

INVESTIGATING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN LEEDS
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COURT ADJOURNMENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Children in Leeds who failed to attend school regularly were often taken to the Juvenile Court by the Local Education Authority under care proceedings provided for by the Children and Young Person's Act, 1969, and dealt with by repeated adjournments of the case until and improvement in school attendance was sustained.

Previous research had suggested that repeated adjournments were an effective means of returning most children to regular school attendance but children who failed to do so often found themselves in care for varying periods.

The aims of the research reported in this thesis were, firstly, to evaluate the effectiveness of two types of adjournment, flexible and inflexible, and a "letters" procedure, using a randomly controlled trial; and secondly, to study some other factors associated with poor school attendance in Leeds by considering the children themselves and the effects of the court procedures on them and their families using a series of questionnaire-based interviews.

Overall, adjournments achieved their purpose in returning many children to regular school attendance, and there were no significant differences between the procedures tested. Improvement in school attendance after the first court hearing was found to be related to whether children had improved attendance beforehand once they knew they were to go to court. The less this anticipatory improvement, the more likely was the child to go into care. The threat of

going to court seemed to produce as much response from children who did well on adjournments as the adjournments themselves.

Features of "truancy" and "refusal" emerged from a questionnaire and they were examined in relation to outcome. Children who showed neither characteristic did best on adjournments. The interviews suggested that parents of court children provided less supervision for their children than parents of a control group, and the court children had poorer material conditions. Reactions to the adjournments were mixed, but many parents and children expressed a great fear of the child going into care. Many heavily criticised schools.

The adjournment method is controversial and has been publicly criticised by many people. Some attempt at evaluating this by considering the ethical implications and social consequences of the research has been made, in the hope that this will influence future developments in the field.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Any abbreviations which are used in the text are listed on the following page.

Notes to go with the text are numbered and appear at the end of each chapter.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.O.	Care Order
C.Y.P.A.	Children and Young Person's Act 1969
C.H.E.	Community home with education on the premises
E.W.O	Education Welfare Officer
G.L.I.M.	Generalised Loglinear Interactive Modelling
G.P.	General Practitioner
H.M.I.	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
I.C.O.	Interim Care Order
I.S.A.	Irregular School Attendance
I.S.T.D.	Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency
L.E.A.	Local Education Authority
N.C.D.S.	National Child Development Study
O and A	Observation and Assessment Centre
R.O.S.L.A.	Raising of the School Leaving Age
S.A.O.	School Attendance Order
S.O.	Supervision Order
S.P.S.S.	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis reports some results from research undertaken in the city of Leeds, West Yorkshire, under the auspices of "The Leeds Truancy Project", which began in the 1970's (1). The research reported here covers the period 1979 to 1983 and was supported financially by The Home Office and latterly, the Nuffield Foundation (2). During 1979-83, the author worked as a psychologist, employed as Research worker for the project (3). The research protocol was submitted and approved by the Home Office (4).

As a whole the project is concerned with one method of dealing with truants before the Juvenile Court for Irregular School Attendance (I.S.A.) in Leeds (5). The method is that of using repeated court adjournments to secure the return of absentees to school.

Previously, the early published work about this method (Berg et. al., 1977, 1978) had found court adjournments to be more successful than Supervision Orders in securing better school attendance in children before the courts for I.S.A. Although this early work was successful, there was little detailed study of the children and their family and home backgrounds. This early work caused a great deal of controversy and subsequent criticism has covered much ground. Criticisms have included the questioning of the use of Care proceedings and adjournments in such circumstances, especially the use of Care as a sanction and how this goes against the spirit of the 1969 Children

and Young Persons' Act. Questions of representation and legal rights of children have become more prominent in recent years as well as the role played by the schools. Substantial criticisms and press coverage have surrounded the project. Interest has been shown by many people involved in dealing with I.S.A., not least among magistrates from different areas of the country, some of whom feel strongly that the more traditional approaches of Supervision Orders or Care Orders are often ineffectual. A further area of debate was generated by the type of research model employed, namely that of a randomly controlled trial or experiment.

The thesis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of this particular method of treating truants. More detailed information from a new area of research not previously attempted, into the social and home backgrounds of the children is included. The thesis recognises that during the life of the "Leeds Truancy Project" many individual issues have been raised, some of which have been controversial. It attempts to pull together and relate some of these wider and more philosophical issues which have surrounded the project in the hope of obtaining a balanced and objective picture of the whole.

Therefore this thesis has several aims :

1. To review the Leeds Project and place the research in context.
2. To evaluate certain aspects of its operation.
3. To investigate the social and home backgrounds of pupils and their families.

and hence, on this basis

4. To provide a general discussion of issues related to the project.

Because this research arose from the work of a team project it should be made clear that the literature critique and legal survey analysed in Chapter 1, plus all of Chapters 4 and 7 reflect the authors sole involvement in the project. The 2 sub-projects in Chapter 1 and 2 were managed by the author. When the author came to work for the Leeds Truancy Project the outline plan was already in existence. Following this already existing plan, the author was involved, jointly with others, in the detailed elaboration and execution of it. The version of the report embodied in Chapter 3 is the author's sole responsibility. The results from the main study presented in Chapter 5 are from collaborative work, in which the author was heavily involved from the beginning. Chapter 6 contains detailed results from the questionnaires and interviewing, most of which were planned and conducted by the author, but which, of necessity involved others in validation. The author alone is responsible for the commentary and critique.

NOTES

1. The two main researchers since the inception of the research in the early 1970's have been Dr. Ian Berg, Honorary Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Leeds and Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Leeds Western Health Authority and Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, and Dr. R.P. Hullin, Reader in the Department of Biochemistry, University of Leeds; and chairman of the Juvenile Panel of Magistrates, Leeds. Some others have been involved to a lesser extent in the research programme.

2. The Home Office funded the project from 1st July 1979 to 30th June 1983. Among other things the funds paid the author's salary while she was employed as a Research Assistant in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Leeds, to work full-time on the project. The joint grant holders were Dr. I.S. Berg; Dr. R.P. Hullin and Professor R.H.S. Mincham (Head of Department of Psychiatry, University of Leeds).

The Nuffield Foundation funded the project from 1st July 1983 for seven months.

3. While working for this project the author was responsible for the day-to-day management of it under the direction of the grant holders. This included setting up the randomization processes in consultation with court clerks and magistrates; data collection and processing; liaison with participating personnel; devising interview schedules used with the families and children studied, and then conducting most of the interviews. The interviewing of families was the authors special responsibility, and area of interest. In addition, the author was able to reflect on the current situation in what was a "live-research" setting, and try to answer any major questions which arose during the research.

4. Final draft of the research proposals as agreed at a meeting in November, 1978.

"The adjournment procedure has come to be used in Leeds Juvenile court for dealing with Truants and has been effective in returning truants to school. The procedure, backed by the use of the Interim Care Order in the rare cases where school attendance does not improve, is now used in practically all cases, but in different ways : in some the period of adjournment is fixed, in others it is flexible. A new development was the use of letters by the Education Welfare Service when school attendance had become satisfactory, to advise parents that they and their children need not actually appear in court when their cases were next considered. Satisfactory attendance was defined as at least 90% of the total attendance possible (This has now been agreed as a minimum of 70%). The research is planned to look at 20 boys and 20 girls in each of the following categories : Flexible adjournment with and without letters excusing court attendance;

Inflexible adjournment with and without letters. (Total of 160 children). Random allocation will be achieved by the use of pre-prepared forms (document for magistrates) to be used in court.

The number of variables to be considered is great and includes reduction of the children's involvement in criminal activities, use by the court of the Interim Care Order, the effects on children of their school environment, action taken by the E.W.O. prior to cases being brought to court, and the effects on the families. It is hoped to look at all of these even though a thorough investigation of all will not be possible. Information from the schools will relate to maladjustment before and after their being subject to the adjournment procedure and levels of attainment will be measured. Information will be collected on the effects of the procedure on the families, looking at changes in their behaviour towards the child, particularly in their supervision of the child's activities. It is intended to interview the mothers at least TWICE, once before court appearance and then again after two months. The children will also be interviewed, if possible at school, otherwise at home.

In discussion, the gathering of information from parents before the operation of the adjournment procedure was queried. The researchers explained that to obtain this the research worker might accompany social workers/E.W.O. on any visits they made prior to court appearance, to families identified by E.W.O.'s. In some cases the child might not be dealt with by the adjournment procedure but the slight wastage was not likely to be significant. The presence of the research worker was not likely to markedly affect the outcome of the situation as the families would in any case have to be seen by a social worker and were also likely to be already heavily involved with social welfare agencies. Moreover the research is not designed to show that the adjournment procedure works (though it will be useful to replicate earlier results) but to compare the effectiveness of different forms of the procedure. A secondary aim is to collect descriptive material which might explain why the procedure is effective and, whether, in returning the children to school, it has any adverse effects, e.g. on family life.

Some consideration would have to be given to the criteria used by the E.W.O.'s in deciding what action to take in cases of truancy, though to investigate this thoroughly would be too large a project. In Leeds there is a tendency against action against parents because the adult courts were inclined not to regard them as serious offenders, as was shown by the often derisory fines imposed. There are apparently, legal problems in using the adjournment procedure on adults.

It is intended to look at cost effectiveness of the procedure, though it was recognised that precise statements would not be possible. A.H. Williams, Professor of Economic Policy at York would be giving

advice and some information might be available locally, though this would not be detailed.

One particular issue of concern was the use by the courts of the Interim Care Order as a sanction. It would be interesting to see, whether, as one of researchers believed, it was this threat that made the adjournment procedure effective. Although children might always, not just in these cases, see being taken into care as a sanction, this was not the purpose of the order. In any case, very few interim or full care orders were made in Leeds for children dealt with under the adjournment procedure. One of the researchers explained that after an interim care order the adjournment procedure was, in practically all cases started again and a full care order imposed if there was no success this time. Usually the adjournment procedure was carried out for six months and then the case adjourned sine die and reviewed after one year and 18 months.

Proposed research now scheduled for three years."

5. The method of dealing with irregular school attenders in Leeds was being publicly referred to as "an experiment" at least as early as July 1978 (Adam, 1978).

CHAPTER 1

A LEGAL AND LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Outline

The very nature of the topic under scrutiny, that of dealing with Irregular School Attenders in the Juvenile Court, is multi-disciplinary, and therefore the relevant literature is also multi-disciplinary. Several agencies are often involved in helping children with this "problem" including schools, social work agencies, the Education Welfare Department, doctors, psychiatrists, magistrates, and child guidance personnel. A survey of the literature in such a wide field therefore cannot hope or pretend to be exhaustive, but, an attempt has been made to include representative work from most of the relevant areas. Where appropriate, reference has been made to fairly recent published "summaries" of research. The professions and disciplines of psychology, education, psychiatry, law, social work and social policy, and criminology all relate in some way to the topic of poor school attendance, and inevitably there is a great deal of overlap and common ground. There are also areas of controversy and a united and agreed approach to the problem of I.S.A. is still a long way off. An interdisciplinary approach is necessary to help give clearer insights into a complex problem.

For convenience and clarity this critique is divided into four subject areas covering :

- (i) Legal aspects of poor school attendance
- (ii) Social and psychological information
- (iii) Educational aspects with particular reference to the role of the school
- (iv) Absence and delinquency

The chapter concludes with a section attempting to gather together some of the common strands and themes and also to highlight some of the fundamental differences and difficulties which are the inevitable consequence of this approach.

(i) LEGAL ASPECTS OF POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In England and Wales the law stipulates that all children are required to receive "an efficient, full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude"(1). At the present time, "those of compulsory school age" means those aged between 5 and 16 years, where the lower limit is defined as:

"the school term following the child's fifth birthday." (2)

The Education Acts of 1962 and 1976 specified the school leaving dates which are in force at the present time (3). No Education Act and no law requires a child to receive his or her education in a school. If a parent wishes to make alternative arrangements which fulfill the requirement of the 1944 Act then the parent is entitled so to do.

Such "alternative" education has to be shown to satisfy the requirements of the law (4), and at the present time the exercising of this option by parents is usually closely monitored by the Local Education Authority. If parents do not provide an adequate alternative for their child to receiving education in a school, Section 37 of the 1944 Education Act provides for the Local Authority to issue a "School Attendance Order" (S.A.O.). This is a relatively complicated procedure, but basically, it is an order sent to the parent of a child who is failing in his or her duty to see that the child does receive an education within the meaning of the Act, by whatever method the parent chooses. The S.A.O. requires the parent to enrol the child at a school so that the child will receive education "suitable to his age, ability and aptitude".(5)

The 1944 Education Act places the responsibility of regular attendance on the parents. It states :

"if a child is a registered pupil at a school and fails to attend regularly the parent is guilty of an offence."(6)

The only acceptable reasons for absence are also clearly defined in the Act. Put briefly they are : sickness or other "unavoidable" cause (including parents' annual holiday); religious festival days and distance of school from home (criteria defined in each case). (7)

The 1944 Act also defines how school attendance may be enforced (8). If a person fails to meet the requirements of an S.A.O. or to ensure that Section 39 of the Act is

met that person is liable to conviction (9). In the case of a first or second offence the maximum fine is two hundred pounds. For third and subsequent offences imprisonment of up to one month and/or a fine are the penalties. Court proceedings under Section 40 of the 1944 Education Act are instituted by the Local Education Authority who have a duty in law to see that all children under its jurisdiction receives education suitable to age, ability and aptitude. Court proceedings taken under this section of the Act are instigated by the L.E.A. against the parents of a child and are criminal proceedings.

Proceedings involving the child may also be instigated by the L.E.A. either instead of, or as well as, proceedings against the parent. Unlike the adult cases based on Section 40 of the 1944 Education Act, cases which involve the child are civil cases taken to the Juvenile court under Section I 2(e) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1969. These are care proceedings and the specific grounds for applying to the court for an order are clearly stated in the C.Y.P.A. (1969). This Act makes the provisions that, if a court is satisfied that the child before it is of compulsory school age within the meaning of the Education Acts, and is NOT receiving an efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude, AND ALSO, that he or she is in need of care and control which he or she is unlikely to receive unless the court makes an order under Section 1 of the CYPA in respect of him or her, the court may, "if it think fit" make such an order.

The possible options open to the court are :

- (a) an order which requires the child or young person's parent or guardian to enter into a recognisance and take proper care of him and exercise proper control over him; or
- (b) a supervision order (10); or
- (c) a care order (other than an interim order); or
- (d) a hospital or a guardianship order as provided by the Mental Health Act 1959

This is the legal basis of the cases taken to court. The question concerning the interpretation of the law must also be considered. Two actual cases are useful to assist in interpreting the concepts of regular school attendance and the meaning of care. These cases have been cited as precedent in proceedings where the citation has lent weight to the point being argued.

(a) Regular Attendance

The first case concerns the question of lateness. In the first case, in 1961 (11) it was held that regular attendance required by Section 39 of the 1944 Education Act is attendance for the times prescribed by the L.E.A. and that the complaint of "failure to attend regularly" could be made if a child was frequently late and arriving in school after the register had been closed. The concept of "regular attendance" in law therefore seems to mean rather more than putting in an appearance at some point

during the school day; on the basis of this case, it also means "punctual attendance".

(b) Care

The second case in 1977 went through all the levels of the court system up to the court of appeal and concerned the interpretation of "care". It was heard by three justices, one of whom was the (then) Master of the Rolls Lord Denning (12). It was a complicated case and had already been through Magistrates, Crown and Divisional Courts, with differing results. The discussion and judgement of the case centred around what "care" meant. In his judgement, Lord Denning stated :

"care" applies not only to the physical well being of a child - his meals and comfort at home - but also to his proper education. Otherwise he is not being properly cared for."(13)

This judgement clarified that care is not just related to the physical well-being of the child but also to the provision of education with the control over the child to see whether he or she gets it. The concept of adequate care including proper education is important, and was the basis for all school attendance cases brought to the Juvenile court under Section 1 2(e) of the C.Y.P.A. (1969) in this study (14).

(c) Juvenile Court Procedure

When a case is heard in any court certain rules of procedure must be followed. (15) This is true in the Juvenile Court generally, and no less for care

proceedings. The rules govern the procedure followed in court when the case is being heard and determine such things as who may speak when; when reports may be presented; and what happens once the case is proved. In school attendance cases the options open to magistrates if they find the case proved were mentioned earlier (see page 23), and these options are also identically defined in the Juvenile Court Rules. (16)

There is however, one important addition to the list, crucial to this study, namely that of the power of adjournment. The Juvenile Court magistrates have the power to adjourn a case for further enquiries to be made. That is to say, they may, if they wish, after the case has been proved, not make a decision concerning what action is to be taken on the day it is first heard, but may make an adjournment, and give the case a new date at some point in the future, so that meanwhile further information may be obtained. It is the exercise of this delay in decision-making through the use of adjournment and, in particular, its use in school attendance cases, that has formed the basis of the current research, and also the basis of much controversy and criticism.

Another option open to Juvenile Court Magistrates is to make an Interim Care Order (I.C.O.) placing the child in the care of the Local Authority for up to 28 days at a time. The Juvenile Court Rules do not specify the exact purpose of this kind of order, but a general assumption is

that one of its functions is to furnish the court with further information to assist it in coming to a decision about how to deal most appropriately with the child's case. In Leeds, I. C.O.'s were used fairly routinely in conjunction with court adjournments during the period of the study reported here, i.e. 1979-82. In practice, this meant that, if a child's case was adjourned, when he or she returned to the court with poor school attendance and did not present acceptable reasons for absence, the court often made an I.C.O. placing the child in the care of the L.E.A. for a period of three or four weeks. This action was technically legal (but never tested in the Appeal Court). Whether such activities were "moral" or "ethical" have been debated by many, and there are those who are of the strong opinion that :

"it goes against the spirit of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act".(17)

Some of the moral and ethical considerations are discussed in Chapter 7.

(d) The Adjournment System in Leeds

In the early 1970's, Leeds magistrates used to make Supervision Orders in cases where children were brought to the Juvenile court for Irregular School Attendance. Some of the magistrates noticed that these S.O.'s did not seem to be very effective in returning these children to regular school attendance. Furthermore, the children were rarely brought back before the magistrates for breach of

supervision by the Supervising Officer. However, the same children and young people often reappeared in the Juvenile Court, but this time for criminal offences. It was therefore decided by the magistrates that they would, in effect, supervise the childrens' school attendance for themselves, and monitor the attendance and progress by using court adjournments. Adjournment was systematically compared to supervision and was found to be more effective.

Two pieces of research were completed that indicate that this was so; the first study concerned children taken to the Juvenile court in the academic year 1972-73 (Berg et.al., 1977) and the second concerned children going through the courts in 1975-76 (Berg et.al., 1978).

The initial study was really a survey which showed that children taken by the L.E.A. to Juvenile Court under the provisions of the C.Y.P.A., (18) were, at the time of the study, being dealt with by one of two methods, the adjournment procedure or the making of a supervision order. Age, sex, social background and criminal behaviour were similar in the children subjected to the two procedures and in most instances it wasn't clear why one procedure had been selected rather than the other. The children were mainly in their early teens and had been absent from school an average of about two-thirds of the time prior to coming to court. The research confirmed what the magistrates had suspected, that school attendance improved more in those children and

young people who had their cases adjourned than in those given an S.O. despite few obvious differences in the two groups of children. These results were interesting but had the severe disadvantage of being based on retrospective data, so a second prospective study was therefore undertaken.

In the second study, the Magistrates decided, in the strictest confidence, to implement a system of random allocation whereby, with few exceptions, all the children brought to the Juvenile Court under Section 1 of the C.Y.P.A. (1969) were either made the subject of supervision orders or put on the adjournment system (Berg, Consterdine, Hullin, McGuire and Tyrer 1978). Using random number tables a series of "A"s for Adjournment and "S"s" for Supervision had been written opposite the names in random order and were obscured by sticky labels. Once the case concerning the child had been heard, and had been "found proved" by the Magistrates, the label opposite the child's name was removed and the indicated procedure instigated. A child under this system had an equal chance of being managed by supervision or adjournment. Three courts were involved and up to 45 magistrates (19). 45 children received adjournment and 51 supervision orders. During the survey the results were monitored and the children's progress followed. Their progress was measured in terms of subsequent attendance at school, and criminal activities leading to convictions or cautions. Statistics compiled at that time showed overwhelmingly that children on the

adjournment system not only attended school more regularly than those receiving supervision, but, in a large number of cases, became more stable, better adjusted, and reduced their delinquent and criminal activities.

Children repeatedly brought back to court under the adjournment procedure improved significantly more in their school attendance than those made the subject of supervision orders and the improvement was maintained for at least a year. The adjourned group committed less criminal offences than supervised children. No differences were apparent when the children allocated to the two groups were compared on a whole variety of background features and on questionnaire measures of psychiatric disturbance related to adjustment at school. This helped confirm that the process of random selection had been successfully carried out. The features used were sex; age; size of class at school; percentage free school meals at the child's school; immigrant population (percentage of new commonwealth citizens) in area of child's home; owned homes (percentage of owner-occupier homes in child's home area); police record. However, the adjourned group had significantly fewer youngsters with intact homes, and significantly more of the supervised group lived in parts of the city with a high population of immigrants. When the five factors of the Conners' Teachers' Rating Scale (Conners, 1969) and all three factors of the Rutter Scale B2 (for teachers) (Rutter, 1967) were compared for supervised and adjourned groups there were no significant differences between the

two groups (Berg, Consterdine, Hullin, McGuire and Tyrer, 1978). Overall, the demonstrable differences in outcome concerning attendance at school and criminal offences thus appeared to be due to the court procedures employed. No evidence emerged from the study that any particular group of children would have done better under supervision. Questionnaires completed by teachers indicated that children taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A. scored highly on the scale of psychiatric disturbance (20) showing both antisocial and emotional disorders, a finding consistent with other studies of children taken to court. There were as many girls as boys in the study which was a finding not totally consistent with other findings about truants that suggest that more boys truant than girls (e.g. Fogelman and Richardson, 1974).

When the results of this investigation became known, Juvenile court magistrates in Leeds began to use repeated adjournments almost exclusively to deal with I.S.A. cases before the courts and virtually abandoned the use of Supervision Orders for such children.

A survey carried out subsequently showed that adjournment gave similarly good results to those obtained during the random trial. Two types of adjournment seemed to be in use. It was found that a system of "flexible" adjournments was often used by the magistrates, so that, when a child's school attendance improved, court appearances occurred after one week, then two weeks, then three weeks and finally monthly appearances were

maintained for a few months. Failure to improve resulted in more frequent appearances and the use of Interim Care Orders. However, some magistrates considered that monthly (four-weekly) adjournments were sufficient irrespective of progress. Adjournment was thus used sometimes inflexibly on a monthly basis, and sometimes more flexibly as described above. This depended largely on the preference of the individual magistrates.

The system of deferring a decision for several adjournments continued to be used in Leeds and the "Leeds Truancy Project" reported in this thesis focussed on the children and their parents subjected to the court adjournment system because of I.S.A.

During the 1970's, another development in the adjournment "system" was that the Education Welfare Department began to ask magistrates whether the child's case could be reviewed after the period of adjournment without the individual concerned having to reappear in the court, providing the school attendance was satisfactory.

When this was agreed, letters were written to the parents and sent out by the Education Welfare Department, saying so. Average attendance in I.S.A. cases coming before the courts under the adjournment procedure remained satisfactory. However, frequent court appearances when flexible adjournment was being used and letters were not sent to excuse actual attendance at court, kept the courts very busy indeed. The magistrates therefore

decided to embark on another evaluative study to see if inflexible adjournment and letters, which together would substantially reduce the work involved in dealing with I.S.A. would suffice. They were keen to establish the most effective and economic way of handling poor school attenders before the courts. Another randomly controlled study was therefore set up with this in mind. This is the study during which the present author was employed as a research worker. Some of the results from this third piece of research are reported in this thesis, and have now also been published (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1983, 1984, 1986; Berg, Casswell, Goodwin, Hullin, McGuire and Tagg, 1985).

(e) Use of Interim Care Orders

A further development during this period was the use by the Juvenile Court Magistrates of the Interim Care Order as a sanction, a move which was highly controversial. The use of the I.C.O. in this way meant that in practice, children were informed by the magistrates that they were required to attend school "full time and on time", and if they failed so to do they ran the risk of being taken "away from home" (i.e. into care) the next time they came to court. The system operated on the assumption that most children prefer living at home with their parents and that the threat of removal was therefore a good incentive for the child to go to school. Not surprisingly, social work agencies felt this state of affairs to be highly undesirable and expressed their concern to the press by describing the use of the I.C.O. in this way as being:

"an abuse regarded as a punishment rather than a means to obtain further information." (21)

Some of the children's perceptions of care used in poor school attendance cases will be presented and discussed in Chapter 6. The issues which arise from the way in which Care Proceedings are entangled with the judicial system will be explored in Chapter 7.

It is unclear whether the particular press report quoted above represented the view of all social workers but nevertheless, in the authors' experience, it is true to say that, in every case she observed in court during the research process, where a child was made the subject of an I.C.O. as a consequence of his or her failure to attend school, he or she invariably spent the time in an observation and assessment centre which prepared reports concerning each child for the courts. This happened in all cases in the study reported here. In theory, it is possible for an I.C.O. to be made for only a week, which would not be long enough to either assess or observe the child adequately. In practice, most I.C.O.'s made by Magistrates were for three or four weeks. More rarely the court made an I.C.O. for 2 weeks because of public holidays or difficulties over court dates. By no means all of the children who are placed on court adjournments spent a period in interim care away from home. Nor did those who were sent away from home as subjects of an I.C.O. for three or four weeks automatically have a full Care Order made when they returned to the courts. Most children were placed back

on the "adjournment system" after being on an I.C.O. and sent home with instructions to attend school regularly "or else". "Or else" meant that the next time the child's attendance was less than it could have been and the reasons for absence were found to be unacceptable then he or she ran the risk of the magistrates making them the subject of a full Care Order to the Local Authority. It is quite clear that such use of the I.C.O. like this raises ethical problems, and some of these will be explored in Chapter 7.

(f) Randomisation Applied to the Court Room

Randomised studies in the field of medicine are now standard practice to enable doctors and patients to make use of the best treatments available. In fact, it is against the law to introduce new drugs onto the market which have not undergone this type of evaluation (22). The evaluation of treatment methods in medicine is well established and documented (23). To apply this type of model to the judicial process was justified by Berg when he argued that the controlled trial is:

"the only satisfactory means of deciding how effective different judicial procedures are." (24)

This argument depends on what "satisfactory" means and whether one can justify using methods in the court room normally reserved for a laboratory. This topic will be raised again in the discussion of the ethical aspects of this research in Chapter 7.

Another problem raised by Berg concerns the independence

of the judiciary. Some judges and magistrates have particularly expressed concern over this aspect of the Leeds work, and some judges are unhappy about the "Leeds Experiment" as a whole. Farrington commented that some judges and magistrates do not seem to be very concerned with how effective their methods of dealing with of a case are (Farrington, 1978, 1983). He wrote:

"The effectiveness of sentences should be evaluated in relation to their aims which are not always articulated by sentencers." (25)

He further commented that many people responsible for criminal justice are reluctant to:

"add costly evaluation to a budget that must be approved periodically by a succession of local officials or agencies, including some of those most likely to resist an innovative programme." (26)

It is important that the randomisation procedure in a study of this kind does NOT take place until after the case has been proved, so the magistracy retain their decision making powers over the establishment of "guilt" or "innocence". This, plus the desire of some members of the judiciary to become more effective in their dealings with the people coming before them, has been used as a powerful argument that the independence of the magistracy is maintained in a randomised trial, even when the decision concerning "disposal" is a random one. As yet, there are no other British known or published random studies in a court room setting (Farrington, 1978, 1983 op.cit) and there are very few in the United States of America. America is far in advance of the British scene, though, in its awareness of the

ethical problems of Experimentation in Law. One consequence of this concern was the publication of a report, Experimentation in the Law (1981) by the Federal Judicial Centre Advisory Committee on Experimentation in the Law.

The randomisation process can only be justified ethically when it is NOT KNOWN which of the procedures being tested is the best. If it is already known that treatment A is better than treatment B, a randomly controlled trial of treatments A and B would be unethical because everyone has a moral "right" to receive the best treatment once it is known. However, when the best treatment is not known, or when it is not certain which treatment is the better, it is ethical to conduct a randomised trial of treatment A and treatment B, and this is exactly what was done with adjournments and supervision.

The assignment to one treatment or the other has to be random to ensure that everyone has an equal chance of receiving either treatment, and also so that people receiving treatment are equivalent (within the limits of statistical fluctuation) to those receiving another. In some experiments subjects are given a choice of treatments, but that type of evaluation is not a true random study.

Theoretically, for "justice" to be done, it could be argued that, now adjournment has been shown to be superior to supervision then all school attendance

cases coming to all Juvenile Courts ought to have the best "treatment". However, it has to be recognised that not all cases respond to adjournment in the same way. More work is needed to determine the characteristics of those for whom adjournments are the most appropriate "treatment" and those children for whom another method of help would be more helpful. The application of science to the court room has been discussed by lawyers and psychologists alike. Some point out that such a system for testing out "treatments" has problems (Sutton, 1978), whilst at the same time they recognise the advantages of putting science to practical use to see if what is being done in practice actually works and is effective (Sutton, 1980). Kahn, refers to the original randomised trial as follows :

"the important significance of this study should be much more widely known and considered." (27)

Although this statement does not refer to randomisation per se but to adjournments, it does seem to reflect the view that this author accepts the "authority" and usefulness of the results of this type of research. Kahn and his colleagues concluded their comments on the Leeds work by high-lighting the need for close examination of the effectiveness of adjournment and its possible hazards. To some extent, this was one of the aims of the project reported here.

In this study, not only was the effectiveness of the adjournment procedure scrutinised using concrete measures of outcome such as percentage school attendance and the

numbers of criminal offences committed, but also it was possible to study psychological aspects concerning the impact of repeated court adjournments on the families concerned.

(ii) SOME SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Numerous psychologically orientated studies concerning truancy have been carried out. In their own way, each has made an attempt to contribute to the continuing debate concerning poor school attenders. Many studies have tried to address the question, "why do some children truant?", by looking at aetiological factors such as homes, schools and family. Some have tried to identify features or traits in the truants themselves. Others have attempted to redefine truancy. From the published material available it is clear that there is considerable overlap in subject matter across different studies and clinical or social aspects of poor attendance are rarely considered in isolation.

(a) Definitions of poor school attendance

There are difficulties in defining the word truant. Authors often begin their reports of research by discussing their personal definition of truant, to enable the reader of the report to know exactly what "truant" means in that particular context. Some workers have interpreted the term truant very loosely as meaning

any unjustified absence from school; other workers prefer to define it as absence without the knowledge or approval of the parent. The definitions offered are by no means uniform. Galloway (1980) preferred to make three categories of bad attenders:

- (1) those who play truant in the narrowest sense of being absent from school without their parents knowledge or permission;
- (2) those who are defined as "school phobic" in the sense of the absence being attributed to some sort of neurotic disorder in the child and their family; and
- (3) those who fall into neither group.

This last sub-categorisation of absentees comprises of all those children who stay at home when they are not ill but with their parents knowledge, while the parent is unable or unwilling to ensure the child goes regularly to school, by either persuasion or force.

Absence with the collusion of parents is termed by many researchers and Education Welfare Officers as "condoned absence". For example, Galloway (1976) asserted that truancy (defined as absence from school without parental knowledge or consent) was a relatively minor cause of unjustified absence and that absence in the "condoned" category far exceeded any of the other reasons for unjustified absence. In his study (1976), Galloway reported finding the truancy rate of secondary children (defined as children absent from school without parental knowledge or consent) as being a little over 11%. Absences with parental knowledge were just over 40%. There was also a group of over 25% of children assigned to a "mixed category" where the reasons for absence were

mixed but included some illness.

Unauthorised absence, unjustified absence, absence for unacceptable reasons, poor school attendance, absenteeism for unacceptable reasons, non-attendance at school, and persistent absence are all terms which have been used in this context. In one sense, truancy, defined as absence without parents' knowledge, and condoned absence fit into these categorisations quite well, but difficulties arise with those children who do not attend and who are diagnosed as "school phobic". Once such a label is attached to a case, it carries with it certain implications for management and treatment rather than for legally orientated intervention, i.e. legal action involving the parents and/or the child. While some child psychiatrists would take a "treatment" approach towards the "ill" school-phobic child, other child psychiatrists are of the view that school-phobic children should be required to obey the law like everyone else, and that support and treatment can be provided in conjunction with the requirement that the child concerned attends school regularly. (28)

Tyerman (1972) lumped school phobics and truants into one group consisting of children who are frequently absent from school. He suggested that children should be treated as individuals rather than as an example of a type since, in his opinion, there was no one cause and no one treatment for the problem of school absence. He stated that there is no evidence to suggest that psychiatric

treatment is more effective than G.P. or Social Worker intervention.

During the course of the work reported here, the term Irregular School Attendance (I.S.A.) became a familiar sight as it was the form of words which appeared on court documents. This form of words was preferred by the present writer because it described the pattern of attendance, as "irregular", without labelling it unjustified, unauthorised or any of the other descriptions used by some other researchers in this area. A further advantage of this form of words is that "Irregular School Attendance" can be justified in certain circumstances, e.g. in illness, and it may or may not include "classical truancy". It can also include prolonged absence described as "school phobia" or "school refusal". In other words, an adequate defence to the complaint being heard by the court could be offered. I.S.A. does not have the same connotations that the term truancy seems to have acquired.

(b) Aetiology

Evans (1975) reviewed the major studies which had been carried out in the truancy field up until that time, covering work by Kline (1897) who postulated that truancy was caused by the wandering instinct; Healy (1915) and Burt (1925) who linked truancy with antisocial and criminal activity, poor parental control, broken homes and mental conflict; Brown (1934) and Dayton (1928) attributed truancy to educational retardation coupled with the wish to escape from the threatening school situation;

Kirkpatrick and Lodge (1935) also suggested that retardation was linked with truancy and Murphy (1938) showed truants to be less intelligent as well as academically retarded.

More recently, Tyerman (1958,1968), explored home circumstances and educational attainment and ability; he concluded that there were distinct areas of truancy which coincided with the slum areas in his study. Furthermore, the truants had lower IQ's and attainments and worked below their ability levels when compared with control children. This was a study of Welsh and English children, including 137 truants charged at court.

Tyerman also concluded that the personality of the truant was characterised by loneliness, unhappiness and insecurity.

Hodges (1968) reported a study of 110 children before the courts during 1965-66 for non-attendance (29). Nearly half the children in his study came from families where the father had died, was permanently missing, or frequently absent from the home. Where several children from one family appeared before the courts, the home was more likely to be intact but the parents were ineffective and the homes characterised by illness, debt and trouble. When there was only one child from a family before the court, families were characterised by restless lives, marital strife and mental instability. On the whole, the prosecutions in Hodges study were seen as being

symptomatic of low general competence in families of poor stability, means and domestic order, causing the children to be unwilling to go to school and the parents unwilling to let them go. Hodges concluded his paper with the suggestion that some "treatment" of these cases was needed which had :

"a greater force than Supervision and less severity than long-term removal from home."

(30)

Cooper (1966) compared 40 truants with 40 school phobics all of whom were referred to child guidance clinics. Truants had lower IQ's; their parents were of lower socio-economic status; and their families were larger when compared to the phobic group. Mothers of school phobic children were more anxious and over-protective than mothers of truants, who were in comparison, unconcerned! Cooper viewed school refusal as being a defence mechanism employed by the child in order to cope with the situation of threat. With the children who truanted it emerged in defiance and breaking the law and with children who were school-phobic it was seen as an anxiety reaction. Unfortunately, Cooper did not analyse her study by sex.

Reid (1982) studied the self-concept of absentees. He demonstrated that the absentees had significantly lower self-concept as measured by two inventories than their control groups. He defined his absentees by using a cut-off of 35% attendance at school or less, and this group were also significantly different from the control group in that the absentees group had more broken homes; more fathers who worked in lower status occupations; fewer of

the absentees mothers worked; absentees' families were significantly larger than the control families (4-6 children); absentees were lower in birth order than the controls; and more of the families lived in council housing. Absentees committed more criminal offences, especially vandalism, more had free school meals and their families had more involvement with the social services than controls. Reid discussed the implications for schools of these results and seemed to raise more questions than he attempted to answer. However, he concluded:

"it seems reasonable to suggest that the schools will have to take a more imaginative approach in their handling, prevention and treatment of their school absentee problems."

(31)

He blames in part, insufficient psychological training for teachers and inconsistencies within schools in respect of pastoral care. The schools in his study had no pastoral care systems and there is now research available which indicate that this might be an important factor in the school when absenteeism is a problem (32). Reid argues that schools do not cause absenteeism but are agents which can increase or decrease their absenteeism problems. He takes a multi-causal approach to the problems.

(c) Sex differences

One study which looked at dissatisfaction with school among adolescents (Jackson, et.al., 1959) commented that sex differences were marked. The boys projected their feelings onto the world outside and were more likely to express their dissatisfaction outwardly. The

girls were more likely to direct it in on themselves, feeling inadequate, restless and ignorant as their response to their dissatisfaction with their school. If the logic of this is followed through, boys should be found more likely to be truanting and girls to be school "phobic". Certainly, Fogelman and Richardson (1974) found more boys than girls were reported by teachers to be playing truant at age 11 years, but the DES survey of 1974 found virtually no sex differences in the proportion of children deemed to have been unjustifiably absent on the day of the survey. There appears to be substantial regional variation for sex differences in groups of truants (Fogelman, 1976). In fact no significant sex differences were found in the first study carried out in Leeds in either the numbers of boys and girls coming to court or in the characteristics examined (Berg et.al, 1978).

(d) Motivation

Intelligence, IQ, and attainment are terms which frequently appear in the literature on school attendance.

Denney (1974) argued:

"the brighter the child, the higher his motivation to attend, the duller the child the less joy there is to be had from attendance."(33)

Unfortunately, he omitted adequate evidence to support this statement.

Kniveton (1969) investigating adolescent attitudes towards aspects of their schooling concluded that, whereas (the

then) grammar school pupils tended to enter employment where academic qualifications were important as entry requirements, this was not so often the case with the (then) secondary school pupils, and that therefore the schooling of the secondary group was seen to have less bearing on and relevance to their employment when they left school. The argument used here is that for the less able pupil, there is less motivation to attend school in order to obtain qualifications to "get him a job". There are at least two reasons for this; firstly, less intelligent pupils may not actually have sufficient ability to obtain these sought after qualifications; secondly, these pupils may not actually want to follow that path or go into that type of profession. Such reasons are, of course, also associated with a pupil's family and personal circumstances. Unemployment among school leavers more than doubled in the five years from 1972, and was especially acute in the 16-17 year age-group who had low or no examination qualifications. Some of the attitudes of these pupils are very revealing - expressing depression, bitterness, boredom and hostility towards a situation of "no vacancies" (sic) (34).

(e) School refusal and school phobia

Kahn (1974) writing about school phobias described a certain type of failure in school attendance where the child says he or she is unable to go to school. It is this type of school refusal which has been traditionally described as "school phobia". It is different from traditional truancy in that both child and parent normally

wish for the child to attend school but this is something that the child simply cannot bring him or herself to do.

Tyrer and Tyrer (1974) separated non-attendance from school caused by school refusal from absence due to truancy and many other writers have used this 2-class distinction. Tyrer and Tyrer have a clinical background, and in their study they were concerned with the amount of truancy or school refusal that their adult neurotic patients had had when they had been of school age. The results demonstrated that school-refusal had been present significantly more in the neurotic patients than in the control group, but the same rates of truancy were seen in both subjects and controls. Both school refusal and truancy were found to occur more frequently in the female patients. Studies such as this suggest that school-refusal and school-phobias are more emotional disorders, whereas truancy is much more a behavioural problem. But this is an on-going debate, and the sex differences found by Tyrer and Tyrer have not been replicated in other studies. For example, in a study of school refusal in early adolescence, Berg (1980) remarked that of the first 100 cases admitted, there were 53 boys and 47 girls. This seems to indicate that it is a mixed picture, i.e. it is a myth that "boys truant" and that girls suffer from "school phobia". Pritchard (1974), in a study concerned with truancy and school phobia in a sample of 55 primary school children not attending school regularly, found that there were few behavioural differences between the girls and boys, and

remarked that this was in contrast to other studies where differences had often been found between the sexes (Douglas et. al, 1972). Consistent sex differences do not appear to have been established.

Other workers who have explored school phobia include Chazan (1962), Davidson (1961), Hersov (1960) and Frick (1964). They all suggest that school phobia could be precipitated by over-protective parents, mental conflict in the family and failure in school work. Kahn and Nursten (1968) viewed school phobia more as a psycho-social problem, related to many areas of life, rather than attributing the problem of refusal (whether by truanting or phobia) to one specific cause. Table 1.1 summarises some accepted characteristics of truants and school phobics.

Table 1.1
Differences between truancy and school refusal/phobia

<u>TRUANCY</u>	<u>SCHOOL PHOBIA/REFUSAL</u>
Parents often unaware of child's absence from school	Parents usually know about school absences
Can be caused by poor home circumstance; unreliable parents; poor routine;	Often these children are from materially good homes;
Rebellion or frustration can cause truancy	School refusal can be caused by emotional conflicts
Truants are often dull but seem robust, adventurous, crave constant change	Often these children of above average intelligence. They fear leaving home, it causes them anxiety and panic
Truants have few strong ties and lack warm relationships often in early life. Often truants come from broken homes, with emotional and material poverty	Emotional climate more likely to be intense than lacking
Truancy can lead to delinquency	Child often develops physical symptoms, e.g. food fads, nausea on school mornings; pains;
Many truants' families place a low value on education, and need older children at home to help in family	Sometimes school refusers contract out of other areas of life besides school
	Parents of refusers usually value education, but are often unable to insist that a distressed child goes to school

(iii) EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF I.S.A WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

(a) An overview - the poverty of studies on the role of
the school in causing absence

Some researchers have now begun to turn their attention to the role of the school in the causation of truancy. Most authors have complained of the "paucity of academic research in this area" (Reynolds et.al., 1980). Tyerman (1972), writing when vast resources were being ploughed into education (i.e. before the cuts of 1980-82) commented that, despite the availability of more resources, there were many more children than had previously been the case away from school illegitimately, either through truancy without their parents knowledge or consent, or because their parents were keeping them at home. He remarked that failure to attend school for whatever reason is a distress call and in many countries parents and children think that

"going to school is a burden to be endured
rather than an opportunity to be grasped."
(35)

However,

"the causes of truancy are to be found in the
home, the school and the child's personality."
(36)

Fogelman and Richardson (1974), in their introduction to some of the results from the National Child Development Study also presented a multi-causal approach to use in the explanation of truancy.

Evans (1975) suggested that much of the early research neglected to look at the role of the school in causing truancy, and that it was only comparatively recently that researchers had examined school factors more closely. He

referred to work by Moore (1966) who investigated the difficulties of ordinary children in adjusting to school. Moore concluded that almost a fifth of the children in his sample, (18%), had never totally adjusted to school, and that this was due to either the teachers or to other factors in the school.

Mitchell and Shepherd (1967) studied a random sample of over 6000 children who "disliked going to school". The children studied were not truants. The investigation had the advantage of large numbers and explored attitudes of children towards school but unfortunately, the reasons for the attitudes were not explored. With the older children in the study it was found that school attendance declined as their attitude to school became more negative. The study also revealed that children who disliked school were rated as "below average" in attainment when compared to those who liked school in the ratio of two to one. Children who disliked school showed more signs of anxiety and a greater tendency to display psychosomatic symptoms. Sex differences were found indicating that a favourable reaction to school was more characteristic of the girls than the boys except at age 15 years, and that conversely, more boys than girls were said to dislike going to school at all ages except 8 and 15 years old.

Douglas and Ross (1965) reported the effects of absence on attainment in a sample of 3273 children. Children in the upper-middle-class socio-economic groups were not affected

by absence from school, but children in other social groups did consistently badly. This study indicated that frequent short absences were more detrimental than occasional long absences.

Evans also commented that many of the early studies supported the view of truancy being caused by home and social background factors, with the school occupying a small and insignificant role. When Evans was writing his review, (1975), some new studies were beginning to look at the role of the school to see whether the school itself had a decisive effect on attendance and some of these are discussed below. He contended that some schools had tried to respond positively and adjust to the needs of its "refusing" pupils, but, that some schools had not made any efforts. Chapter 2 reports a study of 10 schools in the city of Leeds for over 3000 pupils aged from about 13 to 16 years. It was clear from this study that some schools were much better than others at holding their pupils attendance and motivation.

Reynolds and colleagues adopted a sociological slant in their consideration of current educational policy and tried to explore the management structure in the 76 schools in their study (Reynolds et. al., 1977). They have been encouraging a different approach to the study of absenteeism. Their conclusions were similar to those of other researchers. At that time most authors agreed that research into the role of the school in the causation of truancy was still at the stage of

conjecture, especially in regard to which aspects of the school environment have the most impact on pupil attendance, and also, most importantly, how the factors concerned with the school make their effects manifest. Such research, Reynolds argued, should rightly be the concern of policy makers in political, social and educational fields.

One of the particular problems and criticisms of research into the role of the school in generating school attendance problems is that factors which are included in the school-orientated studies are often confused with family-related factors; the two areas of family and school are not mutually exclusive and this has often meant that results from school-orientated research have been consequently confused and not concerned exclusively to isolate the relationship of the school to truancy.

The fundamental question of "why do children truant?" seems to remain inadequately answered. In order to contribute to resolving the absentee problem it can be argued that it is legitimate to examine closely the institutions that these children are required to attend. It is often instructive to look at many different approaches to the same problem and see if there are any demonstrable differences in outcome, and then consider which factors might account for them. The interesting questions in this field concern the way in which different schools approach what is fundamentally the same problem in each - the poor attenders. Do all schools make positive

efforts, rather than accept irregular attendance with passivity? How effective is the "policing" type of approach? How willing are schools to be the subjects of research? The problem of gaining the confidence of schools sufficiently so that they do not feel threatened by research has not been satisfactorily solved. Schools have been accused of being defensive when enquiries and research focus on them in particular and this is unfortunate. Many schools acknowledge that they have short-comings, and no school is perfect, but if a school refuses to even acknowledge or explore what the deficiencies might be it may seem to be burying its head in the sand.

(b) Accuracy of school attendance statistics

Every school is required by law to keep a register of its pupils' attendances. Normally the registers are marked in half days with a mark being given for each complete half day spent in school by the pupil. Such a half-day is known as a session. Registration therefore has to be completed at least twice a day, once for the morning, and once for the afternoon sessions. Registration can thus become tedious for both pupils and teachers. One of the problems connected to attendance marks raised by many researchers is the problem of accuracy (Williams, (1974); Anon, (1974) and David, (1975)).

Overall, as we have already observed, school attendance in England has remained fairly constant for many years, at

around 90%. Embedded within this average are considerable variations due to age of the child, sex, part of the country and type of school attended by the child (Fogelman, Tibbenham and Lambert, 1980). This figure means that, on average, each school child is away from school for half a day per week. It is difficult to decide how much is unavoidable, but the I.S.T.D. study (1974) considered that up to about 3% of the 10% absence might be seen to be unjustified.

The problems in using registers in research include whether the record is made at the right time; whether head-teachers "rig" figures (perhaps in fear of low attendance rates reflecting badly on themselves or to protect the schools' reputation etc.); or whether pupils register and then "knock off". However, registers are accepted as the legal record of a child's attendance at school. In the present author's experience, nearly all the school registers which were examined for research purposes were correctly completed but the research team had no means of checking if they had been filled in at the right times (37).

Actually, a few errors do not make much difference to the overall results from a large sample like this one. One study made use of participant observation within schools, and did not find vast problems with registration such as those discussed above. Post-registration disappearances occurred only 0.5% of the time (38).

