



PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN CARE AS ‘LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN’

2017



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Research, Strategy and Innovation

Róisín Broderick and James Carnie

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prevalence

Overall, over one quarter of those reporting (26%) indicated that during their up-bringing they had been in care at some point and one in seven (14%) had been in care at the age of sixteen.

Just under a half of young people in custody (46% n=82) reported being in care as a child and over a quarter (27% n=48) were in care at the age of sixteen.

Custodial History

Prisoners who had been in care were most likely to report having been on remand between 1 and 5 times (39%), followed by 'over 10 times' (30%) and '6-10 times' (19%). Fewest respondents had 'never' been on remand (12%).

Community Sentencing

Half (50%) of prisoners who had been in care have served a sentence in the community, compared with 37% of other prisoners. Over two fifths (43%) of prisoners who had been in care have received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a community sentence, compared with 22% of other prisoners.

Young People Custodial History

Young people who had been in care were most likely to report having been on remand between 1 and 5 times (74%) compared with those who were not in care (60%), followed by having 'never' previously been on remand (15%) compared with (40%) for those who were not in the care system.

Young People Community Sentencing

Almost twice as many young people in custody who had been in care have served a sentence in the community (49% in care & 25% not in care), and a greater number of those who were in care had received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a

community sentence compared to those who were not in care (39% & 25% respectively).

Drug Use

Just under half of those prisoners who had been in care (49%) reported that drug taking was a problem for them on the outside, compared with three in ten prisoners (30%) who were never in the care system.

Of those prisoners who were in care as children (51%) were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence, compared with one third of all other prisoners (33%).

Over a fifth committed their offence to get money for drugs (22%) and over a quarter (27%) were receiving treatment for their drug use before prison, compared with prisoners who were not in care as children (12% and 15% respectively).

A higher percentage of young people in custody who were in care as a child reported being under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence (52% compared to 42%).

Injected Drugs in Prison

Just under one in ten prisoners who were in care reported that they had injected drugs in prison in the past (9% n=62) compared with other prisoners (3% n= 56).

New Psychoactive Substances

Three in ten prisoners who were in care (30%) reported having used new psychoactive substances prior to coming in to prison, compared with other prisoners (15%). A similar ratio of prisoners who were in care to other prisoners reported using new psychoactive substances during their time in prison (30% to 14%).

Prescribed Methadone

Over a quarter of prisoners who were in care (29% n=147) reported being prescribed methadone compared with 17% (n=221) of all other prisoners.

Alcohol Use

Almost half of prisoners (47%) who had been in care as a child reported being drunk at the time of their offence, compared with 36% of all other prisoners reporting in the survey.

Four in ten (40%) reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 29% of those who had not been in care. In the region of one third of prisoners who had been in care were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (32%) and under one fifth had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (18%).

More than half of young people in custody who had been in care (57%) reported being drunk at the time of their offence, which is only slightly higher than other young people (53%).

Four in ten (39%) young people in custody also reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 23% of those who had not been in care. One in five of young people in custody who had been in care were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (21%), and under one in five had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (17%).

Smoking

Eight in ten prisoners (83%) who had been in care as a child reported being a smoker, compared with six in ten prisoners (61%) who were never in care as a child.

Mental Health & Well-Being

Prisoners were asked questions on mental health through an instrument known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). Three in five prisoners who were in care as children reported dealing with problems well (64%) and feeling confident (58%) compared with a higher percentage of those who were not in care (77% and 69%).

With regards to young people in custody, around two thirds of those who were in care reported dealing with problems well (68%) and feeling confident (64%), compared with a higher percentage of those who were not in care (81% and 77%).

Knife Crime

Six in ten prisoners who reported being in care as a child had carried a knife (61%) compared to one third of those who were not in the care system (33%). A significantly higher percentage of those who were in care reported using a knife to injure someone (48%), compared with 26% of those who were not in care as children. Just under half had been convicted of a knife crime (48%) and received a Police caution (45%), which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (29% and 24% respectively).

