

OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND

POLICY BRIEFING PAPER



Who are we

Inclusion Trust was formed in August 2005 to promote inclusion through learning, education and technology.

The formation of the charity followed 5 years of the successful design, development and implementation of a number of research programmes, including Notschool.net, which worked closely with marginalised young people and their families to provide an education alternative which offered access to life long learning.

This programme, and their experience with Inclusion Trust, has placed the authors of the report in a unique position to develop a detailed understanding the issues surrounding education, inclusion and policy. The longitudinal nature of the programme has enabled them to observe the impact of policy upon educational inclusion between 2000 and 2007.

The authors are all successful practitioners. As part of their work with Inclusion Trust, they have extended their experience nationally and internationally and contributed to a number of high profile seminars on inclusion.



Prior to 2005 the authors were part of a university research unit; enabling them to take a confident and valid approach to the data they have collected through their work on inclusion. The authors standing in the international community, UK research community, with parents and their disaffected young people, local authorities, Head Teachers, alternative providers and with the DfES (who funded the early stages of the programme) has enabled them to observe, analyse and test the way in which policy affects marginalised youth.

The Inclusion Trust trustees are; Professor Stephen Heppell, Professor Nigel Paine, Nicholas Summers and John Rudkin.

Inclusion Trust Mission Statement

The charity exists to advance learning opportunities for people that are excluded or disengaged from traditional education systems. In doing so we aim to make learning more accessible and engaging. The charity's remit is to do this nationally and internationally and to carefully research our practice so that we may provide advice and support to policy makers and practitioners. In all this, we seek to harness new and emerging technologies, and to support communities of learners within their own context and cultures.

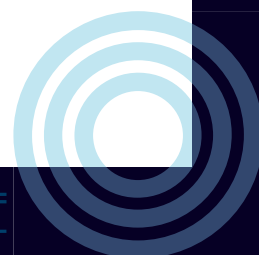
The authors of this briefing paper are
Jean Johnson, Jonny Dyer and Carole Chapman

The authors would like to offer their thanks to all the families and young people on Notschool.net for their valuable contributions to this briefing paper.

Inclusion Trust

Unit 2, Stansted Courtyard,
Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PU
T 01279 873 033
F 01279 873 419
www.inclusiontrust.org
email info@inclusiontrust.org

The next major publication by Inclusion Trust will be the Notschool.net report in Autumn 2007. This will be the cumulative output of seven years research and evaluation of the Notschool.net project working with over 3,500 young people.



Foreword

Inclusion Trust is a charity dedicated to inclusion. We are not a think tank, we actively do things. These papers reflect what we have learned from the detailed research needed to do things effectively.

For seven years our flagship project Notschool.net has been providing full time education for those many children irrevocably outside school - as a result of circumstances or behaviour. It has been a massive research project, and has been spectacularly successful. Thousands of lives have been turned around very cost effectively. A succession of education ministers, from David Blunkett through Estelle Morris to Charles Clarke have applauded and encouraged the project.

We know that building alternative, effective, affordable and engaging provision for those many young people outside of formal education is complex. It requires dedication and ingenuity. We also see the quite remarkable success rates with our 1,000 or so young persons each year. We are clear that a substantially larger number of them might be helped - a project that for many has been the last resort has re-engaged them into learning, as they go on to college, employment and even university.

But our frustration has been to watch as policy increasingly marginalises, and damages, the 100,000 or so people outside of school. Evidence collected from over 3,000 families, 200 staff working in the field, together with 22 Local Authorities and feedback from 80 Head Teachers across 34 Local Authorities suggests that, despite rhetoric to the contrary, policy changes are not working effectively for inclusion. The money is in the system, but it has become divorced from the very people it should be helping. We are clear from our evidence that recent changes are worsening the situation for this group of young people.

Economically, this is a catastrophic waste; ethically it is an immoral division; by any standards, it is a disgrace.



Professor Stephen Heppell
Chair of Trustees
Inclusion Trust

All enquiries to info@inclusiontrust.org
01279 87 30 30



Executive Summary

This briefing paper is the first in a series of discussion and provocation papers intended to address the issues of social inclusion through education, learning and technology.

Education has been a cornerstone of political party policy for many years. The Social Inclusion Unit was formed in 1997 to report directly to the Prime Minister. It has now been replaced by a task force. Every Child Matters¹ (2005) was a landmark document as it attempted to put social and educational inclusion at the top of the political agenda. That the policy itself is directed at a more equal and inclusive society is not in doubt, but implementation of that policy appears to be fragmented leaving those children on the margins of society in an even worse predicament than before.

