An Investigation into the Impact of Arts & Cultural Education on Children Looked After

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Contents

1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this exploratory literature review was to investigate the nature and impact of arts and cultural education on Children Looked After (CLA) up to the age of 18, and those with experience of being in care at some point in their life. Coram was commissioned to complete this literature review in order to develop A New Direction's understanding of the engagement by CLA with arts and cultural education and to inform a more systematic approach to incorporating arts based activities in the lives of CLA. In addition, Coram considers the impact such engagement can have on children's academic performance, self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness and social skills and explores the strength of the evidence for these claims.

Currently there is a lack of existing literature in this area with a focus on children with experience of care, therefore this review also considered the impact of arts and cultural education on children who have similar life experiences, but may not have direct experience of the care system. In this report these children are referred to as 'disadvantaged' and included children and young people who have experienced residential instability and a disruptive education, have behavioural problems and/or learning disabilities, low educational attainment, are at risk of social exclusion and homelessness and involved with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

In this review arts education refers to a broad range of subjects including the traditional fine arts (e.g. visual arts, music, dance, performing arts, theatre and dance) as well as modern dance and movement, hip hop, poetry and creative writing. The range of practice identified in the literature stretches from community-led projects where the initiative for arts activity comes from local people or communities, to arts or community-based organisations with an established track-record, to that of established arts organisations who are relatively new to this area of work.

The current body of literature is not conclusive about the impact of arts and cultural education on CLA. A total of 51 relevant studies were identified from a search of seven educational, psychological and social science research databases. The vast majority of studies were about music education and programmes that included a combination of art forms for example drawing, painting and making collages (Coholic et al, 2012 and Coholic et al, 2016). .

The Scientific Maryland Scale (SMS) was used to assess the strength of evidence and robustness of methodology in the studies (Sherman et al, 1998). The SMS is a five point scale that ranges from 1 for more basic evaluations based on simple cross sectional correlations to 5 for more robust randomised controlled trials. Out of the 51 papers, 17 could be assessed using SMS. The SMS identified that the majority of studies found in this review were of lower methodological quality; no high quality single studies were found. Nine papers (53%) scored level 1, five (29%) scored level 2 and three (18%) scored level 3. The SMS level 3 studies involved measuring the impact of arts and cultural education by comparing children who participated in the activity with those who did not.

This review explores in more depth results from nine papers that were considered the most methodologically robust: eight papers that scored level 2 or more on SMS and a

paper by Hollingworth (2012). The key findings that arose from these nine studies were:

1. **Children's participation in arts and cultural education has the potential to increase self-confidence, self-esteem and emotional resilience.** Children who participated in community singing groups and multi-arts programmes reported feeling happy and more confident about their skills during the programme. Having the opportunity to share their work or preform to the public typically left children with feelings of pride and achievement.

2. **Arts and cultural education allowed children to express themselves through an alternative medium.** Arts and cultural education offered children the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings nonverbally to achieve self-expression and discover talent. This was especially useful with children who found it difficult to talk about their experiences.

3. **Children made new friends whilst attending arts and cultural educational groups in and outside of school.** This was important for children whose friendships had been disrupted by moving schools or local authority placements.

4. **Meeting children with similar life experiences encouraged children to share their feelings and their ways of coping.**

5. **When children feel valued and engaged with arts and cultural education this is a strong indicator that they are likely to experience positive benefits from participating.**

6. **Barriers to children's engagement with the arts include a lack of family and peer support.**

All studies, albeit many of which had a low score on the SMS, reported a positive impact of arts and cultural education. However there is a need for more rigorous and coordinated research to be carried out in this area in order to reach more confident findings about what arts and cultural education can offer CLA.

2   Purpose

The rapid literature review was commissioned by A New Direction to investigate the nature and impact of arts and cultural education on the lives of Children Looked After (CLA) and those who have been in care at some point in their life.

It brings together a range of studies and includes the experiences and voices of children's organisations to understand how arts and creativity can be incorporated into the lives of CLA and disadvantaged children, and draws attention to promising practices that may have the potential to improve school achievement or emotional and psychological wellbeing.

3   Introduction

3.1   Experiences of children in care

The UK's care population has increased steadily over the past seven years (DfE, 2015b). In England there were 69,540 Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of March 2015, an increase of 6% compared to March 2011 (DfE, 2015a). Many CLA experience significant material deprivation and inadequate emotional support in their lives before they enter care; over 60% of children in care are removed from their homes as a result of abuse and neglect (DfE, 2015b and NSPCC, n.d). Children and young people with complex disabilities may sometimes need to be looked after in specialist residential schools.

It is now acknowledged that this social group are at increased risk of poor life outcomes including lower educational attainment, homelessness, poor physical and mental health, unemployment and teenage pregnancy. Meltzer et al's (2003) research found that among young people aged 5-17 years, just under half of CLA in England (45%) were assessed as having a mental disorder. The most common issues were clinical conduct disorders which are "characterised by repetitive and persistent patterns of antisocial, aggressive or defiant behaviour" (NICE, 2014) and emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Research also suggests that as a result of abuse or neglect, CLA can experience challenges in forming positive and secure attachments. Dozier (2001) and Dozier et al (2008) interviewed and observed foster mothers and toddlers who were in foster care and found some children were mistrustful of adults, resistant to support and did not seek care or comfort even when distressed. Furnivall (2011) claims those children with insecure attachment relationships may not only find difficulty in managing stress and controlling their emotions, but are also likely to struggle to manage the learning and social environment of school and could experience some interpersonal difficulties in adulthood.

The educational experience of children and young people in care in England is of major concern (Berridge, 2012). Children and young people in care may face multiple challenges in their education stemming from disruption they have faced in their home lives, their disabilities and learning challenges. Berridge (2012) claims that much of the poor school performance of CLA may be explained by histories of maltreatment.

The latest statistics indicate that in England 12% of CLA who have been in care continuously for at least a year obtain five 'good' GCSEs (grade A*-C) including in English and mathematics compared with over half of children who are not looked after at 52% (DfE, 2014a). This attainment gap is evident in younger ages too (Berridge, 2012). CLA are also more likely to be permanently excluded from school and to have a fixed term exclusion than any other children (DfE, 2014b).

