



Aimhigher

The Way Ahead Project

Dr Angela O'Sullivan
Project Researcher

Seconded from
De Montfort University

Supporting Success -

What factors impact on
Looked after Children
and Care Leavers'
Achievement and Progression?

Dr Angela O'Sullivan
De Montfort University



An Educator's Perspective

Personal experience of teaching

Science in:

Higher education

Further education

Prison education



An Educator's Realisation

Personal experience of teaching

Care leavers in:

Higher education

Further education

Prison education



Achievement Gap

	ALL	LAC
KS1 Level 2	86%	58%
KS2 Level 4	80%	44%
KS3 level 5	73%	27%

DfES, 2006



Achievement Gap

	ALL	LAC
At least 1 GCSE	96%	60%
At least 5 A*-C	56%	11%

DfES, 2006



Common threads

Lack of continuity

Instability

Previous underachievement

Gifts and talents not being tapped

Special educational needs

Causal factors?

Gender

Age distributions

Ethnic origins

Placements – type/number/timing

School moves – timing

SEN

Evidence tracking

Gender

Age distributions

Ethnic origins

Placements – type/number/timing

School moves – timing

SEN

Evidence tracking

187 children

3 cohort years

2 local authorities

Key Stages 1,2,3,4



Barriers to evidence tracking

Gatekeepers

Data not stored in one place

Gaps in data

Data ambiguously presented

Historical data sometimes weak

Preliminary findings

55% male 45% female

Majority White British ethnic origin

Patterns of foster placement distribution

Preliminary findings

LAC with more than 10 placement moves:

60% did not sit any GCSE exams

34% achieved no A*-C grade GCSEs

6% achieved at least one A*-C pass

0% achieved five A*-C passes

Preliminary findings

LAC who moved school in Yr 10/11:

At least 26% of those studied.

Half of these did not sit GCSE examinations

How Do We Close The Gap?

- Shared and updated databases
- Professionals liaising
- Designated teachers
- Achievement monitoring
- Early support if required
- Reduce school moves
- Reduce placement moves



What About HE?

- When the gap narrows more LAC will have access to HE
- HEIs need to encourage recruitment e.g. Summer schools
- HEI staff awareness training
- Close liaison with schools/colleges
- Practicalities e.g. 52 week accommodation

Promoting HE to LAC

- Foster carers
- Social workers
- Designated teachers
- Careers advisors
- Student ambassadors



CLOSING THE GAP

Together we have the potential
to make it happen!

