Review of Research on Vulnerable Young People and Their Transitions to Independent Living

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR TRANSITIONS TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

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The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the Directorate or Scottish Ministers.

Executive summary

- Changes in labour markets, education and the benefits system are some of the factors that have resulted in many young people not earning a sufficient income to support independent living until well into their twenties; consequently, patterns of leaving home, partnership formation and having children have all been modified

- Such changes are affecting young people unequally and there is increased polarisation between the managed 'extended dependency' of those from well resourced families and the more difficult transitions of those from families lacking economic and/or social capital or those leaving care

- Although diverse, young people leaving care tend to come from poorer socio-economic backgrounds; to have had previous poor life experiences and disrupted childhoods; to have experienced trauma and abuse during childhood; and, as a result, to have often experienced a number of care settings

- Compared with other young people, those leaving care are more likely to: have poor educational outcomes and access to further and higher education; experience low paid employment or unemployment; have problems with health, particularly mental health, conduct disorders and misuse of alcohol and drugs; have difficulties with relationships with family and friends; be young parents; and feel affected by stigma and prejudice

- Young people who are making a transition from being looked after to independent living are therefore particularly disadvantaged in terms of many factors which might facilitate this process; however, whilst there is wide-ranging research relevant to this group there are also many gaps, especially in the area of understanding housing needs and issues

- Most young people move on from care at 16 or 17 years; this tends to be an abrupt transition which has been referred to as 'accelerated and compressed', further impacting on other aspects of their lives such as education, relationships and health and well-being. All of these issues, in turn, have implications for the ability to manage independent living

- Research with young people moving on from care shows that they themselves identify the need for preparation for this transition well in advance; they often lack the taken for granted life skills, or 'social inheritance', of those with a more family based upbringing and need support, for instance, with cooking, cleaning, budgeting, health care, accessing services and managing expectations from the adult world

- The level of support that young people experience on leaving care varies. Certain kinds of services, such as supported accommodation, appear to be more effective than accommodation with less access to onsite support; abilities to sustain tenancies are affected by high costs and expenses, too little support, loneliness and a lack of independent living skills. Factors which help to support tenancies include: informal and formal support; choice in accommodation options; practical assistance with rents, bills and furnishing property; and addressing young people's complex needs

- Research with young people leaving care for independent living shows that they are a diverse group whose needs should not be homogenised. However, recurrently expressed needs include: better advance preparation; non-judgemental, individualised and personalised support from a trusted adult; awareness of young people's needs and wishes; practical and emotional support; control over their own decisions and confidentiality

- Mentoring would seem to be one way forward for young people leaving care to support transitions to independent living but the message from recent research and evaluation is that this must be carried out in a realistic fashion, as many of them may find it difficult clearly to articulate ends and goals, there can be many shifts and changes in their lives and circumstances and mentoring relationships can be fragile and easily undermined

- Searches of published and grey literature and contacts with relevant groups and experts found that that there is not an extensive body of research on what contributes to good outcomes for children and young people who have been looked after; in particular there are no longitudinal studies that would help to disaggregate individual outcomes from interventions, though there is a wealth of unrecorded professional 'practice wisdom'

CHAPTER ONE: OUTLINE OF BRIEF

Provision for children who are looked after in care settings has been a key issue in education but associated challenges, such as transitions to independent living for young people leaving care have not received so much attention. In particular, housing issues are an area of increasing concern both for the Scottish Executive and others who work with this group of young people. This research review focused on young people who have been looked after at home (e.g. under a supervision order from a Children's Hearing) and those who have been looked after and accommodated (e.g. in foster care, residential units, residential schools, or in secure accommodation). It aimed to scope existing and ongoing research in Scotland and the UK, examining relevant research, policy, practice and theoretical work.

Young people who have been looked after are known to be a high risk group with regard to homelessness and repeat homelessness. In 2004, guidance '*Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland: Regulations and Guidance on Services for Young People Ceasing to be Looked After by Local Authorities*' set out new duties for local authorities towards this client group. Moreover, the Homelessness Team at the Scottish Executive has undertaken to keep guidance to local authorities on the *Duty to Act in the Best Interests of Children* in allocating permanent housing under review and update as required. A recently published report (2007) *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* concerned with the educational barriers faced by looked after children and young people acknowledges the significance of housing and a wider set of support issues for looked after young people, building on the Social Work Inspection Agency's 2006 report, *Extraordinary Lives - creating a positive future for looked after children and young people in Scotland.* The messages in *We Can and Must Do Better* include emphasis on the importance of the following as prerequisites to enabling looked after children and young people to be 'effective life-long learners' and 'successful and responsible adults': the corporate parent role, clear advice and emotional, practical and financial support for looked after young people as they make the transition to adulthood/ independent living, flexible and appropriate support before, during and post transitions, and good quality accommodation.

The overall aims of the review were to support developments in policy, practice and joint working by mapping research in two areas: transitions out of care settings and housing issues. More specifically the aims were as follows:

Aims:

Transitions out of care settings

- to draw together research on factors that contribute to successful transitions for young people who are looked after
- to outline the different approaches to provision which could be considered for this group
- consider differences in how independent living is defined
- provide a picture of what processes are employed to assess the needs of formerly looked after young people in Scotland
- the forms of accommodation which are considered suitable and those which are provided
- consider whether independent living is always seen as ultimate goal and whether different models of provision are in use

Housing issues:

- pull together existing and ongoing work in area of housing
- provide details of related practice (models of transition) and theoretical works looking at this issue
- identify evaluations of different approaches to managing the process of transition
- models that are in use – identify through web searches

Early scoping work revealed that there was little literature on some of these issues, particularly those relating to housing issues. Time constraints also meant that detailed investigations had to be limited. However, the research team employed the following methods to scope the area and, in this , they were also mindful of further background questions that had been raised by the Scottish Executive (see Annex).

Research Review Methods

This review was essentially a thorough scoping exercise, though it is unlikely that a longer and more systematic review would uncover very much more information. The team included existing expertise in the area of young people in care settings (Elsley). Starting with this, we ensured all relevant materials were accessed through a range of bibliographic search engines. We also contacted colleagues and organisations who are experts in this area in order to ascertain that we were covering the key issues likely to be involved in reviewing this evidence (for example, significant gaps, current conceptual and analytical thinking in the field, range of evidence likely to be available). Where relevant we accessed smaller studies, unpublished and grey literature. For certain sections we made concise appraisals of existing reviews. A broad, non bibliographic internet search engine was also used, Google, as were the search engines accompanying particularly relevant websites such as those of Health Scotland and other Government or voluntary sector sites and research organisations such as ESRC, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Nuffield and a range of more specialised research centres and voluntary organisations like the Policy Studies Institute and Children in Scotland.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE MEANING OF 'INDEPENDENCE' AND RESTRUCTURING TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

Before beginning the review of research on young people making a transition from being looked after to independent living, it is appropriate to acknowledge difficulties in defining 'independent living' and a context of wider social change restructuring the nature of the transition to adulthood for the majority of young people.

For young people, the process of 'becoming independent' is overlaid with 'becoming adult'. What counts as 'independence' and 'adulthood' is historically and culturally specific and claims of 'independence' typically mask inter-dependencies. Leaving the parental home to establish a separate household is a culturally recognised form of 'being independent' and the one with which we are most concerned in this review. However, this is not and has never been the only way in which young people have achieved a sense of adulthood or independence. Historically, working-class young adults living 'at home' while paying board money from their wages drew a sense of independence from 'earning their keep', even when objectively their income was not sufficient to set up their own home and they were still subsidised by their household. Moreover, young adults in their own households are often not fully independent either objectively or subjectively. In the present, many young people who have left their parental home, nevertheless, continue to receive and rely on significant amounts of emotional, financial and practical assistance from their parents (Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005), even if feeling and presenting themselves as 'independent adults'. Those who leave home without support, may, ironically but understandably, feel less secure in their own 'independence'.

Across many of the more affluent countries of the world, patterns of leaving home, partnership formation and having children have been modified as part of a changed landscape of routes to 'independent living'. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded a major British programme of research *Youth Citizenship and Social Change* (1998-2003), in turn building on an early programme of work *The 16-19 Initiative* (1985-1991) (Catan, 2004), which documented the radical extension of the transition from youth to adulthood for the majority of young people. A key aspect of the change is the restructuring of labour markets and the disappearance, since the mid decades of the twentieth century, of many forms of employment that were once predominantly performed by young men or young women. This was followed by a radical increase in the proportion of young people remaining in education, in recent years until at least the age of 18, in order to gain better qualifications. Later partnership has also followed. Cohabiting now replaces marriage as the form of first living with a partner. The modal age of first parenting is now in the late twenties and early thirties rather than in the early twenties as it was in 1970s, although a minority of young people continue to become teenage parents without intending this outcome. These widespread changes have not ended differences between Northern Europe and Southern Europe in patterns of leaving home, with young people in the former leaving home for independent housing relatively early. However, many Northern European young adults continue to receive some financial and practical support in their new homes. In Britain, various forms of direct income support for young people, unemployment benefit, housing benefit and student grants, shrank during the years of the Thatcher government, increasing their dependence on their family for material and financial support. This meant an increase in the numbers of

'returners', young people moving back to the parental home when they have difficulty sustaining more independent living.

In combination, these changes have been described by a number of leading researchers as creating increased polarisation between the managed and supported 'extended dependency' of young people from well resourced families and the more difficult transitions of young people whose parents lack economic and/or social capital (Jones, 2002). A supported extended transition to independent adulthood cannot so readily be managed by family households where resources are already over stretched. The continued impact of socio-economic background on young people's possibilities of making their own way in life is confirmed by longitudinal data, both quantitative (Bynner et al, 2002) and qualitative (Thomson et al. 2004, Thomas et al. 2002).

