

Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Alternative provision](#), HC 341

Tuesday 17 April 2018

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 17 April 2018.

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Members present: Robert Halfon (Chair); Lucy Allan; Michelle Donelan; James Frith; Emma Hardy; Trudy Harrison; Ian Mearns; Lucy Powell; Thelma Walker; William Wragg.

Questions 361-407

Witnesses

[I:](#) Jules Daulby, Director of Education, Driver Youth Trust, Dr Louise Gazeley, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Sussex, and Dr Marion Gillooly, Head of Strategic Development & Innovation, Includem.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Driver Youth Trust](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Jules Daulby, Dr Louise Gazeley and Dr Marion Gillooly.

Chair: Good morning, everybody. Thank you very much for coming today. Just for the benefit of the tape and for the people watching on parliamentary TV and on the internet, could you kindly give your names and positions, if we start from our left to right? The acoustics are terrible here, so if you could kindly speak loudly.

Jules Daulby: I am Jules Daulby. I am Director of Education for the Driver Youth Trust. We are a charity that is dedicated to improving the life chances for children with literacy difficulties.

Dr Gillooly: I am Marion Gillooly. I am Head of Strategic Development and Innovation with Includem. Includem is a charity that provides relationship-based support to young people who struggle to engage with mainstream services.

Dr Gazeley: I am Louise Gazeley. I am the Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Research at the University of Sussex, based in the School of Education and Social Work.

Q361 **James Frith:** Good morning. I refer Members to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests. I would like just to focus on expectations on schools regarding alternative provision. Do you think that pupils are being referred to alternative provision instead of having the appropriate assessments or support in mainstream schools?

Jules Daulby: We work with Aspire in Bucks, which are the PR units for Bucks, and there are many students that get there that have not really been through any assessment protocol at all, or it has happened very early on and it has not followed them through their school careers. A system where students are assessed right from the start and that follows through and looking at support is really important, and that has fallen away more and more over the years.

Dr Gillooly: The policy context in Scotland is different in terms of inclusion, and all of our policy landscape is really focused on including young people in their communities and in schools, so there is a presumption of mainstream education. Local authorities are held to account in relation to attendance of young people in local authority schools and rates of exclusion from local authority schools, so there is not the same assumption that children and young people with additional support needs will not be in mainstream school. However, there are undoubtedly challenges around the capacity to provide sufficient assessment of need to make sure that, whether it is in a mainstream setting or not, the needs of children and young people with additional support needs are being met.



Dr Gazeley: I am going to base my comments around a piece of research that we did for the Office of the Children's Commissioner, which we completed in 2013. I think it is important to say that because, obviously, as time moves on, things change. One of the messages that we took from that work was this idea of a continuum of provision within which alternative provision takes a lot of different shapes and forms, some of which are within school and some of which are outside of school, and children accessing that both intermittently and over more extended periods of time.

Our sense would be that some children have quite well-developed and understood needs because there is a huge spectrum of need, but then there was also a concern that sometimes there were children who were coming particularly through primary-secondary transition, who perhaps have not had need identified. It is probably not a very helpful answer, but it is very complex and it needs to look across that breadth of—

Q362 **James Frith:** Absolutely. You are absolutely right, it is complex, and too often we have a very binary system, and heads in schools in Bury that I talk to are too often seeing it, sadly, as one or the other. Would you agree that while there is a real need to have early identification for children? We have them hosted here previously and taken evidence from them on the brilliant, qualitative support that they have received, which they would all say they would want to have taken sooner. For those children, that is brilliant, but too often, or increasingly, there is a tendency to exclude or off-roll or outsource the issue to AP at the expense of taking a more patient approach, which can cost more money and have quite a lot of distraction for teachers in schools. This AP work can be done in mainstream, perhaps with the premise that you are talking about in Scotland. Perhaps our English colleagues could respond first.

Jules Daulby: I would certainly say around that assessment again that early identification we know is key, but we also know the Berrow report came out 10 years on, recently, and we know that speech and language is huge, all the way up to youth offenders and the prison population. Yet all the evidence shows that if you give good provision early on, and speech and language provision, that will make a huge difference. Unfortunately, the threshold is quite high, so there are a lot of students that slip through the net. That is where we talk about this being a language problem in key stage 1, it is a literacy problem in key stage 2, and it is a behaviour problem in key stage 3. That pathway for those children that are not identified and do not have the early intervention is really crucial. For schools, having that expertise in school and being able to draw from that in a more complex way is really, really important.

Q363 **James Frith:** Is there a way of early-identifying almost by cohort and having an assessment done before perhaps behavioural presentation is made by the child? Is there a way of indicating that?



Jules Daulby: There are many indicators, yes. If you speak to most professionals in the early years particularly, but also in primary and early secondary, there are so many indicators that, if you look at a pathway of a child, you can see very early on where these issues were going to come up. Not always—I am not saying it is that simple—but there are certainly indicators that we can use and that are out there. Screening is really, really important, and then picking up from that screening those that have been shown to have a difficulty of some sort.

Dr Gillooly: Can I just talk about the Scottish experience? For over a decade we have had an approach called “Getting it right for every child”, which is around looking at children and young people’s well-being and considering their well-being throughout their experiences with universal services of health and education, as well as in specialist services. That is really about identifying need at the earliest stage.

