



Department
for Education

Children in Need of help and protection

Call for evidence

Launch date 16 March 2018

Respond by 01 July 2018

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Introduction

The Government committed in its Manifesto to review support for Children in Need (CIN) to understand why their outcomes are poor and what more support they might require in and out of school.

Children in Need are a group supported by children's social care, who have safeguarding and welfare needs, including children on Child in Need Plans, children on Child Protection Plans, Looked After Children, and young carers; and disabled children. It is a broad group across a wide spectrum of disadvantage. All of these children have needs identified through a children's social care assessment or because of their disability, meaning they are expected to require services and support in order to have the same opportunities, health, and development as other children.

In *Children in Need of help and protection: data and analysis*, the Department for Education (DfE) has published new data and analysis, looking at the characteristics, experiences and educational outcomes of Children in Need. This data demonstrates that whilst Children in Need overall have poorer educational outcomes than other children, there is some variation in children's progress across local areas.

Whilst a wide range of factors, including a child's experiences and resilience, and their family dynamic, influence the outcomes of Children in Need, professionals have a vital role to play in improving the outcomes of these children. Professionals work together to share knowledge and expertise that enables them to assess and respond in supporting Children in Need. The work that professionals do with children and families, in and out of school, can have a significant impact on the progress of children at every stage of their education.

Children in Need come to the attention of children's social care because their families are experiencing a wide range of social needs, and this can, in turn, affect their ability to engage with learning. This can include where adults in the family are experiencing difficulties, requiring support from services beyond schools and social care. To understand how to improve the educational outcomes of Children in Need we need a clearer picture of how professionals across education, children's social care, health, and other specialist services, are working to support families to change, to access the right services, and to ensure children's needs are being met.

Educational outcomes of Children in Need

Children in Need of help and protection; data and analysis shows that Children in Need typically have far poorer educational outcomes than other children from the early years and throughout school.

In comparing the attainment of Children in Need and other children, it is important to take into account the impact of the significant prevalence of special educational needs within this cohort, and for some, their experiences of abuse and neglect. These factors should not prevent professionals working with Children in Need from being ambitious about supporting Children in Need to achieve their potential, but do need to be held in mind when considering the level of educational attainment that children reach, their rate and consistency of progress and the level and type of support they might require.

Across local areas, there is variation in the progress that Children in Need make, and despite Children in Need being less likely to achieve than their peers overall, some children are able to succeed despite the challenges they face.

This pattern starts from the early years, where overall, Children in Need are around three fifths as likely to achieve the expected standard in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) than other children. Despite this, around 42% of Children in Need do reach the expected standard, achieving a good level of development.

Over primary school, the analysis suggests that the gap between Children in Need overall and other children widens – meaning they are half as likely to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, 25% of Children in Need do achieve this standard.

Over secondary school, negative Progress 8 scores show that overall Children in Need make less progress on average, relative to children with similar prior attainment at Key Stage 2. Yet the Progress 8 scores for Children in Need in different local authority areas vary by as much as -0.3 to -2.4, meaning those in the local areas where Children in Need are making the most progress are achieving around two grades better across all subjects, against expectations, than in the local areas where Children in Need make the least progress.

Equally, whilst Children in Need overall are around two thirds less likely to achieve A* to C in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 than other children, 19% of Children in Need do achieve these grades. This shows that in spite of the attainment gap for the group overall, some Children in Need do achieve to the same standard as their peers.

What do we want to learn?

We want to understand what it is that makes the difference to the educational outcomes of Children in Need in practice, how some Children in Need can achieve better educational outcomes than others, and what works in enabling Children in Need to achieve their potential.

To do so, we need to develop a stronger evidence base, going beyond the data to look at what is happening in practice. At different stages in a child's life, or when requiring

different levels of statutory social care support, children's needs will require a different response. At each of these stages, a child may work with a variety of professionals who offer support to a child and to their family, to improve a child's circumstances.

Through the call for evidence, we want to understand how the work of professionals supporting Children in Need can make a difference to a child's educational outcomes. Specifically, we are interested in:

- how support is delivered or commissioned to help children
- how this support is measured and evaluated
- how this support influences educational outcomes

Who is this for?

Addressing the needs of Children in Need relies on professionals working together. We want to hear from **anyone working to improve the educational outcomes of Children in Need**. This may include, but is not exclusive to, the following professions:

In education

- teachers
- head teachers
- designated safeguarding leads
- special educational needs coordinators
- educational psychologists

In children's services:

- social workers
- principal social workers
- service managers
- directors of children's services
- virtual school heads
- personal advisors
- early help workers
- troubled families coordinators

In health

- child and adolescent mental health professionals
- adult mental health professionals
- health visitors
- school nurses
- clinical commissioning groups

In the academic community

- those evaluating programmes for Children in Need
- those involved in underlying theoretical research on abuse and neglect, child development etc.
- those researching children's social care or education systems, with links to educational outcomes of Children in Need

What will we do with responses?

We will use the responses to the call for evidence to help us understand current practice and identify promising areas for further research.

Issue date

The call for evidence was issued on 16 March 2018.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the content of the call for evidence, you can contact the team by email – CIN.REVIEW@education.gov.uk.

If your enquiry is related to the DfE website or the call for evidence process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the DfE Contact us page.

Confidentiality of responses

Information provided in response to a call for evidence may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Department for Education will only process any personal data received as part of this call for evidence (e.g. any identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal data will only be used for the purpose of the call for evidence; it will not be disclosed to third parties unless the law requires it and you will not be identifiable from any published reports unless you have given consent to this.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may contact us at CIN.REVIEW@education.gov.uk for a Word document version of the form.

