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**Review of Children's Social Care: call for evidence**

**6. The area of social care which this submission relates to is: Promoting the resilience of young people from living in care to adulthood: messages from research for policy and practice**

This area of children's social care is informed by a body of primary research studies and evidence spanning over 30 years, surveying over 1100 young people and following-up over 300 young people leaving care, using a range of methods. In addition, this area has been informed by international studies, research reviews and literature contributing to the development of theory, policy and practice. These publications are identified below by authorship and the full details have been submitted to *Review.ChildrensSocialCare@education.gov.uk*

**Publications informing the subject based on primary research studies**

(1). Stein, M. & Carey, K (1986); (2). Stein, M. (1990); (3). Stein, M (1994); (4). Biehal, N., Clayden, J., Stein, M. & Wade, J.(1992); (5). Biehal, N., Clayden, J., Stein, M. & Wade (1995); (6). Stein, M., Pinkerton, J. & Kelleher, J. (2000); (7). Dixon, J. & Stein, M (2002); (8). Dixon J, & Stein, M (2003); (9). Dixon, J. & Stein, M (2005); (10). Clayden, J & Stein, M (2005); (11). Dixon, J. & Lee, J., with Stein, M, M, Guhirwa, H. Bowley, S. & Catch22 NCAS Peer Researchers (2015); (12). Kelly, B., Dixon, J. & Incarnato, M. (2016)

**Publications informing the subject based on reviews of UK and international evidence**

(13). Stein, M. (2004); (14). Stein, M. (2006); (15). Stein, M. & Munro, E. (eds) (2008); (16). Stein M (2009); (17). Stein, M. & Morris, M. (2010); (18). Stein, M, Ward H, & Courtney M (2011); (19). Rees G & Stein M (2016); (20). Stein M & Ward H (2021, in press)

**Publications informing the subject developing resilience theory, outcome groups and the history of the rights movement to young people living in and leaving care**

(21). Stein, M. (2005); (22). Stein, M. (2006); (23). Stein, M. (2008); (24). Stein (2011); (25). Stein (2021, in press)

**Publications informing the subject developing the application of research findings to policy and practice**

(26). Stein, M. & Wade, J. (2000); (27). Stein, M (2008); (28). Stein, M. (2009); (29). Stein, M & Dumaret, A-C (2011); (30). Stein M (2012); (31). Stein, M (2015); (32). Stein M (2019)

7. The research evidence informing these findings is identified in Section 6 (full details have been submitted to *ReviewChildrensSocialCare @education.gov.uk*)

## 1. LIVING IN CARE

**STABILITY:** is a key mediator of positive adult outcomes including physical and mental health, education and employment. It promotes resilience through compensatory attachments and for older entrants to care, continuity in their lives.

**EDUCATION:** success at school is associated with going onto further and higher education and employment. School also enhances social networks, new opportunities, leisure activities and turning points – resilience promoting factors. Most children who are looked after have lower levels of educational achievement than children in the general population but many young people do make progress from very poor starting points in care and may take longer to catch-up. The reasons for underachievement are multi-faceted and include pre-care: living in poor households; experience of abuse and neglect, and; difficulties growing-up, often contributing to poor mental health and social, emotional and behavioural problems. The main challenge is to compensate young people and address the pre-care aetiological factors

**A POSITIVE SENSE OF IDENTITY:** is associated with quality of care and attachments; background knowledge; how others respond; how young people see themselves and the opportunities they have to influence and shape their lives.

**PARTICIPATION:** Involving young people in individual decisions, and collectively in policies, which shape their lives, is a central platform of resilience. I was fortunate to be an adult advisor to the rights movement of young people in care between 1973 and 2011 and witness an unfolding story of both individual and collective resilience.

**PREPARATION:** may provide young people with opportunities for planning, problem solving and the learning of new competencies - all resilience promoting factors. This may include the development of self-care; practical, and; inter-personal skills.