We perhaps have a tendency to think about early intervention as being equated to early years, but absolutely early intervention is intervention as soon as there is a concern that there is something not right.

Q364 **Thelma Walker:** Is it right that in Scotland you have a named person for these identified children?

Dr Gillooly: “Getting it right for every child” is a national policy, so it has been implemented across all 32 local authorities on a policy basis, and it really is focused on looking at well-being, on assessing well-being needs and taking earliest possible action to assess those well-being needs. One small part of that wide-ranging policy is that it can be helpful to have a key point of contact, where a child or a young person or a parent can go to if they have concerns about a child’s well-being. That is also an important point of contact for other professionals, that they know where to go. Somebody who knows the child, who has a relationship with the child and with the parents, and is able to make an assessment of that child’s well-being and what supports might be required.

Q365 **Thelma Walker:** How is that person trained?

Dr Gillooly: Named persons, as I say, are implemented on a policy basis. You will be aware that the Children and Young People Act had provision for a statutory named person service, but that has not been commenced. The named persons that we do have in place in Scotland are usually senior teachers in school, head teachers, or teachers with responsibility for pastoral care of children and young people in schools. In the early years, health visitors are the named persons, so they are professionals who know the family, who know the parents, who know the child from birth, and who are able to maintain an overview of what is happening for that child.

Q366 **James Frith:** One last question. Do you think that the role of the Fair Access Panel is relied on as well as it might be? Does it need strengthening as a role? The experiences certainly locally to me,



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compared with some of the evidence we have taken, is that too often the internal conversations that happen at school are presented as a fait accompli when it comes to the local authority's area of authority. I just wondered what your thoughts were on the Fair Access Panel.

Jules Daulby: I am glad they are there, but it is the transparency for me that is key. I think there should be much more rationale about why students are having to leave mainstream, if they should. The Access Panel should be able to record far more deeply and ask more questions around where those students might go. Certainly, again in Bucks, I know it is chaired by the executive head teacher of the PRUs, so there is a system in place, but I would just like to see more transparency and more tracking and more accountability, linked to relationships with schools and alternative provisions.

Dr Gillooly: In the Scottish context, local authority head teachers are required to use exclusion as an absolute exception. The presumption is that young people will stay in school. Where that is not possible to be maintained, then again there is a requirement that support is provided, and the exclusion in and of itself we recognise is not going to address the issues that lead to that young person not coping in a mainstream setting.

We have had really quite impressive success in terms of partnerships between local authorities and third-sector organisations, like my own, in identifying where young people's behaviour and issues and their complex lives are creating difficulties in school, and a recognition that support out of school is often an absolute requirement to be able to allow that young person to be ready to learn and to be ready to engage in school. That is about supporting children and young people to deal with the trauma and complexity and crisis that they are often living with, but also it is about supporting parents, to include parents in that process and to make them part of the decision-making process. If that does not happen, then we are not going to be successful in managing to get young people back into school, and then that cycle of disengagement repeats itself when those young people themselves become parents.

Dr Gazeley: I would just say a couple of things. One is that I think the research that we did pointed very strongly to the idea that it is not helpful always to think about young people as a problem for an individual school. One of the issues around resource and responsibility is the sense that the schools that we looked at were sites of good practice and we scoped them very carefully, but that sense that their collective responsibility is within local communities. Sometimes the solutions do not lie solely within the grasp of the individual school, which is partly why some of the focus on alternative provision within our particular study was about co-development of solutions across local context, which was very much thinking about what is it that young people might need, with a very positive, flexible, resourceful mindset, rather than thinking about it as punitive, places overflowing because children are not wanted. It is really important to think about that.



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Also, a really strong message that we took from the project was this idea that some schools have much shorter lines than others. Schools were investing a lot of effort in some cases, but that sense that other schools were not investing in a similar way. We thought of that as a particular form of inequality and a kind of postcode lottery, and whether that is acceptable to have that fragmentation of support and provision.

Q367 **Emma Hardy:** Good morning. That has perfectly led me on to the questions that I would like to ask. I want to talk a bit about how the school environment affects the number of children being referred for alternative provision. We have had an awful lot of written evidence suggesting that, for example, zero-tolerance behaviour policies are increasing the number of exclusions. I wondered what your thoughts were on this and whether or not you agree that it is certain schools' environments that seem to be pushing the number of exclusions more than others. Start with you, Jules.

Jules Daulby: I am quite vocal on the zero tolerance. I am not saying that they are completely to blame for the rise in exclusions—I just want to make that clear—but I do think it goes against the grain, when you have worked in SEN for a long time and special needs, and that there needs to be flex in the system.

Q368 **Chair:** Can you just define zero tolerance? It can mean different things to different people.

Jules Daulby: Yes. I suppose zero tolerance and no excuses comes from the idea that there is no flex in the system, that everybody has to behave in the rules of the school, and if they do not—and that includes, to a certain extent, parents. If parents do not—

Q369 **Chair:** Would that apply to bringing drugs into school, for example? Would you say they should be flexible in terms of if they brought drugs into the school, if there was zero tolerance drugs-wise?