In addition to the problem of pupils who register and then "knock off" or "leg it" is that of those pupils who register and then never attend classes, spending the day in such places as "the loo". This "internal truancy" is not within the scope of this thesis although the problem is acknowledged.

(c) The role of the school

Previous reference has been made to the fact that up until the last decade or so, attention to the role and effect of the school in the causation of truancy had been scarce. Ignoring the role of the school had largely been encouraged by the general acceptance of the findings of Coleman (1966) who surveyed some 645,000 school children in America attending about 4000 schools. The results were said to show that childrens' educational attainment was largely independent of the schooling that they had received. A British Study, (Plowden Report, 1967), concluded that home influences far outweighed those of the school, and that there was a prevailing doubt concerning the extent to which a school could influence or affect the child's development. Bernstein (1970) suggested that "Education cannot compensate for Society" and that the problems of education were rooted in the educational inequalities of society itself. He suggested that the notion of "compensatory education" which is concerned with the education of children of low social class whose material circumstances are inadequate is not helpful or relevant today. He felt that there were wide gaps between the culture of home and school environments to which the

child from a "deprived home" had to adapt before education could take place and that this was undesirable, since all that informed the child outside school lost validity once the child crossed the school threshold. The world of meaning of the school was thus imposed on the family and the child with them having no say in the matter. In his view, schools needed to change their approach and consider the social assumptions underlying their organisation.

There is no real general agreement as to what the real causes of truancy, delinquency and allied problems might be. The diversity of opinion concerning the causes of truancy was evident even in very early research into the possible causes and correlates of truancy. For example, Partridge (1939) suggested that "school life plays practically no part at all" in determining truancy, whereas Kirkpatrick and Lodge (1935) asked their readers to at least "consider" the relationship between the truants and school. They suggested in their conclusion that it is:

"rather futile for a juvenile court to attempt to deal constructively with the truancy problem until the school curriculum has been modified to fit the child in contrast to the present situation, in which the effort seems largely to be one of trimming the child so that he fits the curriculum." (39)

Broadwin (1932) emphasised the relationship between the home and the school and suggested that they were interdependent. He proposed that the school situation, to a large extent, was a substitute for the home situation, and therefore, a child had to seek a relationship in

adjustment in the two places. Essentially, Broadwin's is a "personality" approach which looks at truancy as one symptom among many representing some underlying disorder. Partridge (1939) emphasised the role of the individual in truancy; Kirkpatrick and Lodge (1935) the role of the school; and Broadwin (1932) the interdependence of the two. These differences in emphasis still exist today.

Rutter (1980) mentioned four studies apart from his own which had recently been concerned with differences between schools within the same areas or authorities. The earliest of these was a study carried out in London Tower Hamlets (Power et.al., 1967, 1972) where it was found that the annual averages of delinquency varied widely between schools of the same neighbourhood and that these differences could not be explained in terms of school-size, age of the buildings, sex of the school population, and the ability of the individual children when aged eleven. (40) Furthermore, it was found that the differences between schools were consistent over the years. He did not examine variation in the attendance figures between the schools or truancy. Power and colleagues concluded that their findings "have explained nothing" (41), but suggested it seemed as if some schools might exert a beneficial influence on the behaviour of their pupils and, they would be surprised if the kind of picture which was found in their research was limited to one London borough, because in fact, their study had arisen:

"out of an impression in quite another area that some of its schools seemed to be contributing far more than their share of offenders." (42)

There have been others who have done interesting work in this field including Hargreaves (43) who studied "Social relations in a secondary school" between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves in the fourth year in a Secondary Modern School. There were clear differences in orientations to school and teachers between "academic" and "delinquent" low-streams. This was an early exploratory study in its field (Hargreaves, 1967) which clearly relates delinquency to the structure of the school, its resources, staffing and sub-culture.

Heal (1978) reported on the role that the school might play in the prevention of crime and the results from the study indicated that, in both primary and secondary schools, the school could influence the behaviour of their pupils in the community. Ten percent of the variation in misbehaviour in children in the sample was found to be directly attributable to the school attended by the child. The study reported that "truancy was rare in those schools studied" (44), but it does not appear to have examined variation in school attendance between schools. Because truancy was "rare", this author suggested that it was unlikely to be responsible for the variation between schools which was observed.

Another study (Gath et.al., 1972, 1977) examined the variation between schools in the patterns of referring

problem children for child guidance across one London Borough. Referral rates were found to vary widely between schools and to closely follow the pattern in variation in the delinquency rates between the same schools (correlation coefficient $r=0.52$). Unfortunately, the authors did not relate the rate of referral for child guidance to the absence rates for the schools.

Reynolds and others (1974, 1976, 1977), studied nine secondary-modern schools in working class areas over the period of 1966 to 1973. They compared the annual average attendance rate for all nine schools and also the delinquency rates. Large and consistent differences were found for both rates between the schools over the seven years of the study. Reynolds and colleagues (1977), reported that:

"as is to be expected, schools with a low delinquency rate tend to have high rates of attendance and academic attainment." (45)

They suggested that the schools in their area did have "an independent effect of their own" and that their future plans were to look at the data available about each school concerning its rules, resources and organisation, staffing and any other relevant aspects, and attempt to answer the question "what is it that makes a successful school?" Their conclusions were that what goes on in a school is

"an important determinant of the type of child that emerges at the end of the process." (46)

Rutter reported a study of the effects of secondary schools on children and presented some convincing

evidence which suggested that differences in schools were important when outcome was considered (Rutter, 1980 op. cit.). In his study, differences in pupil outcome between schools were related to behaviour, academic success and disciplinary intervention. The factors and features which emerged as fostering the success of the school were: teacher approval and attention; topical praise; good pupil conditions; pupil responsibilities and participation; good teacher models; group management of classes and staff organization. Rutter suggested that the results of the research (Rutter et. al., 1979 and 1980) indicated that probably a causal relationship does exist between school processes and the achievements of pupils and went on to present three main arguments to support this contention. Firstly, that the schools in the study varied when behaviour, attendance, examination results and delinquency were considered; secondly, that these schools had different outcomes even when account was taken of any differences present in the intake (47), which suggested that it was the school which was influencing pupil behaviour and attitude; and thirdly, the research showed which set of variables were related to good behaviour and attendance, and which were not. The research of Rutter and colleagues indicated that children benefited from attending schools:

- (a) with good academic standards
- (b) where teachers give good models of behaviour
- (c) where pupils are praised and given responsibility
- (d) where general working conditions are good
- (e) where lessons are well conducted.

Rutter commented that these factors might have been predicted by "common-sense". However, the following factors, which on a "common-sense" basis, might have been thought just as likely to affect outcome, were not in fact significant; size and age of school; favourable staff-pupil ratio; year-based pastoral care systems; continuity of individual teachers; and firm discipline. Rutter stated that his study was limited to an urban population so the results might not be applicable to other situations.

(iv) ABSENCE AND DELINQUENCY

(a) An Overview

The link between truancy and delinquency seems to be well established and documented (e.g. Tennent, 1971; May, 1975; West and Farrington, 1973). Most of the published material concerns the examination of a group of poor attenders for evidence of the scope and type of their delinquency. One study which looked directly at a group of delinquents in terms of attendance and truancy was published in 1963. This study was referred to as "G.A. Bell" 1963 by Denney (1973) who wrote that G.A. Bell:

"published the results of his work in 1963, examined the attendance record of 492 cases of delinquent behaviour brought by the police to a Belfast magistrates' court. Of these 82% showed a satisfactory record of attendance; 18% an irregular, bad record. In this study Bell began by looking at delinquents to see how many were truants."
(48)

In contrast to this, most other studies started with truancy, and some have regarded it as:

"the first step on the downward stair to crime." (49)

And others, such as Farrington (1980) have suggested:

"adverse backgrounds produce antisocial people and that truancy and delinquency are two symptoms of this antisociality." (50)

Although much has been written about the failure of juvenile delinquents to attend school as much as they should (Tennent, 1971) there is a lack of hard information on the subject (Wooton, 1959; May, 1975). The connection and relationship of juvenile delinquency to poor school attendance is particularly important since they have both been shown to precede antisocial behaviour in adult life (Robins, 1978; Farrington, 1980). The problems of defining "truancy" and of differentiating "justifiable" from "unjustifiable" absence have already been mentioned with regard to school attendance and these same problems also hinder any discussion of the interaction of truancy and delinquency.

Because of the dearth of information about poor school attendance in delinquents, when the research team in Leeds discovered during the investigation of children

before the courts for I.S.A. that information about school attendance was available for all children before the courts who were still at school, the opportunity for studying the attendance of young delinquents was taken.

The results, briefly stated, follow, and help to fill out the pattern of school attendance in children and young people with criminal offences. They have now been published (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1986).

(b) A subsidiary study of school attendance in a group of 500 delinquents in Leeds.

During the period of the investigations reported in this thesis it was discovered that whenever a child is taken to court in the city for whatever reason a routine enquiry form is sent to his/her school for completion by the head-teacher in consultation with his or her staff. While the main part of the Leeds Truancy Project was being undertaken it was possible over a period of about 18 months to collect the school reports on children convicted of criminal offences and a sample of 500 was obtained (435 boys and 65 girls). A summary of this study follows.

(i) Procedure

School enquiry forms (see Appendix 2) were obtained for 500 children brought to Juvenile Court for criminal offences. Children were only included once, and children who had passed school leaving age when they were brought to Juvenile Court for criminal offences

were excluded. The study used straight absence rates because they were fairly objective, easily collected and checked, a method recommended by Robins and Ratcliffe (1980). The figures used for absence were totals including any absence for parental holidays taken during school term, illness, dental appointments etc.

On the form, teachers were asked to indicate the child's school attendance over the previous 10 weeks, by giving half-days attended at school from a total of approximately one hundred. This proportion was converted into a percentage school attendance for each child. The form also asked for information about health, behaviour, ability, home circumstances and any justification which had been given for the absence concerned. The responses to these questions for the children studied were converted into appropriate two or three point scales for statistical analyses which used analyses of variance, chi-square tests and t-tests. Significance of product-moment correlation coefficients was tested using the method described by Snedecor and Cochran (1967).

The school attendance of the group of delinquent children was compared with that of three separate control groups. One of them is the group used in the main study of Irregular School Attenders, from which some of the main findings have now been published (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1983), and consisted of those children of the same sex and approximately the

same age who were next on the school register to children who had severe school attendance problems. Information, available on the attendance of 134 such control children over a period of thirty school weeks, had been obtained approximately one year prior to the time when this study of delinquents was carried out.

The second control group consisted of the entire normal school population of the city over ten years of age whose average school attendance had been collected, divided up by school, for one term about eighteen months before this study was undertaken (51). The average attendance of the delinquent child was compared to the mean attendance of the school where he or she was enrolled.

The third control group consisted of pupils in 10 secondary schools in the city of Leeds. These were children in another subsidiary study, to be described in Chapter 2. The delinquent children who attended the 10 schools were compared to others of the same age and sex at the school when the study here described was carried out, and also in the two previous years.

In addition to the school report forms obtained from the courts, information on families invited to appear before the School Attendance Sub-Committee of the Education Department because of absence from school and about Juvenile Court care proceedings for I.S.A. was obtained from the city Education Welfare Department.

(ii) Results

School Attendance

Controls from the main Leeds Truancy Project

School attendance, in ranges of 10 percent, is shown for the delinquent children and for controls from the main 1979 to 1982 I.S.A. study in Table 1.2. For the 483 delinquent children for whom attendance data was given on the forms from schools, the mean attendance was 77%, median 82%, range 0-100%. For the controls used, the mean attendance was 87%, median 94%, range 46-100%. Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Siegel, 1956) D was 0.48 ($p < .001$). This meant that there were significantly more delinquent children in lower attendance bands than expected. (This test is a one-sample test for the goodness of fit and looks at the degree of agreement between a set of observed values, (such as the number of children in each category of percentage attendance) and some specified theoretical distribution (i.e. the control group). It uses cumulative frequencies in each category, and is based on the highest difference between groups).

Boys and girls did not show significant differences ($p > .05$).

TABLE 1.2

500 children prosecuted for criminal offences :
 % school attendance over approximately 10 school weeks,
 compared to 168 children from the same class at school
 as young people taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A.
 (% attendance over 30 school weeks).

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL	DELINQUENT CHILDREN		CONTROLS	
	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency
0 - 10	7	1	--	--
10.1 - 20	7	3	--	--
20.1 - 30	8	5	--	--
30.1 - 40	8	6	--	0
40.1 - 50	28	12	2	1
50.1 - 60	22	17	5	5
60.1 - 70	54	28	4	8
70.1 - 80	84	45	20	23
80.1 - 90	122	71	0	23
90.1 - 100	143	100	103	100
attendance known	483		134	
missing	17		34	
TOTAL	500		168	

Controls from the entire normal school population of the city

The mean percentage attendance of 66 middle schools (age 10 to 13 years) was 92% (standard error of mean = 2, range 88-96). In these schools the average number of children per school was 419 (standard error of mean was 155). The mean percentage attendance of 49 secondary schools (age 13 to 16 years) was 91% (standard error of mean = 4, range 74 to 96). In these schools the average number of children per school was 792 (standard error of mean = 324). The combined mean percentage attendance for all the schools was 92% (standard error of mean = 3, range 74-96). The mean school attendance of the delinquent children was 77% which is 15% below the means of the controls (the 91% and the 92% indicated above for the total of 367,098 children in the middle and secondary schools of the city). Since the standard errors of the means were 4% and 3% respectively for the two types of schools the delinquents clearly had a significant lower mean school attendance.

Controls from 10 schools

68 of the delinquent children were identified as attending one of the 10 schools involved in the subsidiary study reported in Chapter 2.

Comparisons between 29 delinquents who were 15 or 16 years old prosecuted for criminal offences and included in this study, and other pupils at the 10 schools at the same time, showed that the delinquents were attending

school overall significantly less (Table 1.3, $t=2.1$, $df=29$, $p<.05$). It will be seen from the table that their lower average school attendance was not significantly different when the same children were compared a year before this study was conducted and also two years before.

Comparisons between 39 delinquents who were 14 or 15 years old when their prosecution led to their inclusion in this study and others in the 10 schools both at the same time ($t=5.4$, $df=40$, $p<.001$) and when the same children were compared a year previously ($t=2.4$, $df=39$, $p<.001$) showed that they were attending school less frequently each time the comparison was made.

TABLE 1.3
68 children out of 500 prosecuted for criminal offences who attended one of ten schools from which two cohorts of children were surveyed over two or three consecutive years respectively. A comparison of mean percentage attendances over a school year.

WHEN SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT IN RELATION TO DELINQUENCY INVESTIGATION	AVERAGE % ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN IN TEN SCHOOLS			
	COHORT OF CHILDREN:			
	surveyed over 3 school years (AGE)		surveyed over 2 school years (AGE)	
	delinquent group (n = 29)	remainder (n = approx. 1600)	delinquent group (n = 39)	remainder (n = approx. 1800)
2 years before	90% 13 - 14 years old	91% 13 - 14 years old	---	---
1 year before	86% 14 - 15 years old	89% 14 - 15 years old	86% (*) 13 - 14 years old	91% (*) 13 - 14 years old
at the same time	79% (&) 15 - 16 years old	85% (&) 15 - 16 years old	79% (+) 14 - 15 years old	86% (+) 14 - 15 years old

significant differences using t-tests : p<

- (*) .001
- (+) .01
- (&) .05

Features of school attendance in delinquent children

The mean school attendance of the delinquent children over an average period of 9.5 weeks was 77% (Table 1.2, s.d.=21, range 0-100, n=483). Attendance and age had a significant negative correlation ($r=-0.3$, $p<.001$), i.e. attendance dropped significantly as age increased. There was no significant difference in the attendance of boys compared to that of girls, tested by an analysis of variance ($p>.05$). The delinquent children came from 94 schools. There was a small positive correlation between their attendance and the average attendance of the pupils from the schools where they were enrolled measured over one term ($r=0.2$, $p<.001$). The higher the average attendance of the whole school, the less likely delinquents are to be away. There was also a small negative correlation with the number of children on the register of their school ($r=0.1$, $p<.01$), i.e. the smaller the role the less likely they were to be away.

Justification for absence

(i) 143 delinquent children (30%) were identified by their teachers as being truants.

(ii) 87 (18%) were considered possible truants.

(iii) 26 (5%) were absent because they had been suspended (n=17), in care (n=8), refusing school (n=2) or at a residential school (n=1).

(iv) 227 children (47%) were clearly not thought to be truants by their teachers.

The percentage attendance of these four groups (i-iv) was respectively:

68 (n = 143), 69 (n = 87), 58 (n = 26), and 88 (n = 227).

These differences were significant (F=57, df 3479, $p < .001$). No significant sex differences were found across the four groups ($p > .05$). Unjustified absence as assessed by teachers was significantly more frequent both when attendance was less than 70% on average (chi-square=51, df=2, $p < .001$) and when it was less than 50% on average (chi-square=21, df=2, $p < .001$). About half of those thought to be away from school without good reason (n=102) had an attendance of less than 70% compared with about a tenth (n=22) of those whose absence was thought to be justifiable.

Illhealth

64 (13%) of the delinquent children, were thought by their teachers to be off school because of poor general health. About a quarter of this group (n=15) had a school attendance averaging below 50% compared to approximately a tenth (n=44) of the remainder. This difference was significant (chi-square=8.2, df=1, $p < .05$). Boys and girls showed no significant differences in this respect ($p > .05$).

Educational achievement

There is some evidence which suggests that educational achievement and absenteeism are related. In a study carried out in Aberdeen (reported by David May, 1975), the bad offenders had significantly lower IQ scores than other

children, especially for children labelled "truant" by teachers. Whether low ability comes before or after truancy starts is a moot point.

Ability and attainment were categorised on the school reports as "below", "meeting" or "above" expectations. No significant differences were found when the three ability and attainment subgroups of children were compared, allowing for sex, in an analysis of variance ($p > .05$). Between a third and half of children were doing less well at school than teachers felt they should and only a twentieth ($n=17$) were recorded as doing better than expected.

Behaviour problems

Half of the delinquent children ($n=253$) were described by their teachers as having some sort of conduct problem in school. There were no sex differences ($p > .05$). Attendance rates of those with and without conduct difficulties in school were not significantly different ($p > .05$).

Interests outside school

In half the cases ($n=227$) teachers were able to comment about some aspects of the child's interests outside school. Those who were known to have hobbies and outdoor pursuits did not differ in school attendance from those the teachers said did not have any or did not know of any ($p > .05$).

Unsatisfactory social circumstances

In 22% of instances (n=108) teachers considered some aspect of the child's home unsatisfactory. When this was the case the school attendance averaged 74%, otherwise it was 78%, a significant difference ($f=3.9$, df 1481, $p<.05$). There were no significant differences between boys and girls in this regard ($p>.05$). In 13% of cases (n=64) teachers mentioned undesirable associates. Children singled out in this way had a mean attendance of 82% compared to 76% in the remainder, a significant difference ($F=4.2$, df 1,481, $p<.05$). There were no significant sex differences in this respect ($p>.05$).

School Attendance Committee and Juvenile Court Proceedings for Poor School Attendance

(i) School Attendance Sub-committee (52)

44 (9%) of the delinquent children (boys n=35, (7%); girls n=9, (14%)) were invited with their parents to attend the School Attendance Sub-committee of the Local Educational Authority because of poor school attendance, at some time over a three year period. This committee met from time to time to give warnings to parents and children whose school attendance was inadequate for no good reason. One of the purposes of the committee was to try to avoid the need for parents and children to be taken to court. If a child had been to committee previously and failed to respond, or the family was already known to the Education Welfare service, he or she went straight to court.

(ii) Juvenile Court

51 (10%) of the delinquent children (boys n=41, (9%); girls n=10, (14%)) were taken to Juvenile Court under care proceedings for I.S.A. over a 3 year period. 22 of them had been to School Attendance Sub-committee. The school attendance level of those taken to court for I.S.A. was 58% (s.d.=28) compared with 79% for the remainder. The level of 58% school attendance prior to going to Court for I.S.A. was in line with the attendance of all I.S.A. cases in the main study, whose results are outlined in Chapter five.

School Attendance Committee and Juvenile Court for I.S.A. in a group of controls from 10 schools

The proportion of children from the 10 schools over a similar three year period invited to attend the school attendance sub-committee was 5% and the proportion taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A. was 3%. This showed a significant difference in that a greater proportion of delinquent children from these schools were dealt with by these means (School Attendance Committee, chi-square 8.1, df=1, p<.005; Juvenile Court, chi-square 34.3, df=1, p<.001).

Type of criminal behaviour

The offences of the children were categorised as : Damage (boys n=59, girls n=2); Burglary (boys n=134, girls n=5); stealing otherwise (boys n=190, girls n=48); and Assaults (boys n=42, girls n=7). One or two other types of anti-

social activity leading to conviction, such as drunkenness and Road Traffic Offences (boys n=9, girls n=2) were excluded. There was no significant difference between the four groups in mean percentage school attendance either in the case of boys or in girls nor when they were taken together ($p > .05$). Looking at boys and girls who were classified in the Stealing group (i.e not burglary) there was no significant sex differences in the mean percentage school attendance (boys 75%, girls 77%; $t=0.5$, $df=81$, $p > .05$).

(iii) Discussion

The comparison made in this subsidiary study of delinquents and other school children of the city of Leeds confirmed the findings of previous studies which showed that anti-social young people miss more school than their less delinquent peers (Ferguson, 1952; Tennent, 1971; and Farrington, 1980). The extent of the absence in this study of delinquents was seemingly more than that found by May (1975) who studied boys in a comparable survey. This could be because his group was somewhat younger, and the trend for absence to increase towards the school leaving age has already been noticed.

The availability of the control group from the main truancy study made it possible to compare the delinquents with young people from relatively socially disadvantaged home backgrounds (see chapters 5 and 6 for the results of the main study). Even so, the children taken to court

for criminal offences were away from school on average half a day a week more than this control group, and the girls were away from school as much as the boys. The fact that delinquent girls absent themselves from school to a similar extent as the boys is important because most previous studies of absence from school and delinquency have mainly been concerned with boys only. Throughout the study, sex differences were looked for but none found. It is remarkable that the absence rates of girls and boys were fairly similar, but the rate of criminal activities was far higher for the boys than the girls.

The third control group used for comparison consisted of pupils from 10 secondary schools in the Inner City Area of Leeds (the study of these ten schools is reported in Chapter 2). This comparison made it possible to establish that during the last year of compulsory schooling and also in the penultimate year, delinquents consistently attended school less than their fellow pupils. There was a suggestion that the younger delinquents had been staying off from school for longer, possibly indicating that absence from school anteceded delinquency. This has been noticed in other studies (e.g. Farrington, 1980). It has also been previously noted that the older delinquents had possibly been less persistently poor attenders than younger children (Fogelman et.al., 1980).

The school attendance figures for delinquents in this study were not collected by an enquiry on one particular day, or for one particular week but were taken from school registers over several weeks. This fact would support the view that the poorer attendance of the delinquent children when compared to their contemporaries is a genuine finding within schools and parts of the city where attendance is a little below the average for the city as a whole any way.

Straight absence figures (not adjusted for illness etc.) was used to compare delinquents and controls. This was in line with previous studies (e.g. Dell, 1963; Robins, 1978). This method assumed justifiable absence should (by and large) be similar for all children of comparable age, sex, school and home background over a period of several weeks, and that absence due to illness or parents holidays should not be substantially different for the two groups. Because of this a reasonable conclusion from this study is that the absenteeism from school found among delinquents was not justified.

The information provided by teachers on the features of the juvenile delinquents showed several associations with poor attendance which were not unexpected when the findings of national surveys in Britain (e.g. N.C.D.S.) are taken into account. The clear relationship between increasing age and greater absence from school is an example of this. The slight association with the

particular school attended and the size of its roll, and the lack of any relationship with achievement were also reasonably in accordance with other studies, (e.g. Rutter, 1980). As might have been expected, physical illness was considered to be a common cause of absence and those who were thought by teachers to have health problems were in fact off school a good deal more than the others. The finding that those children described by their teachers as being "truants" or "possible truants" were substantially worse attenders than the others was in keeping with the conclusions of other investigations (I.S.T.D., 1974; Dell, 1963; Farrington, 1980).

The finding that misbehaviour in school did not seem to be associated with poor school attendance is interesting because it suggests that the opinions of teachers as to the justification (or not) of any absence was not closely associated with or influenced by antisocial behaviour in school. This conflicts with the results of the Aberdeen study (May, 1975), where the Rutter Questionnaire for Teachers' was given for children, and the truants had far higher problem scores than "the average school boy" over 26 items measured. The same comment also applies to children who were described as having undesirable associates by their teachers. The youngsters thought to have adverse home circumstances were poorer attenders than the others, but from the information obtained it is impossible to determine whether this influenced the teachers' judgements over truancy or vice-versa.

The fact that a tenth of the delinquents were taken to court under care proceedings for ISA points to the finding that there are definite school attendance problems in this group of children, and that they are picked up by the Education Welfare service. The delinquent group contained proportionately, three times as many children taken to court for I.S.A. when compared to the ten schools studied over three years. The type of offence committed does not seem to relate to attendance in any way.

(v) CONCLUDING SECTION

(a) Similarities and differences between approaches, a chapter summary

This chapter has surveyed some of the major approaches that have been taken in dealing with the causes of truancy and excessive school absence. It is clear that there is no agreement as to one single cause for such absence, and no consensus as to how children who are absent a great deal from school can be treated and/or punished.

The classical distinctions between truancy and school phobia have been noted but do not seem to provide totally adequate models for working with children and young people who fail to attend school regularly in the 1980's.

There has been a recognised difficulty across all disciplines concerning the definition of what "truancy" is. This has led to my personal avoidance of the term

whenever possible. I prefer to use the term "Irregular School Attendance."

Legally, there is no dispute that the law requires all people to be educated. However, the interpretation of the law is open to some debate since education can be "by whatever method a parent chooses" with the proviso that it is suitable to the "age, aptitude and ability" of the child or children concerned. Historically, this right has been difficult to acquire (Baker, 1964). The responsibility for ensuring children are educated rests with the parents who can be prosecuted if they fail so to do. The law can enforce some education by placing the child in the care of the Local Authority.

The written law is one thing but the interpretation of the law is another, and there is also some conflict between the technical provisions of the law and the moral and ethical considerations which are raised as a consequence of implementing it. The Leeds work can be described as "ethically ambiguous" and did indeed generate much criticism (e.g. Pratt, 1983).

It had become clear that the systems outlined for dealing with I.S.A. prior to the Leeds adjournment system were ineffective and there was a perceived need for some measures which were more effective. However, snags emerge when ways of dealing with "problem" children or "children in trouble" are developed piecemeal, e.g. use of Supervision Orders in some parts of the country;

ignoring the problem in other areas; fining parents elsewhere.

The Leeds adjournment system had results which were objectively "measured" :

(i) it got children into school and receiving marks on the school register , and

(ii) it appeared to reduce criminal activities

Its declared purpose was to be an effective and economic way of handling poor attenders. It is debatable whether the personal cost, unhappiness, fear and stigma attached to the use of care proceedings in this way were justified, and this issue will be taken further, as the comments made by parents and children are explored in Chapter 6 and further discussed in Chapter 7.

Labelling of children as "truant" or "school phobic" has not been seen as helpful by some (e.g. Tyerman, 1968), who have preferred to stress a need for an individual approach since they think that a problem that can have so many different causes needs to have a flexible means of response, and you cannot expect to treat everyone the same.

There are problems of conflicting evidence as to the causes of bad attendance. For example, there are no consistent opinions or evidence as to whether boys are absent from school more or less than girls. Furthermore, the diagnosis of "causes" of truancy have varied with

psychological and sociological "fashions". For example, in the 1930's, writers such as Partridge (1935) regarded truancy as a symptom, and approached it from a psychological framework, placing much of the causes with parents and home life. Partridge's analysis was heavily influenced by Freud, and he concluded that "school life plays practically no part at all in the determining of truancy" (Partridge, 1935). This contrasts starkly with today's sociological approaches which suggest that society, the environment, and the schools themselves have a lot to do with the generation of truancy.

Truancy has had changing pictures for many years, and no doubt this will be true for the future.

NOTES

1. See: Education Act, 1944, Section 36. The 1981 Education Act (section 17) inserted after the word "aptitude" the words "and to any special educational needs he may have".
2. see: Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1948.
3. See: Education Act, 1962, Section 9, and the Education (School Leaving Dates) Act, 1976.
4. A helpful way of appreciating the difficulties there are in deciding if alternative education satisfies the requirements of the law is to be found in: J. Baker (1964) Children in Chancery, London:Hutchinson
5. Education Act, 1944, Section 36. (op.cit.) (note 1)
6. Ibid., Section 39
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., Section 40.
9. Section 39 of the 1944 Education Act discusses the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil.
10. In the case of a young person aged 13 or more, in Leeds a supervision order was normally made to the probation service. Younger children were usually supervised by a social worker.
11. see: Hinchley v. Rankin (1961)
12. see: re "DJMS a Minor" (1977)
13. Ibid.
14. One of the frequent questions which was addressed by B.W.O.'s when they were contemplating taking a case of Irregular School Attendance before the Juvenile Court under Care proceedings was whether or not both requirements of the C.Y.P.A. could be met in court, i.e. poor attendance and lack of care.
15. The Juvenile Court rules can be found in any copy of Stones' Justices Manual which is published regularly.
16. Ibid.
17. Social workers quoted by Corinna Adam in: Magistrates who stop the truants and anger the Social Workers, in: The Guardian, 5.7.78
18. see: C.Y.P.A., 1969, Section 2(1).
19. Berg, I., Consterdine, M., Hullin, R., McGuire, R.

and Tyrer, S. (1978) The effect of Two randomly allocated court procedures on Truancy, Brit. J. Crim., 18 No. 3, 232-244, p.233

In this paper, the authors comment on the number of magistrates taking part in the study was: "In each court at any one time there were three magistrates, one acting as chairman. However, there could be as many as 15 different justices, sitting at some time, in any court over the year. Nevertheless, three or four particular Juvenile Court magistrates tended to sit as many as 20 to 25 times each in any court over the year, with others attending much less frequently." Three courts were used, and the maximum number of magistrates involved was 45.

20. The questionnaires, specifically were the Rutter B Teachers' Questionnaire (Rutter, 1967) and the Connors Teachers' Rating Scales (Connors, 1969). See also: Berg, I. et.al. (1978) Features of Children taken to juvenile court for failure to attend school, Psychological Medicine, 8, 447-453.

21. Quoted by Corinna Adam, (op.cit.) see: note 17.

22. Atkins, H. (1966) Conduct of a controlled clinical trial, British Medical Journal, II, 377-379.

23. Berg, I. (1980) Absence from school and the law, in: (eds) Berg, I. and Hersov, L. Out of School, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, p.146

24. Berg, I., Hullin, R. and McGuire, R. (1979) A Randomly controlled Trial of Two Court Procedures in Truancy in: (ed) Farrington, D. Psychology, Law and Legal Processes, London: The Macmillan Press, p.150

25. see: Farrington, D.P. (1978) The effectiveness of sentences Justice of the Peace, Feb 4 1978, 68-71, p.68

26. see: Farrington, D.P. (1983) Randomized experiments in Crime and Justice, 257-308, p.287, in: Morris, N. and Tonry, H. (eds, 1983) Crime and Justice, Vol. 4. University of Chicago Press

27. see: Kahn J., Nursten, J.D. and Carroll, H.C.M. (1981) Unwillingly to school (3rd edition), Oxford: Pergamon Press, p.110f

28. A good insight into the various approaches to dealing with poor attendance can be found in Out of School (ed) Berg, I. and Hersov, L. (1980). The two authors vary in their approaches and, amongst others, the book covers psychiatric, psychological and legal methods of handling poor attenders at school

29. The reader should bear in mind that this paper was written before the 1969 Children and Young Persons' Act

30. Hodges, V. (1968) Non-attendance at school, Educ. Research, 11, 58-61, p.61
31. Reid, K. (1982) The Self-Concept and Persistent School Absenteeism, B.J. Educ. Psychol., 52, 179-187
32. Ibid.
33. Denney, A.H. (1974) Truancy and School Phobias London: Priory Press Limited, p.17
34. See: Tell them from me (1980) (eds) Lesley Goward and Andrew McPherson, a book which deals with Scottish school leavers' views about school life and afterwards
35. Tyerman, M. (1974) Who are the truants? in: (ed) B. Turner (1974) Truancy, London: Ward Lock, p.11
36. Ibid., p.13
37. The term "correctly completed" in this study meant that the registers were complete and intact for the time periods being studied. Enquiries were made about the methods used by the Education Department to check whether registers were completed at the correct times, and it became apparent, that by and large, this was left to the jurisdiction of the head teacher. No routine monitoring took place to determine if they were filled in at the right time, although the EWO could turn up in any school at any time to inspect the registers. For the whole study it had to be assumed that the registers had been completed at the right times. This may be a large assumption to make.
38. see: Fogelman, K., Tibbenham, A., and Lambert, L. (1980) Absence from School in: (ed) Berg, I. and Hersov, L. (1980), (op.cit.), p.30
39. Kirkpatrick, M.E. and Lodge, T. (1935) Some Factors in Truancy, Ment. Hyg., 19, 610-618, p.618
40. Power, M.J., Alderson, M.E., Phillipson, C.M. and Morris, J.N. (1967) Delinquent Schools? New Society, 10, 542-543, p.543
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. See especially : Social Relations in a Secondary School, (1967) London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, chapter 8.)
44. Heal, K.H. (1973) Misbehaviour amongst school children: the role of the school in strategies for prevention, Policy and Politics, 6, 321-332, p.329.
45. Reynolds, D., and Murgatroyd, S. (1977) The Sociology

of Schooling and the absent pupil: the school as a factor in the generation of truancy, in: (ed) Carroll, H.C.M. Absenteeism in South Wales: Studies of pupils, their homes and their secondary schools, Swansea: Faculty of Education, University of Swansea, p.58

46. Reynolds, D., Jones, D. and St.Leger, S. (1976) Schools do make a difference, New Society, 37, 223-225, p.225

47. The differences in the intake of the schools was measured by Rutter and colleagues in terms of ability, class and behaviour. For children of any level of ability, the outcome was less good if the bulk of the school population consisted of children in the lowest ability group (measured prior to transfer). See: Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., and Ouston, J. (1979) Fifteen Thousand Hours London: Open Books, p.200

48. Denney, A.H. (op.cit.), p.15

49. Burt, C. (1925) The Young Delinquent, London: University of London Press, p.455

50. Farrington, D. (1980) Truancy, delinquency, the home and the school, in: (ed) Berg, I. and Hersov, L. (1980) (op.cit.), p. 62

51. This absence survey was made available by the education welfare Department, but was not published, and was not a regular activity of the department.

52. The school attendance Sub-committee

This committee was a referral point for families whose children had poor school attendance but who had had no court or committee proceedings started for I.S.A. for at least the previous 5 years. Appearance at committee was designed to try to resolve the problems of poor attendance without the necessity for court proceedings. All the evidence for absence given to Welfare Officers by parents and children was presented to the Committee, and in many respects the Committee hearing was like a court hearing, but with no sanctions other than the warning from the Committee that failure to return to good school attendance would result in the case being referred to the Juvenile Court.

CHAPTER 2

THE EXTENT OF I.S.A. IN LEEDS: A SUBSIDIARY STUDY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN TEN SCHOOLS (1)

(a) Introduction

Children taken to Juvenile Court under Care proceedings for I.S.A. have various characteristics. Some children have been found to score higher than the normal school population on standard questionnaire measures of psychiatric disturbance used by teachers, (Berg et.al. 1977, 1978, 1983). Several studies have found severe and persistent absence from school to be an important antecedent to antisocial conduct in adult life (e.g. Robins, 1978; Farrington, 1980). Because of this it seemed very important to try and establish how these children in Leeds came to be taken to court for I.S.A. in the first place. One obvious way to proceed was to examine the severity of the problem of irregular attendance in as large a group as possible, and to see if the child's sex, or the school at which the child was a registered pupil could be shown to be connected to the child's subsequent appearance in court under care proceedings for I.S.A. or if other variables might be implicated. A study subsidiary to the main court-adjournment study was therefore undertaken with a large number of children to examine school attendance in relation to school, sex, attempted visits by an E.W.O. and going to court for I.S.A.

(b) Procedure

For three consecutive summers (1980, 1981 and 1982) a survey of two secondary schools in each of five different geographical (and administrative) districts of Leeds was carried out looking at young people in their last three years of compulsory schooling.

There were essentially six districts in the "inner city" (2) area of Leeds used by the Educational Welfare Service, but in one of them absence cards were not readily available (3). This left five which could be reliably and conveniently studied. The criterion for selecting schools to be included in the study was convenience and readily available information relating to attendance, i.e. those schools which completed an absence card for each child on their roll each week, and who submitted these cards weekly to the Education Welfare Officer. Therefore only those schools who routinely sent absence cards to the Education Welfare Department were listed as potential schools for the study. Two schools were selected randomly from the available schools in each district. The majority were mixed secondary schools with no particularly distinctive features. One was a mixed Catholic school, one of six in the whole city, and one was a mixed Church of England school, one of only two in the city (4). Two of the ten schools took only boys and one took girls only. All the secondary "high" schools in the inner area of Leeds took children into the "third year" at 13 years old during this

period and kept them for three years to complete their compulsory schooling. The reason as to why some schools routinely submitted absence cards was asked about, but no clear pattern emerged. In one district all schools submitted absence cards and this had become the customary practice for them at the time of this study. In other areas it seemed to have arisen as a reflection of current circumstances, and to some extent may have reflected concern over school attendance difficulties at some particular point in time, with the practice of submitting cards weekly, once established, being continued.

It is possible that the fact that only schools who submitted absence cards were studied may have given a biased result. In the author's opinion this is possible but unlikely, since, as has already been stated, the schools studied were unremarkable.

Two Cohorts were studied: Cohort I comprising of pupils in the "third year" aged about 14 who were surveyed and followed over the next two years (n=1779) at ages 15 and 16; and Cohort II comprising of pupils who entered the "third year" in the same schools a year after Cohort I, also surveyed, and followed up one year later at age 15, (n=1927). Initially absence cards were examined. Follow-up information was obtained from school registers which gave a record of school attendance and some other limited information. The data collected on each child included age, sex, area of residence in the city, absences

from school in the previous academic year, contact with the Educational Welfare Service, and appearances in Court for failure to attend school satisfactorily. The surveys were carried out in June of each year so that the information collected was a reflection of school attendance for most of the current school year. The data was collated, input onto the University of Leeds Amdahl computer and analysed using the SAS (Helwig, 1978) and GLIM (Baker and Nelder, 1978) statistical packages, employing analyses of variance and logistic modelling (Cox and Snell, 1981).

(c) Results

(i) Overall attempted visits

The number of attempted visits for each child made by an E.W.O. were collated. When the 70 children with an average attendance of less than 70% in their 3rd year, in Cohort I were considered, only five had not actually been visited out of seventy. Three attempted visits were recorded for one of them and absence in three of the remaining four had been mainly attributed to illness. The fifth child had apparently slipped through the net. When those from the same year of Cohort I with 70-80% average attendance were considered 48 had not been visited. In 26 instances no attempt to visit had been made and this was usually because illness had been accepted as the main cause of absence; information of this nature generally came from parents notes, medical notes etc, recorded on the absence card. In 22 instances visits had been

attempted, once in the case of 11 children, twice in 6, three times in 2 and four times in 3.

The figures for Cohort II were largely similar. 60 children had an average attendance of less than 70% in their third year, and of these, only one had not actually been visited by an E.W.O. although three attempts to visit had been made.

The mean percentage attendance for boys and girls over the period studied for the Cohort I is shown in Table 2.1 broken down by district and school. Two-thirds of all children studied (67%) had school attendance of 90% or more at age 13-14 years measured over the whole school year. Only 3% of children had attendance of less than 69% (Table 2.3)

TABLE 2.1

Mean Percentage School Attendance for 3rd, 4th and 5th academic years of Cohort I by district, school and sex. (s.d.)

DISTRICT OF CITY	SCHOOL	MEAN % ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL YEAR (SD) COHORT I					
		THIRD YEAR		FOURTH YEAR		FIFTH YEAR	
		BOYS n	GIRLS n	BOYS n	GIRLS n	BOYS n	GIRLS n
A	1	92 (7) 139	90 (10) 151	89 (9) 122	87 (11) 124	83 (15) 116	81 (18) 113
	2	—	88 (9) 114	—	84 (13) 107	—	76 (20) 104
B	3	90 (8) 110	87 (10) 80	86 (11) 103	85 (10) 97	84 (12) 99	81 (12) 78
	4	93 (7) 94	92 (9) 114	90 (10) 92	91 (11) 110	86 (14) 90	88 (14) 110
C	5	90 (9) 158	92 (8) 185	90 (10) 153	91 (8) 178	88 (11) 137	87 (12) 161
	6	92 (8) 195	--	91 (9) 191	--	88 (14) 189	--
D	7	91 (9) 104	91 (8) 79	88 (11) 101	88 (11) 75	85 (11) 98	84 (12) 70
	8	92 (8) 78	--	90 (9) 75	--	86 (17) 74	--
E	9	93 (5) 39	87 (7) 24	93 (6) 38	91 (6) 24	88 (8) 28	81 (22) 18
	10	92 (8) 47	92 (10) 46	90 (9) 41	89 (12) 42	86 (13) 41	85 (1) 41
ALL 10 SCHOOLS		91 (8) 964	90 (9) 793	90 (10) 916	88 (11) 737	86 (13) 872	83 (15) 695

It was found that in Cohort I, the mean attendance for boys in each school year was significantly higher than that for girls (third year: girls mean 90.1%, SE 0.3, n=793, boys mean 91.5%, SE 0.3, n=964, $t=3.3$, $p<.001$; fourth year: girls mean 88.0%, SE 0.4, n=737, boys mean 89.6%, SE 0.3, n=916, $t=3.1$, $p<.002$; fifth year: girls mean 83.3%, SE 0.6, n=695, boys mean 86.2%, SE 0.5, n=872, $t=3.9$, $p<.001$). The drop in mean attendance between the third and the fourth years was significant (mean drop 1.9%, $t\text{-corr } 9.7$, $p<.001$) and the drop between fourth and fifth years was also significant (mean drop 4.2%, $t\text{-corr } 15.2$, $p <.001$). Not surprisingly, therefore, the drop between 3rd and fifth years was significant as well (mean drop 6.1%, $t\text{-corr } 19.1$, $P <.001$). A significant fall in school attendance ($p <.001$) over the last three years of compulsory schooling was found in all five areas of the city looked at in this study. Significant differences in mean attendance between schools were found in all three academic years (third year $F=6.5$, $p <.001$; fourth year $F=6.2$, $p<.001$; fifth year $F=2.9$, $p<.01$).

The mean school attendance for the two years studied of Cohort II is shown in Table 2.2 sub-divided by sex, district and school. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 graphically represent Tables 2.3 and 2.4. Ranges of percentage attendance are shown in Table 2.3 for the two cohorts.

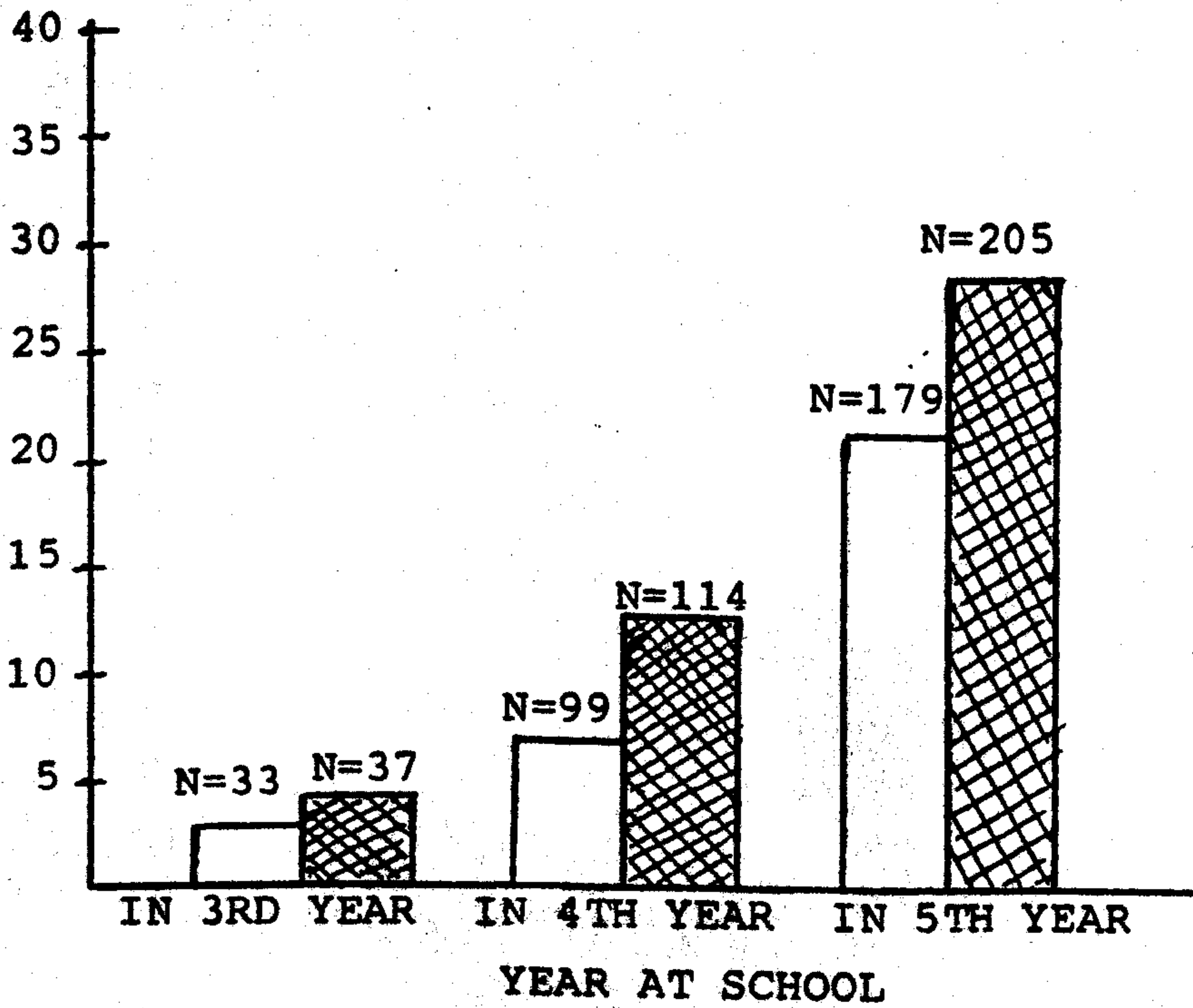
TABLE 2.2

Mean percentage school attendance for 3rd and 4th academic years of Cohort II by district, school and sex. (s.d.)