Academic challenges experienced by those in care can include behavioural and social problems (Hill and Koester, 2014 and Zeltin et al, 2010). Studies have indicated that children who are in care can display more aggressive and uncooperative behaviour or become more withdrawn due to the abuse or neglect they have experienced (Berridge, 2012 and Mills 2004). In addition as the DfE (2014a) data indicate those in care have higher rates of absenteeism, 4.6% of CLA reported to have persistent absentees compared to 3.6% of all children.

Another key feature to the educational experiences of CLA is the existence of special educational needs (Berridge, 2012). Two thirds of children in care have a special educational need and achieve at lower levels than other children who are looked after at Key Stage 2 and 4 (DfE, 2014a). It should be noted that special educational needs is not synonymous with low attainment or with being in care, however the high level of learning difficulties experienced by children and young people looked after is likely to contribute to their educational outcomes (Berridge, 2012 and Baker, 2006).

There is of course a danger of generalising that CLA don't do well in school - there are those who go on to be academically very high achieving (APPG, 2012). Where children looked after have the benefit of factors such as supportive carers, stable care and school placements, successful peers and opportunities to develop out-of-school interests, their educational attainment can be positive (Harker et al, 2004 and Martin and Jackson 2002). Rahilly and Hendry (2014) carried out interviews with eleven children and young people to explore their experience of being in care in the UK. Findings suggested that young people's contact with the care system usually enhanced their life chances in some way for example by experiencing increased support to engage with their education and finding new opportunities to develop close and caring relationships.

Berridge (2012) valuably points out that many children find entry into care beneficial to their education and the care system is not inherently damaging to children's academic performance. Rather the low attainment of children in care is linked to the complex learning and behavioural difficulties of children which have been inadequately addressed rather than the experience of care itself.

Nonetheless, despite the success stories of some children in the public care system, the educational performance of the majority of children looked after falls behind their non-looked after peers. The All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers reported that the work being done in both education and care is patchy and inconsistent (APPG, 2012). Other commentators such as Berridge (2012); Mill (2005); Ferguson and Wolkow (2012) have also concluded that more work needs to be done to address the principal causes holding each child back in order to drive the educational outcomes of children in care.

The lack of reliable and meaningful data on later life outcomes of CLA makes it difficult to assess the long term effects of their educational experiences (APPG,

2012). However research does indicate that there remains marked differences between lives of CLA and their peers even after they have left care. DfE (2014b) found that CLA are more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) and only 6% attend university compared with just over 50% of young people in the general population (Sebba et al, 2015).Young people transitioning from care also have poorer employment prospects, are more likely to end up in prison, misuse drugs and alcohol and be homeless than any other children (Sebba et al, 2015; DfE 2014b). In 2013, "6.2% of children looked after aged 10-17 had been convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand (compared to 1.5% of all children) and 3.5% of all children looked after had a substance misuse problem (compared with approximately 0.5% of 11-17 year olds)" (DfE, 2014b, page 4).

4   Methods used in the review

This review was not intended to be comprehensive but identified research that informs what role arts and cultural education can play in the lives of children looked after and considers the strength of evidence behind claims that have been made.

Given the time frame, the wide range of subjects and outcomes and the inaccessibility of some articles online, the search does not include all relevant material and may be subject to publication bias. Time constraints also limited the review to English language articles only.

4.1   Search strategy

The studies in this literature review were identified from a search of eight educational, social sciences and psychological databases: PsycInfo, Social Care Online, NSPCC, ScienceDirect, CoramBAAF and ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), ProQuest dissertations and Wiley. A reference list is included at the end if this report that details all studies cited.

The key search terms were informed by the PICOS framework (Table 1) to ensure that all elements of the review were incorporated into the search. The key concepts for this review included young people in care/care leavers and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and any arts activities that relate to an improvement in educational outcomes and emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Table 1: PICOS Framework

Population: Children and young people who have experienced any form of state care. Including children who may have similar life experiences to those in care for example residential instability, disruptive education, behavioural problems, learning disabilities, low educational attainment and/or are at risk of poor life outcomes such as homelessness. We describe this population in the text as 'children looked after and disadvantaged children'.

Intervention: Any arts and cultural activity programmes conducted in and out of school with children looked after and disadvantaged children and designed to improve educational outcomes and emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Comparisons: Young people who have not lived outside the birth family environment.

Outcomes: Any educational, cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural or knowledge outcomes.

4.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This review was interested in gathering a sense of how children and young people in care or those with experience of care have engaged with arts and cultural education, therefore the search did not have a target age however most studies involved those less than 18 years. This included children who may have similar life experiences to those in care for example residential instability, disruptive education, behavioural problems, learning disabilities, low educational attainment and/or are at risk of poor life outcomes such as homelessness.

'Arts and cultural education' refer to a broad range of subjects including the traditional fine arts (e.g. visual arts, music, dance, performing arts, theatre and dance) as well as modern dance and movement, hip hop and creative writing. Research that involved young offenders or reconstituted families were excluded as these findings didn't appear to be applicable to a mainstream educational context. Culinary arts, sports and gardening were also excluded.

This review considered a broad range of arts and cultural educational programmes/initiatives, workshops and classes to investigate the range of claims that have been made for the benefits of cultural education for disadvantaged children and young people in care or with experience of care. Studies that assessed impact on cognitive outcomes such as academic performance on tests and teacher assessments; non-cognitive outcomes such as self-esteem, confidence, resilience and non-academic school outcomes such as school attendance and attitude towards school or curriculum subjects and employability were included.

Therapeutic support that incorporated arts and cultural education with CLA or those who had suffered from abuse, neglect or behavioural problems was also considered. Although CLA's experience of therapeutic interventions was not the focus of this report, the term 'therapeutic' can involve a broad range of approaches and professionals and can be delivered in group learning environments (e.g. Coholic et al, 2012 and Coholic et al, 2009). Research that involved one to one interventions and therapies that needed to be delivered by trained clinicians were excluded. A full list of the inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in Appendix B.

4.3 Quality assessment

As well as considering the range of claims that have been made for the benefits of arts and cultural education, this review also looked to identify where the evidence for these claims was the strongest and where it was less robust and the measures that had been used.