Jules Daulby: This is the argument we often get. When I talk about the rise in exclusions, in zero tolerance, they say, "Well, we cannot have children with knives in the school". Nobody is saying that we cannot exclude knives and drugs. However, the majority of exclusions are around persistent disruptive behaviour. Again, I know that is disruptive for a class and the other 29, which is another phrase I hear a lot, but it is much more complex than that. There needs to be a flex around system.

For instance, if there is a child with ADHD, who is impulsive, and then you look at their behaviour that they have got in trouble for, is it linked to their impulsivity? A great example: one of my students once stole a bottle of water for a friend because they did not have any money in the canteen, and he came straight to us afterwards and said, "I shouldn't have done it, I know", but it was his impulsivity that did that. Now, I am not excusing that—

Q370 **Chair:** You are not saying that zero tolerance should not be drugs or



knives, but you are talking about zero tolerance when it is behaviour?

Jules Daulby: It's the behaviours. Sometimes we talk about behaviour as if it is one thing. Behaviours is a thing, so you might have impulsivity. You might have other issues around your special needs. We need reasonable adjustments. Zero tolerance, unfortunately, does not seem to—and I might be wrong, and somebody with a zero-tolerance mindset might come in and tell me—recognise reasonable adjustments, and they see them as excuses as opposed to reasons.

- Q371 **Emma Hardy:** Absolutely. The other thing to point out on the zero tolerance is most children who end up in PRUs do not have their SEN diagnosed before they get there. You can have this zero-tolerance behaviour policy for children who you think have no excuse and no reason to exhibit the behaviour they have. Actually, they have an underlying SEN condition that nobody has even diagnosed, and I think that is what we are saying as well: if you have no flex and if you have an absolutely rigid attitude of, "Everybody, despite if they've experienced ACEs that morning, despite what has happened to them before they have walked into school, they should absolutely behave"—it is down to colours of umbrellas, isn't it, on zero tolerance?

Jules Daulby: Yes, and there is quite a lot of shaming as well with regards to behaviours. When you look at vulnerable children that have spent a long time being shamed in their lives sometimes, those sorts of issues are very complex and I know it is not black and white, but I do not think those help. That is to do with expertise of the school.

- Q372 **Chair:** How do you ensure that the teachers know the difference between someone who has genuine difficulties and someone who is just being bad?

Jules Daulby: That is a really good school system, in my opinion. I have worked in schools that are excellent in inclusion but they have a fabulous SENCO, they have a fabulous team around the child in the school, so they are the ones that would advise the teachers. Teachers are as much victims in some of these situations as children, so I am not expecting teachers to be abused all the time, but there should be a system within the school that does not keep going back to AP that can help that child and help the teacher. That expertise is sadly going sometimes in schools.

- Q373 **Chair:** How do you make sure the school has that expertise? What should happen in your ideal school?

Jules Daulby: There needs to be an excellent SENCO. The SENCO is the real champion. I was in Liverpool with 25 SENCOs yesterday for ASCL, and one of the SENCOs said, "They don't do any exclusions now without me being there", because what has happened in these exclusion meetings, the SENCO has not had a chance to defend that child. The SENCO as champion is huge, and the head listening to the SENCO. The head should be able to say, "Jules, should I exclude this child?" and I would go, "No. We need to do this. We need to do this". It is that sort of



flex in the system and debate and thoughtfulness around those processes.

Q374 **Trudy Harrison:** When you talk about flex in the system, what about the curriculum and how creative that is and how broad and balanced it is?

Jules Daulby: The curriculum is a real difficulty. It is very sad because if you talk to staff at the PRUs in Bucks, for instance, they have gone through hoops to try to find qualifications that their pupils can do. Again, before I joined Driver Youth Trust, we had 20 in a cohort of 450 every year group that would go out on a Tuesday and we would go and do outdoor learning, and we would go to the RSPB and National Trust sites and outdoor education. That is missing a lot in schools, and there are some children who do need that.

Q375 **Emma Hardy:** We had evidence from Matthew Dodd of the Special Educational Consortium, and he made the suggestion that zero-tolerance behavioural policies might be unlawful. He said that reasonable adjustments must be made to everything that public bodies do, and that if you have SEN pupils in a school and you fail to make reasonable adjustments, that is unlawful. Would you agree with that? Would you, Louise, agree that they could possibly be unlawful?

Dr Gazeley: It is difficult. In our research, we were trying to look at inequalities in rates of school exclusion across groups, of which one was SEN, and one of the fundamental problems was that—in a sense it was a problem, but it was an interesting finding—people do not tend to think in those inequalities terms particularly.

What we most heard was about inclusion and good inclusive practice. In these schools that we thought were good at reducing inequalities and exclusion, it was almost a by-product of good practice that they understood how to make accommodations where young people are coming from and the difficulties. They took holistic approaches. They were flexible. They had different behaviour management policies, some of which were more rigid than others, but there was a common message, which was that children need to understand the parameters within which they are working. There need to be good relationships. There needs to be trust. Staff need to be challenged, if their own behaviour does not model what you would expect to see in young people. We are not properly in disagreement around that.

Of course, staff have to understand the legal consequences. People do not talk about institutional racism, but we know what that is. Trying to approach it from those positions is difficult for professionals, and that invites all sorts of training issues, I think.