Cleanliness

Fewer prisoners who were in care as a child rated the cleanliness of prison facilities with a positive score, compared with other prisoners: halls (80% vs. 87%); toilet area (80% vs. 86%); showers (75% vs. 84%); and cell when first moved in (54% vs. 67%).

Bullying

A greater percentage of prisoners who had been in care as a child reported being bullied by another prisoner or group of prisoners in the last month (21% compared to 14%). However, the reported natures of the bullying indicate generally lower instances (see Table 11).

Safety

One in five (22%) of prisoners who were in care as a child reported fearing for their safety in prison during the last month, compared with 14% of other prisoners. Of those prisoners who were in care as a child, and who reported fearing for their safety: 34% reported that another prisoner made them fear for their safety; 92% a non-uniformed

member of staff; 48% a group of prisoners; 74% a group of prison officers (excluding control and restraint); and 65% a prison officer.

Domestic Violence

Almost two thirds of those who were in care as a child (62%) reported witnessing violence between their parents/carers, compared with one third of those who were not in care (32%). Over a quarter of prisoners who were in care as a child (30%) reported they had been involved in violence towards their spouse or partner, with 22% saying they had been convicted of an offence involving violence towards their spouse or partner which is moderately higher than those who were not in care (22% and 19% respectively).

Over half of young people in custody who were in care as a child (57%) reported witnessing violence between their parents/carers, compared with one third of those who were not in care (33%). A quarter of young people in custody who were in care as a child reported being involved in violence towards their spouse or partner (25%), compared with only 3% of other young people in custody.

Literacy & Numeracy

More prisoners who were in care indicated that they had problems with writing (21%), reading (20%) and numbers (19%) compared with other prisoners who were not in care (13%, 9% and 11% respectively).

Between one fifth and one third of young people in custody who had been in care reported that they had difficulty with writing (25%), reading (35%) and numbers (21%) which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (11%, 8% and 8% respectively).

Prison Rules

83% of prisoners who had been in care reported understanding how to access the Complaints Procedure, with less than half

experiencing difficulties in accessing a copy of the Prison Rules (43%). While more than half of prisoners who had been in care gave a positive response with regards to staff dealing with issues fairly (69%) and that staff viewed them as valued individuals in the prison (55%), this was lower than the perceptions of other prisoners (80% and 60% respectively).

Preparation for Release

More prisoners who had been in care knew about Throughcare Support Services compared with other prisoners (55% as opposed to 36%). Similarly, more (38% vs. 26%) had accessed services based in the prison to help them prepare for release.

Introduction

This Bulletin, which deals specifically with prisoners who were ‘in care’ as children is one of a number of thematic commentaries presenting the key findings from the 2017 Prisoner Survey. The Prisoner Survey was introduced to the Scottish Prison Service in 1990 as a mechanism to inform and support the Service’s business planning process. The focus of the Survey has expanded over the years.

The report deals specifically with prisoners held in SPS custody who have indicated in their responses that they have been in care as a ‘looked after child’ at some point in their early developmental years. Questions on being in care as a child were included in the Prisoner Survey 2011 for the first time and the difficulty of capturing the detail and nuance of childhood experiences of the care system were recognised at the outset. To understand fully prisoners’ developmental issues and problems would require a dedicated survey in itself. However, within the space limitations of the eight page Prisoner Survey questionnaire, two questions were asked:

- During your upbringing were you ever in care?
- Were you in care at the age of 16?

The Survey continues to focus upon the core elements of prison life: living conditions, family contact, healthcare, relationships, atmosphere and perceived safety. The Survey informs and shapes change by contributing to establishment and corporate business plans.

The Survey was carried out between July and August 2017 on an establishment-by-establishment basis. Prisoners’ views were collected by means of a self-completion questionnaire, which was distributed and collected personally by the members of the Survey team or by local staff. The Survey involves all prisoners and all establishments.

The Sixteenth Survey achieved an overall prisoner response rate of 46%. A total of 712 prisoners who had been in care during their childhood, participated in this Survey. Of those: 90% male, 10% female; 22% on remand, 78% sentenced.