		MEAN % ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL YEAR (SD) COHORT II			
DISTRICT OF CITY	SCHOOL	THIRD YEAR		FOURTH YEAR	
		BOYS n	GIRLS n	BOYS n	GIRLS n
A	1	91 (9) 136	91 (10) 133	84 (12) 136	86 (12) 132
	2	—	88 (8) 95	—	81 (11) 93
B	3	89 (8) 196	89 (7) 130	83 (11) 186	85 (9) 118
	4	91 (11) 72	93 (7) 110	87 (11) 70	88 (15) 105
C	5	91 (8) 140	90 (8) 192	89 (10) 134	87 (10) 187
	6	93 (10) 190	—	92 (8) 183	—
D	7	94 (6) 82	90 (9) 77	87 (8) 79	84 (10) 71
	8	94 (5) 102	—	86 (15) 102	—
E	9	88 (11) 33	91 (6) 33	85 (9) 32	87 (8) 31
	10	91 (10) 113	90 (11) 76	85 (14) 112	86 (12) 70
ALL 10 SCHOOLS		91 (9) 1059	90 (9) 846	87 (12) 1034	86 (11) 807

FIGURE 2.1
Graph to show % of school year with less than 70% Attendance. (Cohort I)

**% OF SCHOOL YEAR
WITH LESS THAN
70% ATTENDANCE**



KEY



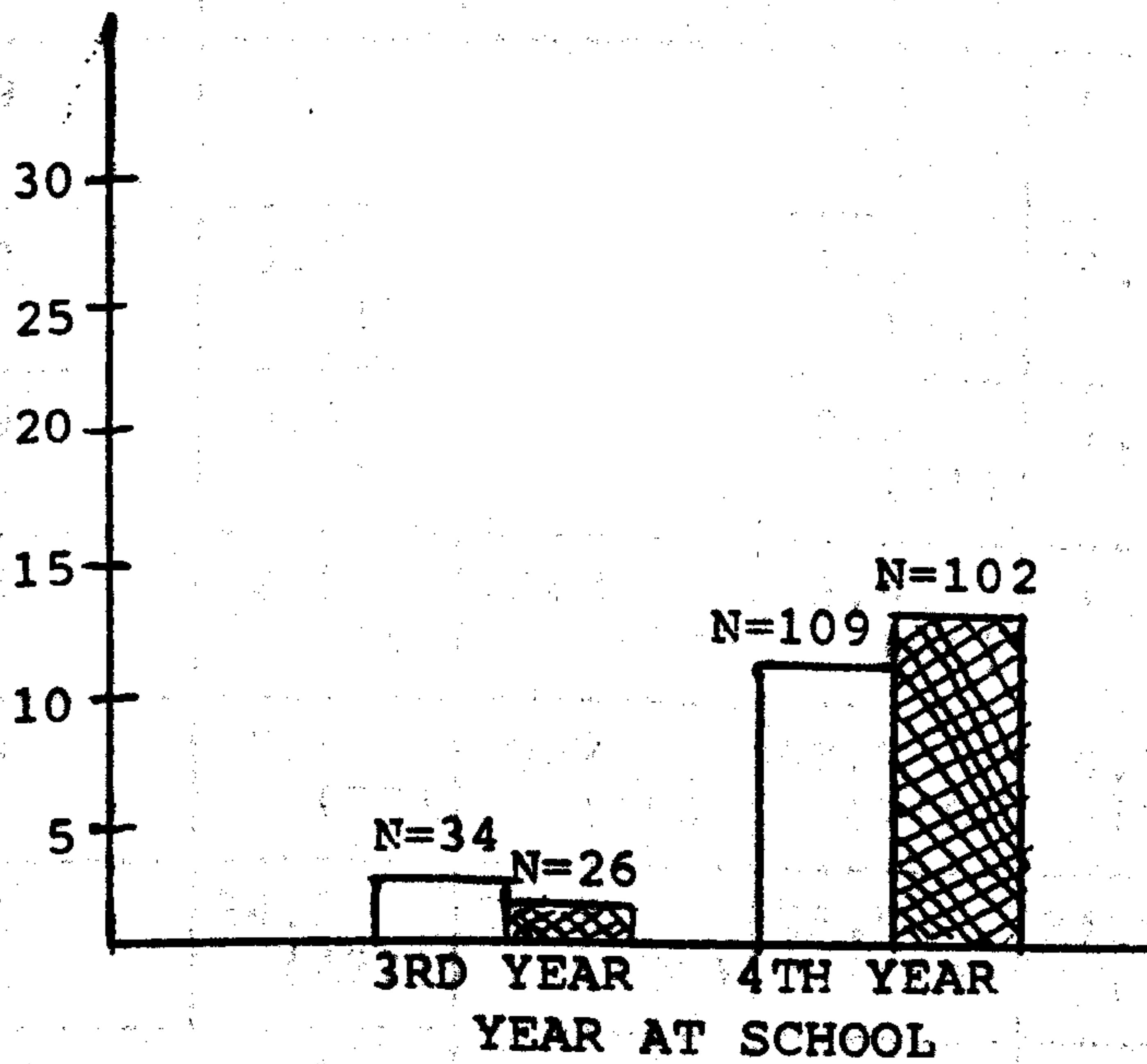
BOYS



GIRLS

FIGURE 2.2
Graph to show % of school year with less than 70% Attendance. (Cohort II)

**% OF SCHOOL YEAR
WITH LESS THAN
70% SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE**



KEY



BOYS



GIRLS

TABLE 2.3
Ranges of percentage mean school attendance for
Cohorts I and II.

MEAN % SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	COHORT I			COHORT II	
	% OF COHORT IN RANGE (n)			% OF COHORT IN RANGE (n)	
	3rd year	4th year	5th year	3rd year	4th year
Less than 20	0	0	0.5 (7)	0.1 (1)	0.3 (5)
20-29	0.1 (2)	0.1 (1)	0.6 (10)	0.1 (1)	0.1 (2)
30-39	0	0.1 (2)	1.0 (15)	0.1 (1)	0.3 (5)
40-49	0.2 (3)	0.5 (8)	1.3 (21)	0.3 (5)	0.6 (11)
50-59	0.5 (9)	1.5 (24)	2.6 (41)	1.0 (19)	1.2 (22)
60-69	2.5 (44)	3.8 (62)	5.6 (88)	1.3 (24)	4.5 (83)
70-79	5.5 (97)	9.2 (152)	13.8 (216)	5.7 (110)	15.7 (289)
80-89	24.3 (427)	25.5 (422)	25.5 (400)	24.5 (470)	30.5 (561)
90-100	66.9 (1175)	59.4 (982)	49.1 (769)	67.1 (1285)	46.9 (863)

Attendance of less than 70% increased with progress through the school in both cohorts. Percentages of pupils with this low level of attendance broken down by district, school and sex are set out in Tables 2.4 and 2.5.

TABLE 2.4
Percentage of children with attendance less than 70%
in Cohort I by school and sex.

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	SEX	% PUPILS IN SCHOOL YEAR WITH ATTENDANCE LESS THAN 70% - COHORT I					
			3rd year	n	4th year	n	5th year	n
A	1	boys	1.0	3	7.6	22	29.3	41
		girls	2.7	8	12.7	37	39.7	60
	2	boys	---		---		---	
		girls	9.3	11	20.3	24	31.4	37
B	1	boys	2.6	5	9.4	18	18.9	15
		girls	2.6	5	6.3	12	19.8	16
	2	boys	0.5	1	2.4	5	17.1	15
		girls	1.4	3	3.9	8	10.5	12
C	1	boys	1.7	6	4.3	15	20.0	32
		girls	1.2	4	4.3	15	21.5	40
	2	boys	4.1	8	6.2	12	12.3	24
		girls	---		---		---	
D	1	boys	2.7	5	6.0	11	12.5	13
		girls	1.1	2	4.9	9	20.3	16
	2	boys	5.1	4	7.7	6	16.7	13
		girls	---		---		---	
E	1	boys	1.5	1	3.1	2	32.7	13
		girls	1.5	1	1.5	1	40.0	10
	2	boys	0.0	0	8.6	8	23.4	11
		girls	3.2	3	8.6	8	19.6	9
ALL 10 SCHOOLS			4.0	70	12.0	213	22.0	384

TABLE 2.5
Percentage of children with attendance less than 70%
in Cohort II by school and sex.

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	SEX	% PUPILS IN SCHOOL YEAR WITH ATTENDANCE LESS THAN 70% - COHORT II			
			3rd year	n	4th year	n
A	1	boys	2.2	6	12.4	17
		girls	1.5	4	7.5	10
	2	boys	---		---	
		girls	5.3	5	17.9	17
B	1	boys	1.8	6	12.7	25
		girls	0.0	0	13.3	18
	2	boys	3.3	6	13.5	10
		girls	1.6	3	10.9	12
C	1	boys	0.6	2	7.1	10
		girls	1.5	5	8.3	16
	2	boys	2.6	5	7.8	15
		girls	---		---	
D	1	boys	0.6	1	8.5	7
		girls	1.9	3	15.4	12
	2	boys	0.0	0	3.9	4
		girls	---		---	
E	1	boys	4.4	3	11.8	4
		girls	1.5	1	11.8	4
	2	boys	2.6	5	14.4	17
		girls	2.6	5	15.9	13
ALL 10 SCHOOLS			3.0	60	11.0	211

In Cohort I, 26 children changed from less than 70% attendance to more than 70% attendance between the third and fourth academic years and 66 from more to less, (chi-square 16.5, df 1, n=1649, $p < .001$), on McNemar's Test (Everitt, 1977); Between the 3rd and 5th years 22 children changed from less to more and 156 changed from more to less than 70% (chi-square 99.0, df 1, n=1565, $p < .001$).

In Cohort II, 21 children changed from less to more and 108 from more to less between the third and fourth academic years (chi-square 57.0, df 1, n=1835, $p < .001$).

The percentages of children in each cohort for whom, during their third academic year, at least one visit was attempted by an E.W.O. and who were taken to the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. subsequently are presented in Table 2.6, by school.

Overall, it was found that the numbers of attempted visits made by E.W.O.'s were significantly more frequent in the case of girls than for boys, (girls: 0.5 mean visits per child; boys: 0.4 mean visits per child; $t=2.0$, $p < .05$).

TABLE 2.6

Percentages of children E.W.O.'s attempted to visit in their 3rd academic year and those taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A. in Cohorts I and II by school and sex.

D I S T R I C T	S C H O O L	S E X	C O H O R T I				C O H O R T II			
			% EWO attempted TO VISIT in 3rd year		% TAKEN TO COURT for ISA over 3 yrs		% EWO attempted TO VISIT in 3rd year		% TAKEN TO COURT for ISA over 2 yrs	
			n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
A	1	boys	18	25	1.4	2	13	18	3.6	5
		girls	20	30	4.6	7	14	18	0.8	1
	2	girls	25	29	2.5	3	21	20	5.3	5
		boys	24	26	10.8	12	29	56	7.6	15
B	3	girls	30	24	6.2	5	30	39	1.5	2
		boys	18	17	2.1	2	16	12	4.1	3
	4	girls	15	17	3.5	4	12	12	1.3	2
		boys	15	24	2.5	4	11	16	0.7	1
C	5	girls	15	27	2.1	4	18	35	1.0	2
		boys	15	30	3.0	6	12	22	3.1	6
	7	boys	29	30	4.2	4	19	15	1.2	1
		girls	27	21	2.6	2	24	13	3.9	3
8	boys	19	15	2.6	2	6	6	1.0	1	
	boys	10	4	0.0	0	34	11	0.0	0	
E	9	girls	32	8	4.0	1	15	5	0.0	0
		boys	23	11	2.1	1	13	21	3.4	4
	10	girls	22	10	2.2	1	23	17	3.9	3
		ALL 10 SCHOOLS	20	343	3.4	60	28	341	2.8	54

A method of log-linear analysis was used to explore the relationship between school attended, sex, attendance levels and the proportion of children for whom the E.W.O. attempted visits. This is a method described by Cox and Snell (1981).

The purpose of a log-linear analysis is to try and develop a model which fits the data in contingency tables and also to estimate the parameters in the models. The term "model" refers to a conceptual framework about the observations, and the effects that particular variables have on the final observation. The most common sort of analysis, that of the linear model was adopted for this investigation. The linear model postulates that the expected values of the observations are given by a linear combination of a number of variables. The interactions of pairs of variables and triplets of variables sometimes have to be examined, and these are known as first-order interactions and second-order interactions respectively.

For the analysis of our data, we used only the data from the seven mixed schools, specifying schools, numbered 1 to 7; sex (boys = 1; girls = 2); and attendance level divided into 4 groups : less than 70%; 70-79%; 80-89%; and 90% or more. The number of children falling into each category was calculated and a contingency table constructed. A logistic analysis was carried out using the G.L.I.M. package on the University of Leeds computer.

The results of the analysis are layed out in Table 2.7. In

both cohorts it was found that the data was adequately fitted by a linear logistic model containing the three main effects of School, sex and level of attendance without the need for any interactions. School, (Cohort I: fall in deviance from null fit=19, df=6, $p < .01$; Cohort II: fall in deviance=34, df=6, $p < .001$), and attendance level (Cohort I: fall in deviance=219, df=3, $p < .001$; Cohort II: fall in deviance=235, df=3, $p < .001$) were significant but sex was not ($p > .05$).

This result means that whether an E.W.O. attempted to visit a child or not was related to their school and their level of attendance, but not related to the sex of the child (i.e. there were no complex relationships meaning that, for example, only the girls whose attendance was less than 80% were visited).

The proportions of children who were taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A. out of those for whom E.W.O.'s attempted to visit, grouped according to school, sex and attendance, as before, were also looked at by logistic analysis. Once again, in both cohorts, the data was adequately fitted by a linear logistic model (Table 2.8) containing main effects and requiring no interactions. Only attendance level was statistically significant (Cohort I: fall in deviance from null fit=24, df=3, $p < .001$; Cohort II: fall in deviance=12, df=3, $p < .01$). This result means that being taken to the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. was not affected by school or sex, but was only related to attendance. Again, there were no hidden relations (e.g. it

was not the case that all the boys or girls from only certain schools got taken to court).

When a child's attendance was "70-79% rather than "less than 70%", according to the analysis, the chances of being taken to court against not going to court diminished by a factor of $\exp(1.56)$, that is, 4.8 (with 95% confidence limits) plus or minus 1.56. (See Table 2.8).

The proportions of children taken to Juvenile Court out of those E.W.O.'s tempted to visit grouped according to attendance level are shown in Table 2.9 for both cohorts. The true odds and their logs to Base "e" are shown.

The plots of log (true odds) against attendance levels are shown in Figure 2.3. It can be seen that the relationship is approximately linear. As attendance at school falls the odds of being taken to court (Fleiss, 1981) a visit by an E.W.O. having been attempted, rises exponentially.

TABLE 2.7

Linear Logistic Model containing main effects: school, sex and attendance level for Cohorts I and II of number of children who E.W.O.'s attempted to visit out of sample.

LINEAR LOGISTIC MODEL:						
log (true odds) = b_0 + school + sex + attendance level						
			(i)	(j)		(k)
PARAMETER	COHORT I			COHORT II		
	estimate	standard error	standard estimate	estimate	standard error	standard estimate
bo	2.09	.75	2.79 ²	3.19	.90	3.43 ³
SCHOOL (2)	-.80	.25	-3.20 ²	-.58	.28	-2.07 ¹
(3)	-.63	.25	-2.52 ¹	-.76	.30	-2.53 ¹
(4)	-.27	.27	-1.00	.38	.25	1.52
(5)	-.53	.40	-1.33	0	.39	0
(6)	-.24	.33	-.73	-.28	.30	.93
(7)	-.62	.28	-2.21 ¹	-.73	.33	2.21 ¹
SEX (2)	-.11	.16	-.69	0	.15	0
ATTENDANCE LEVEL						
70-79% (2)	-.82	.92	-.89	-1.81	1.04	-1.74
80-89% (3)	-.37	.77	-.48	-1.75	.91	-1.92
90% or more (4)	-3.34	.72	-4.64 ³	-4.70	.88	-5.34 ³
* signific.	G = 31.9 with 45 df, N.S.			G = 36.8 with 45 df, N.S.		

1 p<.05 2 p<.01 3 p<.001 (on normal distribution)

*Everitt and Dunn, 1983

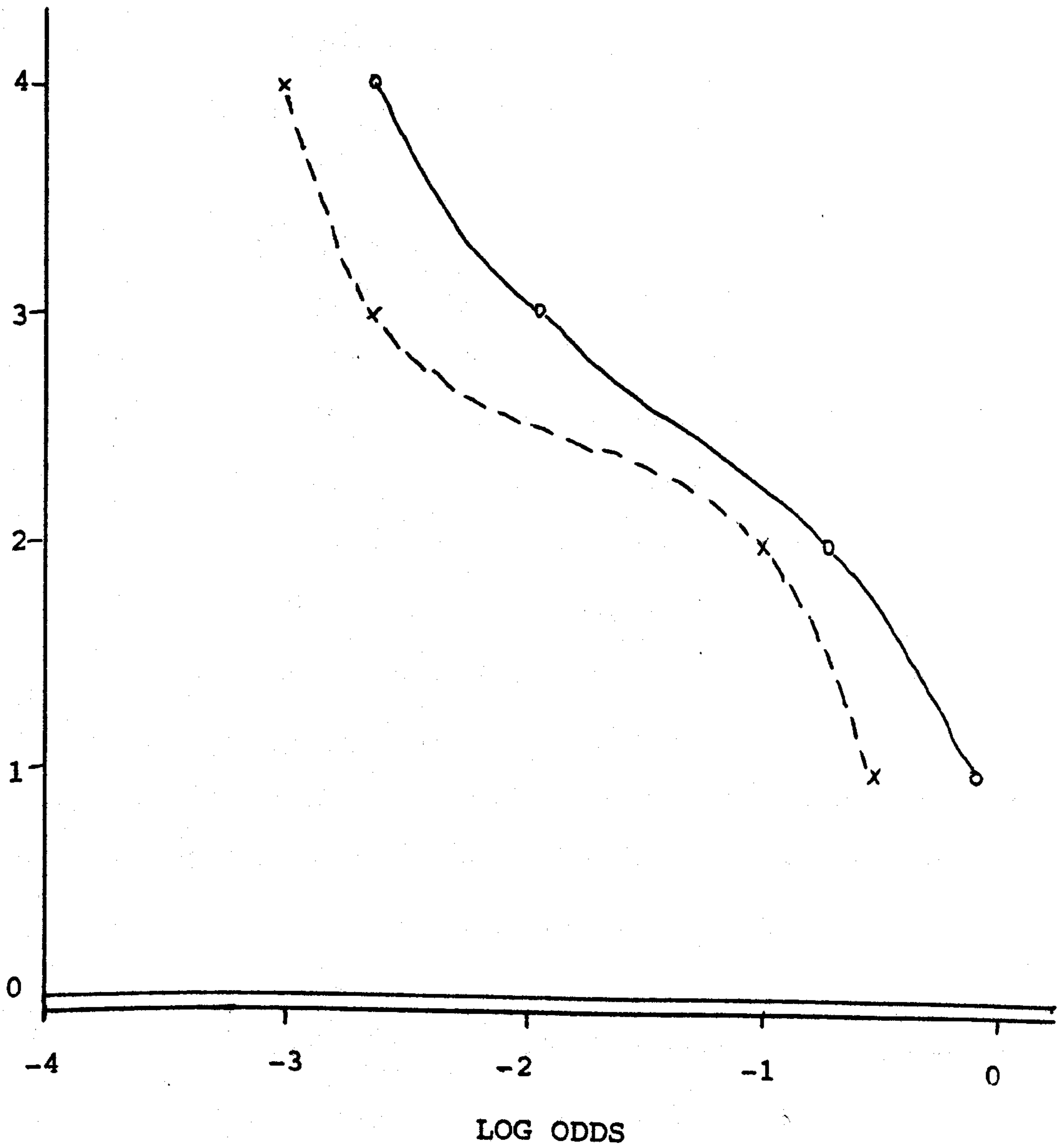
TABLE 2.9

Frequencies of children taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A. and those for whom E.W.O.'s attempted visits : the proportions, true odds and Log (true odds) for four attendance levels.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	C O H O R T	A Number of children taken to Juvenile Court	B Number of children EWO's attempted to visit	Proportion AxB = p	true odds p --- 1-p	log (true odds) p log e --- 1-p
LESS THAN	I	7	11	.64	1.78	0.58
70%	II	6	19	.32	.47	-.76
70-79%	I	6	23	.26	.35	-1.05
	II	2	11	.18	.22	-1.50
80-89%	I	9	59	.15	.18	-1.72
	II	5	68	.07	.08	-2.53
90% or more	I	8	180	.04	.04	-3.22
	II	12	194	.06	.06	-2.82
TOTAL	I	30	273	.11	.12	-2.12
	II	25	292	.09	.10	-2.30

FIGURE 2.3
Log odds of court appearances of those visited for
four levels of attendance. Both cohorts.

ATTENDANCE
LEVEL



KEY
○—○ COHORT 1
x—x COHORT 2

(d) Discussion

Reference has already been made to the overall picture of school attendance in Britain. A decade ago, the situation was reviewed by Fogelman, Tibbenham and Lambert (1980) who presented data from the National Child Development Study (N.C.D.S.) which involved all children born in one week in England, Wales and Scotland in 1958.

The average attendance rate of this national sample when they were followed up at age 14 was just over 89% for the Autumn term. A year later it was between 87 and 88%. Until that time, 1974, the authors commented that school attendance in Britain had remained steady at around 90% overall. It had been lower in secondary than in primary schools and lowest in the last year or two of compulsory education. There was evidence of considerable regional variation in attendance. On the whole boys attended more than girls. The authors suggested that some local studies carried out in the mid and late '70's pointed to the fact that attendance might be falling off in secondary schools.

Set against this information, the findings with respect to attendance in this subsidiary study are not surprising. In Cohort I the mean attendance at age 14 was 89% dropping to 85% at age 15 and in Cohort II the mean attendance at age 14 (penultimate year at school) was 87%. This would suggest that the city of Leeds does not seem to differ very much from national standards. Likewise, the higher average attendance in boys when compared to girls is well established (5) and this was the case in the young people

in this study. The deterioration of attendance as school leaving draws closer, found in this study, follows the trends found elsewhere in Britain (6).

The subject of variation in levels of attendance between schools has already been mentioned in Chapter 1 (Reynolds et.al., 1980). Some studies of differences between schools have shown marked and persistent variation between schools, not attributable to size, intake or administrative characteristics. It is not surprising therefore, that the schools studied in Leeds, showed quite considerable differences in attendance. The fact that the mean attendance in the final year at school varied between 76% and 88% should be a cause for comment. The reasons for the differences between the schools was not examined, since it was beyond the scope of the present project, but the evidence collected is, in the authors view, sufficient indication that this might be a fruitful line of enquiry for the future.

Most absence from school is probably justified by the child and/or their parents mainly on the grounds of illness. But, it is generally agreed that an appreciable portion of absence is not justifiable, and "truancy" is a term commonly applied to this unacceptable absence, particularly when the absence is without the parent's knowledge or condonement. In the N.C.D.S. truancy was estimated using information from teachers rather than parents or the children themselves. It was found that truancy measured this way was strongly associated with

contact with the E.W.O. service. Researchers such as Robins and Ratcliffe (1980) have used straightforward absence figures to measure truancy, with some success, but perhaps a more discriminating criterion would be useful if it could be found. However this is a notorious and long-standing "knotty problem". In this subsidiary study, attempted visits to the home of the child by an E.W.O. were used as an indicator of unjustified absence. It is clear from the findings that, in Leeds, the odds in favour of a visit to a child's home being attempted by an E.W.O. increased dramatically once the school attendance of that child dropped below 90%. The particular school attended by the child then became an important factor affecting whether a visit was attempted or not. Enquiry showed that schools and Divisional Educational Welfare Offices played a role in the decision as to whether a child's family was visited or not, and it is therefore possible that the variation found in the visiting patterns between schools reflected the local administrative arrangements concerning visiting.

In the N.C.D.S. it was found that boys predominated over girls among the truants, but in this study of a general school population of 13-15 year olds this was not found to be the case. In a study carried out by Tennent (1971) in the late 1960's of children taken to Juvenile Court for failure to attend school the proceedings of the Inner London Juvenile Courts with children taken for failure to attend school were examined for a period of one year. Similar numbers of boys and girls appeared in the courts

and in the 13 to 15 year age group the numbers were virtually identical. The mode age for children taken to court in his study was 14. At that age they represented 70 per 10,000 school population. A wide variation in the numbers coming to court was found between the ten areas of the conurbation. Since that study was carried out, the C.Y.P.A. (1969) has, arguably, influenced the numbers of children taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A.. Medlicott (1973) argued that it was responsible for a dramatic fall in numbers.

Conversely, the appeal court judgment of Lord Denning in 1977 has been interpreted by some as making it easier for L.E.A.'s to proceed against absentees legally since it is only necessary to prove that the child is not receiving a proper education to establish that he or she is "in need of care" (Newall, 1983). In the light of this it is interesting to note that the number of children taken to court in the inner area of Leeds rose from around 260 in 1977 to about 320 in 1978 peaking at 430 in 1979. Since then numbers have declined, there being about 360 taken in 1980, about 270 in 1981, approximately 250 in 1982 and about 270 in 1983. This may reflect the active tackling of absenteeism by the Education Welfare Service in Leeds and the success of the court adjournment system (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin, McGuire, 1983). Tennent's finding that equal numbers of boys and girls were taken to court for poor school attendance was confirmed by the study described here. This is interesting, because the number of boys prosecuted for criminal offences far exceeds the

number of girls. This was true of the subsidiary study of school attendance among delinquents before the courts for criminal activities which was outlined in Chapter 1.

(e) Summary

This subsidiary study demonstrated a clear relationship between attendance level and the chances of a child being taken to court once attempts had been made to visit, which was irrespective of sex or school attended. This possibly reflected centralised decision making in deciding whether legal proceedings should be instituted. E.W.O.'s had to convince their superiors that there were sufficient grounds for proceeding before any child was taken to court.

There is a lot of folklore amongst E.W.O.'s and children about why children get taken to court involving case-loads, deterrence, excessive zeal, promotion prospects, and dislike of particular children or families, but this subsidiary study suggested that, in fact, attendance level may well be the main factor.

The study also confirmed the existence of substantial variations in absence between schools, but did not examine the reasons for them, (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2, and also Figures 2.1 and 2.2)

NOTES

1. Some results from this chapter have now been published (Berg, Goodwin, McGuire and Hullin, 1987).

2. Inner city areas

There are six administrative districts in the inner city area of Leeds concerned with education. It proved impossible to obtain attendance cards from schools situated in one of them. Two secondary schools in each of the other five areas were used in the sub-study reported in this chapter.

3. Absence cards

The main criterion for selection of schools was convenience. Schools short listed as possible study candidates had to be ones which routinely sent in absence cards for all children to the educational welfare service. From these lists two schools were chosen per area, virtually at random.

4. Church school

One church school was included, one of only two in the city. It did not appear to have any particularly distinguishing features and was a mixed school.

5. e.g. see: Fogelman and Richardson (1974).

6. Several studies note this, e.g. Fogelman, Tibbenham and Lambert, (1980); Farrington, (1980).

CHAPTER 3

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LEEDS TRUANCY PROJECT 1979-1982

(i) AIMS OF THE STUDY

The original protocol for the study was agreed with the Home Office (1). It had the following aims :

(a) to evaluate two forms of the adjournment procedure, a Flexible and an Inflexible method, by a prospective controlled trial.

(b) to study the factors associated with Irregular School Attendance in Leeds in the court group other than those explored in the judicial procedures listed under (a).

It was aimed to explore the following areas :

- (i) the family
- (ii) the child
- (iii) the school
- (iv) the local environment

It was planned to look at the number of offences and cautions in relation to outcome by using information from the West Yorkshire Police Department, and also to look at what happened when children were taken into care, either on an I.C.O. (2) or on a full Care Order (3).

(ii) PROJECT DESIGN

(a) Court Aspects

With the flexible variety of adjournment, once the case was proved the young person returned to the Juvenile Court after one week, and if there had been enough improvement in attendance the interval before the next attendance at court was made successively, two weeks, then three weeks, and finally four weeks. Four weekly adjournments were then maintained. If there was failure to meet the strict criterion of attendance (70%) in between court adjournments, an I.C.O. was made by the magistrates (4). The criterion of 70% had been decided upon by the magistrates after discussions with the Education Welfare Department and the research team during the planning stages of the research project. The I.C.O. normally lasted for three weeks during which the child stayed in a residential assessment centre to enable reports and further information from the centre to be provided for the magistrates when the child returned to the court at the end of the I.C.O.

When the child returned to court from Interim Care either the Magistrates (in the light of reports) decided that a full Care Order was appropriate, or they restarted the sequence of either Flexible or Inflexible adjournments. Children were returned to the scheme to which they had originally been allocated. A second failure usually resulted in the child being dealt with in some way other than adjournments by the magistrates, often by the making of a full Care Order, which placed the child in the care

of the Local Authority until his or her 18th or 19th birthday, subject to periodic review. Occasionally the Magistrates felt a Supervision Order was more appropriate to the young person.

Inflexible adjournment involved automatically adjourning the case for four-weekly intervals including the initial period; otherwise it was operated in the same way and with the same rules as Flexible adjournment. In both flexible and inflexible groups the number of weeks used in the analysis was the actual number of school weeks; school holidays were excluded from the periods used in the calculations.

Once a child had returned to attending school satisfactorily, he or she kept receiving court adjournments for approximately 6 months. After 6 months the case was reviewed by the Magistrates who then decided whether further adjournments were required; if they considered that they were not, the case was withdrawn from the court books and the file endorsed "No Order Made". Otherwise adjournments were continued.

Children were randomly assigned to one of the two procedures by the Magistrates in court. They used appropriate lists of randomised choices supplied by the researchers. Within each treatment group children were also randomly assigned to one of two procedures:- Letters or No letters. The Letters were sent out from the Education Department and monitored by the research

team. Those in the letters sub-group were excused from attending the court in person for a court adjournment once satisfactory progress in school attendance had been maintained for several weeks. Children in the no-letters sub-group were required to attend court in person each time regardless of their school-attendance record.

Summary

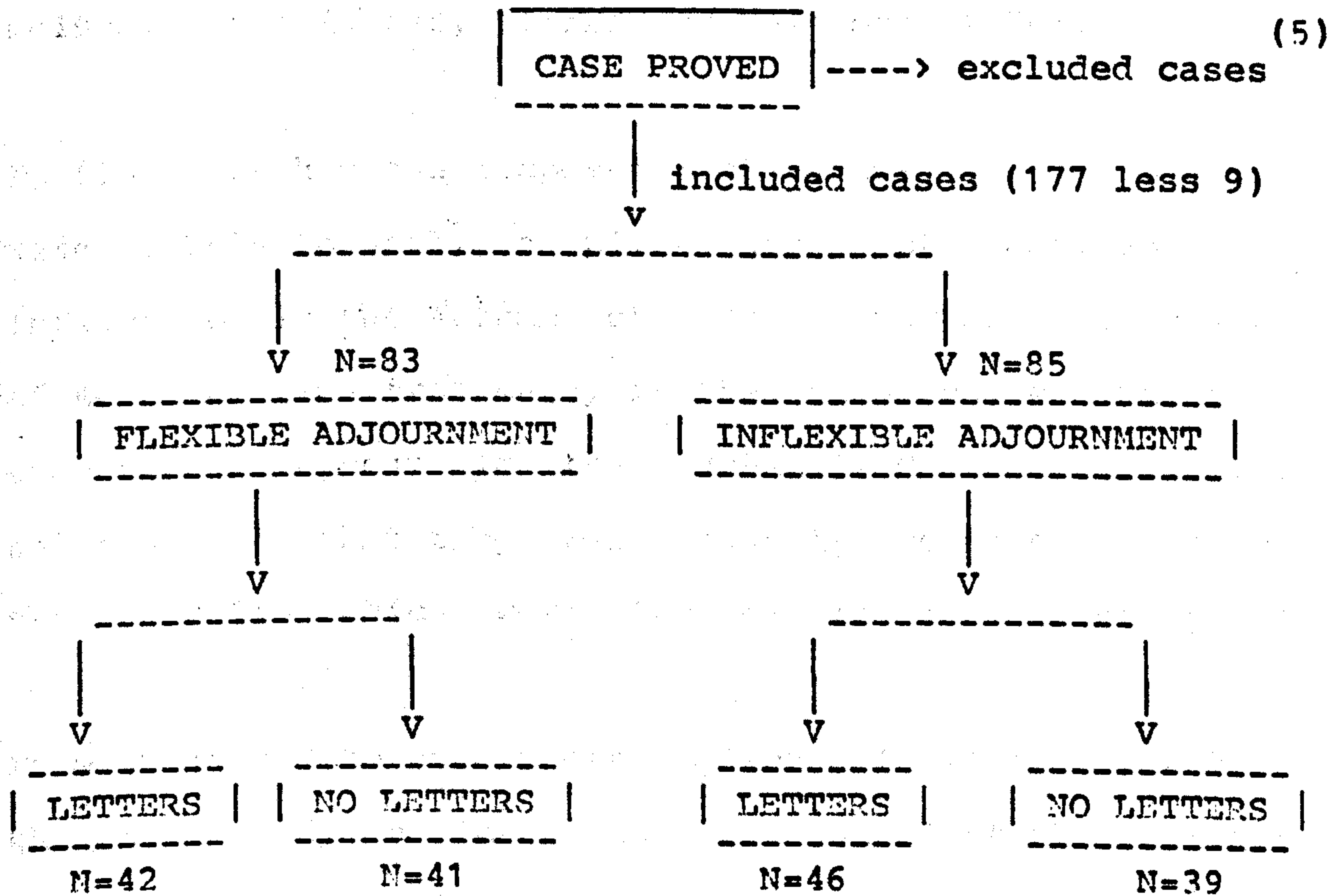
There were 4 treatment groups :

- (i) Flexible / Letters
- (ii) Flexible / No Letters
- (iii) Inflexible / Letters
- (iv) Inflexible / No Letters

The experimental design is summarized in Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1

Diagram to show experimental design used in a randomised trial of 2 court procedures with children appearing in the Juvenile Court for I.S.A.



(b) Families and interviews

Interviews have been used by many other research workers as a method of gathering data concerning families and children. (E.g. Newson and Newson, 1968, 1976, 1977; Wilson and Herbert, 1978; Fogelman, 1978; West and Farrington, 1973; Belson, 1975; Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970).

To find out how the proposed interviews for this study were likely to work, a pilot group of families were interviewed in the Autumn of 1979. The group consisted of some families from early in the research, who had been summoned to appear in the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. selected so that they were exactly representative of the families which were included in the main study. (6)

It was planned to use these pilot families throughout the whole study and interview them ahead of the families in the main interview group at each stage. This was in order that modifications and changes could be made to the various interview schedules in the light of practical experience. Seven families acted as the pilot group. This was done and worked well.

Mothers and children were interviewed before court and again one year later; additionally, mothers were interviewed three months after the court case had been found proved by the magistrates.

A control group of children and their families was used. Children so selected were the next child of the same sex

as the child attending court on the class register at school. The control group is described more fully in Chapter 6.

The first interview took place after the summons to appear in court had been served by the welfare service. This document summoned the parents and child to appear in court on a particular date. An information sheet about the various procedures that the Magistrates might use was also sent to the parents along with the summons by the Education Welfare Department.

Normally, a summons was served on families about 2-3 weeks before the date set for the court hearing and it was arranged that the research-team interviewer would liaise with the Education Welfare service so that, in no case, did she visit a family before a summons had been served. The Welfare department sometimes found it difficult to serve a summons - usually because the parents and child were "out". In some cases this really meant "in the house but not answering the door." Some of these families could therefore not be interviewed before court and were not included in the interviewed group. However, if there was a delay in serving the summons, the court hearing was quite often adjourned for a week or more and then it was possible for families to be interviewed. This happened twice in this study.

The interviewer decided to approach the families directly at home, having first obtained the names and

addresses from the Education Welfare Department. The families who were to be approached were selected randomly from all the children going to court not in their last year at school. The interviewer was to explain to each family approached that there was a study going on in Leeds involving parents and children going into the Juvenile Court with "school attendance problems". They were to be asked if they would be willing to take part in the project, and if they agreed, the interviewer was to make an appointment to return to the house to conduct an interview with one or both parents. The first interview lasted nearly an hour. Generally it was anticipated that mothers would be the parent available for interview but in two cases, only father was living with the family, (one divorcee; one widower), and if this happened, he took part in the study. In some families both mother and father participated in the interviews. Generally, families were welcoming, although a little apprehensive when they first agreed to be participants in the study.

(i) The First Interview

The first interview had the following components :

- (a) School attendance questionnaire
- (b) Questionnaire relating to child's behaviour and activities at home on the previous day
- (c) A general questionnaire about family circumstances
- (d) Rutter A(2) questionnaire for parents
- (e) Self-Administered Dependency Questionnaire (SADQ)
- (f) Housing Index
- (g) Adverse factors check list

Although interview schedules were used by the interviewer, the questions were of mainly open-ended design to allow free responses from the parents and children. (Wherever possible parents were seen separately from children. The interviewer tried to ensure that parents were seen when the child concerned should have been in school. Children were seen after school or during school holidays.) The answers to questions were probed by the interviewer when necessary, so that all the required information was collected during the course of the interview, and a uniform coding scheme adhered to.

For clarification, components (a), (b) and (c) of the interviews were compiled by the writer after reading relevant literature and in consultation with one of the project grant holders (7). These were piloted and amended accordingly. Components (d), (e) and (f) were published materials and are referenced under their descriptions. Component (g) was adapted from a similar one used in

another study (see under its description).

Components (a), (b) and (c) were prepared questionnaires and were used by the interviewer as a guided interview. Components (d) and (e) were handed to the parent to complete while the interviewer was present so that if the parent had any difficulties in understanding what was required they could be assisted. Components (f) and (g) were completed by the interviewer as soon as possible after the completion of the interview.

(a) The School Attendance Questionnaire

The first questionnaire used was a "School Attendance Questionnaire". This collected information about items such as how the child actually travelled to school; when problems about school attendance had begun; whether the parents had sought any help concerning school attendance; any illness of the child; and whether there were any salient clinical features attached to school attendance, i.e. "school phobic" symptoms.

(b) Questionnaire relating to child's behaviour and activities at home on the previous day

The second component of the first interview was designed to assess children's behaviour at home on the previous day and to see how far they complied with, or disobeyed their parents; whether they had got any on-going interests or hobbies; and whether generally they got on well with their parents and how much control parents exercised over their children and their activities.

This questionnaire, in asking about the child's behaviour on the previous day was designed so that an indication of parental supervision of the child could be gained (similar to the measure of "chaperonage" used by other workers such as Wilson and Herbert, 1978; Newson and Newson, 1968, 1976, 1977). (8)

(c) A general questionnaire about family circumstances.

The third component of the first interview was a general questionnaire designed to obtain basic social and background information about the family and its circumstances. This section included such items as the size of the family; age of the parents; whether the home was intact; and employment status and income.

(d) and (e) Questionnaires completed by parents about their child

Mothers were asked to complete two standard form questionnaires. Firstly, the Rutter A(2) form, (Rutter, 1967) which asked about the child and his or her habits. Secondly, the SADQ which concerned interaction between mother and child during the previous school week (Berg, 1974). These questionnaires were supposed to give an indication of psychiatric disturbance in the children. Previous research has shown that parental interview is the single most useful method of gathering evidence of disturbance in children (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970).

(f) and (g) Housing Index and Adverse factors check list

These check lists were completed by the interviewer after leaving the interview. The Housing Index was that used in a study of the type of housing occupied by visitors to a country park (Burton, 1974). The Adverse factors check list was adapted from one used in another study of families (Oliver and Butler, 1979). The questionnaires prepared specifically for this research are included in Appendix 1.

(ii) The first interview with children

At the end of the first interview with parents, the interviewer made an appointment to return within a few days to talk with the child who was going to court. Initially, many children were "out" at this return visit, but, by leaving a card with a promise of 50p. as a "thank you" if they were in, most children were found at home and were willing to be seen. The usual excuse for the child being out was that they had "forgotten". The net result of this was a much more satisfactory interview rate for the children than would otherwise have been the case, and a minimum of wasted journeys, time and frustration for the interviewer. One criticism of this "means to an end" was that a financial inducement could be seen as "bribery". However, most children seemed to be willing to participate once they had been found at home and had the task explained. This method of payment has been used by other researchers, e.g. Belson (1975).

Another interesting spin-off was that the interviewer became known as the "50p lady" in one well known neighbourhood where several children were interviewed! The significance of this is debatable.

The interview conducted with the children and young people lasted for up to an hour, often with a break part way for a drink. It consisted of the following elements:

(a) Children aged 11 or over were given the Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1962) and the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scale (Raven, 1958). Those aged 10 or under were given the Coloured Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1956) and the Crichton Vocabulary Scale (Raven and Walshaw, (1944).

(b) The Neale Test of Reading Ability

(c) A questionnaire about interests, uses of spare time, and activities in the previous week (see Appendix 1).

Components (a) and (b) are standard published Psychological tests for this age group. Component (c) as devised by the writer was designed to complement the questionnaire (component (b)) given to parents. The techniques adopted for questionnaire (c) were influenced by Belson's method developed for interviewing juvenile thieves (Belson, 1975).

(iii) The Second Interview

The second interview had these components :

(a) school attendance questionnaire (2nd version)

(b) repeat of the child's behaviour questionnaire

(c) questions about the court process and its impact on the family

(d) Malaise inventory for mother to complete concerning herself

(e) A Depression rating scale (Leeds Scales)
for mother to complete about herself

The Housing Index and the Adverse Factors Scale were again completed by the interviewer after the interview to act as a cross-check on initial data.

(a) The school attendance questionnaire

The form used was nearly identical to that used in interview one. It was found necessary to re-word one or two questions in the light of experience and also to accommodate the fact that it was a second interview. Most questions remained the same for the second administration and one of the purposes of this is so that it could act as a reliability check on information previously supplied. The other major purpose of the second administration was to assess any changes in the first three months of the child being on the court adjournment system.

(b) The child's behaviour questionnaire

This was identical to the form used in the first interview. Its purpose was to measure any changes.

(c) Questionnaire about the impact of court

This questionnaire was more open-ended than the others used and was conceived with the idea of trying to elicit families' perceptions concerning the court, adjournments and the effects the procedures had had on the child and the family.

(d) Malaise Inventory

The schedule used was that used in the Isle of Wight study (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970).

(e) The Leeds Scales

These were used as a measure of anxious and or depressive symptoms in the mothers (Snaith, Bridge and Hamilton, 1976).

(iv) The Third Interview

The third interview had the following components:

- (a) school attendance questionnaire (as used at interview 2)
- (b) repeat of the child's behaviour questionnaire about the previous day
- (c) questions about court, the child's response, and the impact of court
- (d) repeat of general questionnaire about the family
- (e) Rutter A (2) Questionnaire
- (f) Malaise inventory (mother)
- (g) Depression rating scale (mother)
- (h) Self-Administered Dependency Questionnaire

The Housing Index and the adverse factors scale were again completed by the interviewer.

After the interview had concluded, mothers were asked if they had anything that they would like to ask the interviewer, and discussions quite often took place about the families feelings over court. Arrangements were then made where possible for the interviewer to return to see the child for the final time.

(v) The second interview with children

The second interview with the children was conducted at around the same time as the last interview with parents (about one year after the family had first been contacted). It had two components :

(a) Neale Test of Reading Ability

(b) A repeat of questionnaire about activities in the previous week with some additional questions about the child's feelings concerning court (see Appendix 1)

(vi) Tape recording of interviews onto cassettes.

No family refused point blank to have the interview recorded onto a cassette tape carried by the interviewer. The cassette tape recorder was introduced at the beginning of a visit. Once the interviewer had sat down and got to know the mother a little the mother was asked whether she would "mind having the tape recorder on, not because we wanted to record her, but so that the interviewers work could be checked". Mothers seemed to understand the need to make sure that the interviewer had got it right. Normally the mother laughed and said it was fine. She then forgot about the tape until a young child appeared making a noise! This procedure was established from the first visit by the interviewer after the family had agreed to participate in the research and it was thus easier on subsequent visits to introduce the tape recorder, set it going and then forget it to a large extent. The tape recorder was used to record the interviews so that they could be subsequently be inter-rated, transcribed and checked. It was decided to use a tape recorder because of the obvious disadvantages

if more than one person had tried to visit (one to interview and one to inter-rate) at such a sensitive time when the families were just about to go to court.

(vii) Completion of rating scales by the interviewer

After the interviewer had left the house, she completed two rating scales about the family as soon as possible. The first, concerning the actual physical state of the home and the second to measure the standard of housing (see Appendix 1). In practice, the interviewer had a good look before entering the house, and after leaving, drove the car around a convenient corner before completing the forms, thus avoiding "nosy neighbours" and also families seeing the interviewer "writing about them" if they watched her leave.

(viii) Summary

This section has reviewed the design of the main project in two respects. Firstly, the random design used in the court room, whereby children were randomly allocated into four treatment groups. Secondly, the interview schedules with families and children were described. Interviews with mothers were planned to be conducted at about the time the child went to court for I.S.A, 3 months later and after a year and it was planned to see children twice, at the time they went to court and again after a year. Several new scales were developed for the research project to use and some standard tests were employed. All interviews were tape recorded (with consent) to help validate the data collected.

(c) Schools

Two scales were used to assess possible psychiatric disturbance by rating the children's adjustment in school; one scale was the Conners' Teacher Rating Scale, scored 0,1,2 or 3 (Werry, Sprague and Cohen, 1975) and the other the Rutter B(2) questionnaire (Rutter, 1967). These questionnaires were taken to the schools of children who were on the adjournment system by E.W.O.'s at about the time of the first attendance at court. A second set of the same scales for completion was posted to schools with a letter to Headteachers by the research team a year later. The class teacher filled them in. The next child on the class register of the same sex as the truant was taken as a control and forms were also completed for them.

(d) Other Information

(i) Delinquency in Truants and in the control children

The West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Department supplied lists of cautions and criminal offences of the children whose names had been submitted to them for this purpose. This was under agreed conditions to ensure strict confidentiality and privacy with regard to the individuals concerned. Cautions were considered as offences.

(ii) Periods spent in care

The Social Services Department in the city allowed limited access to some information about the children in the study. As with the criminal records this exercise was carried out under agreed conditions to ensure

confidentiality and was strictly supervised. The records used were those available on the Social Services computer. Individual case notes were not used so it was only possible to ascertain whether a particular child and/or his family were known to the Social Services along with a broad reason for referral. Periods spent in care and placements while in care were investigated, as was any supervision provided by social workers.

(e) Chapter Summary

The Leeds Truancy Project 1979 to 1982 aimed to evaluate two forms of adjournment procedure used with children taken to court for I.S.A., flexible and inflexible. Some assessment of the effectiveness of sending letters to excuse court appearances was planned. It planned to interview parents three times; just before court, 3 months after court adjournments started and finally after 12 months. Children were seen just before court and again 12 months later.

Questionnaire data was to be obtained from schools at the time of the court appearance and again after 12 months and limited data to be collated retrospectively from Police and Social Services.

The purpose of the varied approach was to try and gain an overall picture of some of the features surrounding poor school attendance in Leeds.

NOTES

1. See Chapter 1, Note 4. The reader should notice that, in fact, the cost-effectiveness aspects of the study, referred to in the research proposals was not ever undertaken.

2. Interim Care Orders

An Interim Care Order places a child in the Care of the Local Authority for up to 28 days. At the end of the Order the child returns to the court to enable further decisions to be made about his or her future. Usually this order is spent in residential care.

3. Care Orders

A Care Order places a child fully in the care of the Local Authority until the child is 18 years old, if the Care Order is made when the child is less than 16, or until the child reaches 19 years of age if the child is 16 when the Care Order is first made.

4. Interim Care

An I.C.O. could be made in many circumstances. The criterion of 70% could mean that if a child's attendance fell below 70% with no good and acceptable reason for absence (i.e. illness, or perhaps the death of a close relative) even in the first week of adjournments the child could be made the subject of an I.C.O. by the magistrates when he or she returned to court. In practice this rarely happened. In the two instances observed by the writer, the child concerned appeared to have deliberately taken off from school knowing full well that this would lead to an I.C.O. and one appeared to be visibly relieved to be being taken into care.

5. Excluded cases

The magistrates always had the option of excluding children from the research before the case was proved. Thus, of 205 who could have been included, only 177 were included by the magistrates. From the 177 a further 9 were lost to the study, 5 because the family moved away, and 4 because of court orders for criminal offences.