Dr Gillooly: In Scotland we have the additional support for learning Act, which requires appropriate adjustments to be made to meet the needs of those children and young people with additional support for learning needs. There is that legal framework around the expectation that



adjustments will be made. Punitive measures in and of themselves will not change behaviour. A child who is behaving in a way that is disruptive in a school is communicating something, and often that is around trauma and anxiety. What we are trying to achieve in Scotland is to have a trauma-informed workforce that really understands the impact of childhood trauma on behaviours and on how children and young people present in a school setting and in other settings, to look to try to develop ways of providing early intervention. If we miss those signs in the early stages, it is too late. We spend phenomenal amounts of money trying to cope with families and young people who are in crisis, who are not contributing to their communities. They are not able to secure employment. We know that when we intervene early, we can achieve really good outcomes.

We are making progress in Scotland. I am not attempting to sit here and say we have got it sorted in Scotland and, "Oh, poor you in England. You are not doing so well". That is not where I am coming from at all. Absolutely, you have a long way to go, but I think I am encouraged that the direction of travel is the right one and that we recognise there are challenges and there are resource constraints that will always make it really difficult. There are parents who have significant concerns about the amount of effort that they have to put in themselves to make sure that their children receive the support that they need. I am not ignoring that in any way at all. However, unless we start to make the steps towards inclusion, we will not be able to address the issues that we have.

Dr Gazeley: It might be helpful to say that the strong message was that people really individualise behaviour. Even if you know that someone is from a group that is massively overrepresented in exclusions, you will rationalise it around their individual behaviour. It is very difficult to get people to make that connection from a particular group that is particularly likely to end up in exclusion processes to thinking, because it is framed in those individualistic terms.

Q376 **Emma Hardy:** Did you want to add anything, Jules, before we move on?

Jules Daulby: The idea of legality: you are right that it is not necessarily useful because then you immediately have this issue between schools and the law, but it should be recognised that reasonable adjustments must happen and they are not excuses. There might be some work around that, but prevention is far more important than reaction. We need a lot more analysis around behaviour, particularly as an unmet need.

Dr Gazeley: Can I just add that I am not saying that the law is not important? I believe it is a huge driver of people's attention, but I do think that there is another issue, which is how people then respond to that. Those are two different things.

Q377 **Lucy Allan:** Good morning. We have heard from all of you that early intervention is absolutely key to prevention, and I think, Marion, you were just bringing up the point about capacity and resource to intervene



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early, which seems to be quite clearly a stumbling block. I was just wondering if you could all let me have your views on what we can do about that, because it is not enough just to say, “We need more capacity”, or, “We need more resource”. How do we tackle that in terms of making sure policymakers understand this prevention necessity and saving money later down the line at the crisis end, which you are talking about, Marion? Louise, would you like to comment on capacity tools?

Chair: In essence, in an ideal world, if we had a magic wand, what would happen? We also want early intervention. What would happen in practice in schools across the country?

Dr Gazeley: We were working in 2013 and people were talking then about how they were having to make cuts in terms of what they had on offer, not only in response to the lesser supply of resource in order to do things that they would previously have done—so, encouragement to take things in-house or to use other staff because of the expense—but partly also in response to things like the Wolf report, suggesting that certain qualifications and routes were not useful, even though practitioners might say they have been very valuable for certain children. There is also an issue around resourcefulness, which is about what people decide to prioritise. Some people would buy in, perhaps, some training that might have a cost, but then they would be proactive about ensuring that that was embedded and disseminated. I think there is a massive issue around resource and young people who cannot access crucial services, and the way in which those services have become increasingly fragmented.

Q378 **Lucy Allan:** Have exclusions increased, do you think, as a result of lack of resource?

Dr Gazeley: I could not make a causal connection like that, and I also take a position on exclusions data, which is that that is only a story and a version of what is happening. Underneath that are all sorts of things that we do not see and we do not monitor and we could not understand, that are hugely problematic for young people who come through to parents. We know little about what they have had in schooling. I go back long enough in education to think I now know people who have been in exclusion processes, who are now in their late 20s. I think, yes, we should be concerned about the data—it focuses attention—but it is only telling us a very small portion of what has happened and what will continue to happen in terms of people’s opportunities and their children’s opportunities.

Q379 **Lucy Allan:** Jules, improving early intervention with a limited capacity, limited resource—what would be your suggestions?

Jules Daulby: Indicators are key. Having access to specialists is really important at an early stage and would be much cheaper than later on down the line. Schools need to have access to those specialists and expertise very quickly.



I must say as well the culture in a school really needs to change, because we cannot have these schools that are saying they are more academic and this school is much more inclusive. It becomes a coded message to parents and communities. All schools are for all children in a comprehensive system. If you mix with that ecology, that is one of the issues. A mindset for all schools that they are for all children, and then the support from the specialists.

Teachers and parents are real experts in their own children. The teacher in the classroom knows their child better than anybody, so we must also empower the teacher in a classroom with quality-first teaching, but again access to those specialists, and we must include parents. Parent partnership is key. If we are telling parents, "If you don't like it at our school, you can go somewhere else", that divides the community and is very divisive.

Q380 Lucy Allan: Some parents may have had bad educational experiences themselves and, therefore, be hostile towards the school.

Jules Daulby: Yes, you are just fulfilling the cycle.

Q381 Lucy Allan: How do you break that?

