Children (Scotland) Act 1995: Home Supervision

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

After thirty years in operation, home supervision has remained relatively unchanged and it continues to be the disposal most used by children’s hearings. Traditionally, it has received far less attention, in terms of research, than supervision with conditions for children to live with foster carers or in residential establishments.

The study of home supervision conducted at the University of Stirling from 2000-2002 was commissioned by the Scottish Executive as part of a programme of research on the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The research involved: a postal survey of key informants with responsibility for child and family social work services at a policy level in local authorities; secondary analysis of national data in respect of 5,683 home supervision requirements at 30 June, 1999; examination of 189 social work case files of children on supervision at home and postal questionnaires to 189 reporters; postal questionnaires to elicit the views of 189 panel chairs, 189 social workers, 137 teachers who were involved with the school-aged children in the sample, and interviews with 20 families.

The local policy context

Children’s Services Plans (most of which covered the period 1998-2001) were obtained from all 32 local authority and island councils in 2001. In almost a third of them no separate mention of the term ‘home supervision’ could be identified. In the majority, home supervision was mentioned, but usually only very briefly. More attention was usually paid in the plans to children looked after away from home.

Postal questionnaires were completed by 30 (of 32) local authority and island councils in Scotland by those with responsibility at policy level for home supervision in social work departments or equivalent. The key findings were:

Twenty-one of the respondents considered the Regulations and Guidance governing home supervision\(^1\) to be fairly effective for social work staff delivering home supervision, two considered them to be very effective and four fairly ineffective. Three gave no response.

Twenty seven respondents indicated that social workers in their authority were expected to complete a care plan for children on home supervision.

Just over a third of respondents reported that there were cases of unallocated home supervision requirements in their authority (the largest number being 39).

Whereas most respondents rated social work and education as fairly effective in delivering home supervision, most respondents rated community child health services, child psychiatric services (and less so) drug and alcohol related services as fairly or very ineffective.

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Education was most often identified as the agency with which there was most effective collaboration at policy level regarding children on home supervision, with health regarded as the least effective.

Home supervision was considered to be more effective in respect of care and protection, less effective in respect of children who have offended and least effective of all in respect of children who fail to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse. Reasons given for the high effectiveness ranking of home supervision in cases of child protection were well developed interagency approaches, a good level and variety of services, the high priority accorded to these cases, clear procedures and the existence of care plans.

The few respondents who ranked home supervision for children who offend as very effective identified good interagency collaboration and the provision of specialist services as the primary reason for their views. The late age and stage at which most cases of non-attendance at school reached the social work departments was a key reason for the perceived ineffectiveness of home supervision in these cases.

National data for 5,683 children on home supervision in Scotland at 30 June 1999

More boys (61%) than girls (39%) were on home supervision with their parent or carer at 30 June 1999. While this difference holds for the older age group, for the younger age groups (0-7) there were actually more girls than boys on home supervision.

More girls were referred on care and protection grounds, while more boys were referred on offence grounds and on mixed grounds (i.e. more than one ground).

Only a minority of children (18%) had been on supervision for longer than 3 years.

More of the older children were on supervision on offence grounds: conversely more younger children were on supervision on non-offence grounds.

Although most of the children currently under supervision at home had been so since the start of their supervision, for five per cent this had been preceded by a different supervision requirement and these children had been on supervision for longer, with 159 (62%) having been on supervision for over 3 years (compared with 18% of all children). The younger children were more likely to have started with some form of non-residential supervision, with foster carers or relatives, while older children were more likely to have experienced supervision in a residential unit.

Following the start of home supervision, 64 per cent of children were re-referred to the reporter in relation to further alleged grounds. More re-referrals were made in respect of boys (69%) than girls (56%) and more were on offence than non-offence grounds. The majority (90%) of those with no subsequent referrals during supervision had initially been referred on non-offence grounds.

1. Characteristics, circumstances and supervision of 189 children at home

Of the 189 children on home supervision, there were more boys (65%) than girls (35%) and most (185) were white. Nearly half lived in single parent households, usually headed by a female parent or carer. The majority of families (85%) were living in local authority housing
and the majority of parents or carers (69%) were unemployed. Fifty two per cent of children were referred for care and protection, 14 per cent for failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse, 12 per cent for offending, 19 per cent on mixed grounds (predominantly offenders and poor school attenders) and four per cent for being beyond control or substance misuse.

For the majority of children (86%) this was their first period of home supervision and the majority of requirements (82%) had run for less than 3 years. There had been prior social work involvement in 86 per cent of families. During home supervision the families faced major difficulties including financial and housing problems, physical and mental health problems, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse.

The aims and objectives of home supervision were identified in social work files in respect of 159 cases, although the majority (58%) of these were rather unspecific, particularly in relation to offending.

Care plans, required by the Regulations and Guidance for children on home supervision, were found in the case files for only 32 (17%) of the 189 children.

In 58 (31%) cases a first social work visit took place within two weeks of the commencement of home supervision (the time period stipulated in the Regulations and Guidance); in 35 cases (19%) a visit was undertaken within the first month.

Reviews were recorded in the case files as having been held in only 13 per cent of cases in the year preceding the annual review (the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 require local authorities to carry out a review of children on home supervision within three months of commencement and thereafter within six months of the previous review).

In a three month period in which the number of contacts between social workers and the families was analysed, the average was 6, or one visit per fortnight. In seventy per cent of cases, specific services/resources (in addition to the social worker) were noted in the case files as having been made available to families, about half by social work departments and half by other agencies.

In forty two cases there were periods in the year leading up to the annual review in 2001/early 2002 in which there had been no social worker working with the family. In 34 of the 42 cases, the period during which there was no social worker varied from 4-10 months. In 8 of the 42 cases, there had been no social worker allocated from the last children’s hearing up to the annual review. In 89 (47%) of the 189 cases there had been at least one change of social worker for the family in the year, in 22 of these either two or three changes of social worker were noted.

There was evidence of considerable interagency contact (meetings, written reports, correspondence and telephone calls) concerning the children on home supervision. This involved, principally, schools, solicitors (concerning contact and residence), mental health services and paediatricians, and contact with statutory and voluntary agencies relating to the financial and material well-being of the families.
Subsequent referrals were made to the reporter since the start of the current home supervision for 104 children (55%), with no subsequent referrals for 85 children (45%). There were subsequent referrals for the majority of those initially referred on offence grounds (82%), regular non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse (76%) and mixed grounds (92%). By contrast, a minority of those initially placed on supervision on grounds of care and protection (29%) were subsequently referred to the reporter. At the beginning of home supervision 40 children had been on the child protection register; by the annual review only six children were on the register.

Ratings of the progress in the cases were derived by the researchers from the panel members’ written reasons for decisions at annual review. The results indicate that in 82 cases (43%) progress was rated as satisfactory. In relation to initial grounds of referral, the majority (55%) of care and protection cases were ranked satisfactory, compared with 41 per cent on offence grounds and only 12 per cent on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse. More families referred on care and protection grounds were co-operative than those referred on other grounds and more families who were co-operative had a rating of satisfactory.

Sixty of the 189 home supervision requirements were terminated at the annual review in 2001/early 2002, with ongoing support being made available by the social work department after termination in respect of 29 families. The most common reason for termination was that there had been considerable progress. Other reasons were that families were refusing to co-operate, voluntary measures were being suggested to replace compulsory measures or there had been minimal social work input.

Lay and professional views of home supervision

Fifty two per cent of panel members considered home supervision to be excellent or good in the cases concerned, while a minority (30%) rated it as poor or very poor and fewer still (18%) as fair. The majority of social workers also considered that home supervision had been successful (53%) or partially successful (35%). Twelve per cent thought it had been unsuccessful.

The majority of social workers judged that the objectives of home supervision were fully or partially achieved in respect of the child (87%).

Panel members noted beneficial changes in the child’s life in the last year in respect of the majority (77%) of families. Similarly, in 64 (75%) cases, social workers considered that there had been improvements, as did fifty four per cent of teachers. The main areas of improvement identified were parenting, family relationships and stability, and the child’s schooling.

In the majority of cases 59 per cent of social workers reported no deterioration in the problems in children’s lives. They reported deterioration in a minority (41%), mainly concerning family relationships/home situation, school attendance, child’s behaviour and offending. Teachers reported similar levels of deterioration (39%).

Teachers reported that school attendance had remained about the same for over half the children (51%), improved for under a third (28%) and deteriorated for a minority (18%). They considered that for 46 per cent of children there had been no change in their behaviour,
with improvements for 21 per cent and deterioration for 18 per cent of the children. They reported that school attainment had remained the same for the majority of children (55%), had improved for fewer (26%) and deteriorated for even fewer (15%).

The majority of social workers (69%) and panel members (59%) considered that social work contact with the family had been about the right frequency, while a minority were of the view that the contact was not frequent enough.

The majority of panel members (64%) considered that it was appropriate that the supervision requirement had not been reviewed in the year leading up to the annual review hearing, but a minority (36%) thought it should have been reviewed sooner.

When asked what, if anything, had worked well in home supervision for the children in the sample, social workers identified: the availability of services/resources; an interagency approach; the importance of compulsory measures; the existence of advocacy for the child/support outwith the family home; and the capacity to protect the child/monitor safety. Support services which would have been useful, but which were unavailable, were, in order of ranking: family support workers/home carers; community resource workers; befrienders; groupwork for young people; parenting skills’ classes and respite care.

Social workers identified considerable variation in the contribution made by different agencies in meeting the needs of children on home supervision, with education having a greater contribution than others.

The majority of social workers (52%) reported that they occasionally used the Regulations and Guidance, fewer (16%) that they used them quite often and a substantial minority (30%) of social workers did not use the Regulations and Guidance at all. The majority of social workers found them fairly helpful (55%) or very helpful (12%).

The area for improvement most frequently identified by panel members, teachers, social workers and reporters was more social work time. In some localities the capacity of social work departments to provide the help and support required was deeply compromised. The need for early review of cases, better monitoring of social work provision and additional resources was also noted.

Interviews were conducted with 20 families with children on a home supervision requirement about their views. In most families a parent, sibling or close relative had personal experience of being on supervision. Most families had prior involvement with the social work department.

Most families acknowledged during the interview the reason for their child being on home supervision and outright denial of the grounds was rare.

Very few families said they had been involved in drawing up plans for home supervision. Most families were confident that they were able to express their views to social workers, but a few found it more difficult to do so. Some parents were rather sceptical about the influence of families on decision making.

Most of the families interviewed were satisfied with the social worker assigned to them during the period of home supervision, valuing in social workers their availability, provision
of practical resources, understanding and ability to communicate. While most of the families were broadly positive about the social workers that were in contact with them, the most common complaint was about the infrequency of the contact. Some families noted that there were periods during which there appeared to be no social worker allocated to them.

Families identified two key areas in which social workers had helped, namely situations of domestic violence and the provision of resources and practical help. Few beneficial changes were noted in respect of offenders or school non-attenders, with some parents indicating that the involvement had come too late and others that their child did not get on with the social worker.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter has two main purposes. The first is to explore the background and policy context concerning home supervision. The second is to outline the aims and objectives of the study and describe the research design and methods.

BACKGROUND

Home supervision: the policy context

Scotland’s unified system of juvenile justice and child welfare, the Children’s Hearings system, deals annually with over 60,000 referrals. Its mechanisms are described in detail elsewhere (Kearney, 1989; Norrie, 1998). In brief, a reporter has to decide, on receipt of a referral, whether a hearing is or is not required and where it appears “that compulsory measures are necessary in respect of the child, he shall arrange a children’s hearing to which he shall refer the case for consideration and determination” (s56(6) Children (Scotland) Act 1995). A hearing comprises three lay panel members, a reporter, almost invariably a social worker and the family. If the hearing is satisfied that compulsory measures of supervision are necessary, it may make a supervision requirement under s70(i) Children (Scotland) 1995. An important principle underlying this decision is that no hearing should make a supervision requirement unless it is considered to be better for the child than making no requirement at all (s16(3) Children (Scotland) Act 1995).

Home supervision is the non-legal term given to the supervision requirement when the child remains at home. It is sometimes also used in respect of children who are in foster care, but the authors will restrict the term to mean children under a supervision requirement in their own home, but not with foster carers. The 1993 White Paper indicated that home supervision was going to receive increased scrutiny, particularly in respect of young people referred for offences: “The Government have decided that national objectives and standards for home supervision should be drawn up to ensure consistency of good practice within a common framework throughout Scotland” (Scottish Office, 1993:37). While limited intimation as to what home supervision comprises is to be found in the legislation, detailed direction for social workers is available in the form of Scotland’s Children, The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 Regulations and Guidance, Volume 2, Children Looked After by Local Authorities (Scottish Office, 1997) and the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996.

According to s.73(2) of the 1995 Act, “no supervision requirement shall remain in force for a period longer than one year”, but it can be continued or varied, hence the need for the clause “no child shall continue to be subject to a supervision requirement for any period longer than is necessary in the interests of promoting or safeguarding his welfare” (s.73(1)). While supervision requirements are automatically reviewed annually, the child or a “relevant person” can request a review before this time. An additional feature, introduced by the 1995 Act, is that hearings can set a date for a review hearing (s.70(7)).

2 The separation of ‘Home Supervision’ (Chapter Two) and ‘Fostering Service’ (Chapter Three) in the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997) confirm this approach.
3 Hereafter referred to as the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997).
4 SI 1996 No. 3262 (S. 252)
Interagency collaboration, coordination and co-operation in home supervision

Early child care inquiries following the death of a child who had been abused or neglected have repeatedly underlined the importance of interagency coordination between social work and both health and education. The 1980’s and 1990’s saw the onset of inquiries following directly from a breakdown in interagency relations. In England the Cleveland Inquiry (1991) followed a serious collapse in communication between social workers and health professionals as well as the police, while in Scotland the Fife Inquiry (1992) followed tensions between the social work department, the Children’s Hearings system and other agencies.

Corby (1987) and Gough (1993) found that most interventions in child protection were provided directly by social services and that there was limited involvement of other professionals, particularly specialised medical or mental health services. In respect of child protection work in England, Hallett (1995) found that interagency collaboration was more at the forefront in the initial stages, but that it fell off dramatically with the provision of service. In the same study, contact between social workers and schools was notably absent in much child protection work (Hallett, 1995).

According to the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997), interagency work should be a central aspect of social work supervision of children who remain in their own home. They emphasise regular contact between social workers and schools and, where child protection is a key issue, also with health professionals (Scottish Office, 1997:44). Social workers’ care plans may also include school liaison in respect of cases in which offending is the central concern.

Dearth of prior research on home supervision

Given the long history of home supervision and the fact that it is the most common disposal of the children’s hearings, the dearth of research in this area is somewhat surprising. In relation specifically to child protection, Gough (1993) argues that the evaluation of innovative schemes has traditionally taken precedence over research of routine social work in the UK. However, with the funding by the Department of Health of 20 studies on child protection, the balance was redressed, at least in England and Wales. In an overview of the research programme a shift in emphasis was evident from “children looked after away from home” or receiving specialist services, towards evaluation of mainstream practice with children looked after at home (Department of Health, 1995).

There are a few studies of children "home on trial" in England (Thoburn, 1980 & Farmer and Parker, 1989) and Northern Ireland (Pinkerton, 1994) which have relevance to home supervision, but they relate to different legislative contexts and "home on trial" is not directly comparable with home supervision. Two studies conducted in Scotland, potentially relevant to home supervision, had mixed samples of children being looked at home and away from home, as well as differing types of supervision, voluntary and statutory, with those on a home supervision requirement being largely undifferentiated in the analysis (Triseliotis et al, 1995:40; Freeman et al, 1996: 230)^5. The former also included teenagers from English as well

^5 It should be noted that this is not a criticism of either study, merely a commentary on their limited pertinence to the topic under consideration.
as Scottish local authorities. This study is therefore the first to concentrate solely and in-depth on home supervision.

After nearly thirty years in operation, home supervision has remained relatively unchanged and it continues to be the disposal most used by children’s hearings. Traditionally, it has received far less attention, in terms of research, than supervision with conditions for children to live with foster carers or in residential establishments.

THE STUDY

The study of home supervision was commissioned by the Scottish Executive as part of a programme of research on the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The research involved the collection of data drawn from varied sources:

- A postal survey of key informants with responsibility for child and family social work services at a policy level in local authorities
- Secondary analysis of national data in respect of 5,683 home supervision requirements at 30 June, 1999
- Examination of 189 social work case files of children on supervision at home and postal questionnaires to 189 reporters
- Postal questionnaires to elicit the views of 189 panel chairs, 189 social workers and 137 teachers involved with the children in the sample
- Interviews with 20 families whose children were on supervision at home.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives were set out in the Scottish Executive tender document as follows.

Aims

To examine the effectiveness of home supervision in promoting beneficial changes in the life of the child.

Objectives

- Describe the organisational arrangements for developing and delivering home supervision services, including an assessment of the impact of factors such as interagency working upon the delivery of services.
- Identify the characteristics and circumstances of children who are subject to compulsory measures of supervision at home and assess the relationship between these and the supervision required and provided.
- Describe the nature and experience for children subject to compulsory measures of supervision at home, taking account of professional and lay views about home

- Identify the impact and outcome of home supervision for the child, including a description of the ending and withdrawing compulsory measures of home supervision and identify points at which reviews of the home supervision requirement are sought.

**Research design and methods**

*A survey of key informants in 31 local authorities*

Postal questionnaires were issued to a key informant in 31 of the 32 local authorities across Scotland. The questionnaires were designed for completion by a senior officer in the social work department (or equivalent) with policy responsibility for home supervision, usually together with other matters. Thirty (97%) of the 31 recipients responded, providing information about the organisational arrangements for developing and delivering home supervision. The results are presented in Chapter Two.

**National data in respect of children on home supervision**

The most recent published national data available at the time of conducting the study relate to 1999-2000 (SCRA, 2001). However, these published statistics focus primarily on supervision requirements rather than on home supervision, so detailed information relating to the latter is lacking. The research team commissioned Lambda Research and Consultancy Ltd to develop a system of extracting data from the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration’s (SCRA) data files by which individual records were created for each period of supervision for every child. Each supervision period commenced with a hearing decision to make or vary a supervision order and ended with a hearing decision to vary or terminate the order or to transfer the child to another area. This provides an opportunity, which was not available in the standard statistical analysis of the STATS1 and SWS21 (forms routinely completed by reporter), to examine data over the duration of children’s involvement with the Children’s Hearings system. The database was used to describe the characteristics of 5,683 children on home supervision with their parent or guardian during the year 1999-2000, the snapshot date for which was 30 June 1999. The children are described in Chapter Three.

**Examination of the social work case files of a sample of 189 children on supervision at home and postal questionnaires to reporters involved with the annual review in 2001/early 2002**

From the national database of children on supervision at home in 1999-2000, a sampling grid was drawn up to identify the characteristics of a sample of children across Scotland according to location, gender, age and grounds of referral. Using the grid, children who had an annual review in 2001/early 2002 were identified by reporter’s offices across Scotland and included in the sample. The original target had been 200 children, but this was reduced to 189 when one social work department and one authority reporter’s office of the SCRA declined to participate in the study, and the social work case files for two children could not be located.

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6 One local authority social work department declined to participate in the study and so was not included in the survey.
189 social work case files were scrutinised and anonymised data recorded by the researchers on a laptop computer by means of a data collection tool, a social work case file schedule developed by the research team. Questionnaires were sent to the 189 reporters associated with each of the cases in the sample. Of these 189 questionnaires, 128 were returned (a response rate of 68%). The reporters’ questionnaires, together with the social work case file schedules, yielded data concerning the circumstances and characteristics of children on home supervision, the delivery of home supervision and outcomes. The findings are reported in Chapter Four.