At the same time it is important to acknowledge that most parents who are economically poor, nevertheless, provide their children with support. A detailed study of young people in an area of multiple deprivation (Macdonald et al. 2005, 2002, 2001) indicated that most young people, including some teenage parents, benefited from financial subsidy and emotional support from their parents. But those who left home very early and went onto chaotic housing careers, characterised by multiple and unplanned moves in and out of temporary arrangements and social housing, typically experienced family conflict and instability and insecurity in other parts of their lives. Recent literature draws a more specific contrast between the majority of young people whose family and informal networks assist in their gradual achievement of independent living and the few with precipitous accelerated and multiple transition combining early exit from education and/or home with other unplanned moves in housing and family life. They typically lack family support and their unplanned moves often result in or signal increasing marginalisation and social exclusion from mainstream economic and social life (Social Exclusion Unit, 2005). If young people leaving care lack family support or effective substitutes for that support, then vulnerability to chaotic transitions and social exclusion could be anticipated from this more general literature.

CHAPTER THREE: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH REVIEW

Structure of review

This research review focuses on young people who are making a transition from being looked after to independent living. The cultural ideal-typical notion of 'independent living' involves arrangements in which young people successfully look after themselves and use their own income to pay for their housing and living expenses. But, as the previous section makes clear, there are many notions and degrees of 'independent living' and this review is concerned with the process of young persons moving to any arrangement beyond the housing and care received as a child from a parent or substitute corporate parent. It reviews research on policy and practice in Scotland but draws attention to relevant literature from elsewhere in the UK.

In order to take account of recent changes in legislation, regulations and guidance on young people leaving care, the review has been limited to the period 2001 to 2006 which covers the period prior to the implementation of the Scottish Executive's regulations and guidance on services for young people ceasing to be looked after by local authorities *(*2004b) and over two years after its implementation. The review draws on academic research as well as reports produced by organisations with an interest in this area.

Research which is relevant to this group of young people is wide ranging. It covers studies which consider young people's transitions to adulthood as well as those which focus specifically on the experience of young people who have been looked after, either at home or away from home in a residential setting or foster care. Specific attention has been paid to housing issues in line with the brief.

The research that is reviewed does not generally analyse the type of care provision in which young people were previously placed so it is difficult to identify if there were differences in how young people fared which could be attributed to whether they had been looked at home or away from home, or more specifically to different care settings such as foster or residential care. Other factors, such as stability and continuity of care, are more easily identified as being significant when moving on to independent living than where young people were placed when they were in care. This is an area that could usefully be explored in future research.

Young people's care experiences are not generally static and usually include a number of different placements over a period of time. A young person can therefore have had the experience of being looked after at home as well as being accommodated away from home. Some young people may have lived continuously away from home for many years, others may have had short term placements away from home or been placed in care away from home later in childhood during their adolescence. Some young people may have moved through a number of different residential placements including being placed in foster care, residential units or schools and secure care. Young people's care experiences are therefore diverse.

The review is structured in the following way. It summarises key themes arising from the review in the next section. It then provides an annotated bibliography which summarises key texts from academic and non academic literature. The literature is not prioritised but is organised alphabetically, and for ease of reference is split into Scottish research and other UK research. Longer sections on key findings indicate that this publication has a particular

relevance for the scope of the review. A list of organisations who were contacted is included with, finally, a full bibliography of references and a list of useful website addresses.

CHAPTER FOUR: KEY POINTS FROM THE REVIEW

Legal and Policy context

Section 17 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that local authorities should ensure that all children and young people in the care of the local authority are prepared for the time that they will no longer be looked after. This preparatory and ongoing care is often referred to as 'throughcare' in comparison to 'aftercare', support on leaving care. If a young person is looked after beyond school leaving age, then under section 29 of this Act there is a duty to provide aftercare support up to their 19th birthday. Aftercare may be provided up to the young person's 21st birthday, under the powers of section 29, as long as their welfare requires this aftercare support and section 30 of the Act also makes provision for supporting young people near their place of education, training or employment. This support may continue until such a course has been completed, so may possibly extend to 22 or 23 years old. As the subsequent sections make clear, however, few children leaving care have continued in higher education and many have left care and education at 16 or 17 (Dixon and Stein, 2005).

There have been major developments in law, policy and practice affecting young people who have been looked after and leave care since the origin of this act with many changes being put in place since April 2004. The first significant change was the implementation of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 which provided for the transfer of financial support for young people aged 16 and 17 from the UK government's Department for Work and Pensions to individual local authorities including those in Scotland. Section 6 of this act relating to the transfer of financial support to local authorities was not implemented in Scotland until April 2004. In addition, the Regulations of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 was implemented at the same time with part of the act strengthening previous provisions in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 around assessment and complaints.

Alongside these two pieces of legislation, the Scottish Executive also introduced the regulations and guidance on young people leaving care in April 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004b). These provided detail on how young people were to be supported as well as the duties of local authorities, assessment and planning for young people leaving care known as pathway planning, support to young people, financial arrangements and accommodation provision.

Materials were developed by specialist agencies, Barnardo's Scotland and the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (Scottish Executive, 2004a) to support local authorities in their duties and to be used in conjunction with the guidance and regulations on leaving care.

Housing arrangements for young people leaving care were included in the Homeless (Scotland) Act 2003 which extended 'priority need' to young people who were looked after and were assessed as homeless. In addition the Supporting People Initiative which was introduced in April 2003 in Scotland, England and Wales to provide housing support for vulnerable people included young people leaving care.

The Scottish Executive has also taken forward a range of policy and practice initiatives which have focused on children and young people who are looked after, both at home and away from home. These include, for example, *Learning with Care* (Scottish Executive, 2001), which focused on improving the educational opportunities of children and young people who are looked after, the publication of several reports arising from the Social Work Inspection

Agency (SWIA) looked after children review (SWIA, 2006) and the more recent report *Looked after Children and Young People:We Can and Must Do Better* (Scottish Executive, 2007).

Gaps in research

There has been no major research on young people leaving care since the Dixon and Stein research which was commissioned by the Scottish Executive, published in 2002 and again in an extended form in 2005 (Dixon and Stein, 2002; Dixon and Stein, 2005).There is therefore no study which considers the impact of the guidance and regulations on leaving care since they were implemented in 2004. There is also no study which evaluates current practice across Scotland since 2004 including accommodation provision to care leavers or the decision making processes of housing providers.

There are not any long term studies in Scotland on outcomes for young people leaving care. There are, therefore, no studies which attempt to disaggregate the impact of individual factors and interventions on young people. Similarly, there is not a body of research which disaggregates the experiences of young people who have been looked after in different care settings including that of being looked after at home. Happer, McCreadie and Aldgate (2006) point out that there is not extensive research on what contributes to good outcomes for children and young people who have been looked after.

Organisations who contributed information to this review commented that there was a great deal of unrecorded professional 'practice wisdom' on young people's transitions which was under-researched as well as a lack of longitudinal studies. There is a wider body of research which has been undertaken in England on young people leaving care, linked to similar changes in regulations and guidance which were implemented earlier than in Scotland.

This review focuses specifically on Scotland and therefore does not claim to be a detailed review of all the research recently undertaken in England or the rest of the UK although some studies are referenced here. A recommendation, arising from the review, is that a more comprehensive review of research in England, Wales and Northern Ireland would be worthwhile and would provide further detail about research in the rest of the UK on transitions, moving on from care to living independently and accommodation provision. This could also be further extended to include a review of research internationally.

The Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) is, at the time of this review, undertaking a project exploring the situation of young people leaving care at 16. This has involved contacting local authorities on their policies and guidelines on the age of leaving care as well as gathering the views of young people and front line workers. A report will be produced during 2007 and will be laid before the Scottish Parliament.

Stein, in his review of international literature, also states there is a need for more research on outcomes for young people and indicates that the links between empirical and theoretical literature are under researched with the majority of research detached from theory (Stein, 2005).

Organisations who were contacted as part of this review to identify studies for inclusion indicated that there was little research on the housing needs of young people who have been looked after, particularly as the regulations and guidance on leaving care have been in place only since April 2004.

The remit of this research review has meant that the current policy and practice of major housing and leaving care support services across Scotland could not be analysed in the absence of significant research in this area. A Scottish wide review of homelessness and housing strategies, children's service plans and leaving care plans might provide a fuller picture of current practice and policy. A number of reports on work in Glasgow are referred to including the work of *the big step* organisation which is targeted on the needs of young people between 15 and 25 who are in or have previously been in care.

Young people leaving care

Young people who have been looked after and move to independent living between the ages of 16 and 18 are known to be affected by a number of factors (SWIA, 2006). Although this group of young people have diverse experiences, studies show that they have experience of disrupted childhoods and have previous poor life experiences (Dixon and Stein, 2005; Glasgow Homelessness Network, 2005; Stein, 2006). They are affected by trauma and abuse during childhood and have often experienced a number of care settings as a result.

Most young people move on from care at 16 or 17 years (Dixon and Stein, 2005). This transition is often abrupt and impacts on other aspects of their lives such as education and relationships. During their previous care journey, young people will have had a variety of professional interventions. Studies draw attention to the swiftness of the move from childhood to adulthood for this group of young people (Stein, 2006). Stein calls this an 'accelerated and compressed' transition to adulthood which is different to the experience of other young people who generally stay at home longer and still have access to support from family and friends (Stein, 2006). Young people who have been in care may return to the family home but this can be a transient situation and often disrupts leaving care arrangements, particularly accommodation provision.

Studies and statistical data on young people leaving care and their move to independent living indicate that this group of young people are more likely to have poor educational outcomes including fewer opportunities to access further and higher education than other young people (Dixon and Stein, 2005;Scottish Executive, 2006). They are more likely to experience low paid employment or unemployment than other young people. Thirty seven per cent of young people receiving aftercare in 2005-6, in touch with a local authority and with known economic activity were in education, training or employment (Scottish Executive, 2006). Problems with health, particularly mental health and misuse of alcohol and drugs are more prevalent. Young people are likely to have difficulties with relationships with family and friends and there is a higher proportion of this group of young people who are young parents. Young people say that they are likely to be affected by stigma and prejudice if they have been in care (Paterson et al, 2003; Stein, 2006).