6. The interview schedules were developed by the author after consultation of literature in related fields and discussion with one of the grant holders for the research, Dr. I.S. Berg, Consultant Child Psychiatrist.

7. see note 6.

8. Note on chaperonage

"Chaperonage was defined by Wilson and Herbert in their study of "Parents and Children in the Inner City" (1979) as:

"a composite index which tells us something about the methods practised by parents to keep their boys under control, and about the degree of individual freedom of movement achieved by the boys "

Wilson and Herbert based their index on that used by the Newson's in Nottingham. Briefly they scored the following from their sample :

- (i) mother does not fetch the boy from school, he comes home alone or goes elsewhere.
- (ii) undertakes activities on his own
- (iii) roams around the streets
- (iv) mother cannot find him/often cannot find him
- (v) police record of "found wandering"

With older children, coming in after 8 p.m. or no rules about coming in at night were also scored. This would apply to most of our study group of children. Wilson and Herbert divided their families into three groups on the basis of their total scores. These groups were labelled "much chaperonage" (28% of families); "some chaperonage" (45% of families); and "no chaperonage" (27%). This study linked chaperonage with delinquency and this is something that the Leeds study planned to consider, by comparing behaviour before, during, and after court adjournments and linking this to information supplied by the Police relating to offences and court appearances. Wilson argued that chaperonage exercised when the boys in her study were 10-11 years old affected their behaviour when they were three years older. The results of her analysis showed conclusively that there was a significant relationship between chaperonage and detected delinquency three years on. Those boys who received no chaperonage at 10-11 years were more likely to be delinquent at age 13. The correlation between chaperonage and absence of delinquency in a family was found to be highly significant. 3/4 of the families operating much chaperonage remained non-delinquent, whereas all but one of the families who did not operate chaperonage produced delinquents.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF COURT PROCEDURES AND OTHER
ISSUES RELATED TO CARE PROCEEDINGS

(1) COURT PROCEDURE IN I.S.A. CASES

This description of the court procedure has been included because the Juvenile Court is not open to the general public and therefore many people are not familiar with how it operates.

Of the children who are taken to Juvenile Court for I.S.A., some are already familiar with the court processes because siblings have been taken to court on previous occasions by the Education Welfare Service. However, there are a substantial number of children taken to court whose family have never been involved in the court adjournment system and for these children the process and procedures are new, and might sometimes feel strange or frightening.

Many, but not all children may have some information concerning court appearances for I.S.A. usually gleaned from class-mates at school. There does seem to be some folklore and mythology attached to "going to court", and this seems to be disseminated among school children, especially when they are attending a school which has several children on the court adjournment system (1). The mythology also seems to have spread in certain areas of the city - in particular, on certain well-known housing estates where attendance problems are prevelant. There are housing estates where the E.W.O. service visits

nearly every household in the street for problems concerning school attendance. Sometimes all the children in a family have poor attendance records.

The mythology consists of a strong association of going to court for I.S.A. resulting in "being put away if you don't go to school", or, looking at going to court in a positive way, "if you go to school, everything will be all right - they won't do nowt".

Although the Education Welfare Service has contact with many families, it is only a minority of families that actually get taken to court and placed on the court adjournment system by the Juvenile Magistrates. In many cases problems over school attendance are resolved by liaison between the Welfare Officer, the family and the school. Some of the problems over attendance have roots in family problems, or problems and difficulties faced by the child at school, or financial problems at home (e.g. shortage of money for bus fares and ineligibility for a bus pass). The Welfare Officer is sometimes able to help and advise parents as to what to do or where they need to go to ask for further help. One obvious example is in the provision of free school meals.

The procedure for taking a child to court for I.S.A., in Leeds is fairly standardised, although it should be recognized and remembered that each case is slightly different, that there can be substantial variations, and

each case is dealt with on an individual basis. However, generally speaking, where there are problems over school attendance an E.W.O. visits the family during the day. Because visits are carried out in the daytime, the E.W.O. responsible for a particular family usually has most contact with the mother. However, Welfare Officers do work in the evening from time to time because some families have both parents at work all day and can only be found at home in the evening. Another reason for an evening visit is if the E.W.O. wishes to see a father in a family and make him aware of the situation regarding the school attendance of his children. Sometimes the mother of a family does not "let on" to the father that there are problems over the school attendance of the children; communication difficulties within a family do nothing to help the situation.

An E.W.O. may visit a family over a period of many months, and sometimes years (2). Often an improvement in attendance is obtained and maintained once the parents realise how much time their child has, in fact, missed from school. If the child has been away from school without the knowledge of his parents, then a visit from the welfare officer is often quite a shock resulting in a rapid improvement in attendance.

Another type of absence with which an E.W.O. has to deal is that which is condoned by one or both parents. In such cases the child is often to be found at home during

school hours with "a headache" or similar complaint, and the parent (usually mother) lets the child stay at home from school because he or she is "poorly".

If an improvement in attendance cannot be obtained through the visiting of a Welfare Officer, and there are no genuine medical reasons why the child should not be in school, the Education Department often send the parents a "Blue Warning Notice" which outlines the law relating to school attendance and warns the parents of possible legal action if there is no improvement in their child's attendance. Often the "Blue Warning Notice" is sufficient, but if not, then the child and his or her parents are invited to appear before the Education sub-committee for discussion of the child's attendance. However, if a family has been before the committee within the previous five years this stage is by-passed.

If the committee stage is not successful in returning a youngster to regular education there are two options open to the Education Authority.

The first option is to take the parents to the Adult Court. The second is to take the child to Juvenile Court using Care Proceedings. The law describing these procedures is laid down by the 1944 Education Act and the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act (C.Y.P.A.).

Although a parent can be sent to prison if he or she does

not ensure that his or her child does not receive an "efficient full-time education suitable to his age, aptitude and ability", this does not very often happen. In practice a fine is usually imposed, often very small, and this method does not seem to have been very effective in returning children to school (3).

It has been argued that stiffer financial penalties would only increase the difficulties for most of these families who are often on a low-income and/or Supplementary Benefit anyway. Alternatively, others argue that the only way of getting a child back into school when the parents are at fault is to KEEP imposing penalties until the parents do comply with the law. In Leeds, in practice, few parents are prosecuted in the Adult Court and most cases of I.S.A. are referred into the Juvenile Court for Care Proceedings under Section 1 of the C.Y.P.A. (1969). The care proceedings are brought by the Education Department.

If it is decided to take the child to the Juvenile court under care proceedings a date for the hearing is obtained and the summons is usually delivered in person by the Education Welfare Officer dealing with the family. One of the reasons for this is so that, in the event of the non-appearance of the child and parents in court on the appointed day, proof of the service of the summons by the E.W.O. can be sworn on oath by the officer in court, and if magistrates think fit, warrants for getting the parents and child to court obtained without further

delays. Apart from this reason, the E.W.O. is often able to answer any questions about the court for the parents. In certain cases where a family has been non-cooperative or threatened violence, two E.W.O.'s may go together to serve the summons. In extreme cases the police may be asked to assist.

The reaction of the parents to the receipt of the summons has been described by Welfare Officers as "varied" and this would seem to be the most accurate description possible! On the whole, families know of impending court action before the arrival of the summons, and therefore for them, the summons is of no great surprise. However, often the reality of an actual summons is upsetting for the mother (in particular). This may be the reaction to what was perceived a "threat" actually becoming a reality. Some parents express relief that "at last something was being done" and this was so particularly in cases of "traditional" truancy (see Chapter 1). It is true to say, however, that some parents were angry and upset when court action was taken.

In the current study it was found that once the summons had been served, the school attendance of the children often improved dramatically, and if such an improvement was maintained over several weeks before the actual hearing of the Care proceedings, the case was sometimes withdrawn without any evidence being offered by the Education department.

The next important stage was the actual court appearance. In every case at least one parent or guardian appeared with the child concerned to answer the summons. Magistrates are unwilling for a case to proceed without parents being present. In the cases of non-appearance in answer to the summons, the case was either adjourned for one or two weeks or warrants applied for, depending on the urgency of the situation and the prospects of getting the parents and child to court.

Bail and arrest warrants

If the parents and/or child fail to appear in court and it can be shown that that they knew they were required to attend court, then warrants can be applied for. Sometimes the case will be adjourned by the magistrates, but if that has already happened, or there is some degree of urgency attached to getting the child and his parents to court, then warrants are sought, usually by the E.W.O. who is dealing with the court cases for the afternoon. Often the welfare officer dealing with the family is called to take the oath and give evidence to the effect that the parent and/or child knew they had to come to court because the welfare officer had delivered a "letter to attend" (a letter advising the parents that they and their child are required in court on a particular day and at a particular time) and obtained a signature from the parent saying that they had received the letter. The signed letter can then be produced as evidence that the parents knew that they were required to come to court.

There are two sorts of warrants used in the court for these cases; firstly, a bail warrant which the police execute with bail terms for the parents and/or child to appear on a particular day; this is convenient for the school-attendance courts which run on a weekly basis because the bail warrant can be dated for one or more weeks hence to appear before the same bench; the second type of warrant which is used more rarely is the arrest warrant which means that the child and/or parents would be arrested and taken before the first available court for the case to be heard. An arrest warrant is only used as a last resort or if the child concerned has gone missing.

Not only can warrants be used to get parents and children to come to court for the first hearing of the case, but they can be used subsequently to enforce adjournments. In practice this only happens if school attendance has broken down and the child and/or parents have failed to appear for an adjournment. They are only used as a final resort when all other methods to secure attendance at court have failed.

In the study, some cases were defended by a solicitor (4) but in nearly all cases the parents and child spoke for themselves, and were assisted in this by the court clerk. If a parent and child expressed a wish to have a solicitor when they came to court on the day of the hearing, and also wished to apply for legal aid the case would be adjourned for hearing at a later date.

In practice this rarely happened in court during the study. Parents and child speaking for themselves is the norm in current cases.

(ii) THE HEARING (6)

On the day that the case was due to be heard, the parents and child were called into court by the court usher and after the initial formalities, during which the child was made to stand, the Magistrate in the chair explained the procedure that was to be followed during the hearing of the case to the parents and child. It was made clear that the parents and child were to listen to the evidence given to the court carefully and that they would then have an opportunity first to ask questions of the Education department witness(es), then to call their own witnesses and finally to address the Magistrates on their own account either from the floor or on oath in the witness box. Sometimes the court clerk also asked the parents and children whether they understood why they were in the court and what the magistrates were empowered to do. The Court Officer from the Education Welfare Department was then asked to proceed with the case.

Firstly, the Education Welfare Officer concerned with the family was called into court and gave evidence on oath. Attendance figures were presented at this stage to the court, and a record of all visits made to the child's home

along with all the reasons given by the parents for absence were read out to the court from notes made by the officer at the times of the visits in question.

After the completion of the evidence, the parents and child were asked by the Magistrates if they had any questions which they wished to ask about the evidence just presented to the court. Once any questions had been answered the Welfare Officer left the witness box. The parents and child were then asked whether they had any witnesses to call. If there were any witnesses they would have been called at this point. However, none were observed in the court cases attended by the writer. Finally the parents and child were asked whether they had anything which they wished to say to the magistrates on their own account. Most had things to say and spoke from the floor rather than electing to speak on oath from the witness box. In only two instances observed by the writer did a parent elect to give a statement on oath.

After this stage, the magistrates usually conferred briefly. In every case observed by the writer the case was found proved. When this was so, reports were presented to the magistrates from the child's school and also from the Education Welfare Department. Sometimes there was a Social Services report in addition. The purpose of the reports were to help Magistrates to come to a decision as to the appropriate course of action needed for the particular child before them. Most children were deemed

to be suitable for court adjournments and if the child was eligible for the research scheme he was randomly assigned to one of the procedures at this point. If court adjournments were deemed unsuitable for a particular child then the child was often made the subject of an immediate Interim Care Order so that fuller reports could be obtained and produced in court at a subsequent hearing.

The cases placed on the research scheme were then adjourned the appropriate period of time (i.e. 1 week or 4 weeks) and a warning given to the parents and child that, if the child failed to attend school satisfactorily until the next adjournment, a care order would be considered.

When a child returned to court at the next adjournment, if he or she had attended school satisfactorily, they were told to "keep it up" and given a further adjournment of the appropriate length. However, if the child had poor attendance and had no acceptable reasons for absence an Interim Care Order was usually made by the Magistrates. This was often very upsetting for the child and parents, and tears were not uncommon.

Sometimes the parent stood up in court and told the Magistrates that they were unable to control the child or young person. The Magistrates sometimes made an I.C.O. in these cases. Children made subject to an I.C.O. usually left the court room with the duty police officer and were attended to by duty Social Services staff (5).

Cases where a full Care Order was made were often very upsetting for both the child and parents. This was especially the case when the parent stood up in court and said to the Magistrates "take him/her away". Care Orders made to the local authority last until a youngster is 18 when it is made when a child is 15 years of age or less, and until 19 when it is made at age 16. The Magistrates always explained to the parents that the Care Order was reviewable every 6 months and that the child might be sent home by the local authority at any time. The magistrates encouraged the parents of children placed into care to cooperate fully with the local authority and to keep up contact with the child.

As many as 50 cases on court adjournments appeared in the attendance courts in any one afternoon (although there were usually less than this). A consequence of large numbers was that the duration of an adjournment appearance for any one child was often short, two minutes or less, particularly if the child had done well and was to have a further (routine) adjournment. Another reason for short appearances was if parents and child did not have anything to say. Sometimes an appearance was lengthened by the presentation of further reports from school, welfare department, social services or probation.

It was one aim of the research project to explore how children and parents viewed repeated adjournments, and this was done at the second and third interviews.

NOTES

1. The source of the mythology surrounding the court adjournment system is from children already receiving court adjournments and children who have been "away" for failing to go to school (taken into care on an ICO for three weeks). Children often referred to the chairperson of the juvenile bench as the "judge".

2. The evidence for this statement is to be found within the Education Welfare Department. Many families had been visited for many years. Several examples were found where a family had been visited for poor attendance; the children had grown up only to receive visits for their children just a few years later.

3. The level of fines in use in Leeds immediately prior to the research was typically between ten and twenty-five pounds, despite the fact that up to two hundred pounds is permissible by law. Magistrates were reluctant to impose heavy fines on families already suffering from problems of financial hardship. The Welfare Department viewed this level of fines as derisory and consequently felt it was often of little effect to take parents to court, and that the problem of children not attending had to be dealt with in a more effective way.

4. Solicitors were not used by children and families very often. Legal Aid was not granted by Magistrates routinely. Occasionally (one instance during the author's visits to court) the family got a solicitor when the child faced going into care and the parents wished the child to remain at home. It is possible that some families would have benefitted from having someone to speak for them who was familiar with the court routine, but such a provision may not have affected the decision of finding the case proved or otherwise.

5. A Court Liason Police Officer, a Social Worker and a member of the Probation Service were always represented in court.

6. The commentary about court hearings is based upon the authors many visits to court. The author attended court at least one afternoon per week for a year, and there were normally at least 20 cases of adjournment on each occasion. The comments should therefore be understood as a "typical case" rather than as an example based on one observation.

CHAPTER 5

OVERALL RESULTS FROM COURT

Overview and summary of chapter - a guide to the reader

This chapter aims at examining the different procedures tested. They were the effects of the adjournment procedure generally; the effects of the flexible compared to the inflexible system; the effects of sending letters to excuse court appearances compared to no letters being sent; and the combined effects of the flexible or inflexible and letters or no letters systems.

The chapter uses different criteria for examining the success or failure of children in the experiment, i.e. the attendance before and after adjournments; differences between children who received Care Orders, Interim Care Orders and no Care Orders; and the commission of criminal offences, especially the rate of first offending. An attempt was also made to investigate whether prediction methods could have been used to improve the outcome for certain children.

A short sub-study with other children who had been before the courts for a long-time is also reported.

168 children went through the court adjournment system for at least 30 school weeks after their case was proved.

The main results of the chapter show:

1. Overall, adjournments achieved their purpose in returning many children to regular school attendance.
2. Overall the difference between flexible and inflexible adjournment was not significant (81% compared to 79%) except in the group of children who did not go into care at all when flexibly adjourned children did significantly better than the inflexible group.
3. Approximately half the children received letters excusing court appearances, but did not miss as many appearances in court as they could have done. There were no significant differences in outcomes between children who received letters and those who did not.
4. Attendance after court adjournments began was found to be positively related to the child's previous level of attendance.
5. The previous level of attendance, and whether the child had improved school attendance before the first court appearance but after the serving of the summons was related to whether or not the child's attendance led to a Care Order or Interim Care Order being made. The less the improvement the more likely the child was to go into Care.
6. Overall, the number of offences committed per child fell in the 12 months after court adjournments had begun, compared to the previous 12 months. However, this was only true for children who did not go into care at all during the 30 weeks of the trial. Children who had one or more I.C.O. or who had a full Care Order made showed no drop in the number of offences committed.

A subsidiary study compared two groups of other children

who had been coming to the courts on adjournments for very long periods. One group stayed on the court books and the others stopped coming to court and had their cases endorsed "No Order Made". This study was disappointing and inconclusive, but it suggested there was a need to review the policies of using "No Order Made" for long-standing cases of adjournment.

The results on the whole present an interesting, if slightly complicated picture of the effects of adjournment. It does not appear that, generally speaking, either flexible or inflexible adjournment produce very different results. Neither does the sending of letters seem to affect outcome in terms of attendance. On balance, if the criteria of cost and convenience are used, it seems that in many cases inflexible (monthly) adjournment combined with letters would produce a reasonable improvement in school attendance while at the same time saving the courts and families a great deal of the time and effort required by children on the flexible with no letters scheme. However, the threat of going to court (as produced by the summons) seemed to produce as much an improvement in attendance for children who do well on the adjournments as did the adjournments themselves.

(1) OVERALL SAMPLE

The major findings of the court data have now been published (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1983). 177 children were included in the study. They were all taken from the children who came to the Juvenile Court under care proceedings in a 15 month period from the autumn of 1979. Children who were due to leave school in the same academic year as their court appearance were excluded from the trial. Only one child from a family was included. 85 boys and 92 girls were included in the study at the start.

Exclusions

205 children had been eligible to be included in the scheme during the period of the trial, but in 28 cases the magistrates decided that adjournments were not appropriate. In some instances, the child's problems were not only due to lack of school attendance but often there were severe domestic or behaviour problems, one of which was glue sniffing. The reasons for exclusions were many. Of the 28 exclusions, two were included in error (too old); one child was made the subject of an immediate Care Order for reasons of moral danger; 3 were adjourned for the wrong length of time for their "scheme" on the day of the case being proved; 12 (10 boys and 2 girls) were made subject of immediate Interim Care Orders; the remaining 10 were excluded for the following reasons:- one girl had an initial adjournment of 4 weeks and returned to court without a parent, her attendance was poor but in the absence

of a parent the magistrates did not feel able to make an I.C.O. and adjourned the case for one week instead of four. The girl was subsequently made the subject of an I.C.O. and after it had expired returned to court adjournments. Another girl had an overall attendance of over eighty percent but was an accomplished occasional truant. In the circumstances the magistrates "especially requested that she be excluded from the research".

The magistrates kept an exceptionally tight reign on any absence. One boy had an I.C.O. in the early weeks of the experiment, and subsequently had several one-week adjournments before being made the subject of a full Care Order. One boy had an I.C.O. and several one-week adjournments before a full Care Order was made. One boy was already under a "place of safety order" obtained by the Social Services Department. Subsequently an I.C.O. and a then a full Care Order were made. Another boy was excluded by the magistrates "due to the seriousness of the case". However, the serious nature of the case was not disclosed. One boy was adjourned by the magistrates for two weeks for no apparent reason. One boy had a delay in proving the case because the attendance improved. The case was proved later on, when there were also domestic problems and an I.C.O. was made more because of the home circumstances than for lack of attendance at school.

Sample

Although 177 children were included in the trial, 9 were lost to the research during the 30 school weeks considered in the analysis. This was due to five moving away from the area and four receiving court orders for criminal offences. These cases were dropped from the analysis of attendance, and all results are based on the data from the remaining 168 children (90 females and 78 males) in the study and their respective matched controls.

A table showing the losses from the study, and the remaining participants follows.

Table 5.1

Sample description showing losses and exclusions

INITIAL SAMPLE BEFORE THE COURTS	N = 205
Losses from exclusion by the magistrates leaving 177 children who started the study	N = 28
Losses during study	N = 9
TOTAL LEFT IN STUDY (205 - 28 - 9)	N = 168

Statutory Care

Of the 168 who were eventually included in the study, one child was in the care of the local authority under the statutory provisions of the C.V.P.A. because she had no parents. She was boarded out with a sister and went to a normal school and she was therefore left in the study. Another of the court adjournment group had a secure placement in care, but not during the thirty weeks of the court adjournment trial reported in this study. At least

three other children taken to court for I.S.A. had had a "miscellaneous" period in care but not during the trial. This had usually been for a short period during the illness or incapacity of a parent or due to domestic crisis.

Random Allocation

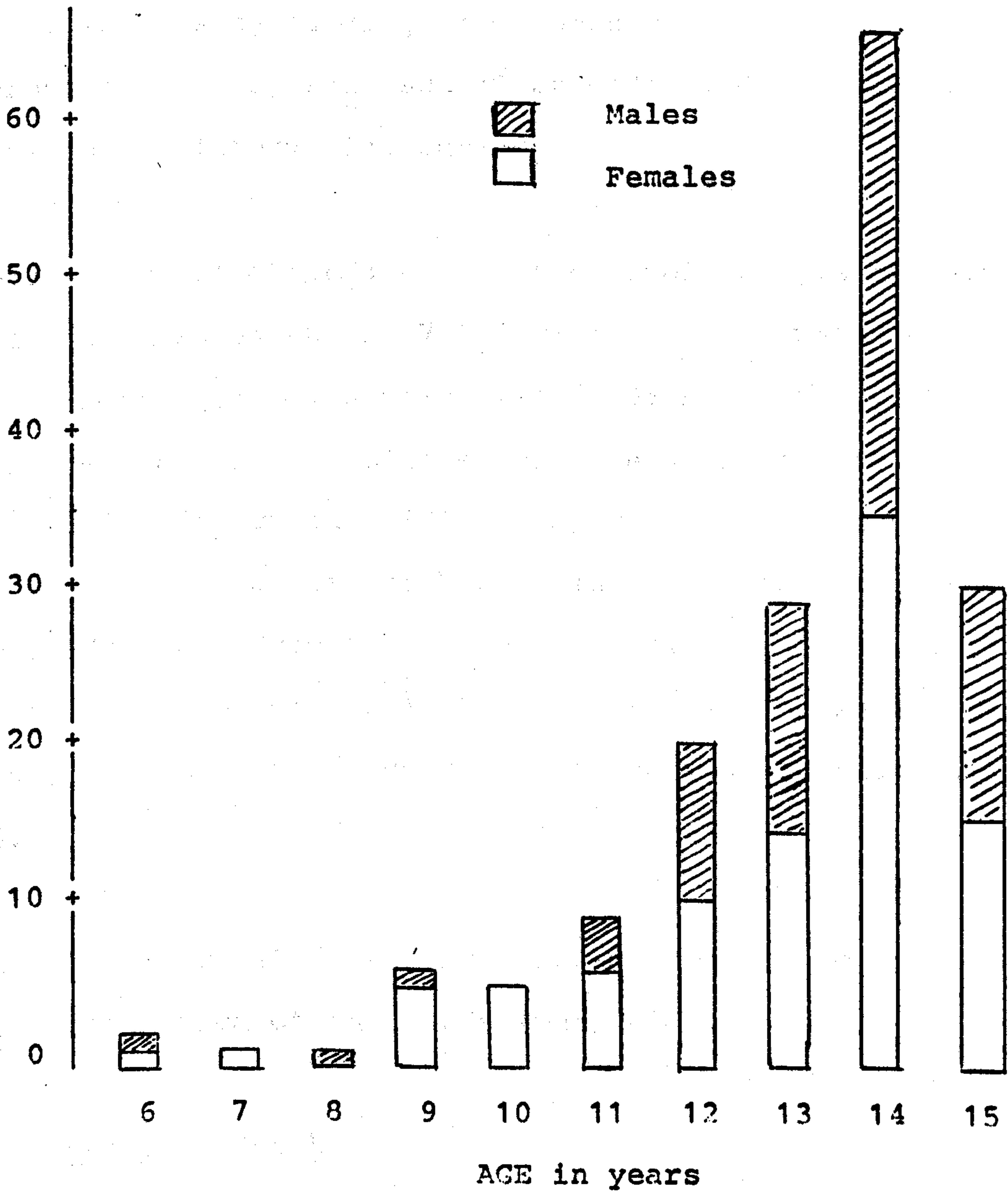
Once the case was proved, and there was no other reason to exclude, children were randomly allocated to one of the two procedures Flexible or Inflexible adjournment. This was achieved by using a system of prepared lists of assignments covered with sticky labels. This had been found to work satisfactorily in the previous study. (Berg, Consterdine, Hullin and McGuire, 1978).

Age and sex

The mean age of the children was 13.5 years and the mode 14 years. The distribution of ages and sex of the sample is shown by the graph in Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1
Frequency distribution of age and sex of 168 children
taken to court for failure to go to school.

FREQUENCY



Overall attendance

Attendance prior to court ranged between 50 and 65% in the 10 weeks before the children first appeared in court. This was twice as much as in the previous two studies carried out in Leeds (Berg et.al., 1977 and 1978). This was a surprising finding and possibly represented an improvement in severe school attendance difficulties in Leeds in the intervening period.

Overall, school attendance for the whole sample of court children averaged out at 75% during the 30 weeks of the adjournment periods studied (SD = 20; n = 168). There were no overall differences between flexible and inflexible adjournment (81% compared to 79% attendance) in the same period although in the case of "very successful" children (who spent no time in care), the flexible group did a little better than the inflexible group, and this is discussed with the results from Table 5.3.

Control childrens' attendance ranged from 85 to 90% over the whole period of the study (mean 87%).

Appearances in Court

Where improved school attendance continued at a satisfactory level the inflexible and flexible adjournment schemes were carried out as described in chapter three. If the child failed to reach the criterion of seventy percent school attendance and did not produce a medical certificate or another good reason

for the absence from school when he or she next appeared in court, an Interim Care Order was usually made by the magistrates, placing the child in the care of the Local Authority, after which, the child returned to court. The I.C.O. can be made for up to 28 days. Most of the children before the court for I.S.A. and who were made subjects of an I.C.O. spent 3 or 4 weeks in care, usually in a residential assessment centre so that the child could be observed and assessed before reports were written for the court to assist the magistrates in deciding the appropriate way of dealing with the child. Most children coming back to court at the end of an I.C.O. were returned to the adjournment system. A second failure to meet the criterion of 70% school attendance led to the child being considered a "failure" of the scheme. Magistrates then took what they considered to be the most appropriate course of action; sometimes they made a full Care Order; or tried a second Interim Care Order; infrequently, a Supervision Order was made. All children who failed a second time to reach the 70% criterion were considered, for research purposes, to have failed to respond to the court adjournment system satisfactorily.

Before Court Comparisons

When the flexible and inflexible groups were compared before court appearances for I.S.A. on a variety of background variables listed, there were no significant differences (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1983).

The group comparisons are shown in Table 5.2.

As expected the flexible group had significantly more adjournments made by the magistrates and went to court more often than the inflexible group. The figures were :

	TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT	
	Flexible	Inflexible
mean adjournments over 10 weeks (SD)	5.0 (0.7)	3.2 (0.5)
mean adjournments over 30 weeks (SD)	10.4 (2.1)	8.7 (1.3)
appearances over 10 weeks (SD)	4.6 (0.8)	2.9 (0.7)
appearances over 30 weeks (SD)	8.1 (3.0)	6.9 (2.3)

(p < 0.01)

TABLE 5.2

Comparison between flexible and inflexible adjournment groups before first court appearance for failure to attend school (1).

VARIABLE	TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT	
	Flexible n=92	Inflexible n=85
Sex	49 Boys 43 Girls	36 Boys 49 Girls
Mean Age (years) (SD)	13.5 (1.9)	13.7 (1.7)
% free school meals at school attended (SD) n	20 (10) 79	22 (11) 82
Average "number" of city area where child lived * (SD) n	10.5 (3.2) 82	10.3 (3.4) 85
Average "number" of welfare division where child lived # (SD) n	3.2 (1.7) 83	3.0 (1.6) 85
Intact home; intact=1; broken home=2; (SD) n	0.3 (0.5) 55	0.4 (0.5) 68
Number of children in family (SD) n	3.8 (1.4) 51	4.3 (1.9) 64
Attainment from school report Backward=1; Normal=2; Forward=3; (SD) n	1.5 (0.5) 58	1.4 (0.6) 70
Rutter B2:teacher questionnaire means N scale (SD)	2.5 (2.2)	2.0 (2.0)
A scale (SD)	3.0 (2.8)	2.1 (2.7)
T scale (SD)	16.7 (9.1)	14.1 (8.7)
Conner's teacher's questionnaire Factor mean scores :		
I (SD)	0.7 (0.8)	0.5 (0.7)
II (SD)	1.3 (0.8)	1.1 (0.7)
III (SD)	1.1 (0.6)	1.2 (0.5)
IV (SD)	0.8 (0.7)	0.7 (0.7)
V (SD)	0.9 (0.8)	0.8 (0.7)

No significant Difference Between Groups (P>0.05)

* 17 Postal districts numbered 1 to 17

6 Welfare divisions numbered 1 to 6

TABLE 5.3

Comparison between flexible and inflexible adjournment groups after first court appearance for Irregular School Attendance.

VARIABLE	TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT	
	Flexible n=83	Inflexible n=85
30 school week period: Failure N	11	11
Weeks to failure mean (SD)	14.8 (6.6)	16.8 (6.9)
I.C.O. N	18	17
Weeks to I.C.O. mean (SD)	13.1 (8.2)	12.5 (7.5)
% school attendance (excluding failures) (SD) n	81 (12.6) 72	79 (10.9) 74
% school attendance (excluding failures and I.C.O.s) (SD) n	85* (10.5) 54	80* (10.7) 57
Offences per child : 12 month period mean (SD)	0.5 (1.3)	0.4 (1.2)
6 month period mean (SD)	0.3 (1.1)	0.3 (1.1)
Number of offences committed by those without a record (%) 12 month period 6 month period	15 (70) 3 (70)	14 (59) 3 (59)
Rutter B2 teacher questionnaire after 12 months N	36	34
means N scale (SD)	1.4 (1.8)	1.7 (1.8)
A scale (SD)	2.4 (3.1)	2.8 (3.0)
T scale (SD)	11.8 (8.8)	14.6 (9.7)
Conner's teacher's questionnaire after 12 months Factor mean scores :		
I (SD)	0.6 (0.7)	0.7 (0.7)
II (SD)	1.1 (0.8)	1.0 (0.5)
III (SD)	0.9 (0.4)	1.0 (0.4)
IV (SD)	0.7 (0.6)	0.8 (0.8)
V (SD)	0.6 (0.6)	0.6 (0.7)

* p < 0.02

(11) ATTENDANCE BEFORE AND AFTER COURT ADJOURNMENTS
BEGAN

Before being taken to court the school attendance in the whole sample of children averaged 53% in the ten week period immediately preceding the court hearing. After starting to go to court for the adjournment procedure school attendance for the whole group averaged about 75% overall in the thirty school weeks which followed.

A matched control group consisting of children from the same class at school of the same age and sex was looked at over exactly corresponding periods of time and attended between between 85% and 90% of the time throughout the period of the initial study.

Figure 5.2 shows attendance before and after court for the entire group of 166 children for subjects and controls.

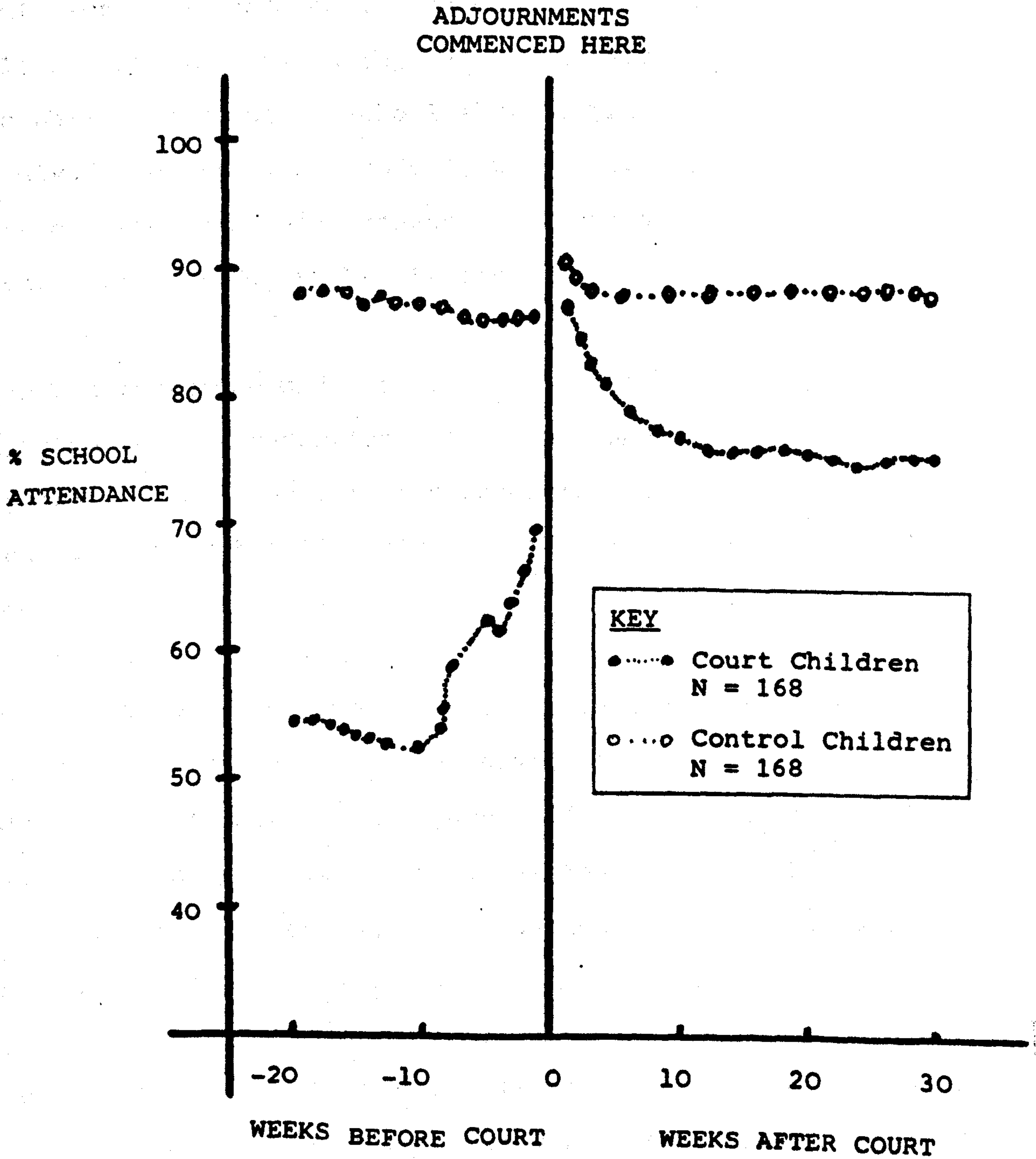
The results confirmed that when adjournments were in operation attendance at school improved substantially. 92% of children met the 70% criterion over the first six months on adjournments and 80% sustained it for a year or more.

Comparison between the flexible and inflexible groups while they attended court showed only one significant difference in outcome measures when a whole range of variables were examined. These variables are listed in Table 5.3 and the significance of comparisons noted. The one significant difference was between the attendance of flexible and inflexible groups for children who did not

spend any periods at all in care. The children on flexible adjournment not going into care had significantly higher school attendance than the children on unflexible adjournment (85% compared to 30%, $p < 0.02$).

Overall, the picture was slightly different and the histogram in Figure 5.3 shows the amount of attendance for all children in the two treatment groups, flexible and inflexible, for the 10 week period before court and the 30 week period after court. Despite more frequent court appearances at the beginning of the trial, taken as a whole, the flexibly treated children showed no evidence of attending school any more frequently than those treated inflexibly. ($p > 0.05$)

FIGURE 5.2
Graph to show attendance before and after court for 168 children on court adjournments for I.S.A.



The evaluation of a "letters" procedure.

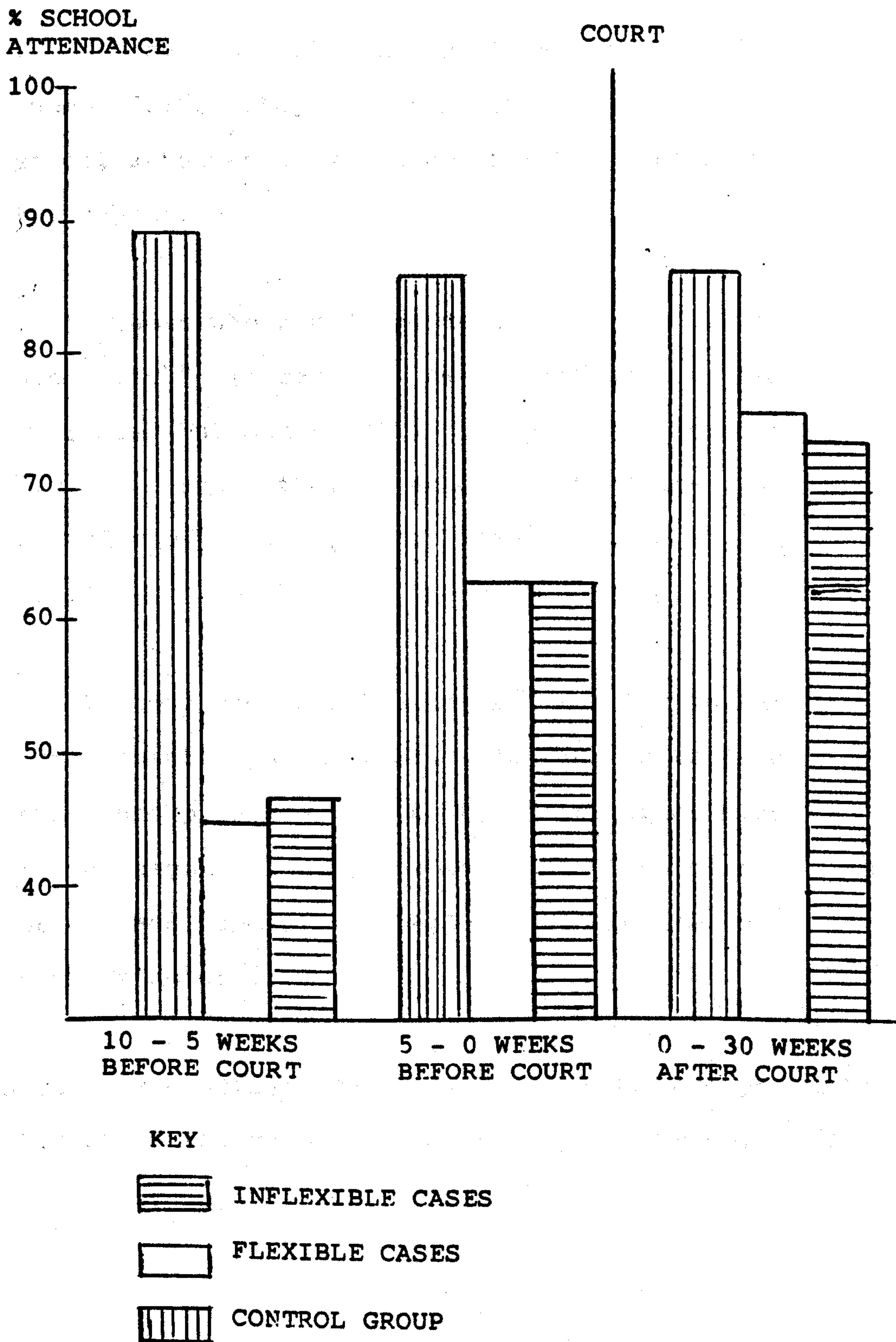
In addition to the adjournment procedures, the study was designed to evaluate the procedure of LETTERS to excuse a child actually appearing in court when they had satisfactory attendance in school. Letters were sent to half of each group excusing actual appearance in court if the child was going to school all the time. The half who received letters were randomly selected. This was done as part of the original random allocation process by the writer using random number tables.

Although the procedure was carried out as intended, the expected large reduction in the number of court appearances made by children receiving letters did not occur in either the flexible or the inflexible "letter" groups.

88 children were assigned to receive letters; 42 Flexible and 46 inflexible. They received an average of 3.3 letters each (S.D.=1.9, range 0 to 7) which excused them from appearing at court if their attendance at school was satisfactory. An average of 1.9 court appearances were actually missed (S.D. = 1.7).

Young people receiving letters did not differ significantly from those not receiving letters when school attendance was examined taking the flexible/inflexible allocation into account.

Figure 5.3
Histogram to show attendance before and after court for each treatment group.



Differences between children who spent time in care and those who did not

The children were divided into three groups based upon outcome at 30 school weeks after first attending court.

(i) Those who could be described as "totally successful". They had no I.C.O.'s and their school attendance was above the 70% criterion throughout.

(ii) Those who could be described as "fairly successful" (because new attendance had increased but not to 70%). They had only one I.C.O. and their school attendance was satisfactory after the intervention of an I.C.O.

(iii) Those who were "failures" as far as the adjournment system went. Children placed in this group either had a full care order made or a second Interim Order or a Supervision Order and their school attendance was unsatisfactory.

Attendance was examined for each of these groups and Figure 5.4 shows the resulting graphs of attendance.

Figure 5.4
Graph to show % school attendance for children receiving court adjournments for different outcome groups.

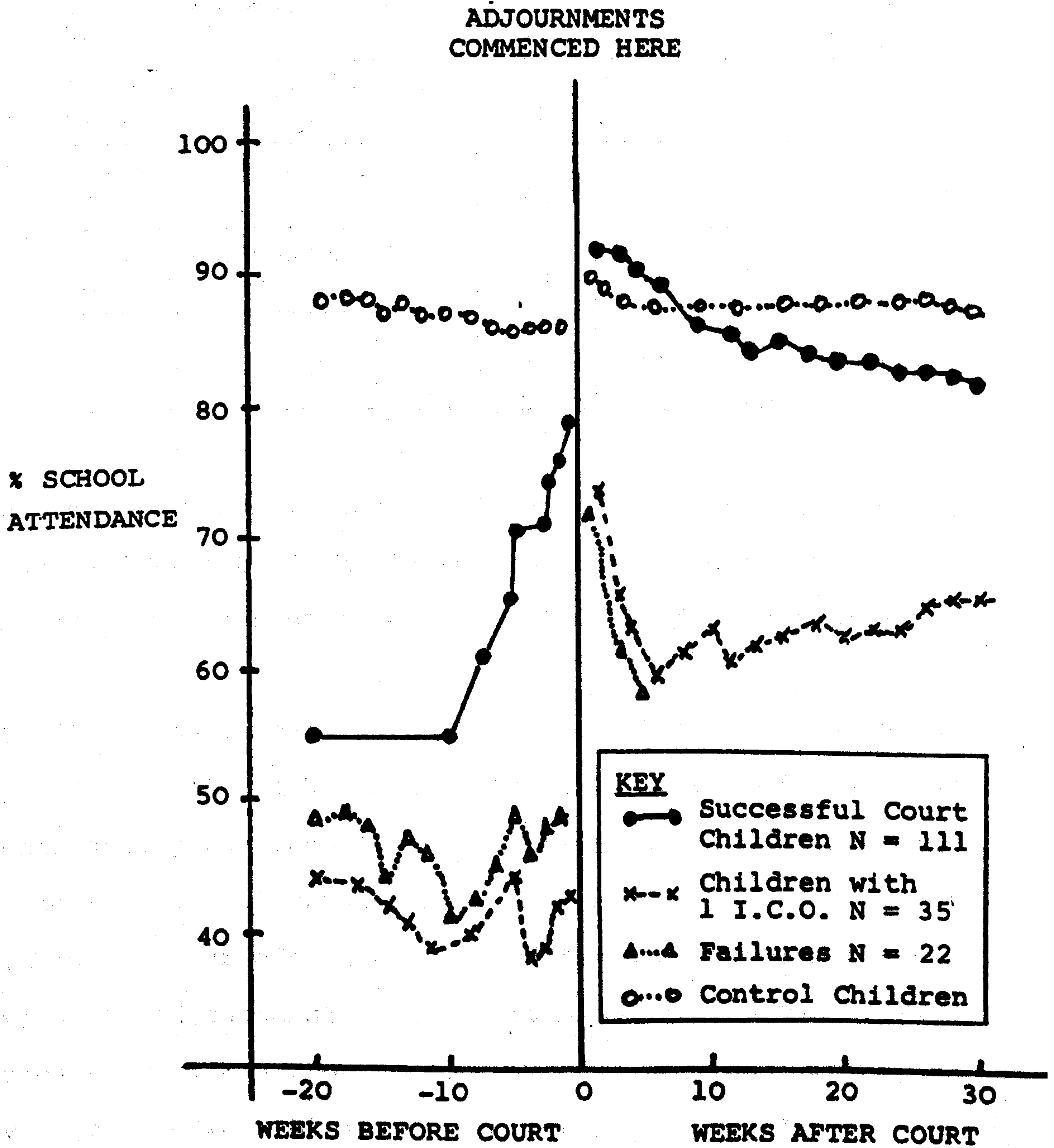


TABLE 5.4
Outcome for each treatment group at 30 weeks.

TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT AND WHETHER ON LETTERS	NO CARE	ONE I.C.O.	CARE ORDER	TOTAL
Inflexible adjournment No Letters	27	6	6	39
Inflexible adjournment Letters	30	11	5	46
Flexible adjournment No Letters	25	9	5	39
Flexible adjournment Letters	29	9	6	44
TOTALS	111	35	22	168

Over the 30 weeks 11 out of 85 children in the Inflexible group and 11 out of the 33 in the Flexible group failed in the adjournment system, an overall failure rate of 14%.

