

INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH

My name is Helen Whincup. I qualified as a social worker in 1991 and worked with children, young people and their families from 1991-2004. I now work at Stirling University teaching social workers and managers and am also doing a PhD.

Although we know some things about what children and young people who are looked after at home think (for example, about going to Hearings) we don't know as much about what they find helpful when they have to meet with a social worker. I was interested in learning more and was given permission to speak to children and social work professionals in one Scottish local authority. The full details will be contained in my PhD, but I wanted to send this summary of the results to children, young people, their parent(s) and social work professionals.

First of all, **2** children, plus **8** social workers, and **6** managers helped me to develop questions.

Then, between January 2011 and May 2012 I talked to **6** children and young people (aged 6-15years) who were on Home Supervision Orders under s70 Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

I also spoke to **2** social work assistants, **6** social workers and **3** team managers (**11** in total).

Everyone I spoke to was given a different name so that when I wrote up what they had told me no-one would else would know who said what.

Since completing the interviews, the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 came in to force, and Home Supervision is now called Compulsory Supervision Order.



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The Department of Applied Social Science of the University of Stirling Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved this research study.



INFORMATION SHEET Young People



Children and young people who are on Home Supervision Orders (now called Compulsory Supervision Orders).

**What are their experiences
of social work contact?**

RESEARCHER:
Helen Whincup



WHAT DID CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE and SOCIAL WORKERS SAY?

- The relationship between a child and their social worker is central. A key message from children and young people was that it was important to know that your social worker *“cares about you”*. The way particular children know their social worker cares varied, but one child said that their worker would *“never say she’s too busy”*.
- Although most children and young people said that they value having someone who they can *“talk to”* and who will help with things they are worried about, several also wanted to *“do”* more things with their worker outside the house like going for a walk or having something to eat.
- Sometimes social workers use *“big words”* when they are with young people which are difficult to understand.
- Professionals talked about the value of spending one to one time with children and young people. One social worker said that this was *“where my heart is”*.

- Social workers talked about the different ways they try to help children.
- Social workers said that sometimes the amount of *“paperwork”* gets in the way of being with children and young people. What seems to help them prioritise the time with children and young people is their sense of commitment, and working in a team where this is valued and expected by their manager.
- What I noticed as a visitor is that some of the buildings in which social workers are based did not seem designed with children and young people in mind.

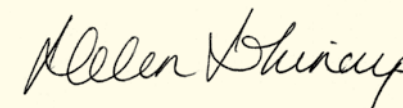
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THE FINDINGS?

This summary will be sent to social workers so they can give it to children and young people and their parents.

I have agreed to speak to social work professionals about the themes coming up from the research so that they know what children and young people have said is helpful. As well as writing up my research for my PhD, journal articles, and speaking about it at conferences, I will share the findings with social workers and team managers undertaking courses at the University of Stirling.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the children, young people and professionals who participated. I am very grateful for your time and hope that the research will be of benefit to others.



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