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**Strategies for supporting schools and teachers in order to  
foster social inclusion**

**Interim Report  
May 2008**

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## 1. Introduction

The focus in this report is on those strategies used to address the disadvantages experienced by minority background students in schools within the United Kingdom (UK) and the wider policy context in which these operate. More specifically, the focus is on four groups of students:

- Ethnic minority students including refugee and asylum seekers' children;
- Gypsy/traveller students;
- Students in care (Looked After Children – LAC); and,
- Linguistic minorities e.g. Gaelic, Welsh.

While these are identified as particular groups of students who, according to the statistics, experience lower levels of participation and educational achievement in post-16 education, other factors such as gender, socio-economic status and disability can also result in educational disadvantage. While this study does not intend to investigate these additional factors, it will take them into account where they are pertinent to the disadvantage experienced by the students listed. It is also acknowledged that these four categories of students are not mutually exclusive in that an individual student may be a member of more than one of these groups, thereby at risk of experiencing multiple disadvantage. This is considered in greater depth in the final report.

In educational terms, specific groups of students (identified by gender, social class, ethnic origin or other variable) are defined as disadvantaged if the statistics on participation and attainment are significantly lower than those of the general population and/or in comparison with those of other groups. Strategies which are adopted to address social inclusion within the educational sector, normally with the aim of bringing these metrics into line with those of the general population, predominantly focus on measures intended to raise participation and attainment. In addition, many strategies to address educational attainment seek to raise self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation as interim outcomes in the drive to improve attainment. These are seen as necessary underpinnings or pre-requisites for educational achievement. In reviewing the literature, the team has sought to identify both those initiatives that were intended to impact directly on attainment and also those which address various interim outcomes.

With regard to the policy context, the devolved nature of government in the UK means that while some broad principles may be common across the four nations that constitute the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), the particular emphases adopted and the strategies developed to foster social inclusion vary from one to the other. In addition, there is no integrated policy for social inclusion but rather separate policy statements for each of the categories of disadvantage identified in the study. All four countries within the UK have a combination of private and state-funded schooling. In much of this report, the emphasis is on the state-funded sector.

## 2. The national context

The political complexion of the United Kingdom (UK) has changed significantly in the last ten years, most notably with the creation of national parliaments or assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland following referendums on devolution in the late 1990s. Responsibility for the devolved powers was transferred to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999 and to the Northern Ireland Assembly on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999. Unfortunately this was later suspended and only restored on 8 May 2007 (<http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/devolved.cfm>). As a result, much of the policy documentation in Northern Ireland is not underpinned by legislation but reflects developments in other regions of the UK, notably that in England, although tailored to meet the specific issues and needs of Northern Ireland.

While the UK Parliament retained authority over the devolved parliaments or assemblies, it transferred considerable powers to them, albeit at varying levels and for similar if not identical areas of responsibility. Devolved powers usually include matters such as education, health and prisons, while those powers that remain with the UK Parliament are known as 'reserved powers'. 'Reserved powers' include defence and other matters with a national (UK-wide) or international impact. Therefore issues relating to social inclusion and minority group experiences are the responsibility of individual parliaments or assemblies. For example, while the UK government ratified the European Charter, it fell to regional assemblies to develop and implement appropriate policies.

### **3 Ethnic minority students, including refugees and asylum seekers' children**

The terms 'asylum seeker', 'refugee' and 'immigrant' are often used interchangeably with little or no common definition or shared understanding. The Refugee Council offers the following definitions:

*Asylum seeker:* someone who has fled persecution in their own homeland, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities and exercised their legal right to apply for asylum.

*Refugee:* someone whose asylum application has been successful and who is allowed to stay in another country, having proved they would face persecution in their homeland.

(EIS, 2007)

Other related terms such as illegal immigrant, failed asylum seeker and economic migrant are also encountered. Essentially, all are terms used to describe people who, for one reason or another, have left their homeland and arrived in another country. There is no entirely accurate national demographic data in the UK on the numbers of asylum seeking and refugee children although in 1993 it was estimated that there were about 99,000 refugee children of compulsory school age living in Britain.

Under the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1949), which has now been incorporated into domestic law (Human Rights Act, 1998), there is 'a right to education' for all people within a country's jurisdiction (Article 2, Protocol 1). Added to this is the stipulation that the state shall respect the '*religious and philosophical convictions of parents*' concerning the education provided.

The system for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK is complicated and can involve families being dispersed across the country, resulting in possible isolation. In addition, it can take a long time for applications and appeals to be processed, creating uncertainty and insecurity. The reliance on dispersal and temporary accommodation may mean that children are forced to move to new schools frequently and this can have a profoundly negative impact on their capacity for socialising, retaining friendships and receiving support from communities.

#### **3.1 England**

According to a report by Save the Children, many children in England are missing out on a good-quality education. Some 9,000 are permanently excluded from school each year and an additional 10,000 are simply not getting an education, due to the complexities of registering for a school place, being dispersed and so on. These figures include asylum seekers and refugee children, whose human rights are not being respected (Save the Children, 2007). One of the most significant principles is the right of children and young people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives and their environments. However, in England it is the parent who is recognised formally and not the child, when it comes to key decision making processes.

## **Policy**

Local authorities have a duty to provide full time education for all children of compulsory school age who live within their area (Education Act, 1996; Section 14). This means that children, even if newly arrived in the United Kingdom, have the same entitlement to free education as those who have UK status by birth. The nationality of the child or the status of their immigration has no bearing on whether they have any entitlement to support.

*'It is Government policy that children from asylum seeking and refugee backgrounds are given the same opportunities as all other children to access education. LEAs have a legal duty to ensure that education is available for all children of compulsory school age in their area, appropriate to age, ability and aptitudes and any Special Educational Needs (SEN) they may have. This duty applies irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence in a particular area'.*

(Teachernet: Refugee and asylum seekers' children p.1.)

In addition all local education authorities (LEAs) and schools have a general duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) to eradicate racial discrimination and promote equal opportunities and positive relationships between people of different racial backgrounds. LEAs therefore require schools to ensure that admission policies and practices are monitored and reviewed by each school. Parents of refugee and asylum-seeker pupils have a duty to make sure that their children receive an education (in England DES circular 11/88).

However, despite there being no statutory requirement, many LEAs put into place arrangements to support the immigrant families in aspects of schooling. These arrangements address enrolment arrangements and extend to strategies at classroom level to support individual children. In England, each LEA has a measure of autonomy in how they support the education of refugee and asylum seeking children. The sorts of strategies that are in place at this level include working with voluntary organisations and other agencies to provide a more integrated support framework.

One example is the Immigration Advisory Service available at the local Citizen's Advice Bureau in Swindon ([www.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov)). This provides support for parents in applying for school places. There are particular difficulties associated with placing children in schools. Doyle and McCorriston (2008) noted reports that some asylum seeking or refugee children had to wait up to seven months for a place despite support from and involvement of, a number of other agencies and organisations.

The difficulties do not end when a place has been secured. Tomlinson (2005) raises issues about the content of the curriculum in English schools. She argues that little attempt has been made to refine the curriculum to take account of the cultural diversity now part of English society. The Qualifications and Curriculum authority (QCA) in 1999 insisted that the amended curriculum (from 2000) would assist in developing a rational outlook and prepare young people to take a positive role in an ethnically diverse culture. Much of this focused on citizenship education. It is interesting to note, however, that Figueroa (2003) has pointed out that key issues such as diversity, conflict resolution, international or global issues, gender, ethnic equality and anti-racism do not feature in the goals set for this aspect of education (Figuera, in Tomlinson, 2005)

Some LEAs have created posts such as 'Asylum seeker and refugee support teacher' and many have developed collaborative partnerships with other services such as Housing Associations. In some instances, collaborative working has been extended to include agencies which can help support pupils with complex needs.

The literature indicates that many LEAs recognise the need for clear communication with schools and for appropriate staff training, not only for teachers but for school governors and school board members. Swindon, for example, suggested that a nominated person in each school should act as a reference point for refugee and asylum seeker matters

([www.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov)). In support of this approach, Whiteman's (2005) research found that the integration of asylum seeker and refugee children depends on the diversity of ethnicity in individual schools, as well as the availability of resources and support.

### **Strategies**

According to the QCA guidance the national curriculum for England should play a significant approach to planning an appropriate curriculum for asylum seeking and refugee pupils (QCA, 2004). The national curriculum has four key goals and one of these relates to the establishment of appropriate education for all pupils, irrespective of social background culture race and gender, among other circumstances. Because of their experiences and their social grouping in this country, i.e. almost exclusively housed in poor socio-economic areas, children of refugees and asylum seekers are considered more likely to underachieve in school. The results of this can be disaffection with school, low self esteem and in some cases exclusion from school (*Transforming secondary education*, DfES, 2001).

Some of the strategies identified in the literature include:

#### ***Buddy systems***

Whiteman (2005) found one primary school in her study, a 'Centre of Good Practice' that a mentoring system was used to support the asylum seeker and refugee children.

#### ***Support for learning English***

In order to achieve, it is essential that asylum seeker and refugee children learn English – the language of instruction in the vast majority of UK schools. Many schools have put in place support systems for children who need to learn English as an additional language (EAL), but resources at school level are often stretched (Doyle and McCorrison, 2008). The pressure on resources is not only at school level. Pressure has increased on central peripatetic teams and school based Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant support staff, put in place by LEAs. This grant is designed to support schools to make provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils who are at risk of underachievement. Schools are expected to set targets at whole school, class and individual levels and to monitor and evaluate the attainment of bilingual pupils (Ofsted, 2004). However the needs of refugee and asylum seekers are complex and not only concerned with bilingualism, which seems to be the focus for this grant.

Practitioners need to be well equipped to support the huge diversity within the groups of children joining British schools (Rutter 2001), and this suggests the need for to respond to this cultural change.

#### ***Provision of interpreters***

Doyle and McCorrison (2008) reported that some schools translated materials for parents/carers and provided interpreters. Others use link workers and bilingual support staff as interpreters, necessary for working with students and to address the needs of parents and carers. Other examples of good practice that they observed included booking trained interpreters for events such as admission interviews and pupil background assessments (Vincent and Warren, 1998). Whiteman (2005) found in one of the schools in the north east of England, interpreters were used only occasionally, usually for meetings with parents. Interpreters were accessed through the LEA or psychological services.

#### ***Friendship clubs***

No evidence of such initiatives was found. However there was evidence that some schools used 'after hours' clubs to boost children's attainment, though these clubs were

not always conducted in the mother tongue because of the diverse range of pupils. OFSTED (2003) reported on one instance where a school was attempting to support children by running breakfast clubs and another of the development of mother-tongue classes.

#### *Anti racist anti bullying strategies in place*

It is notable that a recent OFSTED report (2003) does not specifically mention the place of anti racist and anti bullying strategies in the inclusion and support of asylum seeker and refugee children. Neither of these is mentioned by DFES (2004). All studies of refugee pupils' experiences indicate that a majority suffer racial harassment in school and in their neighbourhoods. No educational policies designed to counter a hostility fed by the media, economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees could be found (Tomlinson, 2005). However all schools are required to record all racist incidents and parents/carers and governors should be informed of these and the actions taken to deal with them. LEAs should be informed, annually, by Governing Bodies of the frequency and pattern of any such incidents (DFES, 2004).

### **3.2 Scotland**

Scotland has long been a destination for immigrants but the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers started to increase in Scotland after 1999, when significant numbers of Kosovan refugees came to into the country as part of the UK Government's Humanitarian Evacuation programme. This increase in numbers brought with it a change in the profile of refugees and asylum seekers. Prior to this, the majority of refugees and asylum seekers had tended to be men, either single or with families who remained in the country of origin (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000). Since the Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999 Scotland has increasingly accepted asylum seekers from a diverse range of countries

What little data there is on the numbers of asylum-seeking and refugee children in Scottish schools may be inaccurate. There are no accurate demographic data on the number of asylum-seeking and refugee children in schools, partly because the disclosure of immigrant status is not mandatory. In 2006, the Scottish Executive's figures suggested around 2,300 asylum seekers and refugee children lived in Scotland<sup>1</sup>.

Refugee and asylum seeking children, like all others, are a diverse group and so cannot be readily labelled in terms of their educational requirements. However, as a result of past experiences, they are more likely to have experienced similar difficulties, including:

- overwhelmingly traumatic events requiring psychological interventions
- isolation in school;
- bullying, often of a racist nature;
- living in socially deprived areas, often in temporary accommodation;
- having unemployed parents;
- requiring support to learn English; and,
- acting as a supporter for others, often parents, who are less able to speak English.