The Scientific Maryland Scale (SMS) (Sherman et al, 1997) was used to assess the strength of evidence and robustness of methodology in each study. The SMS is a five point scale that ranges from 1 for evaluations based on simple cross sectional correlations to 5 for randomised controlled trials. The points on the scale increase in methodological quality and ranks each study based on its research design. Sherman et al (1997) argue that only studies with a robust comparison group design can provide evidence that a programme has caused the reported impact. This equates to

level three and above on the Maryland Scale (DCAL, 2011). Further details on the scale can be found in Appendix A.

5   Findings

Findings from the literature search found a lack of quantitative research in this area and much of the research which is available is qualitative and often based on self-reports. It is therefore hard to obtain 'hard evidence' of many of the perceived benefits of CLA's participation in arts and cultural education and outcomes related to education and employment.

In total 252 papers were identified in the initial scoping, this was reduced to 51 papers to account for duplications and papers that did not match the search criteria, i.e. did not focus on CLA or disadvantaged children but on the general population or described creative therapies delivered to targeted clinical conditions.

Out of these 51 papers, only 17 could be rated against the SMS as they were either empirical pieces or included experimental design. The remaining reports were either ethnographic studies or blog posts which were narrative accounts of the researchers' experience with arts and cultural education or existing literature reviews into the area.

Figure 1: Breakdown of papers found in literature search
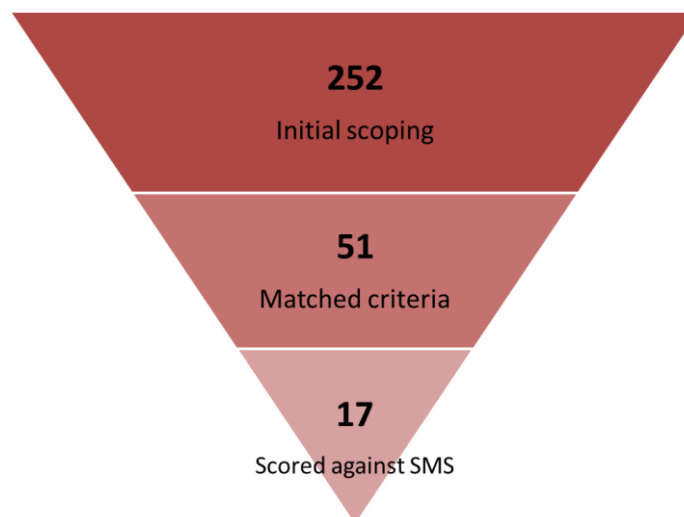
Analysis using the SMS found that the majority of evidence collected from the reports were basic level evaluations:

- Nine papers (53%) scored level 1
- Five papers (29%) scored level 2
- Three papers (18%) scored level 3

Few papers included a comparison or control group or established baseline equivalence. No studies included multiple controlled comparison units or conducted Randomised Controlled Trials (levels 4 and 5 on the SMS). Just under half of the reports (8/17) tested the impact at least before and after the intervention (level 2 and 3).

Sherman et al (1998) argue that only studies that have scored level 3 and above can offer robust evidence that a programme has caused a reported impact. However in this review papers that scored level 2 and level on SMS were reviewed as this was the most methodologically robust evidence available. The nine papers that scored level one on the SMS were excluded as they are considered methodologically less robust.

This review considered nine papers, a summary of these studies is outlined in Table 2. This includes eight papers that scored level 2 and 3 on SMS and a report by Hollingworth (2012). Hollingworth (2012) is the only paper that was reviewed in detail that could not be scored against SMS as it did not include experimental design, however the report was included as it was extremely relevant to the subject of this review. Hollingworth (2012) assesses qualitative results collected from a cross-national study entitled Young People from a Public Care Background: Pathways to Education in Europe (YiPPEE) and reports on the impact of arts and cultural education on UK care leavers. See Appendix C for a full detailed account of the children involved, method of study and quantitative measures used in the nine reviewed studies.

Table 2, Nine reviewed studies

Author and title	Location of research	Scientific Maryland Scale Rating	Purpose and description of the arts and cultural education
Coholic et al (2016) "Facilitating Arts-Based Mindfulness Group Activities with Vulnerable Children" Coholic et al (2012) "Investigating the Effectiveness of an Arts- Based and Mindfulness-Based Group Program for the Improvement of Resilience in Children in Need"	England	3	Holistic Arts Based Group Program (HAP) aimed to explore children's feelings and thoughts, teach relaxation techniques and build group cohesion through activities such as drawing, painting and making collages.
Hinshaw et al (2015) "Group singing and young people's psychological well-being"	England	3	Young Voices is a community singing group. Its aim is to inspire young people to enjoy music and singing, and to improve young people's confidence and self-esteem through the shared enjoyment of singing.
Hampshire and Matthijsse (2010) "Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach"	England	3	Children took part in three SingUp choirs. Sing Up was government-funded programme from 2007–2012 but since then has become a self-funded. Children met weekly for 3 months and had the opportunity to write, compose and sing a variety of songs from different genres including folk music, jazz, light rock and classical music.
Visser and Plessis (2015) "An expressive art group intervention for sexually abused adolescent females"	South Africa	2	Local community arts programme for females who have been sexually abused. Female adolescents met for 10 weekly arts sessions which included making crafts, photo collages, writing poems and drawing. Activities aimed to improve participants' self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.
Angelides and Michaelidou (2009) "Collaborative Artmarking for reducing marginalization"	Cyprus	2	Collaborative artmaking programme in a pre-primary school class. This involved children working together (and sometimes individually) to produce art pieces. Art pieces involved mainly drawing pictures and were created while children listened to music and discussed life experiences. The purpose of programme was to increase the participation of marginalized children in the curricula.

