes...have to be looked at.." (p.12)

Picardie (op.cit.) says also,

"The potential conflict between social workers who are increasingly committed to change, in education and in welfare, and teachers who are rooted in a setting which requires conformity, must not be minimised". (p.115)

However, Bruce (1983) suggests that researchers are far more aware of the barriers obstructing inter-professional co-operation than are the professionals actually involved. This is not difficult to understand when the position of the two groups is reviewed, for both teachers and social workers are caught in a dilemma where the maintenance of the independence necessary for continued professionalisation is operating in opposition to the pressure of their child care philosophies to work together, be interdependent

or even integrated (Kellmer-Pringle 1969).

Emery & Trist (quoted in Adamson 1983) speak of the "turbulent field" within which such organisations have to operate and within which they need to develop agreement as to their separate domains in order to cope with the attendant stress. The idea of domain consensus is central to much thinking on inter-organisational relationships (cf. Negandhi op.cit.). Because of the similarities in overall aim and the attempt by each group to spread its sphere of influence to include the total care of the child, clear-cut operational domains have not been negotiated between the two agencies on a policy level. The demarcation procedures adopted by the narrow task definitions mentioned above, are based on insecurity and a sense of threat as well as differences in professional orientation, and are not subject to any joint discussion of domain consensus, each profession in some senses wishing to have the entire area of child care as its own. Bruce says (1981),

"Both [teachers and social workers] aim to improve their customer's quality of life, both are proud of the services they are able to offer, both are convinced that, by training and experience, they are uniquely qualified to render such services. However, each feels out of sympathy with the other and there is often animosity and hostility. Each tends to feel that his own specialism is self-contained and independent and that he can function effectively without reliance on the other. ... however this is a fallacy." (p.12)

Mary Evans (1979) suggests a clear connection between insecurity of professional domain and the inability to co-operate,

".. we spend.. too little time in acknowledging to each other that we are unable to help in certain

circumstances, or that we have tried and failed. This again.. has to do with one's security in one's professional role. Real co-operation may depend in the last analysis on each worker's ability to be less defensive vis-a-vis his professional colleagues and more able to expose to them the area of his uncertainty and inability." (p.64)

Thus, although each professional group has defined its task in a way that promotes separate identities, this has an uneasy basis in the context of the overlap of their overall professional domain. Moreover, the members of each group, as evidenced by the respondents in the present study, are ignorant of the task of the other group as its members define it (see Chapter 3), and so there is a lack of consensus between them. Parker (op.cit.) emphasises the importance of "prior agreement between the organisations regarding their respective domains". In a discussion of social workers in respect of their relationship with doctors, de Gruchy (1970) says,

".. our professional identity is still so uncertain that other professions are inclined to see us more in terms of their own needs or fantasies than our actual skills or limitations" (p.40)

The mutual uncertainty of the semi-professions of teaching and social work exaggerate tendencies towards stereotyping and negative perceptions of the other group, resulting in mutual mistrust and disrespect, such as that found in the present study. Bruce (1983) corroborates this when writing about social workers and medicine,

"In interprofessional dynamics, negative stereotyping leads to lack of trust, a refusal to consult and unwillingness to share information. Trust and confidentiality are closely linked." (p.163)

Respect for the other party in the interaction, and "acceptance of other people as they are " (Morrell 1969) are suggested in the literature as important components of a co-operative relationship. For Hall et.al. (op.cit.) mutual respect is the third basic element of co-ordination (p.296). They include under the heading of mutual respect, the perception of the other organisation as having "compatible operating philosophies", and this implies not only acceptance of a task domain but also of the value system underpinning the operation of that task. It was shown above (page 251) that teachers and social workers tend to have different values, attitudes and beliefs, which suggests a further reason for their difficulty in working together.

In the present study, the ambivalence found to pervade the perceptions of the social workers and teachers can be understood as a function of the confusion between similar broad goal and different narrow task. The uncertainty inherent in the professionalisation/integration dilemma militates against teachers and social workers being able to negotiate their differences. Respondents also exemplified the three "maladaptive responses" identified by Emery & Trist (quoted by Adamson op.cit. p.34). These are: superficiality, where there is outright denial of what people are feeling and acceptance of the status quo ; segmentation in which sub-goals become goals in their own right, groups are poorly integrated with each other, likely to be overemphatic about differences, and to erupt into feuds; and dissociation which is characterised by passivity, indifference and cynicism.

The differences between the organisations are also masked by their use of a common form of language. The proliferation of statements in the literature suggesting a common aim for teaching and social work was discussed above (page 245), and the practitioners taking part in the present study, teachers in particular, echoed this, (often suggesting it as a reason for sharing information) saying that both professions were working in the "best interests of the

child" (see Chapter 4, page 151). Such well-intentioned language serves to mask the underlying differences of orientation such that they need not be explored. Davie (op.cit.) says that social workers have different meanings for the words "care" and "community" and Asquith (1977) found, in his study of children's panels, a difference in lay and professional use of the term "need".

The use of shared, well-intentioned language encourages the notion of the shared philosophy at the expense of attending to the underlying conflicts between the organisations. Goldschmied (1974) wonders why it has taken so long for concern about social work in relation to education to develop, and suggests as the reason that it has been too difficult to confront the rivalry engendered in sharing the care of children. Avery & Adamson (1972) say that it is difficult for some teachers to accept that the aims of social work may appear to conflict with their own. De Gruchy (op.cit.) says (again writing about social worker and doctors),

".. in our desire to co-operate, we may have overstressed similarities and underplayed differences between the two professions and that an examination of the way they differ may be more helpful in the long run." (p.40)

Moreover, there is evidence of a general myth, perhaps engendered by policy-makers who do not wish to deal with the implications of the actual situation, that all is well at the interface of education and social work,

"..the social services are assumed to be in a normal state of co-operation" (Parker op.cit. p.25)

The reluctance to engage in interaction that might lead to open conflict, and both Hall et.al. (op.cit.) and Parker (op.cit.) suggest that increased frequency of interaction inevitably leads to

increased conflict, is exacerbated by the generally held view of conflict as neither good nor useful. Thus Davie (op.cit.) writing about teachers and social workers after their training, says,

"..future working relationships will almost invariably be subject to misunderstanding, when not actually marred by conflict" (researcher's emphasis)

The procedures adopted for communication by the organisations in this study were neither designed for the negotiation of conflict, nor conducive to it. Occasionally social workers suggested in retrospect that liaison over a particular child would have been improved if differences in professional perspective had been aired, but this was rarely mentioned and more rarely attempted. Rather, communication was reduced to the minimalist level of exchange of information for necessary purposes, often dictated by a third party ie.the reporter. Other contact tended to occur only at times of emergency when time was not available for other than crisis management. Some attempts were made by social workers to engage in a more ongoing and general relationship not based on shared cases but all except the newly started one had foundered. The lack of procedures through which to negotiate differences, dependent on the way the two groups defined their work (as well as being related to economic constraints, the consideration of which is outside the scope of this thesis) promotes an insularity which leads to a lack of understanding and an undervaluing of the other profession. This in turn reinforces the lack of communication, and the two groups adopt no means of managing the conflict inherent in inter-organisational interaction, thus remaining unable to co-operate in an effective way for the "best interests" of their mutual clients.

CHAPTER 8

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Introduction.

Implicit in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter 7 is the notion that, if social workers and primary teachers are to be able to collaborate effectively, they must find some way to acknowledge and resolve the conflicts inherent in their relationship. Change is necessary in order to bring about the conditions required for the negotiation of conflict, and change can be envisioned in two areas; in what Strauss (1978) calls the "structural" context and the "negotiation" or "awareness" context (p.99). These contexts are roughly analogous to the two areas under investigation in the present study, the influences of organisation and of professionalism; although the properties of the negotiation context, such as the balance of power between parties (Strauss p.99/100) are likely to be influenced by both organisational and professionalisation factors. This chapter is concerned with the identification of some possibilities for change in the spheres of organisation and professional acculturation.

Section 1: Organisational change.

Change in organisational structure can be visualised at various

levels, from the macro-level of the department to the micro-level of the management and job remit of individual workers. These are, however, all inter-dependent, for change in one area will necessarily have implications for the others, and, as the focus of this study is the increased collaborative effectiveness of the individual worker in the area team and primary school, the purpose of suggested change is essentially the promotion of improved practice at the micro-level.

Stern, Bagozzi and Dholakia in their chapter on mediational devices for managing conflict between organisations (in Druckman 1977), suggest that there are three major structural variables of importance which can facilitate or inhibit conflict management. These are dependency, power and intensity. Stern et.al. maintain that the optimum conditions for effective conflict management are a high level of mutual dependence, equality or symmetry of power, and a relatively intense relationship (ie. frequent contact and a high level of resource investment). Although these authors are writing specifically about one type of strategy, mediation, the structural variables they mention are all ones which were apparent in the present study and, moreover, were notably absent in most co-operative situations studied. McLintock (1977) suggests that mutual dependence is a criterion of any co-operative setting.

"Such situations tend to be those in which the individual is aware of his own and others' outcomes and in which success is defined as the total outcome achieved by members of a collectivity who share an interdependent relationship." (p.63)

The policy changes identified below will therefore be discussed in terms of their likelihood of promoting increased mutual dependency, symmetry of power and greater intensity of relationship, on the assumption that these will provide conditions more conducive to conflict management.

Legislative change.

Legislation provides the overall framework within which the organisation of social work and teaching is structured. The legislation making education compulsory for children dates back to the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872. Responsibility for studying, advising and providing special educational facilities for children with social, emotional and educational difficulties became the remit of the child guidance service in the 1946 Education (Scotland) Act. Following the 1968 Social Work Act child guidance was given an explicit remit to give advice to the local authority regarding assessment of children's needs. Thus, the specific function of co-operating over school-age children with difficulties was lodged with child guidance and not with schools. The remit was also somewhat narrow, pertaining only to assessment and to advice, stopping short of any notion of genuinely collaborative practice. Organisational structures for collaboration between social work and schools are not mentioned in the education legislation. This is also true for the law regarding social work. As described in Chapter 1, the Social Work (Scotland) Act (op.cit.) on which the current area team structure is based, gives guidelines for social work intervention with children but not for collaboration.

The major source of inequality of power in the relationship between social work and education lies in the legislation, in the statutory remit of the social work department. Through the Social Work (Scotland) Act, social workers have a statutory duty to take children into local authority care if necessary, to assume parental rights where appropriate, to undertake supervision of children on the request of the children's panel. Moreover, although school attendance is compulsory, teachers themselves do not enforce it, this function being the remit of the children's hearing system. As the hearings are closely bound up with social welfare, and truanting children who remain at their local schools will be under social work supervision, ultimately the social worker has greater

involvement than the teacher in enforcing school attendance. It is difficult to see how this imbalance of power could be righted without a dramatic change in job remit which would involve teaching becoming a totally different job, so like social work as to be indistinguishable from it. One possible means of redressing the balance, however, would be a change in legislation to make collaboration a statutory duty of both agencies, with specific regulations on eg. sharing information. This would also perforce increase inter-dependence and intensity.

The departmental structure.