Research suggests that more children than ever are being marginalised from learning with as many as 100,000⁵ thought to be missing from education. The long term consequences for young people and for society are bleak.

This briefing paper offers 4 key concerns:

1. As many as 100,000 (*ibid*) children in England are marginalised⁶ through their lack of participation in education. Worryingly, estimates vary widely and it is apparent that Government simply does not know the true extent of the problem.
2. Hundreds of thousands of children do not attend full time school based education.
We know that at least 50,000⁷ young people truant every day whilst others are excluded, some are ill, some are carers, some have mental health problems, some are on part time timetables and some are not on a school roll.
3. There is a lack of transparency and accurate data regarding the number of young people on the margins of society.
4. The current education funding regime discriminates against this group of young people. This situation is worsening, not improving.

In summary, the policy framework designed to support societal change has become the unintentional instrument of exclusion and marginalisation.

This is clearly an unacceptable state of affairs. The provision of support for those very many who are irrevocably outside the school system is neither available nor equitable.

Urgent action on a national, political, policy and strategic level is needed.

There are over 4 million children in secondary schools in the United Kingdom²

The University of Central Lancashire (2002) estimate that there are 100,00 children missing from education³

NACRO estimate 51,000⁴

Government say it will be impossible to know the real figure until there is a unique identification number for every child is fully implemented

100,000 children run away from home every year⁸

Nearly 17,000 runaways end up sleeping rough, putting themselves at risk of violence and sexual assault⁹

In 2005/6 there were over 215,000 persistent absentees in maintained secondary schools¹⁰

There were 288,040 secondary fixed term exclusions in the UK secondary population in 2005¹¹

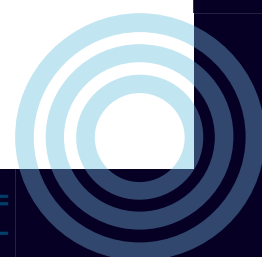
The number of home educated children in England is not known¹²

Education Otherwise estimate the number to be in the region of 87,000¹³

Home educators believe the real figure may be as high as 170,000¹⁴

The DfES estimate 40,000¹⁴.

The proportion of 16-18 year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEETs) was estimated to be 220,000 at the end of 2005 and is increasing¹⁵



Defining marginalised young people

- Those with health problems, such as the long term sick, phobic and mentally ill teenagers.
- Those whose behaviour or background mean that no school is prepared to offer a place.
- Children who are transient and frequently move, are homeless or made homeless.
- Children who are severely disaffected with school.
- Children who are the subject of multiple short term exclusions.
- Children who are unable to attend school because they are carers.
- Elective home educated children removed from schools by parents as a result of external pressure rather than the desire to home educate.

Responsibility and Accountability

Legislative changes in April 2006 moved the balance of responsibility for alternative provision from Local Authorities to Head Teachers in most circumstances.

Evidence collected from families, young people and 22 Local authorities and feedback from 80 Head Teachers across 34 Local Authorities suggests that policy changes are not working effectively for inclusion and that recent changes are in fact worsening the situation for this group of young people:

A significant number of Head Teachers are choosing to allow and even encourage absenteeism rather than pay for appropriate provision.

Head Teachers are actively encouraging parents to take their children off roll to home educate even when this is clearly inappropriate.

A significant number of Head Teachers are choosing to interpret Government Policy to mean that prosecution is the only required outcome, regardless of circumstances, where young people do not attend school.

A significant number of Head Teachers are attempting to manage inclusion internally, focussing on discipline and behaviour rather than learning.

Head Teachers are cash limiting provision for some marginalised young people, so that if their first choice of provision fails, they are unwilling to provide an alternative.

Some Head Teachers remove young people from alternative provision towards the end of Year 11 with no viable alternative in place.

Educational Welfare Officers are increasingly based in schools. Children who are not on roll are not part of their brief.

The consequence of this is that significant numbers of young people are missing education.

The situation is particularly difficult for those marginalised because they:

- Never attend
- Are not on a school roll
- Are on a Local Authority roll (8B)
- Are not on any roll

20th April 2007

"We were briefly in correspondence a year ago. My son, now nearly 14 is still having no education and facing permanent exclusion"

19th February 2007

"I suggested she [EWO] ask the school to refer her and she replied she has but they have refused as there is a cost involved."

