

Fostering Outcomes report 2008-09

based on Every Child Matters outcomes



Brighter futures for children and young people

Contents Page

1 Introduction	3
1.1 Methodology	3
2 Summary of results	4
3 Detailed findings	6
3.1 Gender	6
3.2 Ethnicity	6
3.3 Religion	7
3.4 Age	7
3.5 Staying safe	8
3.5.2. Placement Stability	8
3.5.3 Predicted long term placement stability.....	9
3.5.4 Placements admission process	9
3.5.5 Complaints	10
3.6 Be Healthy	10
3.6.1 Long term illness.....	11
3.6.2 Learning disability.....	11
3.6.3 Exercise and weight.....	11
3.7 Enjoy and achieve	12
3.7.1 GCSE and SAT Results.....	13
3.7.2 General Progress at school	13
3.7.3 Computers	14
3.7.4 Leisure Activities	14
3.8 Making a contribution	15
3.9 Achieve economic wellbeing	16
4 APPENDIX: Performance Indicators	18

The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) Fostering outcomes report 2008-09

1 Introduction

This is the fourth time the Adolescent and Children Trust (TACT) has produced an outcomes report which follows central government targets required of local authorities and the outcomes from the Every Child Matters agenda.

Unlike previous surveys, this year it is possible to compare most of the results with the last comprehensive outcomes survey undertaken in 2006 as the format and methodology are the same.

Although there has been a gap between the two surveys, TACT has undertaken other research looking at outcomes and, in particular, reference must be made to *Aspirations*, a study undertaken by Professor Bob Broad during 2007 and 2008. Published in the summer of 2008, the research summary report presents the initial findings of a study looking at the impact of foster care upon our young people. The report covers "softer" or qualitative outcomes taking into account personal and social factors. The research compares the wellbeing of young people on arrival into care and at the time of the study through the perceptions of the young people and their carers.

The following report focuses mainly on outcomes measured in quantitative terms rather than qualitative. There were 71 questions in the survey and only four of these required an opinion based on individuals' perceptions.

1.1 Methodology

The same comprehensive questionnaire that was devised in 2006 has been used. It is based on the five Every Child Matters (ECM)'s outcomes; be healthy, staying safe, enjoy and achieve, making a contribution, and achieve economic wellbeing.

The 71 questions cover areas such as age, religion, ethnicity, placement length and proposed placement length, as well as those covered in Ofsted and ECM data sets. This report was produced using a specific software package called SNAP, which is used by a number of local authorities and commercial companies. SNAP facilitates analysis of data.

The results of the 2008-09 survey are based on 398 returns from carers and staff, representing 97% of all children looked after by TACT at the time of producing this report (March 2009).

2 Summary of results

The overall results for 2009 indicate that the children and young people in TACT continue to be well served. The outcomes measured show improvements in nearly all areas. Where possible, the results are compared with the National Statistics (NS) released by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

When combined with our local offices' Ofsted inspection reports and the *Aspirations* research summary report, the results illustrate an organisation delivering high quality services in which children and young people are safe and well cared for.

Be healthy

- Although there has been little change in medical examinations, dental checks and eye tests over the last four years, the figure remains high with around 90% of the children and young people looked after by TACT attending for these checkups. This is above the national average, 87% (National Statistic (NS) from the DCSF).
- Fewer young people in TACT care are using drugs (1%), which is again lower than the national average for all looked after children of 5% (National Statistic (NS) from the DCSF).
- The number of children and young in TACT foster care known to use alcohol has improved since 2005. Only 3% are known to use alcohol compared to 7% four years ago.
- Although results show a 3% decrease in the number of young people smoking cigarettes, at 9% (representing 36 young people), it is an issue that TACT will be working on over the coming year.
- In terms of the wellbeing of children and young people looked after by TACT (i.e. their weight, their exercise and numbers with diagnosed illnesses, the children and young people in TACT generally appear to be in good health and well cared for.

Staying safe

- The average age of the children and young people in TACT care in 2009 hasn't changed much since September 2006, it is 11 years and four months. There is only a 3% reduction of young people over ten years old from 67% to 64%. However, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of children of four years of age and under which has improved from 31 to 72.
- 64% of all the children and young people looked after by TACT are in permanent or long term placements (63% in 2006).
- There remains little difference between the numbers of emergency and planned placements. However, more children placed in a planned way were able to visit the carers' home beforehand (70% in 2008-09 compared to only 25% in 2006).
- The number of risk assessments undertaken this year has increased by 14% since 2006; it has moved from 97% compared with 83% in 2006 and 77% in 2005.
- There has also been a 12% increase in the number of children and young people in TACT care receiving TACT's children and young people's foster care guides.