The resilience of young people who have been looked after depends on a number of factors including previous experiences at home or in care and personal attributes. Stability and continuity of care, including being able to maintain an attached relationship, are known to be protective factors as well as leading to poorer outcomes for young people where they are not adequately present (Dixon and Stein, 2002; Happer et al, 2006; Stein, 2005). Recent research by Wade and Dixon (2006) indicates that previous experiences are relevant to how young people cope when they leave care. However, what happens after young people leave care also has a significant impact on their outcomes and can be helped by the availability of services and support.

Support for young people moving on from care

Research shows that preparation for leaving care and the transition to independent living needs to start well in advance of a move (Ann Rosengard Associates and Jackson, 2005; Glasgow Homelessness Network, 2005; Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, 2006). The appropriate age for young people leaving care is dependent on their needs and individual circumstances. Young people need to have support in developing independent living skills in caring for themselves including cooking, cleaning and budgeting (Dixon and Stein, 2005). Those young people who have lived away from home often have an institutional experience of care and have not had the opportunity to develop skills in these areas.

There appears to be a significant variation in the level of care that young people experience on leaving care from a high level of support to very little (Dixon and Stein, 2002). Scottish Executive statistics for 2005-06 show that half of all young people leaving care had a pathway plan with 60 per cent having a nominated pathway co-ordinator (Scottish Executive, 2006).Young people whose behaviour is anti social or who find it difficult to keep to the rules of accommodation provision can be excluded from having access to the services they need although they might be among the most vulnerable of those leaving care (*The big step*, 2006).

Certain kinds of services such as supported accommodation appear to be more effective than accommodation with less access to onsite support (Wade and Dixon, 2006). Several factors impact on young people sustaining tenancies including high costs and expenses, too little support, loneliness and a lack of independent living skills (*The big step*, 2006; Dixon and Stein, 2002; Pawson et al, 2006; Scottish Council for Single Homeless, 2004). Factors which help to support tenancies include informal and formal support, choice in accommodation options, practical assistance with rents, bills and furnishing property and addressing young people's complex needs (*The big step*, 2006; Glasgow Homelessness Network, 2005; Wade and Stein, 2005). Young people themselves emphasise the importance of being involved in decisions that affect them with advocacy services available for support (Paterson et al, 2003; Pawson et al, 2006; Scottish Council for Single Homeless, 2004; Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, 2006).

Some young people who leave care have more difficulties in accessing the right level of resources, particularly accommodation, than others. These include young people who have disabilities, young women and young parents, young people who arrive in the UK unaccompanied and those who have behaviour difficulties, young people who offend, have mental health problems or misuse alcohol or drugs (*The big step*, 2006; Hopkins and Hill, 2006; Glasgow Homelessness Network, 2005; Glasgow Housing Association, 2006; Stein, 2006).

There is a view that changes in legislation and regulations have meant an increasing focus on the provision of specialised accommodation and support services. This, does not, according to some commentators, address a more fundamental issue about whether young people are leaving care too young (Baillie, 2005;Stein, 2005). Consideration should be given to securing high quality care for young people so that they do not move to independent living so young with the resulting difficulties and problems (Baillie, 2005; Wade and Dixon, 2006). Their transition to adulthood could then take place in line with the experience of other young people who deal with the complexities of becoming young adults during a more extended timescale.

The research strongly supports the advice given by the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum:

'There is no set age on when throughcare preparation and planning should begin. It should be well in advance of any move, and should take into account the young person's views and their readiness to move from care. .. Some local authorities ensure that throughcare preparation and planning begins after it has been agreed at a child care review, often some time around age 15 years. It is important for young people not to feel that they are being 'pushed' to leave too soon, for example if a young person is in long-term foster care. It could be said that the development of 'life skills' and preparation for adult living should take place at a suitable pace, throughout a young person's time in care. The provision and continuation of aftercare support should be based on an assessment of needs and pathway plans which are regularly reviewed.'(http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk accessed December 2006)

Research on young people leaving care and health issues

This section summarises conclusions relevant to 'transitions challenges' and independent living from research on the health, health views and experiences of looked after and accommodated young people leaving care.

It is clear from the wider literature, and echoed in the background research presented in these health studies, that young people leaving care are often multiply disadvantaged when they face the transition into the adult world. They may be lacking some of the taken-for-granted skills and knowledge which other young people may have absorbed simply through having a 'family'- based upbringing. Jones (2002) has referred to this as 'social inheritance'. Supporting this is evidence that young people who have had relatively stable looked after experience also tend to fare better in terms of their health than those who have experienced several placements (Allen 2003). As Scott and Hill report:

 'a survey by Meltzer and colleagues (2004) of children looked after in Scotland asked carers and parents to rate the health of the children they care for. Children living with foster carers were more likely to be rated as having very good health (70%) compared to children living in other types of placement, particularly residential care (38%)'. (Scott and Hill, 2006, p 19)

Again, health also seems to improve with experiences of security. Added to this, the gap appears to be widening between those who gain good educational achievements and those who do not; this is further disadvantaging young people leaving care whose educational qualifications are already known to be extremely poor. The 'poverty penalty' of their childhoods which many young people leaving care carry with them into adulthood has increased over time (Bynner et al, 2002).

The background to health issues of looked after or accommodated young people leaving care is, therefore, also one of health inequalities, compared with their peers, and the reasons for this, and their subsequent life trajectories, are multi-faceted. As Scott and Hill have recently concluded:

'Research in several countries has shown how poorly equipped many young people leaving care are to cope with life after care – practically, emotionally and educationally- and has made connections with their subsequent experiences of loneliness, isolation, poor mental health, unemployment, poverty, drift and homelessness'. (Scott and Hill, 2006, p6)

Such statements must, of course, be qualified by acknowledging that looked after and accommodated children tend to come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and many have had previous experiences which heighten the risk of poorer than average current and future health and wellbeing. Nevertheless, Scott and Hill concluded that, the health of looked after young people is quite good, but many have lifestyles that may damage future health and well-being. There is a particularly high level of mental health problems, particularly conduct disorders. Indeed, statistics from ONS in 2004 (Meltzer et al, 2004) suggest that 45% of looked after children have a mental disorder, compared with 8 – 9% of those of similar age in the general population; rates of conduct disorder are similarly high (44% of 5- 11 year olds in care compared with 4% of children in the general population). Meltzer and colleagues (2004) also found that looked after and accommodated children in Scotland aged 11 to 17 were twice as likely to smoke, drink or take drugs as their English counterparts. Such health relevant statistics have implications for everyday behaviours, for instance, McCarthy and colleagues (2003) found that 40% of a sample of children looked after by one English authority were experiencing significant difficulties in three of four key areas: home life, friendships, learning and leisure activities and concluded that: ' children and young people with multiple adjustment problems are at high risk of developing a range of very significant psychosocial outcomes in later adolescence and early adulthood'(p17). All of these issues would seem to have potential consequences for entry into, and ability to cope with, transitions to adulthood, not the least of which is independent living.

Young people themselves have been critical of the timing and inadequate preparation for leaving care. The majority of young people leaving care are still in their teens and research finds that, for them, 'the pressures of growing up, deciding whether to finish or continue education, and finding work are challenges in themselves without also finding a home and living independently' (Scott and Hill, 2006). Once again young people leaving care are disadvantaged relative to their peers, as most other young people in the community may be in education and retaining some dependency on their families until early or mid twenties (Jones, 2002). Small scale studies regularly find that young people leaving care want to be taught practical skills and feel that they can be supported in accessing health care and generally finding their way around adult concerns. Such support has, for example, been identified and provided in Edinburgh by the Underground, a lottery funded Healthy Living Centre targeting socially disadvantaged and homeless young people. Workers not only invited primary health care and other professionals into the Centre but also accompanied their users on visits for example to dentists. Over time they also began to support young people's health relevant needs around providing healthy food and basic washing facilities (Platt et al 2005).

When socially disadvantaged, looked after and homeless young people are asked about their own health care needs and services they tend to make fairly consistent responses. The young homeless population contains a significant proportion of young people leaving care and it is therefore useful to examine what this group has said about their health and health needs. A recent report for NHS Health Scotland (Watt et al, 2006) found that this group tended to see health in very functional terms, emphasising getting a good nights sleep and taking exercise. Although they recognised the importance of aspects of emotional health, such as feeling in control of their lives and being happy, they expressed greater concerns about their physical health. Similarly *the big step* report on young people in Glasgow living in foster care settings found that:

'There was a demand for more information/ advice on all health related topics in the future but especially for information and help with cooking on a budget, losing weight, getting fit and exercise, being a parent, self confidence and self esteem and relationships' . (Scottish Health Feedback, 2003, p25)

Many of these points echo earlier findings and recommendations from similar *big step* research about health with young people in care and leaving care in Glasgow (Scottish Health Feedback, 2001)

Looked after children and young people's views of their service needs again emphasise similar points. The *big step* report of 2001 stated that the most significant barriers young people identified to using services (echoing concerns of young people generally) were: boring waiting areas; lack of choice of staff; feeling that the service might not be confidential. However, they also wanted friendly staff who understood young people's problems, someone they felt they could discuss health concerns with and those in young people's units said they would be more likely to see health staff if they came to them. The DOH report on 'Promoting the health of looked after children' states that the messages from young people again emphasise confidentiality of their health information and their need for privacy. They too wanted advice on fitness, depression, stress, drugs, skin and hair care, sexual health, contraception and how to use a GP practice.

Throughout this health literature there is a clearly identified need for more information and dedicated support for young people leaving care in this area of their lives. It is also suggested that they start off more disadvantaged and less prepared than their peers, yet have greater challenges to face and at younger ages. The needs that recur, from the accounts of young people, professionals and carers are 'information' , 'emotional support', 'befriending', 'stability' and 'mentoring'; all of these are set in the context of the particular levels of understanding needed by young people leaving care because of their childhood experiences to date. As Scott and Hill (2006) comment: 'Discord within their own families, moves of home, changes in school or interrupted school careers, and lack of access to the support and advice of trusted adults can load additional pressures on young and vulnerable shoulders' (p30). It seems reasonable to suppose that these needs are also relevant to their transitions generally and to particular issues they may face, such as housing.