7th November 2006

"I am a deputy head in a state secondary school. We have four students in year 11 who do not come to school"

19th April 2006

"My daughter has not been attending school for almost a year"

15% of children were living in working-age households in the UK where no one was working¹⁶

In 2005/6 3.8 million children were in poverty in homes on less than 50% of average income including housing costs¹⁷

Unicef report that the United Kingdom is bottom of the league tables in its assessment of child well-being in 21 industrialised nations¹⁸

Accountability for appropriate alternative provision lies with Head Teachers where a child is on a school roll. Providing a school conforms to national benchmarks, a percentage of children who do not attend or do not achieve can be disregarded without risk of a negative impact on the school.

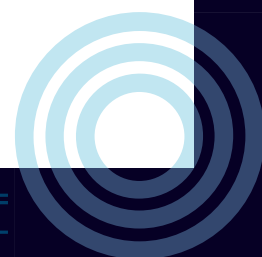
Joint Area Reviews are potentially more effective for monitoring those who are marginalised, since a small number of children are tracked throughout their school career. OfSTED inspections are less potent for those not in school; in part because of benchmarking systems.

Our research tells us that the root of the difficulty for these children does not lie in an uncaring society. Instead, our research indicates that few have any real insight into the complex difficulties and poverty that many of these families face. Marginalised children are typically a low priority for schools where they are rarely if ever seen. Other issues take precedence with scarce resources. The balance has moved significantly against them. What limited provision is put in place is often the result of a limited choice and unrealistic budgetary constraints, not always in control of the school.

Does Every Child Matter?

In 2005, the UK Government published its seminal white paper "Every Child Matters", followed shortly after by the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper¹⁹. This promised to build on the strengths of the education system and it made other far-reaching recommendations. Almost two years later, the impact of many of the promised reforms is mixed. Our evidence demonstrates that education policy changes have resulted in worsened circumstances for this marginalised group. The social impact of this consequence is that the cycle of deprivation and its associated circumstances continues.

In policy implementation terms there has been a series of appointments and reference groups at national level and a proposed cohesion of education and social services at Local Authority level. This is intended to implement significant strategic change including the recommendations of the Laming²⁰ report. Our research has shown that there has been a negative impact on this group of marginalised young people.



1. The amalgamation of Social Services and the Education Sector into a newly branded Children's Services has led to significant reorganisation, widespread redundancies and the resultant uncertainties. A significant number of the 34 Local Authorities report a confused situation where lines of responsibility and budget are unclear. Some Local Authorities report budget shortfalls blaming a Social Services overspend inherited by the newly formed Children's Services.

2. Local Authorities who have been in receipt of generous EU or other funding to support a range of alternative provision, including college placements, are now seeing this phased out adding to budget pressures for which they have not adequately planned.

3. Despite the Government claims of increased education spending, many Local Authorities have reported budget cuts as the balance of funding has shifted to schools; impinging on the existing workforce.

4. Many decisions previously led by Local Authorities are now the responsibility of Heads Forum. In practical terms, there appears to be a lack of clarity about the balance of accountability and decision-making between Local Authorities, Heads Forum and individual schools. Indicators suggest that this will continue for at least another two years as the level of "buy in" by schools to Local Authority services is decided by consortia of schools and individual Head Teachers.

5. School budgets are inequitable. Many Head Teachers report a shortage of funds. Others report significant annual under spend. The amount of funding per pupil varies remarkably across the country with Head Teachers reporting funding received at as little as £1,600 per capita to in excess of £6,000, increasing social inequity in some areas. The funding formulae for schools is complex and the rationale is not transparent. Similarly, Local Authority funding allocations from the education budget and schools' spending are difficult to interpret.

6. A significant number of policy-led reforms and initiatives are in place to support systemic change in schools. There has been a general freeing up of curriculum at key stage 4 with numerous young people embarking on a range of vocational courses, college placements and extended work experience. This has taken place at a range of venues in an effort to engage those for whom an entirely academic route was not suitable.

Whilst these changes are welcomed, our research has shown that the implementation of these reforms is raising concerns because they do not support the most vulnerable and marginalised young people in society who are not in school. They only support student improvement for those in schools without reaching beyond the campus.

Numbers of young disaffected people effectively excluded from school, by circumstances or behaviour, are growing. Government and agencies can no longer afford to ignore this group whether they be: potential contributors to the economy, participants in lifelong learning, or participants in crime or civil unrest. The true costs of their disaffection and exclusion are significant relative to the cost of reversing their disaffection.

16th January 2007

Hope you can give me some advice - I went today to visit one of our traveller girls who is refusing to go to school and she is keen to do Not school and here is my problem - I am seeing the school next week and my sources tell me that the school is probably not keen to fund the idea. Any ideas on how to approach the school?