Enjoy and achieve

- There is evidence of improvement in school attendance with 98% of TACT children and young people attending regularly.
- 8% of TACT children missed 25 days or more schooling last year, the same as in 2006 which is well below the national average for all looked after children of 13% (National Statistic (NS) from the DCSF).
- Exclusions and progress at school remain consistent with results in 2006.

- On average, the 14 young people in TACT care who took GCSE exams achieved between seven and eight GCSEs. Four of them (20%) achieved at least five A-C grades which is above the 14% national average (National Statistic (NS) from the DCSF).
- 92% of children have access to a computer in their carer's home.

Making a positive contribution

- There was only a 1% increase of children and young people's attendance at their own reviews, with noticeable variations between area offices.
- However, the attendance rate of a TACT activity has increased by 11% since 2006. 54% of all TACT young people now attend at least one activity organised by the charity, compared with only 12% who attend one organised by their local authority.
- There has been a significant increase year-on-year in the number of children with a savings book (10% since 2006 and so 17% since 2005).
- Only 2% have been involved in incidents of offending behaviour which is much lower than the national averages of 9% for all looked after children and of 4.1% for all children (National Statistic (NS) released by the DCSF).

Achieving economic well-being

- Only 41% of young people over 15 years of age had a Pathway Plan.
- The numbers of young people who have left school and are unemployed have remained constant since 2006.
- 82% of young people looked after by TACT who have left school attend college. This compares with 80% for all young people in the country and with 66% for all looked after children (National Statistic (NS) released by the DCSF).

3 Detailed findings

3.1 Gender

TACT continues to care for slightly more boys than girls, although the ratio of girls to boys has increased by 2% since 2005.

Gender	2005	2006	2009
Male	54%	53%	52%
Female	46%	47%	48%

Table 1. Percentage of male and female children in TACT 2009.

3.2 Ethnicity

This year, TACT used the Ofsted inspection data set to establish the ethnicity of the children and young people, with the following results:

Ethnicity	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
White-British	67	49.1
White Welsh		22.2
White-Scottish		0.5
White-Irish	1.5	0
Any other white background	4.5	0.5
Black-Black Caribbean	7.2	5
Black-Black African	4.5	5
Black-other		1.5
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	4.5	1.5
Mixed White and Black African	0.7	1.2
Mixed-any other background	0.7	2
Asian-Indian	0.4	0.7
Asian-Pakistani	1.5	1.7
Asian-Bangladeshi	1.9	0.5
Asian-any other background	4.1	6
Traveller		0.2
Any other ethnic group	1.5	2.4

Table 2. Ethnicity of the children and young people in TACT 2009.

It is not possible to accurately compare the results with previous years. A report in 2005 stated that approximately 80% of the children and young people were white, whereas in 2006, the total was 73% and by 2009 this was down slightly to 72.3%.

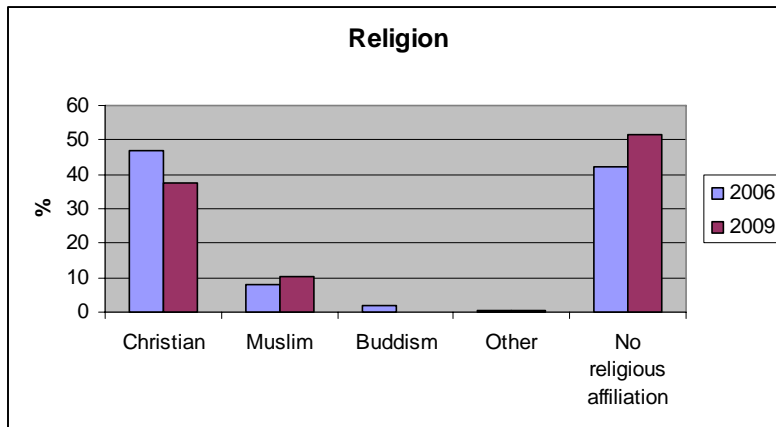
The areas where children of ethnic minority backgrounds are predominately cared for in TACT remain London, Birmingham and Bristol.

3.3 Religion

The Children Act 1989 and subsequent guidance e.g. Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services makes reference to taking into account a young person's religion and having "services which recognise and address his/her needs" in that regard.