Stevens et al (2008) "Improving literacy through storytelling in residential care"	Scotland	2	Storyworks is a storytelling programme for children living in residential child care units. Storytelling sessions (5 in total) was delivered by the literacy coordinator and any other member of staff. The aim of programme was encourage children to read for pleasure. Activities included young people hearing or telling a story to staff, using crafts to create an object that represents their story and giving a presentation about to staff and other children about their work. Sessions also included training and mentoring staff in the care unit.
Sabogal (2013) "Community Arts in the Lives of Disadvantaged African American Youth: Educating for Wellness and Cultural Praxis"	Florida, USA	2	Community film making project that involved African American young people producing a film about their lives. It was a summer programme aimed to offset marginalization of African American young people. Young people had the opportunity to take part in a range of video production tasks including filming, audio production, lighting, scripting, creating storyboards and deciding on talent needed for the film.
Arts Council England (2006) "What's the Point? Using drama to engage young people at risk"	England	2	Two-week (10 sessions) intensive drama programme for young people who were at risk of social exclusion. The programme aimed to support young people back into education and reduce crime and antisocial behaviour both in the short and long term. A range of drama based activities were included that incorporated elements of literacy and numeracy.
Hollingworth (2012) "Participation in social, leisure and informal learning activities among care leavers in England: positive outcomes for educational participation"	England	Secondary analysis of qualitative data	Findings quoted in the report focus on seven young people took part in arts related activities in and outside of the classroom, these included writing, singing, dancing, acting and music. Researcher focused on its impact on UK care leavers.

6   What do arts and cultural education have to offer children looked after and children from disadvantaged backgrounds?

This review was interested in exploring the nature and impact of arts and cultural education on children who have been looked after or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Arts and cultural education have been identified by some as an effective tool to address key issues and challenges children may be experiencing, however there are very few studies that have focused on CLA's engagement with such activities and explore how they might encourage positive emotional and social wellbeing and improve educational attainment. Literature exploring the impact of arts on CLA largely focuses on creative tools and approaches that have been incorporated into therapeutic interventions. For example it was common to find publications that investigated the role of arts and cultural education in diagnosing and treating specific conditions such as psychological trauma (Moroz 2005, Friedman and Mitchell 2008) or explored how arts activities can enhance a client's therapeutic process or experience (Klorer 2005). Nonetheless, the term 'therapeutic' can cover a range of different measures and can create similar learning environments that have been adopted in and outside of the classroom (Coholic et al, 2012 and Coholic et al, 2009).

Nine studies were reviewed and are discussed in detail in this section to explore what arts and cultural education have to offer CLA and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, findings are not methodologically robust therefore caution should be taken when interpreting results.

Four key themes were identified: (1) increased confidence and self-esteem; (2) building and maintaining networks; (3) exploring new experiences and (4) barriers to children's engagement with the arts. Before moving on to the key themes it is important to note that few studies gave detailed descriptions of the actual intervention in their reports. Most studies describe the impact of community arts programmes which involve children participating in a range of different arts for example singing and acting, little detail was provided what specific activities was conducted with the children or the creative learning environments that encouraged positive well-being on children. This presents challenges to assessing the claims that have been made for arts and cultural education and to understand the impact of different delivery models on the lives of children and young people in care.

6.1   Increased confidence and self-esteem

A common feature across the majority of studies in this review was a claim that CLA or disadvantaged children's participation in arts and cultural education has the potential to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Findings suggested that children who participated in activities ranging from singing to drama and attended multi-arts programmes noticed a change in how they were feeling after the programme and generally reported or were observed to be more confident. In addition, many of the studies suggested that children felt a sense of pride and achievement when reflecting on the new skills they have gained. Most evidence for these personal impacts was generated through small-scale surveys, observations or interviews. However, it is not always clear how the qualitative data was analysed, how an

objective analysis framework was applied and how evidence was extracted to give rise to particular themes.

Coholic et al (2016) and Coholic et al's (2012) recent study into the effectiveness of an arts-based mindfulness based group programme (Holistic Arts-Based Program [HAP]) reveals innovative ways of how arts based activities can help children involved with the child welfare system to develop confidence and self-esteem. The programme was specifically designed to offer first-hand experience of arts and cultural education to children in need and on child protection registers, in order to improve self-awareness and expression of thoughts and feelings. Children involved in the programme included victims of domestic abuse and those who are currently living in foster care, for example Edward, a 10-year-old boy who witnessed his mother being physically abused and Susan a 12-year- old girl living in foster care.

The mindfulness arts-based activities aimed to explore children's feelings and thoughts, teach relaxation techniques and build group cohesion through activities such as drawing, painting, making collages, creating with sand and sculpting with clay. Although HAP is considered a type of social work therapy, the authors note (Lang, 2016 and Coholic et al 2016) that HAP sessions, in fact, can run in a similar way to other extra curricula clubs at school, albeit at a smaller scale. Coholic et al (2016) and Coholic et al (2012) suggested that four children per group, although a small number, was "optimal due to the challenges that the children brought to the group process" (page 157).

Coholic et al (2012) tested this HAP programme with a total of 36 children aged 8 to 12 years. Using comparison and control groups and standardized measures Coholic et al (2012) found children who participated in HAP demonstrated improvements in resilience and self-esteem than children who were in a control waiting group. The authors found that the combined verbal and non-verbal components of the arts and cultural educational activities effectively addressed some of the challenges children may experience in an educational or social context for example becoming easily frustrated and distracted, having trouble remaining physically still and poor listening skills. In addition as the programme was not focused on a specific clinical problem, children's participation in arts and cultural education created a different experience for each HAP group member and assisted them to recognize their strengths and develop confidence in their abilities.

Coholic et al (2012) also compared resilience and self-esteem scores of those children who had completed the HAP programme with children who had waited 12 weeks to attend the programme. Whilst waiting to attend the HAP programme these children participated in an Arts and Crafts group for 12 weeks. The Arts and Crafts group ran similar to HAP, four participants per group took part in a variety of craft and art projects such as making play-dough, sculpting with clay, making papier–mâché masks and tie-dying t-shirts. While the arts and crafts activities were taking place, the children chatted with one another and the facilitators about school, their interests, and whatever else they wanted to talk about. Unlike HAP, The Arts and Crafts group did not teach mindfulness-based skills such as relaxation techniques and breathing exercises, its aim was to encourage children's creativity and to have fun, many of the activities were geared to the interests of the participants.

Coholic et al (2012) found children involved in the child welfare system to also benefit as much from attending this Arts and Crafts group as the HAP programme. While not supported statistically, children involved in conventional arts based activities (rather than mindfulness methods used in HAP) also developed self-awareness, self-esteem and appeared to perceive a greater sense mastery. Findings indicate that non-therapeutic arts based activities also appear to have the potential to engage children and young people in a creative, relevant and meaningful way, and hold promise to strengthening children's resilience and self-concept and helping them to manage their emotions.