Thus they are likely to suffer from multiple disadvantage (Candappa and Egharevba, 2000; Jones and Rutter, 1998; Rutter, 1994; Stead *et al*, 1999)

Education may be the only statutory service that can provide sustained support to these children and young people therefore, it is argued, schools have the opportunity to play an essential role in the lives of asylum seekers and refugee children.

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<sup>1</sup> Pupils in Scotland 2006 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/02/27083941/0>



## **Policy**

Scotland has a vision for society where all its children are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included; this vision applies to asylum seekers and refugee children as well as those born there. Recent Scottish legislation (SEED, 2000) states that all children are expected to be educated in their local mainstream school, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Children (Scotland) Act, 1995, requires local authorities to ensure that they have taken into account a child's racial, linguistic, cultural and religious identity within their service provision. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 states that children may require additional support for a variety of reasons. These may include those who are being bullied, are particularly gifted, have experienced a bereavement, or are not attending school regularly, as well as those who have English as an additional language or learning difficulties, mental health problems, or specific disabilities such as deafness or blindness. While this list does not explicitly include asylum seeker refugee children, the comprehensive nature of the Act ensures their inclusion.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 has an impact wider than education alone, as it demands a holistic collaborative approach, integrating the activities of a number of professions such as health, social work and so on in meeting children's needs, physical, social and educational. Under the Act, education authorities have a duty to establish procedures for identifying and meeting the additional support needs of every child for whose education they are responsible. They must keep those needs under review. Other agencies will have a duty to help education authorities meet these expectations.

In addition, also relevant to the plight of asylum seekers and refugees is the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which came into effect in Scotland in 2002. This legislation sets out the statutory duty of public authorities in the promotion of racial equality.

In Scotland, local authorities must provide nursery places for all children aged 3 and 4 years as well as primary and secondary education between the ages of 5 and 16 years. All children are entitled to this provision, regardless of their immigration status. Compulsory schooling ends at 16 years of age, with an optional 2 years of further study. Refugee and asylum seekers' children are entitled to this additional two years.

There are two main forms of tertiary education: college and university. The college sector tends to focus on vocational education, either through award bearing programmes resulting in national qualifications such as the Higher National Certificate or Diploma, or non-award bearing training programmes. These programmes can be undertaken on a full or part time basis. Refugee and asylum seekers' children can attend college, assuming they meet the entry requirements, and they can study to HND level for no more than 16 hours each week. In addition, they can take course in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Until 2007, the university sector was less accessible. Previously, the children of asylum seekers were required to pay 'overseas students' fees if they wished to progress to university. These are significantly higher than those for 'home' students and usually well beyond the means of these families whose parents were not allowed under the terms of their stay to seek employment. In recognition of the inequity that resulted, a number of universities established scholarships specifically for the children of asylum seekers. These covered fees but families still had to find the means to support the student through the four years of her/his course of study. Following lobbying by the universities, groundbreaking legislation was introduced in August 2007 when the Scottish Government announced that the children of asylum-seeking families and young unaccompanied asylum seekers who fulfil specific criteria (mainly residence

requirements) are to have the same access to full-time further and higher education as Scottish children (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/08/03082811>).

There is no specific national education policy for asylum seeking and refugee children. Rather they are covered by the various pieces of legislation outlined above. There are few specific policies at local authority (LA) level either. A study by Candappa with Ahmad, Balata, Dekhinet, and Gocmen (2007) indicated that out of the 32 LAs in Scotland, the 14 who responded had few specific policies or support structures in place for asylum seekers and refugee children. Eleven LAs reported that there were specific policies for bilingual learners and almost all had, for example, a teacher with a remit to support these learners. Other LAs had policies which were more generic but appropriate for asylum seekers and refugee children, for example those concerned with students' additional support needs. Most of the authorities surveyed reported that anti-racist and anti bullying policies were in place and that they also had policies relating to vulnerable children which were seen as appropriate for new arrivals. Four LAs had policies relating specifically to asylum seekers and refugee children. In Glasgow, in addition to specific policies related to asylum seekers and refugee children, the Glasgow Asylum Seekers Support Project (GASSP) was formed specifically to support these children and young people.

### ***Strategies***

Because asylum seekers and refugee children are diverse in their educational requirements the strategies to support them tend to be equally diverse and tailored to specific contexts. However as mentioned earlier, because it has been identified that asylum seekers and refugee children have common experiences there are a number of common supportive approaches.

#### ***Buddy systems***

Buddy systems typically involve matching individual children with local children who can provide friendship, guidance and support on a day to day basis within school. Candappa with Ahmad, Balata, Dekhinet and Gocmen (2007) found evidence that both primary and secondary schools in Scotland have used such systems to good effect.

#### ***Support for learning English***

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe, 2007) in Scotland found that, in general, there was good support for students to learn English and pupils at all levels were achieving well. In the college sector, they found a similar situation for students over 16 years of age. HMIe reported that members of staff appeared to value pupils as individuals and that this positive ethos, combined with support for learning English, helped asylum seekers and refugee children to feel included and communicate with other adults and children.

#### ***Provision of interpreters***

HMIe found in their audit of provision in Glasgow that specialist support staff in particular made good use of the Glasgow Translation and Interpretation Service (GTIS). However more basic requirements for interpreters, for example in issues of discipline or medical matters, interpreters, were often not met. In many schools there was a need for basic school related information to be made available in arrange of languages and/or plainer English. Similar comments were made by Candappa with Ahmad, Balata, Dekhinet, and Gocmen (2007).

### *Friendship clubs*

Candappa with Ahmad, Balata, Dekhinet, and Gocmen (2007) suggest that many schools recognised the importance of friendships for children's well-being and organised clubs to encourage socialising. An important dimension is the support for the wider family within the community. HMIE reported on work that was being undertaken to engage with parents and build relationships. Schools involved parents in their children's education and school life including support programmes for enrolment, workshops related to the curriculum, homework clubs and social events. This approach mirrors aspects of the media clubs set up as part of an action research project in a number of European cities where clubs became more social in nature despite the initial concept of learning to use media. These clubs allowed children to form friendships, and also to share another language. This was considered by the authors to be significant in the building of friendships and a feeling of inclusion (Christopoulou and Rydin, 2004).

### *Anti racist anti bullying strategies in place*

A report by HMIE relating to schools in Glasgow detailed that asylum seekers and refugee children felt safer in primary schools than secondary schools although both sectors had anti-bullying and anti-racist policies in place. Primary schools on the whole had a more inclusive ethos. Christopoulou and Rydin, (2004) considered that bullying, although commonplace across a wide range of children was more likely to occur where the children were asylum seekers and refugees: *'Being foreign, in itself, makes migrant children more prone to be excluded by their peers, especially in places where peer groups are already formed'* (p.14). With regard to anti-racist attitudes, Husband (1995) emphasises that educational professionals need a personal and moral engagement with the implementation of anti-racist policies at an individual level, through dialogue and interaction.

## **3.3 Wales**

In 2003 there were an estimated 2,335 asylum-seeking and refugee children of compulsory school age living in Wales, almost all of whom were resident in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. The largest national group were Somalis, resident in Cardiff, a city that has had a small Somali population since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (<http://www.multiverse.ac.uk>).

### **Policy**

National policy for the support of asylum seeker and refugee children is very similar to that in England. The main educational provision for asylum seekers consists of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). However, refugees have the same entitlements to education and learning as British citizens, even though they may need extra support depending on how long they have been in Wales, and depending on their educational background, particularly their understanding of English, as well as any emotional support requirements.

### **Strategies**

The strategies identified within research and government documents in Wales made no reference the issues raised by Scottish and English work. Instead more general support strategies were discussed.

Research carried out by Reas (2004) indicated that in Wales there was a dilemma regarding whether to identify asylum seeker and refugee children in schools to staff and other pupils. *'Non-identification could limit the risk of discrimination. However, the identification of asylum seekers would raise other pupils' awareness of their problems*

and counteract negative media images' (<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/the-education-of-asylum-seekers-in-wales-implications-for-leas-and-schools.cfm>).

Special arrangements for placing asylum seeker and refugee children in schools might include placing children in lower-ability sets, locating all asylum seekers in the same class, out-of-age placements and new-comers' classes. Areas where provision was most often felt to be inappropriate included shortage of interpreters, funding, and gaps in support at LEA level.

([http://www.elwa.org.uk/doc\\_bin/Research%20Reports/081105\\_learning\\_insight\\_asylum\\_seekers.pdf](http://www.elwa.org.uk/doc_bin/Research%20Reports/081105_learning_insight_asylum_seekers.pdf))

General guidance on support was given by Education Learning Wales and related to generic support for learning. The report refers to the work of Allander (1998) and argues that *'learning methods for learners with limited first language literacy should focus on the learners' immediate personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, familiar topics, and concrete, real world materials rather than abstract and de-contextualised themes'* (CI research, 2004). It advocates a multi sensory approach, with experiential learning and visual aids. However, it includes a warning that teachers should not make assumptions about shared cultural contexts. The document also suggests an approach that moves from concrete to abstract, based on the work of Ramm (1994).

### **3.4 Northern Ireland**

The policy and strategies for Northern Ireland appear to be much the same as those in England.

### **3.5 Summary**

When schools have practices in place that provide additional support to refugees and asylum seeking young people, these should be delivered in a way that does not mark out these young people as different from their peers

Schools should continue, and develop, efforts to get parents/carers involved in extra-curricular activities. Events such as International Days may be a good idea as they celebrate diversity and give refugee and asylum seeking parents/carers a chance to contribute to raising cultural understanding across the school community.

It is essential that those involved in education have a working knowledge of children's entitlements to education and are able to be effective advocates for a group of children who experience racism, discrimination and high levels of social exclusion.

Where children who are seeking asylum are unaccompanied then those under 16 are usually placed in residential care, as there may be few appropriate fostering placements. As a result, some of the discussion in Section 5 is also relevant to asylum seeking and refugee children.

## **4. Gypsy/traveller students**

Gypsies and travellers are not a homogeneous group, comprising a diverse range of cultures and traditions. In the United Kingdom the term Gypsy/Traveller is applied to a range of peoples from different backgrounds and origins including: Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, Irish Travellers, English Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Roma, New Age Travellers, and Occupational Travellers (circus and showground travellers). The use of the '/' between Gypsies/Travellers is commonly used to reflect official awareness of the fact that some families call themselves Gypsies, while others prefer to call themselves Travellers (STEP, 2005).

In Scotland, there are no clear statistics for the numbers of Gypsy/Travellers, with estimates varying from three to five thousand nomadic Gypsy/travellers and perhaps as many as 17,000 when housed Gypsy/Travellers are included (Lloyd et al., 1999). There are no published statistics on the numbers of Gypsy/Traveller pupils in Scottish schools. Recent school census forms can help to identify the number enrolled but this figure does not indicate those children who have not enrolled or who have 'dropped out' of schools (Jordan and Padfield, 2003). In England, there are about 1,100 Irish Travellers and 2,300 Gypsy/Roma students in secondary schools with more than twice as many registered in primary schools (DfES, 2006). In England and Wales, the 2003 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) recorded almost 4,000 Irish Traveller pupils and 6,000 Gypsy/Roma pupils. Traveller groups in UK schools are becoming more diverse with an increasing number of Roma pupils arriving from Eastern Europe.

#### 4.1 Challenges

Gypsy/traveller students are recognised as the most at risk group within the education system. Recent research has detailed the extent of risk, deprivation and social exclusion among children and young people of gypsy/traveller communities (Parry et al., 2004; DfES, 2003; Lloyd et al, 1999).

In England it is estimated that many Gypsy/Traveller students are not recorded in the Annual School Census and are not present during key stage assessments. Nor do they always continue in education up till Key Stage 4 (14 – 16 year olds); for those that do have a recorded result, attainment is very low:

- At Key Stage 1, 28% of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 42% of Gypsy/Roma pupils achieved Level 2 or above in Reading compared to 84 percent of all pupils.
- At Key Stage 4, 42 percent of Travellers of Irish Heritage and 23 percent of Gypsy/Roma pupils achieved 5+ A\*-C GCSE/GNVQs compared to 51 percent of all pupils.

(DfES 2005a, p.9)

There are complex factors surrounding school attendance, exclusion and interrupted learning that are socially and culturally driven, which continue to marginalise this group of learners. Efforts to address these problems have not been totally successful due to a failure to establish a co-ordinated and integrated response (Jordan and Padfield, 2003). The average attendance rate for Traveller pupils is around 75%, this figure is well below the national average and is the worst attendance profile of any minority ethnic group (Ofsted, 2003).