Although, in 2006 41% children and young people looked after by TACT had no religious affiliation, this has markedly increased by 10%. Overall, there is a continuous reduction in children from a Christian background but a slight increase in those from a Muslim background. (See Graph 1 below)

In one of our foster carer's surveys this year, 31% said they had no religious affiliation whereas 62% were Christian. These figures are based on a 45% return but give a general guidance.



Graph 1 Religious affiliation of TACT children and young people.

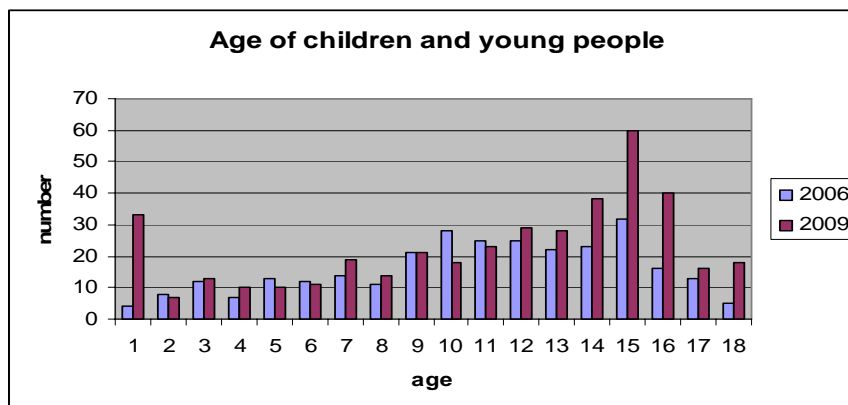
3.4 Age

The age spread demonstrates that the majority of the 398 children and young people in TACT at the time of the survey are over ten years of age. Please note that the Graph 2 below shows the number of children in each age group not the percentage.

The survey shows a marked increase in the number of young children of one year or younger. It also highlights the increase in those of between 12 years and 18 years of age. In particular, it demonstrates a dramatic rise in the number of 15 and 16 year olds.

The increase in young children is noticeable over the last year and is possibly a consequence of the national safeguarding agenda and an increased demand for parent and baby placements.

The doubling of the numbers of 15 and 16 year olds reflects (a) that two thirds of our young people are in long-term placements and (b) a carer base better suited to caring for teenagers.

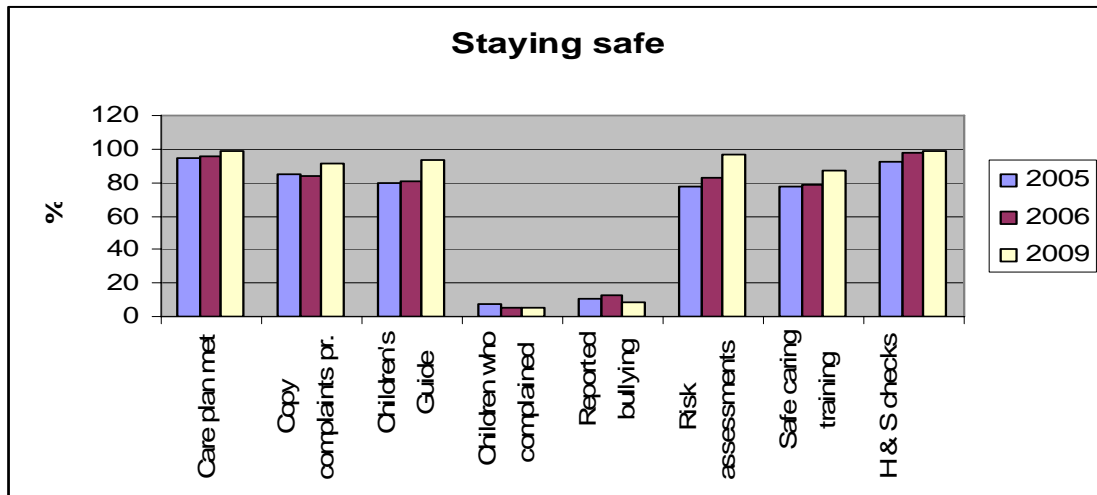


Graph 2 The ages of TACT children and young people.

3.5 Staying safe

3.5.1 Bullying

The results of the Survey indicate that TACT has improved or maintained its performance in all areas (see below graph 3). The percentage of children and young people who report being bullied in the last twelve months has slightly decreased. As in previous years, the majority of bullying is reported to be at school, 28 out of 36 children in number. The remainder said they were bullied at college or in the local area. Two said they were bullied at home and one in a residential unit.