Overall, over one quarter of those reporting (26%) indicated that during their up-bringing they had been in care at some point and 14% had been in care at the age of sixteen. Just under half (47%) of young people in custody had been in care at some point in their upbringing, illustrating the disruption and instability of the social backgrounds from which many of the young people population originate.

Custodial History

Respondents’ remand and custodial sentence history is outlined in Table 1. This shows that of prisoners who had been in care were most likely to report having been on remand between 1 and 5 times (39%), followed by ‘over 10 times’ (30%) and ‘6-10 times’ (19%). Fewest respondents had ‘never’ been on remand (12%).

Table 1. Prisoners in Care as Children ‘Custodial History’	Never	1-5 Times	6-10 Times	Over 10 Times
Number of times previously on remand	12	39	19	30
Number of times previously on a	16	40	16	28

sentence

Community Sentencing

Half (50%) of those who had been in care have served a sentence in the community, compared with 37% of other prisoners. Over two fifths (43%) of prisoners who had been in care have received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a community sentence, compared with 22% of other prisoners.

Young People Custodial History

Young people in custody who had been in care were most likely to report having been on remand between 1 and 5 times (74%) compared with those who were not in care (60%), followed by having 'never' previously been on remand (15%) compared with (40%) for those who were not in the care system.

Table 2. Young People in Care as Children 'Custodial History'

	Never	1-5 Times	6-10 Times	Over 10 Times
Number of times previously on remand	15	74	8	3
Number of times previously on a sentence	33	63	4	0

Young People Community Sentencing

Almost twice as many young people in custody who had been in care have served a sentence in the community (49% in care & 25% not in care), and a greater number of those who were in care had received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a community sentence compared to those who were not in care (39% & 25% respectively).

Drug Use

Just under half of those prisoners who had been in care (49%) reported that drug taking was a problem for them on the outside, compared with three in ten prisoners (30%) who were never in the care system.

A similar number of those prisoners who were in care as children (51%) were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence, compared with one third of all other prisoners (33%). Over a fifth committed their offence to get money for drugs (22%) and over a quarter (27%) were receiving treatment for their drug use before prison, compared with prisoners who were not in care as children (12% and 15% respectively).

A higher percentage of young people in custody who were in care as a child reported being under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence (52% compared to 42%).

Half of young people in custody who were in care (52%) held the view that their drug taking was a problem for them on the outside, compared with just under four in ten (38%) of those who had not been in care.

Table 3. Drug Use	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)	YPs in Care as Children (%)	YPs not in Care (%)
My drug taking was a problem for me on the outside	49	30	52	38
Under the influence of drugs at the time of my offence	51	33	52	42
I committed my offence to get money for drugs	22	12	17	9
I was receiving treatment for my drug use before prison	27	15	10	1
If I was offered help for my drug problem on the outside I would take it	52	32	31	20
If I was offered help for my drug problem in prison I would take it	54	34	35	28
I am worried that my drug taking will be a problem when I get out	36	17	22	8
I was assessed for drug use upon my admission to prison	53	33	40	25
I have been given the chance to receive treatment for drug use during my sentence	39	24	32	30
I have received treatment for drug use during my sentence	35	21	11	23
If yes, did you find the treatment useful?	78	85	78	94

(Note: a greater percentage of prisoners not in care as children reported not taking drugs (43-52%, compared with prisoners in care (21-27%).)

Just over three in five prisoners who had been in care (61%) reported having used illegal drugs in prison, and the majority (87%) of those reported that their drug use has changed during their current period in prison (compared with under a third of other prisoners (31%), and 80% of those having changed).

Over a third of prisoners who had been in care (36%) reported to having used illegal drugs in the last month, compared to under one in five (17%) of other prisoners.

Table 4. Change of Drug Use in Prison	Increased	Decreased	Same Use, Different Drugs	Started Using in Prison	Now Stopped Using
Prisoners in Care as Children	16	32	15	10	27
Prisoners not in Care	11	32	10	14	33

Injected Drugs in Prison

Just under one in ten prisoners who were in care reported that they had injected drugs in prison in the past (9% n=62) compared with other prisoners (3% n= 56).