'Interrupted learning' is a term used to describe the school attendance pattern of Gypsy/Traveller students often on account of their mobility. Negative experiences of the educational system can cause Gypsy/Travellers to disengage from it; self-exclusion of this kind is evidenced by the high levels of rejection of attendance at secondary school, with many Gypsy/Traveller students not transferring from primary to secondary (Jordan and Padfield, 2003). Decisions to self-exclude for reasons such as bullying, racism or family problems, such as homelessness, are often identified by schools as a consequence of weak parenting rather than as a deficit of the educational system (Jordan and Padfield, op. cit.). Paradoxically, attempts to promote increased school attendance by travellers are hampered by some pupils being excluded for disciplinary reasons; this is viewed as being connected to the *wider processes of social exclusion* with difference being reviewed as deviance (Lloyd and Stead, 2002, p.23).

## 3.2 England, Wales and Northern Ireland

In England and Wales, raising the achievement of Gypsy/Traveller students is recognised as the responsibility of all within the education system (DCSF, 2008). Under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 Gypsy/Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority group and the Act gives public authorities a statutory general duty to promote race equality. It states that public authorities and schools have a general duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. The Act also places specific duties on schools, in particular to improve the educational experience for all children including those belonging to minority ethnic groups.

The problems of underachievement of ethnic minority groups have been recognized. Ofsted (2003) reported that Gypsy/ Traveller students have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group and are the most at risk group in the education system. Ofsted have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate progress is being made in schools and local education authorities, an outcome of their work being the development of best practice in schools. As part of this policy of supporting schools and public authorities, Ofsted have published a document outlining good practice (Ofsted, 2005).

Concerns of identification of Gypsy/Travellers students have been raised by Ofsted (2003) who considers that about 12,000 Traveller children are not registered with a school and that at Key Stage 4 this represents about 53% of these pupils. A research study by Derrington and Kendall (2004) found high drop out rates of Gypsy Traveller students at secondary school.

In Northern Ireland, Travellers have some limited legal protection and are defined in the Race Relations Order 1997 (RRO) as: 'a community of people commonly so called who are identified (by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland' (ECNI, 2006, p.11).

### **Policy**

The Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is committed to raising the attendance and achievement of Gypsy/ Traveller pupils (DCSF, 2008). In recent years a number of documents have been published with the aim of developing inclusive practices for ethnic minority groups. In March 2003 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils*, and *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils: A Guide to Good Practice* in July 2003. The *Every Child Matters* initiative (DfES, 2004) is described on the government website as a 'ten-year strategy to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up'. The *Children's Plan* (December 2007) reinforces this aim. These documents are intended for local authorities, educational organisations and staff working with students from ethnic minority groups and aim to offer guidance to ensure that Gypsy/Traveller students enjoy a positive school experience in accordance with the agenda of *Every Child Matters*.

### **Strategies**

The document *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils* was published as a guide to good practice (DfES, 2003). It recommended that schools respect and address the needs of Gypsy/Traveller students and makes a number of recommendations. These included the need for the development of a culturally-relevant curriculum and the need for staff training in order to develop the knowledge and understanding required to support Gypsy/Traveller students.

The DfES also recommended that schools should establish successful relationships with the Traveller Education Support Service (TESS). In 2005, the DfES published *Aiming high: Partnerships between Schools and Traveller Education Support Services in Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils*. This brief document outlined strategies for developing this partnership and gave advice on effective classroom strategies (DfES, 2005b).

Most recently the DCSF has published *The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and Young People* (DCSF, 2008). This document offers guidance and a range of advice and strategies for supporting Gypsy/ Traveller students.

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) is an organisation that was established in response to the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. The FFT is a registered charity, with a Board of Trustees, that seeks to address the problems facing the Gypsy/Traveller community. It provides an extensive body of resources, documents and information on its website including material that has been specifically designed for teachers and youth workers working with young Gypsy Travellers. In addition, there is a teachers' resource pack specifically tailored for teachers and youth workers who are new to working with Gypsy/Traveller students ([www.gypsy-traveller.org](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org)). The FFT was short listed for the Human Rights Award 1999.

The National Literacy Trust also provides a wide range of support materials, resources and documents from its website. Some of these materials are drawn from work carried out within the Literacy and Social Inclusion Project. This was a three-year project was funded by the Basic Skills Agency and delivered by the National Literacy Trust. (<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/database/travellers.html>).

The ELAMP Project (Marks, 2005) was funded by the DfES, coordinated by the National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT) and supported by a number of other agencies. It took place in 2004 and explored the use of ICT with Gypsy/ Travellers. Its aim was to look at the potential of ICT, specifically laptops and datacards, to support the learning experiences of Gypsy /Traveller students. The evaluation report of the ELAMP Project highlighted the strengths and limitations of ICT and argued for a *more prominent role for home-school learning agreements* (Marks, 2005, p.2).

The Welsh Assembly Government commissioned a qualitative study into the education of Gypsy/Traveller students (Jones, Powell and Reakes, 2006). This study involved strategic interviews with respondents from eight organizations, including the Welsh Assembly Government and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. The research showed that there was a need for additional funding to support the education of Gypsy/Travellers on account of the additional educational needs of this group resulting from lack of attainment and cultural influences which impact on their engagement in education (Jones, Powell and Reakes, op.cit.)

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) carry out educational research in England and Wales with the aim of informing government policy. NFER are currently undertaking a research project entitled 'Approaches to working with children, young people and families for Traveller, Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Roma and Show people communities'. The main aim of this study, outlined on the NFER website, is to '*conduct a literature review and supplementary investigation of the range of issues around and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Show people, and the support, training and other programmes available to staff involved.*'

In recent years NFER have been responsible for a number of studies focussing on interventions to support Gypsy/Travellers. One study in Wales looked at the education of gypsy/travelers (Jones, Powell and Reakes, 2006). (See the NFER website for further details of this and other studies in this area.: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/change-for-children/gypsytraveller-children.cfm>.)

Other recent research includes studies by Derrington and Kendall (2007) and Mason and Broughton (2007). Derrington and Kendall's paper outlined the developments in educational policy that have impacted on the educational outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller students. They draw from a recent five-year study and present findings that suggest that issues of racism, cultural dissonance and low teacher expectations are contributory factors in the achievement and educational engagement of Gypsy/Traveller students. Mason and Kendall's case study highlighted the need to develop networks between services and communities in order to advance social inclusion for Gypsy/Traveller children and families.

### **3.3 Scotland**

Through the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act of 2000, the Scottish Parliament established the entitlement of all children and young people in Scotland to a school education. Following the Act, the Scottish Executive published the document *Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 Guidance on presumption of mainstream education* (Scottish Executive, 2002) providing guidance to local authorities in supporting pupils with additional support needs. The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED, 2003) outlined five national priorities for education, these are: Achievement and Attainment; Framework for Learning; Inclusion and Equality; Values and Citizenship and Learning for Life. These priorities are deemed relevant to all pupils.

Scottish Gypsies/Travellers are not currently recognised in law as a minority ethnic group. However the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament have recommended that they be treated as if they had the status of a minority ethnic community, with all that that implies under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000). The Scottish Commission for Racial Equality is currently seeking to establish the same legal status for Scottish Gypsies/Travellers as Gypsies/Travellers living in other parts of the UK.

#### **Policy**

Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004, some Gypsy/Traveller students would be recognised as having Additional Support Needs. The Act places a legal obligation on local authorities and schools to ensure that appropriate support should be in place for all pupils with additional support needs. The Scottish Executive *Code of Practice* (2005) provides a framework for best practice in implementing the 2004 Act.

In 2005, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) published guidance for schools: *Taking a closer look at equality and inclusion – Meeting the needs of gypsy travellers* (HMIe. 2005). This document provides a framework which supports schools in undertaking self-evaluation on the effectiveness of support that they provide for Gypsy/Traveller pupils.

#### **Strategies**

A range of support materials has been developed by key agencies to ensure the effectiveness of provision for supporting Gypsy/Traveller students. The Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP), based in the University of Edinburgh, has established a comprehensive website that is accessible by interested agencies and individuals. STEP has produced a wide range of information and materials for all agencies involved in supporting the education of Gypsy/Traveller students. These include a library of books, articles, research reports, work packs, audio and video cassettes, DVDs and a database of useful contacts, available on their website. It is a rich source of data and information that provides useful support strategies. For example the following frequently asked questions are answered for teachers:



- What might help a new Traveller pupil settle in?
- Are there any resources I can use?
- How can I find out what work they may already have done?
- How can I best help a pupil who may be with the school for only a short period?
- What about Travellers who settle down in my area or who live in houses all year round? What do I need to know?
- How do I note their attendance?

Research carried out by STEP has shown positive results when information and communication technologies (ICT) are used to support Gypsy/Traveller learners (Padfield, 2006).

Research carried out in 12 Scottish schools examined how schools perceived and responded to the culture and behaviour of Gypsy/ Traveller children. The findings raised issues of the challenges schools were faced with in trying to reconcile cultural diversity with the norms of behaviour and attendance (Lloyd et al, 1999). An extensive and thorough report evaluating the impact of national guidance for developing inclusive educational approaches for Gypsies and Travellers has also been published (STEP, 2006). This report emphasised the importance of recognising and being sensitive to the diversity of cultures within Gypsy/Traveller communities and recommended that policy and practice be informed by an awareness of the cultural values of these communities.

The Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP) continues to provide support to a range of agencies, local authorities and colleges through its work with the Gypsy/Traveller communities, consultancy, research and publications. These documents range from concise pamphlets to inform and support parents, families and teachers, to commissioned evaluative reports and research studies. (All research findings and papers are available on the STEP website <http://www.scottishtravellered.net>)

In 2004, the Scottish Executive guidance to local authorities and schools were published, this guidance was based on the outcomes of 'The Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry into Gypsy Travellers and Public Sector Policies' in 2001. The report by the Scottish Executive outlined a response to the 37 recommendations made by the EOC following the Inquiry. These recommendations dealt with a range of issues including legislation and policies, social inclusion, terminology and identification of Gypsy Travellers, education and housing strategies.

Learning and Teaching Scotland, (LTS) is a non-departmental public body, funded by the Scottish Government, with responsibility for the development of the Scottish curriculum. Within the 'Inclusive Education' section on their website, LTS make available a wide range of materials, case studies, support literature and documents. In 2003 it published advice by STEP which outlined recommended practice for developing an inclusive approach towards Gypsy/Traveller students (LTS, 2003). The key recommendations were that authorities should:

- take a lead in reviewing enrolment, attendance and achievement levels
- refer to appropriate reports for advice on developing practice to include Gypsies and Travellers
- identify a designated member of the senior management to progress plans for improving achievements in Gypsy/Traveller communities
- consider how to make most effective use of peripatetic staff and integrated support services
- identify and reserve some short-term pre-school placements
- consider how to take account of views of children in the decision making process

- consider the extent to which allocation of funding and resource provision might support schools in their ability to support inclusion
- consider together with schools how records and recording procedures can provide support for interrupted learners
- review their current approaches to flexibility and innovation in the curriculum
- together with Learning and Teaching Scotland evaluate existing pilot projects on the use of ICT based distance learning opportunities

(LTS, 2003, p.20)

### **3.4 Summary**

Significant factors in the low achievement levels of students from Gypsy and Traveller families include disrupted attendance patterns and disaffection with the school system, particularly at secondary levels (Ofsted, 2003; Jordan and Padfield, 2003; Lloyd et al., 2002). Many of the initiatives identified focus on providing ways in which schools and travelling communities can remain in touch, notably through ICT. Addressing disaffection means considering the tensions between the educational system and the culture and lifestyles of these families and communities. The investigation of specific strategies in the second phase of the study will look particularly at initiatives intended to address these two key issues.

#### 4. Looked After Children

The precise definition of 'looked after- children varies by region of the UK. In England, the term 'looked after' has a specific legal definition based on the Children Act of 1989: *A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours... or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act (that is, under a care order).* Therefore, young people under the age of 18 can be looked after by a local authority either under a court order (including Emergency Protection Orders, Interim Care Orders and full Care Orders) or through an arrangement made voluntarily with the child's parents.

In Scotland, the term 'looked-after' was first introduced in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, replacing the previous term, 'in care'. The term refers to the status under law of young people under the age of 18 who have formally come under the supervision of the local authority, either through an order from the Children's Panel or other statutory order. Looked After Children (LAC) do not necessarily live away from their birth parents. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, 56% of LAC in Scotland were living at home with either their parents or with other family members while still under local authority supervision ('We Can and Must Do Better, 2007). If, however, they can no longer be looked after by the family and are in a children's home, residential school or a foster placement, the children become Looked After and Accommodated (LAAC).

It should be noted, however, that the acronym 'LAC' is used much more commonly than 'LAAC' in Scottish policy and strategy documents, even when the policies and strategies in question are only directly related to children living away from the family home. 'LAC' is also often used interchangeably with 'in care', even though 'in care' should specifically refer to children who are subject to a Care Order. The more general term that acts as an equivalent to 'LAC' should be 'in public care'. This report will use the terms 'LAC' and 'in public care' and make clear when it is discussing initiatives that are specific to accommodated children.