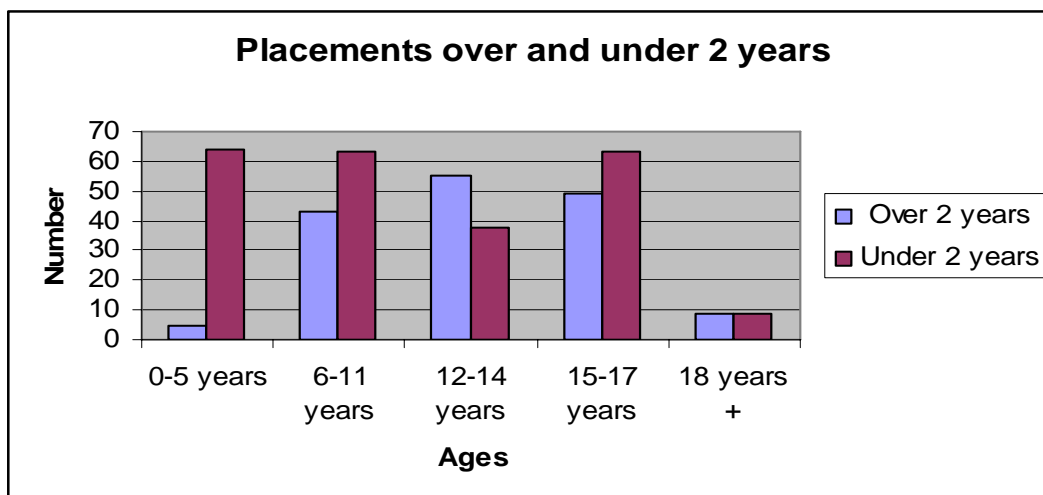


Graph 3 Staying Safe.

3.5.2. Placement Stability

The graph 4 below indicates that almost 40% of our children and young people have been in placement for two years or more. Understandably, the younger age group have fewer children looked after for more than two years (five in number).

The figures are distorted by the fact that a quarter of our children and young people have come in TACT in the last year.

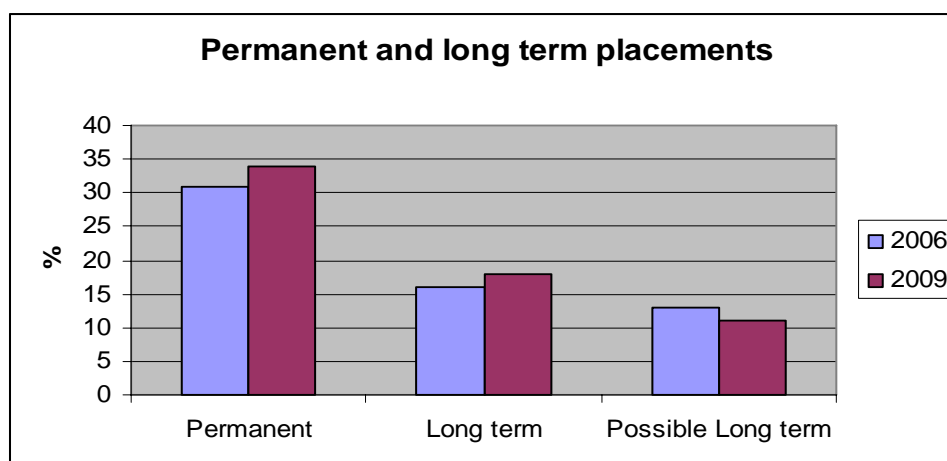


Graph 4 Length of placement by age bands.

3.5.3 Predicted long-term placement stability

The 2006 Survey sought to establish how many of the children and young people were placed “permanently”, “long term” and “likely but not confirmed, long term”.

The same information has been obtained for 2009. As seen on Graph 5 below, the results indicate a slight increase in permanent and long term placements.



Graph 5 Permanent and long term placements.

3.5.4 Placements' admission process

There is very little difference between emergency and planned placements and this has been a consistent measure over recent years.

Type of Placement	2006	2009
Emergency	50.4 %	51.6
Planned	49.6%	48.4

Table 3 Placements' process.

An examination of emergency and planned placements and their outcomes in respect of stability shows only a small difference since 2006, widening the gap between the two by 2% in favour of planned placements.

Type of admission	Still in placement after two years or more.	
	2006	2009.
Emergency	38%	36%
Planned	43%	45%

Table 4 Placements' process and long-term outcomes.

Of those children and young people placed through a planned process, 70% (136 young people) had the opportunity to visit the carer's home prior to their placement.