Postal questionnaires to panel chairs, teachers and social workers involved with the 189 children in the sample

Postal questionnaires were sent to 189 panel members who had chaired the annual review in 2001/early 2002, and to the 189 social workers identified by the reporter’s offices as involved with each case. Questionnaires were also sent to 137 teachers. In the remaining 52 cases, the children were of pre-school age or had left school or (in very few) the teachers’ details were not made available to the research team. One hundred and five questionnaires were returned by teachers (a high response rate of 77%). Eighty nine of the 189 social workers’ questionnaires were returned (a response rate of 47%). This is partly explained by the number of cases in which no social worker allocated to the case when the questionnaires were sent out, about which the research team was notified by a letter or telephone call. Of the 189 questionnaires sent to panel members, 98 (52%) were returned. Unlike social workers and teachers, who received a reminder about non-returned questionnaires, panel members did not do so. This was because panel members asked for questionnaires to be issued as close as possible to the day of the hearing in question, since they did not retain papers following a children’s hearing and indicated that they may have difficulty in recalling individual case details at a later date. Findings from these questionnaires are presented in Chapter Five.

Interviews with families with children on home supervision

Interviews were conducted with 20 families who formed part of the sample of 189. The families were sent letters about the study via the social worker and if they wished to take part in the study they contacted the researchers, usually by means of a tear off slip. This resulted in 20 families agreeing to be interviewed. The researchers obtained written consent to the interview by the families. They also made it clear at the beginning of the interview that participants did not have to answer any questions they did not wish to and that they could terminate the interview at any stage. Interviews were (usually) taped and transcribed and all the information about the families was anonymised. Information from these interviews is included in Chapter Five.

Access

After the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration agreed in principle to the study being conducted in Scotland, the research team sought and obtained access from:

- 31 of 32 Directors of Social Work (or equivalent)
- 32 of 32 Directors of Education
- 31 of 32 Chairmen of the Area Children’s Panel.
This was followed by a rolling programme of approaches to, and sometimes negotiation with, individual heads of school, reporters, panel members and employees at various levels of social work departments. Access was negotiated with social work departments in accordance with the protocol set out by the Association of Directors of Social Work in the *Code of Practice for Research in Social Work Departments*.

Overall, there was a high level of co-operation from participants, the majority of whom have welcomed the study.

*Confidentiality*

Utmost care was taken to preserve the confidentiality of the children and families in the study. An ID number was allocated to the social work case file schedules and all questionnaires returned from panel members, social workers, teachers and reporters used this ID number. There were no case identifying details in the social work case file schedules, in the questionnaires or the transcribed interviews with families.

**SUMMARY**

After thirty years in operation, home supervision has remained relatively unchanged and it continues to be the disposal most used by children’s hearings. Traditionally, it has received far less attention, in terms of research, than supervision with conditions for children to live with foster carers or in residential establishments.

The study of home supervision conducted at the University of Stirling from 2000-2002 was commissioned by the Scottish Executive as part of a programme of research on the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The research involved: a postal survey of key informants with responsibility for child and family social work services at a policy level in local authorities; secondary analysis of national data in respect of 5,683 home supervision requirements at 30 June, 1999; examination of 189 social work case files of children on supervision at home and postal questionnaires to 189 reporters; postal questionnaires to elicit the views of 189 panel chairs, 189 social workers, 137 teachers who were involved with the school-aged children in the sample, and interviews with 20 families.
CHAPTER TWO: ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING HOME SUPERVISION SERVICES

One objective of the study was to explore the organisational arrangements for developing and delivering home supervision services. The organisational context was explored through scrutiny of Children’s Services Plans and through a postal survey of key informants with responsibility for child and family social work services in local authorities. This chapter reports the findings, including use of the Regulations and Guidance, unallocated cases, interagency working and the perceived importance and effectiveness of key agencies in the delivery of services to children on home supervision.

CHILDREN’S SERVICES PLANS

Children’s Services Plans were obtained from all 32 local authority and island councils in 2001. Most plans covered the period 1998-2001. Some local authorities additionally provided copies of one or more subsequent annual reviews of the plan. The plans were scrutinised for information about home supervision. Although home supervision is the most frequently used type of supervision requirement, it was striking how relatively little attention was paid to it in the plans. In almost a third of them no separate mention of the term ‘home supervision’ could be identified. In the majority, home supervision was mentioned, but usually only very briefly. More attention was usually paid in the plans to children looked after away from home, especially those placed in residential units or with foster carers. A few plans appeared to equate looked after children with those accommodated away from home. The Regulations and Guidance, however, states that “children on home supervision have the legal status of children who are looked after” (Scottish Office, 1997:40).

There was, of course, other material in the plans covering universal or specialist services relevant to children on home supervision, for example educational provision, leisure services, child health or drugs and alcohol services. But, as a source of information specifically about service development for a sizeable group of vulnerable children and young people (those on home supervision) the plans proved to be, in general, rather thin.

QUESTIONNAIRES TO ‘KEY INFORMANTS’ IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES ABOUT HOME SUPERVISION

In April 2001 postal questionnaires were issued to 31 of the 32 local authority and island councils in Scotland.7 Thirty were returned, a response rate of 97 per cent. This is an exceptionally high response rate for a postal questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed for completion by those with responsibility at policy level for home supervision in social work departments or equivalent. The precise job titles of the persons completing the questionnaire varied from authority to authority. They can, however, be grouped as follows:

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7 One local authority social work department did not give agreement to participate in the study.
Respondents were asked to identify any other people in local authority with policy responsibility for children on home supervision. Most frequently cited were those with operational responsibilities for children and family social work services (10) or for generic fieldwork or resources (2); next were staff in education (6), including early education/special education, pupil support and education psychology; last were those with strategic planning responsibilities (2).

Sixteen of the 30 local authorities were reported to have a written policy (other than material in the Children’s Services Plan) regarding children on home supervision. Five local authorities reported the existence of written guidance specifically relating to home supervision (for example, multi-agency written home supervision protocol) and five reported that the guidance on home supervision was included as part of more broadly based procedural manuals (for example, “there is policy on home supervision contained in the procedures”). In the remaining local authorities it was unclear whether the written policy was specific to home supervision or more general (for example, “guidance on format of reports and review of care plans”).

Only three respondents reported that written guidance in respect of home supervision was given to teachers and other education staff. One of these identified “joint social work/education practice procedures”; another specified “education staff have access to child care procedure on home supervision on the Intranet” and the other noted that a policy document on Looked After Children was issued to education staff. Seventeen reported that no such guidance was issued and nine did not know. A few respondents noted that guidance to education staff tended to concentrate on looked after and accommodated children (excluding, it was implied, those on home supervision), and a couple indicated that guidance was currently being developed.

Of the 30 respondents, eight reported that in their local authorities there had been consultation with children and young people regarding policy issues related to home supervision. In some authorities more than one model of consultation had been adopted, including best value reviews, Children’s Services Plans, support/focus groups and youth support team customer feedback. Seventeen reported that their local authority had plans to involve children and young people in the future in planning about policy in respect of home supervision, including involvement in Children’s Services Plans, focus/consumer groups and a quality audit of home supervision.

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8 Children and Families, Operations, Looked after Children, Family Support, Practice Teams, etc.
9 Children, Families and Criminal Justice.
10 Development Officer (Throughcare and Aftercare); Community Assessment and Review Officer; Senior Manager.
Use of the Regulations and Guidance in respect of children and young people on home supervision

Eighteen respondents reported that there was written guidance for social work staff regarding the use of Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997) in respect of children on home supervision. Of these, seven specified particular documents (e.g. “Section 3 in our Looked After Children Good Parenting Outcome Policy/Procedure Document, Draft 2”, “Child Care Procedures” or “Policy and procedure document: Home Supervision Reviews”); five identified that staff were referred to the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the associated guidance; a further six indicated that the Regulations and Guidance were incorporated in their operational procedures manuals.

Twenty eight respondents identified the procedures in place to ensure that social work staff had access to the Regulations and Guidance. The most common was to make copies available in area teams/residential units (15) or to give individual copies to all social workers (5). In one of the five authorities which made available individual copies it was reported that “all social workers have copies of the Regulations and Guidance Volumes 1-4 and sign to confirm they have these and have read them”. One, in which multiple copies were made available, reported “copies are in place in relevant sections of the Department but as far as I am aware there are no procedures to ensure this is the case”. Four respondents indicated that the Regulations and Guidance were covered in procedure manuals or induction and three referred to the role of team leaders and of supervision in issuing operational guidance and ensuring such knowledge.

Respondents reported that in only thirteen of the authorities was there monitoring of the social work staff’s use of the Regulations and Guidance. In eight authorities this occurred through staff supervision; in six through formal reviews of children and young people on home supervision; and in four through the computer, audit of review meetings system, sampling of cases and, it was stated, through SCRA returns.11

Twenty-one of the respondents considered the Regulations and Guidance to be fairly effective for social work staff in respect of home supervision, two considered them to be very effective and four fairly ineffective. Three gave no response.

The Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997:43) note that "each child is required under the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 to have a care plan in place”. Twenty seven respondents indicated that social workers in their authority were expected to complete a care plan for children on home supervision (although one of these stated that this requirement was “not operational in practice because of staff time demands”). In twenty four local authorities it was expected that the responsibilities of the education service should be explicitly noted in any care plans produced for children on home supervision.

11 More than one method was in use in some authorities.
Unallocated cases of home supervision requirements

Eleven respondents reported that there were cases of unallocated home supervision requirements in their authority at the time of responding to the questionnaire (May-October 2001). Eighteen reported no such cases and one respondent did not reply to this question. Of those with unallocated cases of home supervision requirements, three authorities reported less than five, one authority reported under ten and three reported thirty, thirty one and thirty nine. Four did not disclose the number but two of these noted that the situation was under “constant” or “operational” review. Two of the respondents identifying unallocated cases suggested that this was a temporary difficulty, for example “a short term measure while a number of posts remain unfilled” and “it should be noted this was a snapshot as at end June/beginning of July largely related to staff vacancies. Recruitment is underway and we are hopeful of achieving full staff thereby resolving this situation”.

Respondents reported varied policy responses for dealing with unallocated cases of home supervision, some identifying a combination in use in their local authority. The most frequent were systems of local oversight/review by team leaders or senior social workers (6), and raising the issue with the local reporter/SCRA and/or with the local Chair of the Children’s Panel (5), which might result in representatives of the Children’s hearing system raising their concerns in turn with the Chief Executive of the local authority or senior management within the social work department. It was reported that leaving cases unallocated might lead to an increase in the roles and responsibilities of other staff, for example, groupwork staff and Intermediate Treatment (IT) staff or to greater reliance on the inter-agency network. Four respondents indicated that there were prioritisation systems in place to aid decisions about which cases to allocate. Two stated that the policy response was to fill vacant posts timeously.

A number of authorities reported no policy responses (having no unallocated cases) and two replied as follows: “cases must be allocated within five working days of the children’s hearings decision” and “the policy is that all Looked After Children will have an allocated social worker as a matter of priority”.

Interagency working

Only five respondents reported that there was a written policy agreement with other agencies specifically about children on home supervision. The following were identified:

- joint practice procedures with housing
- protocol with education undertaking to notify schools when supervision requirements are made or terminated
- multi-agency protocol
- intensive support to prevent the need to accommodate children.

Two authorities identified a range of agreements (for example, about young people who are serious/persistent offenders and children in need).

It was more common for written policy agreements with other agencies to be in place about looked after children generally rather than specifically about children on home supervision. Twelve local authorities had such agreements. Fifteen did not, but several referred to the Children’s Services Plans, for example:
[no]…although the Children’s Services Plan commits all departments to the ‘corporate parenting’ concept where the welfare of the child is seen as paramount. We have good links with education and with housing in particular;

and:

there is an interagency group of the Children’s Service Plan addressing the needs of young people on home supervision involved with the hearing system. This is an inter-agency group involving health, education, SCRA, panel members, social work both children and families and criminal justice, voluntary sector and police.

Some referred to developments in progress but not yet completed, for example: “education/social work policy is in preparation”, “being developed with Child and Adolescent Mental Health team” and “currently developing protocols with education re provision and attainment for LAC children”.

The perceived importance of various agencies/services in the delivery of services to children on home supervision

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of the following eight agencies/services in the delivery of services to children on home supervision:

- social work
- education
- police
- voluntary agencies
- child psychological services
- community child health services
- child psychiatric services
- drug and alcohol treatment services.

The responses for each of the services/agencies (on a four point scale of very unimportant, fairly unimportant, fairly important and very important) are presented below. It is notable that more respondents rated social work and education as very important than the other services/agencies.12

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12 It should be remembered that all the respondents were drawn from social work services.
Figure 2.1: Perceived importance of social workers in the delivery of services to children on home supervision.

- Very unimportant: 3 (n=3)
- Fairly important: 2 (n=2)
- Very important: 24 (n=24)
- No response: 1 (n=1)

Figure 2.2: Perceived importance of education in the delivery of services to children on home supervision.

- Very unimportant: 4 (n=4)
- Fairly unimportant: 1 (n=1)
- Very important: 24 (n=24)
- No response: 1 (n=1)
Figure 2.3: Perceived importance of police in the delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived importance of police](chart1.png)

- Fairly unimportant: n=11
- Fairly important: n=16
- Very important: n=2
- No response: n=1

Figure 2.4: Perceived importance of voluntary agencies in the delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived importance of voluntary agencies](chart2.png)

- Fairly unimportant: n=5
- Fairly important: n=16
- Very important: n=7
- No response: n=2
Figure 2.5: Perceived importance of child psychology services to children on home supervision

Figure 2.6: Perceived importance of community health services in the delivery of services to children on home supervision
The perceived effectiveness of services/agencies in meeting the needs of children on home supervision

Having been asked to rank the perceived importance of the eight key agencies/services identified above, respondents were also asked to rate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of children on home supervision (again using a four point scale - very ineffective, fairly ineffective, fairly effective and very effective). The responses are shown below. What is striking is that whereas the majority of respondents had rated social work and education as very important, a minority rated them as very effective: instead, the majority considered them to be fairly effective. Most respondents rated community child health services, child psychiatric services (and less so) drugs and alcohol related services as fairly or very ineffective.
Figure 2.8: Perceived effectiveness of social worker delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived effectiveness of social worker delivery of services to children on home supervision.]

- Fairly effective: 60% (n=21)
- Very effective: 20% (n=8)
- No response: 10% (n=1)

Figure 2.9: Perceived effectiveness of education in the delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived effectiveness of education in the delivery of services to children on home supervision.]

- Very ineffective: 10% (n=1)
- Fairly ineffective: 20% (n=5)
- Fairly effective: 50% (n=17)
- Very effective: 25% (n=5)
- No response: 10% (n=2)
Figure 2.10: Perceived effectiveness of police delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived effectiveness of police supervision.]

- Very ineffective: 10%
- Fairly ineffective: 30%
- Fairly effective: 40%
- No response: 20%

n=1 n=14 n=14 n=1

Figure 2.11: Perceived effectiveness of voluntary agency delivery of services to children on home supervision

![Bar chart showing perceived effectiveness of voluntary agency supervision.]

- Fairly ineffective: 20%
- Fairly effective: 30%
- Very effective: 40%
- No response: 10%

n=9 n=14 n=5 n=2
Figure 2.12: Perceived effectiveness of child psychology services in the delivery of services to children on home supervision

Figure 2.13: Perceived effectiveness of community health services in the delivery of services to children on home supervision
Twenty five of the thirty respondents identified education as the agency with which there was most effective collaboration at policy level regarding issues relevant to children on home supervision. Some respondents qualified their responses for example: “at policy level,
education, but it does not translate into operational practices as yet”, “educational services but this has yet to translate into practice” and:

*Education department - though staff would say it is a big problem due to resource issues. However, we do communicate and collaborate well with them.*

The agencies identified by the remaining five respondents¹³ as the most effective partners in collaboration were SCRA/Children’s Panel, SACRO, NCH, Barnardo’s and Aberlour. The agency identified most frequently as the least effective collaboration partner at policy level in respect of children on home supervision was health, nominated by eighteen respondents. Of these, in descending order of frequency, health in general was cited, child psychiatry/child psychological services, mental health services, and child health. Six respondents nominated the police and one the reporter (there were five non- responses).

**The outcomes of home supervision**

*Monitoring outcomes*

Thirteen respondents reported that the outcomes for children on home supervision were monitored within their own local authority. The most common form of monitoring was through seniors or team leaders appraising individual cases in staff supervision and/or review. Seven respondents identified this mechanism. There was no suggestion in the responses that the results of this monitoring on a case by case basis were ever aggregated to inform a judgement about home supervision across the whole authority or, on a comparative basis, across its practice units. The remaining six identified the following mechanisms: SCRA time intervals standards, audit and performance review systems, annual report to children’s committee and, rather gnomically, ‘through data’. Two authorities reported that there were plans to monitor outcomes in the future.

*The perceived effectiveness of home supervision*

The bar charts below show respondents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of home supervision in their authority, first, generally and then with reference to:

- children requiring care and protection
- children who fail to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse
- children who offend.

¹³ One respondent failed to answer this question.
Figure 2.16: Perceived effectiveness of home supervision generally

- Very effective: 25%
- Fairly effective: 75%
- Not very effective: 0%
- No Response: 0%

n=1 n=25 n=2 n=2

Figure 2.17: Perceived effectiveness of home supervision for children requiring care and protection

- Very effective: 40%
- Fairly effective: 30%
- No Response: 30%

n=14 n=13 n=3
Figure 2.18: Perceived effectiveness of home supervision for children who fail to attend school regularly without reason.

Figure 2.19: Perceived effectiveness of home supervision for children who offend.
The results for the different categories of cases are illuminating. Home supervision is perceived by senior staff in social work departments to be more effective in respect of care and protection, less effective in respect of children who have offended and least effective of all in respect of children who fail to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse.

Respondents’ reasons for ranking the effectiveness of home supervision in cases of child protection were clear and consistent. Most often cited were the following: well developed interagency approaches: a good level and variety of services (e.g. family support, parenting skills, child and family centres); the high priority accorded to these cases; clear procedures and the existence of care plans. Two local authorities referred to externally commissioned reviews of their child protection services in validating their claims to very or fairly effective service provision.

The few respondents who ranked home supervision for children who offend as very effective identified the provision of specialist services (either within the social work department (e.g. a team for 15-17 year olds) or through special projects in the voluntary sector as the primary reason for their views. Well developed interagency collaboration was also cited as a reason for effectiveness and conversely, its absence contributed to relative ineffectiveness. Resource shortages were cited as reasons for ranking home supervision for this group of children as fairly effective (for example, “lack of community based resources”) or not very effective (for example, “have had no real capacity to provide offending programmes for teenagers who get into trouble or take drugs” and “lack of resources particularly for the 14-18 group”). It was clear, however, that services for young people who offend were changing and several respondents cited new developments, for example: “we are in the process of further developing our provision through our youth crime strategy” and:

*Taking forward the Youth Crime Review is improving the range of services and effectiveness in this area but, at this point in time, we are probably still midway between not very effective and fairly effective (improving quickly).*

Several respondents noted the challenge of working with older children, for example:

*Older children who offend tend to resist the involvement of agencies or they do not want to accept the resources (albeit limited) available.*

and:

*In terms of taking forward the recommendations of the Youth Crime review we have commissioned research which is highlighting the need for a more ‘deeds’ targeted approach with some young offenders. We feel we can do well with young people up to approximately fourteen. Beyond this the child care/welfare based approach tends to lose effectiveness.*

The majority of respondents ranked home supervision in respect of children who do not attend school as less effective than home supervision in cases of child protection or children who offend. The majority ranked it as not very effective. Those who rated it as fairly effective identified special projects/services, such as attaching social work to all secondary schools in the local authority as contributing positively. Several respondents also identified improving and closer liaison between Education and social work services as important, for example:
The Joint Youth Strategy Project involving education and social work helps address the needs of a number of children and young people who do not attend school;

and:

This is an area of work being given a lot of attention between education and social work, with some effective project work having delivered well for some children. Wider changes in joint service approaches are still in the development phase so the overall picture is still towards the not very effective range.