In the areas of housing as well as health, experts and young people themselves would seem to be advocating the need for continuing personalised support for young people leaving care, plus greater preparation for the transition itself. Mentoring would seem to be one way forward but the message from recent research (Philip et al, 2004) and evaluation (Kendrick et al, 2005) is that this must be carried out in a realistic fashion with young people leaving care,

not by following mentoring guidelines to the letter. For instance, many young people leaving care find it difficult clearly to articulate ends and goals and mentoring relationships can be fragile and easily undermined. Moreover, there can be many shifts and changes in the young care leaver's life and circumstances and this means that support needs to be non-judgemental, friendly and often not from professionals!

CHAPTER FIVE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section provides an annotated bibliography which summarises key texts from academic and non academic literature. It is split into two parts; the first considers Scottish research and the second identifies a number of texts from England.

Scottish Research

Publication: Ann Rosengard Associates and Jackson, A J (2005) *Home alone –again?: the accommodation and support needs of young people leaving care in Glasgow.* Glasgow: *The big step*/Glasgow Housing Association http://www.thebigstep.org.uk/UploadedDocuments/ReportDocs/Accommodation%20Research%20Summary.pdf

Aims: To get a snapshot of accommodation and support structures for young people leaving care in Glasgow. To contribute to the Accommodation Strategy for vulnerable young people by assessing accommodation and support needs of young people leaving care, mapping existing accommodation and identifying opportunities for participating in developing services.

Research Data: The research was carried out in 2004. A review was carried out of the services and needs of young people in and leaving care. Statutory and voluntary organisations were consulted in Glasgow. Interviews were undertaken with 24 young people who met the study's criteria of being aged 15-25 or were still looked after and accommodated. The study identifies a number of recommendations for services.

Key Findings: Agencies and some of the young people who were interviewed were concerned that the average age for leaving care was between 16 and 17 with not enough preparation for the transition to independent living. Organisations stated that there was not enough provision which could meet the individual needs of young people or enough accommodation of appropriate quality in suitable areas. This was particularly the case when young people moved to mainstream accommodation.

Agencies identified that young people who had left care were more 'street-wise' in using the system as well being more demanding. Young people had to deal with the trauma of previous experiences and found it difficult to trust people and systems.

It was perceived that services for young people with a learning disability or complex disability had improved in terms of services although community care services were not always quick to respond to individual needs. Joint working was regarded as essential.

Mental health problems were significant for young people. Accessing services could be difficult. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services were available for young people up to 16 with adult services available from the age of 18. There was therefore a gap for 16 and 17 year olds leaving care. Dealing with addictions to drugs was described as a major issue requiring more services.

Unaccompanied young people were supported through the Leaving Care Services but had a number of different needs which were different to the wider leaving care population as a result of previous experiences prior to arriving in the UK.

A lack of accommodation and support for young mothers as well as support for young men as fathers was identified.

Young people had experienced a variety of problems in moving on from care. These included having to leave care on their 16th birthday, having a lack of choice or limited awareness of different options and being ill prepared for moving on. However young people who had supported carers and support accommodation were positive about these services. These were regarded as flexible services which were person centred. Young people wanted services which could 'stick' with them.

Publication: Baillie, T (2005) *Young people leaving care and homelessness legislation*
Shelter http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/policy/policy-4506.cfm
Aims: To discuss current practice and legislation on young people leaving care and homelessness.
Research Data: A web article drawing on current practice and statistical data on young people leaving care
Key Findings: Young people who are homeless include a significant proportion of young people who have been looked after at, or away from, home. The collection of national information on homelessness does not require recording of the previous looked after status of young people who are homeless. The article highlights the importance of being able to find out how many young people who were looked after return to live at home and how many live independently. However, these arrangements can change if young people's living arrangements at home deteriorate.

While recognising the attempts of service providers to provide the appropriate combination of support and accommodation, the article questions whether this emphasis detracts from the importance of providing the right kind of care for 16 and 17 year olds. It suggests that a definition of care for 16 to 21 year olds should include a provision that no young person lives independently until he or she is 18 with the ability to return to care up to the age of 21.

Publications: *The big step* (2006)
The big step (2006) *Accommodation Needs of Vulnerable Young People in Glasgow Report 1: Profile of Need* Glasgow: *The big step*
The big step (2006) *Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People in Glasgow Report 2: Accommodation and Support* Glasgow: *The big step*
The big step (2006) *Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People in Glasgow Report 3: Prevention and Early Intervention* Glasgow: *The big step*
The big step (2006) *Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People in Glasgow Report 4: Executive Summary Report* Glasgow: *The big step*
http://www.thebigstep.org.uk/Reports/report_detail.asp?ReportID=16

Aims: To carry out research on accommodation support and services to vulnerable young people in Glasgow in order to inform the development of future strategies.
Research Data: The study analysed information and research that were already available. It reviewed the draft Glasgow Youth Housing Advice and Information Strategy. Primary research included interviews with young people and service providers. Vulnerable young people were defined as young people who had left or were leaving care, young people who were homeless and at risk of becoming homeless and young people who required some support or advice including support to maintain tenancies. Young people were defined as those between 15 and 25 years. The research findings are presented in four separate reports.
Key Findings: The report estimates that 700 (29.1%) of the 2,406 looked after young people in Glasgow in 2004-5 were likely to experience homelessness in the future. It suggests that

young people with experience of care and mental health issues may be at greater risk of homelessness.

A very small number of young people in the study had used specialist housing and homelessness services. Young people who held mainstream tenancies were often unable to cope with living alone. The reasons for breakdown of tenancies included financial problems, isolation and lack of independent living skills such as shopping, budgeting and cleaning.

The study identified that most services working with young people in Glasgow around housing and homelessness were supporting young people whose lives were stable and could exclude those who had behaviour difficulties or were misusing drugs and alcohol. In these instances, young people could find that they were banned from using services with no alternatives available.

Young people were supposed to have access to a Pathway Plan process which included an assessment and plan for each young person leaving or who has left care. The study found that many young people who were particularly vulnerable in Glasgow had their needs assessed in a fragmented way.

The study recommends that young people should move into supported accommodation where their needs are assessed, a support plan developed and progress is monitored before they move into supported tenancies. Young people should continue to have access to support in order to sustain their tenancy and to develop skills to live independently. The level of support should be dictated by the young person's individual needs.

Existing provision does not met these needs and there are gaps for specific groups of young people including young women, disabled young people, those who have mental health difficulties, unaccompanied young people, young parents with children and those who misuse alcohol and drugs and whose behaviour may lead to them being banned from services.

Factors which contribute to the effectiveness of services include being person centred and involving young people in decisions, providing advice and information, choice in accommodation options, support by staff, assistance with rents, bills, furnishing property and addressing the complex needs of young people. The models of provision include foyers and other kinds of supported accommodation, emergency hostels, supported lodging schemes and independent living schemes.

The study emphasises the need to prevent young people ever becoming homeless and states that there are difficulties in young people accessing mainstream tenancies because of their age and a lack of financial resources such as deposits and advance rent. Young people from the black and minority ethnic community or who are young asylum seekers can be housed in areas where they do not have access to support and are racially harassed.

Young people being adequately prepared and only moving to tenancies when they are ready contributes to the success of a tenancy. The quality and affordability of accommodation, dealing with isolation and access to employment and education are also factors which can make tenancies sustainable. Having access to range of support including access to outreach support, buddying, befriending and peer support is important. Young people's complex needs require to be addressed. Examples of services that are regarded as effective are included in the report.

Publication: Caulfield-Dow, A and Watson, D.A (2001) *"In their own words!" The views of young people leaving care: The results of an initial consultation on the proposed transfer of DSS resources to local authorities* Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum/Who Cares? Scotland

Aims: To find out young people's views on leaving care including claiming benefits and accessing throughcare and aftercare support. The study was carried out at the request of the Scottish Executive Throughcare and Aftercare Working Group.

Research Data: A consultation was undertaken with two groups of young people; those who were 15 years or over and were still looked after and young people who had already left care. Seventy three individual young people contributed their views plus one group of young people. It took place in 15 different areas of Scotland. It was undertaken before the Scottish Executive (2004b) regulations and guidance on young people leaving care were implemented.

Key Findings: Young people identified that preparations for throughcare could start at different ages. Social workers or throughcare workers and family members were identified as the best people for young people to talk to about their plans. Foster carers and residential workers were mentioned as important sources of support. Very few young people who were currently looked after knew what their entitlements to benefits would be when moving on from care. Young people who had left care described what factors contributed to making them feel more comfortable. These included 'already knowing people, being familiar with them, having privacy, being listened to and having people they can talk to' (2001, p22).

Publication: Dixon, and Stein, M (2002) *Still a Bairn: Throughcare and Aftercare Services in Scotland Final report to the Scottish Executive*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/46729/0013996.pdf

Publication: Dixon, J and Stein M (2002) *A Study of Throughcare and Aftercare Services in Scotland* Research Findings No 3. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Aims: To explore how local authorities were carrying out their duties under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to promote throughcare and aftercare for looked after young people as well as assess outcomes for young people. The study was commissioned by the Scottish Executive and contributed to its working group on Throughcare and Aftercare of Looked After Children in Scotland. The study was undertaken prior to the implementation of the Scottish Executive regulations and guidance for leaving care in 2004.

Research Data: The research involved two different stages. A survey of local authorities was undertaken in the first stage with three local authorities being explored in more detailed in the second. A total of 107 young people were surveyed with a further 61 followed up at a second stage in the research. The young people were aged between 15 and 19 years and had moved to independent living. Telephone interviews were carried out with senior managers. The report is presented in full and is summarised in separate research findings.