One way in which to promote a closer working relationship between social work and education would be to bring them together under a single department. This was, in effect, the recommendation of the Kilbrandon Report in 1964 although, because at that time no independent Social Work Department existed, Kilbrandon's suggested department of Social Education was to be under the auspices of the Director of Education and would include only the child care aspects of what is now the total social work task. This would clearly be an untenable way to proceed given the current establishment of a Social Work Department. It would be difficult to hive off from the Social Work side those areas related only to children. As social work is concerned with so many different client groups, of which school-age children is only one, the rationale for a single department of social work and education would be unlikely to find acceptance from social workers. They are working at the interface of several other services and, indeed, similar arguments for mergers have been advocated from those whose primary interest is the promotion of improved collaboration between health and social work. In terms of a unified departmental structure, the only tenable solution would be one department that included all the major social and "caring" professions. This, of course, would be extremely large and unwieldy and would provoke argument as to which

groups would come under such an umbrella; for instance, housing and social security are other areas with a close connection to social welfare.

The departmental unification of social work and education would not in itself change the balance of power, dependency and intensity of interactions at the local level, but would provide an overall organisational framework which explicitly represented the intention to collaborate. Within this, many other changes would be required, and these are discussed below.

Short of total merger are two other possibilities involving joint working at the macro-organisational level. The first of these is the instigation of a co-ordinating body separate to the individual departments. This would have the advantage of covering all the services but being much smaller than a unified department, and allowing them to retain their autonomy. Klein and Hall (1974), in discussing health and social service departments in England, suggest the extension of the notion of an inspectorate to cover inter-professional co-operation. Although "inspectorate " might be an unfortunate term and not one conducive to the promotion of openness and acceptance of conflict suggested here as a central area of concern, Klein and Hall visualise this as an advisory body whose function would be to concentrate on "improving the quality of professional collaboration" (p42). They recognise the potential unwieldiness of an all-embracing inspectorate, even for the two services of health and social work, and suggest an advisory body for each of several client groups. This would be appropriate as far as primary education is concerned for clearly it would be involved in only the one relating to children, but fits generic social work less well, requiring specialisation and involvement in all the various groups.

A co-ordinating body would go a considerable way towards resolving

the structural difficulties in the present situation, for its very existence presupposes its concern with helping people to negotiate differences, though it may not be able to actually change the interactive situations in respect of dependency, power and intensity. Its main disadvantage would lie in the addition of extra personnel and another tier of administration in professions already somewhat bureaucratically top heavy.

A second method of promoting co-ordination, rather than setting up another organisational structure, would be to promote the co-ordinating role as the specific remit of one of the services: However, both social work and education could legitimately lay claim to the role (and may wish to do so in order to enhance their professional autonomy). Social work is part of so many different networks of professional collaboration, that it would not be difficult to accept the feasibility of including co-ordination as a major function within that network. Whittington (1983) suggests this as a legitimate claim for social work which is supported in the Barclay Report (1982). However, Fitzherbert (1977 op.cit) argues for a unified child care service based on schools, on the grounds that every child passes through the institution which is therefore in a prime position for picking up difficulties and preventing their escalation through the co-ordination of the other services in the welfare network. This position was also argued by the NUT in its submission to the Seeborn Report, which Fitzherbert quotes as follows,

" ..no other institution is comparable with the school as the natural focal point for services of this kind."

and,

"..we do suggest that only the education system can properly co-ordinate the various contributions that the services can offer and can invoke them at the earliest possible moment." (p.14)

If one of the professional groups were to take on this role, the balance of power would swing in its favour creating even greater difficulties, unless other changes were made to compensate, notably changes of attitude and of negotiating machinery at the local level. Interdependence would not necessarily increase but presumably intensity of contact would do so because co-operation would become a specific, explicit and central part of the job remit, at least among the group delegated the co-ordinating role. The other group would have to comply with this however, which might not be possible without a considerable shift in professional defensiveness. Fitzherbert's idea that teachers could become "watchdogs" to oversee social work practice (op.cit p.213) would be difficult for social workers to accept in the present climate of suspicion and mistrust.

It is interesting that there does already exist some co-ordinating connection between education and social work, for the body which is responsible for putting into effect the functions of the secretary of state in regard to the Social Work (Scotland) Act, the Social Work Services Group (SWSG), is a sub-section of the Scottish Education Department. The SWSG has the following responsibilities,

".. advice and guidance to local social work departments on the implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968; acting as liaison with voluntary agencies in the social work field; planning and conducting training programmes for staff in local social work departments; drafting regulations for implementing the Act; conducting and supporting research in social welfare; and implementing the Urban Aid programme..." (Gandy 1975 p.2)

It is also responsible for overseeing the work of the children's hearings (English & Martin 1979 p.119). In this sense, therefore, education does have some measure of overall control over social work, as Kilbrandon had advocated. However, the members of the SWSG are social workers and administrators (Gandy op.cit. p.2) and not

educationalists, and the SWSG's organisational place as a subsection of education did not seem to impinge on the area team social workers in this sample. Nor does its remit seem to include the kind of co-ordinating function suggested as helpful here in the promotion of inter-agency collaboration.

Organisational structure at the local level.

It is change at the level of the social work area team and the primary school that is the particular concern of this thesis, and the major issue is that of promoting a higher profile for teaching as part of the welfare network. This is an essential basis for mutual dependency between the two agencies. Data from the present sample showed that both social workers and teachers tended to underplay the welfare possibilities of the school, and certainly did not perceive each other as partners in a welfare role. Unless schools are seen as holding important pastoral cards, they will continually be left out of the deal by social workers. Structures already exist for collaboration between the organisations in the form of case conferences, child care reviews and children's hearings. However, the present research has shown that teachers are by no means equal partners in these, with the social worker initiating and controlling contact in most cases, largely condoned by the school although with some resentment. Two factors are of particular importance here; the statutory power held by the social worker and the low position of the school on the "chain of referral" (see Chapter 7 page 233-4). The possibility of redressing the power balance through a statutory obligation to collaborate has been mentioned above (page 273). The problem of the chain of referral has some of its roots in the structure of the primary school itself. The situation found almost universally amongst the schools in the sample was that the headteacher held the power within the school vis-a-vis external liaison, acting in a mediating

role between class teacher and social worker, and as a gatekeeper, controlling communication, contact and the passing of information. (see Chapter 7, page 234). This promoted dissatisfaction amongst class teachers, exacerbated their ignorance of the social work role, preventing the ameliorating effects of knowledge and personal contact and thus contributing to negative stereotyping and the likelihood that difficulties were not discussed and consulted over at an early stage. A change which would give the class teacher a more active part in the resolution of welfare problems, rather than merely passing them on up the chain of referral, would require that class teachers could make contact themselves with social workers and effect their own liaison. Greater mutual dependence could be fostered in this way, as the class teacher would become aware of how the social worker could aid her in her efforts to help a child, and vice versa. While the headteacher acts as mediator, the front-line workers fail to gain a genuine understanding of the potential usefulness of the other. Thus a change in the remit of the class teacher to include responsibility for external liaison within the welfare network would promote a structure more conducive to consultation on an equal basis rather than a hierarchical one.

It is this kind of change that Fitzherbert (op.cit.) envisages (although she goes further in suggesting a co-ordinating role for teachers) in her assertion that the class teacher is in a prime position to mobilise all the welfare services that have involvement in the primary school; she sees potential for the class teacher as "the conductor of an orchestra who brings in various instruments at the appropriate times." (ibid p.16). However, Fitzherbert does not adequately address the difficulties inherent in such a change in remit. She maintains that holding the co-ordinating role would not "impose on his [teacher's] prime obligations in the classroom." (ibid p.13) She is stating here, that there is no expectation of the teacher becoming a social worker or undertaking welfare work instead of teaching, and this is a very important point as such fears contribute to the present situation where class teachers are "protected" from taking on work outside the classroom. In stressing

it, however, Fitzherbert ignores an essential aspect; the fact that any kind of liaison or co-ordinating work takes up time. Therefore a change in the remit of the class teacher requires a concomitant change in the use of the prime resource of time, for in order to carry out the liaison function, the class teacher would have to be able to leave the classroom to attend meetings or make telephone calls, and/or have reduced teaching hours to enable time to be set aside for collaborative work. If this were to have any substantial effect throughout primary schools, rather than existing in one or two whose headteachers have a particular orientation in this direction, it would ultimately require a policy decision at regional, if not at national level, to allow a change in use of time.

Such a change in the remit of the class teacher would also affect that of the headteacher who would have to allow far greater delegation of responsibility than was apparent in the schools in this study. That such centralised control is the common pattern in primary schools is evidenced by Coulson (1976) where, in his discussion of the role of the primary head, he writes about the "persistence of paternalism" (p.102-104) and its deleterious effects. Coulson suggests that there are strong arguments for authority in schools to "move away from a paternalistic pattern towards a more collaborative one" (p.104), but according to McEnroe (1983) current trends in Scottish primary education have consolidated the power of the headteacher through the Scottish Education Department's highly influential Primary Memorandum (1965) of which he says,

"It would be difficult to think of any other educational document from any other country in the world which recommends more power to a headteacher than the 1965 memorandum." (p.248)

The continuing control of the headteacher was apparent in the present study, at least in relation to liaison with social work.

The research supports Coulson's plea for a change in the power structure in the primary school, for it suggests that liaison with social workers is best carried out by the front-line worker in the school who has close experience of working with the child. The organisational situation in the primary schools complicates the inter-agency situation under investigation, for the promotion of effective collaboration between agencies necessitates also a similar change of structure within the school. We are thus talking of promoting negotiation and collaboration not only inter-agency, but intra-agency as well.

Although the structure of the area team does not present the same power difficulties as that of the primary school, for the front-line basic grade worker is the liaison person, Stevenson (1980) suggests that there are obstacles to intra-professional collaboration here as well. She says that,

"..there remain powerful forces at work in [area] teams to achieve their own harmony by at best insularity and, at worst, hostility to the outside world" (p.29)

Intra-agency collaboration thus possibly needs some attention in the area team as well as in the primary school although this was not apparent in the present sample. However, the need for change in the areas of remit and resources was clear. The social worker, unlike the class teacher, does have a remit to collaborate with other agencies; this is stated explicitly in the British Association of Social Workers' code of practice (see Watson 1985) and the Barclay Report (1982). However, this was only apparent in the field insofar as it was strictly necessary for the acquisition of essential information. Collaborative practice such as that suggested as most effective here, is peripheral to the main thrust of social work which has, by force of circumstances, to concentrate on crisis intervention. Schools and area teams are not inter-dependent in respect of such crisis work. The remit of social

workers must change so that work other than crisis intervention can be done and the long-term effects of collaboration in preventing crises from occurring must be understood by social workers. However, again a crucial element is that of time for in order to build up collaborative machinery and use it effectively, social workers must first have a breathing space from crisis work. It is difficult to see how this could come about without substantial increase in staffing.

There is another major difficulty with the notion of prevention for, although lip-service is paid to its importance, there are ideological and practical dilemmas when it comes to operationalising it. For instance, a greater measure of prevention would necessitate more sharing of information which would cause difficulties for social workers with their ethic of confidentiality. By recording and sharing such aspects as NAI registration, the power of the professionals over their clients would be increased. To some extent this difficulty could be circumvented by the inclusion of parents as equal partners in the preventive work so that information would not be passed without their knowledge, although this may not really affect the problems of clients being caught up in the combined power of more than one professional. Social workers would also have to be less suspicious of the way teachers used information and teachers become more aware of the possible misuse of information held about a child's family background. Difficulties over confidentiality and misuse of information can only be resolved through attitudinal change promoted through training, and this will be discussed below.