Jules Daulby: There is lots of evidence, I think, in good parent partnership work, and they need to be part of the decision-making process. They need to be included. There are so many parents that feel they get, "Oh, another call from the school", and what ends up happening is the parent and the child become against the school, and it should be the school and the parent saying to the child, "Right, this is how we're going to help". That relationship is really important, and sometimes it feels very much that the family and child are to blame, and the school will not work with them until they turn themselves around. As we say, these kids are future parents, so we have this cycle we must break, and we cannot do that if we are not working with parents from a very early time.

Q382 Chair: Can you start pre-primary school with early intervention?

Jules Daulby: Children's centres and the Webster-Stratton courses and the parenting courses that were around, those resources have gone, unfortunately, a lot of the time. We used to endorse it. Barnardo's used to do parent support advisers, which was that wave 2, before they got to social workers, and that was really powerful because it was early intervention again. Unfortunately, it is very intangible prevention, as opposed to reaction, and so we cannot record that until it is too late. Losing those sorts of early interventions and work—

Q383 Chair: Let us say you are faced with a primary school, and there is early intervention in the early primary. You identify a child with difficulties. What happens in practice, in an ideal world?



Jules Daulby: In an ideal world, as soon as it is identified, the parents should be included in the process, specialists should be sought, screeners should be done and assessments should be done, and a plan put in place immediately. Teachers should be advised, and the head teacher should be supporting as an umbrella that whole system.

Q384 **Ian Mearns:** On that issue, your thresholds for social services intervention with families are really quite high, and yet you are talking about working with parents. There are some parents out there, all too many of them, where they are not at the thresholds for social services intervention, but they are still having a negative impact on the upbringing of vulnerable children. What can we do with those sorts of families?

Dr Gillooly: Can I come in there and answer your question and the early question around what does it take for early intervention to be successful? What it takes is a culture shift. It takes a shift in thinking and in allocation of resources that is recognising the value of investment in prevention and early intervention, and it is about using that resourcefulness that we have in schools, in early years provision, to act, to provide support. It is not all about bringing specialists in. Teachers and early years workers know when they can do something to help, and that is about absolutely involving the parents, involving the child as far as possible in any decisions that affect them, and respecting the rights of children and young people, and respecting the rights of their parents. It is absolutely crucial.

What is required in order to meet the gap of those families? What we do not want is children and young people to have to reach an increased level of need before they can access services. That is in nobody's interest. It really requires quite significant transformational change in the way that services are provided. What we are beginning to see in Scotland are some really good examples of local authorities who have taken the courageous decision to invest in services that can save them money at the crisis end of services. Some of the work that Includem is involved in is around returning young people from out-of-authority care placements back into their local authorities through a period of intensive support. That saves a local authority significant amounts of money in a short space of time, and they are reinvesting that saving in early intervention to prevent young people from getting to the stage where the care that they need cannot be sourced from within their local authority. It really takes brave decision-making and a commitment to make that culture shift. That takes time.

We are all too ready to expect that there will be quick fixes to these issues. Issues around inclusion are incredibly complex, but we must not shy away from that. We really need to be brave in this and we need to try to work collectively together. By "collective", I mean collectively with children and young people and their parents and their families.

Q385 **Chair:** We are going to come on to Scotland in a bit—I am going to pass over to Lucy in a second—but does the data show that the action taken



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by the councils in early intervention in Scotland has made a big difference?

Dr Gillooly: We are certainly now seeing the evidence of the difference that that can make.

Q386 **Chair:** In terms of the future of these children and their destinations and so on?

Dr Gillooly: Absolutely. The numbers of young people in Scotland leaving schools and going into work or training or further education are increasing, and the numbers of young people entering our youth justice systems are decreasing, but it is really important to emphasise that we cannot take our eye off the ball. Early intervention is not a cure. It can make a difference and it can absolutely improve outcomes, but we need to keep investing in it. If we do not, all of the problems that we have been facing come back again. I am very cautious about good news stories, particularly if you look at young people who offend. The figures suggest that the problem is going away, but if we take our eye off the ball and if we move the resources elsewhere, the figures start to go up again. We really need to be diligent and vigilant in making sure that we have continued investment in early intervention.

Q387 **Chair:** The reason why I am asking this question is because to make the case—what you are saying seems eminently sensible and important—for this to happen in England, it is helpful to have the data to show that this policy is working.

Dr Gillooly: Absolutely, and there are Scottish Government statistics. The information around rates of exclusion has just been publicised. Rates of exclusion from schools in Scotland have decreased dramatically in the last decade. Again, with all statistics, we need to be very careful in how we interpret those. If we have a national policy and a national improvement framework that is about assessing and measuring numbers of exclusions, then it is not unrealistic to expect that numbers of exclusions will decrease. What we need to do is look at what sits underneath those figures and to make sure that those young people who are being maintained in mainstream education are truly included, and they are included in class and they are engaged in learning. That is the information that we really need to drill down into and to analyse, and, again, analyse over a long period of time because there are no quick fixes in this. We need to be vigilant and we need to keep looking at those figures.

Q388 **Lucy Powell:** Part of what I was just going to ask has just been asked. It is about this threshold point. In England we do also have many examples of early help models. It sounds like similar examples to Scotland. It is quite hard, though, when context is changing the whole time, to give a direct causal correlation between that, but we do know that those early help models work.