Key Findings: The research found that there was a wide variation in services for young people leaving care across Scotland with a lack of data and systems for identifying young people who were eligible for services. Authorities provided a range of accommodation and indicated that they had a planned throughcare programme although less than half the young people in the study indicated that they had access to such a programme.

The survey of young people identified that two thirds did not have standard grade qualifications. Three quarters left care at 15 or 16. A third of the young people had experienced multiple placement moves with only 7% staying in the same placement during their time in care. Having access to support was essential for achieving positive outcomes for young people as was the opportunity to return to services when they were needed by young people who had moved on.

The study highlights that there was a need for effective preparation for independent living for young people leaving care as well as high quality aftercare. Support from specialist leaving care workers was regarded as more helpful than that provided by non specialist social workers. Support which was regular, reliable and available was valued by young people. Ensuring that young people had access to appropriate training, education and employment was regarded as essential.

Accommodation was given high priority as a service for young people leaving care in the three case study authorities although many young people reported mobility in their housing as well as homelessness. Young people experienced loneliness, feeling isolated and unsafe as well as difficulties with relationships and sustaining tenancies. Family links and social networks were important in sustaining young people in practical and emotional ways in their transition to young adulthood. The report emphasises the importance of 'good quality substitute care' as well as stability and links with families and other caring adults. Local authority roles in planning, monitoring, inter-departmental and agency working and developing frameworks for policies were highlighted as being significant for good policy and practice for young people leaving care.

Publication: **Dixon, J and Stein, M (2005)** *Leaving care: Throughcare and Aftercare in Scotland* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
Aims: This publication draws on and expands on findings from the previous research by Dixon and Stein (2002) which was commissioned by the Scottish Executive and explored local authority practice in supporting young people leaving care as well as assessing outcomes for young people.
Research Data: The research data is based on the same data as the previous study carried out by Dixon and Stein (2002) for the Scottish Executive. It includes an additional section on analysis of outcomes for young people and a discussion of policy developments between 2002 and 2005.
Key Findings: The report emphasises the importance of throughcare and aftercare services building on instances of previous high quality care experiences. Stability is a significant contributor, providing continuity of care as well as the opportunity to develop positive relationships. Young people who experienced stability at the point of leaving care in an aspect of their lives such as accommodation, education or employment were more likely to be settled six months later. However most young people in the study had poor educational outcomes six months on. This was matched by similarly poor career outcomes.

Most of the young people (93%) in the study had moved on from care before they were 18 years old with the average age being 16. Only a few were able to stay in foster care until they were over 18 and this was regarded as successful and 'provided stability, continuity and the opportunity for a more gradual transition from care' (2005, p168). This pattern of age on moving care, Dixon and Stein state, shows that throughcare and aftercare services do not reflect the 'normative transitions' of other young people.

The analysis of outcomes indicates that support which was reliable and accessible was a factor in contributing to good outcomes. This contribution was important in the provision of accommodation where two thirds of the young people had moved three or more times in the period that they had left care.

In the area of policy, the research emphasises the importance of a 'comprehensive policy framework' and good corporate and interagency arrangements. Throughcare programmes needed to ensure that young people who were looked after at home received the same support as those in residential and foster care and covered all aspects of skills needed for independent living. Informal and formal support both made a difference to young people as well as having their voices heard in all aspects of service development.

Publication: Glasgow Homelessness Network (2005) *Their way or the F***ing highway: Homeless young people speak out* **Glasgow: Glasgow Homelessness Network** http://www.ghn.org.uk/ghnreps.html
Aims: To consult young homeless people with complex needs in order to increase understanding about the service needs of this group of young people.
Research Data: The research used semi structured interviews with young people who had been identified as having complex needs. The study was undertaken in a number of geographical locations in order to consider regional differences; one urban, one rural and one mixed. It was funded by NHS Scotland. Nineteen young people were interviewed who fitted at least two of the following categories: 'had accommodation bans, had lost accommodation or service at least twice, had been refused a service, had a history of rooflessness (rough sleeping), service defined them as difficult to engage, had substance misuse issues' (2005, p4).
Key Findings: The research found that all those who took part in the research had experienced 'disrupted childhoods' which included 'family breakdown, being in care, exposure to drugs and alcohol, bereavement, sexual abuse, learning and behavioural difficulties and more' (2005, p4). These and other factors contributed to young people finding it difficult to move on to young adulthood.

Thirteen of the sample of young people slept rough after becoming homeless and their experience was characterised by a lack of support from services. The group of young people who took part in the survey, were already highly vulnerable with their needs intensified by not having anywhere to live. When homeless, the young people had an increase in offending behaviour, addiction and emotional problems. Young people talked of a sense of loss and loneliness and experienced feeling low and anxious. They had relationship problems and found it difficult to trust others. This led to behavioural difficulties and further alienation. The experience of transience while homeless often reinforced previous poor experiences when young people had moved between foster care, residential units and unsettled family homes.

Accommodation placements, particularly large scale hostels, did not appear to be able to meet the needs of these young people. The report highlighted that a significant number experienced sexual abuse or other negative experiences in these services.

Young people described diverse experiences of homeless services. Hostels, which served large numbers, were regarded as 'chaotic, dangerous and unsupportive'. Young people found bed and breakfast accommodation isolating and lonely. The small number who had tenancies could not sustain them due to lack of support, restrictions in tenancy conditions and staff who

were unsympathetic. Others failed for other reasons including young people being unable to pay the rent, care for the property or having periods in prison. Workers had to support young people at the same time as dealing with young people who did not adhere to the services' rules or were abusive.

Young people identified several factors which contributed to effective services. These included: having a key worker; staff who were supportive, were around when needed and who socialised with the young people; meals being provided; smaller units and pleasant surroundings; freedom, peace and quiet personal space; being treated like an adult. Support with tenancies included help to come off drugs, availability of support out of hours and links with other services.

The report's recommendations highlight the need to prevent young people ever becoming homeless and suggest a 'mix and match' response depending on the young person's needs. A strong emphasis is put on preparation for young people's transition to independence, 'leaving home education', and the responsibilities of local authorities in this area. Generally the report recommends integrated approaches to tackling youth homelessness which are multi agency and recognise the complexity of young people's needs. The importance of establishing good relationships with young people is emphasised. It is suggested that services develop approaches which respond to the need of young people who have experienced trauma.

Publication: Glasgow Housing Association (2006) *Housing and Community Care Strategy and Action Plan 2006-08 Executive Summary* Glasgow: Glasgow Housing Association
http://www.gha.org.uk/content/mediaassets/doc/housingstrategy.pdf
Aims: To report on the Housing and Community Care Strategy for Glasgow Housing Association and to describe how GHA will meet the housing and community care objectives of its partners.
Research Data: Draws on organisational information, policy and research and highlights how it intends to meet the needs of different groups in its provision including vulnerable young people.
Key Findings: There is a shortage of accommodation for specific groups of young people. Some young people need 'Time Out' services when they are at risk of losing accommodation or local housing so that they can stay in the area. Tenancy sustainment is a major concern for GHA as one in five tenancies breakdown and young people are identified as one of the groups requiring additional support.

Publication: **Hopkins, P and Hill, M (2006)** *This is a good place to live and think about the future…The needs and experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Scotland* Glasgow: Glasgow Centre for the Child and Society
http://www.gccs.gla.ac.uk/docs/pdf/UASCreport.pdf
Aims: To explore the experiences and needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people in Scotland. To consider how well services responded to the needs of these young people.
Research Data: Research was undertaken with 31 unaccompanied children and young people and 74 service providers.
Key Findings: Children and young people who were unaccompanied had often experienced difficult circumstances in the countries that they came from. They had a wide range of needs when they came to Scotland which included accommodation, education, legal advice and access to health services. Many young people did not have English language skills which compounded the barriers they experienced.

Accommodation was regarded as being poor with some young people being housed in homeless accommodation which they found 'disruptive, abusive and dangerous' or bed and breakfast provision. These types of accommodation did not always have cooking facilities so that young people were unable to cook food that was appropriate to their culture and country. They often experienced moves from one accommodation service to another and were frequently isolated and lonely. Unaccompanied young people often arrived with their siblings and required accommodation for a family group.

The duty of local authorities to look after young people who were over 16 years was unclear and there were fewer services available for young people after they reached the age of 18. Many of the service providers were concerned that young people who were unaccompanied and aged 16 or 17 received less support than those who were younger. Young people did not always receive support when they move into their own tenancies or reach the age of 18.

Publication: **Kendrick, A, Hunter, L and Cadman, M (2005)** *Evaluation of Fostering Network: Scottish Care Leavers Mentoring Projects Final Report* Glasgow: Glasgow School of Social Work
Aims: To evaluate mentoring projects for young people leaving care which were funded by the Scottish Executive and several trusts.
Research Data: The study evaluated one mentoring project and drew on contextual information from another four projects. The evaluation focused on process and outcomes.
Key Findings: The evaluation found that there were particular challenges in developing mentoring projects for young people leaving care. Mentoring as a concept was not necessarily understood by young people or by professionals or carers. The elements that contributed to successful mentoring relationships included the age and maturity of the young people and whether the young people's lives were chaotic and disrupted. Relationships between a mentor and a young person which worked well were 'organic' and flexible, not necessarily defined by clear goals but were non-judgemental. Sustaining relationships was difficult and challenging and requires sufficient resources.