26th June 2006

I have a 13 year old niece who has not been to school since September 2005. She has recently tried and failed on a package to get her back to her old school. She is absolutely against returning to school - any school. Currently she is being seen by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team.

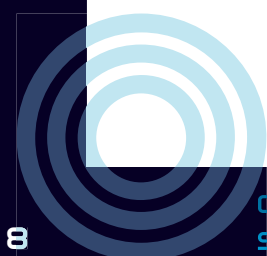
24th March 2006

My 15 year old son has not been to school since September 2005. (The cause we think is phobic/emotional, and he is regularly seeing a Psychotherapist)

I am very concerned that my son may miss out on obtaining the qualifications he is capable of, because he is not attending school or being educated.

Progress in the numbers reaching 'headline' standards at age 11 and 16 diverts attention from the failure to improve outcomes for the quarter of 19-year-olds who fail to reach a minimum educational standard. Since these people face the highest risk of poverty in adult life, one of the major causes of future poverty is not being addressed.²¹

The Princess Royal trust for carers (2007) estimate that 175,000 young people are carers, but no official statistics are collected²²



It would be easy to say that no one cares about these children or about their provision. That is not the case, but the consequences of current policy have the same effect. Policy is school centric.

Emerging Models

Our research has seen some key models emerge for managing inclusion in Local Authorities since April 2006, although the situation is still in flux. There is no doubt that the new funding models are key drivers of the changes.

1. Status quo remains. Local Authorities provide a range of alternative provision and top slice school funding allocations by prior agreement to pay for the service. Evidence suggests that this is an interim measure as Head Teachers begin to question existing Local Authority decisions through Heads Forums.
 2. Local Authorities continue to make some provision as detailed in (1) whilst Head Teachers make some arrangements within school or buy additional provision as necessary. Again, evidence suggests that, as above, this is an interim measure as Head Teachers begin to question existing Local Authority decisions through Heads Forums.
 4. Local Authorities try to maintain the status quo with some key schools opting out, preferring to make their own decisions with regard to provision. Evidence suggests this is an emerging model that, if the trend continues, will make the model of Local Authority central provision unsustainable.
 5. Individual schools or consortia make their own provision for inclusion. Some buy additional support as they see necessary. Support ranges from additional staff, creation of new posts and creation of specialised units geared primarily towards behaviour improvement. This model is increasingly seen nationwide as a cost effective rather than learner centred model.
- NB.** It is still unclear in most Local Authorities how placements out of area at special schools should be funded. It is unlikely that individual schools will be able to afford such expensive provision, but evidence suggests this is leading to the closure of some special schools.

11th January 2007

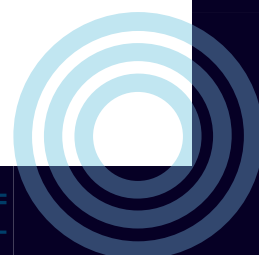
"school as not offered any alternatives for my daughter despite a two year absence"

24th April 2006

"My son Marcus is 14 yrs old - year 9 - been out of the school system now since November 2005 [...] School is not the right environment for him at present. - PLEASE HELP!"

20th March 2006

"I just wanted to write about my daughter Samantha, since she started school at the age of 5 she has had problems [...] Her attendance is down to 58%. The school never seem to do anything or instill [sic] discipline for the bullying on my daughter and the pain that she is going through hurts me"



Actions

1. Policies need to be effective and to really work for those young people who are out of traditional education in the long term.

A genuine entitlement to appropriate and full-time funded provision needs to be put in place with immediate effect.

2. Head Teachers and Local Authorities need to be accountable - genuinely accountable. It is not acceptable for young people to be out of education in the long term where affordable and effective alternatives exist. Nor is it acceptable for there to be extended time lags while children await decisions.

3. Lines of responsibility for these children are not clear. There exists a Social Exclusion Task Force and a Social Exclusion Minister but issues related to these young people are devolved to different groups in different departments resulting in no coherent overall strategy.

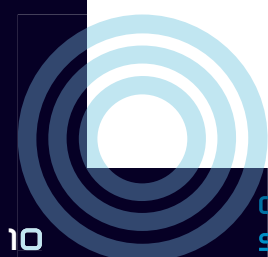
4. Funding for ALL children needs to be clearly tracked and must be centred around the individual. This particularly relates to children on local authority lists such as 8B.

5. Parents' appeals for help need to be met quickly. At the present time, our evidence suggests that a year 11 child may spend many months in review effectively ending their chance of re-engaging in compulsory education.