Hollingworth (2012) came across similar findings from interviews conducted with 32 UK care leavers aged between 18 and 24 (who had been in care for at least a year) and participated in a range of arts and cultural educational activities such a singing, dancing, acting and music in and outside of the classroom. For example one young person reported that dancing had a positive impact on her well-being and feelings of self-worth and helped her to create a new, more positive identity for herself. Dancing also encouraged this young person in making the decision to give up drinking and drugs and to engage in mainstream activities given the opportunity.

Children and young people involved in community singing groups have also reported increased self-confidence and feelings of pride after performing to the public (e.g. Hampshire and Mattijsee 2010; Hinshaw et al 2015). However these benefits were most often reported by girls who were likely to be involved with other extracurricular activities (Hinshaw et al 2015). This means it is difficult to attribute increases in their self-confidence to the singing group alone. Boys also reported reservations about whether singing was perceived as an appropriate male activity.

Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) found that children's participation in 'SingUp' increased their self- confidence and led to a feeling of pride and achievement. 'SingUp' was a UK government funded singing programme that took place in Daleside, Parktown and Middlemoor and involved a weekly choir for children aged 9-11years. During the weeks the children had the opportunity to write, compose and sing a variety of songs from different genres including folk music, jazz, light rock and classical music. Although the programme was not specifically designed to support CLA, it did involve children from economically deprived backgrounds - two of the three sites in which the initiative took place were located in the bottom 5% of the UK Government's Index of Economic Deprivation. Children involved in the study displayed similar experiences and social challenges identified by children in care. Many children were concerned about being bullied for being 'different', found it difficult to form long lasting friendships and felt at times unsafe and uncomfortable in their neighbourhoods.

Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) reported that children's enjoyment in the choirs came through very clearly from both observations and interviews and increased self-confidence was a prominent theme that was raised in many interviews with both children and parents. In addition, during and after performances children felt a strong sense of pride and achievement. Alongside with self-confidence and pride came new aspirations, two children went on to audition for Britain's got Talent on the back of SingUp. Others considered what their singing talents could lead to and displayed a

greater sense of personal potential "We could go to London [to sing], and after London, we might go to, like bigger places" (page 711).

Hinshaw et al (2015) similarly found that children who took part in a choir club during school reported a sense of pride and achievement when looking back at what they have learnt and noticed a positive change in their attitude in relation to singing.

Both Hinshaw et al (2015) and Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) uncovered that girls were more likely to experience positive effects from participating in the choirs, although it was not made clear whether this was a reflection of a wider pattern of non-participation in 'arts' activities by boys (DCAL, 2011). Hinshaw et al (2015) and Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) found that community singing programmes can struggle to recruit and retain boys, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, due to a stigma surrounding singing to be a 'girly' activity and not appropriate for boys. Hinshaw et al (2015) found a statistical difference between boys and girls who wanted to self-identify as a singer and that girls were more likely to display positive attitudes towards singing.

Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) and Hinshaw et al 2015) did not include definitive or concise statements of what these singing programmes involved but general description suggested that a number of musicians worked with the children to develop active and creative involvement in music this includes song writing, learning song of a variety of different music styles for example jazz, classical and folk music and performing to the public.

6.2   Emotional resilience

Coholic et al's (2012) interviews with children found "replaying a problematic event in another medium" (page 161), for example painting, drawing or sculpting, made it easier for children to talk about their feelings and thoughts and made problem solving more manageable and meaningful. Children who were involved in the HAP program self-reported being able to better manage their negative emotions and return to "normal functioning" (page 837) after a strong emotional reaction. Coholic et al (2012) considered HAP's ability to engage with children in a creative and meaningful process that is enjoyable and strengths-based, is central to children managing their emotions and increasing their self-esteem and confidence.

Visser and Plessis (2015) came across similar results with six adolescents who took part in a therapeutic art group intervention for sexually abused adolescent females in South Africa. Many of these young people had little experience of engaging with arts and cultural education and attended 10 weekly sessions that involved making crafts, photo collages, writing poems and drawing. The authors found that arts and cultural education created the opportunity to explore and express these difficult emotions in an indirect and non-threatening way. In addition quantitative survey results demonstrated that the opportunity to share new experiences with others contributed to some change in the participants' self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.

6.3   Building and maintaining networks

Friendships were a prominent theme in all of the studies accounts of children's engagement with arts and cultural education. Findings revealed that arts and cultural education offer children the opportunity to share new experiences with others and to make new friends and connections. Meeting people who have had similar life experiences also encouraged some children to talk about their feelings and the challenges they face and share their ways of coping.

Angelides and Michaelidou (2009) evaluated an after school art activity club for marginalized and socially excluded children and found that drawing and making crafts in a group encouraged "students who normally sit on the sidelines [to] find themselves on equal footing with their peers"(page 4). Findings from interviews with children found that those who initially were seen as marginalized and did not have friends, appeared to get more involved in group activities and begin to play with new groups of children in the playground. The activity club also provided an opportunity for children to make new friends, which was considered particularly important to children whose friendships had been disrupted by moving schools or local authority placements.

In addition, Sabogal (2010) and Stevens et al (2008) discovered community programmes involving storytelling and film making had a positive impact on children and young people's interpersonal skills. Stevens et al (2008) observed a change in interaction among children in residential care who attended a storytelling project, for participants taking turns, creating space for each other and working cooperatively. While Sabogal (2010) found young people engaging with peers who have gone similar experiences offered participants to share their feelings and invite them to "work with others in processes that will contribute to changing the realities that negatively affect them" (page 287).

6.4   Exploring new experiences

Sabogal (2010) reviewed a community arts and cultural education programme designed to improve young African American's self-esteem, confidence and the creative capacity who were living in a low income and socially deprived neighbourhood in Florida. African American youth account for nearly a quarter of the country's foster care population, and are at risk of experiencing mental health problems, homelessness and being involved in the criminal justice system (AFCARS, 2014; ACYF 2013). Children and young people involved in the study mirrored similar life experiences to children in care in the UK. Sabogal's (2010) participants' experienced residential instability and displayed behavioural problems and low educational attainment in school.