A more fundamental difficulty is the possibility of prevention becoming unnecessary intervention. Professional intervention prior to a crisis could be viewed as violation of the liberty of the parents and the question is raised as to when and what type of intervention is legitimate. This is a particularly difficult question because its resolution depends to a large extent upon the

relative weight put by society as a whole upon the rights of parents over children and the rights of the state to intervene on behalf of children. And again, this latter takes us back to the thorny, and relative, question of how we perceive and define the interests of the child. One way around this difficulty might be a change in the way in which teachers operationalise schooling. If schools were to become involved in the active promotion of social and emotional welfare as a central rather than peripheral part of their remit, a different educational climate might be engendered which would be preventive in its very nature. Training would be crucial for such a change to take place, but also a genuine restructuring of schooling to match more nearly the philosophy of education as "learning to be a person" (Langford 1978 p.84). Such a change would provide the opportunity for greater equality, interdependence and intensity of contact. It might also exacerbate conflict over boundaries.

The promotion of preventive strategies in any significant way requires more than the realisation of its relationship with reduced incidence of crisis. It requires a commitment to a wider notion of welfare on all levels, from the legislature through the department to the unit and individual worker. This commitment entails the provision of resources such as time and extra staffing; promotion of the welfare model through training; changes in the organisation of primary schools.

Even without the radical ideological changes proposed above, greater inter-dependency of school and social worker could be created by making collaboration a statutory duty of both agencies - which would serve also to redress the inequality of power - and by promoting greater contact between front-line workers who, equipped with time and a specific remit to work together, would have at least a greater chance of being able to negotiate their differences.

Such structural changes are essential in providing the basic ingredients of priority and time to give to collaborative work. However, they must be supported by an attitudinal change amongst workers of both agencies. As long as the contribution of each agency is not valued by the other, then the potential provided by structural change will not be enough to motivate workers to collaborate. Thus a parallel thrust must take place in changing aspects of professional acculturation. The major vehicle for this is training and this is discussed in the next section.

Section 2: Developments in professional training.

Training is an area which spans both organisation and profession, for it must be sanctioned and financed at various levels of the organisation, and is the major means of determining the characteristics of the profession. At the end of the previous section, it was mentioned as an organisational responsibility and here it will be discussed in terms of the effect on the professionalisation of the individual worker. Although training is designed to promote change in the individual worker, its cumulative effect is upon the profession as a whole. As the discussion in Chapter 7 demonstrates, professional training not only teaches knowledge and skills but inculcates attitudes and culture specific to that professional group; by so doing it creates a sense of identity with the group which by definition is exclusive of others. This common phenomenon of group dynamics is exacerbated in teaching and social work by the nature of professional autonomy and the route by which it is gained. There is therefore a dilemma in a search for training that will bring the two groups closer together. If they are to be trained to be more similar this will conflict with the acculturation inherent in professional training. Rather than attempt to eliminate differences, it may be more useful to provide training for the recognition of differences, the respecting of such differences and the valuing of their resolution in the

interest of superordinate goals.

An innovation in training which moved in this direction was running concurrently with the fieldwork for this thesis. This was a research project with an action research component which tackled the promotion of increased co-operation of teachers and social workers through joint training at the pre-service level (McMichael, Irvine & Gilloran 1984; McMichael & Gilloran 1984). This study is particularly important in attempting to put into practice the rhetoric of inter-professional collaboration and provides insights into the issues surrounding its development. McMichael and her colleagues first researched students entering three professions: teaching (both primary and secondary), social work and community work. The researchers found that students from each profession began their training either with no views of each other or with negative views, and during training they tended to adopt negative stereotypes. McMichael et.al. conclude,

"The fundamental conclusion of the present research is therefore that potential interprofessional co-operation between social workers, primary and secondary teachers and community workers is hindered, and its likelihood decreased as a consequence of the students' training experience." (McMichael, Irvine & Gilloran, op.cit. p.247)

The action phase of the research was carried out with student primary teachers, social workers and community workers. As the present thesis is concerned specifically with the first two of these groups, reference to community workers is omitted from the ensuing discussion. The purpose of the training programmes developed after the initial research was to promote change in perceptions of each others' professions. Two types of joint training were put into operation. The first provided a course in social psychology attended by students from the three professions.

The programme included lectures and workshops and it was hoped that it would serve to establish friendly relations across the student groups, reduce the tendency to stereotype and provide a theoretical basis for examining inter-personal and inter-group conflict and harmony (McMichael & Gilloran, pp.17, 31). The results were, however, that while about a quarter of the students felt that inter-group perspectives had improved as a result of the course, a similar number felt that they had deteriorated and the attitudes of the remaining half remained unchanged and neutral. There were some clear structural reasons contributing to the failure to affect perceptions as much as had been hoped, and these the authors suggest as the over-representation of teachers, the way in which students were able to remain in their own cliques without mixing, the infrequency of the sessions and their multiplicity of purpose. The most interesting aspect of their description of the course was the way in which it actually provided a forum in which negative attitudes were reinforced. Each group witnessed behaviour in the other that supported their stereotypes eg. the teachers did not like the way that social workers were often late and the way in which they interrupted classes to engage the lecturer in debate. The social workers found the teachers' difficulty in participation in groups an indication of their passivity and conservatism. The differences between the groups were clearly exacerbated by the different type of training that they were receiving as an introduction to their profession. McMichael and Gilloran (op.cit.) quote one social work student as follows,

"I'm not sure that the workshops didn't drive us even further apart. I think it's the way we're taught. We are taught to criticise especially in Social Policy....and they're taught to accept what they're told. They learn what they have to teach and it means they're not encouraged to question." (p.28)

The report of this course thus highlights a crucial issue. Where the teaching method of each group is itself imbued with a different

value system, the groups may be already too far apart for an isolated joint learning experience to be truly integrative, particularly where the method of one or other of the groups is the vehicle for the joint experience.

In the second programme, McMichael and her colleagues, drawing on the work of Tajfel (1981), emphasised the need to maintain group social identities rather than attempting to lose them. They hoped that through the learning experience, students would be able to perceive, and value, differences in emphasis, approach, skills and priorities (McMichael & Gilloran op.cit. p.35) and that this would lead to respect between the professional groups. Students would increase their knowledge of the other group and practice collaboration through joint problem-solving activities.

A format based entirely on the small group workshop model was adopted for the second course where mixed groups of students discussed professional dilemmas, explored their differences in relation to case studies and took part in role play. Tutors concentrated on facilitating discussion, and the workshops also promoted inter-professional co-operation among tutors who came together from the different teaching areas of the college to plan, and work on, the course. Important attitudinal changes did take place among students with a decrease in negative stereotyping. The teaching students benefited particularly in gaining more insight into the areas of concern of the social workers. The students did not, however, become aware of any purpose to co-operation beyond that of the other worker providing help towards one's own ends; the notion of superordinate goals in the interests of the child or family, for which the researchers had hoped, was not apparent. It is interesting that one of the difficulties identified in the programme reflects the situation found among the area teams and schools in the present study; it was difficult to persuade student teachers of the usefulness of the course because they knew that when in post they would not be doing any liaison. Another

difficulty paralleled that of the integrated social psychology course; the student teachers were not used to the openness of the workshop style of learning although the activities in this case helped some teachers to develop their ability to speak out in discussion rather than exacerbating stereotypes.

On the whole, the workshop series appears to have promoted a considerable degree of integration which in some cases extended beyond the classroom to college life in general. The second course was certainly more successful than the first in altering negative attitudes and increasing knowledge and co-operation across professional boundaries. The researchers attribute this to the content of the workshops which addressed inter-professional issues rather than matters of general interest, and to their structure which necessitated interaction between students from the different groups. They say,

"..though common courses will have useful results they will not necessarily have the effect of promoting harmony and good will, quite the contrary, in fact, unless deliberate attempts are made to break down hostilities."
(McMichael & Gilloran op.cit. p.115)

Sessions in the workshop course also took place more frequently, group size was small with a more equal number of students from each profession and the tutors were all focussing on facilitation of inter-personal and inter-professional communication. In comparing the two courses run at Moray House, these differences were clearly important in promoting greater effectiveness in the second programme.

However the researchers remained somewhat dissatisfied with the results which were less far-reaching than they had anticipated, and they are particularly concerned that the results might be short-

lived given the variables inside the college and in the field that are likely to conspire against continued interest in co-operation. They found that divisions existed amongst college staff that paralleled those in the student body and were effective, both implicitly and explicitly, in reinforcing students' negative attitudes towards other sections of the college; and they emphasise that the college ethos itself must change in favour of inter-professional collaboration if students are to be expected to change.

The type of training that McMichael et. al. introduced in their workshop design is strongly in accord with the implications of the present research, for it attempted to help student professionals to become aware of differing values and goals and to respect these differences as a preliminary to the negotiation of potential conflict caused as a result of them. However, the approach needs to be developed still further if the resulting attitude change is to be sufficient to promote genuine change in collaborative practice in the field.

A radical shift in the focus of professional training is required so that the traditionally exclusive concentration on the occupation's own role with clients or pupils is put into an inter-disciplinary framework. Membership of a network of services would become the overall model within which the individual profession would be a specialism. This would not negate the identity of the individual professional group but would create the inter-dependence necessary as a basic condition for negotiation. Such a change in general focus of training would promote the resolution of several of the barriers to co-operation identified in this study (eg. boundary issues, respect for others, stigma, confidentiality, exclusion of teachers from the welfare services) because the starting point would be that each group had a different but equally important role to play.

Setting professional training within an inter-professional framework changes the task of each group to some extent; they are now carrying out a specialised part of the welfare role. This then leads to the adoption of superordinate goals - one of the major paths to effecting negotiation according to Stern et.al. (op.cit.). Of course, the notion of the superordinate goal in the social work/education interface leads back to one of the major difficulties identified in co-operative situations in the present sample - that of the different meanings attributed to such phrases as "in the best interests of the child". The suggested framework for training provides a solid basis on which to build collaborative practice but does not do away with the fact of differing emphases in working with children and therefore the training must include, within such a framework, understanding and skill in the process of working together. As Adamson (op.cit.) says,

"...a group may decide to discuss a client or a policy (the task) but unless it simultaneously evolves a means or an appropriate process by which to do this, it is likely to be in the midst of conflict and tension, apathy, denial and cynicism." (p.39)

Training in the process of inter-disciplinary collaboration must therefore be the main thrust of work within the "welfare network" framework, as is increasingly being advocated in the literature. Bruce (1980), writing about social work and health services, says that increase in knowledge of the other profession's role is not enough and that,

"..training should also provide an opportunity for consideration of the social-psychological components in teamwork." (p.204)

Richardson and Morrell, both writing in Kellmer-Pringle (1969), each emphasises that co-operation is a learned skill,

"Co-operation is not just a matter of physical reorganisation; it depends as much on learning about the skills needed to solve a problem and on learning how to put these skills together in the right order, in the right place and at the right time. It is essentially an educational process." (Richardson p.15)

"And thirdly, we need a technology: we must develop the skills of communication and co-operation including supportive forms of organisation." (Morrell p.102)

This is reiterated by Holder & Wardle (1980) in their report of a team approach to work in the field, where they found that collaborating with other agencies actually required more work than operating with individual clients did, and that such work "went against our training" (p.62). Workers must acquire an understanding of, and the skills to effect, team development.

In order to do so, they need training in group dynamics and in understanding their own reactions in groups. Although this is already part of some social work training, Holder & Wardle (op.cit.) maintain, citing Parsloe (DHSS 1979) in support, that groupwork in social work training is almost always related to therapy and as a consequence is not used to develop "thinking about groups as working, organisational tools." (p.189). Adamson (op.cit.) makes the same point (p.49) in saying that the dynamics of the work - as opposed to the client - group get little attention in social work training. She emphasises the need for such training if the collaborative implications of the Barclay Report are to be fulfilled. Moreover, it is clear from McMichael et.al.'s study that the style of groupwork training experienced by the social work students at Moray House served to reinforce their professional identity and their exclusiveness rather than helping them to co-operate with others. Training in inter-group dynamics is needed in addition to the more commonly provided courses in

relationships within a group. Regarding student teachers, the Moray House report suggests that any kind of group dynamics training would be a radical innovation.