The late age and stage at which most cases of non-attendance at school reached the social work departments was a key reason for the perceived ineffectiveness of home supervision. For example, “children tend to be older; little alternative options for non school attenders” and “some young people have very entrenched patterns of non-attendance which are difficult to impact on”.

Some respondents, noting the difficulty faced by social workers in changing entrenched patterns of non-attendance at school with older children, questioned whether home supervision was an appropriate response as in “not an effective measure to address truancy” and “supervision does not ensure that children attend. There are few resources to enable attendance”. A few located the key difficulties within the schools, suggesting that they needed to adapt, for example, “the main issue for many of the children is lack of availability of suitable and appropriate mainstream education” and “non-attendance at school is difficult to impact on at present because of lack of flexible appropriate curriculum in schools”. Two respondents were more blunt: “some schools are intolerant and see residential schools as the answer to troubled young people” and “current arrangements are incompatible with social inclusion”.

The views reported above are, of course, those of senior staff in social work departments. It is, nonetheless, clear that those in senior positions in the local authority children’s services were able to discriminate between their relative effectiveness in meeting the needs of different groups of children and young people in difficulty. They also identified differing degrees of interagency collaboration in meeting the needs of specific groups of children, with the more highly developed and procedurally driven model in child protection services contributing to perceived greater effectiveness there. Additionally, while resource shortages figured in respect of all three groups, it was in respect of young offenders that the shortages were most often identified. It was in respect of children with problems of non-attendance at school that the more fundamental question of the utility of home supervision as a response to the difficulties was raised.

**SUMMARY**

Children’s Services Plans (most of which covered the period 1998-2001) were obtained from all 32 local authority and island councils in 2001. In almost a third of them no separate mention of the term ‘home supervision’ could be identified. In the majority, home supervision was mentioned, but usually only very briefly. More attention was usually paid in the plans to children looked after away from home.
Postal questionnaires were completed by 30 (of 32) local authority and island councils in Scotland by those with responsibility at policy level for home supervision in social work departments or equivalent. The key findings were:

Twenty-one of the respondents considered the Regulations and Guidance governing home supervision\textsuperscript{14} to be fairly effective for social work staff delivering home supervision, two considered them to be very effective and four fairly ineffective. Three gave no response.

Twenty seven respondents indicated that social workers in their authority were expected to complete a care plan for children on home supervision.

Just over a third of respondents reported that there were cases of unallocated home supervision requirements in their authority (the largest number being 39).

Whereas most respondents rated social work and education as fairly effective in delivering home supervision, most respondents rated community child health services, child psychiatric services (and less so) drug and alcohol related services as fairly or very ineffective.

Education was most often identified as the agency with which there was most effective collaboration at policy level regarding children on home supervision, with health regarded as the least effective.

Home supervision was considered to be more effective in respect of care and protection, less effective in respect of children who have offended and least effective of all in respect of children who fail to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse. Reasons given for the high effectiveness ranking of home supervision in cases of child protection were well developed interagency approaches, a good level and variety of services, the high priority accorded to these cases, clear procedures and the existence of care plans.

The few respondents who ranked home supervision for children who offend as very effective identified good interagency collaboration and the provision of specialist services as the primary reason for their views. The late age and stage at which most cases of non-attendance at school reached the social work departments was a key reason for the perceived ineffectiveness of home supervision in these cases.

CHAPTER THREE: NATIONAL DATA FOR CHILDREN ON HOME SUPERVISION IN SCOTLAND

This chapter presents data drawn from a national data set of children on home supervision at 30 June 1999. It covers the characteristics of children on home supervision including: the grounds of referral, changes in the supervision requirement since the start of supervision, subsequent referrals to the reporter and aspects of the histories of children on home supervision.

Table 3.1 shows the numbers and types of supervision requirements made in recent years (SCRA, 2002). As can be seen, supervision at home with a parent or guardian is the most common form of supervision requirement.

Table 3.1 Type of supervision requirements

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<th>2000/01</th>
<th>1999/00</th>
<th>1998/99</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian</td>
<td>6,404</td>
<td>5,683</td>
<td>5,722</td>
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<td>Relatives or friend</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>1,062</td>
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<td>Foster care</td>
<td>2,120</td>
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<td>Residential schools</td>
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<td>565</td>
<td>576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10,878</td>
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<td>9,707</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rate per 1000 population (aged 0-17)</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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</table>


A snapshot of the 5,683 children on home supervision with their parent or guardian at 30 June 1999 is presented below. A system of extracting the data from the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration’s data files was developed by Lambda Research and Consultancy Ltd, the details of which are discussed in Chapter One.

[The age groups employed in this chapter follow the format of the annual statistics published by the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration and, formerly, the Scottish Office].

Characteristics of children on home supervision at 30 June 1999

Table 3.2 shows that 3,440 boys (61%) and 2,243 girls (39%) were on home supervision with their parent or guardian at 30 June 1999. While this difference holds for the older age group, for the younger age groups (0-7) there were actually more girls than boys on home supervision.
Table 3.2 Gender and age of children on home supervision at 30 June 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>830</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Looking at the ages of the children at the start of their current supervision (as opposed to their ages at 30 June 1999) inevitably yields a different picture, with a much higher proportion of the children being in the younger age groups, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Age of children at the start of the supervision requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>744</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>476</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>454</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Table 3.4 indicates that only a minority of children had been on supervision for longer than 3 years by 30 June 1999.

Table 3.4 Length of supervision requirement by 30 June 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When supervision requirement began</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Started in 1999</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started in previous year</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started 2 – 3 years previously</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started more than 3 years previously</td>
<td>1,048</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,683</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 The table gives the age group of children at 30 June 1999.
Apart from the very youngest children, for whom the supervision requirement could not have been in force for significantly longer than their age, the distribution of lengths of supervision was similar across the different child ages.

Table 3.5 presents the grounds of referral on which the children on home supervision at 30 June 1999 were initially referred. More girls were referred on care and protection grounds, while more boys were referred on offence grounds and on mixed grounds (that is more than one ground).

Table 3.5 Initial grounds of referral for children on home supervision at 30 June 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounds</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care &amp; protection (b-g)</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>2,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence (i)</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance at school (h)</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed grounds</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grounds</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds not recorded</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>5,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different grounds of referral are associated with different ages at the start of supervision, as shown in Table 3.6, which separates non-offence grounds (the latter being predominantly care and protection grounds) from offence referrals. The most notable difference is the higher number of older children on supervision for offences, which reflects the peak ages for offence referrals to the reporter, which are 14 for boys and 15 for girls according to the most recent statistical bulletin (SCRA, 2001:12). Conversely, a higher proportion of those referred for non-offences were younger.

Table 3.6 Grounds of referral by age at start of home supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Non-offence</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These grounds are set out in s52(2) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
Most common of these was ground (a), ‘beyond control of any relevant person’.
Most of these were cases transferred into the area in which the supervision was provided.
As the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is 8 there are never offence referrals for those under this age.
The table gives the age group of children at the start of supervision.
Table 3.7 presents the grounds of referral at the start of the current home supervision. More girls (77%) than boys (67%) had been referred on non-offence grounds, whereas more boys (20%) than girls (14%) had been referred on offence grounds.

Table 3.7 Grounds of referral at start of home supervision by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounds of referral</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-offence</td>
<td>2,296</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Changes in the supervision requirement since the start of the supervision

The majority of children on home supervision at 30 June 1999 (5,427 of 5,683) had been under such supervision since the start of the requirement, while 256 had started their current period of supervision with a different supervision requirement and this had subsequently been varied to supervision with a parent or guardian. Table 3.8 shows that of these 256 children, the younger ones were more likely to have started with some form of non-residential supervision, with foster carers or relatives, while older children were more likely to have experienced supervision in a residential unit.

Table 3.8 Type of initial supervision requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Parent / Guardian</th>
<th>Residential units</th>
<th>Foster carers/relatives</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>5,427</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

---

21 The table gives the age group of children at 30 June 1999.
Those children who started under a different requirement from home supervision had been on supervision for longer periods of time than the majority of children, with 159 (62%) having been on supervision for over 3 years (compared with 18% of all children - see Table 3.4).

Subsequent referrals during the period of home supervision

Following the start of home supervision, 64 per cent of children were referred to the reporter in relation to further alleged grounds. Table 3.9 shows that more boys (69%) than girls (56%) had subsequent referrals.

Table 3.9 Subsequent referrals during home supervision by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No subsequent referrals</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent referrals</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.10 compares the subsequent grounds of referral with the initial grounds of referral. The majority (90%) of those with no subsequent referrals during supervision had initially been referred on non-offence grounds. Only 3 per cent of those who had subsequent referrals for non-offences had initially been referred for offending. However of those with subsequent offence grounds, 37 per cent had initially been referred for offending and 42 per cent on non-offence grounds.

Table 3.10 A comparison of initial grounds of referral with subsequent grounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial grounds of referral</th>
<th>Subsequent grounds of referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-off</td>
<td>1,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History of children in home supervision

For 2,529 children (45%) the supervision requirement in force at 30 June 1999 was a result of their first referral. However, for 3,154 children (55%) there had been at least one prior referral to the reporter. Table 3.11 indicates that more boys (60%) than girls (49%) had at least one prior referral.

22 There was incomplete information for all the children.
Table 3.11 Referrals prior to current supervision requirement by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of prior grounds</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,388</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of children (75%) had not been on supervision previously. Table 3.12 indicates the different percentages of children who had and who had not experienced prior supervision.

Table 3.12 Whether children had a prior supervision requirement by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No prior supervision requirement</th>
<th>One or more prior supervision requirement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,358</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

---

23 There was incomplete information for all the children.
SUMMARY

More boys (61%) than girls (39%) were on home supervision with their parent or carer at 30 June 1999. While this difference holds for the older age group, for the younger age groups (0-7) there were actually more girls than boys on home supervision.

More girls were referred on care and protection grounds, while more boys were referred on offence grounds and on mixed grounds (i.e. more than one ground).

Only a minority of children (18%) had been on supervision for longer than 3 years.

More of the older children were on supervision on offence grounds: conversely more younger children were on supervision on non-offence grounds.

Although most of the children currently under supervision at home had been so since the start of their supervision, for five per cent this had been preceded by a different supervision requirement and these children had been on supervision for longer, with 159 (62%) having been on supervision for over 3 years (compared with 18% of all children). The younger children were more likely to have started with some form of non-residential supervision, with foster carers or relatives, while older children were more likely to have experienced supervision in a residential unit.

Following the start of home supervision, 64 per cent of children were re-referred to the reporter in relation to further alleged grounds. More re-referrals were made in respect of boys (69%) than girls (56%) and more were on offence than non-offence grounds. The majority (90%) of those with no subsequent referrals during supervision had initially been referred on non-offence grounds.
CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS, CIRCUMSTANCES AND SUPERVISION OF A SAMPLE OF 189 CHILDREN ON HOME SUPERVISION

As outlined in Chapter One, a sample of 189 children on home supervision whose annual review took place in 2001/early 2002 was identified through reporters’ offices across Scotland. Research findings concerning the home supervision of these 189 children, derived from scrutiny of social work case files and questionnaires completed by reporters, are presented in this chapter. The chapter begins by outlining the characteristics and circumstances of the children. It then reports on the aims and objectives of home supervision and care plans. It considers in detail aspects of the delivery of home supervision including: first face to face social work contact, services and resources provided, allocation of social workers, contact between social workers and families, child care reviews, interagency activity and termination. Finally, the chapter considers the outcomes of home supervision, including for children referred on grounds of care and protection, offending and non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse. Outcomes are explored further in Chapter Five.

CHARACTERISTICS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF 189 CHILDREN

Figure 4.1 indicates that more boys (65%) than girls (35%) were on home supervision, particularly those in the 12-17 age group.

![Figure 4.1: Gender and age of 189 children on home supervision](image)

Of the 189 children, 185 were white. One child was Pakistani and one was Asian, while a further two children were of mixed race. Figure 4.2 indicates that nearly half (46%) the children in the sample lived in single parent households, usually headed by a female
parent/carer. The rate of lone parent households in the population of Great Britain as a whole in 2001 was 9 per cent (National Statistics, 2002). Figure 4.3 shows that most children lived in households with one or two children in them. However, 63 (33%) of children lived in families with three or four children, which is above the national average.

Figure 4.2: Parents/carers in household of 189 c

- Single female parent: n=87
- Single male parent: n=13
- Parent and partner: n=23
- Parent and relative: n=5
- Both parents: n=36
- Other relative: n=25
Figure 4.3: Number of children in 189 households (including child in study)

Figure 4.4 shows that 85 per cent of the families were living in local authority housing. This compares with an average for Scotland of 25 per cent (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2001).
As can be seen from Figure 4.5, the majority of parents/carers (69%) were not employed. In a minority of households at least one parent/carer was employed (27%), which compares with an average employment rate amongst those of working age in Scotland of 69 per cent for women and 75 per cent for men in 1999 (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2001). Although there is variation in the employment rate across Scotland, (from 57% in Glasgow to 83% in Shetland), the figure of 27 per cent for the households in the sample is extremely low.
Current home supervision of 189 children

The majority (90%) of the 189 children began the current home supervision requirement at home. However, a minority (10%) lived with foster carers or in a residential unit (15 and 4 respectively) immediately prior to this current period of home supervision.

At the start of their current home supervision requirement, the 189 children were referred to the reporter on a total of 226 grounds (some were referred on more than one ground). Of the 226 grounds, nearly half (48%) were care and protection, under a fifth (21%) were offences, under a fifth (21%) were failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse and a minority (10%) was beyond the control of `any relevant person' or substance abuse.\textsuperscript{24}

Figure 4.6 shows the children grouped according to the initial grounds of referral. The largest group (52%) was referred for care and protection. A smaller group of children was referred for failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse (14%), and for offending (12%), although it should be noted that a substantial minority (19%) was referred on mixed grounds, which were predominantly offenders and poor school attenders\textsuperscript{25} (a further 4% were referred for being beyond control and for substance misuse).

\textsuperscript{24} These grounds of referral are in s52(2)(a)-(i) Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
\textsuperscript{25} Of the mixed group, 15 were referred on both (h) and (i), 18 on at least (h) or (i) and another ground.
As can be seen from Figure 4.7, the majority (82%) of home supervision requirements had not run longer than 3 years, which is broadly in line with the national data.
Prior supervision/social work involvement in families of 189 children

For the majority of children (86%) their current home supervision requirement was their first supervision requirement, whereas a minority (14%) had experienced completely separate prior supervision requirements - 16 at home, six with foster carers and five in a residential unit. Prior to this current period of home supervision, 30 children (16%) had received what is generally referred to as ‘voluntary supervision’, that is non-statutory contact with a social worker arising from a referral to the reporter which does not result in a children's hearing. Many families had received social work input which had not involved either a supervision requirement or ‘voluntary supervision' for the child currently on home supervision.

There had been prior social work involvement in some form in most of the 189 families (86%). While it was not the purpose of this study to gather information about the history of this involvement, the researchers sought to provide a brief overview of prior involvement as a means of providing some context for the current home supervision requirement; they succeeded in doing so from over three quarters of the files. From these brief resumes a number of distinct aspects emerged regarding the families.

First, the lives of many families were characterised by domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and parental or sibling offending. Mental health problems - particularly depression among mothers - were also prominent and, while less frequent, equally striking were the number of suicide attempts by family members and the death of a parent at an early age for some of the children. Many families had experienced difficulties with housing, including poor living conditions, eviction and homelessness. Additionally, many were beset by financial problems, so much so that when this was not the case it was commented on, as the researcher recorded:

2. The social worker notes that material standards are high in this family and it is not a family that would normally come before the social work department.

Many allegations of abuse or neglect had been made over the years in relation to the child now on supervision or their siblings, either of sexual abuse by parents/carers, neighbours or relatives, or of neglect or physical abuse by the parents/carers. Where this did not lead to any action being taken it was usually because of lack of evidence, for example:

The child alleged that his father had attempted to strangle him during a domestic incident between his parents. No further action was taken as allegations could not be substantiated.

Other referrals for child protection had been substantiated and the child was currently on supervision for reasons of care and protection, or they or their siblings (or both) had been on the child protection register before. Some of the parents had themselves had involvement with the social work department as children, including those who had been accommodated away from home.

Sadly, many families experienced multiple difficulties, as these extracts from the social work case files reveal:
[over a period of two years] all the children were placed on the child protection register... the mother took an overdose of anti-depressants...the mother went to
the health centre with the children whilst unfit through alcohol… the father died of alcohol poisoning;

[over a period of one year] both the mother and father abuse drugs and alcohol… finances are chaotic… she presented pregnant at the hospital stating that she was an intravenous drug user… sibling and child placed on the child protection register;

[over a period of years] the mother was on supervision… she has taken several overdoses and has been hospitalised… concerns over the child’s welfare because of the mother’s drinking… the father commits suicide… reports of drinking parties at house… the mother placed on ‘Diversion from Prosecution’ scheme… she takes an overdose and is hospitalised… mother charged with Schedule 1 offence.

[over a period of two years] The mother has had significant involvement with the social work department throughout the child’s life, including residential, secure and foster care. She has also been on probation following a charge of attempted murder.

Not surprisingly, many of the difficulties experienced by the families in the past were mirrored by their experiences during the current period of home supervision. The researchers noted the major issues for the family to emerge from the case file during home supervision. Table 4.1 provides a list of those difficulties identified in respect of female or male carers. As can be seen, financial and housing problems were most prominent, followed by physical health, mental health, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol misuse. More of these difficulties were recorded in the case files in respect of female carers than male carers.

Table 4.1 Issues affecting parents/carers during the period of home supervision (in addition to the grounds of referral)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Female carer (n=175)</th>
<th>Male carer (n=88)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing problems</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence (victim)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol misuse</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug misuse</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF HOME SUPERVISION

It had been anticipated by the research team that the aims and objectives of home supervision would be specified in the care plans. However, as there were so few care plans in the files (as is discussed below), other sources in the files were sought to yield information on the aims and objectives of home supervision. Those identified include the social background reports

26 Only issues affecting more than 20 per cent of female or male carers have been included.
written for the children’s hearing system, child protection (and other) conference minutes, social work department review minutes and social workers’ case notes. Two key aspects of the aims and objectives are reported below - how specific they were and whether they reflected the grounds of referral. There were 30 case files in which the aims and objectives were not found in any of the above sources, either because there was no substantive information in the file (as in cases that were unallocated for periods of time) or because the information at the beginning of the period of home supervision was not in the file, as sometimes occurred when the file was transferred from one office to the other. In very few cases had the social worker just not identified any aims or objectives.

Figure 4.8 indicates that of the 159 case files in which aims and objectives were identified, the majority (86%) mentioned the grounds of referral as being (at least) one focus of the work. However, Figure 4.9 indicates that the majority (58%) of the social workers’ aims and objectives were not specific, as these two examples illustrate: "to support the child in her attendance at school" and "to provide the child and family with ongoing support". One of the most notable aspects of lack of specificity was in relation to offending, which social workers very often referred to as the "child’s behaviour" and rarely as offending. Moreover, they rarely indicated how they would address the child’s offending, although anger management in respect of those whose offending involved loss of control was an exception to this. By contrast, the aims and objectives for many of the care and protection cases (and to a lesser extent non-attendance at school) were more clearly identified and a range of ways of addressing the problems recorded.

**Figure 4.8: Whether aims and objectives reflected the grounds of referral**

- reflected grounds of referral: 137
- did not reflect grounds of referral: 22
Conditions of home supervision

Apart from the standard condition "to comply with the directions given by the supervising social worker", 84 of the 189 supervision requirements had conditions attached to them. The majority of these conditions involved:

- residence with a named person (usually mother, father or other relative)
- contact, usually with the absent parent
- requirement for no contact or supervised contact with a named person or persons
- attending a pre-school centre, a family centre or educational establishment, usually nursery or school.