New Psychoactive Substances

Three in ten prisoners who were in care (30%) reported having used new psychoactive substances prior to coming in to prison, compared with other prisoners (15%). A similar ratio of prisoners who were in care to other prisoners reported using new psychoactive substances during their time in prison (30% to 14%).

Prescribed Methadone

Over a quarter of prisoners who were in care (29% n=147) reported being prescribed methadone, compared with 17% (n=221) of all other prisoners. Just under two in five prisoners who were in care (39% n=227) reported taking another prisoner's prescribed medication, compared with 20% (n=313) of all other prisoners.

Table 5. Naloxone Use	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoner not in Care (%)
Have you ever been supplied take-home Naloxone?	24	15
Have you been supplied take-home Naloxone in the past 12 months?	11	6
If yes, were you supplied take-home Naloxone in prison?	65	63
If yes, were you supplied take-home Naloxone in the community?	65	66
Have you ever administered Naloxone to someone else?	13	7
If yes, was this in the last 12 months?	42	37
Has someone ever administered Naloxone to you?	12	5
If yes, was this in the last 12 months?	44	35

Alcohol Use

Almost half of prisoners (47%) who had been in care as a child reported being drunk at the time of their offence, compared with 36% of all other prisoners reporting in the survey.

Four in ten (40%) reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 29% of those who had not been in care. In the region of one third of prisoners who had been in care were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (32%) and under one fifth had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (18%).

More than half of young people who had been in care (57%) reported being drunk at the time of their offence, which is only slightly higher than other young people (53%).

Four in ten (39%) young people in care also reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 23% of those who had not been in care. One in five of young people who had been in care were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (21%) and under one in five had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (17%).

Table 6. Views on Alcohol	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)	YPs in Care as Children (%)	YPs not in Care (%)
I was drunk at the time of my offence	47	36	57	53
My drinking affected my ability to hold down a job	23	16	17	23
My drinking affected my relationship with my family	40	29	39	37
If I was offered help in prison for alcohol problems I would take it	45	37	43	35
If I was offered help on the outside for alcohol problems I would take it	43	35	33	25
I am worried that alcohol will be a problem for me when I get out	26	16	25	16
Have you used alcohol in prison in the last month	6(n=36)	3(n=54)	4(n=3)	0
I was assessed for alcohol use on my admission to prison	32	28	21	24
I have been given the chance to receive treatment for alcohol problems during my sentence	27	21	27	27
I have received treatment for alcohol problems during my sentence	18	13	17	16

Prisoners who had been in care also demonstrated more serious drinking habits than other prisoners: over a quarter (26%) reported having a drink containing alcohol in the community four or more times a week, and 40% reported consuming 10 or more such drinks on a typical day when drinking in the community (compared with 15% and 29% respectively).

Table 7. Weekly/Daily or Almost Daily Drinking Habits	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)
Six or more drinks on one occasion	50	38
Not able to stop drinking once you had started, during the last year	32	21
Failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking, during the last year	28	16
Needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session, during the last year	23	15
Feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking, during the last year	27	19
Unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking, during the last year	29	16

Smoking

Eight in ten prisoners (83%) who had been in care as a child reported being a smoker, compared with six in ten prisoners (61%) who were never in care as a child.

Mental Health & Well-Being

Prisoners were asked questions on mental health through an instrument known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). Three in five prisoners who were in care as children reported dealing with problems well (64%) and feeling confident (58%) compared with a higher percentage of those who were not in care (77% and 69%).

With regards to young people, around two thirds of those who were in care reported dealing with problems well (68%) and feeling confident (64%), compared with a higher percentage of those who were not in care (81% and 77%).

Overall those who were in care reported less positively than those who were not in care (Table 8).