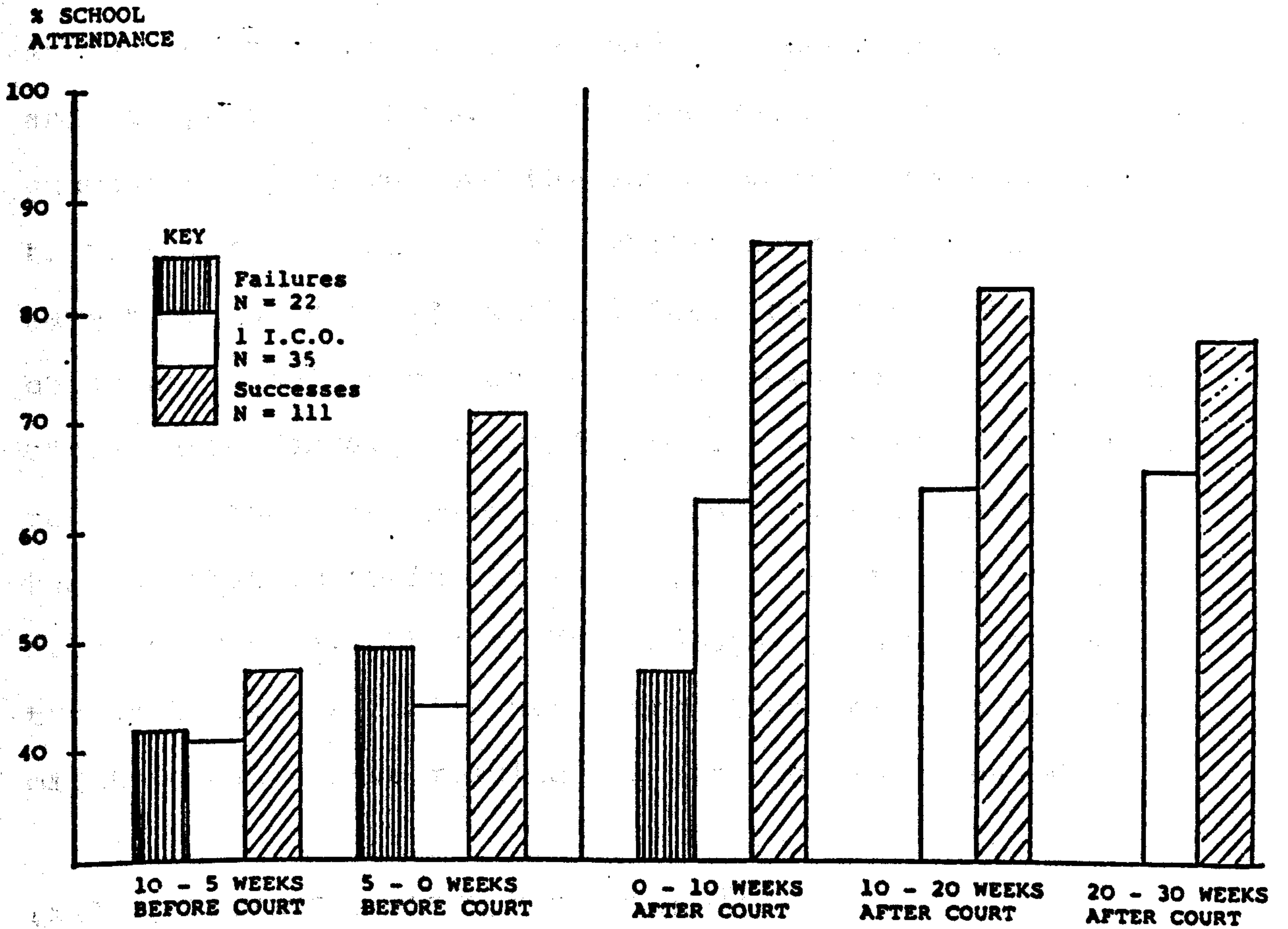
21% of the court children had had one Interim Care Order by 30 school weeks after court, but had returned successfully to school and continued on the adjournment system. 65% of children had gone through the trial without any periods in care. Differences between the two types of adjournment were not significant. The overall success rate was about 86%. Failure occurred after an average period of 14.2 weeks (S.D. = 6.6) in the flexible and 16.3 weeks (S.D. = 6.9) in the inflexible groups. This difference was not significant ($p > 0.05$).

18 children in the Flexible and 17 in the Inflexible group had only one I.C.O. during the 30 week period for failing

to meet the attendance criterion. The I.C.O.'s were made after an average of 12.5 weeks (S.D. = 7.5) in the inflexible group and after an average of 13.1 weeks (S.D. = 8.2) in the flexible cases. Again, these differences were not significant ($p > 0.05$).

The attendances of the three outcome groups was examined before and after court. The attendance from 10 weeks before court to 5 weeks before court was about the same for all groups. However, there are large differences in the attendances for the three groups in the five week period before court. Children who were subsequently successful appear to have increased their school attendance by a substantial amount in this period before court - attaining 70% attendance overall during the period compared to just less than 50% for the other two groups. These results are shown in Figure 5.5.

FIGURE 5.5
Histogram of attendance levels by outcome
before and after court



One explanation for the improvement in attendance during the five weeks before court is that at or around 5 weeks the child and their family was made aware of impending court action - and this was usually followed by the arrival of the summons to appear in court on a given date and a specified time. The amount of time between a summons being served and the actual court appearance seems to have varied, but on the whole the summonses appear to have been served 2-3 weeks before the due date. Some children seemed to respond to the summons by improving their attendance. Others did not. Another explanation could be that the children and/or parents might have thought that improving attendance up until court might help their case. This might especially have been so if the child or his family had feared that "care proceedings" might actually have resulted in care for some reason.

(ii) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUTCOME GROUPS

Two analyses of Variance were carried out between the different outcome groups.

The first analysis placed all children who failed (N=22) and those who had one I.C.O. (N=35) in one group (N=57) against the 111 children who went through the trial without any encounter with care. Sexes were looked at separately.

Previous attendance and age-group were the independent variables used in the analyses. For both sexes previous attendance was very significant ($p < 0.001$). Age-group was

not significant. There was no interaction between age-group and previous attendance.

The second analysis put children who failed in one group (N=22) against all the others (N=146). Sexes were again looked at separately. This time previous attendance was significant for the boys only ($p < 0.028$). When the sexes were put together previous attendance was significant ($p < 0.024$) and age-group was significant ($p < 0.043$), but there was no significant interaction.

(iii) CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Overall offending

Criminal offences committed by the study children were examined in relation to going to court. Out of the 168 taken to court for I.S.A. during the trial, 124 had no recorded offences up to 12 months before coming to court for I.S.A..

In the twelve months before court appearances for I.S.A. offences committed averaged 1.2 per child. This was the same as found in the previous random study in Leeds (Berg et.al., 1978). There were no significant differences between children in the flexible and inflexible groups (mean offences per child : flexible 0.9 (S.D. = 1.7); inflexible 1.3 (S.D. = 2.3); $p > 0.05$)

Offences were collected for the children for the 12 months

following adjournments and averaged 0.4 offences per child. Again there were no significant differences between the two treatment groups (mean offences per child : flexible 0.5 (S.D. = 1.3); inflexible 0.4 (S.D. = 1.2); $p > 0.05$).

First offending rate

Of the 124 children who had no recorded offences up to 12 months before going to court for I.S.A., 16 (13%) committed a first offence in the year immediately prior to attending court for I.S.A.. Between them they committed a total of 41 offences.

At the time of appearing in court for I.S.A. there were 103 children out of the total of 168 who had no record of criminal offences. Of these 103 children, 8 children (8%) committed offences in the 12 months following appearing in court for I.S.A. (total 9 offences).

It was possible to statistically compare the rate of 1st offending in the period before court with the period after court by using a binomial test. The fall in the rate of first time offending was significant (Binomial test, $P = 0.05$).

The 124 children who had committed no offences up to the 12 months before going to the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. were divided into two groups, those who had committed none or one offence and those who had committed two or more offences in the 12 months prior to adjournments. The two

groups were compared, and it was found that there were 115 children in the former and 9 children in the latter.

For the 12 months following the I.S.A. court hearing the 108 children who had not committed any offences up to appearing were divided in the same way. 107 children had committed none or one offences, and one child had committed two or more. The fall in the rate of first offending in the 12 months after I.S.A. cases were found proved compared to the 12 months before was significant (Fisher's exact test, $P = 0.02$). These results are shown in Figure 5.6.

Offences and Care

Offences were also examined in relation to the three outcome groups outlined above. The mean numbers of offences for each of these groups, up until coming to court, in the 6 and 12 month periods before court adjournments and the 6 and 12 month periods after court adjournments are shown in Figure 5.7

Figure 5.6
Convictions and cautions before and after appearing in
court for I.S.A.

	COURT ADJOURNMENTS BEGAN	
	<12 Month period> <before court > <adjs. started >	<12 month period> <after court > <adjs. started >
children with no convictions or cautions ----->	16 of the 124 committed 41 offences rate of 1st offending = $(16/124) \times 100$ = 12.9%	
children with no convictions or cautions----->		8 of the 108 committed 9 offences rate of 1st offending = $(8/108) \times 100$ = 7.4%
children with previous convictions or cautions----->	19 of the 44 had further convictions or cautions rate = 43.2%	
children with previous convictions or cautions ----->		21 of the 60 committed 65 offences rate = 35.6%

Figure 5.7
Offences in relation to three outcome groups, in 6 monthly periods

<u>MEAN NUMBER OF OFFENCES PER CHILD</u>				
	12 months before court	6 months before court	6 months after court	12 months after court
OUTCOME GROUP	(s.d.)	(s.d.)	(s.d.)	(s.d.)
"No I.C.O. at 30 weeks" N = 111	0.33 (1.0)	0.19 (0.8)	0.15 (0.7)	0.2 (0.7)
"One I.C.O. at 30 weeks" N = 35	0.63 (1.5)	0.43 (1.36)	0.6 (1.6)	0.83 (1.8)
"failure - Care Order or 2 I.C.O.'s by 30 weeks" N = 22	1.05 (1.66)	0.6 (1.15)	0.95 (1.89)	1.36 (2.08)

Of the 22 children who subsequently failed on adjournment, 8 committed 23 offences between them in the 12 months prior to adjournments for I.S.A. beginning. Nine children of the 22 committed a total of 30 offences in the twelve months after I.S.A. adjournments started.

An overall significant fall in offences when those before and after adjournments began were compared was only found in the 111 children who had no time in care at all. It seems that the children who had previous contact with the court for criminal activities before adjournments in fact did much worse than the others, but the cause for this was not investigated, and this finding must therefore be treated with caution, since it is possible previous trips to court for criminal offences may or may not have influenced those taking decisions about I.S.A. proceedings.

It would have been interesting and instructive to have studied the data for overall differences between offenders and non-offenders, but this was too large a job to undertake within the confines of the research protocol.

(iv) PREDICTORS OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE TO THE TWO TYPES OF ADJOURNMENT

A multiple regression analysis was carried out using 3 background or independent variables as predictors of subsequent outcome.

The three variables were :

- (i) % attendance in the 5 weeks immediately before court
- (ii) age
- (iii) sex

Subsequent outcome was the actual % attendance of the child over the thirty weeks of the trial, adjusted for any period the child spent in interim care. All failures were included by taking the % attendance at the time they went into care (2). In this way it was hoped to reflect the relationship of failure in the trial (Supervision, 2 I.C.O.'s or Care) to low attendance. For children who had had only 1 I.C.O. the time spent in Care (usually three or four weeks) was deducted from the 30 weeks of the trial and the known attendance for the 26 or 27 weeks used as a measure of outcome. This was necessary because attendance figures were not available for children in Interim Care. In the multiple regression the adjusted figure was used.

The first multiple regression carried out used only those cases which had received flexible adjournment to derive a set of flexible weights. A second multiple

regression used only those cases which had received inflexible adjournments to derive a set of inflexible weights. The results are shown in Table 5.5

TABLE 5.5
Multiple regression analysis: means and weights.

<u>MEANS</u>		
FLEXIBLE CASES (N=83)		INFLEXIBLE CASES (N=85)
62.2%	% attendance in 5 weeks before court	62.6%
13.5 yrs	age	13.7 yrs
----	sex	----
75.2	adjusted school attendance at 30 weeks after court	73.9
<u>WEIGHTS</u>		
0.2	% attendance in 5 weeks before court	0.16
-1.13	age	-1.44
5.18	sex	-4.37
75.87	(constant) for adjusted school attendance at 30 weeks after court	85.15

From the weights 2 prediction equations were derived, using approximations for the weights. These equations were : -

FLEXIBLE PREDICTION EQUATION :-

(predicted flexible outcome)

$$=76+(.2*\text{percp5})+(5*\text{sex})-\text{age}$$

INFLEXIBLE PREDICTION EQUATION :-

(predicted inflexible outcome)

$$=85+(.16*\text{pecp5})-(4*\text{sex})-(1.5*\text{age})$$

Using these weights it was then possible to apply each set of regression weights not only to the group from which they were derived but also to the other group. This produced two sets of predicted attendance outcomes for each group: one from the Flexible regression weights and one from the Inflexible regression weights. It was then possible to look at the results from a theoretical view and see which scheme theoretically should produce the most satisfactory outcomes. Actual outcome in terms of school attendance, was then looked at statistically, using a two-way analysis of variance, to find out whether giving the "appropriate procedure" (i.e. that which had the best predicted score) in each case would have produced significantly better results than by using one type of adjournment on all cases. These results are shown in Table 5.6

TABLE 5.6

Analysis of variance for actual scheme against predicted scheme for each child

The total population considered was 168 (i.e. all cases)
The actual mean attendance at 30 weeks (adjusted) was 74.78%.

CELL ANALYSIS

ACTUAL SCHEME	Inflexible N=85 mean=73.87	Flexible N=83 mean=75.72

PREDICTED SCHEME	Inflexible N=89 mean=75.30	Flexible N=79 mean=74.20

PREDICTED V ACTUAL SCHEME

		PREDICTED SCHEME		Total
		Inflexible	Flexible	
ACTUAL SCHEME	Inflexible	76.58 (48)	70.27 (37)	85
	Flexible	73.77 (41)	77.57 (42)	83
	Total	89	79	168

The analysis of variance showed no significant main effects. The interaction between actual and predicted scheme was not significant either (sig of $F = 0.092$). The trend seemed to be that some children might do better on one scheme than the other.

A further analysis was carried out with the above table of "Predicted scheme" against "Actual scheme" recast:

		ACTUAL SCHEME		
		Inflexible	Flexible	Total
WHETHER TREATMENT APPROPRIATE OR NOT	App.	76.58 (48)	77.57 (42)	90
	Not App.	70.27 (37)	73.77 (41)	78
	Total	85	83	168

The overall results from the Analysis of Variance were not significant. However, the main effect of appropriateness had significance of $F = 0.092$ (i.e. there would appear to be a trend for predictions to improve results). This result is important if further detailed research work was contemplated to refine the adjournment system. The prediction analysis was not carried any further in this study.

(v) CHRONIC SCHOOL ABSENTEES BEFORE THE COURT:
a sub-study

During the course of investigation whilst the author attended the courts, it was noticed that some children and families not in the experiment of two types of adjournments, had been appearing regularly before the Juvenile Court for non-school attendance over long periods of time. A preliminary look at the recent attendance of these children indicated that many were attending school fairly regularly. This information led to the following question :- "Is it necessary for a child to have many repeated court adjournments to secure his or her regular attendance at school?".

Close scrutiny of the cases in question produced some interesting results. When the criterion set for the main project was used (70% attendance) then it was apparent, that on this basis some of the children who had been on adjournments for a long period of time were meeting that criterion and therefore should be considered as a candidate for the cessation of repeated court adjournments. This could be seen more clearly when the percentage attendances for the six most recent appearances for the child were considered. The only allowance made to lessen the 70% criterion was genuine illness, usually supported by a medical certificate, but counted as genuine where there was acceptance of the absence as genuine by the visiting E.W.O. or the magistrates. Usually, a case of genuine illness was obvious, in so far as it caused one or

two low percentages in the midst of a sustained run of acceptably high attendance figures.

A total of 40 cases of long-standing adjournment were supplied by the Education Welfare Department, for a preliminary look at the feasibility of doing a randomly controlled trial to compare continuing adjournments with adjournment cessation. Of the 40 longstanding cases supplied at this stage, 29 had school attendance at or above the 70 % criterion for the previous 6 appearances except for odd instances of genuine illness. 11 cases did not meet this criterion. There therefore seemed to be good grounds for some of the 29 remaining longstanding cases to be adjourned "No Order Made".

Court appearances are expensive, so, if it could be demonstrated that the cessation of court adjournments did not result in a large drop in school attendance, the courts might be able to consider cessation of adjournments at an earlier stage with no detrimental effect on the child concerned but effecting considerable savings in court time and money.

(a) Method

A full list of all cases which had been on court adjournments for at least the previous 12 months was supplied to the research team by the Education Welfare Department. There were approximately 90 names. Each child was randomly assigned to one of two groups by the author, using random number tables.

One group were called "stayers", and it was intended that this group should stay on the courts books and continue to receive court adjournments for the academic year 1980-81. The other group were called "stoppers". It was intended that this group would stop coming to court during academic year 1980-81 by the court making "No Order" and not requiring the child concerned to appear again. The study stopped at the end of the academic year. It was the intention to compare the attendance of the two groups over the year of the study to see whether stopping adjournments had any significant effect on attendance levels.

(b) Results

Subjects

Of the 90 cases on the original list only 31 were dealt with in the intended manner supplied on the random list. The 31 cases which were randomly allocated to the "correct" group were divided up as follows :

stayed coming to court	|	n=16 (7 males)	|
stopped coming to court (no order made)	|	n=15 (9 males)	|
TOTAL	|	n=31 (16 males)	|

59 children were excluded from the trial; of these 31 were due to attain school leaving age during the year and the magistrates retained all of them on the court books regardless of the random allocation supplied by the research worker; a further 23 children were assigned to

the wrong group, i.e. the randomisation was not correctly adhered to; 1 child received a supervision order; in 4 cases insufficient data was supplied.

Attendance

The attendance for the two groups of children was:

	mean % attendance for 1980-81	mean age (years)
stayed coming to court	70.2	12.3
stopped coming to court	80.1	10.9

Children who stopped coming to court ceased at different stages of the academic year. In order to assess the impact of cessation of court adjournments two periods of 10 weeks were taken to examine changes. One of these periods was the 10 week period immediately preceding the "No Order Made" decision of the magistrates and the other was the ten week period immediately following the cessation of adjournments.

For the purposes of comparison two 10 week periods were also examined from the group who remained on court adjournments. These two ten-week periods were the 10 school weeks either side of the February half-term. The attendance for each group in the specified periods is shown in Table 5.7

Table 5.7

Table to show percentage attendance for two groups of children for specified 10 week periods.

CHILDREN STAYING ON COURT BOOKS (N=16)	CHILDREN STOPPING COMING TO COURT (N = 15)
mean % attendance over whole year 70.2	mean % attendance over whole year 80.1
mean % attendance during the 10 wks before February half term 64.4	mean % attendance during the 10 wks before cessation of adjournments 88.4
mean % attendance during the 10 wks after February half term 72.8	mean % attendance during the 10 wks after cessation of adjournments 79.4

This randomisation study of stopping adjournments compared to continuing adjournments was not really a great success. Numbers for both groups were small, and therefore the extent to which the results can be applicable in this situation is debatable. Children who stopped coming to court and had a "No Order Made" decision applied by the court had a higher mean attendance over the whole year, and a higher mean school attendance during the 10 weeks following cessation of court adjournments. It should be noted however, that the children in this group also had a lower mean age (see previous page), and as absence from school is known to increase with age, part of the difference might indeed be attributable to

age effects. Children who stopped coming to court showed a 9% drop in their school attendance measured over the 10 week period following the cessation of adjournments. It should be remembered that this is equivalent to almost half a day per week. Furthermore, the group of children who stopped coming to court may be a biased group. It might well have been the case that the magistrates exercised their judicial discretion and only went ahead with stopping adjournments when the child's attendance had reached a very high level rather than the 70% criterion agreed at the outset. As with the main study, with the benefit of hindsight perhaps 70% was too low. In no case was attendance less than 74% in the stoppers group and in many cases it was at or above the 85% level. Any child who was assigned randomly to the stoppers group and had a lowish attendance may well have been excluded from the study by the magistrates. If this was the case, and it was not possible to ascertain the cause of the low compliance with the randomisation procedure, then only the "good" attenders would be in the resulting group of children stopping adjournments, but both good and bad attenders would be in the group which stayed on court adjournments. Such an explanation might explain the 10% difference between the two groups. This is not significant because of the small numbers involved. Other possible sources of bias were possibly the total length of time that a child had spent on court adjournments; the day of the week that the child appeared in court and how well the magistrate knew his case; the history of

family involvement with school-attendance courts.

This sub-study was disappointing and inconclusive. It does suggest, though, that the criteria for "No Order Made" in cases where adjournment has been proceeding for some time needs to be reviewed.

NOTES

1. The numbers shown in the table are sometimes less than the total of 168 children in the study because some of the information was not available for all children. In particular, details about intact home, number of children in the family and school questionnaires were only available for some children, either from interviews carried out by the author or from court reports. Not all schools returned the questionnaires for all the children.

2. This figure was an average figure calculated up to the point the child went into care. It was the best that could be done to estimate attendance since, after the child was placed in care, no records of attendance were available to the research team from the Social Services Department.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEWS AND SCHOOLS

(i) THE INTERVIEWED GROUP

From the main sample of 177 families 95 families were chosen for interview using a table of random numbers to select the families to be approached. Of the 95 so selected, 21 families either could not be contacted or were unwilling to take part. Three families moved out of the city during the project and were therefore lost to the research. Seven families acted as the pilot group (described previously) to develop the interviews. The remaining 64 families were used as the main interviewed group for the results reported here. In 54 families only the mother was interviewed; in 3 families the father only; and in 7 families both parents were present during the interview.

After three months it was possible to see 54 of the 64 families originally interviewed. After 12 months 41 were seen again. Most of the interviewing was carried out by the author but when the project got very busy, two part-time interviewers were used so that the interviewing time-schedule could be adhered to. (1)

The Sample

As a check, comparisons were made between the 21 families selected for interview but who could either not be contacted or who would not take part and the remaining 71 families who were in contact with the project through the

interviewer (7 in the pilot group and 64 in the main study). No significant differences were found between the two groups when age, proportion of boys, area of residence in the city, percentage of free school meals at the child's school (taken as a measure of adverse social circumstances), previous school attendance or offences committed were considered. The 92 children selected randomly for interview were also compared with the 76 not so selected. No significant differences were found in age, the proportion of boys, criminal offences, school attendance or questionnaires concerning behaviour completed by teachers. These results have now been published (Berg, Goodwin, Hullin and McGuire, 1986).

On this basis further comparisons were carried out using the main group of 64 families interviewed against the 104 other children in the study.

A series of t-tests between families and children in the main interview group (n=64) against the rest of the cases (n=104) were carried out for the following variables :- age; age-group; sex; and school attendance at 20, 10, and 5 weeks before court.

There were no significant differences for any of the questionnaire scores between the two groups. However, attendance at 30 weeks after the first court appearance was significantly different for the two groups. The interviewed group had been to school 79% of the time (s.d. = 18), and the mainly non-interviewed group for 72% of the

time (sd=30); (t=2.1; df=142.6; 2-tail probability = 0.036). This difference is not a large one and could be due to chance. It is possible however, that it could in some way be related to the fact that the families were interviewed three times over the relevant period since the children whose families were selected for interview did not appear to differ from the remainder in any of the ways which were looked at before coming to court but then did substantially better as far as school attendance was concerned after coming to court.

This improvement perhaps indicates that in addition to the adjournment procedure used by the Juvenile Courts, contact between a trained interviewer and the family over the period of a year, with detailed question and answer interviews concerning school attendance problems and how the parents dealt with them contributes to improving outcome, measured in terms of improved school attendance. The reader should note that when the author carried out the interviews with the families no advisory or supportive-type activities were undertaken, but the questionnaires tackled in order, one after the other, followed by a fairly rapid thanks and departure.

Controls

35 control families were randomly selected to be interviewed. This was all resources would allow, and most of these interviews were not carried out by the author, although she dealt with all the random allocations and data processing. These families were the families of the

next child of the same sex on the register at school to the court child, and were interviewed once only.

(ii) SCHOOL ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

For the first interview with parents (just before the initial court hearing) this questionnaire consisted of 72 items, each of which was scored by the interviewer as either "YES" or "NO". (All the questionnaires developed to use in the truancy research can be found in Appendix 1. Standard scales are referenced as appropriate).

Table 6.1 lists all the items which were scored along with the percentages of the court childrens' parents who answered "YES" for that item. Of the 72 items, those for which "YES" was less than 10% or more than 90% were automatically excluded from a principal component factor analysis which was carried out using the SPSS factor programme (Version 9) type "PA2". In addition, some other items were taken out of the factor analysis because they were implicitly implied in other answers. For example VAR1 (Child travels to school on foot) was retained, but all other modes of transport were taken out because, either a child goes to school on foot or he goes some "other" way and that distinction was the only one with which this analysis was concerned. Other more precise details will be described later as appropriate.

TABLE 6.1

Table of 72 items from school attendance questionnaire used in interview 1 showing % of " YES" answers for each item. (N=64)

VARIABLE	LABEL	N	% YES
VAR1 *	child travels to school on foot	32	50
VAR2	child travels to school on 1 bus	29	45
VAR3	child tavelns to school on 2 buses	3	5
VAR4	child travels to school on bike	0	0
VAR5	child travels to school by car	0	0
VAR6	child travels to school-other means	0	0
VAR7	father takes child to school	0	0
VAR8	mother takes child to school	2	3
VAR9	brother or sister travels with child to school	6	9
VAR10	friend travels with child to school	30	47
VAR11 *	child travels to school alone	31	48
VAR12	child travels to school with-other	0	0
VAR13 *	parent found out child had missed school during last month	15	23
VAR14 *	parent found out child had missed school 1-6 months ago	26	41
VAR15 *	parent found out child had missed school 6-12 months ago	10	16
VAR16	parent found out child had missed school more than 12 months ago	6	9
VAR17	child was 5-7 yrs old when he first started missing school	6	9
VAR18 *	child was 8-12 years old when he first started missing school	24	38
VAR19 *	child was 13-16 years old when he first started missing school	33	52
VAR20 *	parent found out from school that child had been off school	9	14
VAR21 *	parent found out from EWO that child had been off school	23	36
VAR22	parent found out from child himself that child had been off school	3	5
VAR23	parent found out from other children that child had been off school	1	2
VAR24	parent found out from a relative or friend that child had been off sch.	6	9
VAR25 *	parent knew child was off school	26	41
VAR26	parent found out from other source that child had been off school	0	0
VAR27 *	child tends to miss school same day each week	15	23
VAR28 *	child tries to miss particular activities	24	37
VAR29 *	parent took child back to school after he had been off	17	27

Table 6.1 cont....

VAR30		mother took child back to school	17	27
VAR31		father took child back to school	3	5
VAR32		brother or sister took child back to school	3	5
VAR33		E.W.O. took child back to school	4	6
VAR34		other person took child back to sch.	1	2
VAR35	*	social services contacted for help over school	10	16
VAR36		probation officer contacted for help over school	1	2
VAR37	*	school contacted for help	37	58
VAR38	*	police contacted for help over sch	10	16
VAR39	*	doctor contacted for help over sch	19	30
VAR40	*	other agency contacted for help	22	34
VAR41	*	no time off ill in last 4 weeks	25	39
VAR42		1 wk or less off ill in last month	25	39
VAR43		over 1 and up to 2 wks off ill in last month	6	9
VAR44		over 2 and up to 3 wks off ill in last month	4	6
VAR45		over 3 weeks off ill in last month	1	2
VAR46	*	no medical certificate required as child had not been ill	23	36
VAR47		med.cert. for 1 wk or less	2	3
VAR48		med.cert. for 1-2 wks	1	2
VAR49		med.cert. for 2-3 wks	0	0
VAR50		med.cert. for over 3 wks	1	2
VAR51	*	child is with parent when off school	36	56
VAR52		child is with friend or relative of parent when off school	3	5
VAR53	*	child is with a friend of his when off school	17	27
VAR54		child is alone when off school	4	6
VAR55	*	parent doesn't know where child is		
VAR56	*	child is at home when off school	38	59
VAR57		child is at a relatives when off	2	3
VAR58		child at friends of parents when off	1	2
VAR59	*	child is at one of his friends	4	6
VAR60	*	child is elsewhere when off	11	17
VAR61	*	parent doesn't know where child is when off school	18	28
VAR62	*	child gets into trouble when missing school	11	17
VAR63	*	child gets into trouble at other times	10	16
VAR64	*	child sometimes refuses point blank to go to school	20	31
VAR65	*	child stays at home as a result of protesting about going to school	15	23

Table 6.1 cont....

VAR66 *	child sometimes upset before leaving for school	19	30
VAR67 *	child refuses breakfast on school mornings	8	12
VAR68 *	child is obviously pale on school mornings	17	27
VAR69 *	child is tearful on school mornings	19	30
VAR70 *	child complains of pains on school mornings	41	64
VAR71 *	child complains of feeling sick on school mornings	30	47
VAR72 *	child resists parents attempts to get him to school	18	28

NOTE : Items marked with * are those which were included in the factor analysis

In all, a total of 14 factors were produced by the factor analysis. The first 5 factors accounted for 62% of the variance. The first factor accounted for 21% of the variance and the second for 14%. The items which had loadings of 0.4 or more in the rotated factor matrix were listed for each factor and produced two factors which were particularly interesting.

TABLE 6.2

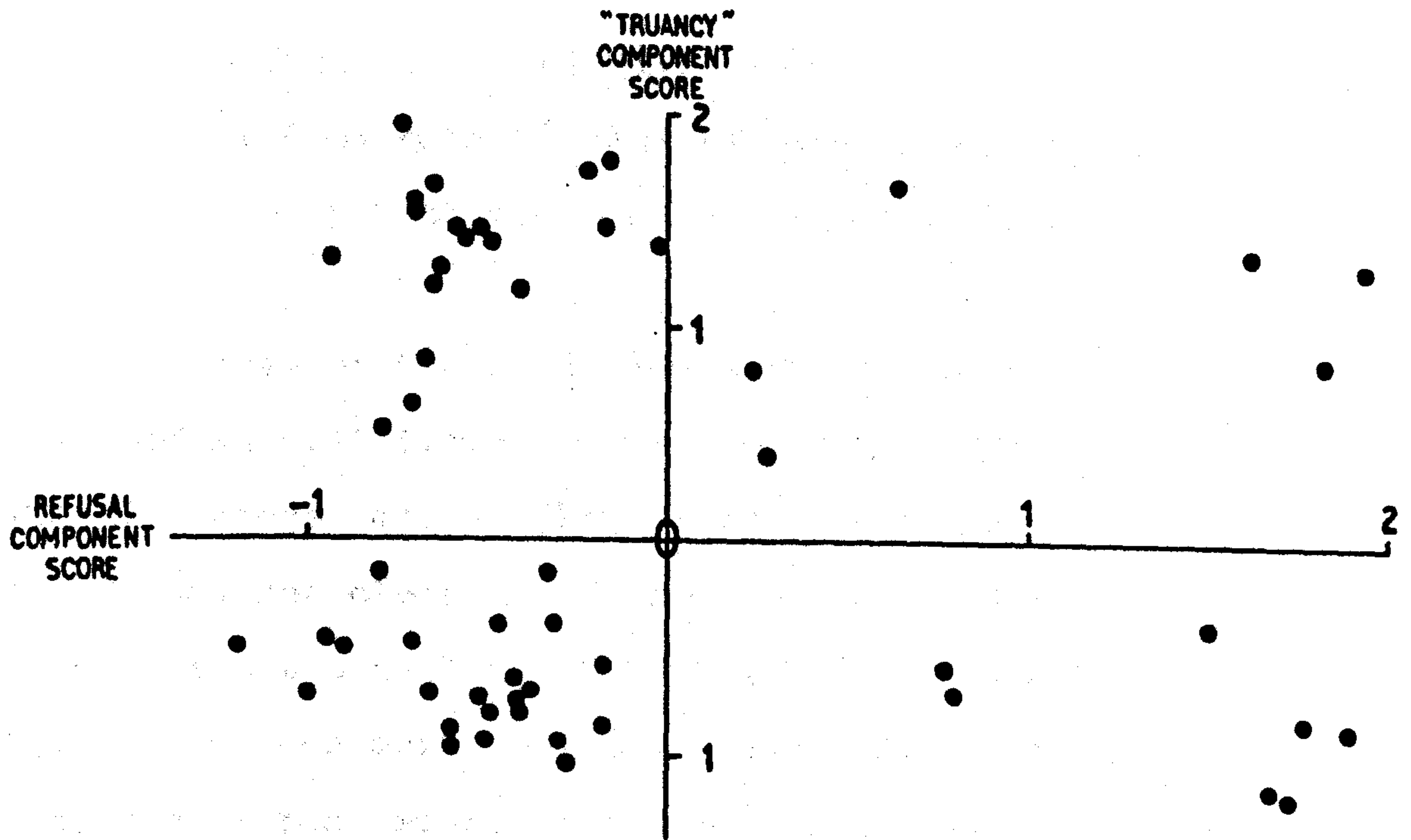
List of items with a loading of 0.4 or more on rotated factor matrix based on questions from the school attendance questionnaire listed by factor

VARIABLE	LOADING
FACTOR 1 (21% of variance)	
Parent found out from EWO about child missing school	0.47
Parent knew that the child was missing school	-0.72
Child with parent when off school	-0.88
Child at home when off school	-0.85
Parent doesn't know where child is when off school	0.73
FACTOR 2 (14% of variance)	
Social services contacted for help over school	0.49
Child sometimes refuses point blank to go to school	0.89
Child stays at home when he protests about going to school	0.90
Child is tearful on school mornings	0.44
Child resists parents attempts to get him to school	0.55
FACTOR 3 (10% of variance)	
No time off ill in last month	0.92
No medical certificate needed - not ill	0.92
Child gets into trouble out of school hours	0.41
FACTOR 4 (8% of variance)	
Child was 8-12 years old when he started to miss school	0.86
Child was 13-16 years old when he started to miss school	-0.88
FACTOR 5 (3% of variance)	
Parent found out child had been missing school during the previous month	0.67
Child was 'elsewhere' when off school	0.71

The first factor had high loadings on items known to be related to "truancy", i.e. the parent didn't know the child had been off from school, but had discovered from an E.W.O.. The second factor had high loadings on items more characteristic of school refusal or school phobia, i.e. the child had refused to go to school, there had been tears on a school morning and resistance to parental efforts to get the child to school. The third factor was not very precise. It consisted of high loadings on "no illness" in the month before court and on "getting into trouble" at weekends or in the school holidays. Factor 4 was concerned with age alone, and Factor 5 linked the parent not knowing where the child was when off school with not finding out about it until very recently. Of the first 5 factors, the first two accounted for over a third of the variance (35%) and were further investigated.

It seemed reasonable to postulate that there were at least two types of school attendance problem as revealed by the questionnaire. Factor scores were produced on each factor in the factor analysis for each subject and the scores read in to the data set on the computer as "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" scores (based upon Factors 1 and 2 in the analysis). These factor scores of "Truancy" and "Refusal" were plotted using the two orthogonal components as coordinates, (figure 6.1). This was done in an attempt to discover whether the individuals varied along a continuum or whether there were specific categories into which an individual would either fall or not fall. This method was recommended by Eysenck (1970).

FIGURE 6.1
Plot of "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" scores from children
taken to court for I.S.A. (N=64)



Inspection of the plot indicated that the categorical view was the correct one to adopt. Individuals were best classified into one of 4 categories :

high score on truancy only

high score on school refusal only

high scores on both truancy and school refusal

low scores on both truancy and school refusal.

For the purposes of the subsequent analysis a "high" score was defined as 0.00 (zero) or more on both "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" factors and a "low" score as being less than 0.00. It was not clear at this stage whether or not those children who fell in the "neither" category were suffering from condoned absence, nor was it very clear how some children scored high on both factors (except that there were few and no more than would be expected by chance). When the control group was included in the analysis most of them in fact fell into the "neither" category. It is possible that these results reflect findings by Galloway (1976, 1980) referred to in Chapter 1 where truancy, mixed reasons and condoned absence were the main groups. The large non-truant and non-refusal group could be the same sort of children who belonged to Galloway's "condoned group" which was also very large.

In order to find out whether these categories were meaningful, the four groups produced by the above analysis were compared on various factors. These are summarised in Table 6.3.

TABLE 6.3

Comparisons between children taken to court for failure to attend school with high and low scores on "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" factors in four combinations

	HIGH SCORES ON TRUANCY & REFUSAL FACTORS (n)	HIGH SCORES ON TRUANCY FACTOR ONLY (n)	HIGH SCORES REFUSAL FACTOR ONLY (n)	HIGH SCORES NEITHER FACTOR (n)	SIG. p< (n)
Rutter B2 Questionnaire Anti-social score	4.1 (9)	3.4 (14)	2.9 (9)	1.0 (19)	.01 (51)
Rutter B2 Questionnaire TOTAL score	21.45 (9)	15.2 (14)	14.1 (9)	11.4 (19)	.03 (51)
Rutter A2 Questionnaire Anti-social score	3.0 (10)	2.5 (20)	2.0 (10)	1.0 (23)	.01 (53)
Rutter A2 Questionnaire TOTAL score	16.7 (10)	12.7 (20)	13.1 (10)	9.3 (23)	.03 (53)
Conners Teachers Questionnaire Factor I	1.2 (9)	0.7 (14)	0.8 (9)	0.2 (19)	.002 (51)
Percentage with criminal offences	60% (10)	55% (20)	27% (11)	22% (23)	n.s .06 (53)
Ratio of Boys to girls	0.6 (10)	0.7 (20)	0.4 (11)	0.3 (23)	.02 (53)

The comparisons showed that children with high scores on the "TRUANCY" factor were more likely to have high Anti-Social scores as measured on the Rutter A2 and B2 questionnaires (Rutter op.cit), and to be boys. These children were also more likely to have a criminal record when they came to court for poor attendance, although the difference just failed to reach significance ($p=0.056$)

Reliability

As a further check on the usefulness of the categorisation, transcripts of the interviews were read by an experienced child psychiatrist who was not involved in any other aspects of the research. She was asked to place each child into one of the four categories; truancy, refusal, mixture of both, or neither.

The classifications made by the child psychiatrist were then compared with the classifications derived from the factor analysis of the school attendance questionnaire using the "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" factors. The classifications of the child psychiatrist and the factor analysis are shown in Table 6.4. The Kappa statistic to check reliability was used (Bartko and Carpenter 1976) and a value of 0.75 showed that agreement was significantly above chance level ($p<.001$) This study has now been published (Berg, Casswell, Goodwin, Mullin, McGuire, and Tagg, 1985).

TABLE 6.4

Comparison between classification of children before the court for I.S.A. by a child psychiatrist and by factor analysis of a questionnaire. (N=55)

Classification into 4 categories by scores on 2 principal components

Classification by a child psychiatrist into 4 categories	<u>School Refusal</u>	<u>Truancy</u>	<u>School Refusal and Truancy</u>	<u>Neither</u>
1. School Refusal	6	0	2	2
2. Truancy	0	16	0	1
3. School refusal and Truancy	1	2	7	1
4. Neither	1	0	0	16

Response to the adjournment procedure

The response of the children in the four groups to the adjournment procedure was examined in relation to the four statistically derived categories outlined above.

School attendance after coming to court

Attendance at school over 30 weeks (adjusted to allow for any time spent in care) following the first appearance in court for I.S.A. was compared for the four groups. (Table 6.4a). There was a significant difference ($F=2.9$, $df = 3,60$; $P < 0.05$). The attendance was worst in the combined "truancy and school refusal" group, and best in the "neither" category. There were no sex differences, and no interactions between sex and groups. When a two-way analysis of variance was carried out on the attendance

data by "truancy" and "school refusal" regardless of whether they were combined, "school refusers" (mean attendance 70.8%, N=21) showed a significantly poorer response than "non-school refusers" (mean attendance 82.6, N=43, $F=6.5$, $P<0.01$), whereas "truants" (mean attendance 75.6%, N=29) showed no significant differences when compared with "non-truants" (mean attendance 81.3, N=32, $F=1.9$). There was no significant interaction between the two factors.

Attendance before court

The child's attendance before the court hearing for I.S.A. was examined in two five-week periods. The first, taken from 10 to 5 weeks before court, was as far as possible a measure of absence from school uninfluenced by impending court proceedings since the families would not have had a summons to appear. The second period taken from 5 weeks to the time of court appearance was influenced by the delivery of the summons requiring the child to appear in court. Subtracting the child's attendance in the 1st period from that in the second period produced a measure of the child's anticipatory response before going to court. The "combined" group showed no improvement before court; and the "neither" group showed the most improvement (see Table 6.4a). The analysis of variance examining change in attendance by the four groups just failed to reach significance ($F=2.7$, $df=3,60$; $P<0.06$). A two-way analysis of variance of change in attendance looked at by the two factors "truancy" and "school

refusal" showed that "school refusers" (mean difference 1.7) changed significantly less than "non-school refusers" (mean difference 19.5, $F=6.0$, $P<0.02$) but "truants" (mean difference 8.2) were not significantly different from "non-truants" (mean difference = 18.2, $F=2.2$) and there was no significant interaction between the two factors.

Table 6.4a

64 children taken to court for failure to attend school whose families were interviewed, classified on 2 principal components ("truancy" and "school refusal"); response to the court adjournment procedure.

Classification	<u>I</u> Truancy and Refusal N=9	<u>II</u> Truancy only N=20	<u>III</u> Refusal only N=12	<u>IV</u> Neither N=23	Total N=64	Signif. of diff between Cols I and IV P <
% mean att. at school in 30 weeks after court for I.S.A.	69	79	72	86	79	0.05
(SD)	(18)	(19)	(26)	(7)	(18)	
Diff. in % mean att. at school in 2 successive 5-week periods (*) before appearance for I.S.A.	2	13	4	26	14	0.06
(SD)	(20)	(27)	(35)	(29)	(30)	
% lack of response to adjournment system (less than 70% attend. leading to I.C.O. or C.O. in 30 weeks).	78	30	33	9	30	0.01

(*) that is 10 to 5 weeks minus 5 to 0 (time of court appearance).

Care

Because it was unclear what part each of "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" played in subsequent outcome a G.L.I.M. (Generalised LogLinear Interactive Modelling) analysis (Baker and Nelder, 1978) was carried out using :

- (1) the refusal factor
- (2) the truancy factor, and
- (3) whether the child had committed any offences up until the time of starting adjournments

The proportion of children in each category who had spent any periods in care during the thirty weeks of the trial was calculated for the analysis. The "truancy" and "refusal" factors were both divided into two groups. Table 6.5 shows the data used in the G.L.I.M. analysis.

The comparisons showed that both high truancy scores and high school refusal scores, quite independently, made it more likely that a child would be made subject to an I.C.O.. Significantly more of the children who went into care had criminal offences when compared to those children not going into care.

TABLE 6.5
Logistic model of factors influencing children going into care because of failure to attend school

REFUSAL FACTOR SCORE	TRUANCY FACTOR SCORE	OFFENCES	ANY CARE OR NOT (incl. ICOs)	No. of children in category
low	low	none	no care	17
			some care	1
		some	no care	4
			some care	1
	high	none	no care	6
			some care	3
		some	no care	8
			some care	3
high	low	none	no care	6
			some care	2
		some	no care	1
			some care	2
	high	none	no care	1
			some care	3
		some	no care	2
			some care	4

Table 6.6 shows the proportions of children getting an Interim Care Order or a full Care Order in relation to the "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" factors and criminal offences for a linear logistic model. This model is the same sort of model used to try to describe data as in Chapter 2. The observed proportions of children in each group were compared with fitted proportions (method described in Cox and Snell, 1981). The proportion of children doing badly

on adjournments (i.e. those who spent some time in care as a consequence of not going to school) was looked at using a logistic model. The main effects examined were the "refusal" and "truancy" factor scores divided up into "high" and "low" and whether or not the children committed criminal offences (yes or no). Only main effects were required to produce an adequate fit - there were no hidden relationships in the data examined. In other words it was found that whether or not a child received a Care Order was determined both by the school attendance problem category and whether or not the child had committed criminal offences, but the two did not interact.

Comment

Response to the adjournment procedure distinguished the problems found among the children studied. Children who had features of both school refusal and truancy appeared to do least well, with school refusal features being most associated with unsatisfactory response. Those with neither features responded best, both in anticipation of coming to court and while attending court. This might support the view that for these children there was some degree of parental connivance with absence which the court discouraged. The poorer response of school refusers (phobics) to efforts made by the S.W.O. service to return them to school had been noticed before, (Pritchard, 1974). One consequence of this is that school phobics/refusers may find they are taken to court for I.S.A., and Pritchard

(op.cit.) found that in a group of primary school children those classified as school phobic were proceeded against more frequently than truant or "other" groups, although the reasons for this were not investigated.

Lack of response to pre-court efforts and lack of response to the real threat of court by the "refusal" group in the study reported here may be one reason why phobics/refusers were taken to court. However, there were more truants than refusers in this study and also more in the "other" group. The results presented tend to support the suggestion made by Pritchard, namely that the E.W.O. may instigate court proceedings, even if a child is school phobic or a refuser, because they have failed to respond to the help the E.W.O. has offered and because the E.W.O. does not know what else to do. Children with school refusal symptoms may not be helped by a legal approach, and this raises the question as to whether enough of them are identified clearly enough to be referred for more appropriate help, e.g. through child guidance.

TABLE 6.6
Proportion of children getting an I.C.O. or Care Order in relation to "TRUANCY" and "REFUSAL" factor scores and criminal offences.

"school refusal" component scores	"truancy" component scores	Committed criminal Offences	
		NO	YES
Low	Low	o 0.06 (18) f 0.08	0.20 (5) 0.12
	High	o 0.33 (9) f 0.25	0.27 (11) 0.36
High	Low	o 0.25 (8) f 0.33	0.67 (3) 0.43
	High	o 0.75 (4) f 0.66	0.57 (6) 0.74

The numbers of subjects are shown in parentheses. Total N= 64. o= observed; f=fitted with logistic model, with only main effects.

Summary

64 families were interviewed about school attendance and classified into four groups depending on whether the children showed characteristics of "school refusal" and/or "truancy" as measured by a questionnaire. About a fifth showed "school refusal" and a third "truancy". Less than a sixth showed both features together and over a third displayed neither characteristic. The children with least disturbance on either scale did best in terms of outcome. Differences between the groups were found in psychiatric disturbance and responsiveness to court procedures.

(iii) GENERAL BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONNAIRE.

An initial factor analysis of all the items which had scored a "YES" response for more than 10% of the children and less than 90% failed to produce any meaningful factors. The questionnaire was therefore looked at more closely, and it appeared that the content of the questions fell into two quite distinct categories. There were those questions which asked specifically about the child's behaviour on the previous day or, failing that a recent day in the previous week. Other questions asked more generally about the last few weeks. Two separate factor analyses were therefore appropriate; the first using those questions relating to the child's behaviour "Recently"; the second for the "general" questions.

Unlike the school attendance questionnaire, where subjects and controls were considered separately, data from 99 children (64 subjects and 35 controls) was factor analysed together, because unlike the school attendance questionnaire, this questionnaire related more to general behaviour and parental expectations of their children rather than an area of known difference between subjects and controls; for this reason subjects and controls were considered together and then compared on each factor.

53 items asked specifically about various aspects of the child's behaviour on a recent day and what, if anything the parents had done about the difficulties encountered.

Table 6.7 lists those items which were related only to a recent day and indicates which were included in a factor analysis. The percentage "YES" responses for interviewed families of court children and control children are shown separately for each item and significant differences are indicated; answers are shown for each of the three interviews with court children, each of which was compared with the one control interview. Similarly, Table 6.8 shows the results from the remaining 57 items covering the more general aspects of the child's behaviour, and parental rules and supervision.