Occasionally there were other conditions, including the requirement to attend appointments with a psychiatrist, to co-operate with a psychological assessment, to comply with the care plan and to attend groupwork.
CARE PLANS

The Regulations and Guidance provide detailed guidance for the supervision of children at home and state:

All children who are looked after by local authorities are required under the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 to have a care plan in place which is reviewed at regular intervals. Children on home supervision must have such a plan covering those matters laid out in regulation 6 and Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations (Scottish Office, 1997:40)

As noted in Chapter Two, 27 (90%) of respondents to the local authority questionnaires indicated that social workers in their authority were expected to complete a care plan for children on home supervision. However, one of the key findings of the study was that while social workers expected to provide care plans - often in the form of the Looked After Children material - for children who are looked after away from home, the practice for children looked after at home was very different. Figure 4.10 shows that care plans were completed for 32 (17%) of the 189 children on home supervision. In a further 8 case files social workers had completed a supervision agreement, which contained some, but not all, of the information contained in the more extensive care plans.

Table 4.2 indicates whether the information set out in the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997:43) was contained in each of the 32 care plans.27

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27 The inclusion of the 8 supervision agreements would have reduced rather than increased the percentages.
Table 4.2 Information contained in 32 care plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s name</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s sex</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s date of birth</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s place of birth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s address</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address of relevant persons</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s nationality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s religion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s first language</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s physical description</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s present legal status, including local authority’s statutory responsibility for the child</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why consideration is being given to the child being looked after by the local authority</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of involvement of the child with any local authority or other relevant organisation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of the child’s siblings, including date of birth and address</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of child’s siblings in respect of their being looked after by the local authority</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of contact the child has with their family and any other significant person who does not live in the same household</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s health history</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s current state of health and development</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements for child’s current medical and dental care</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s education history</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current arrangements for provision of education for the child</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s personality</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s social development</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s interests and recreational activities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conditions of the home SR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the objectives of home SR are to be achieved</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate plans for the child</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer-term plans for the child</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other plans (e.g. child protection or a Record of Needs) relevant to the child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibilities of the local authority</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibilities of the child</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibilities of any person with parental responsibility for the child</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibilities of any other relevant person</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to be provided to meet the care, education and health needs of the child</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification of the frequency of the contact between family and social worker</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification of the location of the contact between family and social worker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification of the nature of the contact between family and social worker</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected timescales for allocation of case</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected timescales for meetings with the family</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected timescales for ongoing contact</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected timescales for meeting of objectives and reviews</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disagreements are to be dealt with</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occurrences that would lead to a review hearing being called</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of alternative courses of action</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of arrangements for the time when the child will no longer be looked after</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of whether the local authority should seek a change in the child’s legal status</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regard for the child’s views</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regard for the views of any relevant person</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 Take this to mean services other than SW intervention, as this is covered separately in the care plan.
Regard for the child’s religion 5 16
Regard for the child’s racial origin 5 16
Regard for the child’s cultural background 4 12
Regard for the child’s linguistic background 5 16

As can be seen from Table 4.2, apart from the child’s name, which was in all the plans, the two most frequently included items were the immediate plans for the child, which were recorded in 31 of the 32 care plans (97%) and how the objectives of home supervision were to be achieved, which were in 29 plans (91%).

The Regulations and Guidance emphasise the importance of drawing up the care plan in consultation with the child and family:

*The plan should be drawn up in close consultation - and wherever reasonably practicable in agreement - with the child and family. It should reflect the fact that the day-to-day care is undertaken by the family. The objective is to clarify and strengthen within the care plan the arrangements for home supervision so that all those concerned - the child, the parents and the local authority - know what to expect of the arrangements and what is required of them* (Scottish Office, 1997:40).

As Table 4.2 indicates, explicit evidence of having regard for the child's views or those of any relevant person, was found in only a minority of the care plans. Data were therefore extracted from the social work case files to indicate other ways in which social workers had elicited (or sought to elicit) the views of children and parents/carers during the year leading to the annual review in 2001/early 2002. The two most frequent sources were entries in the case notes recording discussions of these matters or social background reports for children’s hearings. Some social background reports were prepared to a structured format which contained a section headed "child and family views". Other mechanisms for eliciting views included risk assessment forms, child protection conferences, internal case reviews and, in the case of children only, worksheets compiled during groupwork sessions. Where these more structured mechanisms were deployed, there were usually clearer indications in the case files of the views of children and their parents/carers than when there was a reliance simply on a running case record.
THE DELIVERY OF HOME SUPERVISION

First face to face contact between the social worker and the child/family after the start of the home supervision requirement

The Regulations and Guidance stipulate that once a children's hearing has decided upon a home supervision requirement, the social worker allocated by the local authority should "arrange to visit the child and family immediately where there is a significant level of risk, but in any case within two weeks". (Scottish Office, 1997:42).

As shown in Table 4.3 the case files indicate that in 58 (31%) of the 189 cases a first visit took place within two weeks of the commencement of home supervision. In a further 35 cases (19%) a visit was undertaken within the first month. In several of the latter, the social work case file recorded that the social worker had been on leave in the period immediately after the child was placed on home supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 2 weeks</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 2 weeks – 1 month</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 – 2 months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 3 – 4 months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months or over</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding

As Table 4.3 shows, in 69 (37%) of the 189 cases, it was not possible to discern the date of the first visit from the case files.

Services/resources recorded as provided to children and families on home supervision

In 133 of the 189 cases, specific services/resources (in addition to the social worker) were noted in the case files as having been made available to the children and their families while on home supervision. In the cases in which additional services were noted, one service was identified in 38 per cent, two in 26 per cent, three in 19 per cent and more than 3 in 17 per cent. The total number of services noted was 256, of which about half appeared to be provided directly by social work departments and about half by other agencies, including those in the voluntary sector. The services provided by social work departments, in order of frequency, were:

- practical home-based family support (variously called home support, family support workers, home makers, home helps, community support team)
- groupwork (unspecified)

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29 It was not always clear from the social work case files precisely which agencies were providing which services.
• respite care
• intermediate treatment
• transport
• family centre provision
• financial support.

The services identified in the files as being provided by other agencies were, in order of frequency:

• educational services (either special educational provision, or behavioural/learning support)
• voluntary services (the most common being the use of befrienders)
• drug and alcohol services
• psychiatric services (principally child and family mental health and community psychiatric nurses)
• other health provision (e.g. occupational therapy, speech therapy, dietician).

The provision of educational psychology services was noted in only six cases and general psychological services in three cases. Not unexpectedly, the case files did not always routinely identify the provision of universal services (such as health visiting, mainstream schooling, general practice) and so they underestimate the degree of interagency involvement in the lives of children and families.

In ten cases, five or more services were provided. Although these were only a small minority of the total sample, the packages of services in place for these children and families were extensive and intensive. In one case, for example, the services provided were as follows:

• homemaker, daily 2 hours per day Monday to Friday, 1½ hours Saturday and ½ an hour Sunday (for several years)
• befriender, three times per month (for three years)
• educational psychologist (for a year)
• speech therapy, twice weekly then weekly (for four years).

Over a period of several years there had, in addition, been the provision of grants to help with house renovation and heating installation, respite care in a residential unit and with foster carers, a homemaker, day care once a week for a three year period, money to enable the child to meet the befriender, a number of one-off charitable grants and a holiday. This was in addition to monthly social work contact.
The supervision order in this case was terminated at the annual review. The social work department had been involved with the family for over 15 years, with a supervision requirement in place for most of this period. By 2001 the initial reasons for compulsory measures were considered by the children’s hearing to be no longer relevant. It was clear from the file that the support provided had enabled the mother who had mental health and other problems to maintain this child (and siblings) at home until they reached school-leaving age.

In another case the service package was as follows:

- community psychiatric nurse to support mother and monitor her mental health (once weekly, for three years)
- home support and day care worker to get child out to school and settled in the evening (twice daily, every day for three years)
- befriender to take child out on recreational activities to offer mother respite (one evening weekly for three years)
- Intermediate treatment group work (one evening weekly)
- family support group to assist mother with parenting skills (one afternoon weekly).

At the annual review in 2001 the home supervision requirement was continued. In this case, the standard of care was affected by the mother’s misuse of alcohol and her mental health problems. The written reasons for the decision at the children’s hearing record “the child is doing well at school and attendance is up to 90 per cent”. The panel members concluded the child and mother continued to require the wide ranging support currently on offer.

Services/resources recorded as not available

Researchers noted (the rare) occasions when specific resource shortages were recorded by social workers in the social work case files. Nineteen such instances were identified, the largest group comprising specialist educational resources (6), followed by respite care (5) and befrienders (4). It is, perhaps, surprising that there was not more frequent reference to this issue in the case files. It is possible that social workers simply did not record instances where requisite or desired resources were, in fact, unavailable.

Home supervision in the year leading up to the annual review held in 2001/early 2002

Information was extracted from the 189 case files concerning home supervision in the year prior to the annual review held in 2001/early 2002. The aim was to gather detailed information about patterns of activity in the cases, noting particularly contact between the social worker and the child/family concerned (whether face to face or by telephone), social work contact with other services provided by the social work department and social work contact with others in the interagency network (statutory and voluntary) who were providing services. This was done by focusing on two time periods in the year preceding the annual review in 2001/early 2002. First, information was collected for all 189 cases relating to the first three months of the year prior to the annual review. Secondly, for the 60 cases in which
the home supervision requirement was terminated at the annual review, information was extracted, in addition, for the three months immediately prior to the annual review.

**Allocation of social workers in the year preceding the annual review in 2001/early 2002**

Forty two of the 189 cases had a period of months during the year leading up to the annual review in which there had been no social worker attached to the family. This includes a few cases which were nominally held by team leaders or senior social workers in which some intermittent activity (such as the preparation of reports for children’s hearings) was evident, but there was no ongoing input by a social worker. In 34 of the 42 cases, the period during which there was no social worker varied from 4-10 months. In 8 of the 42 cases, there had been no social worker allocated from the last children’s hearing up to the annual review in 2001/early 2002, as exemplified by the written reasons for the decision at the hearing which requested an early review:

*The children’s hearing made the decision to continue the supervision order and review it in one month for the following reasons:
1. The child and his mother did not attend. We understand they have moved to a new address.
2. No social work input to the family over that past year and no social work report.
3. No basis to make any other decision.
4. Wish an early review to allow the Hearing to see and talk to the family.
5. Social work to be asked for a report on why the recommendations of the previous hearing were not acted upon.*

There appeared to be considerable variation across Scotland with regard to this problem and it was striking that 31 of the 42 cases (74%) were to be found in only four authorities.

The reasons noted in the file for the periods when there was no social work input were threefold: social workers were on extended periods of sick leave, the cases had been transferred from one office to another, and social workers who had resigned had not been replaced. Relatedly, the number of times there had been a change of social worker in the last twelve months was recorded by the researchers. In 89 of the 189 cases there had been at least one change of social worker for the family and in 22 of these either two or three changes of social worker were noted.

**Contacts between social workers and families**

The researchers extracted from the case file for the three month period at the beginning of the year leading to the annual review 2001/early 2002 the following information:

- the number of telephone calls with families
- the number of face to face contacts between the social worker and the family.

There were entries in the case files for 112 (of 189) in relation to the beginning of the year preceding the annual review. With respect to the remaining 77 there were either no case notes (although there may have been unrecorded contacts), there was no social worker allocated for this period of time or, less likely, there were no contacts made during the period.
Table 4.4 Contact over a three month period at the beginning of the year preceding the annual review for 112 cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contact</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face contacts with family</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to child/family</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to agencies</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to others in the social work department</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that there were 659 face to face contacts with the family. These were usually in the form of home visits by the social worker and were mostly with female carers and children rather than male carers, with the latter having less than half the contacts of either of the other two. Of the total of 661 telephone calls, 246 were with families (mostly with female carers and rarely with children), 255 were with agencies and 160 were to other parts of the social work department, such as home care/home support services, groupwork and family centres providing services to the child/family.

In the three month period, the average number of social work visits per case was 6, or one visit per fortnight on average. The average number of telephone calls to the child/family in the three month period was two. If, however, the cases which were unallocated for all or part of this time and/or the cases for which no detailed case notes were available were included, the average for visits and telephone calls for the sample as a whole would be lower.

Child care reviews in the year prior to the annual review 2001/early 2002

The Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996 No. 3262 (S.252) specify in respect of the time when cases are to be reviewed that: `a local authority shall carry out the following reviews of the case of a child looked after but not placed by the local authority:
(a) a first review within 3 months from the date on which the authority began to look after the child: and
(b) thereafter subsequent reviews within 6 months of the date of the previous review’ (s9(2)).

Child care reviews were recorded in the social work case files as having been held in only 24 (13%) of the 189 cases in the year preceding the annual review. In 12 cases one review was held and in eight cases two reviews were held. In three cases there were six reviews and in one six - making a total of 43 reviews.

In 30 of the 43 child care reviews held in the year preceding the annual review, those present were recorded in the case files. Family members were present as follows:

- Other relatives only 7
- Mother only 6
- Mother and child 6
Mothers were thus the most frequent family participants, attending 15 of the 30 reviews. The child was present in only eleven.

Interagency personnel were recorded as present in 13 of the reviews, while 17 were attended by only social work department staff (in addition to family members). Of the total of 20 interagency staff attending reviews, 14 were from schools. Three health service staff were present and three staff from voluntary agencies.

In 17 of the 24 cases in which child care reviews were held during the 12 months prior to the annual review in 2001/early 2002, the original grounds of referral were care and protection. Of the remainder, three were originally referred on offence grounds, two on grounds of non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse and 2 on mixed grounds. This suggests that cases in which the original grounds of referral were care and protection were disproportionately likely to be the subject of a child care review in the year prior to annual review.

INTERAGENCY ACTIVITY IN THE YEAR PRECEDING THE ANNUAL REVIEW

As the Regulations and Guidance note, “collaboration between agencies and within the [local] authority is essential” (Scottish Office, 1997:42) in achieving the objectives of home supervision. Information presented earlier in this chapter on the services and resources made available to children and families indicates the range of these provided from within local authorities (particularly social work departments) and also from across the statutory and voluntary sectors. A key task of the social worker in home supervision was to co-ordinate these service packages, which required liaison with others in the interagency network. The social work files were therefore scrutinised for evidence of this activity, recording matters such as correspondence, telephone contacts and reports from other agencies in the year prior to the annual review.

Correspondence between agencies concerning the child/family under home supervision during the year preceding the annual review

The social work case files were scrutinised for correspondence between agencies during the 12 month period leading up to the annual review. In 88 (47%) of the 189 cases there was no correspondence of this kind in the file. In the remaining 101 cases, over 219 items of correspondence between agencies was recorded as present in the files. The bulk of this correspondence was directly between the social workers and another agency (or vice-versa). In addition, exchanges between others in the interagency network had sometimes been copied to the social worker and placed in the case file. All items have been counted in the total of 219. As Table 4.5 shows, the largest group concerned correspondence between solicitors and

---

1 The composition of ‘other’ was mother, father and child (1); mother and other relatives (1); and mother, child and other relatives (1).

31 In 13 reviews, those present were not recorded in the case file.
social workers, principally over issues of contact and residence. This was followed by health, principally liaison between mental health services, paediatricians and social workers. Next was liaison with voluntary agencies, largely applications by social workers for material/financial aid, such as holiday grants and clothing grants. Lastly came housing, schools and the Department of Social Security (D.S.S.). It is interesting how large a proportion of the interagency correspondence (housing, much of that with the voluntary sector and the D.S.S.) related to the financial/material well-being of the children and families concerned.

Table 4.5 Items of correspondence in the social work files between agencies concerning the child under supervision in the year leading up to the annual review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Number of items of correspondence</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solicitors</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Agencies</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.S.S</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriffs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interagency telephone contacts in the year preceding the annual review

As shown in Table 4.4, 255 telephone contacts were recorded between the social worker and other agencies in the first three months of the year prior to the annual review. These were predominantly with education and thereafter, in order of frequency, health services, voluntary agencies, housing, drug and alcohol services, reporter and police.

Reports from schools, health and voluntary agencies in the social work case files

In the year preceding the annual review there were 104 reports from other agencies relating to 81 cases in the social work case files. In 108 cases there were no reports. As with telephone calls, the majority of reports (82%) were from schools, as shown in Table 4.6, reflecting the importance of links between social workers and schools in respect of children on home supervision.
Table 4.6 Table of reports from other agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of reports</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>No. of reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 School</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 Voluntary agencies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4 Educational psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5 Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.6 TOTAL</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding

School reports for those referred on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse

The Regulations and Guidance specify that where failure to attend school regularly is the problem the social worker should “obtain regular reports from school on attendance”. (Scottish Office, 1997:44). The social work case files were scrutinised for school reports regarding attendance submitted in the twelve months prior to annual review in respect of the 25 children originally reported solely on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse and the 23 children referred on mixed grounds including non-attendance at school.

In seven of the 48 cases, the young person had left school during the period leading up to the annual review, (moving on to college, employment, work experience or unemployment) so no school report would necessarily be available. In 20 (49%) of the remaining 41 cases, school reports were found in the file in the year preceding the annual review but no such report was found for 51 per cent of the cases. Schools were, however, the agency most often in telephone contact with social workers in respect of children on home supervision, so it is possible that reports on progress at school were sought by this means, rather than by written reports.

In addition to telephone contacts, correspondence and written reports, there was evidence in the case files of 31 interagency child protection conferences (relating to 21 cases) having taken place in the year preceding the annual review.

Termination of home supervision

Of the 189 home supervision requirements, 60 were terminated at the annual review in 2001/early 2002. In respect of these cases, the researchers extracted information from the case file for the three month period leading up to the annual review (excluding the month of the review) about the number of telephone calls with families and agencies and the number of face to face contacts between the social worker and the family. Of the 60 terminations, there were entries in the case file for this three month period in respect of 34 case files and no entries in respect of 26. Figure 4.7 indicates that there were 77 face to face contacts with families and 116 telephone calls with families and agencies. Of the 116 telephone calls, 47 were with agencies and 35 were with families, mostly with female carers and rarely with children; 34 were internal to the social work department. The 77 face to face contacts were more often with female carers and children rather than male carers, with the latter having a third of the contact of either of the other two. There were notably fewer contacts with
families and agencies in the three month period leading to termination than in the three months earlier in the year (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.7 Contacts in three months leading to annual review in 2001/early 2002 for terminations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contact</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face contacts with family</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to child/family</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to agencies</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls to others in the social work department</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four reasons leading to the termination of the home supervision requirement emerged from the data. The first, and by far the largest category, was when it was considered that the reasons which gave rise to the supervision requirement in the first place no longer pertained and that there has been considerable progress, as these two extracts from the written reasons for the hearing’s decisions show:

*the child* has moved on. He is doing well at school and is not offending and not has not over the last year.

and:

*the mother* has made excellent progress in addressing the needs of her children. She is managing well their daily care … The panel praised *the mother* for her efforts in achieving excellent progress and wished her well for the future…

The second scenario was when families were refusing to co-operate and home supervision, as this excerpt from social workers’ social background reports illustrates:

It is the writer’s view that between the present time and the child’s next birthday, little can be done to persuade the child to accept assistance, therefore termination of the supervision requirement may be the best option.

Thirdly, and also linked to co-operation, it was being suggested that voluntary measures be put in place instead of compulsory measures and for this reason termination was decided on, as the following the written reasons for the hearing’s decisions illustrate:

*the child* found it too difficult to take advantage of the opportunities. Being on supervision, it was felt, would not benefit *the child* as he has a history of non co-operation. *The child and mother* agreed that voluntary work would be best and *the social worker* emphasised that they would continue to support *the child* on a voluntary basis and had no concerns the family would not comply.