This is a major increase from 2006 and is a credit to the local authorities involved, TACT staff and carers.

3.5.5 Complaints

A total of 20 children and young people were stated as having made a complaint, of which eight were against their own carer. Detail concerning complaints is addressed through the Schedule 7 and 8 reviewing system within TACT, this system is monitored through internal processes and Ofsted Inspections.

15 complaints were made against TACT carers by the children and young people who had previously been in placement and left. These were all dealt with through the local authority and TACT processes.

The level of complaints by children against their carer, either during placement or subsequently, remains consistent with the results from 2006.

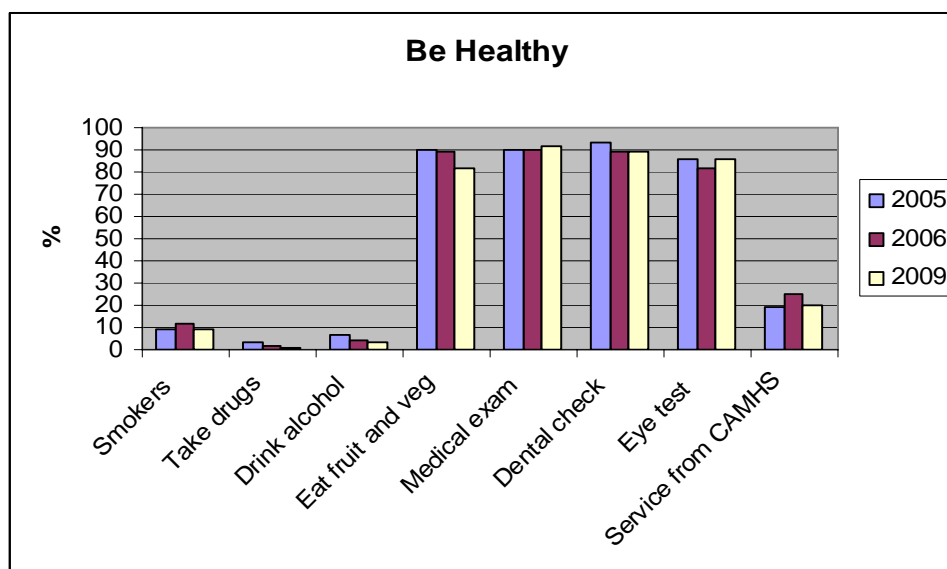
The results continue to demonstrate (a) *the need to ensure that our commitment to children's participation is maintained* and (b) *the importance of our Supervising Social Workers continuing to see the children and young people alone, as required by our Practice Standards.*

Linked to this is the need to ensure that all our children and young people receive a copy of the complaints procedure and children's guide. Following the Outcomes Report of 2006 we sought an increase in the performance indicators for children receiving both complaints leaflet and children's guide. This has been achieved with a 7% increase for the former and 12% increase for the latter.

3.6 Be Healthy

There are eight indicators which could be compared with previous surveys as seen on graph 6 below. They show that less children and young people are smoking, taking drugs and drinking alcohol. Although the percentage for smoking is small, it does represent 36 young people and is an issue to be addressed in the coming year as is the reduction in those regarded as eating fruit and vegetables regularly.

The level of medical, dental and eye tests remains high with small variations. The number receiving services or awaiting to receive services from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) has dropped by 5%. The number referred, but still waiting, is a third which demonstrates that the shortages in CAMHS personnel are still having a significant impact on waiting lists.



Graph 6 Be Healthy.

3.6.1 Long-term illness

27 of the children in TACT have a diagnosed long-term illness. Ten of them have to attend hospital monthly and the rest either quarterly or annually. The illnesses include cystic fibrosis, diabetes, sickle cell, cerebral palsy, arthrogryphosis, Gilbert's Syndrome (GS), Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS).

The range of illnesses suffered by our children demonstrates the range of our carers and their commitment to children's needs.