## 2. TRANSITIONS FROM CARE

**REMAINING IN PLACEMENTS** until young people are prepared and ready to leave (aged 21 plus) is associated with better accommodation, education, employment and mental health outcomes than leaving care early - in contrast to the accelerated and compressed transitions at just 16 and 17 years of age

## 3. PATHWAYS TO ADULTHOOD

**OUTCOMES OF LEAVING CARE SERVICES** show they are effective in supporting: young people in housing; preparation; EET, and groups with additional needs

**EMPLOYMENT:** targeted work experience, apprenticeships training and employment programs may assist young people into employment

**INFORMAL SUPPORT:** Positive extended family, partner and social relationships assist young people in adulthood – but negative relationships are damaging

**LONGER-TERM ADULT OUTCOMES:** limited evidence shows outcomes improve over time, associated with quality of care, ongoing support, having a coherent story, finding satisfying relationships, and; returning to education

**OUTCOME GROUPS:** evidence suggests that there are differences in outcome groups, degrees of resilience, they are not set groups, young people move between them, over time, or as their circumstances or the support they receive changes.

***Moving On group:*** experienced stability in care, school success, gradual transitions from care; found a satisfying career; moved from specialist care to universal services, and see themselves as ‘successful’, having an ordinary identity

***Survivors group:*** experienced placement movement and disruption; left care early with few qualifications; assisted by both leaving care and social networks; achieved career and personal success over longer period of time

***Strugglers group:*** entered care having experienced severe maltreatment; many with complex needs; many placement movements; left care early, cluster of problems, dependent on specialist services, important to ‘stick’ with them

**8.1** There is a lack of research evidence of young people’s transitions to adulthood, aged 21 to 25 plus, as distinct from at the time of leaving care (aged 16 to 20). This means we know very little about the experiences of young adults in managing their pathways to adulthood including what may contribute to their successes or the difficulties that they may experience

**8.2** It would be consistent with the current legal and policy framework to collect official data on young people leaving care, aged 16 years and over up to 25 years of age. Two types of data would greatly assist planning and service development at both a local and national level.

First, a continuation of the annual ‘snapshot data’ up to 25 years of age as a ‘general’ year-on-year indicator – with the health warnings to deter simplistic associations and causality with the ‘care system’ - to provide information on young people’s pathways to adulthood: education, employment and training; accommodation; physical and mental health and well-being, and; keeping in touch.

Second, to complement this with sub-samples of official ‘progress’ data on these pathways to adulthood, collected and published at the same time as ‘snapshot’ data, affording ‘snapshot and progress data equal legitimacy. What is important to young people and those who work with them are subjective measures of ‘well-being’, including the recognition of progress towards major achievements, such as getting back into education, furthering leisure interests and vocational skills, and often for the first time, developing consistent, positive, loving and trusting relationships with adults. This suggests that what is needed is a progress measure of what is happening to young people at different points in time that, in addition could incorporate their views of their well-being, as well as that of other important people in their lives.

**8.3** Methodologically, there is a lack of variety in the types of research studies available. The majority are descriptive, non-experimental mainly qualitative studies using small samples and mixed methods

**8.4** It would be very helpful to have a large scale representative longitudinal study to be able to compare young people living in and leaving care with young people in the general population. In Sweden, for example, national registers for entire birth cohorts has been used to examine a range of psychosocial outcomes in young adulthood for care leavers after the age of 17 years, in comparison with their peers in the general population, This has led to comparative data on how young people progress and the identification of 'risk' and 'protective' factors as a focus of policy intervention.

**8.5.** There have been very few 'intervention' studies with an experimental design which have the potential to contribute more robust evidence of 'what works' in improving the quality of care and young people's progress and outcomes on their main pathways to adulthood

**9.1** The findings from the research submitted in response to Question 7, clearly demonstrate the difference between the evidence of what contributes to good outcomes – in promoting the resilience of young people from care to adulthood - and what is happening in practice. The primary research studies, research reviews and the literature on resilience and the application of policy and practice contain evidence of variations in the range and quality of practices and services. Interviews with staff taking part in the primary studies would suggest that they are aware when their practices conflict with the evidence – most know that young people need: stable good quality placements; help with their education; support when mental health issues arise; to leave care gradually, when they are prepared and ready to leave, and to be well supported personally and practically, on their main pathways to adulthood – accommodation, careers, health and well-being. The main challenge facing both central Government and local councils acting as corporate parents is to ensure young people leaving care, wherever they are living, receive high quality services which promote their resilience. This means urgently addressing the territorial injustices faced by young people and the barriers to 'levelling-up' services, whether they derive from underfunding, managerial failures or poor practices.