Finally, where there had been minimal social work input, it was considered inappropriate for supervision to continue and termination was the outcome, for example:

*the child* has had little involvement from social work over the past year. There are no concerns or issues.
It was also possible for a combination of these reasons to be in operation, as in the following extract from a social worker's background report:

*There's been no report of the child being involved in further offending and, given that his family do not appear to wish social work involvement, I would recommend that the child supervision order is terminated.*

The Regulations and Guidance state that “the ending of compulsory measures of supervision does not mean that contact between the child or family and the social worker should automatically cease” (Scottish Office, 1997:45). Of the 60 home supervision requirements that were terminated at the annual review in 2001/early 2002, it was clear from the case file that ongoing support was to be made available by the social work department *after* termination in respect of 29 families (in a further one, arrangements were put in place such that the family could access support at a later date if they required it). For three of these the planned input was described as `aftercare'.32 All the families for whom ongoing assistance had been offered were said to be willing or keen to co-operate with the social work department.

**OUTCOMES OF HOME SUPERVISION**

The outcomes discussed below and in Chapter Five (where lay and professional views of the supervision provided are presented) seek to illuminate the outcomes of home supervision, including whether beneficial changes had occurred in the lives of the children in the sample under supervision.

**Disposals and recommendations at annual review 2001/early 2002**

Figure 4.11 and Figure 4.12 present the 189 disposals at the annual review held in 2001/early 2002 and the social workers' recommendations. All but one of the disposals was to continue the supervision at home with the current parents/carers or to terminate the supervision requirement (for one child the supervision requirement was varied to named foster carers). There was a high correlation between social workers' recommendation and the disposal of the annual review, with differences noted in only 5 families, in which the social worker was recommending termination and the hearing decided to continue the home supervision requirement.

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32 Dixon and Stein (2002) found that those on a home supervision requirement were not assessed as eligible for throughcare and/or aftercare services by a number of authorities.
Figure 4.11: Social workers' recommendations at annual review

- Not recorded: n=7
- Foster carers: n=1
- No recommendation: n=19
- Termination: n=59
- Continuation of home supervision: n=103

Figure 4.12: Disposal at annual review

- Continuation of home supervision: n=128
- Foster carers: n=1
- Termination: n=60
Of the 86 families for whom their view of the recommendation at the annual review in 2001/early 2002 was to be found in the case file, 75 agreed with the social work recommendation (39 in favour of termination and 36 in favour of continuation of supervision), 8 did not agree with the social work recommendation and in 3 families the members themselves held different views. In the remaining case files either there had been no social background report prepared by the social worker (or a report but no recommendation) or there was no recorded view of the family. In respect of terminations, there was only one recorded family disagreement with the social work recommendation.

**Satisfaction rating derived from panel members’ written reasons**

Ratings of satisfaction in the progress of the cases were derived from the written reasons for decisions at annual review. The results, shown in Figure 4.13, indicate that in 82 cases (43%) progress was rated as satisfactory, while it was not satisfactory in 53 (28%). The method of devising the satisfaction rating is outlined below.

![Figure 4.13: Satisfaction rating derived from panel members' written reasons at the annual review](image)

An assessment was made of progress in the 189 cases by scrutiny of the written reasons for decisions of the children’s hearing at the annual review held in 2001/early 2002. The written reasons ranged from three or four lines of typing or handwriting through to more than a page of A4. Progress was rated (by the research team) and assigned to one of the following five categories: satisfactory, not satisfactory, mixed, progress unclear or missing (not made

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33 These are the statement in writing of the reasons for the decision of the hearing which the chairman makes (or causes to be made) following a children's hearing, under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules r.10(5).
available to the researchers). Illustrations are given below of three of the 82 cases categorised as satisfactory. The first concerned a child referred on grounds of lack of parental care:

The social worker reported that the family have made positive progress over the last year. Since their move to the new house the family have lived more or less independently without social work services. The social work department have kept in contact but the respite service etc is no longer required. The child moves to high school this year and the social worker has already contacted the educational psychologist to inform them of the child's situation. The child’s current head teacher is also available for advice and consultation. The child’s health continues to be monitored on a regular basis by the hospital. The child’s parents accept and co-operate with all services in the child’s interests. The social worker feels that there are enough safeguards in place to allow the current requirement to be terminated. After discussion the panel agreed with this assessment and therefore terminated the supervision requirement. Due to the progress made, compulsory measures of care no longer necessary.

The second concerned a child referred on offence grounds:

The panel unanimously decided to terminate the child’s supervision order because he does not now meet the criteria for an order. Child has turned his lifestyle around in the past year, doing very well at his new school. He has worked well with staff at the school and with his social worker. His behaviour at home has improved and he has to be congratulated on achieving this turn around. The panel wished the child best wishes for the future reminding him that his social worker was still there for him, albeit on a voluntary basis.

The third concerned a child referred on grounds of non-attendance at school:

It was decided to terminate the requirement because:-
1. This will hopefully encourage the child in his efforts.
2. There has been significant improvement in his situation both at home and at school
   He has utilised supports available and will continue to do so.

The following two cases are indicative of those classified as not satisfactory. The first concerns a child referred on grounds of failing to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse:

The situation has not changed. The child does not attend school. School has provided all of the support which the family has asked for, where it has been possible. There is no co-operation from an educational point of view from child. Child is in control rather than the adults involved with her. Child has started to attend young people’s project for children with educational problems and she feels that this help will get her to return to school. She is hoping to return after the school holidays. An early review to be held in September where the issues are to be looked at. Reports from residential school to find out if this would be appropriate option for child to provide an education for her. A report from a clinical psychologist to look at the major
problem of child’s non-attendance which child says is not connected with school.

The second was referred on grounds of lack of parental care.

The panel heard that the past year has been very unsettled for the family. Due to a serious incident in January, all of the children were placed on the child protection register. The panel heard that once the father’s bail condition had been removed, the whole family has agreed to an assessment at the family assessment centre. There is clearly a great deal of work to be done in this vulnerable family situation. For these reasons the panel felt that compulsory measures of supervision should continue.

In all of the cases categorised as mixed there was evidence of progress and improvement but also of continuing problems and concerns. The following are examples; the first referred on grounds of non-attendance at school, the second on offence grounds:

The family has made progress. However there are still difficulties around for them. Mother has agreed to the supports offered by the social work. The family are making good use of the supports given. Attendance and time keeping are still a problem for both even though there have been improvements. Contact with father was discussed. At the present time this has been reduced because of father’s excessive drinking. The appointment of a safeguarder was not considered necessary.

Although child has made excellent progress in dealing with issues relating to his offending behaviour, his school attendance remains an issue of concern. Panel agreed to request an early review in three months time to give the child an opportunity to demonstrate that he would attend school regularly, so that the next hearing could consider the possible termination of the supervision requirement. Safeguarder and contact discussed.

Ten cases were classified as progress unclear. These were usually ones in which the family and/or social worker failed to attend the hearing and no social work report was available. An example follows:

The child’s social worker is currently on sick leave and the family has been notified of today’s hearing. Given that his supervision requirement will lapse imminently and it is unlikely that a social work report could be provided between now and then, we decided to continue the child’s supervision requirement and call for a review in approximately two months in the hope that social work will be able to provide the hearing with the necessary information and that there may be a social worker dealing with the case by that time.

As shown in Table 4.8, when initial grounds of referral are considered together with the satisfaction ratings derived from written reasons at the annual review in 2001/early 2002, the majority (55%) of care and protection cases were ranked satisfactory, compared with 41 per cent on offence grounds and only 12 per cent on grounds of failure to attend school regularly.
without reasonable excuse. Over half of the cases referred initially on grounds of failure to attend school were rated unsatisfactory.

Table 4.8 Initial grounds by satisfaction rating derived from panel members’ written reasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Ratings</th>
<th>Care and Protection</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Failure to attend school</th>
<th>Mixed/other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfactory</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress unclear</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 Thirty six cases were initially referred on mixed grounds and 7 on other grounds.
Subsequent referrals to the reporter

Another outcome measure is whether the child was subsequently referred to the reporter following the commencement of home supervision. As can be seen from Figure 4.14, there were subsequent referrals to the reporter since the start of the current home supervision for 104 children (55%), whereas there were no subsequent referrals for 85 children (45%). It is important to note that these were referrals and not proven grounds. The reporter almost invariably took no action in relation to these referrals, often because the child was already on supervision.

Figure 4.14: Number of subsequent referrals since start of home supervision

Table 4.9 indicates that there were subsequent referrals for the majority of those initially referred on offence grounds (82%), regular non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse (76%) and mixed grounds (92%). By contrast, a minority of those initially placed on supervision on grounds of care and protection (29%) were subsequently referred to the reporter.
Table 4.9 Initial grounds of referral by subsequent grounds during home supervision for 189 children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Grounds</th>
<th>Whether there were subsequent referrals</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and protection</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance⁵⁵</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) Outcomes for children placed on home supervision on care and protection grounds

Subsequent referrals to the reporters

Ninety nine children were initially placed on supervision as a result of care and protection grounds alone. As Table 4.9 shows, of these 99 there were no further referrals to the reporter for 70 (71%). In 29 (29%) cases there were subsequent referrals and Table 4.10 shows that the majority of these were on care and protection grounds. Table 4.10 also indicates that all the 10 cases in which the initial grounds were mixed (and included child protection) there were subsequent referrals to the reporter and these were principally on offence grounds.

Table 4.10 Care and protection (initial grounds) by type of subsequent referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsequent referral by type of grounds</th>
<th>Initial Grounds</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Care and protection only</td>
<td>Care and protection with other ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and protection</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance at school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding

Child Protection Register

As well as subsequent referrals to the reporter, a further indicator of the degree of concern that professionals have about a child about whom there are child protection issues is whether the child is on the Child Protection Register. Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16 show that at the beginning of home supervision 40 children were on the child protection register, whereas at the annual review in 2001/early 2002 only six children were on the register (two of these six children had not been on the register at the start of home supervision and had subsequently

⁵⁵ i.e. failure to attend school without reasonable excuse
been put on). This means that 90 per cent of the children initially on the child protection register had been removed from it by the time of the annual review in 2001/early 2002.

Figure 4.15: Whether child was on CPR at start of home sup

Figure 4.16: Whether child was on CPR at annual review
(ii) Outcomes for children on home supervision on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse

Presented below are findings concerning outcomes for two groups of children: 25 cases whose supervision requirement was based on the initial ground of failure to attend school regularly without a reasonable excuse and 23 cases based on initial grounds which included the grounds of failure to attend school regularly without a reasonable excuse along with other grounds - categorised as mixed.

As is shown in Table 4.8 (initial grounds by satisfaction ratings derived from panel members’ written reasons), progress in cases referred solely on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse was rated as the poorest. In 52 per cent of cases progress was rated as not satisfactory (compared with 27% in cases referred on offence grounds and 18% in cases referred on care and protection grounds). Conversely, only 12 per cent were rated satisfactory (compared with 41 per cent on offence grounds and 55 per cent on grounds of care and protection). Twenty three cases involved mixed initial grounds including failure to attend school without reasonable excuse. The outcomes for this group, shown in Table 4.11 are more even, although more were rated as not satisfactory than as satisfactory.

Table 4.11 Initial grounds (mixed including failure to attend school without reasonable excuse) by satisfaction rating derived from panel members’ written reasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial grounds</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Not satisfactory</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Progress unclear</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (including ‘h’)</td>
<td>10 (43%)</td>
<td>11 (48%)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent referrals to the reporter

As is shown in Table 4.12, for both groups (those initially referred solely on grounds of failure to attend school without reasonable excuse and those referred on this ground with another or others) the majority of children had subsequent referrals to the reporter whilst on home supervision. The most common ground of re-referral was offence.

Table 4.12 Non-attendance at school (initial grounds) by type of subsequent referral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsequent referral by type of grounds</th>
<th>Initial Grounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-attendance at school only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and protection</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance at school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information was extracted from social work case files (including any school reports in the files) and from the written reasons for decision at the annual review 2001/early 2002 to yield information about attendance at school by the 48 children on home supervision on initial grounds solely or including failure to attend school without a reasonable excuse. In some cases there was no or unclear information available, for example in one of these the written reasons for the decision states “the child has been enrolled in [school], but we do not know of his attendance rate”. In others the child had left school and moved on to college, employment or unemployment and so failure to attend school was no longer an issue.

Of the remaining 35 cases, improvement had occurred in 10 cases and deterioration or no improvement in 25. In some cases where there had been improvements, problems concerning non-attendance at school appeared to have been completely resolved. In one case, for example, the written reasons recorded “good progress with school attendance; no longer truants. Child back with mother and has settled down”. In another the social background report for the annual review recorded that the “child’s attendance at school has improved and now stands at 70 per cent, a significant improvement since the point of referral when her attendance was recorded at 22 per cent”.

In a few, although there had been improvement, there were continuing concerns. For example, it was noted in the written reasons “attendance improving but still room for further improvement; mother now encouraging child to go to school”.

The largest category, however, comprised 25 cases in which there had been deterioration or no improvement. Many of these seemed to be intractable. In one case, for example, the child had not been in school for two years, in another the child had not attended school for over a year; in another the child attended for only 57 days in 2000-01 and the written reasons record the school as saying that there was “no likelihood of further progress and it was not in a position to offer any more support or guidance”.

(iii) Outcomes for children placed on home supervision on offence grounds

Presented below are findings concerning outcomes for two groups of children: those 22 cases whose supervision requirement was based on initial grounds of offence and those 25 cases based on initial grounds which included the grounds of offending along with other grounds - categorised as mixed. For the majority of 25 cases referred on mixed grounds, the other ground was failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse.

As is shown in Table 4.8 (initial grounds by satisfaction ratings derived from panel members’ written reasons), progress in cases referred solely on offence grounds was rated by the researchers from the written reasons for decision at the annual review as falling inbetween care and protection and failure to attend school without reasonable excuse. In 27 per cent of cases, progress was rated as not satisfactory (compared with 52 per cent in cases referred on non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse and 18 per cent in cases referred on care and protection grounds).
Table 4.13 Initial grounds (mixed including offence grounds) by satisfaction ratings derived from panel members’ written reasons at annual review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial grounds</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Not satisfactory</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Progress unclear</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (including ‘i’)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
<td>12 (38%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent referrals to the reporter

As is shown in Table 4.14, for both groups - those initially referred solely on offence grounds and those referred on this ground together with another ground, the majority were re-referred and a further offence was the most common subsequent referral to the reporter.

Table 4.14 Offence (initial grounds) by type of subsequent referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsequent referral by type of grounds</th>
<th>Initial Grounds</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offence only</td>
<td>Offence with other ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and protection</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-attendance at school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional beneficial changes in the life of the child for children referred on all grounds

The section above has provided information on whether there were beneficial changes in the life of the child, including whether there were subsequent referrals for child protection, offending and non-attendance at school.

This section will consider the broader, though clearly intricately related, aspects of the families’ lives that have led to beneficial changes for the child during the period of home supervision. There were four striking dimensions that the information extracted from the case files pointed to. The first was the provision of alternative housing in improving the situation, for example:

*The family moved house and the child seems to be settled at school, possibly because he has his own bedroom now in his new house. The child has acquired a new friend and a small dog which he takes out for walks.*

The second was a change of school or the provision of alternative education, for example:

*The child’s overall attendance and behaviour within the educational environment since starting his special school has been more settled and it is considered that good progress is being made.*
The third change which improved life for the child was in family composition, including the removal (or close supervision of contact) from the child’s life of abusive adults, such as "the perpetrator of the [sexual] abuse is no longer permitted to have contact with the child" and:

*The child is no longer exposed to violent behaviour of the father towards mum as an interdict has been taken out against him.*

Sometimes, more than one of these changes had taken place:

*The fact that mother and the child have their own house now, that is they're out of Bed & Breakfast accommodation and also there are no rows because dad's not there.*

The fourth beneficial change was in the physical or mental health of family members, either by means of families having received medication:

*The dad has had a good report from the hospital, which means that health problems will lessen - less worry for the child, who seems to take time off school to care for his dad.*

and:

*The child was seen by staff at the young people's department at the hospital and prescribed [medication]. Since this time his mum believes that he has become more settled and he states himself that he feels better able to concentrate on his schoolwork.*

Less commonly, there was intervention by a psychologist or psychiatrist:

*Mum and the child did some good work with the psychiatrist and there was a real change in the way the family functioned and particularly in the relationship between mum and the child.*

Additionally, medical help with drug and alcohol misuse was provided in respect of a few parents and appeared to be having a beneficial impact, for example: "the mother is successfully undertaking an alcohol `detox' programme".
Co-operation of families with social workers

Figure 4.17 indicates that of the 173 case files in which it was recorded whether the family co-operated with the social worker, 102 families had co-operated, whereas in 57 families there had not been co-operation and in a further 14 families the degree of co-operation differed between family members.

![Figure 4.17: Whether families co-operated with social worker](image)

Table 4.15 indicates that more families referred on care and protection grounds (64%) were co-operative than those referred on offence grounds (50%), mixed/other grounds (47%) or grounds of non-attendance at school (32%).
Table 4.15 Initial grounds by families' co-operation with social worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial grounds</th>
<th>Care and protection</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse</th>
<th>Mixed/other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family co-operative</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family not co-operative</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members differed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not all add up to 100 because of rounding

A further finding in respect of families' co-operation is interesting. Table 4.16 indicates that more families who were co-operative had a rating of satisfactory (58%) than those who were not co-operative (40%).

Table 4.16 Satisfaction rating derived from panel members' written reasons by families' co-operation with social worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family not co-operative</th>
<th>Family were co-operative</th>
<th>Family members differed</th>
<th>Not recorded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfactory</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress unclear</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding

Three factors were taken into account by social workers in their comments about the co-operation of families. First, families were deemed to be co-operative if they accepted the problem to be addressed, for example “both parents are actively addressing their drug problem… both appear committed to tackling the drug addiction affecting their lives”. It is relevant to note that of the 144 case files in which it was possible to elicit information as to whether families acknowledged their problem, in 96 families they had acknowledged them, in a further 14 families not every family member, but at least one had acknowledged them, while in 36 families the problems had not been acknowledged.
Secondly, families were considered co-operative if they accepted or sought intervention by social workers. More usually it was the former, for example: “the family are accepting of social work department intervention” and “the mother has made considerable changes in her life and has co-operated with the department and the advice offered, albeit reluctantly”. Fewer parents were described as positively seeking help, as this one was:

*The family welcome social work support and are in fact proactive in contacting the social worker where there are difficulties arising. There is a clear relationship of co-operation between mother and the social work department.*

Equally children were not often described as positively engaging with the social worker, with comments such as this one from a social background report being rare:

*I have found the child as one of the most engaging young people I have ever worked with. He makes himself available, listens to advice and for the most part takes this advice on board. The area of offending is an area where he has tried hard and attempted to avoid further offending.*

Thirdly, families were considered co-operative if they attended meetings and made themselves available for home visits by the social worker.

The same three factors were indicative of lack of co-operation. First, unco-operative families were reported not to accept their problem, as a social worker commented about a mother who “doesn’t accept she has mental health issues or special needs which need to be addressed; the GP would refer for psychiatric help if she was willing to ask for this”. Secondly, unco-operative families had not engaged with the social worker: “like his mother, the child sees my role as interfering even when I try to ensure that I’m not”. Thirdly, such families had not make themselves available for appointments, as this recent transfer summary by a social worker reveals:

*The greatest difficulty with the family is trying to engage with mother. She has failed to keep numerous appointments. Also, she has not maintained contact with the school as initially agreed and has failed to keep appointments with the educational psychologists.*

However, it was not always the family that contributed to the difficulties between them and the social work department, as the researcher recorded:

*The social background report notes that there has been a history of periods where the family have failed to co-operate, attend meetings or inform the social work department when they will not be at home for visits. This social background report also indicates that this may have been due to frequent changes in social workers over the years with periods when the case was unallocated and more recently a move of the local area team office.*
SUMMARY

Of the 189 children on home supervision, there were more boys (65%) than girls (35%) and most (185) were white. Nearly half lived in single parent households, usually headed by a female parent or carer. The majority of families (85%) were living in local authority housing and the majority of parents or carers (69%) were unemployed. Fifty two per cent of children were referred for care and protection, 14 per cent for failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse, 12 per cent for offending, 19 per cent on mixed grounds (predominantly offenders and poor school attenders) and four per cent for being beyond control or substance misuse.