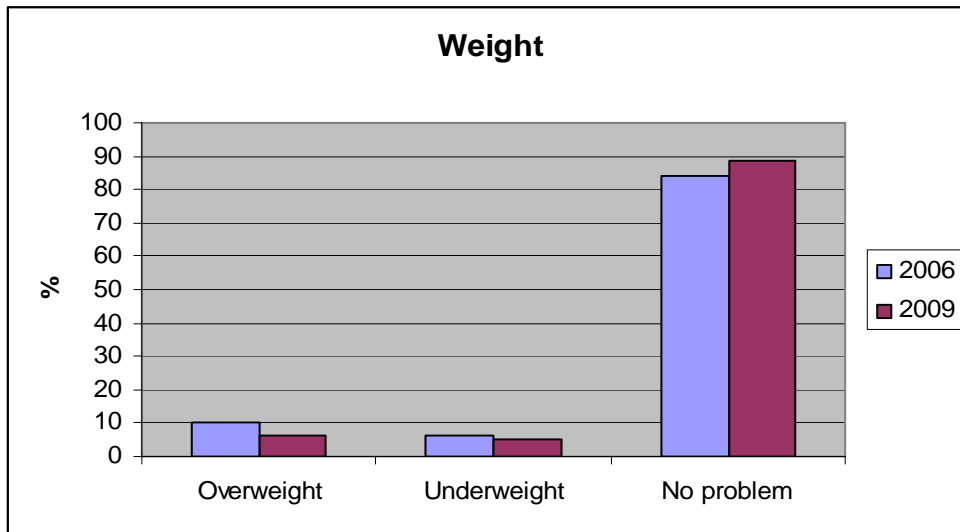
3.6.2 Learning disability

42 of the children surveyed were diagnosed as having a learning disorder. These include Fragile X, autism, Asperger's and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Four of these children have to attend hospital on a monthly basis.

3.6.3 Exercise and weight

Staff and carers were asked to state whether the child or young person took regular exercise or demonstrated little or no interest. 84% were deemed as taking exercise between two to six times a week, but 14% appear to be not interested. This is a 6% increase on 2006 and worthy of consideration over the coming year.

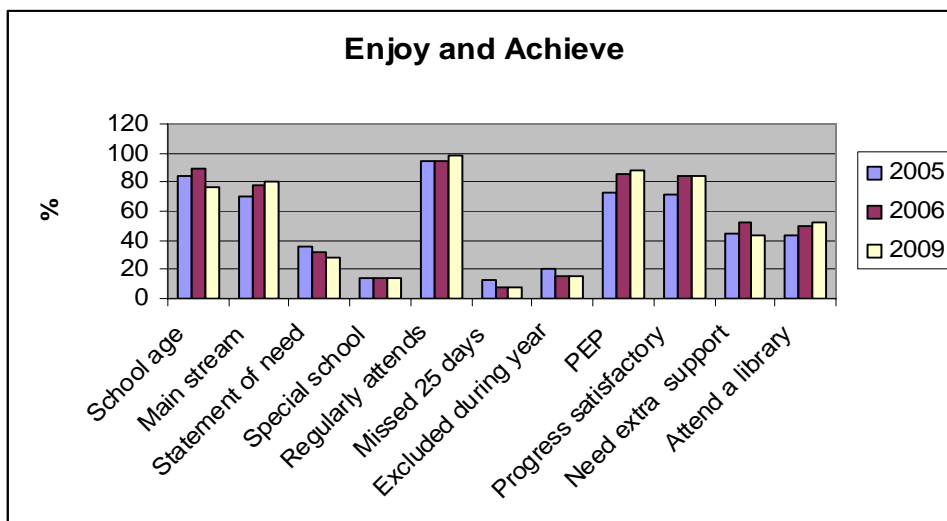
They were also asked if the children and young people are overweight or not. The results (see graph 7 below) show a slight improvement since 2006.



Graph 7 Children and young people deemed overweight.

3.7 Enjoy and Achieve

The performance of TACT in both supporting and strengthening the educational outcomes of the children and young people in its care has clearly been maintained at the high level it has attained over recent years. This level has been acknowledged in Inspection Reports both by Ofsted and its predecessor, Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).



Graph 8 Enjoy and achieve indicators.

There are measurable achievements in 2009:

- Regular school attendance increased from 95% to 98%;
- Those with a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) increased by 4%;
- Those who missed more than 25 days and excluded from school maintained at 8%;
- Those deemed to be progressing satisfactorily at school maintained at 84%;
- A 2% increase in library attendance.

3.7.1 GCSE

14 young people undertook GCSE examinations in 2009, four more than in 2006. This represented 70% of those young people eligible (14/20 young people). The reasons for those not taking exams were language barriers and severe learning disabilities.

The average number of GCSEs achieved in 2009 was eight. This is a slight improvement from 2006 when it was between six and seven. Four young people achieved five or more GCSE passes at A-C grades. This represents 20% of those eligible to take them and is above the national average for looked after children of 14%.

3.7.2 Standard Assessment Tests (SAT) results

148 SATs returns were received. Only 23% of school age children in Wales sat a test as SATs are only undertaken in certain schools.