Training in groupwork requires theoretical background and also a component where students learn to evaluate their own part in group situations. In addition, it would be invaluable for students within the multi-disciplinary framework to have an understanding of the process of professionalisation in which they are engaged. Sociological and psychological perspectives on professionalism could usefully be passed on to the professionals themselves as an aid to making sense of their experience and putting it into context.

A further relevant theoretical area is that of systems theory which Holder & Wardle (op.cit.) suggest as an essential element in training for work in a team. They maintain that students on placement in their project were better equipped for collaboration when their training had included work on systems theory. These authors draw on the theory of Pincus & Minahan (1973) who introduced a systems typology to social work, calling the inter-agency context within which the social worker operates, the "action system" as opposed to the "client system".

In summary, it is advocated here that professional training for both teaching and social work should be placed firmly in an overall inter-group framework which sees the individual worker as firstly a member of a network of client/pupil welfare services and only secondly as a specialist within that network. Training in intra- and inter-group dynamics would have a central place and be supported by a theoretical understanding of groups, systems theory and professionalism, and an ability to effect the skills of team development. That such a radical change in professional training is necessary if co-operation is genuinely to increase, was advocated

long ago as 1969 by J.W.Tibble who, reporting on an inter-professional conference for trainers of teachers, social workers, nurses and psychologists, concluded that,

" It is to be hoped that a broadly based and flexible system of inter-professional education will replace the present patchwork system. It is important to experiment."
(Craft et.al. 1972 p.283)

It is interesting to note that, when asked about their attitude towards joint training, 52% of teachers and 81% of social workers in the present sample indicated that it would be acceptable in some form. Most of them, however, either mentioned in-service training on specific topics or emphasised that only small parts of basic training could be shared because the two groups are so different in role, remit and attitude. Working within the current organisational and professional context, as explored in Chapter 7, this is only to be expected. One social worker envisaged a different kind of training based on integration - he called it "social education" - but said that it would be impossible to operate,

"Teachers and social worker in training of necessity have to be separated because of the system we work in. It would be ideal to be in the business of social education. But given the system it is a disadvantage to the child to bring social workers and teachers together." (BG Z3)

The type of training advocated here would have two important effects on front-line workers in teaching and social work. By shifting the foundation of professionalisation from the initial development of separate identities from which practitioners later attempt to work together, to the development of an integrated welfare identity, professional defensiveness would be reduced allowing each group to acknowledge the skills of the other and place more value on their contribution. Understanding of group

dynamics and the effects of professionalisation, and training in the skills of teamwork and the negotiation of conflict would promote the ability to negotiate differences when they occurred rather than avoiding them. In relation to the framework of organisational analysis introduced at the beginning of this chapter, the adoption of a mutually accepted welfare ideology has the potential to shift the balance of power, dependency and intensity of relationship to a situation more conducive to effective co-operation.

It would be useless to send out social workers and teachers trained to a new and wider perspective if they were to join organisations which did not share this view, for the pressure to conform to the norms of the existing group would counteract the recent training of the novice (Blau 1963). In-service training must therefore run concurrently with changes in initial courses. The most effective means of incorporating the aspects mentioned above in an in-service context would be the use of consultants to assist team development in already existing working groups. This is discussed by Adamson (op.cit. p.46-7) and would promote an experiential and theoretical understanding of working together with the added bonus of ameliorating present relationships. The notion is somewhat akin to that of a co-ordinating body as discussed above (page 274) but takes the focus away from co-ordination as something external to the front-line participants and places effective collaboration firmly in the remit of the workers themselves with the consultant merely a tool in the development of their own skills.

Section 3: Change in the organisation and the profession.

Although this chapter has been divided into separate discussions of organisational factors and those to do with professionalisation, the two areas are of necessity interconnected. Dingwall (1980),

writing about obstacles to the team approach, highlights this as an "important concept", saying,

"..attitudes and behaviour of individuals cannot change unless there are changes in the structure itself ... "
(p.87)

The suggestions outlined above for training and for restructuring the local organisation are intertwined, for the inter-disciplinary mode of working requires changes in remit, use of resources and intra-organisational patterns. Change in each area necessitates change in the other, and, on a global level in regard to the notion of the inter-disciplinary training framework, in that of the other welfare professions.

Change, however, is difficult to achieve at any level, and in itself tends to be perceived as threatening, breeding the very defensive reaction that the innovations suggested here are designed to overcome. That people are resistant to change is well-documented (eg. Reich & Adcock 1976), and Marris (1974) attributes this to the "conservative impulse" based on "the assumption that the impulse to defend the predictability of life is a fundamental and universal principle of human psychology" (p.2). Anybody who wishes to promote change in others has to be aware of their likely reactions and how to manage the introduction of change so that it is acceptable to the participants. In the case of inter-professional collaboration between social workers and teachers, it may be necessary to wait for the advent of the "internal decay" of society's present paradigms of professionalism and social welfare delivery, as described by Kuhn (1962) in relation to scientific thought, before practice will reflect rhetoric in this arena.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

This study was designed within the general remit of research on the interface between education and social work. It set out to explore co-operation between these agencies at the level of the area team and the primary school. The focus of enquiry was on perceptions held by practitioners; of each other's profession, of the way in which they communicated, and of co-operation between them over actual children. Data on these perceptions were gathered through a range of research tools administered through interviews with headteachers, assistant headteachers, class teachers, social work area officers, senior social workers and basic grade social workers. Because the research tools used still require proper validation, and the sample was too small for statistical analysis and testing for significance of results, conclusions drawn from the findings can only be exploratory and tentative in nature. Given these caveats, there have emerged from the data some illuminating findings on the state of co-operation between social work and education, albeit in a limited number of situations. These findings have been discussed in relation to a theoretical consideration of inter-organisational and inter-professional factors which, it is suggested, are important determinants of co-operative style. The discussion of these factors gives rise to suggestions for policy changes to improve the effectiveness of joint work between social workers and primary teachers.

The data have been analysed under three main headings, inter-personal perceptions, communication, and co-operation over focal cases. The data on inter-personal perceptions demonstrated the existence of both consonant and dissonant perceptions, and it was suggested that dissonant perceptions were related to lack of

knowledge of each other's work and differences in values held by each group. The data on communication showed that there was a common pattern of liaison among the schools and area teams in the sample, with liaison the remit of the headteacher and the basic grade social worker who made contact over individual children. Contact took place within a chain system of communication where practitioners "passed on the problem" up the chain. Teachers were lower on the chain than social workers. On examination of co-operation over the focal children, practitioners were found to operate to one of three different types of liaison, ranging from "open channels" with almost no actual contact, through to ongoing communication where contact was maintained outwith statutory or emergency requirements. A fourth type of liaison was characterised by dissonant perceptions as to its nature: teachers and social workers had different ideas as to the amount and frequency of contact. Co-operation was also seen to exhibit a range of difficulties related to communication, mutuality of perceptions and satisfaction. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction among class teachers who had a limited role in respect of liaison, but wanted to be more involved. The analysis of co-operation data demonstrated a link between incongruent perceptions and low levels of co-operation. The kind of communication required for practitioners to negotiate their differences and come to a joint understanding of the case, called here "collaboration", was not evident in the sample. A final piece of analysis was carried out in order to examine links between co-operation and general perceptions but, possibly because of the low numbers in the sample, or because even the higher levels of co-operation were not very high, there were few clearcut results. The notion of a link between incongruent perceptions and co-operative style was furthered to some extent by this part of the analysis, but results were not completely consistent.

In Chapter 7, the data from the sample were pulled together under four main headings which incorporated the major findings. Firstly, an unequal power relationship existed between the schools and the

area teams. This was related to control over information-sharing, where control was held by the social workers as a result of their statutory remit and their principles of confidentiality. The suspicion with which they often viewed teachers' use of information, which was related to their perceptions of teachers as holding different values to their own, led them to control the flow of information to schools, causing dissatisfaction and resentment amongst teachers. This pattern was repeated within schools, with the headteacher controlling information passed to class teachers. Following from this, the second major finding was the way in which communication operated in a chain, which meant that contact tended to take place only between the two people adjacent in the chain. This militated against a more collaborative type of co-operation. Thirdly, perceptions of each other, and of the relationship between them, were permeated by ambivalence. Fourthly, there existed a great deal of incongruity between the perceptions of the teachers and the social workers. These four areas were all underpinned by lack of knowledge, different values, lack of trust and lack of respect for the other profession's work.

In Chapter 7 also, the theoretical framework outlined at the beginning of the thesis was taken up and expanded in the light of the findings from the research data. It was suggested that fundamental difficulties existed in the position of social workers and teachers vis-a-vis their professionalism and their organisational structure, which made it difficult for them to co-operate fully. The discussion centred on the notion of conflict as inherent in their situation on two counts. Firstly, inter-organisational theory suggests that conflict is inevitable where two separate organisations meet. Secondly, social workers and teachers are caught between a push towards co-operation because of their overall common aim to promote the development of the child in his or her best interests, and a pull away from each other due to their positions as semi-professions. This dilemma, fostered by the process of professional acculturation, also promotes conflict. Because of the adherence to the service ideal, and the lip-service

paid to co-operation as necessary for the provision of an effective service for children, the conflicts between the two are not explicitly addressed. Organisationally, the conditions for co-operation do not exist with the inequality in power, lack of mutual dependency and low level of resource input that characterise the relationship between the agencies. No organisational structures are set up for the negotiation of conflict. All of these factors lead to the low level of co-operation evidenced in the sample, with practitioners unable to acknowledge the conflict between them as an integral part of their relationship, and to work together to negotiate their differences and promote joint work towards superordinate goals.

Following from this discussion, implications for policy which would promote such collaboration were explored in Chapter 8, and the study concludes with suggestions for change at both the organisational and the professional level, ranging from the possibility of legislative change, through to change in the individual worker. This last can only be carried out through the vehicle of training and it is advocated that the basis of professional training should be shifted, from initial acculturation into a strong separate identity which involves the devaluing of the other group, to an integrated welfare service identity shared by all workers before specialisation. Such training would incorporate education in group dynamics, systems theory and the skills of negotiation and teamwork. Until a radical change of this kind is introduced, it will continue to be difficult for social workers and teachers to co-operate at the level of the primary school and the area team.

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APPENDIX 1a

CHECKLIST

On this page is a list of difficulties associated with school children. Could you indicate for each item, whose professional responsibility you think it would be to do something about it.

1. Inadequate clothing.....
2. Bullying.....
3. Withdrawn behaviour
in the classroom.....
4. Glue-sniffing.....
5. Vandalism in the
local community.....
6. Rudeness and defiance.....
7. Unexplained absences
from school.....
8. Falling behind in
school work.....
9. Stealing from
local shops.....
10. Disruptive behaviour
in the classroom.....
11. Frequent weeping for
no apparent reason.....
12. Parents condone
absences from school.....
13. Wandering the
streets at night.....
14. Damaging school
property.....
15. Evidence of physical
maltreatment at home.....
16. Arriving late at
school every day.....
17. Stealing from
other pupils.....
18. Parents do not respond to
invitations to discuss
child's learning problems.....

In the spaces below, could you indicate which six of the above difficulties are:- (a) the most serious (b) the least serious

most serious		least serious	
1.....	4.....	1.....	4.....
2.....	5.....	2.....	5.....
3.....	6.....	3.....	6.....