For the majority of children (86%) this was their first period of home supervision and the majority of requirements (82%) had run for less than 3 years. There had been prior social work involvement in 86 per cent of families. During home supervision the families faced major difficulties including financial and housing problems, physical and mental health problems, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse.

The aims and objectives of home supervision were identified in social work files in respect of 159 cases, although the majority (58%) of these were rather unspecific, particularly in relation to offending.

Care plans, required by the Regulations and Guidance for children on home supervision, were found in the case files for only 32 (17%) of the 189 children.

In 58 (31%) cases a first social work visit took place within two weeks of the commencement of home supervision (the time period stipulated in the Regulations and Guidance); in 35 cases (19%) a visit was undertaken within the first month.

Reviews were recorded in the case files as having been held in only 13 per cent of cases in the year preceding the annual review (the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 require local authorities to carry out a review of children on home supervision within three months of commencement and thereafter within six months of the previous review).

In a three month period in which the number of contacts between social workers and the families was analysed, the average was 6, or one visit per fortnight. In seventy per cent of cases, specific services/resources (in addition to the social worker) were noted in the case files as having been made available to families, about half by social work departments and half by other agencies.

In forty two cases there were periods in the year leading up to the annual review in 2001/early 2002 in which there had been no social worker working with the family. In 34 of the 42 cases, the period during which there was no social worker varied from 4-10 months. In 8 of the 42 cases, there had been no social worker allocated from the last children’s hearing up to the annual review. In 89 (47%) of the 189 cases there had been at least one change of social worker for the family in the year, in 22 of these either two or three changes of social worker were noted.
There was evidence of considerable interagency contact (meetings, written reports, correspondence and telephone calls) concerning the children on home supervision. This involved, principally, schools, solicitors (concerning contact and residence), mental health services and paediatricians, and contact with statutory and voluntary agencies relating to the financial and material well-being of the families.

Subsequent referrals were made to the reporter since the start of the current home supervision for 104 children (55%), with no subsequent referrals for 85 children (45%). There were subsequent referrals for the majority of those initially referred on offence grounds (82%), regular non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse (76%) and mixed grounds (92%). By contrast, a minority of those initially placed on supervision on grounds of care and protection (29%) were subsequently referred to the reporter. At the beginning of home supervision 40 children had been on the child protection register; by the annual review only six children were on the register.

Ratings of the progress in the cases were derived by the researchers from the panel members’ written reasons for decisions at annual review. The results indicate that in 82 cases (43%) progress was rated as satisfactory. In relation to initial grounds of referral, the majority (55%) of care and protection cases were ranked satisfactory, compared with 41 per cent on offence grounds and only 12 per cent on grounds of failure to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse. More families referred on care and protection grounds were co-operative than those referred on other grounds and more families who were co-operative had a rating of satisfactory.

Sixty of the 189 home supervision requirements were terminated at the annual review in 2001/early 2002, with ongoing support being made available by the social work department after termination in respect of 29 families. The most common reason for termination was that there had been considerable progress. Other reasons were that families were refusing to co-operate, voluntary measures were being suggested to replace compulsory measures or there had been minimal social work input.
CHAPTER FIVE: LAY AND PROFESSIONAL VIEWS OF HOME SUPERVISION

One of the objectives of the study was to provide an account of professional and lay views of home supervision. In pursuit of this objective, questionnaires were issued to three groups of lay and professional people associated with the 189 children in the sample. These were lay panel members who chaired the children’s hearing at the annual review in 2001/early 2002, the teachers identified by the reporter as the key contact in the 137 cases involving school-aged children, and the social workers (again identified by the reporter) with responsibility for each case. Questionnaires sought information both about the home supervision provided to the 189 children in the sample and also requested the views of these key stakeholders about home supervision generally. These findings are reported in this chapter. The views of families are presented at the end of this chapter based on interviews conducted with 20 families who formed part of the sample of 189 children on home supervision.

PANEL MEMBERS

Of the 189 questionnaires sent to panel members who chaired the Annual Review in the cases concerned, 98 were returned. This is a response rate of 52 per cent, which is high in view of the fact that reminders were not issued (for reasons discussed in Chapter One).

Figure 5.1: Rating of home supervision: Panel members’ views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.1 indicates that, of the 94 responses to this question, 52 per cent of panel members considered home supervision to be excellent or good in the cases concerned, while a minority (30%) rated it as poor or very poor and fewer still (18%) as fair. While a good relationship and communication between the social worker and the family were identified by panel members as important elements of supervision rated as excellent or good, what they most frequently noted was the amount of input by the social worker. Home supervision was usually described by panel members positively if there had been what they considered to be a good level of contact between the social worker and the family. It was criticised if the social worker was deemed not to have had sufficient contact. Insufficient contact was attributed by panel members on the one hand to the social workers themselves - for example as a result of staff sick leave, cases not being allocated, changes in social worker – and on the other hand to non-co-operation by the family with the social worker.

Figure 5.2 shows that, of the 97 responses to the question, 59 per cent of panel members rated the social worker’s contact with the family during home supervision as the right frequency, a substantial minority (39%) considered the contact was not frequent enough (2% did not know); no panel members considered the contact to be too frequent.

Figure 5.2: Frequency of social work contact with the family: Panel members' views
Panel members noted improvements, or beneficial changes, in the child’s life in the last year in respect of the majority (77%) of families. The improvements most frequently cited by panel members were increased stability, security or better relationships in the child’s home (often relating to child protection issues) and better school attendance and attainment. By contrast, levels of improvement in respect of offending or drug misuse were noted in only a few cases. Panel members noted deterioration in the child’s life in the last year in respect of over two thirds (69%) of families, with non-attendance at school, continued offending and drug misuse most prominent.36 Echoing an aspect already touched upon – namely the amount of input by social workers - most of the panel members’ suggestions for improvements to home supervision in these particular families focused on the need for increased social work input.

Figure 5.3 indicates that the majority of panel members (64%) considered that it was appropriate that the supervision requirement had not been reviewed in the year leading up to the annual review hearing. However, a minority (36%) considered that the requirement should have been reviewed before the annual review hearing, usually because there had been a significant change in the child’s circumstances or the social worker had made no headway with the family, for example: "an early review would have been able to address the issues around breakdown in co-operation". The most recent statistical bulletin of referrals to the reporter and the children’s hearings (SCRA, 2001, Table 14:116) indicates that in respect of reviews at which non-residential supervision requirements were continued, reviews called by local authorities (14%) and by families (5%) accounted for only a minority of review hearings. Most were annual reviews (50%) and reviews directed by the children's hearing (25%).

36 Panel members noted both deterioration and improvements for some children.
Figure 5.4 indicates that, of the 92 responses to the question, the majority of panel members (78%) regarded the social work reports for children’s hearings to be very helpful or helpful. Panel members considered this to be because the reports were clear, concise, informative and provided an up to date account of the situation. Similarly, the majority of panel members (71%) regarded the reports provided by teachers at hearings to be very helpful or helpful, as Figure 5.5 shows (75). Panel members considered that good school reports were those which gave a clear, full picture and highlighted progress or deterioration. Additionally, they “demonstrated a very rounded view of the child, commenting on their social and emotional as well as academic progress and development” and:

There was a lot of information in addition to the standard school report. This was written from a personal perspective giving additional insight to the problems of the child.

Unhelpful reports from both social workers and teachers were deemed by panel members to be those which lacked detailed or current information.

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37 The lower number of responses reflects the fact that not all children on the home supervision requirements were of school age.
Figure 5.4: Social work reports: Panel members' views

- Very helpful: n=30
- Helpful: n=42
- Unhelpful: n=13
- Very unhelpful: n=5
- No report received: n=2
TEACHERS

Of the 137 questionnaires sent to teachers, 105 were returned, which is a high response rate (77%) to a postal questionnaire. Questionnaires were not sent to teachers for the 52 children who were of pre-school age, those who had left school or to the (very few) teachers whose details were not made available to the research team.

Figure 5.6 indicates that, of the 93 responses to the question, fifty four per cent of teachers in the last year had had contact with the social worker of children on home supervision a few times, while fewer (29%) had contact with them frequently and fewer still (18%) reported no contact at all. Most of the contact between teachers and social workers was reported by teachers to be by telephone rather than face-to-face. This is confirmed by data recorded in the social work files which reveal that teachers are by far the most frequently telephoned colleagues in the interagency network (reported in Chapter 4). There were exceptions to this pattern of contact, however, as the following quote illustrates: “social work colleagues join the school liaison team meeting at least once monthly, so we are kept up to date with most developments through this contact.”

38 In the following presentation of the data, the total number does not add to 98 as missing responses were excluded.
Sixty four (61%) teachers reported that they had provided school reports for children on home supervision in the last year. The majority of reports were for children’s hearings and fewer were for social work departments’ internal reviews or case conferences. Several teachers had provided reports for other purposes, including the educational psychologist, hospital consultant and bereavement counsellor or for interagency meetings (unspecified), record of needs reviews and in the form of six monthly report cards.

**Impact of home supervision generally**

Fifty four per cent of teachers reported general improvements for the child during home supervision. While this broader question allowed for teachers to report on improvements for the child outwith school, school related aspects (particularly attendance) still featured most frequently. However, the qualitative nature of the question allowed for insights into the reasons for the progress. School attendance was sometimes ascribed to a change in circumstances at home. For example it was considered to have "improved markedly since the child went to live with his mother" or to have been due to a change in educational circumstances: "improvement this year, acknowledged by all, is that the child has moved to small group education in a highly supportive special school environment".

The teachers’ responses showed that they were conscious of the fact that school attendance was an integral part of other aspects of the child’s life, as the following comment indicates: "the child is cleaner, better fed, attends school more regularly and has his homework supervised and done". An additional aspect identified by teachers was an improvement in the child’s general well being, such as: "the child appears more confident, is being listened to and supported, appears happy and coping with the situation" and "the child appears more settled, happier at home, personal hygiene has improved".
Even when home supervision appeared not to have had a positive impact, teachers considered that the social work presence had at least prevented the situation from worsening, for example:

The child has not really engaged with any worker, but at least their home circumstances are being closely monitored;

To provide a check on the worst excesses of difficult circumstances;

*He did manage to attend for some SQA exams and he was not received into care when the home situation became fraught.*

These observations by teachers point to an important consideration in assessing the outcomes of home supervision – namely the extent to which service provision may stabilise or prevent further deterioration in the life of the child rather than contributing positively to beneficial changes.

Teachers reported deterioration for 39 per cent of the children. As with their responses to the question about improvements, so their responses to the question about deterioration reflected concern with issues at school, particularly attendance and behaviour. However, their views also reflected their awareness of wider aspects of the children's lives. Most teachers noted that the reason for the deterioration was difficulties at home. These ranged from a parent or carer coping with mental health problems to rejection of the child by a parent. Moreover, the generally poor circumstances of the child’s life were seen to have had an impact, as the following illustrates:

*The child has been subjected to a chaotic lifestyle. He is seeing and hearing inappropriate things and is being ‘robbed of his childhood’. His academic attainment is being hindered.*

In only a few instances did teachers suggest that professionals had played a part in the deterioration, for example:

*Constant changes of people helping and counselling the family, too many people, agencies and arrangements made for this one child who can by now be wondering daily who he is seeing or where he is going next.*

and:

*I have seen little or no improvement in the child’s home circumstances over the past year. As far as I’m aware the social worker has not had access to his home. A considerable number of social workers over the past three years, so lack of consistency of approach.*

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39 Teachers noted both deterioration and improvements for some children.
Specific impact of home supervision on children at school

Asked about the impact of home supervision on the child at school, 103 teachers responded. Figure 5.7 shows they thought it had made no difference in respect of less than half of the children (43%) and had effected an improvement for over a third of children (38%); in only one case was the situation thought to have worsened (teachers reported that they did not know for 18%).

![Figure 5.7: Impact of home supervision on child at school: Teachers’ views](image)

Asking what they considered to have been the main aim of home supervision for the child, teachers most commonly cited school related issues – dealing with non-attendance at school and improving educational attainment and behaviour (the next most commonly cited aims were the protection of the child and providing stability at home). These various school related aspects are considered in turn.
Figure 5.8 indicates that, of 102 responses, teachers reported that school attendance had remained about the same for over half the children (51%), that it had improved for under a third (28%) and that it had deteriorated for a minority (18%). (Teachers reported that they did not know for 3%).

![Figure 5.8: School attendance in the last year: Teachers' views](image)

Figure 5.9 shows that, of 101 responses to the question, teachers considered that for forty six per cent of children there had been no change in their behaviour, while there had been improvements for twenty one per cent and deterioration for eighteen per cent of the children (teachers did not know for 15%). Problematic behaviour identified by teachers included a range of problems, such as lack of attention in the classroom, aggression towards staff and pupils, being disruptive and bullying.
Figure 5.9: Children's behaviour in the last year: Teachers' views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers reported that school attainment had remained the same for the majority of children (55%), while it had improved for fewer (26%) and deteriorated for even fewer (15%). (Teachers reported they did not know for 4%), as Figure 5.10 indicates (96 responses).

**Figure 5.10: School attainment in the last year: Teachers’ views**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n=25</th>
<th>n=53</th>
<th>n=14</th>
<th>n=4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOCIAL WORKERS**

Of the 189 questionnaires sent to social workers, 89 were returned40 (a response rate of 47%). As noted in Chapter One, this response rate is partly explained by the number of cases in which there was no social worker allocated to the case when the questionnaires were sent out.

Figure 5.11 indicates that the majority of social workers were of the view that the objectives of home supervision were achieved. They were fully achieved or partially achieved in respect of the child (87%) and the parents (82%). The question about whether the objectives of home supervision were achieved in respect of the parents was included because, while (under the terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) it is the child who is placed on supervision, in some cases it is the parents rather than the child’s behaviour in which change is required. This is most clearly evident in respect of cases of care and protection, where it is the quality of parenting which is at issue. It can also be relevant, in cases of non-attendance at school and in respect of offending, if the parents are unwilling or unable to influence the child’s behaviour.

40 In the following presentation of the data, the total number does not add to 98 as missing responses were excluded.
Social workers were asked in what respects they considered the objectives of home supervision for the child had been achieved and they identified several. Some pointed to improved home circumstances, for example: “the child has continued to have a secure stable place with his grandmother”. In respect of offending and non-attendance at school, the following was reported: "received excellent reports from work experience; no further charges", "no known offending in the community, child now in full-time education" and "offending has dropped dramatically; child appears more able to cope with mother’s addiction; attendance improved at school. The following examples relate to parenting in the context of substance misuse:

*Children present as clean, happy and keen to learn. Mother now regularly meets with school staff so she can help children with schoolwork. Considering counselling for alcohol abuse;*

and:

*The child continues to develop appropriately for her age and is well cared for. Further, despite some difficulties she has remained in the care of her parents. Finally, they continue to co-operate with social services and are still on their methadone programme.*

Among the reasons given by social workers for rating the objectives of supervision for the child as *partially* achieved are the following:

*Contact with mother (absent parent) has been consistent and access has been maintained. School attendance is still concerning and father and partner are*
often difficult to contact and chaotic lifestyle leads to missed opportunities/reviews. Contact with child has been very positive and regular;

Dependent on parent’s ability to function. Managed well when not in crisis, less well when other issues [arose]. Inconsistent in taking up support of social worker and other agencies due to chaotic lifestyle.

The most common reason cited for not achieving the objectives of home supervision was lack of co-operation by the child or parents or both, with lack of social work input cited in a few cases.

Figure 5.12 shows that, of the 85 responses, the majority of social workers considered that home supervision had been successful (53%) or partially successful (35%).

![Figure 5.12: Success of home supervision: Social workers’ views](image)

The responses from social workers about the outcomes of home supervision can be compared with the satisfaction ratings derived from written reasons at the annual review, (presented in Chapter Four). Although the social workers’ views are available for only 89 cases and not the 189 cases in the total sample, the patterns from the two data sources are similar. In both, successful is the largest category, followed by partially successful (or mixed) and then unsuccessful. There is, then, a degree of congruence between the panel members’ views as represented by the written reasons for decisions at annual reviews and social workers’ perceptions of progress in the cases.
When asked, what if anything, worked well in home supervision for the child, social workers identified the following five main factors:

- the availability of services/resources
- an interagency approach
- the importance of compulsory measures
- the existence of advocacy for the child/support outwith the family home
- the capacity to protect the child/monitor safety.

Examples of each included:

- “regular contact and support”, “child included in groupwork, drama classes and summer play schemes promoting increased self esteem” and “excellent support of home carer and befriender/respite carer”
- “close supervision of her care and unified approach by the professionals involved” and “multi-agency work i.e. joint school/social work liaison”
- “having compulsory involvement within a family where there are clear risks” and “ensured parents addressed issues”
- “he had someone else who would support him in a crisis”, “the child being involved in all family meetings and her views being considered” and “young person stated ‘someone listened to her’”
- “when problem arose at nursery, social services can react immediately to ensure the child’s continued well being” and “supervision guaranteed child close scrutiny of her situation”.

Figure 5.13 shows that, of the 87 responses, the majority of social workers (69%) considered that their contact with the family had been about the right frequency, while a minority (25%) were of the view that the contact was not frequent enough and very few (6%) that it was too frequent. This can be compared with the views of panel members reported above, namely that 59 percent of panel members rated the social workers contact with the family as the right frequency and 39 percent as not frequent enough. The social workers were therefore slightly more generous in their estimations than panel members.
Social workers were asked to identify support services which would have been useful in home supervision but which were unavailable. They did so in respect of 53 (out of 89) cases. The key services identified as unavailable were, in order of ranking: family support workers/home carers; community resource workers; befrienders; groupwork for young people; parenting skills’ classes and respite care. It is interesting to compare this with data extracted from the social work case files (discussed in Chapter Four), which recorded services as unavailable in 19 of 189 cases. This appears to indicate that social workers do not routinely record such information in case files. This could, in turn, impact upon resource availability in the longer term if there is little systematic recording of the nature and scale of resource shortages.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the decision of the children’s hearing at the annual review in 2001/early 2002 coincided in the majority of cases with the social worker’s recommendation. Not surprisingly, therefore, the majority of the 89 social workers reported that they were satisfied with the disposal, using phrases such as “appropriate”, “in agreement”, “the correct outcome”, “happy with outcome”, “positive outcome”. A small minority expressed dissatisfaction, having hoped for termination of the supervision requirement in cases in which the children’s hearing decided to continue it. One such respondent expressed the view that more supervision requirements could be terminated “if the children’s hearings were not so cautious; they do not seem to realise that you can still work with the family on a voluntary basis”.

Figure 5.13: Frequency of social work contact with family: Social workers’ views

![Bar chart showing frequency of social work contact](chart.png)
Eighty six of the 89 social workers responded to a question as to whether there had been any improvements in the lives of children on home supervision over the previous year. In 64 (75%) cases, social workers considered that there had been. The main areas of improvement identified are presented in Table 5.1. (In some cases more than one area of improvement was identified.)

Table 5.1 Areas of improvement in children's lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of improvement</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family stability</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s behaviour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

General improvements were noted in 14 cases in respect of parenting. In a further 12 there were improvements in the parenting capacity of those affected by alcohol or drug misuse. Examples include:

- in respect of parenting: “parent seems more aware of the child’s needs and has curbed her alternative lifestyle appropriately” and "improvement in parenting in the home”;
- in respect of school and other educational provision: “school attendance improved” and “now receiving education from adult literacy – confidence and independent skills improve”;
- in respect of family stability: “child settled in city with mother” and “child freed for adoption”;
- in respect of offending: “no longer offending” and “young person has not re-offended”; 
- in respect of the child’s behaviour: “drinking to excess and getting into trouble with the police has ceased” and “support systems have calmed child’s behaviour”.