In Northern Ireland the definition is similar, with The Children (NI) Order 1995 stating that a 'looked after' child is one 'who is in the care of a Trust or who is provided with accommodation by a Trust'. Looked after children in Northern Ireland can live:

- in a residential home
- in a residential school
- in a foster placement
- in a family placement with a relative or occasionally at home

There are a number of reasons why children might come under local authority care.

These include:

- children suffering sexual, physical or emotional abuse;
- children suffering neglect;
- families unable to cope with a child's behaviour;
- carents with mental health issues or drug or alcohol addictions that prevent them looking after their children safely; and/or,
- children having complex health needs or disabilities that require full time specialist care

In addition, only a very small percentage of LAC have become looked after due to their own criminal behaviour. It is also worth noting that Britain has an increasing number of looked after children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Throughout the United Kingdom, looked after children continually under-achieve at school in comparison with their non-looked after peers. Department for Education and

Skills statistics for 2006 in England show that only 12% of children who had been looked after for 12 months or more achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A to C, compared with the national average of 59% of children (NFER, 2008).

There are numerous reasons for this under-achievement, including disruption within the home environment, disruption caused by having to move schools and lack of an educationally-rich environment in residential settings. LAC have consistently higher than average rates of low attendance, exclusions, and truancy. They are also vulnerable to social problems at school such as bullying. These are all specific educational issues that are tackled in both policy and practice regarding looked after children.

## 4.1 England

This section presents the key legislation and government policy documents relating to the care and education of looked after children in England.

### **Policy**

The Children Act (1989) gave local authorities legal responsibility for children in public care either with the agreement of their parents/carers or as a result of family court proceedings. Importantly, local authorities were to act as a 'corporate parent' in respect to looked after children.

The 'Quality Protects' initiative (1998 –2004) was backed by a grant of £885 million and ran for five years. It emphasised the 'corporate parent' message with all those involved in children's services being asked to consider the question: 'Is this good enough for my child?'

The responsibilities of local authorities were increased with 'Guidance on Education of Children and Young People in Care' (2000) which required each local authority to appoint a 'nominated champion', a LAC Co-ordinator, to over-see and promote inter-agency working regarding the education of looked after children. Other measures in the paper included: Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after pupils; a designated teacher in each school with responsibility for looked after pupils and a limit of 20 school days to provide suitable education for looked after children who change care placement.

'Education Protects' was launched in 2000 as a joint Department of Health (DoH) and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) initiative to drive educational improvements for looked after children. Its focus was on multi-agency coordination in order to improve educational attainment. One of its recommendations was the introduction of local authority training for designated LAC teachers in schools. These designated teachers would have a responsibility to make sure that a Home-School agreement is drawn up.

'Education Protects' provided extra funding through the *vulnerable children grant* (DfES, 2003) to develop multi-agency educational strategies across local authorities, not simply to be used in schools, although the funding could be used to provide individual bursaries for looked after children.

'The Role of the School in Supporting the Education of Children in Public Care' (2003) set out to provide examples of good practice in implementing the recommendations of the 'Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care'. It gave special consideration to the role of Designated Teacher. The other areas covered in the research were PEPs, Specific Initiatives to Support the Education of Children in Public Care, Transition Planning and Admissions, Post-16 Provision, Exclusions, Attendance and Truancy, Celebrating Achievement, Funding, Multi-agency Working, Local Authority Guidance Materials, Awareness of Policy among Staff, Identified Governors, National Initiatives, Funding, In-School Support, Identifying Individual Needs, The Management of Transitions, Meeting Needs, Exclusions, Attendance and Truancy, Bullying, Raising the

Attainment of Pupils in Public Care, Successes, Support Activities and Challenges. This research serves as a good practical guide to the various areas of responsibility a school has with regard to its looked after pupils.

The Social Exclusion Unit's report 'A Better Education for Children in Care' (2003) identified five key reasons why looked after children underachieve in education: instability in the young peoples' lives; too much time being spent not in school; not enough help with education; not enough support and encouragement for education in the care environment and not enough support with their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. The report also found a variety of underlying problems that it identified as hampering progress in the education of children in care. These included weak management, lack of resources, poor planning, systems and structures that hindered multi-agency working and too much bureaucracy. The report laid out specific action to allow local authorities to provide looked after children with a full range of educational opportunities and set targets to narrow the achievement gap between children in public care and other pupils.

This was supplemented by 'If this were my child ... a councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent' (2003), published by the DfES along with the Local Government Information Unit.

The 'Every Child Matters' (2004) green paper identified five outcomes it wanted for all children - that they should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. The subsequent publication 'Every Child Matters: Next steps' (2004) put a responsibility on the director of Children's Services in each local authority to promote the educational achievement of LAC.

In the same year, 'Who Does What' (2004) was published as a practical guide for carers and social workers to support looked after children through their education, from pre-school to when they leave care. The document indicated clearly where responsibility lay for various aspects of the education process for LAC, including; Starting Pre-School, Starting School and Changing School, PEPs, Appeals, Attendance, Checking Progress, Reviewing Progress, Study Support, Planning for Life After School, Work Experience, SEN, Annual Reviews, Taking Part in School Life, Bullying, Exclusion, Mentors and Counselling, Education Out of School and Absence from School. This was supported by the 'Who Does What Checklist' (2005) which further clarified the direct roles and responsibilities of social workers and carers, and gave a list of key educational events in a child's life, what age they happen and what key activity the social worker or carer needs to engage in to support children through them.

In 2005, the 'DfES Statutory Guidance: Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children' described the necessary actions which local authorities were expected to undertake to fulfil their role as corporate parent and clarified the individual roles for local authority personnel (both in education and social work) and carers in delivering an effective educational experience on a daily basis.

Supporting Looked After Learners. A Practical Guide for School Governors (2006) offered specific guidelines for looked after children in the areas of Planning, Designated Teachers, Admissions, PEPs, Inclusive Schooling, Home School Communication, Curriculum and Options, Raising Achievement and Expectations, Exclusions, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Pastoral Support, Behaviour, Bullying and Study Support. These issues were each addressed by dividing them into three areas: What the governing body should ensure; Information the governing body should know or be given quick access to by the school; Questions that should be considered by the school's senior management team.

More recently, the '**Care Matters**' white paper (2007) set out a number of proposals for extra educational funding for children in care, new schemes funded by the private sector and a pilot programme to introduce 'virtual head-teachers'. Through 'Care Matters', each child in care who is in danger of falling behind in their education is to receive an annual education budget of £500 to be spent on books and after school activities. How this

money is spent will be decided upon by the children and young people, in discussion with their designated teacher, social worker and carer, and will be a part of their PEP. This funding is for extra activities to complement and support LAC's learning and should not be seen as a replacement for educational services that the school or local authority should be providing. £56.25 million has been allocated for this to be spent between 2008 and 2011. In addition, a £2,000 university bursary will be available for every young person in care that goes onto higher education. This was also due to be available from 2008.

Another 'Care Matters' proposal was for looked after children to have their education monitored by a 'virtual school head', who would assume responsibility for all the children in care in their area. This entails working with school staff, local authorities and carers to oversee the progress of these young people and improve their educational prospects. The white paper also puts the designated teacher role within the school on a statutory footing.

'Care Matters' also gives looked after children top priority regarding admissions, allowing them places in the best schools, even if these schools are full. There will be a specific obligation for local authorities to try not to force LAC to move schools in the important transition age of 10 to 11. Strong efforts will also be made to reduce the overall number of times looked after children change schools. The White Paper also puts a heavy emphasis on encouraging private funding for looked after schemes and greater networking between the private sector and local authorities.

## **Strategies**

### *i. Raising attainment*

There are numerous strategies employed both nationally and locally to improve the educational attainment of LAC in England. For many of these, strategies to help children in care are a part of larger programmes to promote educational achievement in general among young people from disadvantaged areas. Examples of these include the DfES programmes 'Excellence in Cities' and 'Education Action Zones' which have operated programmes of homework support and family literacy specifically for children in public care.

The EMIE section of the National Foundation for Educational Research website (<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/>) provides a list of English local authority websites which detail their specific strategies for raising the educational attainment of LAC.

One strategy focuses on 'out of school hours' learning. *ContinYou* is a project funded by the Department for Education and Skills with the aim of improving educational outcomes for looked after children through improving access to study support, both in schools and in the community. In its pilot phase, it involved three local authorities: Greenwich, Kirklees and Nottinghamshire.

The project produced the 'Taking Part' pack, designed to help children's services and other agencies make study support and out of school learning (oshl) an important part of raising the educational achievement of looked after children. The pack enables children's services to:

- focus on the benefits of study support, particularly for looked-after children
- consider the barriers to participation and how an authority might address them
- identify key allies in the authority and how to 'make the case' to or on behalf of them for putting study support at the heart of the local authority's strategy
- ensure that strategic and child-level planning takes into account the importance of leisure and cultural activities as part of their study support provision

Three regional seminars were held in May 2005 to disseminate the information gleaned from the Taking Part project. Following these, ContinYou is offering a consultancy service to local authorities to support implementation of the Taking Part resources. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was engaged to evaluate the pilot scheme but has declared the difficulty in doing this due to the lack of evaluation of the situation before the project began: *We can't evaluate the effect without knowing what the starting point is.*

It is however unlikely that students will progress if they do not attend school in the first place. In 2004, the Who Cares? Trust produced *Think Smart: Staying in School*, an interactive CD Rom that was designed specifically for looked after children between the ages of 10 and 15 and addressed the issue of the importance of education and the need for regular attendance in school. It also offered guidance on what to do if faced with exclusion or expulsion. It featured quizzes, games, photo stories and other information aimed at encouraging greater engagement with the education process.

As part of the 'Care Matters' (2007) push to raise levels of private sponsorship of educational programmes for looked after children, HSBC's Global Education Trust provided £1 million of funding for an initiative to provide private tutors to children in care from four local authorities - Warwickshire, Gateshead, Dudley and Merton. These tutors will be responsible for the children's overall education, not just their academic achievement, and therefore the success of the project will be measured in terms of increased participation in social activities and improvements in self-esteem as well as on academic results.

The one-to-one tuition programme is part of the government's two-year '*Making Good Progress*' pilot project which is running from September 2007 in 500 schools throughout England to improve attainment amongst children in danger of falling behind at school. The HSBC funding, however, is specifically for local authorities to work with looked after children. The company has also offered places on its training programme for any children in care who excel on the programme.

HSBC has also promised further resources for a pilot programme to allow care leavers to enter its Management Academy Programme. The 'Access to MAP' scheme would allow care leavers to work for HSBC while attending college on a day release basis where they would study for relevant vocational qualifications.

*ii. Raising self esteem, confidence, motivation and aspirations*

Raising self-esteem, confidence, motivation and aspiration are often stated interim goals of projects designed to raise the educational attainment of LAC. Projects which have a more specific goal of raising aspiration are often also designed to increase their participation in higher and further education.

In June 2006, the Frank Buttle Trust ([www.buttletrust.org](http://www.buttletrust.org)) introduced a Quality Mark in England to be awarded to institutions who have shown extra support for students who have been in public care. The Quality Mark was launched in Wales in November 2006 with Jane Davidson, the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, setting a target of the end of 2007 for all of Wales' Higher Education institutions to have been awarded the Quality Mark. Since then, 24 English and Welsh institutions have been awarded the quality mark.

*AimHigher* is a national programme, run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), which aims to widen participation in higher education by raising the aspirations and developing the abilities of young people from communities who are often under-represented within higher education, typically from lower socio-economic groups and disadvantaged backgrounds.

*Stepping Stones* is a project designed to encourage looked after children into higher education that was developed in Leeds and which took advantage of the partnerships

already in place within *AimHigher* in the area. As well as working with the education coordinator for Leeds Social Services, partners in Stepping Stones include Education Protects, Leeds Mentoring and Pathway Planning, City Learning Centres, Leeds University and Leeds Metropolitan University. The partnership between Stepping Stones and the universities of West Yorkshire is given the umbrella title Higher Education Aspiration Raising West Yorkshire (HEARWY) and it meets regularly to share strategies and best practice. Stepping Stones looks to involve actively the young people and, importantly, their parents and carers. To this end, the organisation runs a range of out-of-school activities during evenings and holidays. Examples include homework support programmes with undergraduate students and S6 pupils, mentoring schemes, family days at the universities to encourage a familiarity with, and understanding of, university life and courses exclusively for carers. Leeds Metropolitan University runs week-long summer schools to teach children in care about the social and academic side of university which are reported to raise the confidence levels of the young people taking part (Hopkins, Community Care, 2003). Hopkins (2003) draws attention to the need for programmes such as Stepping Stones to be run by someone with an understanding of both social services and education.