APPENDIX 1b

CASE STUDIES

On this page are four examples of children with problems at school. If the children were in your class (school) what would you do about their problems?*

1. A child with a poor record of attendance and who is aggressive and difficult to control in class, is caught stealing from local shops.

2. A child comes to school with inadequate clothing and apparently underfed. His parents do not attend parents' meetings and do not respond to letters.

3. A child who has previously been of average academic ability begins to slip further and further behind in school work and becomes very withdrawn.

4. A child comes to school on several occasions with large bruises. You begin to suspect physical maltreatment at home.

* Instructions for teachers. Wording for social workers: If these children were referred to you...

APPENDIX 1c

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL (worded for social workers)

On the next page is a list of characteristics which might be applied to social workers. They are arranged in opposites, with a row of six lines in between, like this:-

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
kind	...	...	...	...	...	...	unkind

Please indicate to what extent you think the characteristics, on the whole, apply to social workers, using one tick for each pair of opposites. Put the tick on one of the lines as follows:-

The lines nearest each end (lines 1 and 6) are used if the characteristic at that side is a very good description of social workers.

The next lines in (lines 2 and 5) are used if the characteristic on that side is quite a good description of social workers.

The two middle lines (lines 3 and 4) are used if the characteristic on that side is a slightly better description than that on the other side.

That is:-

1	2	3	4	5	6
very good description	quite good description	slightly better than other side	slightly better than other side	quite good description	very good description

Here is an example:-

SOCIAL WORKER							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
kind	...	...	...	...	...	...	unkind

A tick on line 1 means that you think that the characteristic "kind" is a very good description of social workers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
kind	...	...	...	...	...	...	unkind

A tick on line 4 means that you think that the characteristic "unkind" is a slightly better description of social workers than the characteristic "kind".

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
kind	...	...	...	...	...	...	unkind

A tick on line 5 means that you think that the characteristic "unkind" is quite a good description of social workers.

SOCIAL WORKER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
caring	uncaring
doing useful work	not doing useful work
sticks to tried and trusted methods	tries new methods
co-operates with colleagues over problems	does not co-operate with colleagues over problems
difficult to talk to	easy to talk to
has a professional approach	does not have a professional approach
indiscreet	discreet
no clear professional objectives	clear professional objectives
overworked	not enough to do
sensitive to the problems of other professions	insensitive to the problems of other professions
head in the clouds	down to earth
shares knowledge about cases with other professionals	does not share knowledge about cases with other professionals
strict	permissive
encourages conformity	discourages conformity
non-directive	directive

APPENDIX 1d

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(worded for teachers)

Communication and co-operation.

1. Does the school refer many children to the social work area team?

a) If yes - What kind of things do you refer them for?

Is there any other agency to which you refer children with social and emotional problems?

Which kind of problems go to social workers and which to other agencies?

b) If no - Where does the school refer children with social and emotional problems?

2. How would you go about referring a child to the social work area team?

3. Once a child has been referred, does the social worker keep the school informed about what she is doing?

Or would you normally expect to contact her first?

4. Do social workers keep you informed about children in their care when they have not been referred by the school?

5. What kind of information do they normally give you?

How often do they contact you?

Are there differences between social workers in this respect?

6. Which member of staff usually contacts the social worker?

7. How is this done?

8. Do you have any contact with the social worker?

9. Does the class teacher have any contact with the social worker?

10. Would it help the child if the social worker talked to the child's own teacher?

11. How far do you think that teachers and social workers should share information about a child they are both helping?

Should you pass on all the information you have about a child?

What kind of thing would you pass and why?

What kind of thing would you not pass on and why?

12. Does the school have to write reports for the children's panel?

Have you yourself had to do this?

Are you satisfied with the way this is done?

13. Does the school have a good relationship with the social work area team?

What makes it good (or bad)?

Is there any way that it could be improved?

14. What do you think of the idea of having social workers attached to schools?

Focal case.

1. Do you generally know if children in your class (school) are having social work help?

2. Do you know what they are being given help for?

For instance, what about X [child's name]?

3. Does X have problems at school?

4. Would you say his/her problems are educational, social or emotional?

5. Is there anything you can do in school to help X?
6. Do you agree that the social worker should be involved with X's problems?
What do you think she can do to help him/her?
7. Did the school refer X to the social worker?
If yes, how was the referral made?
Was the class teacher involved in deciding where to refer X?
8. If it was not a school referral - How did you find out about his/her social worker?
9. Does the social worker keep in contact with the school about X?
Is this:
 - a) on a regular basis, or
 - b) only in emergencies, or
 - c) when reports are required?
10. Is the class teacher kept informed of what is being done to help X?
11. Which member of staff does the social worker contact?
How is this done?
12. Does the social worker ever contact the class teacher?
13. Does the school ever contact the social worker or is it always the social worker who contacts the school?
14. Do you know the social worker personally?
By name?
Spoken to on the phone?

15. Is the social worker easy to get hold of?

16. How would you describe the school's contact with the social worker over X's case? Has there been satisfactory or unsatisfactory liaison?

In what way?

17. Would it help the handling of X's problems if there were more contact between the school and the social worker?

In what way?

18. Are there children in your class/school who are not getting social work help that they need?

What sort of problems do they have?

Preparation for co-operation.

1. When you were on your training course, did you get guidance on dealing with children's social and emotional problems?

What form did this take?

2. Did you find that you had been adequately prepared for this side of things when you actually started teaching?

If not, how could this have been improved?

3. Were you told about agencies that help children with problems?

What about the role of the social worker?

4. Is there a case for joint training of teachers with social workers?

5. If there was a social worker attached to your school what do you think she could do?

6. Do teachers and social workers see things differently?

REPORT ON TWO WEEK'S PARTICIPATION IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Brief description of the school and its environment.

This open-plan primary school was purpose-built and opened in 1973. It was funded initially by Urban Aid, and original intentions were that the school should have a particularly close relationship with the local social work area office whose buildings back on to it. For various reasons this close liaison has not materialised.

The school has 160 pupils at the moment, in addition to a full-time nursery. Its catchment area is very small, extending only to the roads in the immediate vicinity. The area is extremely run-down with as many houses boarded up as inhabited. It has a bad name among tenants and most families who can get a council house elsewhere move away, leaving only the least socially and economically mobile. Many of the children at the school have multiply-deprived family backgrounds.

The headteacher has always been aware of the many problems that confront her pupils and sees one of the most important aspects of their education as being the relationship they have with teachers.

2. Brief description of the participation.

I began as a kind of understudy to the auxiliary, which served to introduce me to all the teachers and gave me an acceptable role. However, continuing strictly on this basis would have been rather restricting, and I was fortunately quickly encouraged to go into classrooms and approach individual teachers.

After the first two days, I was asked to take groups of children from one class for practical weighing exercises, ie. baking rock cakes. This proved to be so popular that other teachers asked if their pupils could have this too. Much of my time thereafter was spent supervising baking. This was a most helpful development as I now had a specific role that was seen as useful by the teachers. The baking gave some structure to my activities and legitimised my presence but left plenty of time for other contact with staff.

As well as baking, I took reading groups, played games with children and went on an outing in the school minibus. I spoke to

several of the teachers about social work and attended a staff meeting where communication with social workers was discussed.

3. Talking to members of staff.

a) The assistant headteacher had most to say about the relationship between teachers and social workers. Although keen to have the closest possible links with the social work department, he thought that it would not be an advantage to have a social worker attached to the school. Contact should be informal, within an atmosphere of mutual support, where teachers and social workers could feel able to talk to each other at any time.

Other points mentioned were:-

- Need for good relations between agencies dealing with children
- Need for school to have the aid of social workers who can deal with welfare problems of families.
- Importance for school of having information about the home life of children, as problems at home affect conduct in school.
- Lack of insight on the part of teachers as to what it means to a child to be taken into care.
- Lack of insight on the part of social workers as to the importance to the child of the disruption of schooling that is attendant on eviction and consequent removal to another part of the city.
- Problems of confidentiality.
- Contact tends to be with particular personalities on the area team. Some social workers are interested in liaising with the school and others are not.
- Social work intervention at crisis point is too late to help a child. Preventive measures have more long-term effect.

b) A class teacher said that there was little contact between class teachers and social workers. On one occasion she had initiated contact but unsuccessfully because her aims and those of the social worker were directly opposed. She said that the social worker was family-centred (trying to keep the family together) while she, herself, was child-centred (thinking that the child should be removed from the family).

c) Another class teacher had had an unfortunate experience when the manager of a residential children's home refused to allow her to

visit a pupil of hers who had been placed in the home. When appealed to as mediator, the social worker merely relayed the manager's refusal and the teacher felt that her right to have an interest in the child was rejected without any thought being given to it.

d) Another class teacher said that she understood the problems of social workers because several members of her family worked in social work.

e) The school nurse thought that social workers were reluctant to share information. She had not found this problem when liaising with professionals in other fields.

4. Staff meeting.

The staff meeting was a reporting-back session after teachers had visited neighbouring services - a day nursery; the special unit at a secondary school; the Family Service Unit and the social work area team.

The visits to the two last of these brought forth strong feelings about the lack of interest in closer links with teachers shown by the social workers they had visited, despite the fact that many of the children in the school were social work clients. The teachers found that their attempt to initiate contact was not met with enthusiasm and got the impression that social workers preferred to look after their own patch and thought that teachers should do the same.

Afer a report by one member of staff on his experiences working in a List D school, there was general discussion on the problems that arise from the List D system and the apparent lack of insight into these problems on the part of social workers. There was discussion on the reasons for the lack of liaison among agencies dealing with children with problems. It was suggested that one reason was lack of leadership at management level and another was jealousy, both between and within professions.

Another topic of discussion was liaison with secondary schools. One point of view was that formal liaison rarely works because people are defensive and trying to impress, and that the best liaison both between and within professions takes place informally. There was a general desire to find out more about the role of guidance teachers in secondary schools.

5. Meeting with area team social worker.

I was given an informal introduction to a social worker from the area team who gave me her opinion on liaison with primary schools, as follows:-

- Links with schools in this particular area are generally good, as teachers can see the importance of the service provided by social workers. Different schools have different attitudes to social workers and in some schools this prohibits contact of any kind. The school I was in was felt to be a welcoming school where social workers felt free to go in at any time.
- Contact with class teachers is not frequent and even less so in the secondary school where liaison is with the guidance staff.
- Some schools tend to over-react to problems and make constant and unnecessary phone calls to the social work department.
- Teachers are not involved enough in panel discussions, although meetings are organised for panel members which teachers are welcome to attend. Teachers should be present for parts of hearings but should not stay to hear intimate details of family life as this inhibits the family and is a breach of confidentiality.
- Professional differences between teachers and social workers can create problems. Teaching is a long-established profession while social work is a new one.
- This social worker felt strongly that liaison with primary schools is important but recognised that, where there are constantly crises to be dealt with, such liaison is a low priority for social work departments.

6. Conclusions.

Information gained while at this primary school, while not extensive, supports the notion that difficulties in inter-professional communication do exist between social workers and teachers. This is true even in a school with a particularly caring attitude towards its pupils and which is felt to be welcoming by social workers. Teachers felt frustrated at the seeming lack of interest in liaison of social workers.

Research could attempt to map out the inter-relationships and trace causes of both positive and negative perceptions. This may give an

indication of ways in which effective contact is, or could be, made. Better communication and co-operation would promote increased understanding of the child with problems, and beneficially affect the handling of these problems by both social workers and teachers.