Table 8. Mental Health & Well-Being	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)	YPs in Care as Children (%)	YPs not in Care (%)
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	61	69	68	77
I've been feeling useful	50	59	32	64
I've been feeling relaxed	55	70	55	68
I've been feeling interested in other people	44	58	36	43
I've had energy to spare	61	65	69	77
I've been dealing with problems well	64	77	68	81
I've been thinking clearly	65	79	65	74
I've been feeling good about myself	55	66	65	72
I've been feeling close to other people	40	55	40	54
I've been feeling confident	58	69	64	77
I've been able to make up my own mind	79	86	88	88
I've been feeling loved	47	53	39	51
I've been interested in new things	55	67	67	82
I've been feeling cheerful	58	66	57	78

Knife Crime

Six in ten prisoners who reported being in care as a child had carried a knife (61%) compared to one third of those who were not in the care system (33%).

A significantly higher percentage of those who were in care reported using a knife to injure someone (48%), compared with 26% of those who were not in care as children. Just under half had been convicted of a knife crime (48%) and received a Police caution (45%), which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (29% and 24% respectively).

Just under three in five of young people who reported being in care had carried a knife (59%) compared to half of other young people (51%).

An appreciably higher percentage of young people who were in care reported using a knife to injure someone (40% compared with 32% of young people who were not in care). Two in five had been convicted of a knife crime (39%) and received a Police caution (39%), which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (28% and 35% respectively).

Table 9. Knife Crime	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)	YPs in Care as Children (%)	YPs not in Care (%)
Have you ever carried a knife?	61	33	59	51
Have you carried a knife in the 12 months before coming into prison?	33	17	41	34
Have you been a victim of knife crime?	52	32	49	13
Have you ever used a knife to injure someone?	48	26	40	32
Have you ever been cautioned by the Police for carrying a knife?	45	24	39	35
Have you ever been convicted of a knife crime?	48	28	39	28
If you were cautioned for carrying a knife would this stop you? Yes?	42	42	40	43
Are you a gang member? Yes?	14	5	19	7
Will you ever carry a knife again? Yes?	28	12	29	9

Safety

One in five (22%) of prisoners who were in care as a child reported fearing for their safety in prison during the last month, compared with 14% of other prisoners. Of those prisoners who were in care as a child, and who reported fearing for their safety: 34% reported that another prisoner made them fear for their safety; 92% a non-uniformed member of staff; 48% a group of prisoners; 74% a group of prison officers (excluding control and restraint); and 65% a prison officer.

Those respondents who reported fearing for their safety indicated the segregation unit as the most common area where they experienced such fear (92%). Other common areas were: recreation (60%); the reception area (87%); workshop/work-party (72%); and toilets/showers (65%).

Bullying

A greater percentage of prisoners who had been in care as a child reported being bullied by another prisoner or group of prisoners in the last month (21% compared to 14%). However, the reported natures of the bullying indicate generally lower instances.

Table 11. Type of Bullying	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)
Physical abuse	52	54
Sexual abuse	87	95
Money	65	88
Property	63	80
Religious insults	89	85
Racial insults	97	88
Sexuality insults	79	79
Disability insults	67	84
Age	93	88
Drugs	61	84
Name calling	31	31
Transgender	93	99

Domestic Violence

Almost two thirds of those who were in care as a child (62%) reported witnessing violence between their parents/carers, compared with one third of those who were not in care (32%). Over a quarter of prisoners who were in care as a child (30%) reported they had been involved in violence towards their spouse or partner, with 22% saying they had been convicted of an offence involving violence towards their spouse or partner which is moderately higher than those who were not in care (22% and 19% respectively). Two in five of those in care (40%) had been a victim of violence from their spouse or partner compared with a quarter (27%) of those who were not in care as a child.

Over half of young people in custody who were in care as a child (57%) reported witnessing violence between their parents/carers, compared with one third of those who were not in care (33%). A quarter of young people in custody who were in care as a child reported being involved in violence towards their spouse or partner (25%), compared with only 3% of other young people.