The programme was led by Moses House, took place during the summer holidays and involved young people making a film, as a group, about topics that involve their lives. This included young people learning a key aspects of video production for example different camera shots, audio production, lighting, scripting, creating storyboards and deciding on talent needed for the film. Some young people interviewed members of the public and presented on camera. The young people were offered a monetary incentive: if they attended sessions they were rewarded with a shopping trip at the

end of the programme. Sabogal (2010) recognizes that this could have impacted on attendance and emphasizes that the programme continued to elicit a range of benefits on participants.

Sabogal (2010) observed and carried out pre and post interviews with the young people and found that the opportunity to gain and develop new skills encouraged young people to see themselves as artists, which appeared to increase their confidence in their productions and inspire them to look for opportunities to sharpen their skills. Responses from interviews indicated that before the programme young people considered arts and cultural education to be a foreign concept and appropriate for only "special people, talented and successful people" (page 185). After completing the project young people displayed a change in attitude and a broader understanding of arts and cultural education. They recognized music and dance as artistic forms and thus culturally relevant for them as well. They also believed that they could also be proficient in these areas. For young people in Sabogal's (2010) study, the opportunity to gain new experiences in arts and cultural education not only increased their confidence and changed their attitude towards such activities, but helped them to develop new interests.

These findings were not unique to Sabogal's (2010) study. Findings gathered from Stevens et al's (2008) evaluation found that a storytelling project helped children in care develop new interests and enhance skills associated with literacy.

"I read a lot more now….I like Harry Potter, I just finished 'The Goblet of Fire'" (age 10)

"I enjoy reading now. I'm reading 'The Amber Spyglass'. I like it if I see a film and then read the book….like 'A Series of Unfortunate Events.' You know that was four books in one film?" (age 16)

"I read different books now and I got a library card. I like to write. I write different things now, personal things, you know" (age 16)

(Stevens et al, 2008, page 36)

These quotes are taken from interviews with young people who took part in the programme and reveal that the storytelling project encouraged some children to read a lot more and explore different genres. One residential home went to develop a monthly A3 magazine written by young people with stories, articles and jokes as a direct result from the storytelling project.

7   Barriers to children's engagement in the arts

As discussed above, CLA's participation in arts and cultural education can have the potential to improve their emotional and social well-being. However evidence suggests that these effects are not always unequivocally positive or straightforward to obtain. The role of friends and peers is also very influential and can be a barrier to young people engaging with arts and cultural education (Adamson and Poultney, 2010).

7.1 Feeling disconnected

Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) pointed out that although singing has the potential to positively impact on disadvantaged children's confidence and self-esteem, it is children feeling valued by those conducting the programme that is a strong indicator to whether children will experience these changes. Hampshire and Mattijsee (2010) found that the artists in SingUp drew on their 'middle class taste' and traditional forms of music ideologies for example classical and folk music, that left many children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, feeling alienated from the sessions and what SingUp seemed to be about. The artists were also reluctant to include requests from participants and songs that reflected the interests of local children which left participants feeling devalued and discouraged some young people from engaging fully with the session or attending the choir in the future.

Sabogal (2010) found some young people who participated in a community arts and cultural education programme not to fully understand the purpose of the project, what it involved and what was expected from them. As a result, they did not feel as confident, happy or motivated as other young people. As such, Sabogal (2010) stresses that there is a need for community programmes not only to ensure they communicate regularly with participants, but also to recognize the context in which children live and consider their values and identities in order to encourage them to fully engage with the project.

As part of Adamson and Poultney's (2010) review into what works to increase the engagement of young people in arts and extra curriculum activities, they found that the involvement and influence of young people in promoting and delivering positive activities is important both to increase and maintain levels of participation and also to maximise the benefits.

7.2 Lack of family support

Hinshaw et al (2015) assessed the impact of a community singing group on children aged 7–11 who lived in low socio-economic areas and were at risk of social exclusion. The use of Hinshaw et al's (2015) mixed method approach suggests that although children reported improved wellbeing after participating in singing during interviews, there was a reduction in quantitative measures of children's emotional state and no change in their positive outlook. In addition, results from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (a widely used measure of child mental health and behaviour) found that singing had no impact on children's psychological difficulties. Child well-being scores also significantly reduced following participation in the project. This suggests that completion of the singing intervention was associated with a reduction in children's immediate state of happiness; children's comments suggest this could be due to a lack of family support.

7.3 Consistency of participation in the arts

Evidence in this review suggests that children's consistent engagement with arts and cultural education is key to them retaining the positive benefits they have experienced. Sabogal (2010) found through semi-structured interviews with young

people involved in video production that children enjoyed the variety of the programme and having the opportunity to rotate roles for example within production and directing. Unfortunately for some, the experience was short lived. Young people revealed at the end of programme that they would have liked to spend more time on some of their favourite activities, in particular because they wanted to continue in that line of work, perhaps in the future (page 229). Although children's experience was short-lived, focus groups with children at the end of the programme indicate that the effects were not. Children seemed motivated to continue on with the activities they had participated in the programme and had a greater sense of what they can do and achieve.

8   Conclusion

Facilitating arts and cultural education with children is nothing new. Research reveals that arts and cultural education have been used by a variety of professionals including health professionals, social workers, teachers and occupational therapists to serve a range of children such as refugees, young offenders and children from affluent and disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of this review, however, was to explore the impact and nature of arts and cultural education on children looked after and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. By the very nature of being in care, young people have experienced a different and often very difficult start in life; however this subject has received little attention despite studies suggesting that arts can have positive outcomes on vulnerable children. This is a significant gap in research; much more rigorous and coordinated work needs to be conducted into this area to understand how arts and cultural education may support young people in or leaving care.

Nine studies were reviewed in detail in this report to explore the role arts and cultural education has played in the lives of children looked after and the impact such engagement may have. Most of the studies included in this review were about music and multi-arts programmes that included a combination of art forms. There is little investigation carried out on the impact of visual arts such as painting, drawing and sculpture outside of a multi-arts programme.

With most of these studies scoring low methodological robustness on the Scientific Maryland Scale (SMS), it is difficult to state conclusively what the impact of arts and cultural education on children looked after might be. However evidence in this review does suggest that arts and cultural education can have the potential to encourage positive effects on cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes on children. Findings showed that such activities have the potential to help children foster self-awareness, increase self-esteem and confidence, develop new interests and build networks.