TABLE 6.7
Replies to questions about the child "RECENTLY"

variable list	SUBJECTS						CONTROLS		sig of diff p <
	INT 1		INT 2		INT 3		% yes (n=35)		
	% yes (n=64)	N	% yes (n=54)	N	% yes (n=41)	N	%	%	
+ home on time from school	27	58	35	65	27	66	33	94	.05
+ out before tea	29	45	25	46	13	32	12	34	ns
had tea at home	58	91	49	91	38	93	35	100	.05
had no tea	3	5	0	0	2	1	0	0	ns
tea at a relations	2	3	1	2	1	2	0	0	ns
evening meal at friends	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	ns
evening meal elsewhere	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	0	ns
+ went out after tea	41	64	36	67	30	73	23	66	ns
+ watched television	55	86	36	67	30	73	30	86	ns
hobby of some kind	3	5	3	6	2	5	4	11	ns
went to cinema	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
gardening	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	11	.03
welfare work/ visiting old people etc	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
go and see people on stage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
gymnastics	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
+ reading	11	17	3	6	1	2	13	51	.001
+ games such as draughts, or darts	11	17	5	9	2	5	6	17	ns
+ art of some kind	10	16	4	7	1	2	8	23	.05

TABLE 6.7 (continued)

+ music-instrument or records	15	25	12	22	5	12	16	46	.05
go to see places	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	6	ns
+ look after a pet	17	27	10	18	2	5	12	34	.05
go to the fun fair	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	ns
dancing or disco	1	2	2	4	2	5	2	6	ns
out with girl friend	6	9	2	4	2	5	0	0	.05
out with boy friend	4	6	1	2	2	5	4	11	ns
+ getting around with mates	22	34	16	30	7	17	18	51	.05
+ sport	7	11	3	6	0	0	10	29	.05
go to church/chapel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
go to an evening class	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
fighting	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	ns
cubs, scouts, brownies, or guides	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ns
go to a youth club	1	2	2	4	0	0	3	9	ns
+ go to a friends house	23	36	17	32	5	12	12	34	.05
+ homework	9	14	7	13	3	7	9	26	.05
+ other activities	29	45	19	35	28	68	3	9	.01
+ in on time yesterday evening	43	75	29	54	30	73	27	77	.05
+ argument about bedtime	14	22	4	7	8	19	10	29	ns
+ difficulty at bedtime	2	3	0	0	1	2	2	6	ns
+ disagree over use of time	11	17	4	7	9	22	5	14	ns
disagreements yesterday	5	8	4	7	3	7	1	3	ns
+ child did jobs yesterday	45	70	39	72	34	83	32	91	.05
jobs done under protest	5	8	7	13	5	13	3	9	ns
+ jobs child failed to do	6	9	5	9	1	2	4	11	ns
+ did things not supposed to	9	14	7	13	11	27	3	9	.05
bad language yesterday	3	5	6	11	2	5	1	3	ns
fighting yesterday	5	8	4	7	1	2	4	11	ns
+ temper	10	16	2	4	5	12	8	23	.05
+ quarrelling	14	22	10	18	12	29	17	49	.05
+ noisiness	13	20	9	17	8	19	9	26	ns
+ untidiness	11	17	5	9	5	12	10	29	.05
+ disobedience	8	12	1	2	2	7	2	6	ns
lying	3	5	1	2	4	10	1	3	ns
staying out late	1	2	2	4	2	5	1	3	ns
coming home late	2	3	4	7	1	2	2	6	ns
throwing things around	4	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	ns
+ answering back	13	20	7	13	7	17	7	20	ns
+ general cheekiness	6	9	2	4	8	19	8	23	.05
+ moodiness or sulkiness	9	14	5	9	6	15	5	14	ns

+ denotes item included in the factor analysis

TABLE 6.8
Replies to questions about the child's
general behaviour and parental expectations

variable list	SUBJECTS						CONTROLS		sig of diff p<
	INT 1		INT 2		INT 3		% yes (n=35)		
	% yes (n=64)	N	% yes (n=54)	N	% yes (n=41)	N	% yes (n=35)	N	
* time expected in at night	50	78	39	72	30	73	30	86	ns
* out beyond deadline	27	42	25	46	12	29	13	37	ns
* fixed bedtime	20	31	16	30	9	22	18	51	.05
* expected to make bed	35	55	29	54	28	68	30	85	.05
* expected to help with dishes	25	39	21	39	18	44	24	69	.05
* expected to help with fires	3	5	1	2	1	2	1	3	ns
* expected to help set table	15	23	7	13	7	17	19	54	.05
* expected to help clear table	19	30	7	13	7	17	23	66	.05
* expected to look after a pet	17	27	16	30	7	17	15	43	.05
* expected to help w. shopping	29	45	25	46	14	34	23	66	.05
* expected to help w. garden	5	8	6	11	2	5	9	26	.05
* expected to tidy bedroom	46	72	35	65	24	58	35	100	.05
* expected to help w. cleaning	17	27	14	26	11	27	13	37	ns
* expected to help w. cooking	8	12	4	7	3	7	17	49	.05
* expected to help w. washing	4	6	5	9	6	15	6	17	ns
* expected to help w. ironing	7	11	7	13	9	22	12	34	.05
* look after other children	14	22	17	32	10	24	14	40	ns
* other jobs expected	9	14	4	7	9	22	3	9	ns
* par.tell/suggest where to go	35	55	26	48	22	54	21	60	ns
* p stop c going to cert.places	39	61	30	56	20	49	21	60	ns
* p stops c going out at all	23	36	14	26	9	22	15	43	ns
* p wants to know what c doing	58	91	44	81	35	85	33	94	ns
* p wants to know where c going	58	91	51	94	38	93	34	97	ns
* p wants to know who c is with	58	91	44	81	39	85	30	86	ns
* p tell c to be in on time	54	84	42	78	32	78	33	94	.05
* p stop c staying out late	54	84	45	83	34	83	32	91	ns
* p advise c on associates	44	69	35	65	30	73	24	69	ns
* p stop c assoc.w.cert.people	44	69	30	56	29	71	24	69	ns
* p tell c stop hang.round sts.	23	36	12	22	12	29	13	37	ns
* p tell c stop getting into tr	34	53	25	45	22	54	20	57	ns
* p stop c going to cinema	6	9	8	15	4	10	6	17	ns
* p stops c's hobbies/sport	3	5	1	2	1	2	0	0	ns

TABLE 6.8 (continued)

*	p stop c smoking/drinking	35	55	21	39	21	51	17	49	ns
*	p discourages c from stealing	43	67	26	48	28	68	27	77	.05
*	p stop c spending too much	14	22	14	26	14	34	13	37	ns
*	p make c do homework/study	36	56	22	41	16	39	22	63	.05
*	p tell c stop hanging round	13	20	7	13	9	22	10	29	ns
*	p tell c to go out (s/times)	17	27	13	24	14	34	17	49	.05
*	p encourage sport/hobbies	27	42	29	54	22	54	23	66	.05
*	p give chores or jobs to c.	42	66	37	68	24	59	30	86	.05
*	p advise c on appearance	53	83	41	76	31	76	29	81	ns
*	p use punishment for misbeh.	52	81	46	85	33	81	33	94	.05
*	p reason with c if he misbeh.	55	86	45	83	36	88	34	97	.05
*	p complain/moan if c misbeh.	42	66	35	65	30	73	25	71	ns
*	p threaten/warn if c misbeh.	56	88	45	83	32	78	29	83	ns
*	p ignore c as a punishment	10	16	12	22	11	27	7	20	ns
*	p deny meal as a punishment	1	2	3	6	0	0	1	3	ns
*	p keep in as a punishment	42	66	33	61	22	54	25	71	ns
*	p send to room/bed as punish.	36	56	24	44	16	39	26	74	.05
*	p stop pocket money as punish	30	47	18	33	15	37	11	31	ns
*	p stop c smoking as punish.	3	3	2	4	3	7	3	9	ns
*	p make do jobs as a punish.	15	23	10	18	7	17	10	29	ns
*	p make c study as punish.	7	11	7	13	2	5	7	20	ns
*	p make c pay for damages	26	41	17	32	16	39	17	49	ns
*	p hit w stick/slap as punish.	11	17	10	18	5	12	10	29	ns
*	p slap c as a punishment	40	62	39	72	32	78	19	54	.05
*	p thinks punish. effective	45	70	39	72	30	73	32	92	.05

(*) denotes item included in the factor analysis

(a) Questions about recently

Eleven factors were produced in all from the 23 items about the previous day which were included in the analysis. Of these the first 6 had an eigen value of more than 1. The principal components were rotated using the varimax method (S.P.S.S.) and those items with a rotated loading of 0.4 or more were looked at for each factor. Table 6.9 shows the items loading highest for the first 6 factors.

TABLE 6.9

List of items with a loading of 0.4 or more on a rotated factor matrix based on questions about recent behaviour from the child's behaviour questionnaire listed by factor.

VARIABLE	LOADING
FACTOR 1 (20% of the variance)	
child went out before tea	0.40
child went out after his tea	0.76
child did some art of some kind	-0.44
child got around with his mates	0.71
child went to a friend's house	0.41
FACTOR 2 (16% of variance)	
child did a sport of some kind	0.50
problem with quarrelling	0.64
problem with general cheek	0.51
argument about bedtime	0.40
FACTOR 3 (11% of variance)	
child failed to do some jobs	0.71
problem with disobedience	0.60
FACTOR 4 (10% of variance)	
reading	-0.43
problems with noisiness	0.56
problem with untidiness	0.58
problem with answering back	0.43
FACTOR 5 (8% of variance)	
arrived home on time	0.70
disagreement over how child spends his time	-0.54
FACTOR 6 (8% of variance)	
reading	0.70
"other" activities - not specified	-0.54

Factor 1 could be called an "out" factor because those items with high positive loadings concerned being outside with friends; the negative loading item concerned sitting at home drawing. Factor 2 concerned "active conflict" of child in the family both with siblings (quarrelling) and with parents (general cheek and arguments about bedtime) plus sport. Factor 3 was solely concerned with disobedience and failure to comply with parents wishes (jobs which the child was expected to do) on the previous day. Factor 4 had the ingredients of "uninhibition" on the part of the child; the high loading positive items are problems with noisiness, untidiness and answering back on the previous day; the negative loading item being reading, an activity usually associated with sitting fairly quietly. Factor 5 concerned the child's use of time, whether he or she arrived home on time and also the more general use of free-time in the previous week. Factor 6 concerned the child's activities on the previous evening. Reading loaded positively, quite clearly contrasting with the "other" category which was used when the parent didn't know what the child had been doing or said that the child "had been messing around" etc. and couldn't say what the child had been doing from a wide range of activities supplied even when closely questioned.

A simplified score on each factor was calculated for each child using the weights specified in the previous table. A series of t-tests was then performed between subject and control groups on each factor. The test was repeated for the questionnaire scores obtained for the court children 3

months after the start of court adjournments and also for the scores obtained from the 12 month follow-up interview. Exactly the same form of this questionnaire was used at each interview with the court children so that it was possible to determine :

- (i) differences in scores between subjects and controls
- (ii) changes over time in the subject group

In all cases the comparisons were made with the data from the control group obtained from the one and only interview with them. The results of the various t-tests between groups at the various stages are shown in Table 6.10

Consistent differences between subjects and controls were only found on factors 2, 5 and 6. The differences found between court children and control children on Factor 2 were concerned with "active conflict". Control children appeared to have more active conflict with their parents and siblings than court children. This factor also loaded highly on sport. Many more control children (29%) than court children (11%) played sport.

The differences found on Factor 5 show that the control children were more punctual (came home on time more often) than the court children and also had less disagreements with their parents over their use of free time.

Finally, the differences on factor 6 reveal that the control children did significantly more reading than court

TABLE 6.10
Factor mean scores in subjects and controls from analysis of the behaviour questionnaire: items about a recent day.

		FACTOR MEAN SCORES (SD)					
		factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
----- CHILDREN TAKEN TO COURT							
1. Interview 1 before court (N=64)		4.4 (4.0)	1.6 (2.3)	0.8 (2.0)	1.0 (2.8)	2.5 (2.9)	-0.4 (1.6)
2. Interview 2 3 mths after court (n=54)		4.8 (3.4)	0.8 (1.5)	0.5 (1.5)	1.0 (1.7)	3.1 (2.4)	-0.5 (1.2)
3. Interview 3 12 mths after court (n=41)		4.1 (2.8)	1.8 (2.6)	0.3 (1.4)	1.4 (2.1)	2.9 (2.9)	-1.3 (1.0)
----- SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE between :							
1 v 2	p <	NS	0.023	NS	NS	NS	NS
1 v 3	p <	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.001
2 v 3	p <	NS	0.007	NS	NS	NS	0.002
----- CONTROLS							
one interview only (N=35)		4.9 (4.4)	3.1 (3.1)	0.7 (2.2)	0.5 (3.5)	4.4 (1.7)	1.4 (1.5)
----- SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE between :							
Interview 1 (court) and controls	p <	NS	0.014	NS	NS	0.001	0.001
Interview 2 (court) and controls	p <	NS	0.001	NS	NS	0.003	0.001
Interview 3 (court) and controls	p <	0.034	0.05	NS	NS	0.005	0.001

(see definition of factors in Table 6.9)

children (51% for controls; range of 2-17% for court children, see Table 6.7). The court children also engaged in less structured activities than the control children.

There were few remarkable changes over time at all in the court cases (the control group were interviewed once only). The change worthy of comment is that of Factor 6 which changed significantly for the court children between the first interview and the third interview a year later. The factor mean score dropped from -0.4 to -1.3 indicating that one year after starting adjournments, even less of the court children did any reading for a hobby than they had been doing when they first went to court. More of them engaged in "other" (unspecified) activities in their spare time, mainly described as "out" or "nowt" after a year on court adjournments.

(b) Questions about general matters.

From the factor analysis performed on items classified as general (items in Table 6.8) a total of 18 factors were produced. 11 of these had an eigen value greater than 1, and with the analysis of items about the previous day, the first 6 were retained and rotated using the varimax method (S.P.S.S). The first six factors accounted for 59% of the variance. Again, the factors were simplified by taking those items with a rotated loading of 0.4 or more and weighting the items. Table 6.11 contains the rotated loadings and items which emerged from this analysis.

Table 6.12 summarises the results of comparing subjects and controls for different interviews on each factor, as previously compared for the questions about the child's recent behaviour. Consistent differences were only found in Factors 1 and 4.

Factor 1 concerned the parental expectations made of children with respect to help and jobs at home. More demands were made by parents of control children than by parents of children going to court for I.S.A. Factor 4 concerned help with looking after pets and the garden (e.g. walking the dog and mowing the lawn). Again, more help was expected from control children by their parents.

TABLE 6.11
Factor analysis of general items on the child behaviour
questionnaire. Items with a loading of 0.4 or more

VARIABLE	ROTATED LOADING
Factor 1 (20% of variance)	
child expected to make his bed	0.47
child expected to help with dishes	0.59
child expected to help set table	0.84
child expected to help clear table	0.79
child expected to help with cleaning	0.68
child expected to help with cooking	0.52
child expected to help with washing	0.41
child expected to help with ironing	0.66
Factor 2 (14% of variance)	
fixed time that child is expected in at night	0.60
parent wants to know who child is with	0.44
parent tells child he has to be in by a certain time	0.72
parent stops the child staying out late	0.36
parent keeps child in as a punishment	0.44
Factor 3 (8% of variance)	
parent stops child going to certain places	0.40
parent sometimes stops child going out at all	0.62
parent advises child on associates	0.51
parent stops child associating with certain people	0.43
parent tells child to stop hanging round the streets	0.76
parent stops child spending too much money	0.46
Factor 4 (6% variance)	
child expected to look after pet	0.60
child expected to help in garden	0.68
Factor 5 (6% of variance)	
parent sometimes tells child to stop hanging round the house	0.90
parent sometimes tells child to go out	0.60
Factor 6 (5% of variance)	
parent stops child smoking or drinking	0.69
parent discourages child from stealing	0.64

TABLE 6.12

Factor mean scores in subjects and controls from analysis of the behaviour questionnaire - general items

FACTOR MEAN SCORES (SD)

	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
CHILDREN TAKEN TO COURT						
1. Interview 1 before court (N=64)	2.6 (3.7)	7.5 (2.9)	5.0 (3.6)	0.8 (1.5)	2.0 (4.1)	4.3 (2.9)
2. Interview 2 3 mths after court (n=54)	1.8 (2.9)	7.2 (3.2)	4.1 (2.6)	1.0 (1.5)	1.3 (3.4)	3.1 (2.7)
3. Interview 3 12 mths after court (n=41)	2.3 (3.3)	7.2 (3.2)	4.6 (2.9)	0.6 (0.9)	2.2 (4.2)	3.5 (2.5)
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE between :						
1 v 2 p <	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.002
1 v 3 P <	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.026
2 v 3 p <	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
CONTROLS						
one interview only (N=35)	6.1 (4.4)	8.2 (2.2)	5.4 (3.9)	1.8 (2.1)	2.9 (4.6)	4.5 (2.7)
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE between :						
Interview 1 (court) and controls p <	0.001	NS	NS	0.026	NS	NS
Interview 2 (court) and controls p <	0.001	NS	NS	0.066	NS	0.015
Interview 3 (court) and controls p <	0.001	NS	NS	0.003	NS	NS

(see definitions of factors in Table 6.11)

Summary

An analysis was made of a questionnaire designed to review children's behaviour in recent days and how much involvement parents had with it. The questionnaire was analysed in two parts. Factors were produced to compare the behaviour of court children and of controls on the previous day. Significant differences were found in the amount of active conflict between court children and their parents. Control children seemed to have more conflict with their parents than court children. Parents of control children set firmer rules about time-keeping for their children than did the parents of court children. Control children appeared to spend more of their spare time reading than the children who went to court.

Generally, parents of control children made more demands on their offspring to do jobs at home and join in family life. As the Yorkshire Post (1983) reporting on the research put it, "The typical truant fails to arrive home in time for tea and is unlikely to read books, listen to music, keep pets or play sports. He or she may be expected to look after brothers or sisters but will otherwise do little in the way of housework. Few truants have a fixed bedtime. What is lacking, clearly, is any real measure of parental supervision. It is small surprise that a child who receives little guidance at school (by virtue of truancy) and even less at home (because of the parents' indifference) should be in danger of turning to crime".

(iv) QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT COURT ATTENDANCE AND PARENTAL ATTITUDES TO COURT AND SCHOOL

At the time of the second interview with parents (approximately three months after the case was found proved by the magistrates), specific information concerning the court proceedings and their effects was sought (see Appendix 1 for the complete questionnaire used). Questions were asked about the procedure itself and also concerning the effects and impact of going to court.

90% (n=47) of the parents interviewed at this stage considered that their child's attendance at school had improved since the start of court adjournments. Questions were asked about what was said and done each time that the child had been to court. Many mothers were vague about the length of time between each adjournment despite the fact that these were in the recent past and were still continuing. Most seemed to remember four-week adjournments, but distinctions between one, two and three week adjournments were not always clear. Parents usually remembered the circumstances of an adjournment if their child had been placed in care.

Children allocated to the flexible scheme of adjournments and whose parents were interviewed were reported to have been to court an average of 5.2 times (sd = 2.3) and children allocated to the inflexible group an average of 3.7 times (sd= 1.8) as reported by

their parents when asked in the interview. This was a significant difference ($T = -2.5$; $df=35.5$; $p<0.02$). In fact the actual figures relating to court appearances at this point in time were : 4.4 times ($sd = 1$) and 3.1 times ($sd = 0.6$) for the flexible and inflexible groups respectively. Overall the parents tended to overestimate the number of times they were required to go to court. (Table 6.13)

TABLE 6.13

Table to show numbers of reported adjournments, actual adjournments and actual appearances for those families interviewed after three months (n= 46)

ALLOCATED SYSTEM	Reported No. Adjournments by parents (s.d.)	Actual No. Adjournments by parents (s.d.)	Actual No. Appearances by parents (s.d.)
Flexible (n=21)	5.1 (2.3)	4.4 (1.0)	3.3 (1.5)
Inflexible (n=25)	3.7 (1.7)	3.1 (0.6)	2.3 (0.8)

Parental view of the effect of court adjournments on their child.

45% (24) of parents considered that the court adjournments had a positive effect on their child, the remainder, 55% said that they thought that there was either no effect, or that the effect was adverse. There were 50% who said "no effect", and 5% who considered that the effect was adverse. One parent went so far as to say, "it has given him a healthy contempt for the law".

50% (27) parents reported that the court appearances upset their child in some way. Example of replies about this were :- "A. (girl) was really upset the first time"; "It frightened him"; "It affects him a lot, he knows he has to go to school, he's frightened of going away"; "it frightens her because two kids up the road are in care", and the main effect was "to keep him going to school". The theme of "being put away" recurred several times in this section and again in the section of questions asking about the magistrates (see below).

The effect of court adjournments on the parents

Only 11% (6) of parents interviewed considered that having a child on court adjournments had had any positive effect on themselves. This effect was concerned with what they actually did about the child's attendance.

Many mothers reported acute feelings of anxiety and worry about the court appearances and some found them humiliating. Replies as to how the mothers were affected are typified as follows, "I've got used to it now, the first time my nerves were bad and I went to pieces"; "I don't like it when you hear some of the language in the waiting room, they wandered around (others waiting) as if they lived there"; "I get upset and my stomach churns, I worry"; "It's bloody awful, you never know how long it's going to take"; "it's

frightening because the magistrates could take your children off you"; "I feel sick as a pig, waiting so long".

There were also comments on the effects on the families finances, e.g. "the first time we both went (mum and dad) and it caused a wage drop. Dad went with him the second time but the last two times he has been by himself"; "it's expensive to get to court and upsets the household routine"; "it's boring and the travelling is a nuisance, it's no good for me legs"; "we're sick of it, the bus fares are so expensive".

65% (32) parents expressed negative feelings concerning the repeated adjournments and having to keep on returning to court with their child over and over again. Attitudes varied from passive acceptance "it's a bit of a nuisance but I am for it if it keeps him going to school", to more definite expressions of dislike :- "I don't agree with it, he's done nothing wrong". Comments again occurred in this section about the cost of 'bus fares to court and the inconvenience and waste of time. One parent said "I don't think that it is necessary every month, three monthly would be more appropriate." Several parents remarked on the fact that once regular attendance was established court seemed to be a waste of time resulting in the child having half a day off from school.

Clinical symptoms displayed by the child before court

Three children had refused to go to court at least once. They did eventually get to court despite their protests. Six children were described by their parents as being "tearful" before court; six as "off their food". Sixteen parents (29%) thought that their child was "pale" before going to court and three said that their child had "complained of feeling sick before going to court".

Five children had complained of "pains" before going to court, e.g. headache, stomach ache. Some of these symptoms are similar to those associated with school refusal, which is not surprising.

Going to court

All parents had to attend court at least once with their child on the day the case was heard and found proved (or not). All parents are supposed to attend court each time with their child for an adjournment, except for absence with the express permission of the magistrates, and then only if the child had full attendance. No case would be heard for the first time without a parent, but if a child turned up for an adjournment without a parent, the magistrates could only really make a further adjournment and serve a "letter to attend" on the parent.

98% (53) said that they had accompanied their child to court and nearly all (92%) travelled into court by

'bus. Again, there were numerous complaints about the cost of 'bus fares.

In two-thirds of cases it was usually mother who accompanied the child to court but in some families both parents had gone with their child to court on the first occasion only. In two cases an older brother or sister was reported to have accompanied the child to court and there was a tendency for the parents to send the child alone after the first time or two if they were attending school satisfactorily. 46 children (85%) had to take the afternoon off from school in order to attend court, the remaining 8 (15%) took the whole day off when they were due for an adjournment. In 2 instances, reasons for the whole days absence was given, "he gets so upset before court" and "he has the whole day, they don't seem to mind". All adjournments were in the afternoon on four afternoons of the week.

The actual appearance in court

Parents were asked how long they actually spent in the court room with the magistrates. This varied from very little (2 minutes or less) to about three-quarters of an hour. 75% of parents estimated an average length of appearance of 10 minutes or less and many described the time spent in the court room as "a couple of minutes if he were O.K." (i.e. if the child had been to school).

Some parents explained that on the first occasion, the day the case was heard they spent much longer in the court room with the magistrates, a typical figure of 20 minutes being given.

When asked about the time spent waiting to go in, a much longer length of time was mentioned in all cases sometimes up to 2 hours. There were many complaints about the length of this wait, especially when compared to the very short time spent by some children before the magistrates .

First appearances

In most cases the first appearance in court was remembered vividly. This was the day when the case was heard by the magistrates, and if it was found proved the child placed on the court adjournment system.

Nearly all mothers mentioned the warnings and threats made by the magistrates concerning the risk of their child being taken into care if there was no improvement in school attendance. For example, one parent said, "they gave him a rollicking, and told him to improve or else"; and another, "they told her that she shouldn't be missing school, and if she did she could be sent away". Some parents found the initial appearance harrowing or distressing :- "the magistrate was really abrupt, they frightened me"; "I was in tears"; "she (the magistrate) hurt me badly and accused me of treating my daughter like a slave and threatened to

put her away". Other parents just described their feelings as "worried". The "worry" and anxiety seems to have been over the warnings and threats of enactment of care orders if their child failed to go to school.

Following the proving of the case, and in the absence of any reason for exclusion, the child, having been randomly allocated to one of the two procedures, flexible or inflexible, was adjourned for either one or four weeks. Parents' memory of the adjournment lengths seems to be rather vague. Examples of replies were "they gave him another date"; "they saw him again in a month" or "they adjourned it for a week", but the differences in the number of court attendances recollected for each clear scheme were not very great considering that it was only 12 weeks previously that the events had happened.

Second and subsequent adjournments up to three months

Many of the parents reported that their children had received praise for improved school attendance from the magistrates when they returned to court. Some were told "well done, keep it up" or that "their attendance was pleasing". It was suggested to some children that "school's not so bad after all". All absences always had to be accounted for, e.g. dental and hospital appointments were checked and late marks read out.

Parents didn't mention threats and warnings at this stage very often, although one girl, whose attendance was improved but "far from perfect" was reminded that "we don't make idle threats".

More positive and favourable attitudes towards the magistrates were expressed in this period, some mothers saying that "they were very nice" or "he was pleased" or "he encouraged her", while others were more circumspect, "she" (the magistrate) "was still sharp" and "he was sarcastic and said to come back in a month".

One girl had gone missing by the time of the second adjournment and warrants for her arrest were issued because of the concern felt over the situation. Three children from the interviewed families had had unsatisfactory attendance at the 2nd adjournment and were made the subject of Interim Care. The third, fourth and fifth adjournments were also covered by the questionnaire and showed a similar pattern of responses to those relating to the second appearance.

Influence of court on the child

66% of parents thought that the court adjournments had influenced their child's behaviour, (as compared to 55% who felt that court had no positive "effect" on the child in terms of attitudes).

In about a third of cases (n=18) the person being

interviewed felt that the father's behaviour (where there was one) had been influenced and in 39% of cases (n=20) mothers felt that they had had their behaviour influenced by the adjournments. The influence seemed to be mainly over getting the child to attend school.

Most children (85%) were described as being relieved after their court appearance was over; six were described as "worried" or "afraid" and seven as "angry"; eight children were described by their parents as being "withdrawn" (quiet or subdued) following court. Only 60% of children were described by their parents as "keen to go to school" following an adjournment. 11 children were described by their parents as "not caring less" after a court adjournment was over.

General comments about court

Nearly two thirds of the parents interviewed (61%) felt that their child should NOT have been taken to the Juvenile Court for Irregular School Attendance. Parents were asked by the interviewer what 'other things might have been done instead', and this unearthed a variety of opinions, ranging from, "nothing really, he brought it on himself", to, "they should come every morning and take her by car, with a big stick!".

Nine of parents (17%) made some reference to the

desirability of the schools being more helpful over their child's difficulties than they actually were. Examples of this sort of reply were :-"they could have found the culprits of the bullying....the school could have been more helpful"; "the school could have given her a good warning"; "they could have done more in school and been more understanding and supportive when he got into trouble with the police, instead they threw him out and sent him to the exclusion centre"; "they should let him go where he can learn something useful like woodwork".

Another category of remarks was that linked with illness. At least three parents interviewed mentioned that there was some medical basis for absence which they felt had not been fully resolved before the court proceedings were instituted. One parent said "they should have believed that she was ill"; the second said "we wanted him to go and see the child psychiatrist, but he wouldn't go, our move had upset him"; the third said, "he" (the E.W.O.) "should have contacted our GP to see why she was off school without being clever and taking her to court. One or two other criticisms of welfare officers were also made in this section, for example, "the E.W.O. should have given him a good talking to first. The E.W.O. came with the summons, nothing else." One parent felt that they were not informed frequently enough if their child had been away from school and therefore it was difficult to keep a check, and therefore suggested that "they

should let us know every week whether she's been to school, and then we could have done something."

Improving school attendance in general and other remarks about education

Most parents when asked about improving school attendance generally gave answers relating to the school itself, some of which were very scathing and few complimentary.

Areas discussed covered discipline in school, or lack of it, curriculum irrelevant to the needs of the children, pupil-teacher relationships and other social reasons and pressures associated with school. In some instances mention was made of the raising of the school leaving age since the parent had left school.

Examples of replies relating to discipline in school were :- "they should make school full-time, like it used to be, less freedom in school is needed, less breaks and no signing in and out"; "the teachers should have more authority, and teach, not let the children run riot! They should try and understand the children better, by talking to them and not at them. The leavers year was a total failure, they insist that he goes and he does nothing. There must be something wrong with schools if they don't want to go. They need stimulating things". Parents thought that more subjects were required with a direct relevance to life, along with reading and writing. Examples of this type

of suggestion were :- "The subjects they teach are NOT related to life, the classes are too big; why teach them French when they can't read English?"; "Reading, writing and maths are important, why should they teach French? "

The expense of school clothes was mentioned in three instances. In one case one parent complained that her daughter was always wanting clothes so that she was "like everybody else", and this parent wished that her child's school had a uniform. In another case a parent complained of the high cost of school uniform. Two parents mentioned and showed disapproval of some of the children attending their child's school, describing them as "scruffy looking and unkempt".

When should a child be allowed to leave school ?

The interviewer asked parents when they considered a child should be allowed to leave school, and asked for reasons. Diverse opinions were expressed by parents. Several parents said that they thought that the leaving age had been acceptable at 15, and that they had left at 15 and there was no good reason why their child should not do so. Other parents felt that the present age of 16 years was acceptable but added provisos, e.g. "16 if the child has the ability, but if the child could do better at work they should be allowed to leave earlier". One parent put the school leaving age down

to 14 years, with the proviso that the child had obtained a permanent job.

In comparison, one mother said, "17, the way the country is now, there is no point in leaving earlier; then they should go and do National Service". Another parent left it open-ended, "At the moment there is nothing to leave school for. They should have to stay until they have exams, as long as possible". Interestingly, several comments made the remark that "they should be allowed to stay on after 16".

Compulsory schooling ?

Parents were asked whether they considered that children should be made to go to school, and then asked to give a reason for their answer. Nearly all parents considered that children should be made to go to school and the reasons given were fairly uniform :- "because they need an education"; "for job prospects"; "for reading, writing, sex education and R.E."; "so that they can make something of their lives"; "they need the basic subjects like English and Maths".

The theme of education being restricted to the "basics" of reading, writing and arithmetic coupled with "life-relevant" lessons was common.

Work and Court

Parents were asked about taking time off work in order to accompany their child to court. 10 fathers and 10 mothers had taken some time off work during the first three months of court adjournments in order to go with their child to court. It was relatively straightforward and "easy" to get time off work for this purpose in the case of 5 fathers and 6 mothers. Difficulties over having time off were related to the employer not liking people taking time out, especially in a factory, or in the case of a supervisor taking the time out for court meant closing the works for the day. In addition, it was reported that 13 fathers and 7 mothers would lose pay if they did take time off work for this purpose. Only one father and four mothers took time off work for other things like doctor, dentist or clinic appointments.

Other members of the family and the courts

Eight parents said that apart from going to court for Irregular School Attendance their child had also been to court before for other matters.

In a quarter of families interviewed, another family member had been to court prior to the time of the interview. One father, one mother, 20 brothers and five sisters were included in this group along with one in the "other" members of household category. The range of time before the interview that this had

happened varied from one week to 12 years.

Interim Care Orders by the time of the second interview

Eleven of the families who were interviewed at this time had had a child who had not been to school at the required level and had not produced adequate reasons for absence and therefore had been made the subject of a 21 day Interim Care Order to the Local Authority.

Parents were asked about the I.C.O.. 10 of the 11 children had been "upset" when the Interim Order had been made. All eleven had had visits from parents while they were away, usually at the weekend. Six families had found visiting difficult, usually because of distance and transport problems, e.g. 'buses on a Sunday. Eight of the children were said to have written home while they were in care and five parents said that they had written to their child while he or she had been away. In four cases parents said that the child had received letters from other people besides themselves. In two cases the parent had spoken to the child on the telephone, but this was reportedly discouraged in the centres in which the children were placed.

In seven cases, parents thought that the time spent in care had "done the child good" and that their behaviour had changed for the better since their return home. At the time of this interview ten of the eleven children

were back at home and the other one had been made subject of a full Care Order to the local authority for continued bad school attendance after the initial I.C.O.

(v) HOME ENVIRONMENT VARIABLES FROM A GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The third part of the first and third interviews with parents of court children and the one interview with control children (see Appendix 1) asked the parents about general things to do with their family; age of parents; marital status; family size and birth order; housing; the number of recent changes of address made by the family; employment and other financial matters.

The general questionnaire used at interviews one and three with parents of court children were almost identical except for minor changes of wording in the light of experience and the addition of two questions at the end concerning free prescriptions and free school meals. The control children were all interviewed using the revised version of the questionnaire with the extra two questions.

The tabulated results from items on this questionnaire are contained in Tables 6.14 and 6.15. Table 6.14 lists the variables for which a t-test was applied between the two groups to ascertain what differences

there were between court children and their controls.

The main differences were :

1. Mothers of court children were older than those of controls (41 compared to 38 years).
2. The court families had spent significantly fewer years in their current home, (6.5 compared to 10 years in control families).
3. Court families had significantly less space which they designated as "living" space but more space designated as "bedroom" than did the control families.
4. Significantly more court families had family members other than the parents at work and still living at home (0.5 compared to 0.3 per household).
5. Court families had had significantly more changes of address in the previous two years than the control families (0.3 compared to 0.1 times per family).

There were no significant differences in the number of children living at home, or total family size per se, but there was a tendency for children from the court families to fall lower in birth order than their

matched controls, a result which just fell short of significance (3.5 compared to 2.7, $p < 0.08$).

Similarly, the number of hours spent at work by the mother of the family was almost significant ($p < 0.07$) with the mothers of control children tending to work on average more hours per week than those parents of court children. The number of hours worked by fathers was not significantly different and neither was family income, although there was a tendency for fathers of court children to work fewer hours than the fathers of controls. The hours worked was calculated only for fathers who were employed. Fathers who were unemployed were not counted.

A Pearson correlation was carried out between number of hours worked by father and the family income, and the two variables were correlated ($r = 0.3, sig = 0.005$). In the same manner a Pearson correlation was carried out between the number of hours worked and whether the family was on Social Security and as expected this correlation was highly significant in the negative direction, the less hours worked the more likely a family was to receive Social Security ($r = -0.8, p < 0.001$).

TABLE 6.14
Results of home environment variables (1)
t-tests between subjects (interviewed cases from 168
children taken to court for I.S.A.) and their controls

variable	mean for subjects (sd) (n)	mean for controls (sd) (n)	T-value	df	2-tail prob p<
age of mother	41.2 (8.5) (62)	38.4 (5.4) (34)	-1.97	91.5	.05
n of children living at home	3.8 (1.6) (64)	3.6 (1.6) (34)	-0.73	69.4	NS
total children in family	5.1 (1.9) (64)	4.3 (2.5) (35)	-1.49	56.9	NS
position of study child	3.5 (2.1) (63)	2.7 (2.1) (35)	-1.80	65.8	.08
age of father	43.8 (9.1) (47)	42.4 (6.0) (31)	-0.84	75.9	NS
total size of household	5.6 (1.8) (64)	5.5 (1.9) (35)	-0.32	66.2	NS
number of yrs at present address	6.6 (5.4) (64)	10.0 (8.9) (35)	2.04	47.9	.05
number of living rooms	1.8 (0.6) (64)	2.1 (0.3) (35)	3.24	95.8	.03
number of bedrooms	3.6 (0.9) (64)	3.2 (0.6) (35)	-2.68	92.5	.01
number hrs/wk mom works (*)	6.8 (10.8) (44)	12.1 (13.2) (33)	1.87	61.0	.07
number hrs/wk dad works (*)	25.5 (21) (35)	33.2 (17) (30)	1.63	63.0	NS
number others working (*)	0.5 (0.5) (46)	0.3 (0.3) (35)	-2.01	69.1	.05
total income (£) (*)	82.7 (25) (44)	92.3 (24) (33)	1.69	70.6	NS (.1)
no. children living away	0.5 (0.5) (64)	0.7 (1.3) (35)	0.71	40.1	NS
no. moves in last 2 years	0.3 (0.5) (64)	0.1 (0.3) (35)	-2.22	93.7	.03

(*) for court group this data from 1 year follow-up
interview

Table 6.15, lists the variables from the general questionnaire for which contingency tables were constructed in order to compare the frequency of occurrence of each variable in both subjects and controls. The chi-squared test was used (Siegel, 1956) applying Yates correction (Yates, 1934) where appropriate.

The significant difference can be summarized:

1. Less court children had both natural parents living at home (52% compared to 77% in the control group)
2. More families of court children complained of damp or unusable rooms in the home compared to control families (56% compared to 33%).
3. More families of court children were reliant upon social security payments (61% compared to 31%)
4. When the household size was divided into 2 groups, one consisting of households of 5 or less, the other of households of 6 or more, families of court children tended to fall into the larger group (59% compared to 37%, $p < .06$) a result bordering on significance.

TABLE 6.15
Results of home environment variables (2)
chi-squared tests between subjects (interviewed
cases from 168 truants taken to court for I.S.A. and
their controls).

variable	% 'YES' subjects (n)	% 'YES' controls (n)	chi square	df	level of sig
both natural parents at home	52 (33)	77 (27)	5.2	1	.03
mother only at home	31 (20)	14 (5)	2.6	1	.1 (NS)
father only at home	3 (2)	6 (2)	0.01	1	NS
family only in the house	75 (48)	89 (31)	1.8	1	NS
mum/dad widowed	9 (6)	6 (2)	0.6	1	NS
mum/dad separated	16 (10)	3 (1)	2.6	1	.1 (NS)
mum/dad divorced	11 (7)	11 (4)	0.0	1	NS
owner occupier of home	12 (8)	29 (10)	2.9	1	.09 (NS)
home rented from council	80 (51)	69 (24)	1.5	1	NS
family complain home damp	41 (26)	14 (5)	6.1	1	.02
mother works	33 (21)	56 (19)	3.8	1	.05
mum not worked prev 13 wks (+)	46 (16)	30 (10)	1.1	1	NS
family receives soc.security(+)	61 (28)	31 (11)	5.8	1	.01
no.in household 1-5 compared to 6 or more	59 (38) 6 or more	37 (13) 6 or more	3.6	1	.06
children in care (if any)	10 (6)	6 (2)	1.0	1	NS

(+) for court group this data from 1 year follow-up
interview

There were no global differences in the type of housing occupied by the families, the majority in both groups being in council dwellings. An overcrowding index was constructed by adding the total number of bedrooms to the total number of living rooms and dividing the grand total by the current household size. Families of court children were no different than those of control children (mean number of persons per room was one in both groups).

(vi) RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES SENT TO SCHOOLS

Questionnaires were completed for court children and control children by class teachers at about the time the court children first attended court for I.S.A. and again a year later. These questionnaires were the Rutter B2 (Teachers) Questionnaire and the Connors' Teachers Questionnaire, both of which were referred to in Chapter 3. This aspect of the study had been planned as a relatively minor role in the research and is therefore not reported as a major area.

A comparison between scores on questionnaires completed by teachers showed a significant fall for the court children in the Rutter B(2) Total (T) and Neurotic (N) mean scores from the beginning of adjournments to about 12 months later (Tables 6.16 and 6.17), (T score, mean drop = 2.7; n=56; $P < 0.01$; N score, mean drop, 0.8; N=56; $p < 0.02$). The mean Factor scores II

drop = 2.7; n=56; $P < 0.01$; N score, mean drop, 0.8; N=56; $p < 0.02$). The mean Factor scores II (inattentiveness/passive), III (Tension and anxiety) and V (Unsociability) also fell significantly ($p < 0.01$) for court children.

Compared to the control group, the court children had significantly higher scores on these two scales at both times of administration during the experiment (Table 6.18, $p < 0.01$); 71% of court children (69 out of 97) had Rutter B(2) scores of nine or more initially, and 64% (49 out of 77) a year later.

All scale scores were significantly higher for court children than controls except on factor IV of the Conners' questionnaire (measuring hyperactivity) where there were no significant differences. These findings are similar to those of previous studies in Leeds (Berg, Butler, Hullin, Smith and Tyrer, 1978).

The two scales completed by teachers both measure disturbance, and the results appear to provide evidence that court children are a disturbed group. However, the possibility must be registered that teachers may have been influenced in making their ratings by their knowledge of the young persons' I.S.A. and appearances in court.

TABLE 6.16

Comparison between Flexible and Inflexible adjournment groups before first court appearance on Rutter B (2) and Conners' teachers questionnaire.

TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT	RUTTER B2 (TEACHERS) QUESTIONNAIRE MEAN SCORES (SD)			CONNERS' TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE FACTOR MEAN SCORES (SD)				
	N	A	T	I	II	III	IV	V
FLEXIBLE (n = 47)	2.5 (2.2)	3.0 (2.8)	16.7 (9.1)	0.7 (0.8)	1.3 (0.8)	1.1 (0.6)	0.8 (0.7)	0.9 (0.8)
INFLEXIBLE (n = 50)	2.0 (2.0)	2.1 (2.1)	14.1 (8.7)	0.5 (0.7)	1.1 (0.7)	1.2 (0.5)	0.7 (0.7)	0.8 (0.7)

No significant differences between Flexible and Inflexible groups ($p > 0.05$)

Rutter

N = Neurotic scale
A = Antisocial scale
T = Total score

Conners Questionnaire

Factor I = Conduct problem
Factor II = Inattentive-passive
Factor III = Tension-Anxiety
Factor IV = Hyperactivity
Factor V = Unsociability

TABLE 6.17

Comparison between Flexible and Inflexible adjournment groups 12 months after first appearance in court on Rutter B2 and Conners' teachers questionnaires.

TYPE OF ADJOURNMENT	RUTTER B2 (TEACHERS) QUESTIONNAIRE MEAN SCORES (SD)			CONNERS' TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE FACTOR MEAN SCORES (SD)				
	N	A	T	I	II	III	IV	V
FLEXIBLE (n = 36)	1.4 (1.8)	2.4 (3.1)	11.3 (8.8)	0.6 (0.7)	1.1 (0.8)	0.9 (0.4)	0.7 (0.6)	0.6 (0.6)
INFLEXIBLE (n = 34)	1.7 (1.8)	2.8 (3.0)	14.6 (9.7)	0.7 (0.7)	1.0 (0.5)	1.0 (0.4)	0.3 (0.8)	0.6 (0.7)

No significant differences between Flexible and Inflexible groups ($p > 0.05$).

(See previous table for a description of the factors.)

Table 6.18
Comparisons of Rutter B2 and Conners' Teachers
Questionnaire Scores between children taken to court
for failure to attend school and controls.

ITEMS	Children taken to to court for I.S.A.		Controls from same school class		Sig. of dif. p<	
	Yr.1 n=98	Yr.2 n=70	Yr.1 n=87	Yr.2 n=67	Yr.1	Yr.2
Rutter B(2) Questionnaire Mean scores						
Neurotic (S.D.)	3.2 (10.0)	1.6 (1.7)	1.0 (1.3)	0.9 (1.5)	.05	.01
Antisocial (S.D.)	2.6 (2.8)	2.6 (3.0)	1.3 (2.1)	1.1 (1.8)	.001	.001
Total (S.D.)	15.4 (9.0)	9.3 (1.1)	7.4 (0.8)	5.9 (6.3)	.001	.001
Conners' Teachers Questionnaire Factor mean Scores						
Factor I (S.D.)	0.6 (0.7)	0.6 (0.7)	0.3 (0.5)	0.3 (0.6)	.001	.01
Factor II (S.D.)	1.2 (0.8)	1.0 (0.7)	0.6 (0.6)	0.7 (0.6)	.001	.002
Factor III (S.D.)	1.2 (0.5)	1.0 (0.4)	0.7 (0.5)	0.7 (0.4)	.001	.001
Factor IV (S.D.)	0.8 (0.7)	0.7 (0.7)	0.6 (0.6)	0.5 (0.5)	NS	NS
Factor V (S.D.)	0.9 (0.8)	0.6 (0.7)	0.3 (0.6)	0.3 (0.5)	.001	.002

(vii) INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN

Reading

One of the components of the interview introduced early on was the Neale Analysis of reading ability. This was administered at both the interviews with the children using parallel forms of the test.

The average time between the first and 2nd testing on the Neale Analysis of reading ability for children before the court was 13 months. The average increase in accuracy scores over this period was only 3 months, and the average increase in comprehension scores just 2 and a half months (Table 6.19). It appears that the court group were further behind in reading relative to their age after court adjournments.

The control group were tested once. This group of children were also behind in reading relative to their age and in this respect were not significantly different from children attending Juvenile Court on court adjournments.

All the children tested had comprehension scores which lagged behind reading accuracy scores.

TABLE 6.19
Scores obtained on the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability by Irregular School Attenders and a control group.

	1st testing of court cases (N= 63)	2nd testing of court cases (N=58)	Control Group (non-court) children, (N =35)
Mean chronological age (1)	13.55 yrs	14.64 yrs	13.99 yrs
Mean of reading ages based on accuracy (2)	10.27 yrs	10.51 yrs	10.77 yrs
Mean of reading ages based on comprehension (3)	9.49 yrs	9.63 yrs	10.18 yrs
difference (A) (1 subtract 2)	3.26 yrs	4.11 yrs	3.43 yrs
difference (B) (1 subtract 3)	3.98 yrs	4.93 yrs	3.81 yrs
difference (C) (2 subtract 3)	0.79 yrs	0.83 yrs	0.33 yrs

Matrices and vocabulary scales

Where possible children were seen alone. The Ravens Matrices or the Coloured Matrices were given first followed by the reading test (see above) and the Mill Hill Vocabulary scales.

The Matrices and the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scales were administered once only for court children (at the first childrens' interview) and for the control children when they were seen. The grades for both Matrices and Vocabulary scales were computed for each child from standard tables of age-related norms. The resultant grades are shown in Tables 6.20 and 6.21. For comparative purposes, the percentile (normal distribution) levels for each grade are shown. Clearly, both court children and control children were below the levels expected from a general population, but the court children were worse than control children. Because the children came (on the whole) from comprehensive schools where the intakes were fairly uniform, and where there were substantial numbers of children who were not in the highest ability bands, the fact that there are more in the lower grades than one would expect to find in the general population is unremarkable. The difference between the court children and the control children indicates, though, that the court children seem to have been of lower ability than their peers at school.

Table 6.20
Ravens Matrices grades for court children and controls.

		COURT CHILDREN		CONTROL CHILDREN		PERCENTILE LEVEL (NORMAL DISTRIBUTION) FOR EACH GRADE
		(N)	%	(N)	%	
Grades	I	1	1.5	1	2.9	at or above 95th percentile
	II	3	4.7	6	17.1	at or above 75th percentile
	III+	5	7.8	5	14.3	between 51st & 74th percentile
	III	1	1.5	3	8.6	at the 50th percentile
	III-	17	26.6	10	28.6	between 26th & 49th percentile
	IV	22	34.4	6	17.1	at or below 25th percentile
	V	11	17.2	4	11.4	below 5th percentile
missing		4	6.3	-	-	
TOTALS		64	100%	35	100%	

Table 6.21
Mill Hill Definitions grades for court children and controls.

		COURT CHILDREN		CONTROL CHILDREN		PERCENTILE LEVEL (NORMAL DISTRIBUTION) FOR EACH GRADE
		(N)	%	(N)	%	
Grades	I	-	-	-	-	at or above 95th percentile
	II	-	-	4	11.4	at or above 75th percentile
	III+	1	1.5	1	2.9	between 51st & 74th percentile
	III	1	1.5	2	5.7	at 50th percentile
	III-	11	17.2	9	25.7	between 26th & 49th percentile
	IV	15	23.4	6	17.1	at or below 25th percentile
	V	30	47.0	12	34.3	below 5th percentile
missing		6	9.4	1	2.9	
TOTALS		64	100%	35	100%	

Interviews: attitudes, experiences and behaviour

56 children who had been summoned to appear in court for I.S.A. were interviewed a few days before going to court. The child or young person was asked to think about what they had been doing in the previous week and answer some questions. The theoretical framework behind the questionnaire was one of asking about specific instances of behaviour rather than letting the youngster generalise, but based upon self-report. The questionnaire was designed to help build up a picture of the child and his or her activities, interactions with parents, activities and hobbies, homework and school. Some of the questions were adapted from Belson's study of juveniles (Belson, 1975).