Literacy & Numeracy

More prisoners who were in care indicated that they had problems with writing (21%), reading (20%) and numbers (19%) compared with other prisoners who were not in care (13%, 9% and 11%

respectively). Similarly, more prisoners who were in care would like help with writing (23%), reading (19%) and numbers (19%) compared with other prisoners who were not in care (13%, 10% and 13% respectively).

Between one fifth and one third of young people who had been in care reported that they had difficulty with writing (25%), reading (35%) and numbers (21%) which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (11%, 8% and 8% respectively). Considerably more young people in custody who were in care would like help with writing (33%), reading (35%) and numbers (25%) compared with other young people who were not in care (10%, 10% and 9% respectively).

Prison Rules

83% of prisoners who had been in care reported understanding how to access the Complaints Procedure, with less than half experiencing difficulties in accessing a copy of the Prison Rules (43%). While more than half of prisoners who had been in care gave a positive response with regards to staff dealing with issues fairly (69%) and that staff viewed them as valued individuals in the prison (55%), this was lower than the perceptions of other prisoners (80% and 60% respectively).

Table 12. Positive Responses to Prison Rules	Prisoners in Care as Children (%)	Prisoners not in Care (%)
When I raise an issue with staff it is dealt with fairly	69	80
Staff offer support to help me deal with my problems	62	75
I believe I am viewed by staff as a valued individual in the prison	55	60
I believe that staff care about my wellbeing	61	68

Preparation for Release

More prisoners who had been in care knew about Throughcare Support Services compared with other prisoners (55% as opposed to 36%). Similarly, more (38% vs. 26%) had accessed services based in the prison to help them prepare for release.

Conclusion

A sizeable proportion of prisoners disclosed that they had been in care as a child. Over one quarter of those reporting (26% in 2017 and 2015; 27% in 2013) indicated that during their up-bringing they had been in care at some point and 14% had been in care at the age of sixteen (16% in 2015; 17% in 2013).

Just under half of young people in custody (47%) reported being in care as a child, considerably higher than previous surveys (34% in 2015; 30% in 2013; 37% in 2011).

Just under half of those prisoners who had been in care (49%) reported that drug taking was a problem for them on the outside, compared with three in ten prisoners (30%) who were never in the care system (2015 figure, 53% and 31% respectively).

Almost half of prisoners (47%) who had been in care as a child reported being drunk at the time of their offence, compared with 36% of all other prisoners reporting in the survey (2015 figure, 45% and 38% respectively). Prisoners who had been in care as a child also reported more serious drinking habits, with half (50%) consuming six or more drinks on one occasion as part of their weekly, daily or almost daily drinking habits (compared with 38% of other prisoners).

Overall, drug – including injected drugs, new psychoactive substances and methadone prescriptions – and alcohol problems were more prevalent in those who had been in care at some point in their youth.

Positive scores for mental well-being were consistently lower across the range of indicators for those who declared themselves to have been in care at some point in their childhood.

A significantly higher percentage of those who were in care reported using a knife to injure someone (48% compared with 26% of those who were not in care as children) (2015 figure, 50% and 27% respectively). Half had been convicted of a knife crime (48%) and received a Police caution (45%) which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (29% and 24% respectively).

Prisoners who were in care as children also reported in general a more negative experience of imprisonment compared with other prisoners – from their ratings of facility cleanliness (80% vs. 87% in halls), experiences of bullying (21% vs. 14%), occasions where they feared for their safety (22% vs. 14%), and positive responses to prison rules (69% vs. 80% for fair treatment by staff when raising an issue).

Almost two thirds of those who were in care as a child (62%) reported witnessing violence between their parents/carers, compared with just over one third of those who were not in care (32%) (2015 figures, 64% and 36% respectively).

More prisoners who were in care indicated that they had problems with writing (21%), reading (20%) and numbers (19%) compared with other prisoners who were not in care (13%, 9% and 11% respectively).

In the region of one fifth of young people in custody who had been in care reported that they had difficulty with writing (19%), reading (19%) numbers (17%) which is higher when compared to those who were not in care (15%, 13% and 15% respectively).