Many of the claimed benefits from the studies included in the review centred on personal or individual benefits, including an increase in their confidence, self-esteem and emotional resilience. All studies found that children who participated in arts and cultural education, either by attending intensive multi-arts programmes, extra curriculum clubs at school or activities outside of school, experience a sense of personal success. Coholic et al's (2012) study revealed art forms such as painting, drawing or sculpting assisted 'children in need' to develop different skills such as improving optimism, confidence and self-esteem and made it easier for children to talk about their feelings and manage their problems. Evidence suggests that arts and cultural education is a useful tool for vulnerable children to organise their thoughts and feelings into something visual. However the lack of description of the actual intervention means that it is hard for these successes to be replicated and to understand which specific elements lead to specific outcomes.

A key message to be gained from this review is that arts and cultural education alone will not elicit positive outcomes. Children and young people's involvement and influence in the programme is important both to increase and maintain levels of participation and also to maximise the benefits (Adamson and Poultney, 2010).

It has been suggested that those taking part in arts and cultural education may accrue benefits directly as a result of their participation (i.e. arts + participation = outcome) (Jermyn, 2001). However findings from this review suggest that increasing an element of coproduction may have the potential to increase children's emotional resilience, self-esteem and confidence. Action to increase impact include family support, feeling respected by 'artists' coordinating the classes and children's consistency of participation in the arts.

Nevertheless, evidence does suggest that CLA's engagement in arts and cultural education provides opportunities for the enhancement of transferable skills such as team work and communication skills, and develops qualities such as self-esteem, self-awareness and confidence. Arts Council (2006), Stevens et al (2008) and Deasy (2002) argue that these qualities are crucial for employment, training, re-entering education and improving educational outcomes. Further research is necessary into the longitudinal benefits of participating in arts and cultural educational activities (for example outcomes relating to employment and later life) and how to overcome barriers and to build supports for effective participation that could lead to positive personal, social and educational outcomes (Adamson and Poultney, 2010).

Arts and cultural education cannot substitute for the lack of stable relationships and complex mental health problems children in care may be experiencing, however evidence from this review suggests that they can be an important vehicle for children looked after to develop their skills and abilities and improve their emotional and social wellbeing.

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10   Appendix

10.1 Appendix A, Scientific Maryland Scale

The five levels on the Scientific Maryland Scale are classified by:

Level 1: Observed correlation between an intervention and outcomes at a single point in time. A study that only measured the impact of the service using a questionnaire at the end of the intervention would fall into this level.

Level 2: Temporal sequence between the intervention and the outcome clearly observed; or the presence of a comparison group that cannot be demonstrated to be comparable. A study that measured the outcomes of people who used a service before it was set up and after it finished would fit into this level.

Level 3: A comparison between two or more comparable units of analysis, one with and one without the intervention. A matched-area design using two locations in the UK would fit into this category if the individuals in the research and the areas themselves were comparable.

Level 4: Comparison between multiple units with and without the intervention, controlling for other factors or using comparison units that evidence only minor differences. A method such as propensity score matching, that used statistical techniques to ensure that the programme and comparison groups were similar would fall into this category.

Level 5: Random assignment and analysis of comparable units to intervention and control groups. A well conducted Randomised Controlled Trial fits into this category.

(Sherman et al, 1998 and DCAL, 2011)

10.2 Appendix B, Inclusion and exclusion search criteria

Included	Excluded
School based delivery Non-school based group interventions and therapies involving the arts	Individual 1to 1 interventions and therapies
Foster care Residential care Adopted Substitute care Special guardianship CAO post care Care leavers Children from low socio-economic backgrounds	Prison/YOI, Reconstituted families
Visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography) Digital art and animation Filmmaking Music Theatre Dance Literature and storytelling Crafts (e.g. pottery, furniture making, textiles)	Culinary arts Sports/hobbies/gardening