APPENDIX 2b

REPORT ON PILOT STUDY

This report is organised under the following headings:-

sample
checklist (copy attached)
methodological problems in the checklist
case studies
patterns of communication
questions on communication and co-operation
questions on actual (focal) cases
questions on preparation for co-operation (training)

1. Sample.

Interviews were conducted with 5 social workers from one area team, and with 15 teachers from 5 schools served by the area team. 7 children who attended these schools and who were on the social work case-loads were selected as the actual (focal) cases to be discussed.

Teachers interviewed were as follows:-

School 1 (Primary)	1 assistant headteacher 1 class teacher	total - 2
School 2 (Primary)	2 assistant headteachers 2 class teachers	total - 4
School 3 (Primary)	2 assistant headteachers 2 class teachers	total - 4
School 4 (Junior Secondary)	1 assistant head (guidance) 1 registration/guidance teacher	total - 2
School 5 (Junior Secondary)	1 year guidance teacher 1 registration teacher 1 subject teacher	total - 3

2. Checklist.

The checklist was analysed by counting the number of times each category was used and by counting the number of times additional categories were mentioned. Respondents were divided into 5 groups for comparison: social worker; secondary guidance teacher;

secondary class teacher; primary assistant headteacher; primary class teacher.

Results:

Teacher alone: Mentioned most often by primary class teachers and least often by social workers.

Social worker alone: Mentioned most often by social workers and least by primary class teachers.

Other categories introduced:-

Parents: Mentioned by all groups - most by secondary guidance teachers and least by social workers.

Child guidance: Mentioned only by social workers and secondary guidance teachers and, of these, more by social workers.

Attendance officer: Mentioned by all social workers and no teachers.

Health visitor/ Medical officer/ Health clinic: Mentioned most by secondary guidance teachers and not at all by social workers and secondary class teachers.

Panel/Reporter: Mentioned only by social workers, not at all by teachers.

Police: Mentioned once by a social worker and once by a primary teacher.

DHSS: Mentioned once by a social worker.

There were definitely differences in the responses of the 5 groups, both in the use of the categories given and in the mention of other categories. However, the results are not very meaningful as there were serious methodological errors in the checklist.

Methodological errors in the checklist:

The structure of the response categories was poor:-

a) Giving only the choice of "teacher" or "social worker" biased respondents (especially teachers) to say social worker where they might not otherwise have done so.

b) Not having a separate category for "parents" was ambivalent. Some respondents expected parents to be automatically included, others saw the task in terms of agencies so that the inclusion of parents seemed irrelevant. It is also important to distinguish in analysis between those who thought that parents should be consulted and those who thought that the problem was the entire responsibility of the parents.

c) Primary class teachers tended to think of the category "teacher" as the class teacher and said that they would refer on to their assistant headteacher, putting this in the "other" category.

d) The inclusion of the category "both" was misleading. It tended to be used when respondents were unsure and this encouraged a bias in favour of it.

Suggestions:

a) Response categories could be altered to: social worker; school; child guidance; attendance officer; health services; police; reporter/panel; parent; other. Respondents could be told that they could tick more than one.

b) Fixed response categories could be removed altogether and respondents asked whose professional responsibility each item is, with a blank line to write in as many as they consider to be appropriate. This would eliminate the methodological difficulties.

3. Case studies.

These were difficult to analyse and I am not sure what is the best way to treat the data. I have given a brief overall view on each question. Respondents found this an easier task than the checklist but again class teachers tended to say that they would refer the problem to the assistant head or headteacher. It might be better to ask them what they think that the person they refer on to will do.

Results:

Case 1: There was a general expectation that the school would go through other agencies before the case reached the social worker. Social workers mostly said that this would be child guidance, as did the secondary guidance assistant headteacher. Primary schools suggested the attendance officer and class teachers tended to refer up the system within the school and leave the problem to the head or assistant headteacher.

Case 2: Social workers definitely saw this as their problem though entry to the home would probably be through the health visitor. Schools also saw this case as going to the health visitor or other health agency. Referral to a social worker was suggested by two guidance staff and one primary assistant headteacher.

Case 3: This was generally seen as a school problem and social workers expected it to go to child guidance rather than social work, and only come to social work if there were other problems. Schools saw it as being dealt with within the school and in consultation with parents. Other agencies mentioned by teachers were social work (3 times), school medical officer (once), and child guidance (once).

Case 4: Social workers reacted very strongly to this, indicating

that they would take immediate action in co-operation with the school. It was seen on all sides as a social work problem but the social workers would accept it as a straight referral whereas teachers (particularly primary teachers) saw it as going first through the health visitor, nurse or clinic.

4. Patterns of communication.

a) Primary schools:

A similar pattern was found in all three schools, with all contact between school and social work done through the headteacher. Social workers tended to be fairly happy with this, feeling that their relationships with headteachers were good. However, social workers were unaware of whether or not information was passed down through the school. In all three schools, both assistant heads and class teachers were ignorant of the school's relationship with the area team, and in several cases were not interested, with class teachers passing things on to assistant heads without expectation of consultation or feedback. They also tended to be ignorant of which outside agencies were involved in the school and sometimes did not know to whom they were talking when the psychologist or social worker visited the school. There was some strong opposition to the idea of social workers being attached to schools.

Communication within schools differed among the schools. In one case, information about the focal child was accurately passed down by the headteacher. In another school, the teacher's information was entirely gleaned from the local paper. In this school, also, the headteacher was adamant that problems were contained within the school, although it was clear from interviews with teachers that many problems were not tackled at all because "we can't do anything about it." It was not seen as appropriate for the school to do anything itself or to enlist outside help in doing something.

Social workers perceived the passing of information to each of the schools as dependent on whether or not the schools would respect the information. They saw teachers as liable to use information to anticipate and create problems, to label children, to denigrate children and to threaten other pupils. Teachers were not aware of social workers' perceptions on this and thought that information should be shared.

b) Secondary schools:

Totally different patterns emerged here for each school although in both cases communication was via the guidance staff.

School 4: There were poor relations with social work. The school was served by two area teams and only a small number of pupils came from the catchment area covered by the team in the sample. The school was frustrated by lack of liaison and almost always referred to child guidance - "They are the specialists". Social workers were

seen as having too many other things to do and as thinking of school problems as low priority. Even where there was social work involvement, there was dissatisfaction with liaison for the following reasons:-

- Social workers were difficult to get hold of.
- The social worker contacts the school only when the child on supervision comes up for review, but should make contact when the child is first put on supervision.
- The school should be informed when the child changes social worker.
- There should be regular meetings with the social worker who should be known personally to the teacher.
- The use of the school had been offered to the social worker who had not taken it up.

The social worker was not aware of this bad feeling and, in fact, did think that liaison with the school was a low priority as there were so few children from the school known to the area team.

Although not happy with the relationship with the social worker, teachers were aware of the role of the social worker and the social worker's difficulties, and, given the opportunity, would be willing to co-operate. Such willingness and awareness was far less evident in the primary schools.

School 5: This was an example of a more effective communication system. The school had monthly guidance meetings which the social workers attended. Teachers and social workers knew each other personally and discussed informally both children on supervision and others about whom the school was worried. All guidance teachers and social workers were happy with this arrangement though one social worker thought that the discussions at guidance meetings did not go far enough beyond cataloguing bad behaviour. The registration and subject teachers were not aware of this system of communication. The subject teacher was not interested, saying that it was not his job to deal with, or to detect, social and emotional problems. The registration teacher thought that the system of internal communication in the school was poor with little information shared by guidance staff and little feedback given to class teachers.

General note: Because I did not interview headteachers I did not get a full picture of how communication worked.

5. Communication and co-operation.

Questions 1-3: Referral.

Straight referrals were unusual except from School 5; referral was usually through another agency. Any straight referrals were done by assistant head (guidance) in secondary schools and headteacher in

primary schools. Class teachers in both secondary and primary schools did not know that referrals were made straight to social work and did not know about referral procedure.

Questions 4-5: Information-sharing.

Social workers thought that they gave information to schools where relevant. Teachers thought that they were not given information (except school 5).

Questions 6-7: Confidentiality.

Social workers: All thought that information should be shared but only to the extent that it affected the school. All (except in the case of School 5) thought that there was a danger of teachers misusing information and this made them wary of passing it on. If parents or children requested confidentiality, this must be respected.

Teachers: Most teachers thought that there should be no barriers to passing on information. As fellow professionals they would respect confidentiality. They were not aware of social workers' perceptions about misuse of information by teachers.

Questions 8-9: Contact.

Primary - Headteacher made contact.

Secondary - Any guidance teacher made contact.

Almost always by telephone (also through meetings in School 5).

Questions 10-11: Case conferences.

Most class teachers had never heard of them and the assistant heads in primary schools were unsure. Social workers said they were called by social work; schools were unsure.

Questions 12-14: Relationship school/area team.

Social workers generally thought relationships were reasonable; very good in the case of School 5.

Secondary teachers in School 5 thought it was very good and in School 4 that it was very bad.

Primary teachers thought that the relationship was almost non-existent so could not say whether it was good or bad. They tended to think that social workers should have more contact with schools.

Improvements suggested:

- The most common suggestion from both social workers and teachers was regular and informal meetings.
- Class teachers occasionally thought that they should have more direct contact with social workers.
Social workers should contact the school when a child is put on supervision.

Question 15: Attachment of social workers to schools.

Mixed reception from both social workers and teachers. Social workers in favour mentioned the benefits of picking up problems early and the possibilities for prevention. Social workers against the idea thought that attached social workers could become school-oriented rather than child-oriented and that one social worker would not be enough to deal with all the problems in a school. Teachers in favour saw an opportunity for working closely with social workers and picking up problems early. Primary teachers thought that attached social workers would be able to go into homes and give advice to teachers. There were some strong negative reactions, particularly from a primary assistant head who thought that the presence of an attached social worker would create problems.

6. Focal cases.

Primary school 1: Child referred to social work for truancy and consistent late arrival at school. Social worker kept in regular contact with the headteacher by telephone and occasional visit. Assistant head and class teacher unaware of child's domestic problems, the fact that the child had a social worker and that the social worker was in contact with the headteacher. Child had no problems at school.

Primary school 2: Focal case was that of two brothers. Social worker liaised with headteacher who had given accurate information on the problems and their causes to both assistant head and class teacher, although they did not know what the social worker was doing for the children. The boys had no problems at school.

Primary school 3: Child A: The only child in the sample seen as having problems in school, his behavioural problems (stealing) were known to all concerned. However, information was not passed on by the headteacher and the class teacher gained her information from the local paper. The class teacher did not know of the social worker's contact with the school. The social worker thought that the teachers knew what he was doing but they did not. The social worker thought that greater contact would only be useful in specific instances and teachers thought that greater contact would be of no help.

Child B: It was not known to the school (including the headteacher) that this child was on supervision. The social worker thought that the school would have been informed recently by the reporter as the case had come up for review, but the school had not heard. This child did have some problems in school and teachers had formed an unfavourable impression of her mother and home background. The social worker thought that the school would label the child if told of social work involvement, and would expect her to be a problem.

Secondary School 4: This child came to School 4 because of trouble at a previous school so teachers knew of social work involvement. Both school and social worker saw the role of the school as containing the girl for 6 months until she was 16, in an attempt to

keep her out of trouble. She had no problems while at the school and neither the social worker nor the teachers saw any need to liaise.

Secondary school 5: Teachers were aware of the general reasons for the child's referral to social work (except for the subject teacher). The guidance teacher and the social worker each knew what each other was doing. The child was not perceived as having problems in school apart from being a slow learner.