Social workers reported that in 14 cases (16%) there has been no improvements. Sometimes this was a straightforwardly negative response as in “none”, “nil” or “no real improvements”, but at times the response was more equivocal. One responded, for example, “none, other than preventing accommodation”. While this can be classified as no improvement there is an argument for saying that maintaining a child at home and preventing the need for looking after the child away from home may be deemed a success. In another case the response was “father obviously will remain a schedule 1 offender and is still considered a high risk”.

Eight cases (9%) were classified as mixed where some improvement was recorded together with continued concerns of various kinds, for example: “some improvement in school attendance but depends largely on mother’s use of alcohol - mother denies she needs help with this” and “more clearly defined access arrangements - no improvement in educational situation”.

There were many and varied responses by social workers to a question as to what part, if any, home supervision had played in the improvements. Some responded in quantitative terms, for example, “none”, “minimal” or “some”. Others suggested: “the fact that social work is actively involved has been the main contributory agent”, “significant - child remains in
parent’s care only because of significant input of time on part of the social worker” and “without social work services this child would be accommodated”.

Some identified aspects which had been, in their view, associated with the existence of a home supervision requirement. For example, some noted that the supervision requirement facilitated access to resources: “enabled access to off site provision, facilitated quicker referral to resource team” and “child may not have received a service had he not been on supervision - goes against no order principle”. The latter comment raises the important issue of whether home supervision was used, at times, in order to gain access to services, rather than because compulsory measures were deemed to be required.

Social workers also considered the supervision requirement to have helped in securing interagency provision, from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, for example, “helped make the other agencies involved more accountable”; “unlikely to have been achieved without formal involvement of social work department and therefore voluntary agencies” and “it gave me the statutory obligation to press for an appropriate school placement”.

Social workers also identified the potential importance of home supervision in enhancing their capacity to monitor or control the safety and well-being of children. For example, they considered that it “enabled the department to access the child” and “allowed positive support in a controlled or regulated manner”. The existence of the supervision requirement was considered to help underline the seriousness of the issues in some cases, for example: “parents understood the necessity of attending meetings”. Also, it:

raised awareness of parents that agencies had concerns about care of the child. This may have prompted parents to ensure child attended school etc

and

enabled child and his family to recognise and address the difficulties which were the grounds of referral.

Social workers acknowledged that, in some cases, co-operation from the child or parents was unlikely to be forthcoming without compulsory measures, as in “gave mother little option but to accept the services offered” and “suspect that if contact was on a voluntary basis it would have been rejected by the parental figures and none of the work completed would have been possible”. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, co-operation was by no means guaranteed by compulsory measures, as this comment illustrates: “home supervision appeared ineffective as young person did not ‘buy in’”.

Finally, some social workers queried whether a home supervision requirement was, in fact necessary in order to achieve the improvements, for example, “they could and would have been done without home supervision” and:

all the above would have been possible without home supervision, but knowing that her social worker was going to be seeing her regularly probably provided extra security to the child.

Eighty two out of 89 social workers responded to a question as to whether there had been any deterioration in respect of problems in the child’s life in the previous year. In the majority of cases, 48 (59%) social workers reported no deterioration. In the majority (40) of these 48 cases, improvement had been also identified over the same time period. Problems in
children’s lives were reported to have deteriorated in 34 cases (41%). The main problems identified, in rank order, were problems relating to family relationships/home situation, school attendance, child’s behaviour and offending, followed by parental alcohol misuse, child’s alcohol/substance misuse and parental physical/mental health.

When asked the reasons for the deterioration, social workers most commonly cited first the child’s attitude, for example “child lacked motivation”, “child looking to be excluded” and “child’s cocky stubbornness and unwillingness to lose face that took him into situations he should not have contemplated”. This was followed by persisting difficulties in parents’ lifestyle, parenting skills or attitudes (for example “lack of direction”), “chaotic home life, poor parental attitude towards educational achievement” and “parent’s lack of insight, inappropriate guidance to child and general lack of parental care”. Occasionally, resource shortages were identified as having contributed to the deterioration, for example “there was no social work contact” and “child was not motivated to get up in time for school - no ongoing support from an allocated social worker”.

**Interagency working**

Figure 5.14 illustrates that the social workers identified considerable variation in the contribution made by different agencies in meeting the needs of children on home supervision, with education having a greater contribution than others. In terms of effectiveness, more social workers deemed all services to be effective than ineffective, with the exception of child psychiatry, which was deemed by more social workers to be ineffective.
Eighty six of the 89 social workers responded to a question as to whether they used the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997). The majority of social workers (52%) reported that they occasionally used them, fewer (16%) that they used them quite often. Only one social worker reported using them very often. A substantial minority (30%) social workers did not use the Regulations and Guidance at all (see Figure 5.15).
Eighty four social workers responded to a question about the helpfulness of the Regulations and Guidance. Figure 5.16 shows that they were described by the majority of social workers as fairly helpful (55%) or very helpful (12%), with few describing them as not very helpful (14%) (the remaining 19% did not use them).
The group of social workers who were broadly positive about the Regulations and Guidance considered them to be useful as a point of reference, as a means of maintaining a focus, as a reminder of the basic objectives of supervision, as providing a framework and structure and information about timescales. However, while some clearly found them useful, for example “generally clear interpretations of the law – can be applied to actual situations”, others disagreed and considered the Regulations and Guidance to be unrealistic. Comments such as “unrealistic given workload and other ‘priority’ expectations”, “demands of workload make adherence impossible to maintain” and “they felt like a theoretical concept, divorced from the reality of working in the field”.

The substantial minority, who admitted frankly that they did not use the Regulations and Guidance much or at all, explained this by lack of time, for example, “lack of time to consult such documents”, “good to have guidelines - no time to read them”. Others seemed not to have found them useful, for example “have not often referred back to the Regulations and Guidance since initially read them”. Yet others, said they were not known or available to them, for example, “no access”, “nobody knew where copy was when I asked”, and “unaware of availability of these.”
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT HOME SUPERVISION

While the major part of the questionnaires issued to key stakeholders (panel members who chaired the annual review 2001/early 2002, teachers, reporters and social workers) focused upon the supervision provided to the children and families in the sample of 189 cases, some more general questions were also included. Respondents were asked for their suggestions for improving home supervision and also to identify what they thought worked well in home supervision generally.

Suggestions for improving home supervision

It is perhaps unsurprising that the area for improvement most frequently identified by panel members, teachers and social workers and reporters was additional resources. Specialist and more flexible educational provision, family support workers, groupwork (including anger management) respite care and more befrienders were requested. However, the predominant view was that more social work time to provide a more intensive (or any) pattern of contact with children and families was the key to improving supervision. Teachers, for example, identified clearly and often the need both for more frequent contact by social workers with children and families in their care and for the allocation of cases and, less often, for continuity in staffing with fewer changes of social workers. They said:

In my experience many pupils on supervision are not allocated until they become really challenging and difficult. Prior to that they are low priority. This extends to child protection issues.

and:

Lobby and approach people in power to do something to provide more social workers; cases are unallocated for long periods of time.

Panel members, reporters and social workers themselves shared this view, emphasising the need for more time to undertake direct work. One panel member, for example, wished to see “adequate staffing for child and family social teams” and social workers wanted “reduced caseloads to enable the social worker to spend the time needed”.

These are important observations, and interesting in the widespread agreement which was evident across the respondent groups. They highlight the fact that, while children have been adjudged to require compulsory measures of care in the form of a home supervision requirement, in practice the capacity of social work departments to provide the help and support required is deeply compromised, at least in some localities.

This led the panel members and social workers to reflect on how this could be addressed. The area for improvement identified most frequently by panel members (after increased social work resources) was the need for early review of cases. They said, for example:

I think there are times when the social worker should call for a review of the supervision requirement and this is not being done because it makes work for them. Reviews should be called when the social worker has not made contact on a regular basis.
and:

*If home supervision is not working and the same problem persists or the child is not co-operating, then the social worker should call another hearing, not let it ride until the annual review.*

Some panel members wondered whether some other form of monitoring was required, for example:

*I am aware that it is not the function of the hearing to monitor contact with the social worker. However, the care of the child is paramount. It may be helpful if the reporter is notified every time the social worker meets the child/family.*

One suggested that social work background reports for review hearings should be required to contain details of all social work contact between the child and family and to identify the nature and frequency of any additional resources or services provided. Others considered that oversight of plans and of the work undertaken should be monitored more closely by social work departments themselves. It was interesting that several social workers also identified a need for this. They considered that drawing up care plans, undertaking regular case reviews and systematically monitoring provision would significantly improve home supervision (second only to an increase in social workers).

Besides more social work resources, teachers identified improved interagency liaison, particularly the need for more frequent contact between schools and social workers and regular updates. Electronic communication and social workers linked to specific schools were proposed.

Several respondents (drawn from panel members, reporters and social workers) additionally identified a need for clearer information and advice to be made available to children and parents about the nature of the home supervision, including their rights (for example, to seek review) and responsibilities. Some social workers pointed to the need for greater involvement of children and families in drawing up plans for the supervision requirement. Some panel members considered that greater use could be made of (realistic) conditions in the supervision requirements, for example: "conditions should be made so that the family has a legal commitment to work on certain goals with the social worker".

Panel members, social workers and reporters were also asked to identify what, in their experience works well in home supervision. These responses closely mirrored the key areas for improvement. The predominant response identified by all three groups was regular social work contact with the child and family concerned and the ability to provide coordinated interagency support. Many respondents also identified the capacity of the social worker to engage the child and family and to build up a relationship of trust and cooperation with them. The importance of focused intervention guided by a clear care plan underpinned by tailored, individualised assessment of need was also highlighted as was the need for regular review of cases. Rather fewer respondents also noted that home supervision worked well when it was able to provide an external and independent source of support for the child, for example “the child is not alone with their problem”, ”it can provide the child with an additional dimension in their lives away from social and domestic pressure” and ”if implemented the child feels that someone is interested in what happens to them".
FAMILIES’ VIEWS OF HOME SUPERVISION

Interviews were conducted with 20 families with children on a home supervision requirement seeking their views. As discussed in Chapter One, the research team did not have access to the families' details, so information about the study and a letter asking families if they would take part was conveyed to them by the social workers responsible for the supervision requirement and those families wishing to opt into the study did so by returning a tear off slip. The views of these 20 families, therefore, while providing an insight into how some families viewed home supervision, should not be regarded as representative of all families whose children are on home supervision.

Families’ prior involvement

The 20 families had varying degrees of experience of supervision and very few had no prior involvement with the social work department. In most families a parent, sibling or close relative had personal experience of being on supervision, for example:

I had been involved in social work when I was ten. Oh aye there's nothing you can tell me about the system that I don’t know about and that’s being honest. I knew about the panels. I knew about like the f….. poxy children’s homes and all the rest of it and I’m afraid it’s no place for my weans to go.

Several parents, whose younger children were on home supervision because of abuse and neglect, regarded the requirement as supervision of them rather than of the child, as this comment reveals:

They became involved because of my man going to jail and I couldn’t handle what had happened. I couldn’t handle it so I turned to drink. I was neglecting the kids and getting drink in instead of food. It was to try and give me a bit of support as well I think, you know what I mean, with the kids, but then nine year later I can’t get off it (emphasis added);

Acknowledging the problem

Most families frankly acknowledged during the interview the reason for their child being on home supervision, whether this was in relation to care and protection issues, offending or regular failure to attend school without reasonable excuse, even when this involved discussing with the researchers their own behaviour in a negative light:

We [the parents] used to have a drink and have a fight there’d be a lot of fighting and [the child] ended up having the social worker in place to stop the trouble, so that’s how we got involved. Aye well I knew there was a problem. I mean it was blatantly obvious there was a problem right. I didn’t have the guts to do something about it until the social workers got involved because I thought the social workers were going to take [the child] away from me.

Denial of the grounds was only evident in two of the families interviewed, including the following:
Some families not only acknowledged they had a problem, but also actively sought help, both with regard to their children with whom they needed support (to deal, for example, with their offending and substance misuse) and also for themselves in relation to their own parenting, or in this parent’s view to prevent her physically abusing her child:

Well my ex man, this man used to be unreasonable altogether...he smashed up the house. He had me and the weans nervous wrecks. Because of him getting me stressed, I skelped my daughter twice. When I skelped my wean I have never been so ashamed in my life doing that to her. Well I asked them for help. I reported myself, I felt so ashamed and I felt as if it was history repeating itself what my ma used to do with me. My ma gave me black eyes. She used to hospitalise me and I thought “oh no, get help, f... that man, going down the same road as that”.

Families and partnership

Families were asked whether they were involved in drawing up plans about what home supervision comprised and what their part in this process was. Very few were aware of any such process, commenting: “we never even got asked for a signature for their involvement” and “we were working towards getting, you know, better living conditions but no, there was no care plan”. This family in contrast did get a social worker who tried to involve them in the care plan:

The first social worker I got was here and she was writing out all this stuff like, what I’m supposed to want and what I’m going for and all of this stuff like. I didn’t understand where they were coming from and why they wanted all of that. Their priority should have been him, making sure he was all right. Some of it I didn’t understand. She made this list out of like my goals, one, stop smoking, you know, and all of this and I thought “well what’s that got to do with my son?”

Another parent responded to the researcher’s questions by telling how the social worker prepared her well for any forthcoming hearings: “she would come in and sit down with me because I don’t know what to expect here” and the social worker’s reassurances not to worry about it “just be yourself and they’ll [the children’s panel] listen to everything that’s being said.”

Most families were confident that they were able to express their views to social workers, for example: “I can talk to the social worker as if I’ve known him for years; he’s very approachable, you can say anything to him” and “I feel quite confident speaking to [social
worker] they always ask me am I willing to continue looking after the girls and if I am happy to have them.” Another parent learnt to express her opinion at meetings over time:

At the beginning of the conferences there were so many people, it was so busy. I just let them walk over the top of me at first. I just sat there. Then I said “no way”, so that was why there were only seven people at my last conference. They weren’t giving me reports until the day I was there at the conferences, but now I’ve asked to get them before we go and I can phone them up and say well that’s no right.

Others found it more difficult to express their views: “I was basically going yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, saying yes to everything to keep her (social worker) happy type of thing”, “I didn’t feel able to say I don’t understand this, I felt a bit frightened of her saying that I wasn’t understanding anything” and “sometimes when I was on home supervision I felt as if I was talking to myself, that no one was actually listening to what I had to say”

Some parents were rather sceptical about the influence of families on decision making:

I’d just been told all along well the social work make their own law and you just need to co-operate with them to get anywhere. Sometimes they sit and listen to us, you know and they try and they make as if they understand how we’re feeling, but they’ve, at the end of the day they just make their decision you know but it’s never what we want, it’s just what they want.

Families’ views of social workers

Most of the families interviewed were satisfied with the social worker assigned to them during the period of home supervision. The following excerpts from the interviews give a flavour of what the families valued in social workers, which included availability, provision of practical resources, understanding and an ability to communicate:

He always talks to [the child] when he’s here. He listens and gives you a fair play. He always comes out just like that. He’s really good, I’ve no bad complaints about him at all. I really can’t say nothing wrong about the social work, I really can’t;

I’m happy with the social work department;

They were reasonable, I mean, and they were understanding. When they [the children] were put on the at risk register she seen them every week. Once [the partner] left they weren’t seeing us four and five times a week, which was reasonable because rightly what they were saying was there was really only concern when he lived there. I must admit, I’ll give them their due, they were reasonable for home support, respite things like that;

I’ve probably been lucky that I got on with the social worker, I think that’s the main thing that I can talk to her. I suppose if it’s maybe someone that doesn’t get on with them they find it hard you know. When she’s got a lot on right enough she’ll say “well I’ve got this and that but I could come up at half past eight.” Or
she’s even come up here on her own time when she’s finished work and she’s been in here until the back of six. She’s been really good.

Fewer families were critical of the social workers assigned to them:

_I don’t know if they’re doing their jobs properly because of the experience I’ve had. I just don’t understand why they could get involved with a family and do so much hurt to us all you know when they are meant to be there to help families stay together._

and:

_I don’t like social work. I’m trying to get them away from me. I don’t need them any more. My wee boy’s fine, he’s come on great but my wee lassie’s speech is a bit slow and they’re still moaning because they say I’m not playing with her or talking to her. I’m talking to her all day and playing with her all day she gets lots of toys and that. They come to me and they want to hear her talking and they want me to tape her on the blank tape to hear her talking. I never asked them to do anything. I want to do everything myself. I want to show people I don’t need home care at night and in the morning, I want to do everything myself.”_

A few families had mixed feelings:

_I think overall it was quite good. Just sometimes there was, I mean, sometimes I got quite angry with them because I felt they were being intrusive_

Others had experienced different social workers, so were able to make comparisons:

_I’ve had four social workers over the year and a half. We got [current social worker]. He’s actually been the best out of the whole lot of them._

_To begin with I had [first social worker] who was absolutely excellent. She was reliable she was always there. If she said she was coming, she came and if she couldn’t come she let you know; there was never this hanging about. She knew what your entitlements were and she knew how to go about it. You could actually sit and have a cigarette and a cup of coffee with her and I felt she was very sympathetic. After she left it was everybody and anybody. I really had nobody if you know what I mean. I could go in to the office and it was just the duty social worker. Then I had [next social worker]. She was here under false pretences. She was utterly horrendous, She’d promise to come and take the girls out to try to get feedback from them to say how they felt about things. And every time the girls would be sitting here all afternoon and not as much as a phone call. I reported her to the social work manager._

_The first girl that came to us, she was a wee bit unsure. I think she was relatively new in the job... but the one we have at the moment is excellent, very informative and she herself I’d say that she’s a programme of her own in regards to [the child] and helping [the child] for things like holidays and that and respite._
Infrequency of social work contact/unallocated periods

While most of the families were broadly positive about the social workers that were in contact with them, the most common complaint was about the infrequency of the contact:

*It’s not helped at all because the social worker’s never been up. With my other boy the social worker came regularly. With this one they have not done anything.*  

*It was noted at the last panel that social work have not been coming at all... My husband says social workers intrude: they don’t intrude because they are never here. I feel that if they had intervened more he wouldn’t still be on this supervision;*

*Normally I would ken when a panel or something like that was coming up and I’d get a visit from the social worker beforehand because she’s got to write a report.*

The social worker never came unless I got in touch with him myself. He kept saying he was going to come and see me but he never turned up. He used to phone me and say “oh I’ll be up in your area on Wednesday or something like that, I’ll pop up and see you” but he never came up.

At first he had a social worker, I don’t know how she got the job. She said at the panel that she would see him every fortnight then she kept making dates to come and never appeared. I would stay in maybe change a shift and she wouldn’t show. I know there’d be more important people, but at the same time it was too regular, you know, it was just happening too regular. At the beginning I would be lucky to see her once a month. It ended up before the last panel she went to I hadn’t seen her in six months. At that panel she hadn’t seen us, she hadn’t spoken to us and she’d wrote this report, it was total rubbish. I’d say “how the hell do you know that because we’ve all changed since you last spoke to us?” The only time I seen her was when there was a panel.

I wasn’t really sure what it [home supervision] meant actually, I thought maybe it was going to be like somebody out here like checking him every day or something like that. I thought they were going to come and explain it to me and all that but nobody ever came near. The social worker did come once and we did discuss it well me and the social worker.

Other families noted that there were periods where there appeared to be no social worker allocated to them, for example for one child who was not attending school at all “the supervision didn’t kick in until about eight months down the road” and the response was: “well stuff it. I ain’t going back to school; nobody’s interested. Further examples were:

*They never allocated another [social worker] and I was really angry at the time because he’s really at the worst during the summer holidays and that is when I was likely to go totally off my head with it. I tried to get in touch with them right through the summer and nothing happened. When he had a panel coming up they allocated him a social worker. It was a social worker came out and asked how he’d been during that 6 months he hadn’t had any supervision. I told him how he’d been and that the police reports had been about 3 pages thick and that was what was presented at the panel. I was really angry about that because they*
hadn’t been supervising him, nobody knew him that was up there representing him from the social work department. Maybe for bairns that are not quite as bad as him the supervision might help, but not for him.