*iii. Support for schools/teachers working with minority background students*

'How are schools supporting looked-after children?' (2008) is one of a series of papers that reports on the findings of the Annual Survey of Trends in Education carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research. Three hundred and forty-seven (347) primary schools and 854 secondary schools took part in the survey, carried out in the summer term of 2007. These schools were asked whether they had agreed policies in place for the educational provision of LAC and for cooperating with and supporting the local authority in promoting the educational achievements of children in public care. Over half, 59%, of primary schools reported an existing policy for LAC educational provision, up 4% from the 2006 survey, and 63% of secondary schools reported an existing policy, again up 4% from the previous year. Regarding a policy for cooperation with the local authority, 52% of primary schools had a policy in place, up 2% from the 2006 survey and 59% of secondary schools reported a similar policy, an increase of 4% (Lewis, Chamberlain, Gagg, Rudd, 2007).

The survey found that, at secondary school level, schools in deprived areas were more likely to have policies in place to support looked after children than higher-achieving schools in more affluent areas. The survey identified this as an issue requiring to be addressed quickly as, since February 2007, following the measures brought in by the 'Care Matters' white paper, schools are required to give looked after children priority in admission, even when schools are full, thereby giving them access to the best schools. This therefore puts an onus on **all** schools to put policies in place, regardless of whether or not they currently have any children in care on the school roll.

The schools were also asked whether they prioritised looked after children in their support strategies. In general, secondary schools were more likely to do this than primary. The most common ways in which schools prioritised children in care were by allocating a designated teacher, providing praise and encouragement and by maintaining regular school attendance. Other strategies included support for additional educational needs; nominating a governor responsible for LAC; avoiding exclusions; providing extra support when joining/leaving school mid-year; providing extra support during formal key stage assessments; providing key worker/mentor support; accessing and participating in out of school learning; and prioritising in admission arrangements.

The survey noted that, for both primary and secondary, schools from more deprived areas were again more likely to prioritise children in public care in their support arrangements. This suggests that local authorities should target high-attaining schools in particular in order to make sure that they too have strategies for prioritising LAC in support arrangements. The survey did, however, find it encouraging that more schools



were prioritising regular school attendance for LAC; an area highlighted by the 'Care Matters' white paper.

*iv. Procedures for identifying, tracking and supporting looked after children*

Following the recommendations of the 'Care Matters' (2007) White Paper a two-year pilot scheme was set up to introduce 'virtual schools' of looked after children run by 'virtual heads'. Eleven local authorities were chosen nationwide to take part, with the expectation that if the pilot is successful, the initiative will be extended across the whole country. The 'virtual head' will take responsibility for the educational monitoring of all looked after children in their local authority, gather all the relevant information about each child in their care and act as their champion; examining and sharing this information and liaising with all relevant local authority services to ensure that the children in their care make the best possible educational progress.

Merton was one of two local authorities in London chosen for the pilot and it has laid out detailed plans for the responsibilities of the virtual head and the multi-agency framework in which they will operate. Stated partnerships within the Merton Virtual School include; Education workers, Social Care, CAMHS, SIPS and Education advisers, Admissions, Research and Information, Education Welfare Service, SEN, Corporate Parenting Officer, Connexions, Schools and other education establishments in and outside Merton, Behaviour Support Team/ Inclusion, Foster Carers and Children and Young People. Such is the range of these partnerships that the Merton project notes that the Virtual Head must be someone 'capable of bridging two cultures – education and social services, under the umbrella of Children's Services.' ('The Virtual School for Looked After Children and Young People'; Merton London Borough, [www.younglondonmatters.org](http://www.younglondonmatters.org))

Outside of the school environment, the 'Who Does What' guide (2004) and checklist (2005) offers social workers and carers a way of monitoring who is taking responsibility for the various aspects of looked after children's education.

## **4.2 Scotland**

In Scotland, as in England, there are a number of significant legislative documents and policy statements related to the care and education of children and young people over the last decade.

### ***Policy***

In 1995, the Children (Scotland) Act (1995) stated: *Children who are looked-after should have the same opportunities as all other children for education, including further and higher education, and access to other opportunities for development. They should also, where necessary, receive additional help, encouragement or support to address special needs or compensate for previous deprivation or disadvantage.*

There was little more published until 2001 when *Learning with Care* described the results of a joint inspection by HMI and SWSI in 1999-2000. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the social work and educational services provided by local authorities to meet the educational needs of looked after children. From this, it provided nine main recommendations.

In January 2002, Minister for Education and Young People, Cathy Jamieson, set local authorities three targets for improving the educational attainment of looked after children, based on the recommendations from *Learning with Care*:

- all looked after children should receive full-time education;
- all looked after children should have a care plan which adequately addresses educational needs; and

- all schools should have a teacher designated to championing the interests of these children.

In October 2001, Jack McConnell announced funding of up to £10 million to provide books, equipment and homework materials for every looked after child in Scotland. The funding was intended to ensure that all looked after children are provided with an educationally rich environment. This money was allocated in 2002 and more than 11,000 children received between £500 and £2500 worth of equipment or support. In October 2004, the Scottish Executive allocated a further £6 million to improve educational outcomes for looked after children.

In 2003, Who Cares? Scotland<sup>2</sup> were commissioned to produce the report *A Different Class?*, a consultation exercise designed to record the educational experiences of a large number of looked after children across the country. The findings from the study provided baseline data on the young people's achievements and qualitative information on their educational aspirations. The report also sought to find out why looked after children become disengaged with education and asked the young people themselves to suggest how their educational attainment may be improved. It also looked to discover whether looked after children had noticed any positive educational changes from the 2001 £10 million investment by the Scottish Executive in this area.

*Extraordinary Lives* (2006) was a review, carried out by the Social Work Inspection Agency, of all areas of local authority care for looked after children with an emphasis on identifying good practice and recommending future improvements. The review produced six key messages, with an emphasis on local authority departments working together to champion looked after children and allowing them as great an opportunity to develop into successful adults as any other child: *There is nothing inevitable about looked after children doing less well in education.*

With specific regard to education, the review identified four factors that played a key role in helping looked after children become effective learners and offered some examples of good practice in these areas. These were: learning environment; family and home circumstances; health; and social and environmental factors. The report then suggested ten action points to help looked after children achieve academically and six key points to consider.

'Extraordinary Lives' makes the point that looked after children can benefit from programmes designed to target pupils who are slow to learn or suffer some form of educational disadvantage without necessarily singling them out as looked after. There is a range of strategies in place to fulfil the potential of pupils who are underachieving, which include some looked after children. From these the review highlights A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive 2004), Ambitious, Excellent Schools (Scottish Executive 2004) and Determined to Succeed (Scottish Executive 2004).

In addition, *More Choices, More Chances*, the Scottish Executive's strategy for reducing the number of 16-19 year olds in Scotland who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) was published in 2006, along with *Workforce Plus*, the Executive's Employability Framework for Scotland. Specific mention is made in these documents of the high percentage of looked after children in the NEET category and there are suggested actions for young people of school age (pre-16) in order to improve the educational experience of those most at risk of disaffection and disengagement with school. These areas for action are: Transforming the learning environment; Flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition; Recognition of wider achievement; Developing employability; and, A focus on outcomes.

Focusing more specifically on LAC, 'Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better' (SEED, 2007) sets out 19 actions aimed at improving the lives and

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<sup>2</sup> Who Cares? Scotland is a voluntary organisation that provides a range of services for young people in public care, including advocacy, advice, information and support. ([www.whocaresscotland.org](http://www.whocaresscotland.org))

educational outcomes of looked after children. These actions were based around the five themes of the report; 'Working Together'; 'Becoming Effective Lifelong Learners'; 'Developing into Successful and Responsible Adults', 'Being Emotionally, Mentally and Physically Healthy' and 'Feeling Safe and Nurtured in a Home Setting'. Actions relating to education fall mainly into the first three themes, though action 18 within the final theme calls for accommodation that 'must appropriately support their longer-term outcomes in terms of education, employment and training'.

An 'implementation board' is responsible for seeing that the actions, and the 57 tasks that are associated with them, are completed. In order to do this, eight working groups have been established under the five themes of the report; four 'Working Together' working groups and one working group for each of the other themes.

## **Strategies**

### *i. Raising the attainment of Looked After Children*

Funded by the Scottish Executive, *Reading Rich* is a three-year project, carried out in partnership with NCH Scotland and the Scottish Book Trust, aiming to promote a love of reading and improve literacy among children in care. This followed a 2005 report from Audit Scotland that 60% of sixteen and seventeen year olds in care in Scotland had not passed standard grade English or mathematics (TES Scotland, 06.05.05). The first phase of the project involved over 50 children from three Scottish regions; Central Scotland, Moray and the Western Isles, and originally focused on creating a rich reading environment for children, aged between three and sixteen, in residential and foster placements. The initiative also featured writers in residence working with children in residential and foster homes in Fife, Ayrshire, Edinburgh and the Western Isles. Included in the Scottish Executive funding for the initiative is money for a full evaluation to see how it may affect future funding for LAC initiatives.

The £10 million of additional funding for looked after children announced by the Scottish Executive in 2001 was to provide books, equipment and homework materials for every looked after child in Scotland in order to help provide them with an '*educationally rich environment*' and '*to raise the educational attainment of looked after young people to meet their ambitions and abilities*'. The money was distributed among local authorities based on the number of looked after young people in each local authority's area, with £500 allocated for each young person looked after in a community placement, and £2500 for young people in local authority or independent residential homes, residential schools or secure accommodation.

The Scottish Executive's *Report on Educational Attainment of Looked After Children* (2002) gave extensive details on how much of this funding each local authority was given and how the money was spent. It found that around half the money had been spent on ICT equipment, including PCs, laptops, printers, educational software and filtered internet access. Other areas the money was spent on include; books, library expansions and reference materials; homework facilities including desks, furniture, workstations, appropriate lighting and defined study areas; outdoor educational equipment; arts and crafts materials and individual packs of basic school materials such as a school bag, pens and erasers. This report stated a belief that the extra funding has increased expectations for the future educational attainment of looked after children by allowing many of them to achieve specific learning outcomes identified in their PEPs.

The 2003 Who Cares? Scotland consultation report *A Different Class?* was undertaken to ascertain whether looked after children had noticed any educational benefits from the £10 million investment. It reported several disappointing findings, including:

- 58% of young people interviewed were unaware that money had been recently invested in their educational attainment.

- Only 22% of young people were consulted about the best way the money could be spent to improve their education.
- 77% reported that they did not perceive any direct benefit from the investment.

*ii. Strategies to raise self esteem, confidence, motivation and aspirations*

Innovative Routes to Learning (IRL), an educational project at the University of Strathclyde, has run a series of programmes working with looked after children from different West of Scotland local authorities. These projects are aimed at raising both the young people's self-confidence and their aspiration to go on to reach a positive destination upon leaving school. They involve the young people working in groups on a series of progressively more difficult challenges.

IRL also runs introductory programmes designed to encourage LAC to attend its sister project, the Summer Academy @ Strathclyde; a two-week summer programme with the purpose of encouraging young people from more deprived areas into Higher Education. The Summer Academy programme is based on a 'Challenge Curriculum' that offers educational, recreational and study support components and is located at the university's Jordanhill Campus. It is carried out by undergraduate student mentors. The introductory Summer Academy LAC programme was conceived in 2007, with the purpose of familiarising the looked after children with the Jordanhill Campus, the mentors they will work with on the Summer Academy itself and the kind of activities they will be taking part in. It was felt that this would increase the chances of the young people attending the full two-week course.

In September 2007, the Frank Buttle Trust introduced its Quality Mark in Scotland. The mark is for institutions who have shown extra support for students who have been in public care and has been awarded to four universities in Scotland; Strathclyde, Glasgow, Abertay and Edinburgh. The universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow have since worked together with Glasgow local authority to devise a series of events for secondary school LAC pupils in order to raise their aspirations of attending higher education.

*iii. Support for schools / teachers working with minority background students*

Following on from the 2001 '**Learning with Care**' report, the Scottish Executive commissioned a multi-agency project in January 2002 to develop new materials that would assist local authorities in improving the educational outcomes for looked after children in Scotland. The agencies involved included Save the Children, Who Cares? Scotland, the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care and the University of Strathclyde's Faculty of Education.