General note: The amount of liaison over the focal cases follows the pattern of general communication. Perceptions of social workers and teachers match most closely in School 5 where liaison was greatest and in School 2 where the headteacher kept the staff informed to some extent.

7. Preparation for co-operation.

Question 1-2: Training.

Most teachers and all social workers had had courses on children's social and emotional problems. Two primary assistant headteachers had had these only on the Associateship course and one class teacher thought that these topics had not been covered in her teacher training course. Some teachers had had the role of the social worker mentioned in a brief way but 8 had not. 3 social workers had had courses on social work in education and 2 had not.

Social workers and teachers were evenly divided as to whether such courses should be during initial training or at in-service level. All social workers and most teachers thought that courses on social and emotional problems would be more valuable if teachers and social workers were trained together.

Question 3: The value of attached social work in schools.

It was generally thought that teachers and social workers would need to know what was expected of each other if a social worker were to be attached to the schools. This question was difficult to answer and should be modified.

CHECKLIST
(as used in pilot study)

On this page is a list of difficulties that can be experienced by schoolchildren. As a social worker, could you indicate for each one whether it would be your professional responsibility to do something about it, or that of the teacher. If an item would be the responsibility of someone else, could you specify who this would be

	Teacher	Social Worker	Both	Other (specify)
1. Inadequate clothing
2. Bullying
3. Withdrawn behaviour in the classroom
4. Sex education
5. Suspicions of glue-sniffing
6. Parents do not attend parents' meetings
7. Unexplained absences from school
8. Falling behind in school work
9. Stealing from local shops
10 Smoking
11 Child frequently weeping for no apparent reason
12 Fighting in the playground
13 Wandering the streets at night
14 Parents refuse to allow remedial treatment for difficulties of eyesight, speech or hearing
15 Promiscuity
16 Child who is dirty and unkempt
17 Damaging school property
18 Child with no friends
19 Evidence of physical maltreatment at home
20 Arriving late at school every day

CASE DESCRIPTIONS

Case 1: School A; Social worker BG W1

Child fostered with grandparents.

This child was the youngest in a family where the older siblings had had some social work involvement when in School A themselves. Contact with the school was seen by the social workers more in terms of the family than of individual children. Liaison in connection with the child in the sample had not been great as he had not yet exhibited disruptive behaviour. The notion of preventive contact was not employed by any of the personnel, with the basic grade social worker suggesting that there was no time for preventive work due to the number of crises involving the rest of the family. She expected there to be formal intervention with the child when he was older as he was likely to follow in the footsteps of his older siblings.

Contact between area team and school was between the basic grade social worker and the class teacher, an unusual situation within the sample. The headteacher was unaware of their liaison. This atypical communication pattern can be explained in terms of two variables. The social worker and class teacher were personal friends and the social worker suggested that there would be little contact without this friendship. The headteacher had been only recently appointed and contact was probably infrequent enough not to have become an issue since her appointment to the school. The ignorance of the headteacher as to this contact with the social worker, although perhaps explicable, suggests that this type of

information about the school organisation was not seen as central enough to be passed on to the headteacher although the assistant head knew of it. The head did know about the previous contact over the older brothers.

Although class teacher and social worker purported to have good and fairly frequent contact, they gave different answers when asked when contact was made. The class teacher suggested that it was as frequent as once a term with additional communication over emergencies or major developments, while the social worker thought that contact only occurred in relation to child care reviews. Both practitioners thought that the contact was satisfactory. The teacher said that there was little need for contact over the child at the moment and that the fact that she was in some contact with the social worker was adequate. The source of satisfaction for the social worker was the co-operation of the school when asked for information, particularly in respect of reports for reviews. There was thus some mismatch of perceptions about the reasons for, and the frequency of, contact, and the sources of the participants' satisfaction differed.

Communication type: Dissonant perceptions (teacher - ongoing; social worker - emergency).

Difficulty type: Differences in perception as to amount and frequency of contact.

Case type: Fostered.

Child fostered with grandparents.

As in Case 1, this family included an older child over whom there had been considerable inter-agency contact in the past. This sibling was no longer in the school. There was some difference of opinion about the amount and type of contact related to the child in the sample. The social worker said that she checked up with the school more than once a term (ongoing communication) whereas the headteacher maintained that communication only took place when the child came up for review (formal or emergency contact). She mentioned an additional incidence of communication by telephone in respect of payment by the Social Work Department for a school trip. The class teacher had met the social worker for the first time recently when she had been invited to the area office for a meeting with the social worker and the child's family. This may have been a child care review though the teacher did not know it by this name, saying only that she had been "invited to meet the grandmother". This meeting took place after the social worker had been interviewed for this research. Within the school, the headteacher said that she passed on information to the class teacher, but the class teacher thought that she would only be given information if she asked for it specifically. As in Case 1, therefore, there was some lack of communication within the school.

Despite the differences in perception as to frequency of contact, both school and social worker were satisfied with liaison as it stood. This was, however, for different reasons. The headteacher and the class teacher thought that the child's problems (and she did have behavioural difficulties in school) were not amenable to social work help, therefore additional contact was unnecessary. The social worker, on the other hand, was satisfied because she had found the school "very co-operative, and they tried to help".

Communication type: Dissonant perceptions (teacher - emergency; social worker - ongoing).

Difficulty type: Differences in perception as to amount and frequency of contact.

Case type: Fostered.

Children under supervision for parental neglect.

Both children in this family attended School B at the time of the research. One class teacher was "not a hundred percent sure why there is a social worker in". She had been contacted once by the social worker. The second class teacher felt some resentment towards the social worker, saying that there had been no contact despite attempts by the school to initiate it. The assistant head knew that the head was in contact with the social worker but could say nothing about the nature of the contact. The headteacher said that she had had contact over reports for reviews and hearings, emergencies and organising outings for the children. However, she was dissatisfied with what she saw as too low a frequency of contact and maintained that a year had elapsed at one stage between social work visits. The head felt that she had made a particular effort to establish an ongoing relationship which had not been taken up by the social worker, although she did recognise that the children's problems were not severe and perhaps from the social work point of view did not warrant closer liaison. There was particular resentment over a recent incident when the social worker had arrived at the school to collect the children for attendance at a hearing which the school knew nothing about.

The social worker's account of type and frequency of contact was generally in accord with that of the headteacher, but she perceived this as a considerable amount of communication. She said that frequent contact when the children first became social work clients had decreased and now the supervision order had been lifted (presumably at the recent hearing). She perceived such a decrease as a natural progression. As regards the hearing mentioned by the headteacher, the social worker maintained that the school did know about it, and she was angry that she had had to fetch the children from the playing field when she expected the teachers to have them

ready to go. She perceived herself to have had more contact over this particular case than often occurs, but did suggest that a more collaborative approach could have been adopted at the outset with the formulation of a joint plan of action. According to the social worker and to the senior, there had been some disagreement as to priorities, with the school more concerned than the team with problems of dress and hygiene. The senior said that the school had felt frustrated when the social workers were not seen to be achieving results desired by the teachers and that more contact at the time could have helped to alleviate this frustration.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: Disagreement over nature and handling of case; difference in perception as to amount and frequency of contact; headteacher dissatisfied; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for parental neglect.

Case 4: School C; Social Worker W4

Child under supervision for non-attendance at school.

It was the social worker who had negotiated this child's attendance at School C. An initial high level of contact had decreased over time but there remained a high degree of mutual satisfaction. Contact was now regular but not very frequent. The social worker telephoned the school every two or three months and the school made contact when they considered it necessary. The social worker thought that the headteacher could perhaps phone more often than he did. The class teacher had met the social worker once or twice and had found these meetings most helpful and informative. He did think, however, that his meeting with the social worker had not taken place soon enough after he had become the child's teacher, and he wanted some machinery for regular meetings of this kind. He also thought that the headteacher did not pass on to him enough information and this perception was shared by the social worker.

Communication type: Ongoing.

Difficulty type: Class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for non-attendance at school.

Case 5: School D; Social Worker W5

Child under supervision for offence.

Liaison over this child was felt to be unsatisfactory by the school staff but not by the social worker. There were mismatched perceptions on two levels, between the headteacher and the social worker, and between the class teacher and the headteacher. There had been considerable contact between the headteacher and the social worker when the child first went to School D as the social worker had been instrumental in effecting the changeover from another school. The social worker said that initially the situation had been kept under a close watch and information was shared with the school. Although now, irregular contact was more frequent than for emergencies only. He said that he did contact the class teacher on occasion and that the liaison was satisfactory because the school co-operated and because the teachers were able to cope with any difficulties. He did not think that greater contact would be useful.

The headteacher's version of the considerable initial contact focussed on the unsatisfactory way in which liaison was carried out. He maintained that contact had all been by telephone and that "No-one ever came in to see me. It was all done by phone. He needs a lot of help. No-one is really interested. I wanted someone to come and see me and the class teacher. It would help to have more contact." The headteacher thought that it was left to the school to initiate contact and that the social worker should be doing this as well. He was worried about the child's ability to cope with the secondary school to which he would soon be moving.

In view of the headteacher's concern it is perhaps surprising that the class teacher thought that she had been given no help whatever

in dealing with the child who presented considerable behaviour problems in class. She did not know that the child had a social worker and had not been given this information by the headteacher although she had spoken to him of her worries and her difficulties in coping with the boy. Although the social worker had met one class teacher, it had not been the one currently involved.

Communication type: Dissonant perceptions (teacher - emergency; social worker - ongoing).

Difficulty type: Differences in perception as to amount and frequency of contact; social worker unaware of school's anxieties about child; headteacher dissatisfied; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for offence.

Case 6: School D; Social Worker W6

Child on supervision for offence.

Also at School D but with a different class teacher and social worker, this child belonged to a family generally known to be a social work case. The child was the youngest of the family and several siblings had already passed through the school. The headteacher said that there had been some regular contact with the social worker two years previously but that there was now no ongoing liaison and the social worker was not responding to communication from the school (open channels). It was usually the school which initiated contact. He would have liked face-to-face contact rather than telephone calls. The social worker said that he made contact approximately once a term and that he knew the class teacher (ongoing contact). He did say that more regular contact would improve liaison which was "good but there is a tendency not to use it as well as it might be used."

The class teacher had not met the social worker. She had particular worries about the child and had tried through the headteacher to get in touch with the social worker the previous term. There had apparently been no response to this. The class teacher saw liaison with the social worker as unsatisfactory from her point of view. Her knowledge of social work involvement was the knowledge common to the local community and she had been given no official information.

This social worker had spoken earlier in the interview of attempts to make more regular contact with the school in which he had been rebuffed. Yet the headteacher was desirous of closer and more personal contact over the focal children. There was a mismatch of perception over the expectations, and evaluation, of the relationship between the agencies.

Communication type: Dissonant perceptions (teacher - open channels; social worker - ongoing).

Difficulty type: Differences in perception as to amount and frequency of contact; social worker unaware of school's anxieties over child; headteacher dissatisfied; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for offence.

Case 7: School E; Social Worker Y2

Child fostered with grandparents.

This child had been under social work supervision for nine years since being fostered as a baby by his grandparents. The case had only comparatively recently been transferred to team Y although the child had attended the school since the age of five. The previous team involved in the case had had no contact at all with the school and seemingly little or none with the grandparents. The class teacher was extremely concerned about the child whom she perceived as having severe behavioural problems. These she attributed to his relationship with his grandmother. The class teacher had recently become so worried about the boy that she had asked the headteacher to contact the social worker. This set off a chain of events which included visits to the school by the social worker and senior and the organisation of a case conference where the teachers met the grandmother. However, there was a difference of opinion between the class teacher and the social worker as to the severity of the boy's problems and the nature of his relationship with his grandmother. The class teacher wanted the child removed from his grandmother's care but the social worker did not agree with this. The social worker felt unable to communicate with the class teacher on any meaningful level and the teacher felt resentful and aggressive towards the social worker. A referral was made to child guidance and the imminent assessment visit of the educational psychologist was awaited by both parties as a form of arbitration.