Publication: Paterson, S., Watson, D., Whiteford, J (2003) *Let's Face It! Care 2003: Young People Tell Us How It Is:* Glasgow: Who Cares? Scotland
Aims: To consult with children and young people on their experience of being looked after away from home and to make a series of recommendations to policymakers and practitioners.
Research Data: Who Cares? Scotland consulted with 90 young people who had experience of being looked after in residential units, foster care, residential schools, secure accommodation or in supported accommodation. Consultations took place in two different residential events with a further 17 young people taking part in interviews. All consultations and interviews were facilitated by Who Cares? Scotland staff. The majority of young people who took part lived in residential units (55) with 7 living in supported accommodation.
Key Findings: The findings focus on four key issues: safety and protection; relationships with care staff/trust and quality of care; friendships and support; and family. Responses are given under the headings 'my care experience', 'my safety in care; and 'my personal life'. The report concludes by asking if current practice will lead to improvements in children's and young people's care experience. Although the report does not focus on young people who have moved on from care, it is a recent extensive consultation with young people who have experience of being looked after away from home. It highlights the importance of positive relationships with staff and young people's peers, the negative impact of placement moves and the impact of stigma and discrimination on young people. The report emphasises that

young people need to be listened to and have the right to participate in decisions affecting their future.

Publication: **Scottish Council for Single Homeless/ Scottish Youth Housing Network (2004)** *My Space My Place: Tenancy Sustainment Consultation Event Dundee 2004* Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Single Homeless

Aims: To report on a consultation for young people in Scotland around sustaining tenancies and to summarise young people's views on sustaining a tenancy, what helped make tenancies work and what contributed to tenancies failing.

Research Data: This report highlights the views of around 70 young people and 40 workers who attended two Scottish consultation events in 2004 and is the product of a partnership between the Scottish Council for Single Homeless and the Scottish Youth Housing Network. It includes short descriptions of projects represented at the event and approaches that are used by these agencies to support young people living independently.

Key Findings: Several issues were raised by young people as barriers to sustaining tenancies. These included high rents, lack of choice, a poor image of young people, moving in packages, debt, loneliness and isolation and access to support.

High rents were a barrier for young people in accessing and maintaining accommodation. This was particularly the case for those who lived in supported accommodation, projects, hostels or with private landlords. Most young people indicated that the lack of choice and availability of appropriate accommodation was a problem. Prejudices about young people affected their tenancies. Moving into a new flat with no furniture or household goods was seen to be stressful. Young people felt that funding and assistance to buy houseful necessities should be available before moving in or when needed. Temporary or trial tenancies could make a young person feel insecure.

Debt was raised as an issue and this contributed to difficulties in sustaining tenancies. Some young people felt that they did not have the appropriate skills to deal with debt. A number of young people indicated that they often left a tenancy with no notification because they were unable to copy with debt .Young people found that housing benefit and council tax forms were difficult to complete. Isolation and loneliness were a problem with some young people mentioning that there were occasions when they did not speak to anyone else for several days. The need for company sometimes led young people to making the wrong choice about friends. Dealing with loneliness was felt to be an important part of making a tenancy sustainable.

Some young people indicated that they were more likely to get support when they had an advocate while others spoke about services being unresponsive. They wanted help at the beginning of a tenancy rather than when it went wrong. Young people did not like their views being regarded as tokenistic. Many thought that schools should have a more important role in making young people aware of housing, drug and alcohol issues.

Publication: Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (2006) *How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service? Quality indicators for best practice to support young people who are or have been looked after.* Glasgow: Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum

http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk/content/articlefiles/262-BestPractice.pdf

Aims: This is a best practice guide to developing effective support services for looked after young people as they approach adulthood. The publication aims to be a resource for reviewing services and identifying areas for future development.

Research Data: The report brings together the work of an advisory team which was set up by the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum to develop best practice guidelines. It draws on work that was undertaken at the Forum's national conference in 2005 on best practice indicators. A draft report was circulated for consultation. It is targeted at service providers, practitioners, carers and policy makers.

Key Findings: The report emphasises the collective responsibility of services to provide for young people who have been looked after and the need for a culture of good corporate parenting.

The report covers nine areas where agencies should develop quality indicators for best practice. These include young people's involvement in services, throughcare preparation, assessment, planning and reviewing, health and well being, accommodation, financial support, education, training and employment, management of risk and quality assurance and development of services. Each section highlights quality indicators and best practice outcomes. It also identifies agencies which are considered to promote good practice in these specific areas including local authority services and voluntary agencies.

The report identifies factors which contribute to good practice. Involving young people, the provision of adequate timely support and access to advocacy are essential. Preparation for the move to independent living should start as soon as possible. Life skills development should cover a range of areas including health, emotional well being, practical and financial skills. There should be an opportunity to 'test out' independent living with support mechanisms in place.

The Pathway process, the system for assessing, planning and reviewing a young person's throughcare and aftercare needs, should be well supported and evolve as a young person's needs change. Young people should have access to named health practitioners and require a range of health services to promote well being including leisure and fitness. Financial support should be provided at an appropriate level to meet young people's needs with information, advice and guidance available.

Young people's learning needs should be identified at school and the transition to post school opportunities in further education, training and employment should be discussed with young people and well supported. Where concerns are raised about a young person's behaviour, risk assessment procedures should be put in place. Throughcare and aftercare services should be routinely evaluated. Young people's views on services should be actively sought.

Housing provision should be based on a young person's needs. The local authority should ensure that it is fulfilling its corporate responsibilities. Accommodation should not be provided solely on the basis of a young person being homeless. Local authority homelessness strategies should explicitly identify the needs of young people who were previously looked

after. The local authority should have a number of mechanisms in place to support young people who were formerly looked after including a multi disciplinary panel to review accommodation provision and agree a definition of what is suitable accommodation in partnership with other housing providers.

Publication: Pawson, H., Donahoe, T., Munro, M., Netto, G.,Wager, F. and Littlewood, M. (2006) *Investigating Tenancy Sustainment in Glasgow*
 http://www.gha.org.uk/content/mediaassets/doc/full_tenancy_sustainment.pdf
Aims: This research was commissioned by Glasgow Housing Association and Glasgow City Council in order to explore early termination of tenancies. It aims to inform policy and services in order to reduce turnover in tenancies.
Research Data: The study examined existing policies, procedures and practices in both GHA and the Glasgow Homelessness Service, analysed data sources, interviewed a sample of those who had terminated their tenancies and provided recommendations to policy makers and service providers. The methods included statistical analysis of lettings by Glasgow Housing Association in 2003, focus groups and interviews with staff in Glasgow Housing Association, Glasgow City Council. Interviews were undertaken with 50 tenants in Glasgow Housing Association who had tenancies which they gave up within 12 to 18 months of taking them on.

This report is not focused on young people or young people who have lived in care. It does however acknowledge that young people with experiences of care may be one of the groups who find it difficult to maintain a placement.

Key Findings: The research found that alcohol and drug misuse made it difficult to sustain tenancies and that support was needed to combat social isolation and to help with practical problems such as furnishing a property and dealing with welfare benefit applications. Younger single people were one of the groups who were less likely to sustain tenancies but were only a small proportion of those housed by Glasgow Housing Association. The research found that support was extremely important for those with drug, alcohol or mental health issues.

In a review of literature the report highlights risk factors that lead to tenancy breakdown. Tenants may not have skills in running a home such as budgeting, shopping and cooking. If they have lived in residential care, tenants may have experienced institutional living. Access to benefits, difficult housing and neighbourhood conditions may impact on people who take on tenancies. Young people who have been homeless may require particular support to maintain a tenancy.

The conclusions of the study found that a number of factors contributed to tenancy breakdown including being allocated a home in an area that a person did not want, lack of furniture or equipment, dissatisfaction with the condition of the property, debt problems and isolation. Anti social behaviour was mentioned most frequently by ex tenants as reason for tenancy breakdown.

Publication: Ridley, J and McCluskey S. (2003) Exploring the Perceptions of Young People in Care and Care Leavers of their Health Needs *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* Volume 2 No 1, 55-65
http://www.sircc.strath.ac.uk/journal/issue2/health_needs.pdf

Aims: To understand the health needs and concerns of young people themselves who are in care and leaving care as these are some of the most vulnerable young people in society. This was to inform the planning and delivery of appropriate and relevant services and information for these groups.

Research Data: Carried out in Glasgow in 2001. A 'user friendly'questionnaire drawing on the West if Scotland 11-16 study and including standardised measures of mental distress and self-esteem.
96 respondents aged 14 -24, stratified for age and gender.

Key Findings: Most were surprisingly positive about their future prospects which was interesting in view of significantly above adolescent population average scores for high levels of depressive mood, low self esteem and deliberate self harm. Health was not a concept that most of the sample related to, seeing it largely as physical fitness or absence of illness. Little evidence of a positive culture valuing health within the care setting. Most perceived the transition from LA care as having a negative impact on health and were concerned about this.

Publication: **Scottish Executive (2002)** *Report from the Working Group on the Throughcare and Aftercare of Looked After Children in Scotland*
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/46951/0024017.pdf

Aims: To report on the work of the Scottish Executive Throughcare and Aftercare Working Group which was set up to advise the Executive on improving these services with a particular focus on the ways in which financial support was provided and future legislation. It was undertaken prior to the development of the regulations and guidance for leaving care (Scottish Executive, 2004b)

Research Data: The report draws together the work of the Scottish Executive Working Group and summarises findings from commissioned research and consultation. It makes a number of recommendations on future action.

Key Findings: The working group's report makes detailed recommendations on information that should be gathered on local authority services including the number of looked after children leaving care, throughcare and aftercare plans for each young person, and nomination of key workers and advisers for young people, the arrangements for those leaving care over school age including the number of moves and any periods of homelessness and education, employment and training arrangements for each young person. It highlights findings from commissioned research which are referenced elsewhere in this annotated bibliography including Dixon and Stein's research *Still a Bairn? Throughcare and Aftercare Services in Scotland In Their Own Words* (2002). The report emphasises the importance of young people being given proper support and the need for existing services to improve to meet needs.