Getting back to that threshold point and drilling down in that a little bit



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more, we all know that these days you have to be on an education, health and care plan, or you have to have met some kind of proper, formal threshold to really get some of the interventions that we are talking about. Do you think we could look more creatively underneath that threshold about who does what in terms of where those resources are coming from? It seems to me that too often it is also the expensive professionals that we rely on to deliver some of those services: health visitors, for example, which are a level 7 postgraduate qualification, or the senior SENCO in a school, which would be a very senior teacher. Do you think there is some scope there to look a bit more at better use of teaching assistants, better use of outreach workers and so on in that context?

Jules Daulby: Yes. For me, it is the whole system. The expensive specialists are there as guidance, so they must not go.

Q389 **Lucy Powell:** No, they should not go. No. They should be needed.

Jules Daulby: There is an awful lot that they can drip down and feed into the more mainstream system. Teaching assistants can do fabulous work and, again, they need to be supervised. Yes, absolutely, the system needs to go, but it needs to come from the top and from the community at the same time. That is where we talk about the culture. The culture of a system must work, and everybody needs to believe that an inclusive school and an inclusive community will succeed. It is breaking those barriers down, and that is where the experts are important because they can bring into it—

Q390 **Lucy Powell:** I totally agree with you. We have had some models like that in Manchester, and it is very, very hard to change that culture about who does what and how things get done. Again, in my experience, you cannot change a system from national Government. Systems can be changed in smaller pockets that have to be around, say, a place, a local authority or whatever, and the stripping away of the local authority role here has been a challenge. Do you think culture change needs to be done in a community, in a whole place?

Jules Daulby: Yes, and partly incentives as well. We all know that you are not rewarded for being an inclusive school at the moment. That is absolutely definite. Incentives for being an inclusive school, and every school should be inclusive. Then there needs to be far more incentive, maybe, from the national picture.

Q391 **Lucy Powell:** Yes, so the right levers from the national body.

Jules Daulby: When there is a will, all sorts of stuff can happen quite cheaply and professionals can be used lower down. TAs are real professionals now in our schools and they are doing quite high-level work, and that is fine if they are supervised from the experts. I think that is a really good model to use. It is a systematic will as much as anything else that needs to happen so we do not reach those crisis points and very expensive ways of doing things.



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Dorset, for instance, has just closed all its PR units to children unless they are permanently excluded. It has shut its doors for the summer term because it is absolutely full. It has a waiting list. It has five PR units. It has closed for the summer term unless there are children in crisis that have been permanently excluded. To reach that situation, I do not know how we have got to that situation.

Dr Gazeley: It is really important to think holistically about this. Some of these issues are systemic, and the contextual factors are really important. What you see happening in schools does reflect external pressures, and I do believe there is a conflict of interest between the pressures on schools and the pressures on young people sometimes. It is really difficult to create an external framework that is conducive to the kind of work that we do all know is most beneficial to the most vulnerable young people. As you say, that does not necessarily incentivise.

The thing about teaching assistants and people like that is we cannot ignore the fact that these people are really undervalued, underpaid, in really poor working conditions. They are doing the really difficult work, often suffering all kinds of physical abuse and all the rest of it, within a system. Unless we look at the whole picture, we will never find the answers for these children. It has to be a cross-sectional look through all of it. We have quite good understanding of a lot of things that are wrong, and it is that solution-focused approach, which a lot of these people talk about, which is: how do we look at the policies? How do we work out what is going wrong? How do we put those in place across the board, instead of in pockets? Some people are doing it really well.

Q392 **Lucy Powell:** My final question about that links to that threshold point. We have heard overwhelmingly through a lot of the evidence we have taken on this that alternative provision has been a very, very positive experience for many of the young people who have arrived there. Many of them felt that it was a shame that they had to be labelled so many times as a failure in order to access education that was more appropriate for them or an environment that was more appropriate for them. In terms of that threshold, do you think that we need to look again at perhaps a lower-threshold alternative provision that is perhaps more of a revolving door, rather than the permanent exclusion, PRU, or mainstream, and then there is nothing in between for perhaps some young people who the current mainstream, for whatever reason, is not right for, but would flourish in a different environment?

Jules Daulby: In Aspire we have been looking at that pathway and using the PRUs as outreach for mainstream schools, and having that relationship, with the specific idea that they stay in mainstream and it is prevented as opposed to a reaction, but there is always a recognition that there will be some children that might do better and they need that alternative provision. What I think would be really useful is having that decision made—maybe through independent people—of the pathway of that child through looking at their history. Are they the type of child that



will be able to come back to mainstream, are they somebody that should go to a special school, or are they a child that may flourish in an alternative provision? Having that future school as part of the plan might be useful.

I would say, however, if something is there, then people use it. I started in 1998 teaching, and it was not really on our radar. We never thought about children going to alternative provision. If you make this fabulous alternative provision, everybody will use it, and most of these children should be in mainstream. We absolutely have to make the case, like Scotland, that the majority of children—and the massive majority—should be in mainstream, and then have excellent alternative provision for those. That pathway, to make that decision very quickly—“Are they an AP type of child? Should they go to a special school?” or, “They really should be in mainstream. Let’s do what we can do keep them in mainstream”—is really important.