- At Key Stage one (7 years), 57% achieved their expected level in English and corresponds with the NS for all looked after children.
- At Key Stage two (11 years), 49% achieved their expected levels and this is again similar with the NS.
- At Key stage three (14 years), 35% achieved their expected levels which is 2% above the NS for Mathematics.

3.7.3 General Progress at school

The survey asked for a general assessment of the children and young people's progress at school. The percentage of children progressing satisfactorily at school has remained the same since 2006.

Reason for unsatisfactory progress	2006	2009
Results in numbers		
Emotional problems	19	8
Bullying	3	1
Unhappy with teachers	5	5
Lack of interest from child	10	15
Out of school	1	10
A disability/illness	3	7
Other	1	2
Total in numbers	42	48
Total as % of all school age children	15%	15%

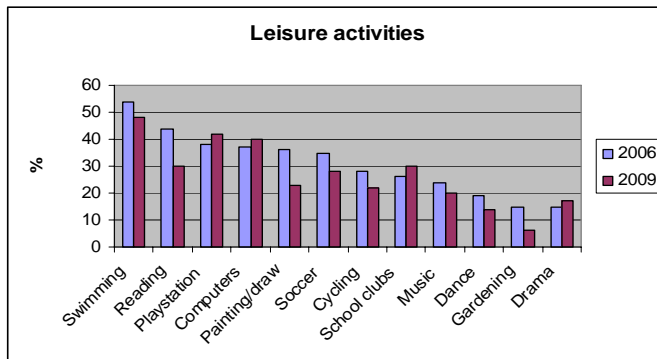
Table 5 Reasons for lack of school progress.

3.7.4 Computers

92% of all children and young people were said to have access to a computer in the home.

3.7.5 Leisure Activities

The list of the activities that the children and young people participate in is endless. The most popular are listed on the graph 9 below in order of popularity. Swimming remains the most popular activity although there is a small reduction in the numbers stated as participating.



Graph 9 Most popular activities for TACT children and young people.

Other activities that the children and young people participate in include rugby, netball, horse riding, gymnastics, brownies, scouts, cubs, cadets, martial arts, basketball, attending mosque, ice skating, choir singing and quad riding,

3.8 Making a contribution (see graph 10)

The most noticeable improvement in this area is the number of young people attending a TACT activity. This has increased from a low position in 2005 to 54% this year. This compares with only 12% who attended one organised by the relevant local authority.

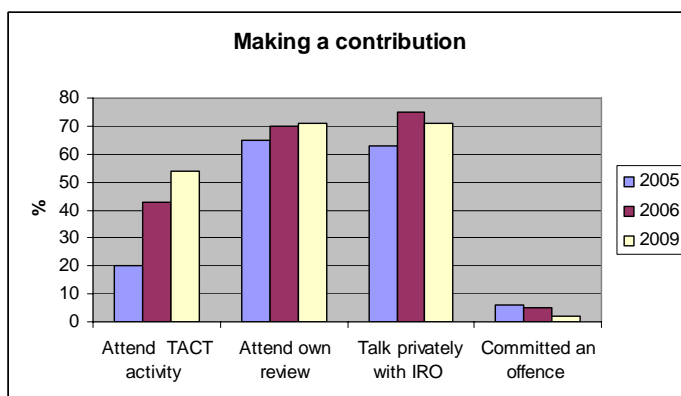
The number attending their review is almost identical to 2006, but the percentage that was able to talk to the Independent Reviewing Officer has declined, albeit by a small amount.

60% of those who did not attend their review (80 in number) were deemed to be too young and it raises a question about the appropriate age for attending a review and how a review is organised for younger children. 70 out of the 80 were under five years of age.

25 young people refused to attend their review and 9 did not attend because of their disability!

There is evidence of a wide variation between areas of the UK, for the number of children and young people who attend their own reviews. Some areas show attendance at reviews as high as 88% (East London), 86% (the Fens) and 81% (South London). However, others such as West Wales 57%, Birmingham 47% and the North West at 54%. In part, this reflects the age bands for these areas.

Eight children and young people committed an offence or were cautioned by the police which represents a reduction of one since 2006 and a 4% reduction since 2005.