Deadline

The call for evidence closes on 01 July 2018.

Thank you very much for completing the call for evidence.

Call for Evidence Questions

The questions below were developed in response to the insights from *Children in Need of help and protection: data and analysis*. These questions provide the opportunity to discuss the underlying theories and research that inform your approach to working with Children in Need. We have asked about the ways that relationships are developed with children and their families, how you work with other practitioners, how decisions are made about meeting the needs of a child, and how long someone would remain working with the same child or their family.

The questions are intentionally broad to allow for a wide variety of responses, and should be treated as a starting point to describe how Children in Need are supported to achieve and progress in school, and participate and engage with learning, including through living in safe and stable environments.

Please provide your answers to these questions using the online form available [here](#).

In the online response, there are some initial questions to help us understand your background and role in supporting Children in Need.

Priorities and focus

Every professional working with Children in Need will have a different focus to their work, which is due in part to the statutory functions attached to some roles. Whilst some professionals will work solely with Children in Need, some will work with other children as well.

This question invites responses, which explain what you do, the support you provide, and the focus of your work with Children in Need, and how you think this relates to their educational outcomes.

- 1. Describe your priorities in what you do to support Children in Need to improve their educational outcomes.**

Theories and research

Many professionals make use of theories, research or pedagogy to inform their work with children. To understand the practice of teachers, social workers, or health professionals, it is useful to understand the basis for the work that they are conducting.

- 2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?**

I/My organisation has a strong evidence base that underpins our work with Children in Need.

3. What theories or research do you rely on to inform a plan of how to support a child?

Direct contact and building relationships

Evidence suggests that, in what professionals do to provide support, strong relationships are an essential part of effective practice. When working with Children in Need, professionals have to develop relationships with children and the adults in their families; in itself, this direct contact may function as a means of achieving change. The nature of the relationships with children and their families may be pastoral, or therapeutic, and may reflect the statutory duties of some professionals. Organisations may support professionals to develop these relationships through training, management or supervision. This will often require professionals to reflect on a child's experiences and how they perceive adults, adapting their contact to build a relationship accordingly. In professionals' contact with adults, professionals may find that they have to create and maintain relationships even when difficult decisions are made about a child's welfare and their education.

These questions have been designed to understand the direct contact that professionals have with Children in Need and their families, and the extent to which different professionals feel confident to build relationships with Children in Need, the support organisations provide to do this, and how this influences the changes that need to be made to improve a child's educational outcomes.

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I have effective approaches and skills to build relationships with Children in Need.

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I have effective approaches and skills to build relationships with adults in the child's family.

6. What approaches and skills do you use to build relationships with Children in Need, and how is this supported by your organisation?

7. What approaches and skills do you use to build relationships with adults, and how is this supported by your organisation?

Assessment and decision-making

Where a child needs support to achieve a good standard of health or development, and make progress in school, assessments are carried out to identify what their needs are, where they come from, and what should be done to address them. Different professionals are likely to have a different focus to any assessment, with social workers capturing a summary of what a child is experiencing within their family.

A child may have special educational needs, display challenging behaviour, or be experiencing abuse or neglect. The purpose of these questions is to understand how a professional would approach any concerns about a child's presentation, and decide when any informal support or targeted interventions might be proposed.

- 8. How do you identify a child's needs, and make decisions about what support should be in place?**
- 9. When deciding what support should be put in place for a child, what evidence do you use?**
- 10. Where a child is disabled, or has special educational needs, what are your priorities in offering support to improve their educational outcomes? (You may refer to children with disabilities, or special educational needs, or both).**

Working with other professionals

The work to support and safeguard Children in Need relies on agencies working together. Children in Need are likely to be children who are vulnerable, and have complex histories that influence their ability to engage in their education. Addressing vulnerability will often require the expertise of a range of professionals. The question below seeks to understand where this expertise comes from, and how it is used.

- 11. How do you work with other agencies to improve the educational outcomes of Children in Need?**

Consistency of professionals

Evidence suggests that Children in Need benefit from having trusted relationships with adults that help them, and it is important that there is consistency. Children in Need might move through different stages of education and children's social care. These questions aim to understand who in the child's life is likely to remain consistent during this time, and what happens when a significant adult stops working with a child.

- 12. In your experience, how long would you remain working with the same**

child and family?

13. What impact does consistency of professional have on the child involved and their outcomes?

Supporting the whole family

When supporting Children in Need, their welfare is the priority, and the ambition is to find ways to ensure that children can remain with their families when it is safe to do so. This means that to address a child's needs, both in and out of school, professionals are likely to work with children as well as adult family members, to bring about change and improve a child's educational outcomes. Depending on the role a professional plays in a child's life, they may have more or less contact with their family. These questions seek to understand the relationships with a child's family.

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The majority of support I/my organisation offers to Children in Need involves helping the whole family.

15. What is the nature of your work with adults in the child's life?

Evaluation

We want to understand how support is measured, and what evidence is used in practice to improve educational outcomes. The questions below may be appropriate to respond to in the context of individuals, or may be questions for system leaders that are involved in the strategic planning or evaluation of support for Children in Need.

16. How do you measure and evaluate the impact of your work to address a child's educational outcomes?

17. How do know your work has been successful, including any before and after measures you use?

18. Do you have comparator groups?

19. In your view, what are the areas that have a strong existing evidence base in improving educational outcomes for Children in Need?

20. In your view, what are the areas that need a stronger evidence base in improving educational outcomes for Children in Need?



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