6. Full funding should follow the child so that there is less disparity from one area to another and one child to another.

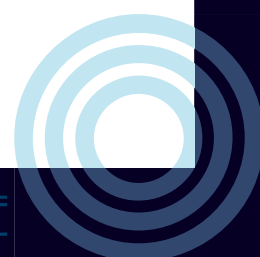
7. Token provision is not enough. An unattended school unit, odd moments of college provision, a commercial provider offering 'enough' learning to assuage consciences and retain funding are all immoral. Cynical responses do not meet the young persons' needs.

8. Parents and children need to be given a real voice where traditional schooling is not the right answer. This needs to happen quickly so that families are no longer left in desperation whilst we continue to fail their children.



references

1. DfES (2005) *Every Child Matters*. Cm.5860. Norwich, HMSO.
2. Figures as of 2003, Social Trends 34.
3. TES 28th Nov 2003. Mission Out.
4. Missing Children Report 2003. NACRO.
5. University of Central Lancaster (2002).
6. Marginalised definition - young people who are excluded from society. See Page 6.
7. DfES (2007) online. Available from:
<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/behaviourand discipline/truancy/>
(accessed May 2007).
8. Safe and Sound. Still Running 11; findings from the second national survey of young runaways. The Children's Society 2005.
9. Safe and Sound. Still Running 11; findings from the second national survey of young runaways. The Children's Society 2005.
10. DfES "Pupil Absence in Secondary Schools in England, 2005/06", May 2007.
11. DfES National Statistics 2005.
12. York Consulting, 2007,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/6389211.stm
13. Meighan, Dr R. (May 2007) formerly Special Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham.
14. 10th May 2007.
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,,2076500,00.html>
15. NSO SFR21/2006 06 June 2006.
16. Spring 2006 Social Trends no 37.
17. DWP Delivering on Child Poverty: What would it take? Nov 2006
Barnardos Press Release, 27/03/2007.
18. UNICEF: Report Card 7, Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries, Feb 2007.
19. DfES 2005 Cm 6476. *14-19 Education and Skills*. HMSO, Norwich.
20. Laming Lord (2003) Cm 5730 *The Victoria Climbié Enquiry*.
21. Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report, December 2006
"Informing Change".
22. Census Figures Cited Lofts, C, 2007.
<http://www.carers.org/press/schools-let-down-young-carers,268,NW.html>



// I was born in 1991 to proud parents. I spent the first five days of my life in a cot next to my mothers bed in the hospital as she was so ill. My father wasn't much help. He used to sit around the house making plans to get a job and when he did get a job he would moan all night. My mum worked at 2 jobs to look after me. My mum left my dad. We moved in with my grandma which made the house cramped but I loved it.

I went to primary school and enjoyed it! I loved doing the work and seeing my friends. I thought my new secondary school was great and I was enjoying going everyday. I was in the top sets for all my lessons.

By year 9 I wasn't enjoying school life, people had changed and were not nice. The girls at school used to make up stories about me. When I walked past them they would push me, throw things at me and call me horrible names. I started to be late for school and not wanting to go. I used to tell my mum I was ill in the mornings. I hated it more and more and it came to the point were I was refusing to go to school. I would cry all night.

My mum went to school and told my head of year. She just shrugged her shoulders and simply said: 'give it time they - the bullies - will move on to someone else soon". By this time the girls were writing horrible things about me on web sites on the internet.

My mum went to the doctor who referred me to a lady at the hospital. After all the tears and feeling upset went I began to get angry! I was angry at everything and everyone, even mum. The doctor gave me tablets to take and they helped with my panic attacks. By this time I wasn't going to school at all and I was determined to never go back. We had a meeting and the school told me to either come back or find another school. I didn't want to do either as I wasn't strong enough to put my self in a position of going to another school and being brave about meeting other people. So I started Notschool.net and it took a big weight off my shoulders

I have no worries now, and i am getting better and have gained a lot of qualification. I am a stronger person and now I know who I am!

//
The young person was placed on Notschool.net from February 2006 until May 2007 when the school withdrew funding. Inclusion Trust has remained committed to this young person by supporting her continued access to Notschool.net

OUT OF
SIGHT OUT
OF MIND

Inclusion Trust

Unit 2, Stansted Courtyard,

Takeley, Essex, CM22 6PU

T 01279 873 033

F 01279 873 419

www.inclusiontrust.org

email info@inclusiontrust.org

MAY 2007



Inclusion Trust