Although the interviewing in the Belson study was on a much larger scale and better resourced than that undertaken here, the preparation and piloting of those interviews with a group of London boys was extensive and there seemed to be value in making use of their experience.

Specifically, the idea of using cards to display a choice of replies was adopted to answer some questions and vary the rhythm of the interview. Also, the claimed frequency of "missing school when they should be there" options of "once a week" or "once a month" or "hardly ever" were used along with "never".

Unlike the Delson study, in Leeds the children and young people were not collected from home and taken to an interviewing centre, although with the benefit of hindsight this might have made interviewing conditions more private, quiet and suitable to elicit sensitive information (but the project simply wasn't funded to do this). The Leeds project interviewed everyone in their own homes, with as much cooperation as could be secured from parents to see that the child and the interviewer were left in peace for the interview.

On the whole the court children were friendly and cooperative and the author tried to get to know them a little and put them at their ease before beginning the session. Control children (with three exceptions) were seen by another worker.

Spare Time

Almost equal numbers spent their spare time indoors and outdoors in the previous week, spread fairly evenly between boys and girls, although there was a tendency for more of the boys to spend more time outside. Some had paper-rounds or did some baby-sitting to earn pocket money. Only one child reported doing any homework of substance. Most appeared to do as they pleased for most of the time.

Relationships

Very few (ten) reported significant conflict or dispute with their parents in the previous week. For the most part they reported several friends.

School

Attitudes to school varied from being politely disinterested to expressing vigorous dislike. Many children looked forward to the day they could legally leave, but few had any clear idea what they wished to do when they left. Some, at the time of the second interview implied they would get no choice of job, they would just have to take "any Y.T.S. that was offered and be grateful".

Children out of school

Children were asked "where they spent their time when they were not in school and should be". Nearly a fifth (13%) said they went to town (meaning the city centre) and an equal number talked about being "on the street", "walking about" or "all over". Nearly two-fifths (36%) said they spent their spare time at home, and another tenth went to friends or relatives houses. Six said they went "nowhere special" when off school and one each went bird-watching, riding a motor-bike and playing golf. Only one of the 57 children who answered this question denied being off school illegally at some time.

Care

Thirty eight children were interviewed after a year, all over 12 years old. Of these 13 (8 boys and 5 girls) had spent some time in care. Eleven had been on an I.C.O. and two had had full Care Orders made. Of the two in full Care, one had already been allowed "home on trial" by the time of the second interview to attend her old school but the other was still away from home and in care during the week and earning weekends at home "by being good".

Descriptions of being in care

Children talked about pocket money and the number of smokes they were allowed while in care. Generally, they reported being more controlled and supervised than when at home. There were mixed reactions from children to being placed on an I.C.O. but most accepted it as an inevitable consequence of "the system". Comments ranged from "it was a lot better than you thought" to "I didn't like it at all"; and, "it was terrible, I missed my mum". One 16 year old boy said he had been "lonely in care with no-one to talk to".

All the children who were placed in care on an I.C.O. or a C.O. spent time being observed and assessed in a proper C. and A centre.

(viii) CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has examined some of the more psychological and sociological features of poor school attendance as revealed by the series of interviews with questionnaires which were conducted. Several significant findings have emerged.

Firstly, there were no significant differences between the families and children who were interviewed when compared with the families and children not interviewed on a whole spectrum of variables. The only significant difference to emerge ^{was} being the percentage school attendance in the 30 school weeks after the first court appearance, when the interviewed group did better (79% compared with 72%). This suggests that interviewing (or perhaps visiting or "being interested") might have a significant contribution to make in the reduction of bad attendance at school.

Secondly, those who were interviewed were divided into four groups by factor analysis depending on whether they exhibited features of "school refusal" and/or "truancy". These groups were cross-validated by an experienced child psychiatrist. Differences between the groups were found in psychiatric disturbance and responsiveness to the court adjournment system. Refusers did much worse than the truants, who in turn, did much worse than those showing neither characteristic. This is in line with previous

findings.

Thirdly, control children had much more active conflict with their parents, who appeared to set firmer guidelines and rules for their children than the parents of court children. This finding was also confirmed by the interviews with the children themselves, where court children appeared to be largely unsupervised in their spare time.

Fourthly, parents had a mixed reaction to the court adjournment system. Many had negative feelings towards the court, especially concerning the time spent waiting to go in. There were strong negative feelings towards the schools on a wide variety of topics; many parents thought the curriculum offered by the school was irrelevant to their child's needs, but nearly all supported compulsory education. The parents worried a great deal about their children's futures while on the court adjournment system. A major fear which emerged in both the interviews with parents and children was of the child going to court and "being put away" (placed in care).

Fifthly, parents of court children often had many material problems to overcome and school attendance took a low place in the priorities of some. The mothers of court children were significantly older than control mothers; court families tended to be larger

than control families and more court children came from broken homes. There were no global differences in the type of housing occupied by court children and their controls, but there was a difference in the quality of housing, since significantly more court children lived in homes where damp and cold were problems. Court families were more mobile and had moved house more often than control families. More court families were supported by Social Security than control families.

Sixthly, the questionnaires about behaviour completed by class teachers showed the court children to be significantly more disturbed than controls, but the court children's scores fell during the year between two testings.

Finally, both control and court children were well below the norm for general IQ, vocabulary and reading. The court children were even worse than the control group. This finding may reflect the characteristics of the school and its intake as well as the fact that, on the whole, the court children were a less-able group than controls.

The above points can only be taken as a general guide since each child interviewed was different. To capture some of the differences six case studies have been included in Appendix 2 to illustrate some of the types of children who were taken to court for I.S.A.

Although many parents and children expressed dislike of the court adjournment system, for many it appeared to be viewed as an inevitable part of their environment and culture.

NOTES

1. Part-time interviewers.

As the project developed it became clear that the author could not possibly carry out all the interviewing of subjects and controls as well as manage the day to day running of the whole project. Accordingly, two part-time interviewers were engaged to give help on a casual basis. One, a qualified psychologist, did the majority of interviewing for the control group, seeing both the parents and the children. The other, a qualified social worker, saw some of the court children when necessary to maintain the interview time-table.

The author conducted all the interviews with the court children and saw all of their parents at least once.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CRITIQUE

Introduction

As far as anyone was aware, the Leeds Truancy Project was the only research project of its kind known in Britain whilst it was underway (1). It was "live" research in a real-life setting, constantly changing and in need of response and adaptation in the light of events. This, among a number of other things has made it difficult to draw a line time-wise for the purposes of writing this report. The line was drawn for the collection of hard "research" data when the author left the project in August 1983. My reading and thinking has continued since then and this chapter contains some reflections which have arisen since the end of the project in 1983. They are therefore distanced from the research and attempt to provide a balanced view of the entire project so that it may be more seen as a whole rather than as a series of separate articles or letters each focussing on a small part of the project. This thesis tries to relate and pull together some of the disparate issues raised by critics of the Leeds Truancy Project including more individual methodological and philosophically based criticisms as well as the reactions by various professional groups to this important research.

Reviewing the past eight years or so, however, certain features of the research project remain prominent, e.g.

endless numbers of visits to court; the trailing backwards and forwards to the city-centre from as far out as six miles (usually by 'bus); the problems of low-income families; and cold and sometimes squalid rented housing, rather than the improvement in school attendance and the reduction in criminal offences which were published as results and described the project as successful. In some cases the project affected peoples lives in a profound way (2). It is clear that, for many children, adjournments were effective in returning them to school but there were "costs" involved as well as benefits and these have been commented on by many (e.g. the number of children received into Care as a result of the adjournment procedures (Pritchard, 1986)).

So far, this thesis has attempted a number of things. Chapters 1 and 2 reviewed the legal and literary background of the project and placed it in a wider context than the city of Leeds before considering background information and data concerning delinquency and general school attendance in Leeds. A full report concerning the specific project designed to refine and evaluate two methods of court adjournment was presented in Chapter 3 and was followed by a discussion of the particular court procedures relevant to Care proceedings for I.S.A. in the Juvenile Court. Because the project collected and processed a large amount of data the results were divided into two. Chapter five considered the overall results from the courts and

looked at school attendance, delinquency and care orders and Chapter 6 presented the information obtained about home and school background from the various interviews and questionnaires.

This chapter focusses on the following areas which seem to be important and which have valuable lessons to teach us as well as raising questions to consider for any future work:

- (i) Project design, length, funding and the problems facing research in a live-setting;
- (ii) Ethical considerations;
- (iii) Enforcement of education, some views and reactions in the light of the Leeds work;
- (iv) Irrelevant curriculum and "alternative schools";
- (v) Social consequences of the research;
- (vi) Legal representation for parents and children;
- (vii) Final conclusions and recommendations.

(1) PROJECT DESIGN, LENGTH, FUNDING AND THE PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH IN A LIVE SETTING

The initial submission concerning the research made to the Home Office in 1978 was scheduled for three years from Summer 1979. Experience has shown that this was barely long enough and an extension was applied for and granted for a period of one year. Even with the extra time, there was insufficient time for the best possible use to be made of all the data available.

Some of the constraints on timing were built into the design of the project since it was planned to follow-up all children interviewed at the time of going to court one year later. In practical terms this meant that the last child or young person to enter the study had to be through the project to allow sufficient time for the collection of the necessary follow-up data and the analysis of the results before they could be written up. Given the project took about 6 months to organise and set up with the relevant agencies, and then had to rely on the throughput of new cases to the courts by the Education Welfare service this meant that only children appearing before the courts during a period of about 15 months could be interviewed and followed up. The constraints in time were extremely tight, since the initial interviews had to be done before the first court hearing and the 2nd and 3rd interviews were timed for 12 school-weeks and 12 months after the case was proved, respectively. At one point all three sets of interviews were in use at once, and the project was extremely busy. At this point it suffered from a lack of personnel, since there was no paid clerical back-up, and this proved a serious handicap. This is a lesson for any research programme, and was a fault with this one.

The design itself was fairly straight-forward for anyone from a scientific background, a random trial

with the allocations covered by sticky labels. However, not all the magistrates and court clerks responsible for enacting the adjournment allocations were familiar with such research procedures, and some briefing sessions had to be held to try and ensure maximum compliance with the protocol of the research schemes (flexible and inflexible adjournments).

With the benefit of hindsight, the project may have benefitted considerably had more effort been put into this aspect at the beginning, and more informal discussion allowed concerning the criterion for excluding children, before the project got underway. That 177 of 205 were randomly assigned to one of the two groups is remarkable since there were 4 courts involved, sitting on Monday to Thursday afternoons, with about 30 magistrates taking part at some point.

The need for adequate communication and briefing of participants in any project has to be underlined, and particularly so here when the people putting the research into practice were not (e.g. the magistrates) the architects of the research, and didn't appreciate the difficulties posed for analysis if, for example, too many had been excluded.

Another problem area, related to shortage of time, was that of piloting the interview schedules. Because time

was tight and there was a pressing need to get the main study underway as soon as possible, piloting had to be limited. As soon as it was clear that the interviews could be made to work, and a few modifications made, the main study got underway. There is no doubt in my mind that the interview schedules could have been improved and refined far more if there had been more resources available, notably a longer time-period between the pilot group and main work.

Information from the schools attended by the children before the court and their controls (the next child of the same sex on the school register), especially from the questionnaires completed by teachers about the children was not as forthcoming as had been expected. The initial questionnaires were distributed by Education Welfare Officers to the schools and were returned via the Education Welfare Service. This was not entirely satisfactory, mainly because of different pressures on E.W.O.'s time and accountability. The research team could not insist that the taking out and collection of these forms was to be made "top priority".

When the time came for the twelve month follow-up for questionnaires, because of the difficulties experienced on the first distribution, a choice had to be made as to whether to abandon the follow-up or to organise it from the research office. It was decided to try to

make the 12 month follow-up data as complete as possible, and so the forms were sent out direct from the research office with a covering letter to head-teachers and a stamped addressed envelope for returning the forms. This was time consuming but worthwhile. A problem such as this underlines the need to allow some contingency time and money in research designs and plans. It also underlines yet again, the problems inherent in doing research which depends upon the input of many people.

Research in a "live" setting presents many problems which are not encountered in a controlled laboratory setting which uses volunteers or "captive" subjects and can control for a variety of contingencies.

In the Leeds work, there were not only varied responses to the adjournments by the subjects of the research, but also varied responses to the requests for information. There were problems of non-compliance of magistrates with respect to the allocation to the scheme (already discussed); problems of schools failing to complete and return forms, some of which could have been alleviated with more personnel who could have visited the schools to "round up" information. Families approached for interviews were not always willing to be interviewed, although 71 out of 92 approached did so. There were also a few problems of the E.W.O. service not sending out letters

to excuse children attending court at the right time, but this fortunately was resolved without a great deal of effort. (In the case of children not complying with the request of the court that they attend school regularly, then the outcome was determined, depending on the level of attendance). Personnel in the research project sometimes had problems complying with the protocol of the research to the absolute letter, often for reasons which appeared valid (e.g. a magistrate dealing with a child in court). No contingency plans were made in advance to deal with such problems. The project would have benefitted had someone sat down and thought out what the effects of non-compliance by all or any of these groups would be, and carefully explained it.

The fact that the initial research period of three years was extended has already been referred to. One of the reasons for this was the problem of the project snow-balling; questions were raised in the process of research which needed an answer, for example, what was the general attendance like in secondary schools? The extra work which this entailed was considerable. This underlines again the need for on-going strategic discussion and some flexibility in the time-scale plan for any research project. On the whole the subsidiary work was of value in placing the research findings from the main court-study in a wider context.

Summary and recommendations

Several major faults have emerged from which any future research projects might benefit.

(i) Lack of paid clerical back-up with specific responsibility to the research project meant research personnel were often overstretched.

(ii) Limited resources and efforts meant that briefing sessions for professional participants were not as extensive as they could have been.

(iii) The research project snow-balled and stretched limited resources still further.

(iv) Under-resourcing meant that pilot studies for interviews were severely limited.

Arguably, research projects of this sort need a much longer "base" period than the three years which is normally granted. Examples of projects which have been spread over a much longer period of time are: The National Child Development Study, which began in 1958 with the birth of a group of children and followed them through until at least age 21. (Fogelman, Tibbenham and Lambert, 1980); and The Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development, which is a prospective study of a group of 411 males contacted in 1961 at age 8. In 1978 they had been followed up for 17 years and plans were to continue this. Even the study on the Isle of Wight, which collected data in 1964 and 1965 published it much later in 1970 (Butter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970), a fact which underlines the need to allow time

for considered analysis of the results obtained and their implications before committing them to print.

The Leeds Truancy Project would have benefitted by receiving consistent funding for at least 5 years from the outset. This would have allowed for:

- (i) Better briefing of affected participants
- (ii) More preparation and piloting of the interviews
- (iii) A better system for compliance from schools
- (iv) More time for on-going reflection, strategic planning and the final reporting of results to relevant bodies.

(ii) ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the major methodological issues raised by the Leeds Truancy Project is the notion of importing a "random trial" into the court-room. Critics of such action have questioned whether what is, in essence an early agricultural model, adopted by medicine, (Pickering, 1949), can be transported and enacted in the court room.

There are several ways of responding to this argument, and several writers have commented about it. For example, Dr. Roy Mullin (one of the research team and chairman of the Juvenile Bench of the Court) said when describing his actions during adjournments

procedures for I.S.A.,

"I'm not giving or withholding drugs, just seeing the kids go to school as the law demands and what could be more "caring" than seeing they get the education they need?" (3)

The issue comes into focus when one notices how the word "treatment" has been used in reference to what is done with the children appearing in court for care proceedings. As Sutton (1981) remarked :

"There are grounds to suspect, however, that the concept of treatment in child care has migrated from medicine, specifically from child psychiatry, which has for most of this century claimed expertise over a wide range of problems largely coterminous with those presently construed as child care." (4)

Increasingly, in the twentieth century "problem behaviour" in children (including truancy) has been referred to child psychiatrists or psychologists. The Leeds work, by using what is essentially a research tool from the laboratories of Fisher (1935) and other social scientists of his day, then pioneered in the field of medicine (the random controlled prospective trial to evaluate treatments), in the court room, has confused "treatment" of "problem behaviour" (in this case, failure by the child to go to school regularly), with the functions of child care. This raises some ethical questions over the function of care.

The design of the Leeds "experiment" in the court room was not unique; the design is that used in trials of medical drugs. That a medical model of evaluation was

used to test two "treatments" was hardly surprising since two of the principal researchers were connected with medicine, one being a child psychiatrist (5), and the other a Biochemist (6). It is important to remember that although the random trial is now a well established method of evaluation in medicine, the method struggled for a very long time before it gained acceptance in the medical sphere as the only appropriate way of evaluating treatments.

The whole area of randomized experiments in crime and justice is very complex and few random experiments have been carried out at all on crime and justice topics (Farrington, 1983).

One of the main ethical problems arising from the application of such a research model to the court room was not the fact of the court room per se but the way in which the exercise was handled in court. Journalist, Jack Cross, who visited an afternoon court in session while on a fact-finding expedition to Leeds, raised the question of whether it was ethical to use a behaviourist approach in experiments of this kind. He saw the experiment as one of the kind which:

"treat children as if they were particles and not people". (7)

When deciding about how to deal with problem children in court, Sutton (1981) gave a specific example of how

"unspecified 'needs' might override more objective considerations in a case of non-attendance". (8)

He suggested that at present we do not have the technical expertise to treat everything and perhaps all we can realistically offer is humane care. He argued that there is a need to distinguish between humane motives and treatments so that the ineffectiveness of a particular treatment does not discredit the motive behind it. He presented an argument supporting the Leeds project and in favour of moving towards :

"a science-based expertise". (9)

He suggested that this would link theory and practice in child care. Opinions, he argued, are not enough; what is needed is research on a proper foundation with comparison groups and proper appreciation of the statistical concepts involved. He said of the Leeds work:

"the two studies of non-attendance on adjournment in Leeds represent an isolated example of a strategy of research directed towards a specific problem in the area of child-welfare in this country". (10)

Methodologically, the random experiment is justified for Sutton because :

(i) the Leeds work was carefully sequenced, progressing from initial observation and hunch to practice in stages which would have permitted withdrawal if necessary; (ii) school attendance is not a "socially sensitive question" (11); and (iii)

because the exclusion of cases clearly counter-indicated, before randomization is similar to that of medical research, such clinical research being:

"conducted by compassionate and caring medical staff" which is "accepted by the rest of us as the only way treatment can advance". (12)

Using blind trials of a genuine experimental nature in real-life situations seems to Sutton to be the acid test as to whether or not we are really committed to work towards a responsible expertise based upon real knowledge of what it recommends. He remarked that, in deciding NOT to undertake such a harsh test, the alternative is to base practice upon untried ideas or convenience, such a basis posing an ethical problem in itself.

He concluded his support of a scientifically-based child-care expertise:

"It remains true that "meaning well" does not equal "doing good", and the term "do-gooder" has come to imply ineffectual attempts to intervene in matters beyond our control".
(13)

This argument holds that courts, children and families, plus society generally could gain a great deal from a more scientifically-based child care expertise.

Another major ethical issue raised by the court room setting for the experiment is that of consent. As far

as can be ascertained, the question of consent in the Leeds work has not been widely debated.

Methodologically, the most desirable research is that of random allocation (Farrington, 1978) and ideally, administrators of the research treatments and subjects should be ignorant of the experimental conditions and hypotheses because of the problems which arise from bias. It is often difficult to arrange this (Farrington, 1983) and in the first stages of the Leeds work (Berg et al, 1978a) the experiment was deliberately kept secret from juveniles and treatment staff (E.W.O.'s and Social Workers) but NOT magistrates. This resulted in an avalanche of protest from the social workers in particular, amounting to what Reynolds (1978) called "bitter opposition" (14). Jack Cross (1983) commented that the system was:

"not greeted with universal acclaim", (15)

the magistrates were accused of insensitivity towards individual problems, and also of devaluing and by-passing an expensive, hard-working and caring social service.

Brewer (1978) commented that the social work reaction (to the first random trial) was very remarkable because:

"as an aspiring profession which feels entitled to the sort of social and political respect which doctors take for granted, it might have been expected to examine and

modify its own practices, or even have withdrawn gracefully from a field in which it performed so badly". (16)

Another possible reason for the adverse social work reaction to the early (1977) research may be found in another criticism of the design. Pritchard (1986) suggests that the research design itself was flawed because, rather than having one primary goal with which to measure success, there were, in fact, two when adjournments were compared to Supervision. The argument used suggests that rather than the measure of successful outcome being improved school attendance and reduced criminal involvement, which was the stated aim, in fact, the primary aim of the social workers involved in the Supervision Orders would be to "maintain the young person within the community and their family and, seek to avoid admission into care..." (Pritchard, 1986). Thus it is suggested that the 1977 work wasn't really a comparative treatment approach since the two contrasting interventions of Supervision and Adjournment had different goals which would have meant that social workers would have placed a higher priority on retaining a young person at home than returning them to school. The later research, however, being concerned with a different problem did not repeat these comparisons and was concerned solely with comparing different methods of court adjournments and with the same aims as already reported in Chapters 3 and 5.

The phenomenon of treatments doing harm is one known to the medical profession, which is fully aware that some treatments which do good have certain side-effects and dangers. Brewer suggested that if social workers sought the status of therapists, they would have to accept that their efforts might on occasion be harmful; he commented that many social workers did not seem able to realise this. This criticism of harm could, of course, apply to the adjournment system.

Apart from keeping the early research secret from other "involved professionals", the problem of "informed consent" arises with respect to the children and their parents who were before the courts. It is a knotty problem. Methodologically, as current knowledge stands, it is better for research purity if the subjects are ignorant of the experiment, a fact which directly conflicts with the belief that participants in a research programme should give their informed consent (Farrington, 1983). Little research has been carried out concerning the issue of informed consent on the outcome of the research, but one study demonstrated a significant decrease in the willingness

of people to take part in interviews about sensitive subjects (Singer, 1987).

Farrington, (1983) suggested that one basic rule that "might" be followed in randomised experiments was that:

"subjects should not be harmed by participating in the research". (17)

In general, in such experiments designed to evaluate treatment, experimenters tend to randomly assign subjects either to the usual treatment, or, to something believed to be better (or preferred by the subject).

A general ethical dilemma which sometimes can arise is that what is best for the individual may not always be best for the community. This can mean that experimenters err on the side of caution and this can sometimes be detrimental to the research project's design.

A possible way forward in helping to evaluate whether a research project is ethical is to consider whether its likely benefits outweigh its likely costs (e.g. in terms of deception, invasion of privacy, or harm caused to subjects.)

In the second Leeds random trial, reported in this thesis, children who had been summoned with their parents to appear in the Juvenile Court did not know

that they were taking part in a randomly-controlled study of two court procedures (flexible or inflexible adjournment). Those children and parents who were approached for interviews were only told that there was a study being conducted in Leeds concerned with children and their parents going to Juvenile Court "with problems over school". Families were told that the research team were based at the University and in all cases they were assured of confidentiality. In no case was the random assignment by the court discussed with or mentioned to families, the consent they gave was clearly for the interviews alone.

To sum up, so far in this section, the main ethical issues raised concern the use of a "scientific" model of random experiment in the court room; the communication of research plans with other involved professionals; the issue of informed consent for participating in research.

Ethical problems of secrecy and "informed consent"

The possible consequences of particular experimental designs need considering before any experiment is carried out and this is especially so for experiments which involve an element of deception or secrecy. To tell the truth about all of a complex matter is impossible, but some lies are deliberate, as are some deliberately kept secrets (Bok, 1984). This happened during the early Leeds work in the first random trial

(Berg et. al. 1978) where the fact that the research project was underway in the Juvenile court was kept secret from social workers and others. Once it was realised that what had been a traditional practice of placing most children on a Supervision Order was no longer being used as frequently by the court, some social workers were very upset and angry. One reason given for the secrecy was that it was necessary for the conduct of a random controlled trial without bias. If the social workers had known in advance about the proposed comparison their behaviour might have changed.

The normal criterion applied to random medical trials is that they require "informed consent" before a person participates, but it is recognised that this concept, when used by biomedical investigators is difficult to achieve, and is often relative. One person wrote:

"The terms 'true consent' and 'informed consent' are both used. 'Informed consent' implies that the patient has received all the information necessary to enable him to give consent. However, it may be impossible or inadvisable always to give full information, so the term 'informed consent' is a relative one." (18)

The consequences of an experiment which keeps the involved group "in the dark" are often dire. Such groups quite rightly often feel deceived - they have been. Bok (1978) suggested that deception can blur the accurate estimation of the costs and benefits of research (19) and the assessment of costs and benefits

is one of the accepted tests to be applied to evaluate a proposed study before it is undertaken (Farrington, 1983). Bok commented that deceived people who later learn that they have been wronged are often resentful, disappointed, suspicious and feel wronged. The deception of one group of people can have consequences for many more (20). This interpretation could help to explain the adverse social work reaction to the first random trial in the Leeds courts, and some of the coolness towards the second.

The first random trial affected relationships between groups of professionals working with children in the city. From all the available evidence, it is clear that social work reaction was resentful and the group did feel wronged. This affected the cooperation received towards the second random study which forms the subject of this thesis. Although information was obtained from Social Services it was not the easiest of working relationships, and the research project was treated with suspicion.

Some critics have said very firmly that none of this need have happened had the social workers been consulted before the early research (comparing supervision with adjournment) began, and that as concerned professionals they were entitled to such consideration. However, the experimenters had to face the fact that giving a potentially hostile group

information about an experiment with which they might not have agreed, and which might have counted against their best interests would have left the door wide open for covert or overt sabotage or non-cooperation.

On a positive note, full inter-professional consultations were held before the second random trial began in 1979.

Ethical scrutiny

If deceptive research is contemplated, safeguards are needed. Bok (1978) argued that such planned deceptions are judged more harshly than those told without fore-thought. Bok described pre-planned deceptions as "especially suspect" (21). Social science has traditionally stressed the benefits produced by such research, but such "altruistic" claims can often be "paternalistic lies" in disguise (22). Bok suggests good intentions, and the intention to produce benefits are no guarantee of a good outcome and therefore to stress the possible benefits of the research is not an adequate defence of deceptive practices. Sutton (23) uses the same argument in reverse to support experimentation, i.e. the good intentions of social work "caring" may not have a good outcome, and there is a need to find out what might produce a good outcome by strategic research, which would then give the caring professions a science-based expertise, which he would regard as the benefit

produced by research.

In the field of medical experiments there is a requirement for the subjects of research to be told that it will involve deception when their consent is sought. (E.g. when one of several treatments will be used, at least one of which will be a placebo). Only when such consent is gained, from competent subjects, can the research be described as treating subjects fairly (24). So far as the author is aware the Leeds project neglected to consider this matter at all.

Scrutiny of medical research proposals accrues in ethical and research committees, procedures which safeguard the subjects in experiments, and also the integrity of all participants in a research programme. Sometimes assessment groups can be biased, and Bok (1978) suggested that, as a general rule, all interested parties should be represented on the committee including potential subjects. As far as can be ascertained the first random trial in Leeds was not subjected to such scrutiny, and although expert advice was obtained from criminologists (25) no formal ethical scrutiny was undertaken. Commenting on the use of randomisation Berg et.al (1979) wrote:

"In medicine the evaluation of treatments in this way is now standard practice (Atkins, 1966 and the ethical implications have been widely discussed and generally agreed on (Leader, 1973). No such agreement exists with regard to the use of such trials in the legal sphere." (26)

Formal scrutiny was not made of the second random trial either.

A more public test of research projects is to ask whether the entire practice can be defended in the press or on television (Bok, 1978). In this respect, clearly the "Leeds Way" of dealing with truancy cannot be said to have failed, since it has received a great deal of media attention, much of it favourable. For example, one local headline ran:

"Leeds anti-truant plan registers a success". (27)

Most of the information gained by the media concerning the research was from the research team itself, either directly, or by journalists attending meetings at which one or more of the research team were speaking. There were one or two exceptions to this. The press raised some of the ethical issues but no clear opinions emerged. Opponents of the research working professionally in the sphere were less benevolent. For instance, one article by Pratt (1985) discussed the Leeds method of dealing with truants before the courts for I.S.A. in detail. He suggested that it might be possible for social workers to campaign against a specific issue such as the use of care orders in school attendance cases (one of the main

bones of contention) and for them to:

"bring in a number of arguments against any local adaptation of the Leeds system". (28)

Bok (1978) argued a strong case for subjecting social science research to the same ethical stringency as medical investigations. If the same criteria as those used for medical research had been applied in the case of the research conducted from 1980 onwards, then one of the main issues would have been that of consent. The issue of experimentation on children is not clear even in the medical sphere. Generally speaking, the position is that:

"a circular from the Department of Health on the ethics of clinical research (HSC(5)153) says that children of 12 (14 in Scotland) can give consent, However, this circular has no legal status. The Family Law Reform act gives a minor authority to give his consent to treatment (without any other consent), but this is understood not to cover research procedures, although the issue has never been tested in the courts". (29)

As a rule medical research procedures are not allowed on children under 12 years of age. In the Leeds study of 1980 onwards, a number of children were less than 12 years old, and this raises the question as to whether such young children should have been included. If the ethical rules relating to medical trials had been applied then it might well have led to the exclusion of any child under the age of 12, and the requirement that consent was sought from all other children aged 12 and over. This would have given a more homogenous group (12 to 15 year olds) but a

smaller picture in terms of the total school population.

Summary and recommendations

The use of a scientific model of random experiment in a court room raised much controversy. It is clear that the research was not subject to formal ethical scrutiny in the same way as a medical trial would have been. Informed consent from children or from parents was not sought and attempts were made to keep the research secret while it was in progress.

In the author's view, such studies should always be preceded by ethical scrutiny. Furthermore, because of the increasing sensitivity to children's rights, further discussion on the issue of consent might result in future work excluding the younger children. There are good grounds for suggesting that the research should have excluded all children under 12, and should have examined the topic of consent in relation to any 12 to 15 year olds who became a research subject without knowing that this was so.

(iii) ENFORCEMENT OF EDUCATION, AND SOME VIEWS
AND REACTIONS ABOUT THE LEEDS WORK

A number of social work critics of the Leeds method of dealing with irregular school attenders by pursuing Care Orders in the Juvenile Court did not see the necessity for making a child go to school if he or she doesn't wish to go (Adam, 1978).

Embedded within some of these critical arguments against the Leeds work lies something of the whole philosophical debate for and against compulsory education. This debate over whether or not the state should enforce education dates back at least as far as 1859, when John Stuart Mill wrote:

"Is it not almost a self-evident maxim that the state should require and compel education up to a certain standard of every human being who is born a citizen?" (30)

In the case of the Leeds work, the question has to be asked as to whether, if it is compulsory for a child to be educated, it is better to enforce the law, or are there any overriding needs of a child that should take precedence over the law?

Some social work critics of the Leeds adjournment system, writing in 1978 concerning the early 1977 work prior to the study reported in this thesis evidently felt that there were some needs of children which took priority over school:

"Better", they say, "almost anything than to send a deprived child to a school he hates". (31)

Pratt (1983) described the Leeds work as behaviourist in its approach which he suggested failed to take into account the world of meaning of the child. He quoted from the Black Report to support his views. This report concerned schooling in Northern Ireland, but was endorsed by the present British Government. In the report:

"education care proceedings were seen as essentially coercive and even perceived as unsolicited state intervention." (32)

The compulsion of education by the state raises wide ethical questions which are not unique to the Leeds research. The whole area of state-intervention and coercion for anything is involved in the debate. In particular, the earlier statement (quoted above) of John Stuart Mill about the self-evident nature of the need for the state to "require and compel education" is open to debate. The particular philosophical question which critics of the Leeds study have raised follows from this, namely whether or not the state should coerce children into receiving education at school when this is not necessarily going to get them anywhere, in the sense that a "good education" is now no longer any guarantee of a job. It must be recognised though that education is not only for vocational purposes, but can be of value for its own sake. Furthermore, is such coercion really paternalism masquerading under the guise of "care"?

Another major criticism of the Leeds adjournment

system has been the way in which it utilised the provisions of the 1969 Children and Young Persons' Act for the making of Interim Care Orders and Full Care Orders in cases where children fail to go to school after some time on court adjournments. A press release from social workers in July 1978 levelled criticism that the use of an I.C.O in the way was an abuse of the C.Y.P.A. and it used (statutory) care as a punishment rather than for its intended purpose, that of gaining further information to help the court to reach a decision about what was to be done with the child. They claimed that this use was against the spirit of the C.Y.P.A.

Some critics have highlighted the number of children who have ended up in care as a result of the Leeds scheme (about 20%) and the evidence that some of these were considerably disadvantaged. Pritchard (1986) also notes that it seems that the Leeds researchers "failed to note the sequential consequences of residential care which makes rehabilitation and re-integration into society much more difficult". In this study the researcher were not unaware of some of the consequences of care, and questions about care and its effects were asked during the interviews. However, the research did not have a major focus on Care Orders for I.S.A. and its consequences, and with the benefit of hindsight this might have been examined more fully.

In the 1983 study reported in this thesis, 35 children out of 168 who went through the project for the whole study went into care for three weeks on an I.C.O. A further 22 did not reach the required level of attendance and "failed" for the purposes of the study. Of the 22, 4 pregnant school girls aged 15 or more did receive Supervision Orders from the magistrates. The remaining 18 had a Full Care Order made, following periods of interim care. This meant that a third of the children going through the courts had care used as a sanction or treatment at some period in the study.

Jack Cross, a journalist, remarked after an afternoon spent observing in the Juvenile (Education) Court:

"sounds harsh, but only a few children go into care". (33)

In further press comment, Lamb (1984) reported a question raised in "an H.M.I. report" (not specified), which had asked whether the continuing threat of being placed in care was fair on the child. (34)

There is clearly a mixed picture. On the one-hand, writers such as Brewer and Lait (1980) suggest the Leeds research was good since it allowed evaluation of social work interventions in a blind study; and on the other, a number of critics who consider the number of children placed in care by the scheme totally unjustified. This mixed picture may reflect the confusion there is between welfare and judicial

approaches. This issue is taken further in section (v) of this chapter.

The Leeds scheme has been described as:

"working in outcome for a large proportion" (35);

"curing school shy children" (36);

and as a "positivistic" method of action (37). Some writers of the Leeds scheme have supported what is essentially a form of behaviour-therapy or modification based on intervention. Some critics condemn this approach as:

"treating symptoms rather than diseases" (38)

or as neglecting the manifold causes behind truant behaviour (Pratt, 1983). Pratt commented that for many truants the world of work no longer existed and that there was little hope of any realistic fulfillment of job hopes. He went on to argue that Berg's assumption that regular school attendance is good preparation for the world of "work when they grow up" was no longer true.

Many social workers regard truancy as one of many problems a youngster may have, the tip of a large iceberg, and suggest that truancy is often caused by an excess of problems in the first place (39). In such cases threats might only make the situation worse (Reynolds, 1978). Some social workers felt that the Leeds scheme was a form of window-dressing with "good results" concealing the real problems.

There is no doubt that the supervising of magistrates in their exercising of adjournments worked for a large number of children. Some have argued that these results were achieved by keeping the children before the courts for lengths of time which were inappropriate and unacceptable (often in excess of six months). Some claimed that repeated adjournments were illegal. Others, such as Sybil Eysenck, a magistrate and respected clinical psychologist of considerable experience, likened the adjournment system to a "deferred sentence" (40). This is a disposal available to the courts in criminal cases. She argued that the Leeds Truancy Project had showed that a deferred decision worked in care proceedings too. She supported the Leeds scheme because it put the onus onto "the defendant" and thus the child (and presumably the parents) had to take some responsibility for the consequences of their decision and actions (41).

The Principal Education Welfare Officer for Leeds, Mr. Harry Brown, likened the adjournment procedure to the "Sword of Damocles" (42), a threat which kept the pressure on the child to return to school. It is argued that the long length of time during which children were kept coming before the courts on repeated adjournments was to ensure that they did not regress into previous habits of poor attendance.

Nationally, magistrates and the legal profession are divided on the issue of whether or not the use of court adjournments for juveniles in this way is illegal. The Leeds magistracy and court officials, having taken advice, thought that they were legal and used them. When eminent members of the legal profession, present at the SSRC Law and Psychology Conference in 1981 heard a paper presenting the Leeds work,

"whilst some members of the legal profession could see the value of using the experimental method to evaluate sentences and court orders, it was clear that others considered it was incompatible with legal procedures. They believed that learned discussion between experienced practitioners was the only way to decide on the correctness of sentence". (44)

Presumably, the Home Office considered the matter carefully before awarding the 1978 research grant to examine the use of adjournments in more detail. The question of the legality of adjournments remains to be tried in law and publicly debated. The fact that a final decision as to which type of adjournment any particular child received rested on chance, in some legal opinions, constitutes grounds for appeal. Some members of the legal profession consider the magistrates using the system of adjournments were open to being accused of abrogating their responsibility to make a definite decision, and that had the child realised this was the situation, it would have been grounds for appeal to a higher court (45). To date no one has challenged this point in the High Court.

Summary and recommendations

There are philosophical differences which lie behind the various approaches to intervention. The criticism of paternalism will probably stand for ever as one that can always be made of "care".

The use of statutory care by the Leeds Juvenile Courts to enforce school attendance has been described as "an abuse of the C.Y.P.A.". Quite significant proportions of children who went to court for I.S.A. spent periods in care and this has been severely criticised by some. But little attention has been given by critics to effective alternatives, although we know from work done by Rutter (1979), Rose and Marshall (1975) and Pritchard and Butler (1978) that other factors such as school, staff and counsellors can all be used to improve school attendance and educational achievements even when the young people concerned are very disadvantaged. It might have been helpful if the project had found out more about the children who were placed in care.

The legality of the system was questioned by many, but never tested in the high court. This may reflect the relatively low socio-economic status of many of the families who appeared before the magistrates, and the lack of legal aid and advice (this point will be taken further in section vi).

A more full discussion and consideration of the various philosophical approaches to care before the research project was begun would have been helpful and may have avoided misunderstandings.

(iv) CURRICULUM RELEVANCE AND "ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS"

Some critics of compulsory schooling have tried to address the problem of relevance in the curriculum offered to children in state schools. Obviously curriculum varies from school to school, and some schools do better than others in offering a curriculum perceived by young learners as being relevant and helpful rather than so totally removed from their world as to be a "turn-off".

I have already noted the fact that some of the schools of the children and young people who were included in this study were perceived by the parents and youngsters as offering a curriculum whose bias was far away from the consumer (see chapter 6). I think the pain of all this was summed up by the mother who asked "Why teach 'em French when they can't read English?" A remark which was her way of questioning how relevant was the schools menu of teaching to her fifteen year old son. He was due to leave school within 12 months of the interview when she made that remark, and the mother was expressing anxiety over how equipped he would be to cope with life when he left. As she saw

things, he was one of the "failures" of the school system. He would be taking no public examinations before leaving school and the family lived in an area of very high unemployment so prospects after school were bleak. This mothers' question was a cry from the heart for action before it was too late. One general solution to the problem of irrelevancy in school-education has been the de-schooling movement which argues strongly against using education as a means of social control (e.g. Holt, 1976). Another solution has been the development of the Free-School movement in which schools run by parents have devised their own curriculum and provided suitable staff to implement it. At least one such Free School was functioning in Leeds during the time of the court study reported here, and one child was observed by the researcher coming to the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. (but she had started coming before the study started) who attended a Free School.

Within the state-system country-wide various practical responses and alternatives to "normal" school have been established for children and young people who have tried it and "opted out" (usually by being excessively absent or in producing disruptive and problem behaviour). Units have been variously described being called such things as "Truant centre";

"Reporting Centre"; "Disruptive unit"; and "College-club".

One such project was the ROSLA Community Education Project in Bristol for 5th form leavers. This was:

"a project based outside the school institution, but in cooperation with it, that has explored methods and courses which might offer meaningful education to these children". (46)

This approach can be criticised as a drain on financial resources, since the per-capita expenditure is high, however, two of the workers for the project, Royer White and David Brockington argued that some of the lessons learned from alternative education programmes such as the one at Bristol could be implemented in the state system without vast cost:

"to enable those who are gaining little from it at present to enjoy more of its facilities and the vast per capita sum invested in their schooling". (47)

Another criticism of similar projects is that they tend to be "wishy washy" and the young people are "allowed to do as they like". This does not appear to have happened in the Bristol project, since the work there was based on theory which had been carefully thought through and related to practice. The philosophies behind its approach were those of building relationships of trust, and of affirming young people and treating them as valued in their own right before attempting any educational work, which was done by group consensus and not coercion.

The "club" at Bristol took five groups of about 15 young people at a time; each group attended the centre for one day a week. These youngsters were all "failures" of the traditional school system and were:

"selected largely through being in a comprehensive low stream at the beginning of their final compulsory year and because few are taking CSE's. All of them intend leaving at the first opportunity and regard school as pretty much a waste of time; all of them are 'failures' of the state system and most of them know it. For these youngsters education has become a meaningless bore." (48)

The account of the ROSLA project in Bristol charts an approach of group working which took education out of the classroom and out of the jurisdiction of the teacher. It placed education with the young people themselves.

In fact, the project staff were committed to four stated principles concerning education:

- (i) that it should be directed towards self-sufficiency and self reliance;
- (ii) that it must be a participatory experience, include self-government and self-determinism as well as community action involvement;
- (iii) that education should develop expressiveness in a wider sense than just literacy;
- (iv) that learning should continue after 16 to be a life-long experience presented as an exciting and rewarding process, which may ultimately break down the barriers between the notions of work and education." (49)

Underlying these principles was the assumption that education needs to be tailor-made.

The Bristol scheme developed its curriculum from these principles with some success and was of benefit to those who participated. The scheme has been described in some detail because it is an example of an approach with a different philosophy than that which would shunt children into a classroom "because the law says they should be there" while at the same time failing to question what they do once incarcerated behind desks.

Leeds itself had a reporting centre, a unit concerned with children who had truancy and/or behaviour problems during the adjournment study, but it dealt with few numbers and made little impact on the more widespread problems of absence in the city.

De-schoolers and free-schoolers argue that forced schooling and conforming to a pre-set curriculum can be very harmful because children (and adults) learn when they are ready. Education specialists such as John Holt have argued very forcefully that children have their own ways of learning and working things out and that this natural style of thinking is destroyed when the child goes to school and encounters formal schooling methods (Holt, 1964; 1967). Such views do not deny that "education" is a moral good, but try to reinterpret "education". John Holt gave a definition of "education" which he rejected:

"I choose to define it here, as most people do, as something that some people do to others for their own good, moulding and

shaping them and trying to make them learn what they think they ought to know. Today, everywhere in the world, that is what 'education' has become, and I am wholly against it." (50)

Holt said that next to the right to life itself, one of the fundamental human rights is that of the right to control our own minds and thoughts. He commented:

"That means, the right to decide for ourselves how we will explore the world around us, think about our own and other persons' experiences, and find and make the meaning of our own lives. Whoever takes that right away from us, by trying to 'educate' us attacks the very centre of our being and does us a most profound and lasting injury." (51)

Such views are almost completely the reverse of the implicit philosophy behind the Leeds' scheme which ensured children attended school "full-time and on time" to "get the education they needed", or which sent them into care where, they were told, they would receive schooling whether they liked it or not. Some criticisms of this official enforcement of school attendance are ideological and conflicts of ideology are notoriously difficult to resolve.

To tell young people and parents that they "need the education provided by school" could be regarded as deception. Such an attitude carries many dangers including, the raising of false hopes (e.g. of success); leaving personal problems and potential unexplored; and causing unnecessary resentments to linger. All of these criticisms can be made of the enforcement of school attendance by court sanction.

Summary and recommendations

Many children and young people forced to attend school find what is offered irrelevant and boring. Some Alternative Schools, Free Schools and projects have attempted to try and develop activities and educational strategy which can be accommodated to individual need. They are based on a wider philosophy of education than are many classrooms and schools, but often consume more financial resources.

Pressuring children to attend traditional schools by using the sanction of court and the threat of Care as in the Leeds work, may not have been the most desirable or helpful thing for some of the youngsters many of whom had rejected traditional schooling as personally unfulfilling and irrelevant. Perhaps there is scope within the city for more "alternatives" within the state system, and a more imaginative approach to the curriculum.

(v) SOME SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE LEEDS RESEARCH

The Leeds method of adjournments for dealing with Irregular School Attenders has been both strongly advocated and opposed by many. A wide variety of arguments have been used to support either side of the debate. In some instances these reflect the different ideologies held by various professional groups.

On the positive side there are two obvious and measurable arguments which have frequently been quoted. Firstly, the undisputed fact that many children, previously absent from school, returned to some semblance of regular attendance once they were being regularly supervised by magistrates at repeated court adjournments. Secondly, there was a concurrent reduction in criminal activities once children returned to school.

A number of other positive features have been used to support the method of repeated court adjournments, although it is not so easy to measure their effect. These include reduced anti-social activities which might place absent children in moral or physical danger, or lead to criminal activities. For example, trips to the city centre amusement arcades and glue sniffing (both of these activities were admitted by some children interviewed in this study).

By returning a child or young person to school an opportunity is created for them to learn to deal with and get along with authority, rather than meet it with antagonism. It can be argued that by doing this, the young people are being better equipped for adulthood than they would be if they were just allowed to stay away from school "because they didn't like it". Additionally, the chance of mixing and forming social relationships at school is another benefit which comes from regular attendance.

There is quite a lot of evidence suggestive that poor school attendance runs in families. Intervention in school absence has been seen by some as an attempt to break into familial cycles of deprivation and absence that have sometimes existed in families for several generations. One journalist (Reid, 1984) highlighted this argument, and commented:

"today's truants are tomorrow's sloppy parents"
(52)

i.e. those who will, in their turn condone or sanction their children's absence from school. A positive value can be placed on any attempt to break into this cycle, especially if it is linked with strenuous efforts to help parents see the value of education.

Finally, on the positive side, are issues which come under the general heading of deterrence. The Leeds Truancy Project has been likened in its effect to that of a T.V. Detector van, deterring many would-be "truants" from actually becoming so. Historically, deterrence has played its part in the formulation of penalties in the legal system.

Negatively there are a number of strong arguments which can be used to oppose the enforcement of regular school attendance by court adjournments. Firstly, there is the vast amount of resources consumed by a scheme which could be described as dealing with symptoms rather than causes. The system takes large amounts of time from Education Welfare Officers, who

have less time for "welfare" problems, (e.g. free school meals, or clothing). Truancy and poor school attendance is not seen as a top priority for a stretched social services department which could arguably spend its money elsewhere to more effect and with more justification, e.g. with the elderly, the handicapped, or on Intermediate Treatment programmes. Probation officers lack the proper time available to spend it on enforcing school attendance for Supervision Orders.

Large numbers passing through the courts, sometimes as many as forty adjournments plus five new cases to be heard per afternoon, meant that there was less time available for more serious problems. Related to this is the criticism of "familiarity breeding contempt"; and a fear that frequent appearances could lead to a lack of respect for the law, bringing it into disrepute and leading to a loss of influence.

The other major negative criticism that can be levelled at the Leeds work is, the large numbers of children going through the Care system, by being made the subject of either an I.C.O. or a C.O. or both (58 out of 168 children in 30 school weeks).

To evaluate the social benefit of the scheme it is necessary to ask whether the children and young people benefitted from being "forced" to return to school under the threat of removal from home on a Care Order

if they didn't, a threat that can be described as emotional blackmail. Alternatively, such procedures could be seen as trying to convey to today's children and young people that in our society not everyone may do as they like and that society has powers to enforce the law.