The materials were aimed at carers and local authority education and social work staff and were designed to help these staff improve the educational attainment and outcomes of looked after children. They included: training materials; an information booklet; an education report and quality indicators that would allow local authorities to determine whether their residential units were an 'educationally rich' environment for LAC. These self-evaluation markers were designed to be used not just in a range of care settings but also by schools and local authority managers. This emphasised the 'corporate parent' role which calls for local authority departments to work together and take a collective responsibility for the education of LAC.

In order to ensure that the materials were fit for purpose, Save the Children and Who Cares? Scotland consulted 27 looked after children and young people in order that their opinions and experience would be represented within the materials. '**We Can and Must Do Better**' (2007) described the training materials as providing 'an ideal multi-disciplinary training opportunity for teachers, social workers, foster carers, residential workers and other relevant professionals working with looked after children and young

people.’ It goes on to say that they have been used ‘extensively, though not consistently, across Scotland’.

*iv. Procedures for identifying, tracking and supporting looked after children*

The £10 million of funding issued to local authorities in 2001, as well as being used for materials that children in care could access directly, was also used to set up ICT systems to improve communication between local authority departments and allow information on the educational attainment of children in care to be shared. Several Scottish local authorities have used the Strathclyde Educational Establishment Management Information System (SEEMIS) for this purpose. SEEMIS is used to monitor and track pupil progress in terms of attendance, attainment and exclusions.

From 2006, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) developed inspection work in schools that specifically looked at schools' provision for looked after children. The nine recommendations in 'Learning with Care' acted as a starting point for this work. In 2007, schools were asked, during HMIE inspections, to supply information on the attainment and progress of looked after children, as well the school's approach to meeting the specific needs of these pupils.

### **4.3 Wales**

Policy in Wales regarding LAC is similar to both England and Scotland, in that local authorities have the status of 'corporate parent' in relation to children in care. Policy also takes into account section 52 of The Children Act 2004 which makes it a positive duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children in their care.

At the local level, policy is similar to that in England, including the designation of nominated teachers in schools, the appointment of looked after children education co-ordinators within the local authority and the obligatory use of Personal Education Plans (PEPs). In 2007 'Towards a Stable Life and Brighter Future' followed on from 'Guidance on the Education of Children Looked After by Local Authorities' (2001), with policy being shaped by three over-arching aims:

- to provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- to bring the educational attainments of our Looked After Children nearer to those of their peers.
- identifying the schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children. Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

(Welsh Assembly Government, 2007)

The paper calls for closer collaboration and greater coherence between relevant professionals and agencies in order to produce better educational outcomes for looked after children and offers specific guidance as to the content and purpose of PEPs, the responsibility for which it places on social workers. The paper also reiterates the duty a local authority has in considering the educational needs of looked after children when placing them in schools under the 'Placement of Children (Wales) Regulations' (2007) and the requirement under the 'Children's Homes (Wales)' (2007) regulations that every residential home has a link worker who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked after children.

In June 2006, the Welsh assembly announced funding of £15.4m to be distributed to schools and local authorities under the 'RAISE' programme, designed to improve levels of attainment and standards of education for disadvantaged children. £1m of this money was to be distributed to local authorities as a separate grant specifically for supporting

the education of looked after children. The local authorities would receive this money in both 2006-07 and 2007-08.

The stated intention of this LAC-specific funding takes into account the local authority status as 'corporate parent': *The intention of the grant is to enable educational support to be provided for looked after children of the sort that parents would normally provide for their children; particularly when their children are approaching crucial examinations at age 16.*

#### 4.4 Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the definition of a 'looked after child' is one '*who is in the care of a Trust or who is provided with accommodation by a Trust*'<sup>3</sup> (The Children (NI) Order, 1995). This accommodation can be a residential home or school, a foster home or in a family placement, that is living with a relative or occasionally living in the family home. As in other regions, there are a number of care orders that can be applied (Interim, Full or Residential) as well as 'Voluntary Accommodated'. When the decision is made that a child becomes 'looked after', a care and development plan is put in place. This sets out the living and care arrangements.

The key aim of the Children (NI) Order is to protect children and promote their welfare. It emphasises the need for agencies such as the Health and Social Services, Education and Library Boards<sup>4</sup>, Trusts and parents to work together to resolve the situation.

Recent developments have been driven by data which indicate that educational achievement amongst LAC is significantly lower than that for other students and this may well have negative effects on their life chances in the longer term. The Children (NI) Order states that these children have as much right to educational experiences and life chances as any other children but it also acknowledges that, as a result of their experiences, they may have additional or special needs.

While targets for improving the educational attainment of looked after children and care leavers were included in the 'Priorities for Action' document (2004–05), there was no specific funding provided to support this in the draft Priorities and Budget 2005-2008.

#### 4.5 Summary

Throughout the United Kingdom there is an impressive amount of policy and practice relating to the educational achievements of children in public care, reflecting how the issue retains a high profile on both a national and local level. There is, however, still a widespread acceptance, as seen in policy document titles such as 'We Can and Must Do Better', that many of these measures have not had the desired effect in closing the attainment gap between LAC and their non-looked after peers.

Much policy and practice in recent years has been an attempt to provide better coordination between educational and social work services within local authorities in order that a more consistent, unified and effective approach may be taken with LAC. The sharing of relevant knowledge is particularly important for this. To this end, the concept of a Virtual Head of a Virtual School who takes responsibility for children in public care within an authority seems both innovative and promising.

Programmes, both in and out of school, that aim to improve the educational goals for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds without specifically targeting LAC would

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<sup>3</sup>Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland are delivered by Health and Social Services Boards (HSS Boards) and 19 Health and Social Services Trusts (HSS Trusts). Each Trust manages their own staff and services on the ground and controls its own budget.

appear to often offer some degree of success, taking into account how looked after children often do not want to be singled out because of their in-care status.

There is still a need for clearer, more consistent policy and practice on making the home environment of looked after children more 'educationally-rich'.

## 5. Minority Language Speakers

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (2001)<sup>5</sup> defines regional or minority languages as those that are:

- a. traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and
- b. different from the official language(s) of that State;

(Council of Europe, 2001, Part I, Article 1)

The charter specifically excludes dialects of the official languages of the State or the languages of migrants (often referred to as 'community languages' in the literature.). In practice, much of the UK legislation and policy regarding minority languages makes explicit reference to the place of community languages in education.

Across the UK, government support for minority languages is typically expressed as a commitment to ensuring that communities retain their sense of identity, that the nation as a whole embraces the cultural diversity that such languages reflect, and that they are integrated into public policy. In addition to identifying benefits to the community, minority language support is also viewed as benefiting the individual, particularly with regard to educational outcomes and life chances. The specific languages thus supported vary across the UK. Scotland, Wales and Ireland all have (different) indigenous minority languages that they seek to protect and preserve. In England, there is no widely recognised indigenous heritage language although there are movements campaigning to have, for example, the Celtic language Cornish recognised as such. In all four countries of the UK a number of minority community languages are recognised and supported within the educational system.

### 5.1 England

Between 1985 and 1989, a survey of the local authority provision for language support in England and Wales noted that most local education authorities (LEAs) were making some provision in relation to the needs of bilingual pupils, with others indicated a need to make occasional provision for individual pupils, as and when a need was identified (Bourne, 1990). The majority of language support staff were providing additional support in learning English, with small percentages (<10%) of community or bilingual language teachers. It was noted that slightly more primary than secondary schools were receive such support. In some instances, the posts were school-based while in others they were part of central teams that ranged across schools and communities.

Over the period of the survey, a number of improvements were observed. For example, there was a greater emphasis on curriculum learning **through** language (either English or other languages) rather than support for the learning **of** English and there was evidence of increased teaching of languages other than English within schools. A number of constraints to the continuing development of support for bilingual pupils, including the need for staff development, resources, models of good practice and the involvement in minority linguistic groups in educational decision-making. Bourne concluded by noting that, while there had been initiatives aimed at addressing minority languages in the classroom, there was little systematic evidence of the practices

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<sup>5</sup> <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

developed or their effectiveness. This report establishes a baseline for considering developments since then.

### **Policy**

The policy for language learning in English schools is set down in the National Curriculum (1999) which requires schools to offer at least one official working language of the EU and requires students in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years) to study at least one modern foreign language (though not necessarily one from the European Union). There is no compulsion to study a language in Key Stage 4 (14-19 years) although schools must make provision for those who choose to do so. These requirements related to the academic study of a language for external certification purposes.

The National Language Strategy is set down in *Languages for All: Languages for Life* (2002). The rationale is expressed in terms of the need to improve understanding between people; to support global citizenship and to recognise the importance of understanding the people and cultural traditions of other countries. The plan aims to improve the opportunities for language learning at school, primary and secondary, enriching the experience and transforming the language capability of the UK.

The Strategy sets out a series of initiatives designed to meet the aims of the strategic plan. It is comprehensive, with proposals for schools, for further and higher education and learning in the community. The focus is primarily on modern foreign languages teaching, predominantly European languages, as academic subjects with an emphasis on early language learning and what is referred to as the 'primary entitlement'. The document targets pupils at the upper primary stages (Key Stage 2: 7-11 years) on the basis that early intervention can be more effective than delaying language learning until later in a student's school career. In addition, it is envisaged that schools will draw on the expertise of members of the community, native speakers and those with relevant skills, to enable them to meet this entitlement. Other than this, little attention is given to community language learning.

The National Centre for Languages (CILT) is recognised, and partly funded, by the government as providing expertise and advice on the learning and teaching of languages. (CILT existed previously as the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research and became the national Centre for Languages following its merger IN 2003 with another body, the Language National Training Organisation, which previously set the standards for and promoted enhanced capability in the use of foreign languages in the work place.) CILT now sets the standards for languages, translation and interpreting as well as a source of expertise for business and commerce. Based in London, CILT has 'branches' in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales (<http://www.cilt.org.uk/index.htm>). The website hosts a number of specialised units with interests in specific areas of language learning.

In addition to providing online support and resources, CILT runs staff development programmes for community language teachers, as well as modern European languages. It also published reports and reviews on the impact of interventions and initiatives. The CILT report *Positively Plurilingual*, based on survey of community languages in 2005, points to research that indicate the educational and career benefits that can accrue as a result of second language skills and understanding (CILT, 2006). The findings indicate that, as well as improved academic performance, bilingual children tend to be more positive to learning in general and more secure in their compound identity. The numbers of bilingual children are substantial, with over 100 languages spoken by school children in Scotland, 21% of Welsh population already bilingual in English and Welsh, and almost 100 other languages spoken amongst children, while in Northern Ireland, there is a growing investment in Irish-medium schooling. With more than one in eight of the schoolchildren in England already speaking a language other than English, initiatives in



language learning aim to harness the advantages bilingualism can bring for the benefit of the individual child's educational and life chances

### **Strategies**

The Language Strategy identifies a number of pathways to language learning. These include: specialist language teachers, working with individual or clusters of schools; staff development for existing primary teachers; outreach working from Specialist Language Colleges (and an increase in the numbers of these); an increased use of the Comenius scheme to place language assistants in schools, particularly primaries; learning opportunities drawing on wider expertise such as that offered by businesses, universities and colleges, parents and the wider community. In addition, the use of ICT is seen as having significant potential as are innovative partnerships involving schools in other countries.

A key aim is to introduce a recognition system which will give people credit for the acquisition of language skills and complement the existing qualification frameworks. This has resulted in the 'Language Ladder', a scheme for recognising skills across the four modes of language, speaking, listening, writing and reading. The Ladder provides a framework against which achievement can be measured, progress recognised and rewarded and transitions between primary and secondary, for example, supported. It is mapped on to National Curriculum Levels and other external qualifications such as GCSE and A levels. In addition, there is an external rewards scheme which is based on the Ladder, Asset Languages. Through this, as students progress, competence can be assessed at the end of each Key Stage and teachers are supported in making interim assessments of competence.

A National Director for Language for England has been appointed, Dr Lid King, based in the Department for Children, Schools and Families. He was previously Director of CILT and his remit is to 'develop, steer, progress and deliver the strategy and champion language learning' (National Strategy, p.41).

Many of the projects initiated by the Strategy are being driven by or overseen by CILT. The CILT website (<http://www.cilt.org.uk/index.htm>) hosts or links to other websites and networks which aim to support language learning and, in particular, community language learning. For example, there are two concerned with languages in the primary sector, the National Centre for Early Language Learning (NACELL) and Primary Languages and Languages ICT. NACELL website provides guidance, advice and resources for teachers and those involved in early language learning across a range of languages (<http://www.nacell.org.uk/index.htm>). The website also has details of a community languages training school in the Local Borough of Tower Hamlets. Primary Languages and Languages ICT provides ideas and guidance for teachers in using ICT in language learning.

Similarly, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) has developed a resource sharing facility for teachers in a range of community languages. Languages Work is a new range of resources designed to highlight the benefits of language learning, beyond school and providing guidance on effective approaches for teachers.