Publications: **SWIA (2006)** *Extraordinary Lives: Creating a positive future for looked after children and young people in Scotland,* Edinburgh, SWIA
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/07134204/0
Aldgate, J and McIntosh, M (2006) *Time well spent: a study of well- being and children's daily activities.* Edinburgh: SWIA
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/07103939/0
Aldgate, J and McIntosh, M (2006) *Looking After the Family: A Study of Children Looked After in Kinship Care in Scotland,* Edinburgh: SWIA
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/07132800/0

Happer, H, McCreadie, J and Aldgate and J (2006) *Celebrating success: what helps looked after children succeed*, Edinburgh: SWIA
http://www.swia.gov.uk/swia/files/j7418.pdf
McRae, J (2006) *Children Looked After by Local Authorities: The Legal Framework*, Edinburgh: SWIA
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/07104155/0
Scott, J and Hill, M (2006) *The Health of Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People in Scotland*, Edinburgh: SWIA
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/07103730/0
Aims: These reports were published by the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) in 2006 as part of a review of looked after children and young people in Scotland.
Research Data: A variety of methodologies were used. Examples of good practice were gathered. Policies and government reports were reviewed and 200 young people and adults were consulted. Thirty two young people were interviewed.

The different reports consider kinship care, the daily activities of children, legislation relating to looked after children, the health of looked after children and young people and seek young people's views on their experiences.

The reports do not focus on young people leaving care but key findings from individual reports relevant to this review are highlighted below. A number of these findings focus on what contributes to better outcomes for children and young people in adulthood.
Key Findings: SWIA, (2006) *Extraordinary Lives: Creating a positive future for looked after children* Edinburgh: SWIA
The review's overall findings identified a range of factors which can impact on children's and young people's well being including stability, relationships with skilled adults, higher expectations of what children can achieve, greater awareness of young people's views and tackling the difficulties of being looked after through planning and delivery of services.

Evidence from other studies identifies that young people need to be supported in their move to independent living through preparation and by ensuring that they have a say in decisions. Support should be available for young people for as long as they require it. Young people who have been looked after have to adjust to independent living much faster than other young people.

The review found that some young people received help from adults such as foster carers, residential staff and social workers after they had left care. Young people with experience of prison required support while they were in prison and after they were released. There were different levels of awareness about the support that could be provided to young people who had been looked after in further and higher education.
Key Findings: Happer, McCreadie, J and Aldgate, J (2006) *Celebrating success: what helps looked after children succeed* Edinburgh: SWIA
This individual report, as part of the SWIA review of looked after children, explores the views of 30 adults and young people who have been looked after with a focus on what helped children who had been looked after grow into successful adults.

Several factors were identified which contributed to better outcomes for young people who had been looked after. These included having an adult who cared about a young person and have feelings of attachment to a significant adult. Mutual trust between a caring adult and young person as well as feeling safe, included and nurtured contributed to well being. The

importance of stability in care arrangements and contact with parents and families, where appropriate, was noted by the young people. Receiving encouragement and being believed in enabled young people to make positive decisions about their futures.

Young people in the study had on the whole left care before pathway planning had been introduced in 2004 and had mixed experiences of support. The study identifies that the best practice existed where young people had the opportunity to be involved in planning for leaving care and had the opportunity to develop skills as well as make mistakes and then deal with them.

Publication: Scottish Executive, (2001)*Learning with Care: The education of children looked after away from home by Local Authorities* Report of an inspection undertaken jointly by HM Inspectors of Schools and the Social Work Services Inspectorate.
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/lacr-00.asp
Aims: To report the findings of an inspection by HM Inspectors of Schools and the Social Work Services Inspectorate conducted in 1999-2000.
Research Data: Inspection of the provisions of 5 local authorities including interviews with key personnel and inspection of social work and education files of 10 children. A sample of 50 children at the later stages of primary school and at the Standard and Higher grade stages of secondary school were studied in more detail.
Key Findings The educational needs of children were not being routinely assed as an aspect of becoming looked after, social workers were often unaware of their educational attainment, some residential units are educationally poor, most looked after children were underachieving in comparison to their peers and a small but significant minority of children failed to access appropriate curricular and vocational guidance.

Publication: York Consulting Ltd. *Literature review of the NEET group* (2005) Scottish Executive Social Research: Enterprise and Life Long Learning Research Finding 32/2005.
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57078
Aims: To provide an overview of the difficulties facing those 'not in education, employment or training' aged 16-19 in Scotland
Research Data Literature review dealing with Scottish literature providing statistics on the NEETs group, their characteristics, the risks they face and policy interventions.
Key Findings Care leavers are a distinct sub-group of NEETs. The review identifies that behavioural problems, stigma and poor attainment are common to young people who have left care and fall into the category of a NEET group. It highlights that there are a number of gaps in the literature relating to, for example, young people who are asylum seekers, young people from black and minority ethnic groups and young people at the post care transition stage. It is not known whether policies designed to improve the employability of NEETs are effective.

Other UK Research

Publication: Allen, M. (2003) *Into the mainstream: Care Leavers   entering work, education and training* Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
full report http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1842630865.pdf
findingshttp://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/053.asp
Aim: To explore what helps and hinders young people leaving care and moving into education, work or training.
Research Data: Interviews with 36 young people leaving care in North Yorkshire, it looks at their current and previous economic circumstances and activities, their support networks, and the factors that affected their career options after 16, such as housing needs, substance abuse and debt. It explores the influence that their formal and informal support networks, their care background and their educational history had on their achievements, and identifies key areas that enable them to make a smoother transition into adult life.
Key Findings: Many had severe difficulties surviving on a low income without parental support. The research highlights the vital role of support networks, both formal and informal.

Publication: **Broad, B (2005) Young people leaving care: Implementing the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000?** *Children & Society* **19** pp. 371-384
Aims: To examine ways in which the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is being implemented in England and Wales
Research Data: Article present findings from a large empirical study which sent out questionnaires to 300 local authorities, leaving care teams and voluntary organisations. There was a return rate of 17% with 52 questionnaires returned from leaving care staff. It included questions about leaving care teams, accommodation services and the implementation of the Children (Leaving Care) Act.
Key Findings: The study found that there had been a number of improvements in services since the introduction of the Children (Leaving Care) Act in England and Wales in comparison with studies that took place pre implementation of the act but there is wide variation in services across leaving care teams. The findings indicate that the assessment and planning functions of leaving care team show more progress than in the delivery of services and outcomes for young people.

Publication: The Foyer Federation reports. Smith, J. *Dispersed Foyers A Research Study-Delivering Services Through Diversity: An evaluation of Dispersed Foyers compared with Single-Site Foyers and Floating Support Schemes* (2004) The Foyer Federation
http://www.foyer.net/mpn/publications.php
Aim: To compare three different ways of developing the foyer idea, that is a form of provision of accommodation + for young people, with some combination of access to services, social life and education/training with housing.
Research Data: A detailed examination of three examples of Foyers.
Key Findings: Finds different merits in each approach.

There are two foyers in Scotland (Aberdeen and Cumbernauld). A short case study from the Aberdeen foyer, is published on the Foyer Federation website
http://www.foyer.net/mpn/story.php?sid=1004

This describes a young woman's background as living between her parents' home and foster care most of her life but being in a children's home immediately prior to moving to the Aberdeen Foyer. The support given by the Foyer included access to health professionals, time with a Homemaker to help her with budgeting and sorting out her bills and one-to-one cooking sessions, help from the Foyer Move-On with finding her own place to live, and intermediate steps towards training, education and employment - putting her in touch with the Princes Trust Team which built her confidence and a weekly art class which also helped her numeracy and literacy difficulties, assistance in applying for a place at College.

Publication: MacDonald, Robert and Marsh, Jane (2005) *Disconnected Youth? Growing Up in Britain's Poor Neighbourhood* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
MacDonald, R. and J. Marsh (2002) 'Crossing the Rubicon: Youth Transitions, Poverty Drugs and Social Exclusion', *International Journal of Drug Policy* 13: 27–38.
MacDonald, R., P. Mason, T. Shildrick, C. Webster, L. Johnston and L, Ridley (2001) 'Snakes and Ladders: In Defence of Studies of Transition', *Sociological Research On-line* 5(4), URL: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/4/macdonald.html
MacDonald, R. and J. Marsh (2001) 'Disconnected Youth?', *Journal of Youth Studies* 4(4): 373–91.
Aims: To document the experiences of people growing up in some of the poorest parts of Britain and to hear in their own voices, how they carve out transitions to adulthood in adverse circumstances.
Research Data: Fieldwork was undertaken in 1998-2000 in a Teeside council estate, known by the pseudonym 'East Kelby', with an almost exclusively white working class population, high on indicators of multiple deprivation, known for drugs and crime problems. This involved 40 interviews with professionals (youth workers, probation officers, drugs workers and New Deal advisors), then a period of participant observation in youth clubs, unwaged groups, Family Centres and 'on the streets', followed by a series of semi-structured interviews with 88 young people between age 15 and 25 eliciting 'narrative accounts of the processes that led young people to their current situation'.
Key Findings: Young people living in East Kelby had diverse ways of growing up reflecting different family, housing, leisure, work, education and health careers. Factors radically disrupting a sense of planned progress towards independent living included ill-health, experiences of bereavement and loss, unplanned parenthood, parental drug and alcohol abuse and family violence. In general young people wanted to stay in the area despite its bad reputation and poor amenities because the only supports they had were from family and/or friends in the locality and they had very limited access to experience of living anywhere else. When envisaging changes that would facilitate young people's transitions to adulthood, the factor the authors stress as potentially making the most difference is widening routes to secure jobs that pay enough to lift young people out of poverty. As in other studies, the majority of young people lived with their parents and valued period of semi-dependence, financial subsidy and emotional support before leaving to form their own household. But those who had left home had often done so early, and typically had chaotic housing careers characterised by multiple and unplanned moves in and out of temporary arrangements and social housing within their local area. East Kelby had a larger than average stock of available social housing. The most frequent movers typically experienced family conflict and/or instability and insecurity in other parts of their lives.

Publication: Philip K, Shucksmith J, King C (2004) *Sharing a Laugh: a qualitative study of mentoring interventions with young people*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Aims: To understand how vulnerable young people view the experience of being mentored and to compare different types of mentoring.