Dr Gillooly: What is key to all of that is absolutely person-centred planning for the child. Their needs need to be considered on an individual basis. We do not want to label children as a particular type of child or a particular type of need.

Jules Daulby: That is the thing, and that is the danger, yes.

Dr Gillooly: That is absolutely the danger. It really is around, “What can we do to support this young person, and who does that take? Who could do something to help them achieve the outcomes that they want to achieve for themselves, as well as the outcomes that we want them to achieve?” It is, as you say, a team around a child to try to identify specific roles, and being quite clear about what each person is doing, co-ordinating that support so that we do not have duplication of support, which is often the case and a real risk, or we do not have different people providing support that is in conflict. It really needs co-ordination. It is about not making assumptions before we go into a situation. It is really about looking at the needs of the individual and how they can be supported. That culture shift is absolutely required to make a change.

Q393 **Trudy Harrison:** Marion, this is really following on from what you have been saying. You speak very positively about the steps being taken in Scotland around getting it right for every child, and I understand that the powers in Scotland are different, in that no school can permanently exclude a child; that is a decision only for the local authority. I can really understand how the local authority is then very much in tune with the challenges and directing the funding accordingly. If you could just explain a little bit more about what else needs to happen for it to work. I know you have touched on it already, but a little bit more detail would be very helpful.

Dr Gillooly: Yes, absolutely. Just to set the context, in Scotland, local authority schools are accountable to the committee structure within the local authority, so we do not have boards of governors in local authority



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schools. That contributes to probably more standardisation of approach across our local authority schools than is perhaps the case, which is not to say that head teachers do not have accountability and are not given the capacity and the freedom to make decisions around how their schools should operate. In fact, there are some new changes to education governance systems in Scotland that give more power and control to head teachers.

What we are seeing now is direct allocation of funding, particularly around closing the poverty-related attainment gap between the children and young people who live in the most deprived areas and have the most income in their households and those who are in the least deprived situations. Making that direct commitment to allocating resources, where it is seen that spend on prevention and early intervention will have most impact, is absolutely critical, and that is happening. Local authorities have the ability and in fact they are required to plan for children's services in their area, and they are required to report back to Scottish Ministers on a regular basis on how they are improving outcomes for children and young people in that area. That accountability at local authority level is really key and what has made us make positive steps within Scotland.

As I said earlier, I am not suggesting that there are not problems and that there are not issues and that it is not difficult to allocate sufficient resources. In an ideal world, we would all have more resources, more money, more people, more skills to be able to support our children and young people. The steps that are being taken to invest where we know there is a good chance that it will make a difference are helpful, and the role of the third sector is recognised and supported across Scotland. That is a really positive thing that that partnership approach is a recognition that schools on their own cannot do it all and we do need to bring in others.

Chair: Could I just very gently interject? We have to finish. We are running out of time. What you are saying is very valuable, but we have to finish in less than 10 minutes. Could you just have slightly more concise responses?

Q394 **Trudy Harrison:** Just finally, when we have been speaking with pupils who have moved over to alternative provision, they have pretty much all spoken incredibly positively about that transition and how it has really changed their lives. I worry slightly that all the emphasis is on avoiding exclusions at the cost of supporting the child or young person.

Dr Gillooly: That is the danger of using, as I said, inclusion figures on their own without looking underneath that at what is happening. Absolutely it is about working out what is the right course of action for that child. What will meet that child's well-being needs? For some children, mainstream education is not the place where their needs will be met.



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Q395 **Chair:** How many informal exclusions are there in Scotland? How can we find them?

Dr Gillooly: The way that figures are reported, it is very difficult. Officially, there are no informal exclusions. Exclusions are formal exclusions. If a school excludes a child, they should record that and report that as a formal exclusion. The policy states that there is not an official way of giving a child or young person a cool-off period or sending them home until things settle down and come back. Practice around that is more difficult to assess. Yes, I think that people are constrained by statistics and constrained by figures.

Q396 **Chair:** I just want to understand. Because there are hardly any exclusions, the children are remaining at the school. Is that right? Or are they going to alternative provision but it is linked to the school and the school is directly accountable?

Dr Gillooly: There are exclusions.

Q397 **Chair:** Yes, but not many?

Dr Gillooly: They are reducing. There are fewer exclusions, and the length of period of exclusion is reducing. There are ways that schools can look at alternatives for young people. It is possible, for instance, to come to an agreement within a local authority that a child will attend another school within the local authority for a period of time, but there is always the presumption that they will be reintegrated back into that original school where at all possible. These situations are looked at and monitored, so that presumption of mainstreaming and presumption of inclusion is absolutely running through all of the practice around how we deal with challenging behaviour.

Q398 **Chair:** The figures I have here are: 2016-17, one pupil in Scotland was removed from the register, permanently excluded, and in 2015-16, five pupils. It is hardly any at all, which is quite extraordinary. I am just trying to understand. I am not clear what the alternative provision is, then.

Dr Gillooly: What we would talk about is pupil support provision. Pupil support provision within schools and in some local authorities also—

Q399 **Chair:** You do not have PRUs, in essence?

Dr Gillooly: Not in the same way as—

Q400 **Chair:** If a child is excluded and then takes their exams in the alternative provision or assessment or whatever it may be, do you think that the school should either be fully or partially accountable for that excluded child?