A number of initiatives have been established to take forward the aims of the National Language Strategy. Many of these are relatively small scale, in response to local interests or needs (CILT, 2006). Some are intended to support community language learning, such as 'Language of the Month' at Newbury Park Primary School. Here pupils and parents work together, alongside teachers, to produce ICT-based materials. Similarly 'Teach a Friend a Language' encourages students to pair up and learn each other's languages. Performances, in the community languages, are put on for parents and friends. Initiatives in specific languages e.g. Chinese, Urdu and Polish, are also identified.

Primary Language Pathfinders are pilot projects which were established to investigate how primary language learning could be best supported and delivered. Nineteen Local authorities were involved, with 1400 schools, to address key issues related to language learning. Although European languages are most visible, several local authorities have focused on the learning of community languages at KS2.

The National Strategy has identified a series of specific action and initiatives, with a time line for their implementation, across each of the sectors identified. In 2008, Dr King outlined progress to date drawing attention to the Pathfinders projects and to baseline research being undertaken to determine more accurately the situation in primary schools (CILT, 2008). He also referred to significant advances in pre-service teacher training, notably courses run in partnership with countries in Europe such as France and Spain which involve placements in primary schools. While much of the attention has been on early language learning, Dr King raised the issue of addressing the situation in secondary schools and he noted that an important debate on the role of non-European community languages in the strategy has still to be had.

## 5.2 Scotland

The wide-ranging National Cultural Strategy, published in 2000<sup>6</sup> following devolution, identified, as one of the key priorities, the promotion '*of Scotland's languages as cultural expressions and as means of accessing Scotland's culture*'. While the two indigenous languages, Gaelic and Scots, are explicitly mentioned in the action statements associated with this priority, the document recognises that other minority languages are also to be valued. It endorsed the recommendation in the national curriculum guidelines for the teaching of English across the primary and early secondary years<sup>7</sup> that teachers should encourage respect for the mother tongue languages of all the children, be it English, Gaelic or Scots, or one of the community languages such as Urdu, Punjabi or Cantonese and foster an interest in its literature (SOED, 1991). However, it should be noted that the Scottish national curriculum guidelines are not mandatory.

### **Policy**

Although the Cultural Strategy, and the curriculum guidelines, emphasised the value of diversity and recognised the importance of minority languages in the national culture, no specific policy document existed that considered the implications for education. Following on from the Cultural Strategy, the government launched the Scottish Inquiry into the role of educational and cultural policy in supporting Gaelic, Scots language and minority languages differentiated between minority languages (as defined above) and community languages i.e. languages spoken by members of significant immigrant communities, or their descendants, within Scotland. The report of the Inquiry (Scottish Parliament Corporate Body, 2003) noted that in the absence of any published, explicit policy for minority languages, it could be concluded that there was, in effect, an implicit default policy which essentially allowed minority languages to die out. The Inquiry aimed to address this through identifying ways in which the government could support and encourage language use in Scotland. They identified 3 principles which would serve as organisers for the language policy:

- i. the conservation and revitalisation of Scotland's existing linguistic heritage;
- ii. the integration of Scotland's language resources with public policy priorities; and,
- iii. the development of new and extended opportunities.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/nationalculturalstrategy/docs/cult-14.asp>

<sup>7</sup> [www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/guidelines/englishlanguage.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/guidelines/englishlanguage.asp)

Gaelic and Scots are defined as minority languages (indigenous heritage languages) while the most frequently used community languages are Urdu, Cantonese, Polish and Arabic. The authors also called for the languages used by the aurally and impaired such as British Sign Language and Braille, to be classed as minority languages.

The European Charter, however, places Scots and Gaelic in two different categories. While recognising both as minority languages, Gaelic is identified as in need of specific protection and support to ensure its survival.

The Gaelic language Act (2004) required the production of a national language plan for Gaelic. Published in 2007, The National Plan for Gaelic: 2007-2012 was developed on behalf of the government by Bord na Gaidhlig, a statutory, non-governmental public body, funded by the government. Addressing the use of Gaelic in the home, community, place of learning and workplace, the national Plan sets priorities and targets for the subsequent five years, including education. The National Gaelic Education Strategy (Annex A) identifies a need for an expansion of Gaelic medium education and new initiatives proposed include a 'virtual' classroom environment for the delivery of Gaelic medium subjects.

### **Strategies**

English and Gaelic are the official languages of the Scottish Government. Scotland has a total population of just over 5 million, with approximately 1.5% speaking Scottish Gaelic, the most frequently cited minority language. The 2001 Census data showed that, while the number of Gaelic speakers dropped significantly during the 1990s, there was a small but encouraging increase in the numbers who could read, write and understand Gaelic. ([http://www.bord-na-gaidhlig.org.uk/about\\_gaelic/gaelic\\_today.html](http://www.bord-na-gaidhlig.org.uk/about_gaelic/gaelic_today.html)).

The Scottish Executive has a system of specific grants for Gaelic medium education as well as grants to support other aspects of Gaelic in the community and funding for Gaelic broadcasting. Much of this is addressed through the Gaelic Development Agency (<http://www.bord-na-gaidhlig.org.uk/welcome.html>) which works in partnership with the Scottish Executive and Gaelic organisations to improve the position of Gaelic in Scotland and beyond. Funded by the Government, it has a particular interest in education and a key aim of increasing the number of Gaelic speakers.

Mac an Tailleir (undated, <http://www.cnampshleite.org.uk/tailleir.htm>) identifies 4 stages in the development of provision for minority languages: exclusion, single subject teaching, partial immersion and total immersion. He describes how, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gaelic was excluded from schools, with English as the medium of instruction. Subsequently, in the 1960s and 70s, Gaelic could be studied as a subject in secondary schools for external certification. Since then, Gaelic medium education (GME) units, attached to mainstream schools, have been established to provide some instruction in Gaelic and in 2006, the Glasgow Gaelic School opened, based on total immersion principles.

Mac an Tailleir argues for total immersion in that it ensures that all interactions, formal and informal, in and outwith the classroom, are conducted in Gaelic, allowing fluency to develop in all aspects of language use. Partial immersion, he argues, can discriminate against minority language speakers, who are marginalised and prevented from experiencing the holistic learning experience that majority language speakers enjoy.

At present, there are over 60 primary schools offering Gaelic medium education, with additional teaching resources in Gaelic. The government has also taken steps to increase the numbers of Gaelic-medium teachers, both in primary and secondary schools, in a number of ways, notably through the introduction of Gaelic-medium preservice programmes.

While there are no official figures for the numbers speaking the Scots language, it is generally considered to be relatively widely spoken and, increasingly, promoted as a living language and the focus of academic study (National Cultural Strategy, 2000). The 2001 Census did not contain a question relating to Scots speakers, partly on the grounds that a lack of a shared definition of Scots amongst those who claimed to be speakers would cast doubt on the accuracy of the responses. This issue of definition is an ongoing one.

The implementation of a language policy in response to the European Charter has been *'half-hearted, ill thought-out and buried in a swathe of other 'cultural' issues'*, according to Millar (2006, p.63). As a result, there is little in the way of initiatives to promote Scots. Millar's analysis of the UK and Scottish responses to the Charter draws comparisons between the respective positions of Gaelic and Scots although he acknowledges that this is in part due to the categorization of the two languages in the Charter. He notes that the periodic reports on progress required by the European Commission as evidence of adherence to the Charter, place considerably greater emphasis on developments in Gaelic but say little or nothing regarding Scots. His findings on local authority language policies indicate a similar position at the local level.

It is only when discussing the academic study of the two languages does there seem to be equal attention given in government reports. Otherwise there is little evidence of status or acquisition planning for Scots in the official documentation.

Another area of interest is that of minority community languages such as Urdu, Punjabi and Cantonese. In an investigation into the experiences of minority ethnic pupils, Ashrad *et al* (2005) found that teachers, pupils and their parents had differing perceptions of the extent to which schools did, in practice, foster inclusion and deal with discrimination. While much of the study was concerned with experience of racial discrimination or racist bullying, and interpretations of these terms, some mention was made of the support for the English as an additional language (EAL) provided by the school or authority. Teachers in some schools were positive in their appreciation of the contribution and support provided by EAL staff and there appeared to be good working partnerships between them. However, in other schools there was little evidence of true partnership but rather, EAL staff were expected to deal with all language and, in some cases, race issues that arose. Rather than seeing minority pupils as cultural enrichment, they saw them as problematic. Participants in the study identified a need for appropriate staff development, improved resources for learning and teaching and, for some, the need to increase the number of minority ethnic teachers, resulting in a more ethnically diverse teaching force and a broader range of role models for children.

McPake (2006) found that Urdu was the most extensively taught language after Gaelic in Scottish Primary and secondary schools, albeit typically as a second or modern language for external certification. She identified over 100 complementary classes, schools or centres for community language learning although these tended to be concentrated in the 25 or so most frequently used languages. Many of those teaching in complementary provision have little or no training in supporting language learning and many are unpaid volunteers. She also argues for an inclusive language policy that is also comprehensive, that involves community learning needs as well as academic and recognises the benefits that language skills can bring to society as a whole, not just in terms of academic achievement in schools.

### **5.3 Wales**

The National Assembly for Wales has only been in existence since 2000. The official languages of the Assembly are English and Welsh, with all information including minutes of the Cabinet meetings and Cabinet papers, accessible in both languages.

In the late 1980s, approximately 19% of the population were Welsh speakers (Bourne, 1990). Bourne's report on the needs of bilingual pupils and the provision made for language support in schools found some differences in the positions in England and Wales. A key factor is the existence of a national indigenous language, spoken by a significant proportion of the population, in addition to any community languages. Welsh speakers were more involved in decision making and the government has undertaken consultation on language provision at community level. Where resources allowed, parents had a choice on the balance of languages used in the classroom and, consequently, whether their child was taught in English or Welsh, either as a first or second language. The Welsh National Curriculum continues to uphold this choice.

### ***Policy***

The Welsh Language Board (WLB) was established in 1993 as a statutory body with responsibility for the promoting and facilitating Welsh language usage. Since then, it has initiated new projects, worked in partnership with other agencies on others and funded yet others (Welsh Language Board, 1999). The Board published A Strategy for the Welsh Language in 1996, followed by A Vision and Mission for 2000-05.

Describing Wales as a bilingual nation, the Vision and Mission statement emphasises the need for partnership in securing the future of Welsh, involving both public and private bodies. It argues that ensuring the survival of Welsh, like any other minority language, will demand continual work to establish and sustain it, to ensure that it is valued and, critically, seen to be valued by key institutions, as well as to ensure that it remains vibrant, up to date and relevant to those who might use it.

The strategy aims to make Wales increasingly bilingual and multilingual against the wider political context of a devolved UK and a progressively more diverse Europe. Each of its aims is accompanied by specific targets, with timelines.

### ***Strategies***

The Vision and Mission document (WLB, 1999) identified four areas of language planning: acquisition, usage, status and corpus, with aspects to be addressed in each. Acquisition had two dimensions: transmission within the family and Welsh within the education system. (The Scottish National Plan for Gaelic acknowledges that the Welsh Vision and Mission statement influenced its development and uses the same four dimensions of planning in its Educational Strategy.) The document notes a number of barriers to children's acquisition of the language from their parents, the anticipated primary source of learning. Where only one parent in a family speaks Welsh, there is only a 50% likelihood that the children will be brought up speaking Welsh. Significant proportions of adults lack confidence in speaking the language and, during adolescence, many young people give up speaking Welsh on a regular basis. Intervention begins early with the provision of advice and information for pregnant mothers, through specifically trained midwives and health visitors as well as resource packs. This emphasis on the benefits of bilingualism continues into work with schools as well as other agencies working with young people.

More formally, Welsh-medium and bilingual education are cores strands in the strategy, from pre-school provision through schooling to tertiary education and lifelong learning. With only 6.3% of children aged 3 speaking Welsh, the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual nursery education is considered a priority, on the basis that languages are acquired more easily and naturally at an early age than in later life.

The WLB has reported on a decreasing use of the language in schools as pupils move from primary to secondary and again from secondary to further and higher education. These discontinuities at transition stages are continuing to cause concern.

Bilingual resources and support packs have been produced to support teachers, and training colleges began providing bilingual methodology courses in 2004. The Vision and Mission statement encouraged schools to move from teaching the language itself, to teaching other areas of the curriculum through Welsh. Similarly, colleges and universities were encouraged to use Welsh in some or all of their courses and through lifelong learning provision, courses were provided for adult learners in increasing numbers.