**CARE REVIEW: LINKS TO THE EVIDENCE – RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS 6; 8; and 9**

**6. The area of social care which this submission relates to is: Promoting the resilience of young people from living in care to adulthood: messages from research for policy and practice**

This area of children’s social care is informed by a body of research and evidence spanning over 30 years, surveying over 1100 young people and following-up over 300 young people leaving care, using a range of methods. The primary research studies are outlined below (see Table 1):

**Table 1. Summary of Research studies, 1982 – 2013**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Follow-up</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Main Methodology</b>	<b>Further information</b>
Leaving Care (first UK follow-up study)	79	45	1982-1984	Mainly qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews with young people at 4 points in time
Living out of Care	65	32	1986-1989	Leaving care project evaluation – mainly qualitative	Interviews with young people, project workers and social workers at 3 points in time
Moving On (first UK evaluation of leaving care schemes, with experimental design)	183	74	1990-1994	experimental outcome design, following up care leavers ‘participating’ in 4 leaving care schemes with ‘comparison’ sample	3 sets of interviews carried out with young people (426 Interviews) and a policy set with project staff and managers
Scottish throughcare & aftercare study (first Scottish follow-up study)	107	61	1999-2001	Mixed methods	Policy survey of local authorities; a survey of 107 young people; a follow-up study of 61 care leavers
Mentoring Care Leavers (first UK study)	181	17	2002-2004	Mixed methods	Data on 181 mentoring relationships
Corporate Parenting (first built in evaluation of peer research)	579	87	2011-2013	Mixed methods – using peer researchers	Policy survey; interviews; focus groups
<b>Total</b>	<b>1194</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>31 years</b>	<b>Wide Range</b>	

In addition, this area has been informed by international studies, research reviews and literature contributing to the development of theory, policy and practice.

The key findings arising from the research and evidence identified in Section 6 are organised to address how the resilience of young people can be promoted, first, by the quality of care they receive when living in care; second, during their transition from care, and, third, on their pathways to adulthood. In conclusion, in connecting the research evidence to young people's lives, including the implications for promoting their resilience, three main outcome groups are identified ('Moving On'; 'Survivors', and; 'Strugglers').

The foundation stones were laid by the primary research studies (see Table 1 and references 1-12). These foundations were built upon by: evidence from the research reviews of UK and international evidence (references 13-20); the application of resilience theory and the identification of outcome groups (references 21-25), and, finally, by the application of the research findings to policy and practice (references 26-32).

### **Publications informing the subject based on primary research studies**

- (1). Stein, M. & Carey, K (1986) *Leaving Care*. Oxford: Blackwell
- (2). Stein, M. (1990) *Living Out of Care*. Barking: Barnardo's
- (3). Stein, M (1994) Leaving Care, Education and Career Trajectories, *Oxford Review of Education*, 20, 3, 349-360
- (4). Biehal, N., Clayden, J., Stein, M. & Wade, J. (1992) *Prepared for Living? A survey of young people leaving the care of three local authorities*, London: National Children's Bureau
- (5). Biehal, N., Clayden, J., Stein, M. & Wade, J. (1995) *Moving On: Young people and leaving care schemes*. London: HMSO.
- (6). Stein, M., Pinkerton, J. & Kelleher, J. (2000) 'Young people leaving care in England, Northern Ireland, and Ireland.' *European Journal of Social Work*, 3, 3, 235-246.
- (7). Dixon, J. & Stein, M (2002) *A study of throughcare and aftercare services in Scotland*, Scotland's Children, Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Research Findings, No 3, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.
- (8). Dixon J, & Stein, M (2003) Leaving Care in Scotland; The Residential Experience, *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, 2, 2, 7-17
- (9). Dixon, J. & Stein, M. (2005) *Leaving Care, Throughcare and Aftercare in Scotland*. London: Jessica Kingsley

(10). Clayden, J & Stein, M (2005) *Mentoring young people leaving care, 'Someone for me'* York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (

11). Dixon, J. & Lee, J., with Stein, M, Guhirwa, H. Bowley, S. & Catch22 NCAS Peer Researchers (2015) *Corporate Parenting for young people in care – Making the difference*. Catch22, London.

(12). Kelly, B., Dixon, J. & Incarnato, M. (2016). Peer Research with Young People Leaving Care: Reflections from Research in England, Northern Ireland and Argentina. In P. Mendes, & P. Snow (Eds.), *Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care: International Research Policy and Practice* (pp. 221-240). Palgrave Macmillan.