Dr Gillooly: Absolutely. Exclusions should not be about a school wiping its hands of a child.



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Jules Daulby: We just do not know a lot of the data, and we do need to know more about the data. Where a child is is so important, and they should stay on that school roll until another school takes over. If they are moving in an area, they should stay on that roll until they go to another school. The AP should be part of that.

Dr Gazeley: I am not sure I have much to add to that. I did want to say just a little bit earlier the idea that some of these students are moving, they are simultaneously in alternative provision and mainstream, and it is important not to have it as a binary option. Some of the young people certainly talked about the fact that having those two things running alongside each other was beneficial because it gave them a reason to re-engage with the schooling because they were getting some positive—the exchange between those two things can be positive.

In thinking about alternative provision, you have to think, what are the alternatives? Some of those alternatives are good and some of them are awful. I feel, in a pragmatic space, much as I might want every child to be included and flourish in a school, I recognise we do not have a system that does that, so then what do we do? That is where, for me, this conversation about the alternatives begins to come in.

Dr Gillooly: We need to be really creative. There are some good examples of young people who perhaps attend mainstream school for part of their week and maybe go to college to do a vocational qualification.

Q401 **Chair:** You have units in your schools that you put the children with difficulties—

Dr Gillooly: We have pupil support bases.

Q402 **Chair:** They are in the same school?

Dr Gillooly: They are in the same school.

Q403 **Chair:** People say here that if we had that across the board, they would become dumping grounds. What is the answer to that?

Jules Daulby: We had a speech and language base within a big, mainstream school, and I think it is a really good model, but obviously that was linked to the special need, the educational need of the child. It worked because they could go to all their lessons but then they had this place that they could come back to. The speech and language therapists were there. There was also a team around that child if there were difficulties in the mainstream. Something similar could work in schools but we would have to be really, really careful that it did not become a dumping ground. There would have to be a very specialist provision as opposed to just an inclusion unit, which they are often called, which do not work. I think it needs to be linked to expertise.

Q404 **Lucy Powell:** The experience of some of the young people of those units



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was horrific. The young lady that you know, Robert, then flourished in AP. She absolutely hated that.

Jules Daulby: Yes. The segregation in mainstream schools is a thing that we do need to discuss as well, that they may even not go to an AP but they are segregated within the mainstream. That is a huge issue for me because if they are just having problems, say in the maths, for a short term, then they should be able to go to all their other lessons and then just maybe come out of maths for a bit, and let us work on that and see. That sort of to-ing and fro-ing within a mainstream school, for me, would avoid probably an awful lot of exclusions, but it seems to be they are either in class or not. Having base expertise within a school that can have a bit of flex would work, but the dumping ground idea and the segregation is a real problem.

Dr Gazeley: There is a difference in terms of alternative space, and schools can have multiple alternative spaces. They can have highly punitive units for children they regard as behaviour problems, but they can have units perhaps for children with autism who need those quiet spaces. The notion that one thing works and one thing does not work is really problematic.

Q405 **Chair:** Just a final question. What do you think of a Bill of Rights for parents and their children in terms of exclusions? Given the amount that happen, this does not really apply because you have so few. There is this huge problem.

Jules Daulby: Yes, I had heard that or I saw that in the last panel. I like the idea, as long as it is truly reflective of parents so they can do that. We know, for instance, the SEN tribunal says 80% win with regards to EHC plans. Probably exclusion panels could end up the same. Again, it is that accountability in tracking and knowing where these children are and including the families from a very early age that that Bill could work, as opposed to just becoming a tick-box, "Yes, we have asked the parents and they have said yes. Yes, we have done this". Again, it needs to be much more of a relationship with the family. I think there absolutely should be a Bill of Rights for parents and children that are not coping or have been excluded from mainstream, and we should know much more about them.

Q406 **Chair:** That would include informal exclusions as well?

Jules Daulby: Yes, any child that is not having a mainstream education.

Dr Gazeley: Some parents are very much better placed to exert their rights than others, and one of the issues is that many of the children who get tied up in all these processes have parents who do not have the knowledge, the understanding, the trust or the experience to exert their rights, and they do not have access to advocacy either. They are in a very dependent position on trust for professionals, some of whom do a very good job and some of whom we know are not doing the right things.



It is really important to recognise that some parents can leverage the system and some cannot, and we need to think about how we help them.

Jules Daulby: Can I just mention one more point? It used to be called parent partnership and it is now IAS, independent advice. That was always for parents who have children with SEND, but we know there are so many unidentified special needs for children that are being excluded. That should be broadened as well. IAS, as it is now called, should not just be for children that have SEND. It should be for any child that has been excluded from school or is in danger of exclusion from school. They have a lot of expertise in the system and they work with schools as well as parents, so their role could be expanded.

Q407 **Chair:** Could I thank you? I would just ask one request of Marion. First of all, just to learn about the Scottish system. It is quite remarkable what is going on there, I have to say. Thank you. Thank you to all of you for your expertise. If I could ask, Marion, if you could help the Committee with data on outcomes?

Dr Gillooly: Of course, yes.

Chair: I think that would be very helpful in terms of making the case. Thank you to both of you as well for the work and research and the advocacy. We hope that you like our report.