Well they said to me, it’s [home supervision] a social worker comes up and sees you now and again and all that, but that doesn’t happen... I saw her once, when was that [turns to mum]?

Relatedly, families noted their need for continuity of social workers, while acknowledging that this was not always possible:

Well one thing I would like to point out about social workers is they should try to keep one person based with one person. They should keep one person for that case as long as they can. I know it’s not their fault, I know people move on and that, but then even if it’s just the top dog that takes on the case then that should be the way because it’s bloody hard work for normal folk to trust social workers who’s got a bad reputation and it’s like I say when you get one that’s bad and then you get a good one like I did, the good one has to clean up the mess the bad ones made. She has to get the trust and all that. Then you get the trust and she’s off. For people like myself one person should be there.

At first when we got involved with the social work there was two social workers one week and then there was another. I think I met every social worker in the place within a few months, which wasn’t easy for us either. Appearing at our door, barging in our house, even when we had visitors. It was a different social worker all the time.
Beneficial changes and home supervision

Families identified two key areas in which social workers had helped them. The first related to those families in which the partner had been abusive and, subsequent to home supervision, had left:

If I hadn’t had the supervision order things would have continued the way it was. It was because the supervision order went in and the social workers got involved that made me leave his dad and get sorted out.

There’s a lot of people out there that they [social workers] should be jumping in before people even ask them for help...before all that my man was making my life a misery and a nightmare.

If I hadn’t got him out of my life then the weans [children] would still be on supervision. They made me get rid of that [partner] out of my life and made me change my lifestyle for the sake of my weans. I put him out last year. There wasn’t a question of my ability to look after the weans physically or mentally because now with it only being me and the weans there, there’s nobody here to fight or argue with.

The second related to the provision by social workers of a range of resources and practical help:

The first time I got involved with social workers was like voluntary, when he was a year old because I was suffering from depression. I was going to see them and we were chatting and things, they were helping me out with sorting out the dole and everything;

The social worker got him into the after school group, which is three nights a week which was great for him because he got to play with other kids.

It’s good, aye. They [IT workers] take me places and they buy you stuff and if you tell them that you need clothes and that they’ll see your social worker and then they’ll get you money for it;

They got someone in from the, I don’t know what it’s called, it’s like these cleaners and stuff like that help you out and somebody came and helped me out once and took care of the nursing for me. That was a really good help at the time;

He went to a group [alternative educational provision] and there was about five of them went and they done different things every day. Well he quite liked that. He went all the time you know because basically they get doing what they want to really;

The weans get respite every Monday and then on a Sunday I get three hours home support. They take the three older ones and that leaves me with the younger one. I get on brilliant with them and the weans get on brilliant with them and that. The week I went in to hospital last year they arranged to take the weans to school and nursery for me because of me just being out of hospital;
My wee lad’s got a befriender and my wee lassie. They take the kids out for a couple of hours once a week and bring he kids back and give me a break and all. They’re really fine with the befriender and all that. My wee lass has got some place [respite] she goes there every six weeks and all that and gives me a break. She’s got a playgroup and goes there. I have to taxi there and taxi back, the social work pay and all that.

There were few beneficial changes noted in respect of offenders or school non-attenders, with some parents indicating that the involvement had come too late and others that their child did not get on with the social worker. One exception, described fairly dramatically by one parent, was the impact of the children’s hearing at which the requirement was imposed on one teenager:

When we came out of the of the children’s panel that day - don’t get me wrong, they were fair with [the child], but they were like “you need to stop getting into trouble, you’re going to end up in care” … From that day his behaviour is a hundred times better. The Youth Alcohol and Addiction team – it was a young lassie came up and worked with [the child] … she took him out every week. I don’t know what they spoke about. It was confidential. I was just happy she was making progress.

**Termination of home supervision**

The families whose supervision was terminated at the annual review in 2001/early 2002 gave their perceptions of the reason for the disposal. The reasons were threefold. First, the supervision had been terminated as a result of a satisfactory resolution of the problems, as in this family where there had originally been care and protection concerns and for whom voluntary contact was to continue:

I cope a lot better with things now and they're off the supervision. I still see [the family support worker]. She just advises me in any situations and you know helps me out. Like I’ve been having bother with my rent, so they’re helping me out.

and in a family where the parenting had improved:

When the yearly thing came up the social worker said I don’t need the supervision any more, which was sort of good for me because I needed the confidence you know. I felt that I’d done everything I was supposed to do. I was talking to the social worker and I said “right I think I’ve done everything I was supposed to have done so I don’t think I need the supervision any more”. She was in total agreement because I was managing, I was coping and I was doing what I was supposed to be doing.

In a few families, where the original grounds had been offending and regular non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse, the home supervision was terminated under less satisfactory circumstances. For example, one child with a poor school attendance record and who was nearly 16 was thought to be unlikely to return to school, while an offender whose supervision was terminated said that he:
... got took off it at the last meeting we had with the - what do you call it, the reporter isn’t it? I felt as though they just gave up on him actually, the last few months you know. I mean [the social worker] said I’m just going to recommend that he comes off it because it’s not working anyway, you know, he was still messing up. They just took him off it because it wasn’t doing any good anyway. I don’t think there was much they could do with him to be quite honest with you. No matter what they done he was just going to do what he wanted to do.

In one family, termination was recommended by the social work department, but was not accepted by the children’s hearing, who continued the supervision requirement, against the wishes of the parent, who claimed there was no input by the social worker:

The social worker said that she thought he should come off the supervision because he hadn’t been having any contact with social work and he seemed to be doing okay, so what was the point, what was the use of having a social worker any longer, but they ruled that he should stay on the supervision. Well to me it doesn’t make any difference. [the social worker] hasn’t been here and she isn’t here now so I wouldn’t notice any difference. I’ve never known any difference apart from having to go to the panel when there was a review again.
SUMMARY

Fifty two per cent of panel members considered home supervision to be excellent or good in the cases concerned, while a minority (30%) rated it as poor or very poor and fewer still (18%) as fair. The majority of social workers also considered that home supervision had been successful (53%) or partially successful (35%). Twelve per cent thought it had been unsuccessful.

The majority of social workers judged that the objectives of home supervision were fully or partially achieved in respect of the child (87%).

Panel members noted beneficial changes in the child’s life in the last year in respect of the majority (77%) of families. Similarly, in 64 (75%) cases, social workers considered that there had been improvements, as did fifty four per cent of teachers. The main areas of improvement identified were parenting, family relationships and stability, and the child’s schooling.

In the majority of cases 59 per cent of social workers reported no deterioration in the problems in children’s lives. They reported deterioration in a minority (41%), mainly concerning family relationships/home situation, school attendance, child’s behaviour and offending. Teachers reported similar levels of deterioration (39%).

Teachers reported that school attendance had remained about the same for over half the children (51%), improved for under a third (28%) and deteriorated for a minority (18%). They considered that for 46 per cent of children there had been no change in their behaviour, with improvements for 21 per cent and deterioration for 18 per cent of the children. They reported that school attainment had remained the same for the majority of children (55%), had improved for fewer (26%) and deteriorated for even fewer (15%).

The majority of social workers (69%) and panel members (59%) considered that social work contact with the family had been about the right frequency, while a minority were of the view that the contact was not frequent enough.

The majority of panel members (64%) considered that it was appropriate that the supervision requirement had not been reviewed in the year leading up to the annual review hearing, but a minority (36%) thought it should have been reviewed sooner.

When asked what, if anything, had worked well in home supervision for the children in the sample, social workers identified: the availability of services/resources; an interagency approach; the importance of compulsory measures; the existence of advocacy for the child/support outwith the family home; and the capacity to protect the child/monitor safety. Support services which would have been useful, but which were unavailable, were, in order of ranking: family support workers/home carers; community resource workers; befrienders; groupwork for young people; parenting skills’ classes and respite care.

Social workers identified considerable variation in the contribution made by different agencies in meeting the needs of children on home supervision, with education having a greater contribution than others.
The majority of social workers (52%) reported that they occasionally used the Regulations and Guidance, fewer (16%) that they used them quite often and a substantial minority (30%) of social workers did not use the Regulations and Guidance at all. The majority of social workers found them fairly helpful (55%) or very helpful (12%).

The area for improvement most frequently identified by panel members, teachers, social workers and reporters was more social work time. In some localities the capacity of social work departments to provide the help and support required was deeply compromised. The need for early review of cases, better monitoring of social work provision and additional resources was also noted.

Interviews were conducted with 20 families with children on a home supervision requirement about their views. In most families a parent, sibling or close relative had personal experience of being on supervision. Most families had prior involvement with the social work department.

Most families acknowledged during the interview the reason for their child being on home supervision and outright denial of the grounds was rare.

Very few families said they had been involved in drawing up plans for home supervision. Most families were confident that they were able to express their views to social workers, but a few found it more difficult to do so. Some parents were rather sceptical about the influence of families on decision making.

Most of the families interviewed were satisfied with the social worker assigned to them during the period of home supervision, valuing in social workers their availability, provision of practical resources, understanding and ability to communicate. While most of the families were broadly positive about the social workers that were in contact with them, the most common complaint was about the infrequency of the contact. Some families noted that there were periods during which there appeared to be no social worker allocated to them.

Families identified two key areas in which social workers had helped, namely situations of domestic violence and the provision of resources and practical help. Few beneficial changes were noted in respect of offenders or school non-attenders, with some parents indicating that the involvement had come too late and others that their child did not get on with the social worker.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This chapter draws together the key findings from the study.

Characteristics and circumstances of the children on home supervision

In the national data set, (presented in Chapter Three) the majority of children on home supervision were boys, with the exception of those aged 0–7 where girls predominate. The majority in the national data set had no supervision requirement prior to the period of home supervision. Only 18 per cent of the home supervision requirements had been in existence for more than 3 years.

In the sample of 189 cases, the home circumstances revealed that the children had greater than average family size and were disproportionately drawn from lone parent households, from local authority housing and from households in which no adult was employed. Their poverty and disadvantage was striking. In the sample of 189 cases, there had been social work involvement prior to the supervision requirement in 86 per cent of the cases. The lives of many of the families were characterised by domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and offending by parents or the children. Mental health problems particularly amongst mothers were prominent, along with housing and financial problems. During the period of home supervision financial problems and housing problems were the difficulties noted most frequently in the case records, followed by problems of mental and physical health, domestic violence and alcohol and drug misuse. These multiple complex and sometimes intractable problems posed a major challenge for intervention and a context in which securing beneficial changes in the life of the child was likely to be a difficult task.

Delivering home supervision

In the majority (70%) of the 189 cases in the sample, services and resources were made available to the children and families in addition to direct social work input. About half of the additional services were provided by social work departments and about half by other statutory and voluntary agencies. A key feature of the social work task in cases of home supervision was the organisation of these packages of care, akin to case management in community care. This required liaison with other service providers within the social work department (e.g. in family centres, day care services, group work, etc) as well as with others in the interagency network.

In the three month period at the beginning of the year preceding the annual review (for 112 of the 189 cases for which data was available) there were 659 face to face contacts with the child/family concerned, or one visit per fortnight on average. There were, however, 77 cases which were either unallocated for part or all of this time and/or for which no case notes were available which indicated the frequency of contact. If these cases are included the average number of visits would be lower.

Interagency liaison was a feature of many of the cases in the sample. The most frequent telephone contact was with schools; the most frequent written correspondence was with solicitors (principally concerned with residence and contact issues), and then with health. Teachers suggested that increased interagency contact which would significantly improve home supervision. Some services were, however, reported by social workers to perform more
effectively than others, child and family psychiatric services and drug and alcohol services were not as highly rated as others, such as education, community child health and social work.

**Social work resources and unallocated cases**

Panel members, teachers, reporters and social workers themselves all identified the need for more social work time as the single most important factor which would improve home supervision. A sizable number of cases, 42 (22%), was identified as having no social worker attached to the family for a period of months in the year prior to annual review. These cases are colloquially known as ‘unallocated’ but, in practice, the picture is a little more complex. Some were allocated but extended periods of sick leave meant that no direct social work input was, in fact, being provided. Some were held under review by the senior social workers or team leaders, facilitating intervention in response to a crisis or a request for a report for a hearing.

There was considerable geographical variation in the number of unallocated cases. In the sample of 189 cases, 74 per cent were found in four authorities. Eleven (36%) of key informants reported that there were unallocated home supervision requirements in their authority in 2001, ranging in number from less than 5 to 39. The priority systems in place in some social work departments to aid decisions as to case allocation resulted in some home supervision requirements not being allocated.

There is a tension inherent in the system over the availability of social work resources. While no doubt panel members reach decisions about home supervision with awareness of the local resource context, their primary task, in accordance with legal requirements, is to reach decisions in the best interests of each individual child coming before a hearing. This in turn can pose demands on a service required to operate within a cash-limited budget. Some services, such as most income transfers within the social security system, operate on strict eligibility criteria but are then demand led. It is not open to the system to declare that individual citizens who meet the criteria (for example, for payment of an old age pension) cannot receive one because of a lack of resources. Others, such as the national health service, can ration services by delay, through the operation of waiting lists. The main rationing devices open to social work departments are dilution - spreading the service more thinly than may be requisite or desirable (Parker, 1975) - or the covert imposition of rationing through local systems of case prioritisation. In the study the latter left unallocated (or effectively unallocated) a sizeable number of cases subject to compulsory measures of care through home supervision requirements.

**The use of Regulations and Guidance**

Seventy per cent of the key informants questionnaires in the local authorities considered the Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997) to be fairly effective, compared with 13 per cent who thought they were ineffective. The majority (67%) of social workers described the Regulations and Guidance as either very or fairly helpful. However, 30 per cent reported that they did not use them at all and the majority (52%) did so only occasionally. The key informants reported that the use of the Regulations and Guidance was monitored in 43 per cent of the local authorities, principally through staff supervision.
It appeared from the case files that some of the key requirements of Regulations and Guidance were not being implemented in the course of supervision. This was most striking in respect of care plans and reviews. Ninety per cent of key informants indicated that social workers in their authority were expected to complete a care plan for children on home supervision. However, care plans were found in the case files for only 17 per cent of the 189 children.

The Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996 No. 3262 (S.252)) specify that reviews should be carried out in respect of a child looked after but not placed by the local authority within three months of the date on which the authority began to look after the child and thereafter within six months of the date of the previous review. Reviews were recorded in the case files as having been held in only 13 per cent of cases.

The Regulations and Guidance (Scottish Office, 1997) also stipulate that following the making of a home supervision requirement, the social worker should “arrange to visit the child and family immediately where there is a significant level of risk but in any case within two weeks.” The first visit took place within two in respect of only 31 per cent of the cases in the sample. (The timing of the first visit was not recorded in the file in 37% of cases.)

**The status of home supervision requirements and implementation**

The findings concerning the use and implementation of the Regulations and Guidance suggest that children on home supervision may not be considered to be in all respects ‘looked after children’. The Children’s Services Plans (with the greater emphasis on children looked after away from home) and the numbers of cases in the sample which were not allocated to a social worker for a period of time may also be indicative of this. This can be understood, at one level, since the responsibilities of the local authority for children removed from their parents and accommodated in residential units or placed in foster care may seem qualitatively different from cases where the child remains at home, with primary responsibility for their daily care resting with their parent(s). At another level, however, the children on home supervision can be seen as particularly vulnerable since the protection and the degree of surveillance which are (or should be) associated with a placement in a residential unit or in foster care are not as available to those living at home. For whatever reasons, there does appear to be a disjuncture between the formal, legal status of children on home supervision as ‘looked after’ and the realities of practice.

**Outcomes**

The outcomes in respect of home supervision were considered to be broadly positive. Data from varied sources confirmed this. First, 83 per cent of key informants in local authority social work departments reported that they considered home supervision to be effective. The majority (52%) of panel members rated the home supervision in the cases concerned to have been excellent or good. Fifty four per cent of teachers reported general improvements for the child during the period of home supervision. A large majority (87%) of social workers was of the view that the objectives of home supervision were fully or partially achieved in respect of the child. Finally, the satisfaction ratings concerning progress in the 189 cases in the sample derived from panel members’ written reasons at annual review, revealed that the largest category, 43 per cent were considered to be satisfactory, 29 per cent were rated as mixed, with some progress noted alongside continued concerns, and 28 per cent unsatisfactory.
When outcomes are considered in relation to the original grounds of referral, there is also consistency. Ninety per cent of the informants ranked home supervision as very or fairly effective in care and protection cases, compared with 70 per cent in respect of children who offend. None rated home supervision for children who fail to attend school regularly as very effective and only 43 per cent considered it to be fairly effective. By contrast, 47 per cent considered it to be not very effective or not at all effective in these cases. The satisfaction ratings derived from panel members’ written reasons confirm this rank order. Fifty five per cent of care and protection were rated satisfactory, 41 per cent of cases referred on offence grounds and only 12 per cent of cases concerning non-attendance at school. The majority (52%) of cases of non-attendance at school were rated unsatisfactory.

The high priority attached to care and protection cases, together with clear procedures, well developed interagency approaches, appropriate services and care plans were reported to contribute to this. The relatively poor success rate in respect of children referred on grounds of non-attendance led some key informants and some social workers and reporters to raise questions about the appropriateness of home supervision for this group of children and whether greater responsibility for tackling this problem should rest with education services accompanied, perhaps, by changes at the school level.

**Monitoring of home supervision requirements**

Key informants in 13 (43%) local authorities indicated that the outcomes for children on home supervision were monitored usually through the supervision of individual cases. It appeared that the results were rarely aggregated to inform a judgement about how well home supervision was working across the authority as a whole. Panel members identified the need for more robust methods of monitoring, whether by early review of specific cases at hearings or via the reporter or by social work departments themselves. Social workers also identified the need for better monitoring (for example, drawing up care plans and undertaking regular case reviews), placing this second only to an increase in social workers as a suggestion for improving home supervision.

The national data set (presented in Chapter Three) indicates that only 18 per cent of home supervision requirements had been in force for more than 3 years (at the snapshot date of 30 June 1999). This raises the issue of whether an annual review is sufficiently frequent. Implementing, say 6 month reviews, might well be beyond the current resources both of lay panel members (a scarce and valuable resource) and of the SCRA, but there may be some advantage in considering whether an ‘interim’ review, possibly short of a full hearing involving perhaps a meeting with the child and family concerned with one or two panel members or even a written report from the social work department outlining the care plan and recording contacts would be useful. An alternative could be the appointment of an independent person (such as a safeguarder or children’s rights advocate) to visit each child/family on a six monthly basis and to provide a written report to the panel members, the reporter and the social work department. One panel member suggested that social background reports for review hearings should be required to specify the dates of all contact between the social worker and the child/family and a list of the nature and frequency of any additional services provided. The findings indicate a need for closer monitoring of home supervision, whether internally within social work departments or through some external arrangements.

In conclusion, there was much that was found to be positive, with service provision by the social work department and others in the interagency network contributing to beneficial
changes in the lives of the children concerned. Broadly positive views about the effectiveness of home supervision were expressed by social workers, panel members, teachers, key informants in local authorities and families. Children initially referred on grounds of care and protection were considered to have the most successful outcomes, followed by those referred on offence grounds. Home supervision was judged to work least well in respect of children referred on grounds of non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse.

Nonetheless, there were some parts of the country in which the service was severely affected by staff shortages, leaving cases either formally unallocated or in practice receiving a much reduced and episodic service. This geographical variation raises important issues not only of territorial justice in access to services across the country but concerns also about the well-being of vulnerable children and families who have been adjudged to require compulsory measures of care.
References

Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996 No. 3262 (S.252))