### **Publications informing the subject based on reviews of UK and international evidence**

(13). Stein, M. (2004) *What Works for Young People Leaving Care?* Barkingside: Barnardo's.

(14). Stein, M. (2006) 'Research review: young people leaving care.' *Child & Family Social Work*, 11, 3, 273–279.

(15). Stein, M. & Munro, E. (Eds) (2008) *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood: International research and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley

(16). Stein M (2009), *Quality Matters in Children's Services, Messages from research* London: Jessica Kingsley

(17). Stein, M. & Morris, M. (2010) *Increasing the Numbers of Care Leavers in 'Settled, Safe' Accommodation*. Vulnerable Children Knowledge Review 3. London: C4EO.

(18). Stein, M, Ward H, & Courtney M (2011) Editorial: International perspectives on young people's transitions from care to adulthood, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33,12, 2409-2411

(19). Rees G & Stein M (2016) Children and young people in and leaving care in Bradshaw J (Ed) *The Well-being of children in the UK*, Bristol, Fourth Edition Policy Press, Bristol

(20). Stein M & Ward H (2021, in press) Editorial: Transitions from care to adulthood: persistent issues across time and place, *Child & Family Social Work*

### **Publications informing the subject, developing resilience theory, outcome groups and the history of the rights movement, to young people living in and leaving care**

(21). Stein, M. (2005) *Resilience and Young People Leaving Care: Overcoming the odds*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

- (22). Stein, M. (2006) 'Young people aging out of care: the poverty of theory.' *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 422-435.
- (23). Stein, M. (2008) 'Resilience and young people leaving care.' *Child Care in Practice*, 14, 1, 35-44
- (24). Stein (2011) *Care Less Lives*, the story of the rights movement of young people in care, London: Catch 22.
- (25). Stein, M (2021, in press) The rights movement of young people living in and leaving care in England between 1973 and 2011: a history from below, *Child & Family Social Work*

### **Publications informing the subject developing the application of research findings to policy and practice**

- (26). Stein, M. & Wade, J. (2000) *Helping Care Leavers: Problems and strategic responses*. London: Department of Health.
- (27). Stein, M (2008) 'Transitions from Care to Adulthood, messages from research for policy and practice, in Stein, M. & Munro, E. (Eds) (2008) *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood: International research and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley
- (28). Stein, M. (2009) 'Young People Leaving Care.' In G. Schofield & J. Simmonds (Eds) *The Child Placement Handbook: Research, policy and practice*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering, pp.420-438
- (29). Stein, M & Dumaret, A-C (2011) The mental health of young people aging out of care and entering adulthood: Exploring the evidence from England and France, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33,12, 2504-2511
- (30). Stein M (2012) *Young people leaving care, supporting pathways to adulthood*, London: Jessica Kingsley
- (31). Stein, M (2015) 'Supportive Pathways for Young People Leaving Care, Lessons Learned from Four Decades of Research.' In J.K Whittaker, J.F. del Valle & L. Holmes (Eds) *Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Youth*, London: Jessica Kingsley
- (32). Stein M (2019) Supporting young people from care to adulthood; International practice, *Child & Family Social Work*, 24, 400-405

### **8. This response is informed by the Evidence 'Publications informing the subject based on reviews of UK and international evidence'**

Most substantially:

- (17). Stein, M. & Morris, M. (2010) *Increasing the Numbers of Care Leavers in 'Settled, Safe' Accommodation*. Vulnerable Children Knowledge Review 3. London: C4EO.

See pp15-16 'Gaps in the evidence base'

(15). Stein, M. & Munro, E. (Eds) (2008) *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood: International research and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley

See Chapter 10 – Courtney, M, 'Use of Secondary Data to understand the Experiences of Care Leavers', pp 279-288; and Chapter 11, pp 104-105

(19). Rees G & Stein M (2016) Children and young people in and leaving care in Bradshaw J (Ed) *The Well-being of children in the UK*, Bristol, Fourth Edition Policy Press, Bristol

This chapter identifies in different sections the limitation of official data and research evidence

**9 This response draws on evidence substantially from 'Publications informing the subject based on primary research studies' (1-12) and the issues are also explored in selected literature from the other sections**