Usage planning also had two dimensions, the economic benefits of bilingualism for the speaker and the society, and the use of Welsh in all aspects of life, including social, cultural, leisure and community use. Status planning depends on two conditions: firstly, that key status institutions such as the National Assembly and the Regional Committees (local government) support the use of the language; and, secondly, the language must be relevant and modern, reflecting current society through its ability to deal with new technologies, for example. The fourth aspect, corpus planning, focuses on two dimensions: the need for linguistic standardisation and for the development of a form of the language that people find useful, relevant and worthwhile learning. While acknowledging that languages must change and grow in response to changes in society and the wider context, the WLB recognised the need for specialised, standardised dictionaries and consistent rules for translation.

Specific strategies identified included:

- increasing opportunities for bilingual preschool education by expanding the number of bilingual units across Wales;
- providing advice and support for parents in aiding their children's learning of Welsh;
- providing more teacher training, pre-service and in-service in bilingual methodologies in the classroom and resources to support learning and teaching;
- redesigning the educational support service to improved the language support (Welsh-medium, lingual and Welsh as a second language) available to schools;
- promoting a Welsh cultural dimension to the curriculum in schools;
- investigating the reasons behind the discontinuity observed at the transition from primary to secondary school;
- using information and communications technologies to increase the incidence of Welsh language use in the curriculum;
- establishing a central agency concerned with the development of bilingual education in Wales.

Each of the strands of the strategy has specific targets, often quantified, accompanying each. A significant activity in the next phase of this project is to evaluate the extent to which these targets have been met and to determine the factors contributing to their success, or otherwise.

#### **5.4 Northern Ireland**

Irish Gaelic, one of the Celtic languages in the UK alongside Welsh and Scottish Gaelic, is recognised as a minority language in Northern Ireland and has been ratified as such by the UK government, in line with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It is not recognised as an official language of the state, however. Three major dialects are spoken in Northern Ireland - Ulster, Connacht and Munster - although only Ulster is spoken and taught in schools.

The last native Irish speaker in Northern Ireland died in the 1970s (Mac Poillin and Ni Bhaoill, 2004). As a result, out of a population of just under 2 million, the majority of Irish speakers are second language learners, learning Irish through school or informal language provision. The first Irish-medium schools were established in the early 1980s. They were funded by the government, as were a number of Irish language projects. The 2001 Census reported that approximately 10% of the population had some knowledge of the language.

### **Policy**

When the Northern Ireland Assembly was re-instated in 1998, the Good Friday Agreement, which set down the conditions under which it would operate, recognised the importance of Irish, Ulster-Scots (as a dialect rather than a minority language) and the languages of other ethnic communities within Northern Ireland. Two cross-border agencies, operating across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, *Forus An Gaeilge* and *Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch*, were established with the responsibility to promote these two languages, Irish and Ulster Scots respectively, on both sides of the border.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), created as part of the Good Friday Agreement, has argued for recognition and respect for those who use minority languages, dialects and other forms of communication, such as sign language, as they all contribute to the diversity and richness of the culture of NI. In addition to sign language, the Commission made specific reference to Chinese, Urdu and the languages of Travellers. The NIHRC seek legislation to ensure that linguistic communities are supported in a range of ways, including the through the educational system.

As with Scotland and Wales, education legislation and policy is a devolved responsibility. The Education (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, set out the duty of the Northern Ireland Regional Assembly to promote the development of Irish-medium education. At national level, the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) oversees policy and its implementation while at regional level, educational policy and oversight is the responsibility of the five Education and Library Boards, funded by DENI.

Legislation commits the NI government to facilitating Irish-medium education or, at least, providing the opportunity to study Irish throughout schooling (where numbers are sufficient and parents wish it), the teaching of the language, its culture and history, and the provision of teacher training to meet these commitments. The first Irish-medium primary school was established in 1971 and the first secondary school in 1991. In 2000, the Department of Education established two agencies, one to support the development of Irish-medium education and schools and a second to provide, primarily, small grants to non-state funded schools and preschools to support Irish-medium education.

### **Strategies**

For the Irish language, the main strategy adopted is Irish-medium education. This can take place in a number of different types of school. There are Irish-medium units which, although hosted and managed by English-medium schools, are essentially self-contained, with all instruction in Irish. There are also state-funded Irish-medium primary and secondary schools that are not attached in any way to English-medium provision. In addition, there are free-standing independent (private) Irish-medium schools. Both forms of organisation adopt total immersion approaches to learning and teaching. In 2004, all Irish medium units were in Catholic schools and managed by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (Mac Poillin and Ni Bhaoill, 2004).

Another body, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), promotes integrated education and support parents in establishing integrated schools, with a

religious balance in pupil enrolments, staff etc. (i.e. both Catholics and Protestants). In this sector, Irish can be studied as a subject within the curriculum.

The Council for Irish-Medium Education (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta), was set up in 2000 with the remit of promoting good practice, issuing advice and guidance to those setting up Irish-medium schools and units. A complementary body, the Trust Fund for Irish Medium Education (Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta) provides financial support for new school provision, at pre-school, primary or secondary levels, supports schools as they develop and provides funds for enhancing existing provision.

Irish is a core subject within Irish-medium establishments, in addition to the core National Curriculum subjects of English, mathematics and science and technology. In 2004, it was reported that preschool, primary and secondary Irish medium units and schools experienced a lack of specialist resources and staff trained in Irish-medium pedagogies and approaches (Mac Poillín and Ni Bhaoill, 2004). In addition, many staff were second language learners of Irish, with varying levels of competence in its use. While the Department of Education had established special needs units, the specific needs of special education in the Irish-medium sector were not being addressed. Newly qualified teachers entering the profession were not always prepared adequately to teach in total immersion situation, with only one training institution providing dedicated training in Irish medium practices.

There was little research into Irish-medium education prior to 2000, due in part to the political situation. Since then, there have been a number of projects investigating immersion education, 'good practice' in Irish-medium education and the achievements of pupils in Irish-medium units.

The situation in Northern Ireland is more stable than it has been for a long time. The provision of Irish-medium education continues to grow and develop through the extensive planning and funding bodies. An important aspect is the emphasis on continuity through the preschool, primary and secondary sectors. To complement the expansion of provision, there is a need to both improve the resources available to teachers and address the shortage of qualified teachers through both preservice and inservice training.

A range of projects, including educational initiatives, has been funded by the government focusing on the other indigenous language, Ulster Scots, through the Ulster Scots Agency. The level of protection given under the European Charter is significantly less, and this is reflected in the funding available. In 2007, the Agency was allocated over £12M in funding for projects across governmental departments for a 5 year period, with an additional £11M earmarked for the establishment of an Ulster Scots Academy. In comparison, Irish language projects were allocated £111M for a range of projects, again covering all aspects of government, over the same 5 year period. ([www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/cal\\_committee\\_brief\\_-\\_indigenous\\_language\\_policy.htm](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/cal_committee_brief_-_indigenous_language_policy.htm)).

In 2006, an Ulster Scots website was launched at Stranmillis College, Belfast, to support language learning by primary school children. Declared as the first step in introducing an element of Ulster Scots into the primary classroom, the website features resources for teaching and quizzes and interactive games for children working independently as well as a speaking dictionary which gives both meanings and pronunciation (BBC news, 31.03.2006 - [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/4862990.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4862990.stm)).

More broadly, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure supports a range of indigenous and minority ethnic language users as well as those using British and Irish sign languages through various projects (<http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages.htm>). One of its key tasks is to provide guidance for the government that will enable them to discharge their obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages



Under the St Andrews Agreement (2006), the government is committed to introducing an Irish Language Act. Consultation has been extensive, continuing throughout 2007. In 2008, debate was still continuing with the government expressing reservations over the estimated cost of its implementation and arguing that the implementation of the European Charter would provide a more cost effective solution ([http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/irish\\_language\\_act.htm](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/irish_language_act.htm)).

## 5.5. Summary

In 2001, the British government ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Scots, Welsh and Irish were given the highest level of protection; Scots and Ulster Scots were given more limited protection. In addition to these indigenous heritage languages, each of the countries within the UK recognises and, to varying degrees, have policies and initiatives in place to support community languages.

For indigenous, heritage languages, this takes the form in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, of language-medium teaching of various types, from total immersion to single subject study for external certification similar to provision for other modern foreign languages such as French or Spanish. The second phase of the this study will look more closely at the impact of such strategies, investigating examples of free-standing schools, partial immersion and the teaching of the curriculum through minority languages. In addition, further study will be undertaken into the position of Scots and Ulster Scots in the education system and investigate specific projects which were established to enhance their standing and increase their visibility in the school curriculum.

Minority community languages appear to have received less attention, and funding. However, the second phase of the study will identify and evaluate the impact of specific projects within the four nations that comprise the United Kingdom.

## 6. Discussion and next steps

This report has outlined the policy context and described some of the strategies in place for four categories of minority group students in each of the four countries within the United Kingdom. Although there are some variations in the nature of policies and the approaches adopted to address the needs of minority groups, all four countries have, to a greater or lesser degree, an overarching philosophy of integrating provision within an 'inclusive education' approach. In phase 2, this approach will be evaluated and related initiatives, such as the use of extended schools<sup>8</sup>, will be investigated and discussed further. In particular, we will consider the extent to which minority groups experience harassment and bullying in educational settings and look at ways in which national and local responses to this through policy and practice have been effective.

In phase 2 of the study, attention will be given to investigating in greater depth some of the strategies adopted to address the disadvantage experienced by many students within these groups. In particular, the study will consider the following initiatives and their impact. Set against the broader concerns of social integration (bullying and harassment etc.), these will provide examples of activity under four categories of support: raising attainment; addressing interim outcomes such as aspiration and motivation; providing support for teachers/schools in working with these students; and, procedures for identifying, tracking and supporting them. In many instances, the review of the literature indicates that these are likely to be local initiatives in response to national policy.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/>

**i. Children of refugees and asylum seekers**

- Mentoring ('buddy') systems
- Specialist/designated teachers working with students and their families
- Staff development for teachers working with such students in local authorities such as Glasgow City Council in Scotland, or boroughs in London.

**ii. Children of Travellers and Gypsies**

- the use of ICT to retain contact and support learning
- the provision of materials and information for parents
- the use of integrated services (social work, education and health services) to provide a more holistic approach to supporting the child and his/her family
- the monitoring of attendance and progress and initiatives to address these

**iii. Looked After Children**

- the Continyou initiative in England which addresses achievement;
- the Frank Buttle Trust initiatives in England and Scotland which focus on raising aspiration and achievement
- the HSBC's funding of the Global Educational Trust which provides tutors for LAC
- the Stepping Stones initiative, working with parents
- the implementation of the designated teacher role in England
- the Virtual Heads scheme to monitor, track and oversee the education of LAC students.

**iv. Minority language speakers**

- Gaelic-, Welsh- and Irish-medium language teaching, the impact on achievement and integration
- online resources, information and guidance for teachers to support language-medium teaching
- pre-service and in-service support for teachers teaching immersion units or schools
- initiatives relating to the support of community languages – typically locally based.

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## **Social inclusion – web addresses**

### **General**

[http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links\\_and\\_publications/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links_and_publications/)

### **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

<http://www.googleusercontent.com/u/jrf?sa=Search&q=minority+&hq=inurl:www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings>

### **Gypsy, Roma Travellers**

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/database/travellers.html>

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/inclusiveeducation/findresources/supportinglearners/gypsytravellers.asp?strS cope=Individual>

<http://www.scottishtravellered.net/>

<http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/ourService/index.html>

[http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising\\_achievement/gypsy\\_travellerachievement/?section=1](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/gypsy_travellerachievement/?section=1)

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<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects/>

<http://www.surestart.gov.uk/aboutsurestart/about/everychildmatters/>

[www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk/TheConstitution/](http://www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk/TheConstitution/)

<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=1522>.

Merton Virtual School: [www.younglondonmatters.org/uploads/documents/implementingcar\\_370688.ppt](http://www.younglondonmatters.org/uploads/documents/implementingcar_370688.ppt)

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/news/newsreleases/2005/August/looked-after.htm>

Vulnerable Children Grant:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sickchildren/vcgc.shtml>

English Local Authorities' Strategies:

[http://dev.nfer.steelhosting.co.uk/emie/content.asp?id\\_Category=158&id\\_Content=4725&level=3](http://dev.nfer.steelhosting.co.uk/emie/content.asp?id_Category=158&id_Content=4725&level=3)

Kic.in2.study:

[http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Learning/cla/looked\\_after.htm](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Learning/cla/looked_after.htm)

Excellence in Cities:

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/secondary/excellence.html#summary>

National Children's Charity:

<http://www.nch.org.uk/aboutus/index.php?i=460>

<http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/looked-after-children-new-law-improves-education-rights-1771>

Learning and Teaching Scotland:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/lookedafterchildren/index.asp>