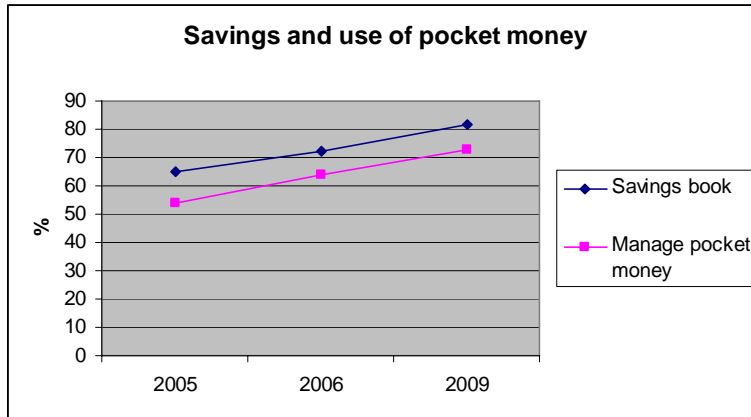


Graph 10 Making a contribution.

3.9 Achieve economic well being

The percentage of young people over 15 years of age who have a Pathway Plan is 44%. This Plan is a local authority responsibility and should help to prepare the young person for moving into adulthood. Clearly it is an issue if over half the young people do not have one. TACT needs to consider how best to assist local authorities in improving this situation.

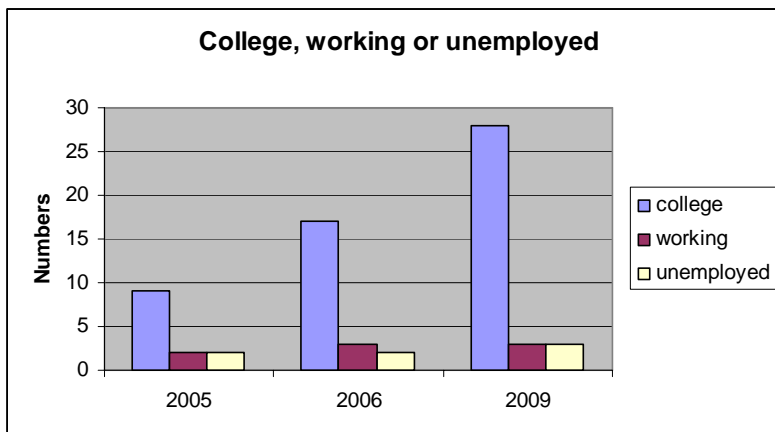
In the area of savings and pocket money, 2009 has seen a continuing improvement since 2005 in the number of young people with savings books and in those viewed as managing their pocket money wisely as shown on graph 11 below.



Graph 11 Savings and pocket money.

The increase in the number of all children and young people in TACT over the last few years is replicated in the numbers who have left secondary education and remain looked after by a TACT foster carer. (Essentially those young people post-16 years and under-18 years of age who are no longer in mainstream schooling.)

They numbered 13 in 2005 but in 2009 there are now 34 young people. As the graph 12 below demonstrates, this increase is not mirrored in the numbers who are unemployed or for that matter, employed. The majority of those who have left school attend college, with only three young people unemployed at the time of the survey.



Graph 12 Young people who have left school.

4 Appendix: Performance Indicators

STAY SAFE	2005	2006	2009
Placement meets care plan %	95	96	99
Received copy complaints %	85	84	91
Received Children's Guide%	80	81	93
Children who made complaint %	7	5	5
Reported being bullied %	11	13	9
Risk assessments undertaken %	77	83	97
Carer attended safe caring %	78	79	87
H & S checks undertaken %	92	98	99

BE HEALTHY			
Young people who smoke %	9	12	9
Take drugs %	3	2	1
Drink alcohol %	7	4	3
Eat fruit and veg regularly %	90	89	82
Received a medical exam %	90	90	92
Attended for dental check %	93	89	89
Received an eye test %	86	82	86
Received a service from CAMHS %	19	25	20

ENJOY AND ACHIEVE			
Statutory school age %	84	90	77
Main stream school %	70	78	80
Statement of Educational need %	36	32	28
Attend a special school %	14	14	14
Attend school regularly %	94	95	98
Missed more than 25 days %	13	8	8
Excluded at some point in year %	20	15	15
Children with a PEP %	73	85	88
Progress satisfactory %	72	84	84
Require extra education support %	45	52	44
Attend a library %	44	50	52

MAKING A CONTRIBUTION			
Attend a TACT activity %	20	43	54
Attend own review %	65	70	71
Talk privately with IRO %	63	75	71
Committed an offence %	6	5	2

ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL BEING			
Savings book %	65	72	82
Manage pocket money sensibly %	54	64	73
Left school and are;			
attending college (number)	9	17	26
working (number)	2	3	3
unemployed (number)	2	2	3