It was, paradoxically, in this school that another social worker was attempting the innovative practice of forging a formal, ongoing link.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: Disagreement over nature and handling of case;
class teacher dissatisfaction.

Case type: Fostered.

Case 8: School E; Social worker Y1

Child's mother is social work client.

Again in School E and with the same class teacher as in Case 7, but a different social worker, liaison over this child was considerably less fraught. It was the child's mother who was the social work client and there had only been contact between the agencies on one occasion. The social worker had visited the school after the mother had complained about the child's treatment there. The social worker met with the class teacher and decided that the complaint had no substance. The class teacher's and the social worker's perceptions of the situation were essentially similar. Staff of both agencies thought that more liaison was not necessary, the school because the girl presented few problems in school, and the social worker because it was not the child who was the client. The headteacher said that the school found out that there was a social worker "just by chance" when contact was made over the mother's complaints. The class teacher had not been told the reason for social work involvement but had formed her own opinions from local gossip.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: No difficulties.

Case type: Parent is client.

Case 9: School F; Social worker Y3

Child under supervision for parental neglect.

This child had an older sister previously at the school. The general circumstances of the home were known to school staff as part of their knowledge of the community which they served. Both the class teacher and the assistant head had also been given information officially by the headteacher regarding the social work involvement. The head had had some close liaison with the previous social worker. The present social worker was fairly new to the case. He had been contacted by the headteacher who knew that a changeover was taking place, and thus initial contact was established between them. Since then there had been little action required over the child, with the social work mainly monitoring the home situation. There had been correspondngly little contact between school and team but both the headteacher and the social worker thought that contact could be easily made if required. Both also agreed that what communication there was tended to be initiated by the school but, while the social worker was content with this, the headteacher wanted more regular reports from the social worker and a more ongoing type of liaison. The class teacher had had no contact with the social worker. Although the possibility of such contact was not ruled out by the headteacher, he did not see it as necessary unless some reason for ongoing contact arose. The class teacher, however, would have liked to have met the social worker and to have more information as to the child's background.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: Headteacher dissatisfied; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for parental neglect.

Case 10: School G; Social Worker Y4

Children in residential care.

Case 10 included four children from one family, all of whom were living in a residential children's home at the time of the research. They were in social work care when they came to the school and the teachers knew that they had a social worker because they were "Home Children". This case differed from most others in the sample as two sets of social workers were involved; from the area team and from the residential home. The policy was that the residential staff were the ones who took the major liaising role in their capacity as substitute parents. The class teachers had met the Home staff and found this to be adequate social work contact. All the class teachers involved also attended child care reviews but, although they thought that they had probably met the area team social worker there, they had not been specifically introduced. One class teacher said that there were so many people at reviews that it was difficult to know who they all were.

The headteacher had a fairly close liaison relationship with the area team social worker who tended to telephone or pop in to see the head occasionally. For instance, he regularly collected two of the children from school and on these occasions would have a chat with the headteacher. Both the headteacher and the social worker thought that liaison was satisfactory, and the social worker said "The headteacher is working in the same way as I am. She is quite understanding of the children's needs and aware of the problems."

Communication type: Ongoing contact.

Difficulty type: No difficulties.

Case type: Residential care.

Child fostered outwith the family.

Of the school staff, only the headteacher knew that this child was fostered as he had been told by the foster mother on the single occasion that she had visited the school. She had come to the headteacher seeking help with the child's behaviour, thinking that the school already knew of his circumstances. It was only at this meeting that the headteacher heard that the child had a social worker and he had had no contact with the area team over the case. Neither the assistant headteacher nor the class teacher knew of the social work involvement although the class teacher had heard through staffroom gossip that the child was probably fostered. She had not met the foster parents. The social worker supposed that the foster mother was in communication with the school and thought that direct contact between social worker and school would not be helpful as the social worker would become the go-between. He thought that any problems in school would be dealt with by the teachers and the foster mother who would then inform the social worker. In fact, the foster mother had only made the one contact with the school on the occasion mentioned above. The social worker seemed to be unaware of this lack of communication. The child was not presenting any problems in school but the foster mother was having a great deal of difficulty coping with his emotional difficulties at home.

The headteacher thought that, as the child was not a problem in school, contact with social work was unnecessary, but both the assistant head and the class teacher said that it would be helpful to know more of the child's background and to have some contact with the social worker. The class teacher's knowledge of the child's circumstances was expressed as "he has a strange family", and confusion as to his background was exacerbated by the fact that he was dark-skinned where other children in the family were white,

and that older "siblings" had a different surname. The school and the social worker each knew the child by a different surname.

Communication type: Open channels.

Difficulty type: School confused about social work involvement; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Fostered.

Case 12: School J: Social Worker Z1

Child under voluntary supervision as beyond parental control.

This child had been under social work supervision for some time at the request of his widowed mother who felt that he was beyond her control. Despite exhibiting severe difficulties in school with which the class teacher was struggling to cope, there had been until the time of the research, only one telephone call between school and social worker. Recently, the headteacher had been invited to attend a case conference which was about to be held soon after this interview. The headteacher thought that further contact was not possible due to the voluntary nature of the social work involvement. He also said that greater liaison would not, in any case, be useful as "there is little we could have added to the social worker's knowledge: it is not a changing situation." When asked about the purpose of liaison, he said that there was none other than the exchange of information.

The social worker also saw no reason for further contact as she thought that the school was coping well. She had involved the child in an Intermediate Treatment group and knew that he had difficulties in relating to other children, but did not see this as a reason for working conjointly with the school. Only the class teacher, who was having difficulties in coping with the child in class, saw a use for greater contact, saying that he would like to discuss the child's difficulties with the social worker.

Communication type: Open channels.

Difficulty type: Social worker unaware of school's anxieties about child; school confused about social work involvement; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Voluntary supervision due to parent not coping.

Case 13: School K; Social Worker Z2

Child in residential care.

This was the second case in the sample where the child was living in residential care, though this child had moved there while at School K, and supposedly on a temporary basis. As with the children in Case 10, it was the staff of the Home who mostly kept in touch with the school, and the class teacher had had two meetings with them which she had found helpful and satisfactory. Before the child had been admitted into residential care there had been ongoing liaison between the headteacher and the area team social worker and the headteacher had found their contact very satisfactory. The social worker said that now he occasionally contacted the school by telephone but left liaison mostly to the Home staff. The headteacher attended reviews but felt that she did not really understand some of the events and some of the actions of the social worker. The assistant headteacher was unsure of the kind of care that the child was in and of what his future prospects were. Despite these uncertainties, co-operation had clearly been at a fairly high level of ongoing contact with all personnel satisfied with it's amount and frequency.

Communication type: Ongoing contact.

Difficulty type: School confused about social work involvement.

Case type: Residential care.

Case 14: School K; Social Worker Z3

Children under supervision for parental neglect.

The two children from this family had been referred from the school when the teachers became worried about their home conditions but it was unclear whether or not they were already under social work supervision at the time of the school referral, five years ago. The social worker had visited the school and spoken to the class teachers. According to the headteacher, the social worker visited the school infrequently and contact was more often by telephone, but she found it satisfactory. Both class teachers, however, despite having met the social worker, said that their contact was inadequate as it was not frequent enough and, for one teacher, not early enough. She relied on the child's own accounts for information about her home life. The social worker had recently changed and the new one had contacted the school, having been told that liaison was in train before. Although maintaining some contact with the school, he thought that their concern was perhaps detrimental to the children as it led to them being labelled. The senior, also, said that the headteacher was too quick to telephone the area office over domestic upheavals, which, in his opinion, were best given less attention. The social worker was thinking of lifting the supervision order as he thought that it was stigmatising and therefore harmful to the children. He said that more contact with the school earlier on would have been helpful as it might have clarified differences in perception held by the teachers and himself.

This school was not involved in child care reviews but the social workers had made a point of involving teachers in discussion of the family problems. This was perceived as adequate by the headteacher but not by the class teacher or the current social worker. The headteacher appeared to keep liaison going by frequent telephone

calls to the area team over incidents that she considered to be emergencies but which were not seen as such by the social worker, who thought that the headteacher was over-zealous in her communication to a point which was damaging to the children.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: Disagreement over handling of case; social worker dissatisfied; class teachers dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for parental neglect.

Case 15: School L; Social Worker Z4

Children's mother is social work client.

Among the six teachers interviewed about the three children from this family, information as to social work involvement was unevenly spread. Two class teachers and one assistant head said that they had known about it; one assistant head and the headteacher did not know. The children's mother had voluntarily become a social work client and had remained on the case load for only six months. At the time of the research, the case had been closed. None of the children had particular problems at school and the social worker had deliberately not informed the school of her involvement because she thought that the problems concerned the mother only. The class teachers said that it was unnecessary to know and the headteacher, although he believed that information was always useful, did not see it as imperative in this case. The mother had herself informed at least one teacher and the social worker said that she would have involved the school had there been difficulties with the children or had the case gone on longer.

Communication type: No contact.

Difficulty type: No difficulties.

Case type: Parent is social work client.

Case 16: School L; Social worker Z3

Child under supervision for non-attendance at school.

This case was a school referral, the child having been referred to the reporter for non-attendance, and subsequently placed on social work supervision. All the school staff interviewed knew of social work involvement. The child had recently left School L but there had been frequent contact between the agencies while he was there. Initially, the school telephoned regularly every week to report on attendance and this then decreased to contact by telephone calls from the school when concerned about some aspect of the child's condition or behaviour. In School L, one assistant head took responsibility for liaison, so it was he who was involved in the telephone communication. The assistant head said that he had wanted longer and face-to-face discussions, and the headteacher also said that it would have been preferable to have met with the child's family and the social worker to discuss a joint approach to his problems. The class teacher had had no contact with the social worker and, although not herself worried about the child, thought that she should have met the social worker. The class teacher had, on her own initiative, spoken to local community workers and asked them to keep an eye on the child when he was truanting. The social worker also thought that he should have met the class teacher, suggesting that this would have helped to clarify to the child the attitude of both agencies. The main problem perceived by the social worker was a mismatch of perceptions as to how to handle the case. He said that the school had been pushing for quick action to remove the child from home while the social worker had been deliberately holding off from this kind of decision. He saw the school staff as having misconceptions about the social work role, which he should have taken time to explain himself. Contact had decreased from ongoing to emergency.

Communication type: Emergency contact.

Difficulty type: Disagreement over the handling of the case; social worker dissatisfied; headteacher dissatisfied; class teacher dissatisfied.

Case type: Supervision for non-attendance at school.

Case 17: School M; Social Worker Z3

Child's mother is social work client.

This child belonged to a family of three children all recently started at School M. All interviewees tended to respond in terms of the family as a whole and it was the mother who was the social work client. The mother had told the headteacher of social work involvement when the children began to attend the school. The social worker thought that the mother should deal directly with the school herself rather than allow the social worker to become a go-between. However, the headteacher had contacted the social worker and an ongoing telephone link had been established at the time of the research. The class teacher was kept informed by the headteacher but had had no contact herself with the social worker. The children had presented no problems in school as yet and all personnel involved perceived the liaison to be satisfactory.

Communication type: Ongoing contact.

Difficulty type: No difficulties.

Case type: Mother is client.