10.3 Appendix C, Nine reviewed studies

Author and title	Scientific Maryland Scale Rating	Location of research	Purpose and description of the arts and cultural education	Children involved	Method of study	Quantitative measures used
Cobolic et al (2016) "Facilitating Arts-based Mindfulness Group Activities with Vulnerable Children" Cobolic et al (2012) "Investigating the Effectiveness of an Arts-Based and Mindfulness-Based Group Program for the Improvement of Resilience in Children in Need"	3	England	Holistic Arts Based Group Program (HAP) aimed to explore children's feelings and thoughts, teach relaxation techniques and build group cohesion through activities such as drawing, painting and making collages.	36 children involved with child protection and children's mental health services participated in the study, 20 boys and 16 girls aged 8–14 years. Children involved had experienced domestic violence, parents' substance abuse, a history of physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and likely to have experience of being in care.	HAP was assessed using comparison and control groups, and standardised measures. All children were exposed to the 12 week HAP programme, however the timing of when they attended the HAP depended on what stream they were assigned. Children participating in Stream A received the HAP after a 6-week wait period. Children in Stream B were the comparison group and they participated in a Arts and Crafts group first, waited 12-weeks and then attended the HAP. Children in Stream C constituted the control group and participated in the HAP after a 24-week waiting period. Standardised measures were completed at five different points during the year, including the start and end of the programme.	• Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale used to assess psychological health in children and teens. • The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA) measured how well a child can regulate the speed and intensity of his/her negative emotional response, and how soon he/she returns to normal functioning after a strong emotional reaction.
Hinshaw et al (2015) "Group singing and young people's psychological well-being"	3	England	Young Voices' is a community singing group. Its aim is to inspire young people to enjoy music and singing, and to improve young people's confidence and self esteem through the shared enjoyment of singing.	60 children took part in the study aged 7–11. Children from a range of different backgrounds participated in the singing group. 12 attended school in a low socio-economic area and experienced psychological difficulties.	A mixed methods approach was used to assess the impact of Young Voices on the psychological well-being of children. Both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative data (interviews and focus groups) was collected. Self-rated measures of psychological well-being and identity as a singer were administered to all 60 children at three time points. 10 children who were not participating in the programme but attended the same school represented the control group. A 3 month follow-up was also adopted.	• Stirling Children's Well-being Scale was used as a measure of children's psychological well-being. • The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was used as a measure of children's mental health and behaviour. • Researchers designed a questionnaire used to assess children's singing beliefs and behaviours.
Hampshire and Matthijsse (2010) "Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach"	3	England	Children took part in three SingUp choirs. Sing Up was government-funded programme from 2007-2012 but since then has become a self funded. Children met weekly for 3 months and had the opportunity to write, compose and sing a variety of songs from different genres including folk music, jazz, light rock and classical music.	48 children aged 9-10 years from three different towns took part in SingUp. Two out of the three towns suffered from high levels of economic deprivation.	Both children attended and observed the weekly singing rehearsals. 48 semi-structured interviews were conducted with children, 28 were interviewed more than once. A questionnaire was administered at baseline, participants and a control group with a similar economic profile and was conducted at baseline, 8 months and 16 months.	Questionnaire based on Schaefer-McDaniel's (2004) work. Measured young people's social capital and social and emotional wellbeing such as: social networks and sociability, trust and reciprocity, and sense of belonging/place attachment.
Visser and Plessis (2015) "An expressive art group intervention for sexually abused adolescent females"	2	South Africa	Local community arts programme for females who have been sexually abused. Female adolescents met for 10 weekly arts sessions which included making crafts, photo collages, writing poems and drawing. Activities aimed to improve participant's self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.	Females aged 12 to 17 years who had been sexually abused.	The facilitators kept a reflective journal that documented the group processes and the personal growth of the participants in each session. Researchers conducted semi-structured interview with each participant before and after programme. Two quantitative scales were included in the interviews to measure differences in participant's self-esteem and relationships.	Scales included in interviews: • The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) measured self esteem, confidence and self worth. • The interpersonal closeness scale measured participant's relationships and willingness to share personal experiences.
Angelides and Michaelidou (2009) "Collaborative Artmaking for reducing marginalisation"	2	Cyprus	Collaborative artmaking programme in a pre-primary school class. This involved children working together (and sometimes individually) to produce art pieces. Art pieces involved mainly drawing pictures and were created while children listened to music and discussed the experiences. The purpose of programme was to increase the participation of marginalized children in the curricula.	22 five year old children took part in the study had experienced situations of marginalisation. The experiences of four children were discussed in detail. Children involved were excluded from peer groups, found it difficult to make friends and to participate in discussions in the classroom and had difficulties speaking and writing Greek.	A mix of ethnographic and qualitative methods were used to assess the effectiveness of drawing in understanding and addressing marginalization. Research was conducted in a class at a pre-primary school with 22 children. Researchers visited the class twice a week to observe children who took part in and compared children's engagement and behaviour from the beginning of the programme to the end.	n/a
Stevens et al (2008) "Improving literacy through storytelling in residential care"	2	Scotland	Storyworks' is a storytelling programme for children living in residential child care units. Storytelling sessions (5 in total) was delivered by the literacy coordinator and any other member of staff. The aim of programme was encourage children to read for pleasure. Activities included young people hearing or telling a story to staff, using crafts to create an object that represents their story and giving a presentation about to staff and other children about their work. Sessions also included training and mentoring staff in the care unit.	11 young people from four children's houses in South Lanarkshire took part in the evaluation. Age range not specified but findings indicate young people aged 13 to 17 years were involved.	11 young people were interviewed. Questionnaires was used to assess process of storytelling and its impact, as well as on the extent to which storytelling had been continued in the units and distributed to young people and staff. Sessions were also observed by researchers.	Details not provided about questionnaire used to assess impact of storytelling.
Sabsay (2013) "Community Arts in the Lives of Disadvantaged African American Youth: Educating for Wellness and Cultural Praxis"	2	Florida, USA	Community film making project that involved African American young people producing a film about their lives. It was a summer programme aimed to offset marginalization of African American young people. Young people had the opportunity to take part in a range of video production tasks including filming, audio production, lighting, scripting, creating storyboards and deciding on talent needed for the film.	5 African American children and young people aged 9-12 living in a low income area. Children experienced residential instability, behavioural problems and low educational attainment.	Mixed methods research was adopted. Researchers observed project processes and children's engagement in activities through the course of the programme. Interviews were also conducted with each participant and focus groups before and after the programme to track changes in their behaviour and perceptions. Self reporting measures designed by the researcher were included in the interviews.	Researcher designed wellbeing scales (based on concepts and scales used by other researchers) that assessed participants relationships with others, behaviour changes and a sense of morality. Children completed these measures before and after the programme.
Arts Council England (2006) "What's the Point? Using drama to engage young people at risk"	2	England	Two-week (10 session) intensive drama programme for young people who were at risk of social exclusion. The programme aimed to support young people back into education and reduce crime and antisocial behaviour both in the short and long term. A range of drama based activities were included that incorporated elements of literacy and numeracy.	9 young people aged between 12 - 17 years took part in the programme. These children were at risk of social exclusion and crime and had been out of education and training for some time. Some participants were previously young offenders however report does not specify the number.	Pre and post-project questionnaires and interviews were conducted with young people. In addition, during the programme creative methodologies such as video diaries, a graffiti wall and text messaging were used to understand more closely and researchers observed children every session.	Simple Likert scale designed by researchers were presented to participants to assess skills such as ability to communicate with peers, work as a team and manage emotions.
Hollingworth (2012) "Participation in social, leisure and informal learning activities among care leavers in England: positive outcomes for educational participation"	Secondary analysis of qualitative data	England	Findings quoted in the report focus on seven young people took part in arts related activities in and outside of the classroom, these included writing, singing, dancing, acting and music. Researcher focused on its impact on UK care leavers.	32 care leavers aged between 18 and 24 took part. This group were in care at age 16, had been in care for at least a year and showed reduced chances of staying engaged (defined for the purposes of the research as having achieved at least one school leaving qualification). Equal number of young men and women from a range of ethnic backgrounds.	Researcher analyses English qualitative results from a cross-national study entitled Young People from a Public Care Background: Pathways to Education in Europe (YiPPEE), which was conducted across five European Union countries between 2008 and 2010. Semi-structured interviews with young people, care leavers, care managers and virtual heads across five local authorities. Twenty-seven of these young people were then interviewed for a second time around a year later.	n/a

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