Research Data: Observation of mentoring in three different contexts one of which was a supported accommodation project, a block of flats staffed by keyworkers on a 24 hour basis. The young people were expected to stay for a max of 6 months and then move on to local authority managed flats with tapered support - the nature of this differed from the mentoring in that it was very practical, more structured and geared towards practical managing (budgeting, keeping the house clean) and less personalised.

Key Findings: Planned mentoring is not a 'magic bullet' and works best when mentors are able to give long term commitments and young people feel able to 'have a laugh' with their mentor but there are some contradictions in trying to help young people become more socially integrated through relationships with one adult. . Vulnerable young people can find support cut off because they no longer fit in a particular category and a mentor or keyworker is not typically able to make up the deficit.

Publication: SEU (Social Exclusion Unit)(2005) *Transitions: A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report on Young Adults with Complex Needs*. London: SEU.

Aims: To identify how to improve services for 16- to 25-year-olds with complex needs as they make the transition to adulthood. Complex needs might involve two or more of the following drug or alcohol problems, homelessness, offending behaviour or being the victim of offending behaviour, mental illness and being outside of education, employment or training.

Data: A series of visits to projects throughout the UK to gather evidence of good practice and discuss the barriers to the effective delivery of services. 129 responses to an on-line questionnaire aimed at practitioners working with young adults. Nearly 100 responses to an interim report *Transitions*, published in March 2005. 16 focus groups in different parts of England with over 150 young adults. A literature review conducted by Gill Jones of academic research on disadvantaged young adults' thinking and behaviour, and in particular at the ways in which they take decisions *The thinking and behaviour of young adults (aged 16-25)*. Regional road shows with a range of stakeholders in various locations in England in autumn 2004.

Key Findings: 'consultation, focus groups, and desk research have all made it very clear that, for the most disadvantaged young people, housing issues are often critical, and are the trigger for young people who are very disengaged from the system to access services. … a young person presenting as homeless is rarely assessed holistically and few housing departments see it as part of their role to signpost young people onto other help they may need that does not seem to relate directly to their housing need. This is a missed opportunity to help young people – and more holistic help might help to prevent them coming to crisis point in other areas of their life later.' (section 5.34 - 5.35)

Discussion includes reflections on policies with respect to Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Income Support (including Housing Benefit and Education Maintenance Allowance) and their impact on young people in varying circumstances and the possibility of changes in qualifying factors to help better support young people trying to get back into education and training and their families.

The section on young people's thinking and behaviour emphasises the importance of understanding and trying to work through, rather than around, how young people themselves are thinking and the existing influences on their thinking and behaviour, suggesting that

successful strategies typically approach young people holistically and acknowledge their voice.

The need for intermediate steps to education and training including life skills training and support were noted, paralleling the finding that children leaving care need high quality through care and after care.

The importance of a trusted adult in lieu of family support was also stressed. Young people 'set particular store by having someone who really cared about them and their difficulties, and who was prepared to work with them consistently to address their needs'.

Publication: Stein, M (2005) *Resilience and young people leaving care: Overcoming the odds* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/185935369X.pdf

Aims: The study explores the different factors which impact on young people leaving care in their transition to adulthood. It considers how the resilience of young people who have left care is promoted.

Research Data: The research draws on studies from the last 20 years which have considered the experiences and views of young people who have left care. It uses an ecological framework to examine the different stages of young people's experiences and considers these in the context of factors which are known to promote resilience generally for children and young people.

Key Findings:

The research on resilience has identified a number of factors which promote children's and young people's well being. However there is no substantive research review of the factors that promote the resilience of young people who have been in care. This study therefore draws on a number of pieces of research to identify some common areas which may promote resilience.

Stability in young people's care experiences is likely to promote resilience through continuity and sustained relationships but young people leaving care at 16 have often had several placement moves and have missed out on this opportunity. Young people who have had a close relationship with at least one carer are more likely to be securely attached than those who do not and are more likely to have greater resilience. Supporting young people to have a positive sense of identity may also have a positive impact on young people's lives but some young people's previous experience is chaotic and confused and their experience of family relationships is difficult. Having the capacity to feel competent and resolve problems is also a protective factor although young people in care often feel stigmatised and powerless.
Positive experiences of school and educational achievement make a difference and can provide access to other activities and successes.

The review emphasises that young people who have been in care experience transitions more abruptly than other young people. However, psychological research, and in particular focal theory, shows that most young people deal with changes over time, resolving one problem at a time. This is not the case for young people who are young people leaving care who have to move to 'instant adulthood' at the point of leaving care.

The study suggest that specialist leaving care services are now viewed as the appropriate response to meeting the needs of young people leaving care resulting in a shift away from the role of carers and providing high quality substitute care. Stein argues that the policy and practice of leaving care needs to be integrated with that of 'caring for leaving' so that young people do not experience 'divided and fragmented pathways' (2005: 27).

Publication: **Stein, M. (2006)   Research Review: Young people leaving care** *Child and Family Social Work* **11** pp273-279

Aims: To consider current and recent research in the UK and internationally on young people leaving care

Research Data: Review of international literature on young people leaving care

Key Findings: The article highlights the growing body of international research on young people leaving care. This indicates that young people who have left care are at high risk of experiencing social exclusion particularly across education, mental health, unemployment, offending and homelessness. Young people from particular groups may experience further disadvantage. These include black and minority ethnic young people, unaccompanied young people and disabled young people. Young women with experience of care are more likely to be teenage parents.

Research identifies that young people leaving care are more likely to be living independently when they are 16 to 18 years than other young people. The transition to adulthood is therefore quicker than it is for young people who do not have experience of care with many life changes happening at the same time. Stein highlights that young people who leave care therefore experience their transition as both 'accelerated and compressed'. Young people leaving care often do not have the support of family that other young people experience.

Services for young people leaving care which have developed recently in England and Wales have two specific features which Stein identifies as a 'corporate parenting model'. Responsibility for young people's cases rests with a personal advisor and there are more formal inter agency agreements. There are number of positive changes but some services remain poorly funded.

Evaluations of specialist services indicate that they can make a difference, particularly in the area of accommodation and homelessness. The article draws attention to studies by Wade and Dixon (2006) which highlights the relationship between stability of accommodation and young people's well being. Services can also promote positive outcomes in personal skills and relationships and education although there are difficulties in evaluating outcomes.

The importance of resilience factors is acknowledged. Stein describes findings from his previous work   which categorised young people who move on within three different groupings (Stein, 2005). Those young people that move on successfully have experienced stability and continuity, better planning for moving on to independent living and involvement in education. Those in the second group, 'survivors', have not experienced the same degree of stability and often have left care younger with ensuing problems with homelessness, unemployment and relationships. This group could be helped by better support. The third group Stein identifies as 'victims', young people with complex and difficult experiences with a history of more placement moves in care, few significant positive relationships and with predicted poor life chances. Young people with these experiences are more likely to have accommodation difficulties as well as being isolated, with mental health problems and with little support available. These findings argue for more comprehensive service responses to improve young people's transitions and the benefits of appropriate support.

More research is identified as being needed to evaluate outcomes, understand risk and protective factors and for governments to measure progress over time. Stein also argues for more links between empirical and theoretical research.

Publication: **Wade, J and Dixon, J. (2006) Making a home, finding a job: investigating early housing and employment outcomes for young people leaving care** *Child and Family Social Work* **11**, 199-208

Aims: To study the outcomes of young people leaving care funded by the Department for Education and Skills

Research Data: It researches a sample of 106 young people in England on progress that they made in the areas of housing and employment. The study was undertaken in the period up to 12-15 months after the young people left care in two stages.

Key Findings: The study highlights that the transition to adulthood has become more complex over recent decades and has meant that young people have had to be more dependent on their families for longer. There is therefore greater 'polarisation' between the experience of the majority of young people and those who move into young adulthood leaving school and the family home early.

At 12- 15 months after leaving care young people had experience of variety of different housing arrangements from housing tenancies to temporary accommodation. Almost two thirds were still in the same accommodation or had moved once. Another third had moved two or more times with one in five moving four or more times. Over one third had been homeless at some point since leaving care. The use of supported accommodation ranged across local authorities from 22% to 83% of young people.

Young people did better at managing their housing needs where they had not experienced disruption, had education, training and work, were not misusing alcohol or drugs and had 'strong life and social skills'. The study found that positive experiences of accommodation had more impact on young people's mental well being than education and training. Young people who had more complex needs due to disability, persistent offending, emotional and behavioural difficulties or housing instability were found to have poorer outcomes in housing.

The study concludes by highlighting that some groups of young people fared worse than others and required more intense support including more specialist accommodation. There is a close relationship between what happens when young people leave care and their previous experiences although 'positive interventions' after leaving care can have a significant impact. Leaving care at a later age is likely to help young people adjust to the transition to adulthood

CHAPTER SIX ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

Aberlour Child Care Trust
Barnardos Scotland
The big step
Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland
COSLA
Glasgow Homelessness Network
Scottish Council Foundation
Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum
Scottish Council for Single Homeless
Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP)
Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC)
Shelter
Who Cares? Scotland

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CHAPTER 8 WEB RESOURCES

Organisations with expertise in this area and who provide policy and research resources on their websites.

the big step
http://www.thebigstep.org.uk/

Centrepoint
http://www.centrepoint.org.uk/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/

The Foyer Federation
http://www.foyer.net/mpn/

The Fostering Network in Scotland
http://www.fostering.net/scotland/?PHPSESSID=abc49a025f36e74f6d66e8cf24f4a37e

Glasgow Homelessness Network
http://www.ghn.org.uk/homepage.html

National Leaving Care Advisory Service
http://www.raineronline.org/gen/M7_s1_1NLCAS.aspx

Scottish Council for Single Homeless
http://www.leavinghome.info/leaving_care_favourites.php

Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care
http://www.sircc.strath.ac.uk/

Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum
http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk/

Shelter Scotland
http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/home/index.cfm/setcountry/true/