It was surprising that no parents in the study elected to provide education "suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude" for themselves, a fact probably reflecting the families' social-economic status' than anything else, since there were no "professional" families in the study (under the Registrar-General's Classification, most were class III manual or lower).

Summary and recommendations

The Leeds method of dealing with Irregular School Attendance in court had both positive and negative social consequences. On the positive side were measurable effects such as the successful return of children and young people to school, a reduction in criminal and other anti-social activities, social development, and a chance to break into familial cycles of disadvantage. Negatively, the vast consumption of scarce judicial and social work resources, and the use of care as a threat were the main issues.

(vi) LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

One of the negative features of the Leeds system was the few children who were legally represented when their case was heard in court (53). Although the research did not originally plan to look at this, it was striking that, on the whole, families represented themselves, helped by the court clerk. This stood out not least because, in all other respects the court resembled the arena where criminal cases were heard, when usually a defendant was represented. Legal Aid was rarely sought, and apparently not always granted (although no examples of this were seen or heard about by the author during the research). One reason given for the non-granting of Legal Aid by Magistrates was the view of some who maintained that a child was not in danger of going into care from such proceedings provided he or she returned to regular school attendance (54).

Another reason for the lack of legal representation is the way in which the "welfare" approach to dealing with juveniles has unfortunately become entangled with the judicial system. This is reflected in the way the courts work. As Roger Smith commented in a perceptive essay called Children and their Lawyers in the Juvenile Court (1981):

"One of the major differences between the juvenile and adult court is that there has not been the same domination by lawyers. The clerk has a legal qualification. He has often until recently been the only legally qualified person in court. The magistrates

are almost invariably laymen. The ideological dominance of the welfare agencies has been matched by a physical dominance in terms of the number of representatives present in court" (55).

Roger Smith remarked that, despite all the representatives from social services, the probation service, educational welfare, and the juvenile liason bureau, plus any students on placements with these bodies, there were none of the ranks of "besuited lawyers waiting for their cases to be heard that dominates the magistrates court" (56). An observation leading one to query "why not?"

The confusion between welfare and judicial approach

One of the reasons for poor representation of children and families in care proceedings could partly be caused by the confusion between welfare and judicial approaches for dealing with these young people. One reason for this is historical and a number of writers concerning juvenile law have commented on the changes which have taken place in the twentieth century in our concepts of childhood. As the opening paragraph of a book called Justice for Children (Morris, Giller, Szwed and Geach, 1980) succinctly stated:

"Children have not always been seen as a distinct social problem. Until this century, childhood was a brief and unimportant phase of life; infant mortality rates were high and those children who survived were quickly introduced into the responsibilities of adult life. As children had neither rights nor independent status, they were vulnerable to all forms of physical and economic exploitation and abuse. Intervention into family life was virtually unknown, since the principle of

family autonomy was supported in many influential sections of society (both secular and religious). The history of childhood, and the history of children as a social problem, are primarily a history of changes in the legal and social relations of children with the adult world". (57)

We have to recognise that childhood is a modern-day concept and that there was a gradual change in the legal processes for dealing with children during the 19th century. Juvenile Tribunals began in 1908, more for the "depraved" than the "deprived", but gradually less distinction was made between the two types of children, so that:

"The expansion of the child care service in the twentieth century and the development of preventative social work both served further to consolidate children in trouble into a single conceptual category: the deprived and the depraved were one and the same. Couched in the language of "welfare" and supported by an army of professionals, attention was continually diverted from what children do to what children are. Children became the object of our concern, rarely its subject. Children became ensnared in a series of discretionary processes within which the safeguarding of the rights of the individual children were subordinated to what were seen as wider social problems. This trend culminated in the Children and Young Persons' Act, 1969." (58)

Of course, this is only one opinion stated by a group of professionals who feel that children coming under care proceedings provided for by the 1969 Act do not get a fair deal since their wishes and their rights get lost amidst all the helping and caring on offer from welfare agencies. The mixture of judicial and welfare functions is seen by many as unjust, and to compound the confusion criminal and welfare

proceedings often take place in the same court room. This was so in the arrangements for juvenile courts in Leeds at the time when this research was undertaken.

It is generally agreed that during the twentieth century children have become the focus of increased professional attention and intervention (Morris et.al., 1980). Quite often the child's "problem" is diagnosed and a "treatment" model employed to "put it right". In fact, treatment seems to have been the rationale behind the Leeds Truancy Project and section 3 of this chapter has already referred to some authors support of what is essentially a form of behaviour therapy or modification based on intervention. The model is similar to that of traditional aversion therapy treatment insofar as the court attempts to encourage children and young people to return to school, under threat of being placed into care if their absence continues. Rachman and Teasdale (1969) underlined the ethical problems associated with this method since in the range of applications they discussed it involved the deliberate application of painful stimuli as a "punishment" and was very unpleasant. They were, in fact, writing in 1969 about modern Aversion Therapy which involved almost exclusively the use of physical deterrence such as electrical stimuli or emetics for problems such as alcoholism and sexual

disorders. Whether "fear of care" or "appearance in court" are comparable with these is an open question. Nevertheless, the general point made by Rachman and Teasdale about behaviour changing therapies only being given with the knowledge and consent of the patient with full information being supplied is applicable, and was discussed in section two of this chapter which also considered the ethical problems associated with conducting such experiments with children. Generally speaking, Aversion Therapy methods are strongly discouraged for use with children and those suffering under severe social disadvantages. Rachman and Teasdale and others have urged the consideration of other methods before opting for it, while urging that when it was adopted it should be "employed as a "research treatment", and every attempt made to obtain hard evidence regarding its efficacy." (Rachman and Teasdale, 1969). The Leeds study was undoubtedly a research treatment and did obtain hard evidence about the efficiency of the treatment. However, the question as to whether the method should have been used at the outset remains.

The application of a medical models in a court room raises another question as to whether justice and care are compatible. As well as administering the judicial processes can a court room operate also under a banner of care and welfare? Can they operate together or should they be separated since, as Morris

et. al. comment,

"There is mounting controversy about whether involuntary treatment, prescribed by the court and social services, can be anything but punishment. Research shows that neglected as well as delinquent children feel they are being punished and not treated by the courts". (59)

In the author's experience, this quotation describes very similar feelings to those expressed by a number of children and their families during the Leeds Project. That children feared being "put away" for failure to attend school was one of the most strongly verbalised perceptions of the whole scheme. This criticism must be taken seriously, since it means that large numbers of unrepresented children were being removed from home and placed in the care of the Local Authority against their own wishes and desires and that their wishes and desires were not adequately represented to the courts. Morris et. al. elaborated on the notion that in care proceedings children, "the subjects of the proceedings -are, in fact, the objects" (60) and noted:

"Existing legal arrangements are designed to facilitate a contest between the natural parents and the state over the custodial rights to children. The structural arrangements by which these rights are determined reinforce the marginal position of the child: for example, the child is entitled to legal representation but his views may not be presented. But parents, too, are in a marginal, or at least, disadvantaged position, through the unequal distribution of legal rights and the practical difficulties which exist in securing independent professional services to aid their case". (61)

Quite often, decisions made by the court in care cases rest on evidence which has remained unchallenged by unrepresented parents and children.

Roger Smith (1981) commented:

"Until recently, local authorities have largely succeeded in care cases which they have brought to court, through default of organized opposition. There was little representation of parents and children. Debate tended, where there was any, to centre around questions of fact. Did the parents really do that or not? Increasingly, the movement of law centres into this field has been followed by other professionals - particularly concerned social workers and psychologists - who feel that independent analyses of the child's position should be presented to the court. The professional judgement of social workers and specialists hired by local authorities is being challenged on its own terms. Care proceedings are slowly becoming a more equal contest. Social workers are going to have to become accustomed to adapting and defending their judgements under cross-examination by lawyers whose questions may well be briefed by a psychologist sitting beside them, and assessing evidence as it is given". (62)

In the Leeds care cases the evidence given did centre around fact. The Education Welfare Officer for the family always gave evidence on oath which was an exact description of visits, school absences and the reasons given for absences by the parents to the E.W.O.. The E.W.O. always asked the courts permission to refer to their notes. Extracts from the school register were presented as evidence to the court. In no instances observed by the author was any E.W.O. who gave evidence cross-examined, be it by the parents (acting for themselves), the child, a representing lawyer, or the court clerk.

There are grave dangers attached to the receiving of non-examined evidence. Sutton and Moss, both experienced practitioners in childrens' justice describe the dangers like this:

"Experience in working with the justice/welfare system, both within it and in opposition to it, suggests that the evidence that is presented to courts to support care orders is so weak technically that

if the facts presented are not sufficient to satisfy the law's notional 'reasonable man' (so that the recommendation depends instead upon opinion as to 'needs'), if the evidence is challenged by a lawyer who knows its weakness (perhaps with the help of a psychologist advising or reporting independently on the case), and if proper consideration to these matters is given by those sitting in judgement, then it should be almost impossible for a care order to be made on the basis of 'child-care' evidence alone" (63).

It is striking that in approximately two-thirds of the Leeds care cases reported in this study no care orders were made in the thirty weeks studied, despite the fact that the proceedings were care proceedings and the case of I.S.A. was "found proved" each time. That this happened so frequently lends support to Sutton and Moss' argument as to the weak grounds often submitted to courts for the making of care orders. In view of this type of strong and well-argued criticism, perhaps more, if not all children appearing in court for I.S.A. should have been legally represented, with separate representation, where necessary for the parents. This would probably have lead to more full-hearings, where there was a full consideration of

the evidence from both sides. The true basis of each decision then might have been clearer to all, i.e. whether it was a punishment or welfare related action.

So much dissatisfaction has been expressed about decision-making related to children in the juvenile court, especially in relation to care proceedings, that hearings which are demonstrably fair to all parties ought to have a high priority. Separate representation for all parties, .. parents, Local Authority and children, might go some way in this direction. An alternative might be the adoption of a "family court" system, similar to that used in Scotland. Either of these courses of action would allow some debate over how the law was to be interpreted and might help to overcome the danger of treating all alike and using non-valid and non-relevant treatments for particular children.

As things stood, "the system" of court adjournment in Leeds for I.S.A. was viewed by the children and young people who were it's consumers as something which couldn't be beaten. They had to play along with it and go to school or be punished by going into care. The onus was placed on the child and the family to "conform or else".

A good criticism of the "continuing and controversial experiment conducted in the Leeds Juvenile Court in

Truancy Cases" (64) was one made by Freeman (1984) who thought that the Leeds research shied away from the serious analysis of the system in favour of trying to seek explanations of a child's behaviour within the family of the child concerned. In his opinion,

"In child-care interventions the basic unit of analysis and intervention is, or should be, the system....."

Research has shown that large differences in school attendance rates in homogenous working class areas can only be explained by institutional factors (Reynolds and Murgatroyd, 1974). Too little account is taken of this by Berg and his colleagues."

(65)

The work of Murgatroyd and colleagues, and also other researchers into the role of school in the generation of truancy was discussed by the author in Chapter 1, and differences in absence rates between schools explored in the subsidiary study outlined in Chapter 2. It is clear that some schools do better than others in catering for children disinclined to regularly to attend, but a detailed look at this aspect of attendance in Leeds was not part of the brief of the project. A lot of the more precise details concerning the role of the school, e.g. that outlined in 15,000 Hours (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston, 1979) were only published after this project was well under way. In the light of the research findings now available, more account would have to be taken in any future research of the role of the schools involved.

The fact that a number of practitioners questioned the legality of the Leeds system of adjournments has been referred to previously. This is perhaps the strongest argument to support the adequate representation of the children and their parents so that,

"perhaps, in due course, a represented child will apply for judicial review to test the legality of the whole procedure". (66)

Summary

Very few children or parents were legally represented when they appeared in the Juvenile Court for I.S.A. during the period studied (1979-82). This has raised a number of criticisms including the way in which welfare and judicial approaches to dealing with Juveniles in trouble have been confused over the years. It raised the question as to whether justice and care are compatible since other research had shown that many neglected as well as delinquent children feel that "care" is a punishment.

Lack of respect for childrens' rights, as highlighted by the non-representation of their views in court, and the generation of fear in children who already had problems were other issues which have raised controversy. To a large extent, the Leeds research did not examine the role of the school in generating poor attendance. More published research is now available about this aspect and any future work would need to take this into account. At least one writer felt that these facts were ones which should have been

brought out by debate in court. Another result of poor legal representation was that the dispute over the legality of the Leeds method for dealing with I.S.A. cases was never tested in a higher court by represented debate between all parties.

An alternative to using the present system in such cases might be the adoption of a "family court" system similar to those used in Scotland.

(vii) FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the seventeenth century, William Shakespeare wrote about reluctance to go to school in As You Like It :

"the whining school boy with his satchel and shining morning face creeping like a snail unwillingly to school" (Act 2)

It seems as if times have not changed, and that as long as there are schools which require pupils attendance some will be reluctant takers.

To present conclusions to such a disparate and diverse project as this is both a challenge and a difficulty. Some attempt has been made to pick out the main findings, recommendations and conclusions in the thesis in summaries throughout the text. Particularly, in the final chapter several specific recommendations have been made. These include the following.

(a) There is a perceived need for a longer time-base for a project such as this and better support resources. Retrospectively, it is clear that the project was under-resourced in personnel and in the time allowed for the work undertaken.

(b) There was a need for more sensitivity concerning the issues raised by the "random experiment" in the court room, including more communication with involved personnel, more rigorous ethical scrutiny and the possibility of excluding all children under 12 years old.

(c) The legality of the system could have been tested in the higher courts but was not. Few families were represented or applied for Legal Aid. In the author's view, all families and children should have had greater opportunities to be

legally represented.

(d) A greater appreciation of the different philosophies in approaching the notion of Care is needed. Many children viewed Care as a punishment, even if a Care Order was made with very compelling reasons.

(e) The role of the school and the relevance (or otherwise) of the curriculum to the children and young people they teach needs to be much more central in any future research examining reasons for pupil-absenteeism. This is more true now than when the Leeds work started since more published data is now available in this field. There are lessons to be learned from various experiments about changing what is offered by schools and making it more relevant to pupil needs.

(f) The deterrence factor of the Leeds scheme and the enforcement of attendance had gross personal costs in many instances, some of which have only just begun to come to light in any public way. In particular, an article which appeared earlier this year (1987) in Community Care, entitled, "At the sharp end of the Sword of Damocles", told a very moving story of a boy and his "bitter experience of the Leeds Truancy Project". It was clear his mother viewed the effects of the project as detrimental to her son, his education and her family. More account must be taken in any future methods devised to enforce school attendance of the feelings and views of the parents and children affected. (g) In Britain there is a need to sort out the confusion which exists between welfare and judicial approaches to caring for children. Perhaps they are not compatible. Certainly, lessons can be learned from the Scottish family court system.

Epilogue

The final report of some of the research reported here dropped onto Home Office desks in 1983. Since then it is clear that, despite positive findings with respect to improvement in school attendance by the use of court adjournments, it has largely been ignored. There has always been a fair amount of opposition to such a pragmatic approach to dealing with I.S.A. especially when combined with what was, in effect, a form of behaviour modification therapy, particularly from some Social Service and welfare agencies. In fact, it appears that these agencies have killed off the adjournment system in Leeds, since, as a consequence of political and personnel changes in the Education Department and a change of policy in Social Services, more effort is now being made to keep poor school attenders out of the courts.

In April, 1987, a pilot scheme began in South Leeds and immediately Education Welfare Officers throughout the city were instructed to take no new education cases to the Juvenile Court.

Nationally, there are moves to abolish the use of Care proceedings in I.S.A. cases because of the D.H.S.S. Review of Child Care Law, confirmed by the subsequent White Paper. This will deprive L.E.A.'s of the power to bring care proceedings on the grounds of non-school attendance. These are the powers which have been used for so many years in Leeds.

So, is this the end? Only time will tell.....

NOTES

1. Random controlled studies connected with use of legal procedures are still few and far between (Farrington, 1983).
2. In writing this, I have to publically acknowledge that my thinking since leaving the Truancy Project's staff, particularly concerning the use of care proceedings for I.S.A. has changed. A contribution to this change was a medical and social ethics course which I did as part of my training for Christian ministry. In this final chapter, I express a personal view, informed by reflection and experience which was not available when the original research was carried out.
3. Quoted by Jack Cross in: Absence makes the heart grow harder in: Times Educational Supplement 11.2.83, p.23
4. Andrew Sutton (1981) Science in Court in: (ed) Michael King, Childhood, Welfare and Justice, London: Batsford Academic & Educational Ltd, p.69
5. Dr. I.S. Berg
6. Dr. R.P. Hullin
7. Jack Cross (1983) op.cit.
8. Andrew Sutton, op.cit., p.77f
9. Ibid., p.94ff.
10. Ibid., p.96
11. Ibid., p.97
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., pp.101-2
14. Diane Reynolds (1978) Truants under suspended sentences, in: Community Care, May 31st. p.20
15. J. Cross, op.cit.
16. Colin Brewer (1978) The pride and prejudice of the Social Worker, in: The Spectator, 8th July, p.12
17. David Farrington (1983) Randomised Experiments in Crime and Justice in: (eds) N. Morris and M. Tonry, Crime and Justice, Vol. 4, University of Chicago Press, p.290

18.A.W. Wilkinson (1977) Consent in (eds) A.S. Duncan, G.R. Dunsten and R.B. Welbourn, Dictionary of Medical Ethics, London: Darton Longman and Todd Ltd., p.89

19.Sissela Bok (1978) Lying :Moral Choices in Public and Private Life, Hassocks, Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd. pp 19-20

20.Ibid., p.20

21.Ibid., p.79

22.Ibid., p.81

23.A. Sutton, op.cit., pp.94-102

24.S. Bok (1978) op.cit., p.83

25.The project acknowledged Professor Nigel Walker and Dr. David Farrington of the Cambridge Institute of Criminology who were "most helpful in discussing the project with us" (Berg. et. al., 1977).

26.I. Berg, R. Hullin, and R. McGuire (1979) A Randomly controlled trial of two court procedures in Truancy, in: (eds) D.P. Farrington, K. Hawkins and S.Lloyd-Bostock (1979) Psychology, Law and Legal Processes (Oxford Socio-Legal Studies), London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., p.150

27.Yorkshire Evening Post: Leeds Anti-Truant Plan registers a success, 16.11.82

28.J.D. Pratt (1985) Juvenile Justice, Social Work and Social Control : The Need for Positive Thinking, British journal of Social Work, 15, 1-24, p.13

29.see: Dictionary of Medical Ethics (1977) (eds) A.S. Duncan, R.B. Welbourn, p.41

30.John Sturat Mill (1859) On Liberty, chapter 5, in: Utilitarianism; On Liberty; Representative Government, Everyman's Library, No. 482, London: Dent p.160

31.Quoted by Corinna Adam in: Magistrates who stop the truants and anger the social workers, in: The Guardian, 5.7.78

32.The Black Report (1979); quoted by J.D. Pratt in Folk-Lore and Fact in Truancy Research, British J. Criminol. Vol.23, No.4, October 1983, p.349

33.J. Cross op.cit.

34.Barbara Lamb (1984) The right way, the wrong way and the Leeds Way with truants, in: The Guardian, 4th September 1984, p.11

35. Sybil Eysenck (1982) Sentences Deferred, The Magistrate, Vol 38, No.4, pp.55-6
36. Sue Reid (1984) On Patrol with the Truant Squad, in: DailyExpress, 24.1.84
37. J.D. Pratt op.cit., p.349
38. A statement attributed to social workers referred to in C. Adams, op.cit.
39. D. Reynolds, op.cit., p.21
40. S. Eysenck, op.cit.
41. Ibid.
The Leeds method of adjournments could also be likened to the legal procedure of "being bound over" which also puts the onus on "the defendant" in avoiding further penalties.
42. Quoted in J. Cross, op.cit.
43. A recent critic of the Leeds Truancy Project picked up the theme of the "Sword of Damacles" in an article entitled, At the sharp end of the Sword of Damacles, which appeared in Community Care on 26th March, 1987. In this article a mother told about her the experience of her family with the Leeds Truancy Project and how it had had a detrimental effect on her son, his education and her family. By telling her story so publically, she hoped that it would "help create a fairer and better system". This article is referred to again in the summary of this chapter.
44. see: (ed) Sally Lloyd-Bostock (1984) Children and the Law, papers presented at the SSRC Law and Psychology Conference, 1981, page 86.
45. Ibid.
46. Roger White and David Brockington (1978) In and Out of School: The Rosla Community Education Project London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.ix
47. Roger White (1980) Absent with Cause : Lessons on Truancy, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.2
48. White and Brockington (1978) op.cit., p.18
49. Ibid., p.26
50. John Holt (1976) Instead of Education, Pelican 1977, Harmondsworth: Penguin, p.7
51. Ibid., p.8

52. S. Reid (1984) op.cit.

53. None of the children in the research project was represented by a solicitor. Although, on three separate occasions other children before the courts for I.S.A. were observed to have a solicitor, in no instance was a parent and child represented separately.

54. This reasoning based on the Lord Denning Judgement, whereby adequate care includes education and not just the physical welfare of the child. (See Chapter 1).

55. Roger Smith (1981) Children and their lawyers in the Juvenile Court, in:(ed) Michael King Childhood Welfare and Justice, London; Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd., pp 29-30

56. Ibid.

57. Morris, A., Giller, H., Szwed, E. and Geach, H. (1980) Justice for Children, London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., p. 1

58. Ibid., p.7

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., p.85

61. Ibid., pp 85-6

62. Roger Smith (1981) op.cit. p.40

63. Andrew Sutton and Geoff Moss (1984) Towards a Forensic Child Psychology in: (ed) Sally Lloyd-Bostock (1984) Children and the Law Oxford: Centre for Socio-Legal Studies pp.45-46

64. see: M.D.A. Freeman (1984) Introduction. Decision-Making in Matters Relating to Children: Insights from Law and Psychology in:(ed) S. Lloyd-Bostock (1984) op.cit., p.6

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., p.7

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRES

(a) SCHOOL ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE (Interview 1)

During the last few weeks how has the child normally travelled to school ?

	YES	NO
on foot _____	_____	_____
on one bus _____	_____	_____
on two buses _____	_____	_____
by bicycle _____	_____	_____
by car _____	_____	_____
other (specify) _____	_____	_____

During the last few weeks with whom has the child normally travelled to school ?

	YES	NO
With father _____	_____	_____
With mother _____	_____	_____
With brother or sister _____	_____	_____
With a friend _____	_____	_____
Alone _____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____

When did you find out that the child had been missing school recently ?

	YES	NO
During the last month _____	_____	_____
1 - 6 months ago _____	_____	_____
6 - 12 months ago _____	_____	_____
Longer than 12 months ago _____	_____	_____

How old was the child when he/she first started to miss school ?

	YES	NO
5 - 7 year _____		
8 - 12 years _____		
13 - 16 years _____		

How did you first find out that the child had been missing school?

	YES	NO
From the school _____		
From the Education Officer _____		
From the child himself _____		
From other children _____		
From a relative or friend of yours _____		
Parent knew _____		
Other source (specify) _____		

Does the child always tend to miss school on the same day each week ?

YES	NO

Does he/she try to miss any particular activities, for example, games or maths etc. ?

YES	NO

If 'YES' :

What are these activities ? _____

When you discovered that the child was staying out of school, did you attempt to take the child back to school yourself ?

YES	NO

if 'YES' :

For how long ? _____ days

If you have attempted to take the child to school, who was it that took him/her ?

	YES	NO
Mother _____		
Father _____		
Brother or sister _____		
Education Officer _____		
Other (specify) _____		

When you discovered that the child was staying out of school did you try and contact any of the following for help ?

	YES	NO
Social Service _____		
Probation Officer _____		
School _____		
Police _____		
Doctor _____		
Other (specify) _____		

Has the child had any time off in the last 4 weeks because of illness ?

	YES	NO
no time off at all _____	_____	_____
1 week off or less _____	_____	_____
over 1 week and up to 2 weeks _____	_____	_____
over 2 weeks and up to 3 wks _____	_____	_____
over 3 weeks off _____	_____	_____

If the child has had time off from school due to illness in the last 4 weeks has any of the time been covered by a medical certificate ?

	YES	NO
not applicable (no time off ill) _____	_____	_____
1 week or less _____	_____	_____
over 1 week and up to 2 weeks _____	_____	_____
over 2 weeks and up to 3 weeks _____	_____	_____
over three weeks _____	_____	_____

When the child misses school, who is he/she usually with ?

	YES	NO
Yourself _____	_____	_____
with a relative or a friend of yours _____	_____	_____
with a friend of his/hers _____	_____	_____
alone _____	_____	_____
don't know _____	_____	_____

When the child misses school, where is he ?

	YES	NO
at home _____	_____	_____
at a relatives house _____	_____	_____
at the house of a friend of yours _____	_____	_____
at one of his/her friends houses _____	_____	_____
other (specify) _____	_____	_____
don't know _____	_____	_____

When the child misses school does he/she ever do things that might get him/her into trouble ?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If your answer was "yes" what sort of things does he/she do ?

Does the child ever get into trouble at other times ?
(e.g. at weekends or in the school holidays).

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If your answer was "yes" please would you describe what sort of trouble. _____

Does the child ever refuse to go to school ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES' :

How often does this happen ? _____

Are his/her efforts successful ? (i.e. does the child stay at home as a result of his protest?)

YES	NO
_____	_____

Has the child been upset before leaving for school ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

On school mornings has the child been affected in any of the following ways ?

	YES	NO
going without breakfast (compared to weekends or holidays)	_____	_____
child has looked obviously pale	_____	_____
child has been tearful	_____	_____
child has complained of pains	_____	_____
child has complained of feeling sick	_____	_____
child has resisted your attempts to get him/her to school	_____	_____

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about the child and his/her school?

THANKYOU FOR YOUR HELP

(b) CHILDS BEHAVIOUR ON PREVIOUS DAY

In all of the following questions unless I indicate otherwise please will you think especially about YESTERDAY.

Did _____ arrive home from school at the time that you expected him/her ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES' :

What time was this ? _____

Where did he/she go after school but before his/her evening meal ?

If the child went out :

What time did he/she get in after this ? _____

Did _____ have his/her evening meal at home ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'NO' probe : Did _____ do any of the following ?

	YES	NO
not bother _____	_____	_____
eat at a relations _____	_____	_____
eat at a friends _____	_____	_____
other (specify - cafe, club etc.) _____	_____	_____

Did _____ go out after his/her evening meal ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

Last night did he/she do any of the following between his/her evening meal and going to bed ?

(If any answer is 'YES' probe how long was spent on this activity.)

	YES	NO	TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITY
Watch Television _____	_____	_____	_____
Hobby of some kind _____	_____	_____	_____
Go to the cinema _____	_____	_____	_____
Gardening _____	_____	_____	_____
Welfare work of some kind _____	_____	_____	_____
Go to see people on the stage _____	_____	_____	_____
Gymnastics _____	_____	_____	_____
Read _____	_____	_____	_____
Play games such as draughts or darts _____	_____	_____	_____
Art of some kind _____	_____	_____	_____
music _____	_____	_____	_____
go to see places _____	_____	_____	_____
look after a pet _____	_____	_____	_____
go to a fun fair _____	_____	_____	_____
dancing / disco _____	_____	_____	_____
go out with a girlfriend _____	_____	_____	_____
go out with a boyfriend _____	_____	_____	_____
go around with his/her mates _____	_____	_____	_____
a sport of some kind _____	_____	_____	_____
go to church, chapel or synagogue _____	_____	_____	_____
go to evening class _____	_____	_____	_____
get into a fight with other boys and girls _____	_____	_____	_____
go to cubs, scouts, brownies or guides _____	_____	_____	_____
go to a youth club _____	_____	_____	_____
go to a friends house _____	_____	_____	_____
homework _____	_____	_____	_____
other activities (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____

Does _____ have a time by which he/she is expected to be home at night ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES': What time is this? _____

Was _____ home by this time yesterday evening ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If the answer to the last question was 'NO':

ask :

How did you handle this ? _____

all cases :

Is _____ ever out beyond this deadline ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES': How do you usually deal with this ? _____

Does _____ have a fixed bedtime ?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If 'YES' probe :

What time is this ? _____

All cases :

Has there been any argument about bed-time in the last week?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If 'YES' probe :

How did you cope with this ? _____

All cases :

Was there any difficulty over bedtime last night ?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If 'YES' probe :

Please can you tell me what happened ? _____

In the last week, have you had any disagreements about how _____ spends his/her time ?

YES	NO
—	—

If 'YES' :

Did this happen at all yesterday ?

YES	NO
—	—

If 'YES' :

(i.e. if it did happen yesterday)

What happened ?

For this question I would like you to think about the last few weeks.

During the last few weeks has _____ been expected to do any of the following to help around the house ?

	YES	NO
making his/her bed _____	_____	_____
helping with the dishes _____	_____	_____
fires _____	_____	_____
helping set the table _____	_____	_____
helping clear the table _____	_____	_____
looking after a pet _____	_____	_____
shopping _____	_____	_____
gardening (or allotment) _____	_____	_____
tidying bedroom _____	_____	_____
general cleaning _____	_____	_____
cooking _____	_____	_____
washing _____	_____	_____
ironing _____	_____	_____
looking after other children _____	_____	_____
other jobs (specify) _____	_____	_____

Did _____ do any of these jobs yesterday ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES' : Which jobs were they ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Were any of the jobs that he did do done under protest?

YES	NO
_____	_____

All cases :

Were there any jobs that _____ failed to do yesterday even though he/she was supposed to do them ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If 'YES' : Which jobs were these ?

1. _____
 2. _____
- How did you react to this ? _____
- _____

Now please will you think about yesterday as a whole.
Did he/she do anything that he/she wasn't supposed to?

YES	NO

If 'YES' :

What was this ? _____

Yesterday, was there any difficulty over any of the following ?

	YES	NO
bad language _____		
fighting _____		
temper _____		
quarrelling _____		
noisiness _____		
untidyness _____		
disobedience _____		
lying _____		
staying out _____		
coming home late _____		
throwing things around _____		
answering back _____		
general cheekiness _____		
woodiness / sulkiness _____		

In all cases where the answer is 'YES'

1. What happened?
2. When did it happen ?
3. What did the parent do ?
4. What was the child's reaction in the end ?

Difficulty 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Do you ever do any of the following ?

	YES	NO
Tell or suggest to ___ what to do or where to go?	_____	_____
Stop him/her going to certain places _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her going out at all _____	_____	_____
Want to know what he/she is doing _____	_____	_____
Want to know where he/she is going _____	_____	_____
Want to know who he/she is with _____	_____	_____
Tell ___ to be in by a certain time _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her staying out late _____	_____	_____
Advise him/her who to associate with _____	_____	_____
Stop ___ associating with certain people _____	_____	_____
Tell him/her to stop hanging round the streets _____	_____	_____
Tell ___ to stop getting into trouble or fights _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her going to the cinema _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her pursuing hobbies or sports _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her smoking or drinking _____	_____	_____
Discourage him/her from stealing _____	_____	_____
Stop him/her spending too much money _____	_____	_____
Make him/her study or do homework _____	_____	_____
Tell him/her to stop hanging about the house _____	_____	_____
Tell him/her to go out _____	_____	_____
Encourage him/her to go to sports or do hobbies _____	_____	_____
Give him/her chores or jobs to do _____	_____	_____
Advise him/her on appearance _____	_____	_____

What sort of punishment do you use if _____ misbehaves?

Do you use any of the following ways as a punishment?

	YES	NO
Reason with him/her _____	_____	_____
Complain or moan at him/her _____	_____	_____
Threaten or warn him/her _____	_____	_____
Not speak to him/her _____	_____	_____
Deny him/her some meals _____	_____	_____
Keep him/her in and not allow them out _____	_____	_____
Send him/her to their room or to bed early _____	_____	_____
Stop his/her pocket money or cut it down _____	_____	_____
Not allow him/her to smoke _____	_____	_____
Make him/her study _____	_____	_____
Make him/her pay for any damages _____	_____	_____
Hit with a stick, slipper etc. _____	_____	_____
Slap him/her _____	_____	_____

What is his/her reaction to being punished? _____

Is it effective?

YES	NO
_____	_____

(c) GENERAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (for interview 1 with mothers)

Mothers name : _____

Mothers age: _____

I would like to ask you first about your children.

How many children normally live with you? _____

Starting with the oldest, who are they?

	NAME	AGE	SEX	SCHOOL ATTENDED (if any)
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Are any of the children living away from home at present?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If the answer is "YES" please could you tell me where they are living and why they are away? _____

Are the children living at home with:

	YES	NO
Both natural parents _____	_____	_____
Mother only _____	_____	_____
Father only _____	_____	_____
Mother and step-father _____	_____	_____
Father and step-mother _____	_____	_____
Mother and cohabitee _____	_____	_____
Father and cohabitee _____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____

Please could you tell me about your husband / cohabitee?

What is his name : _____

Age : _____

Who else normally lives with you in the household
(apart from the children)

	YES	NO
No-one else _____	_____	_____
Parent(s) only _____	_____	_____
Other relatives only _____	_____	_____
Parents and other relatives _____	_____	_____
Other (specify -lodger etc.) _____	_____	_____

So, all together, there are _____ living in your household.

If your husband does not normally live with you in the household are you:

	YES	NO
Widowed _____	_____	_____
Separated _____	_____	_____
Divorced _____	_____	_____
Unmarried _____	_____	_____

I'd now like to ask you about the house / flat.

Is it:

	YES	NO
Owned by you (mortgage) _____	_____	_____
Rented from the council _____	_____	_____
Rented from a private landlord _____	_____	_____
Other (e.g. because of job) _____	_____	_____

How long have you been living here? _____ years

If this is less than two years, please can you tell me how many times you have moved during the last two years? Where were you living before you came to live here? _____

So, in the last 2 years you have moved :	YES	NO
Not at all _____	_____	_____
Once _____	_____	_____
Twice _____	_____	_____
Three or more times _____	_____	_____

How many rooms do you have? (include as a living room the kitchen when family meals are eaten in that room)

No. of rooms in house / flat	
Living rooms	Bedrooms
_____	_____

Males
Females

No. of people in the household		
1-10 yrs	10+ - 20 yrs	21 & over
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Are any rooms very small, damp or unusable for any reason ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If your answer to the last question was 'YES' please could you describe _____

WORK

Do you yourself have a job ?

YES	NO
_____	_____

If the answer is 'YES' please could you describe the job for me?

What hours do you work ? _____

What time do you have to leave for work ? _____

What time do you get home from work? _____

What does your husband/ cohabitee do for a job?

What hours does he work ? _____

What time does he have to leave for work ? _____

What time does he get home from work ? _____

Has he had any periods out of work in the last three months ?

	YES	NO
Father	_____	_____

(if mother is the principle wage earner, please answer the following question :) Have you had any periods out of work in the last three months ?

	YES	NO
Mother	_____	_____

In either case, if the answer is 'YES' please would you say for approximately how long this was ?

Father _____ weeks (1 - 13)
 Mother _____ weeks (1 - 13)

Please could you indicate by pointing to the appropriate section on this card approximately how much your husband and yourself bring home each week.

First, for husband _____

for yourself _____

Does anyone else in the household have any paid employment

	YES	NO
	_____	_____

if the answer is 'YES' which member of the family is this ? _____
Please could you describe their job for me ? _____

Please could you indicate by pointing to the appropriate section of the card whether they contribute to the household expenses each week ? _____

Do you have any other money coming into the household each week? (e.g.) Family allowance, Social Security etc.

	YES	NO
	_____	_____

If the answer was "YES" please could you point to the card to show me approximately how much this is each week?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SECOND INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER

1. Can you tell me how _____ has been going to school since he/she first went to court?

2. How many times has he/she been to court? _____
3. What was said in court on each occasion?
 - (i) _____
 - (ii) _____
 - (iii) _____
 - (iv) _____
 - (v) _____
4. What was done with him/her on each occasion?
 - (i) _____
 - (ii) _____
 - (iii) _____
 - (iv) _____
 - (v) _____
5. What effect has having to keep going back to court had on him/her?

6. What effect has having to keep going back to court had on you ?

7. What do you feel about having to keep on going back to court again and again? _____

8. Who usually goes with the child to court? _____
9. How far is the court from here? _____
10. How do you get to the court? _____
11. How much time does _____ have off from school to go to court? _____
12. Do the court appearances upset your child? _____
In what way ? _____
13. Has he/she ever refused to go to court at all? YES/NO
If your answer is 'YES' please can you tell me the
the circumstances ?

- 14A Has he/she been off his/her food before going to court? YES/NO
- 14B Has he/she been tearful before going to court ? YES/NO
- 14C Has he/she been obviously pale before going to court ? YES/NO
- 14D Has he/she complained of feeling sick before court ? YES/NO
- 14E Has he/she complained of pains before going to court?

15. When you actually get to court how much time do you spend in the court room with the magistrates ? YES/NO

16. How much time do you spend waiting to go in ? _____

17. Who do you see at court ? _____

18. What do the magistrates do when you get to court? _____

19. Do the magistrates ever try and blame you if your child hasn't been in school?

20. Have the court appearances influenced your child's behaviour? YES/NO
If 'YES', in what ways ? _____

21. Have the court appearances influenced his/her father's behaviour?
If 'YES', in what ways ? _____

22. Have the court appearances influenced your own behaviour? YES/NO
If 'YES', in what ways ? _____

23. How does your child appear after the court appearance?

23A Does he/she appear worried ? YES/NO

23B Does he/she appear afraid ? YES/NO

23C Does he/she appear angry ? YES/NO

23D Does he/she appear withdrawn ? YES/NO

23E Does he/she appear relieved ? YES/NO

23F Does he/she appear keen to go to school ? YES/NO

23G Does he/she seem not to care less ? YES/NO

24. Did you yourself have to go to adult court ? YES/NO
If 'YES' what happened ? _____

25. Do you think that you should have been prosecuted at all ? YES/NO

26. What other things do you think might have been done instead of taking you to court? _____

27. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about what we have just been talking about ? _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SECOND INTERVIEW WITH MOTHERS (continued)
If the parent indicates that the child has been sent away from home on an interim care order (usually made by the magistrates for a period of three weeks) the following questions should be asked.

1. When the court made the interim care order was the child upset? _____
2. How did it affect him/her? _____
3. What assessment centre was he/she sent to? _____
4. Did you visit him/her? _____
How often? _____
5. How easy was (is) it to get o the centre from here? _____
6. Did he/she write any letters home while he/she was there? How many? _____
7. Did you write any letters to him/her while he/she was there? How many? _____
8. Did anyone else write to him/her while he/she was there? Who? _____
9. Were you able to speak to him/her on the telephone while he/she was there? _____
if "YES" : did he/she ring you? _____ How many times? _____
did you ring him/her? _____ How many times? _____
10. Has his/her behaviour changed in any way since his/her interim care order? _____
if "YES" how has it changed? _____
11. Why do you think the court made the interim care order? _____
12. Is _____ now living back at home? _____
If "NO", please can you tell me where he/she is? _____

INTERVIEW 3 (with mothers)

1. Generally, how has N ----- changed over the last year?

2. (a) Has N ----- any ideas about what job he/she would like to do when he/she leaves school ?

(b) Do you agree with him/her, or would you prefer him/her to do something different ?

(c) What are N -----'s chances of getting a job ? _____

(d) Is there anyone in the family who might help in getting N----- a job ?

(e.g. relative, uncle, father's firm etc.) _____

3. What do you remember most about going to court ? _____

4. When did N----- last go to court about school attendance? _____

5. Has N----- got to go to court again? YES/NO

6. About how many times has N----- been to court all together about school attendance? _____

7. How often has N----- been to court? _____
(e.g. once a week, once a month etc.) _____

8. What do you remember about the magistrates? _____

(e.g. Did they make any threats? Did they give any warnings? _____

9. Has N----- had to go to court in the last year for any other reason?

YES/NO

If so, how many times? _____

What happened? _____

10. Thinking back, what effect has having to keep returning to court had on your child?

(a) at home _____

(b) at school _____

(c) with his friends _____

(d) evening and weekend activities _____

11. Has N----- had any time off for any of the following things:

	YES/NO	approximate no. of days
(a) illness	YES/NO	.....
(b) refusing to go to school	YES/NO	.....
(c) errands	YES/NO	.....
(d) helping at home	YES/NO	.....
(e) no shoes	YES/NO	.....
(f) no coat	YES/NO	.....
(g) excluded	YES/NO	.....
(h) suspended by school	YES/NO	.....
(i) funerals	YES/NO	.....
(j) parents holidays.....	YES/NO	.....
(k) playing truant	YES/NO	.....

Please supply further details for YES answers _____

Did you know about all the times N----- has had off from school? YES/NO

If not, how did you discover that N--- had had time off?

12. What has N-----'s health been like in the last year?_____

13. Has N----- been to see a doctor in the last month or so? YES/NO

If so, what was this for?_____

14. Has N----- been sent away into care by the magistrates? YES/NO

If so, when? _____

How long was he/she away from home?_____

Is he/she still away from home?_____

Where was he/she sent?_____

Were you able to visit him/her? _____

15. Has N----- ever refused point blank to go to court? YES/NO

16. Thinking back, do you think that repeated visits to court affected you? YES/NO

If so, how?_____

17. Do/did the court appearances upset N-----? YES/NO

If so, in what way?_____

18. Before going to court has N----- :

- (a) been tearful?.....YES/NO
- (b) been off his/her food?.....YES/NO
- (c) been obviously pale?.....YES/NO
- (d) complained of feeling sick?.....YES/NO
- (e) complained of pains?.....YES/NO

19. Does/did anyone usually go to court with N-----? YES/NO

If so, who? _____

20. Have N-----'s appearances in court involved you or your husband in taking time off work ?

Father.....YES/NO

Mother.....YES/NO

Is it easy to get time off work?

Father.....YES/NO

Mother.....YES/NO

21. Do you (or your husband) lose any pay when you go with N_____ to court? YES/NO

If so, how many hours do you/does he lose? _____

22. How does/did your child seem after the court appearance?

-
- (a) does/did N----- appear worried?.....YES/NO
 - (b) does/did N----- appear afraid?.....YES/NO
 - (c) does/did N----- appear angry?.....YES/NO
 - (d) does/did N----- appear withdrawn?.....YES/NO
 - (e) does/did N----- appear keen to go to school YES/NO
 - (f) does/did N----- appear relieved?.....YES/NO
 - (g) does/did N----- appear not to care less?....YES/NO

23. Do you think N-----'s school attendance has changed since he/she started going to court? YES/NO

If so, in what way? _____

24. Thinking back, have the court appearances influenced N_____ 's behaviour? YES/NO

If yes, in what ways? _____

25. Thinking back, have the court appearances influenced your own behaviour? YES/NO

If yes, in what ways? _____

26. Thinking back, have the court appearances influenced his/her father's behaviour? YES/NO

27. What do you feel about having to keep on going back to court again and again? _____

28. Does the Education Officer (Board man/lady) still visit you about N_____? YES/NO

If so, how often? _____

29. Does the Education Officer (Board man/lady) visit you about any other children? YES/NO

If so, who? _____

30. What did the Education Officer (Board man/lady) say about court? _____

31. Did the Education Officer (Board man/lady) say anything about being sent away or put into care? YES/NO

If so, what were you told? _____

32. Have you found the Education Officer (Board man/lady) helpful? _____

In what ways? _____

33. Do you think that N_____ should have been taken to court? YES/NO

34. What other things do you think might have been done instead of taking him/her to court? _____

35. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about improving school attendance?

36. Do you think that children should be made to go to school?

YES/NO

Why?

37. When do you think that children should be allowed to leave school?

(at what age.....?)

THANK FOR HELP

QUESTIONS ABOUT WORK AND APPEARANCES IN COURT.

When you child appears in court for non-attendance at school do either yourself or his father have to take time off from work to go with him/her?

	YES	NO
Father _____	---	---
Mother _____	---	---

Is it easy to get time off from work?

	YES	NO
Father _____	---	---
Mother _____	---	---

If your answer was 'NO' to the last question please would you tell me about the difficulty? _____

Do you lose pay if you take time off from work?

	YES	NO
Father _____	---	---
Mother _____	---	---

If your answer was 'YES' to this question, please could you tell me how many hours pay you, lose? _____

Do you ever take time off work for other things?

	YES	NO
Father _____	---	---
Mother _____	---	---

If your answer to the last question was 'YES' do either of you take time off for any of these reasons :

	FATHER		MOTHER	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Visits to Doctor _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Visits to Dentist _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Visits to optician _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Visits to hospital _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Visits to clinics _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
For other children (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

In all the above cases where the answer 'YES' is given please say how often this occurs. _____

Do either of you take time off for any reasons other than those given above?

	YES	NO
Father _____	_____	_____
Mother _____	_____	_____

In cases where 'YES' is given please could you say what the time off is for? _____

Apart form the appearance in court for not attending school has the child ever had to appear in court before?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If your answer to the last question is 'YES' please could you tell me briefly what this was about? _____

How long ago was this? _____

Has anyone else in the family ever had to appear in court?

YES	NO
—	—

If your answer to the above question was 'YES' please could you say who it concerned?

	YES	NO
Father _____	—	—
Mother _____	—	—
Brother of child _____	—	—
Sister of child _____	—	—
anyone else living in household at time" _____	—	—

In case where the answer is 'YES', about how long ago was this ?

What was the outcome of the case? _____

2nd VERSION OF CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

CHILD'S NAME : _____

Male /Female

Date of Birth : _____

I am going to ask you some questions. Unless I say otherwise please would you think especially about the last week.

In the last week, where have you spent most of your spare time ?

So, on the whole, where would you say that you spent most of your spare time ? Outside the house, or at home ?

	YES	NO
outside the house _____	_____	_____
at home _____	_____	_____

In the last week, have you had to ask your parents (mum/dad etc.) before going out ?

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If YES : When did you have to ask ? _____
Where were you going ? _____
Were you allowed to go ? _____

(Try to find out whether the child tells parent he/she is "off out" or whether they ask if they can go out.)

In the last week on which evenings have you gone out after your tea ?

(Start with the previous evening and work backwards)

	Activity	YES	NO
Sunday	_____	_____	_____
Monday	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____

Please look at this card.
(show card no.1)

In the last week, how much did your parents (mum/dad etc.) object (complain, moan about) where you spent your spare time ?

	YES	NO
A lot _____	_____	_____
A fair bit _____	_____	_____
A little _____	_____	_____
None _____	_____	_____

If there is indication of objection /complaint etc. ask :

When was this : _____

Please could you tell me what happened ? _____

Where were you going ? etc.... _____

Look at card no.1 again.

In the last week how much did your parents object to the people (your mates) with whom you go around ?

	YES	NO
A lot _____	_____	_____
A fair bit _____	_____	_____
A little _____	_____	_____
None _____	_____	_____

(NO CARD REQUIRED)

In the last week have you been punished by your parents for misbehaving (doing things you shouldn't.....) ?

Probe with examples e.g. moaning etc.

YES	NO
_____	_____
_____	_____

If YES : Please can you tell me what happened ? _____

Please look at card No. 1 again.

In the last week, then, how much punishment would you say you have been given by your parents ?

	YES	NO
A lot _____	_____	_____
A fair bit _____	_____	_____
A little _____	_____	_____
None _____	_____	_____

For this question I would like to ask you to think about the last few weeks

In the last few weeks, when you have done something wrong, in which of the following ways have you punished (dealt with) ?

Answer Yes or No for each one.

	YES	NO
Parents have reasoned with you _____	_____	_____
Parents have complained or moaned _____	_____	_____
Parents have threatened or warned you _____	_____	_____
Parents have not spoken to you _____	_____	_____
Parents have made you go without a meal _____	_____	_____
You've been kept in and not allowed out _____	_____	_____
Sent to room or bed early _____	_____	_____
Your pocket money has been stopped _____	_____	_____
You have not been allowed to smoke _____	_____	_____
You have been made to do chores _____	_____	_____
You have been made to study _____	_____	_____
You have been made to pay for damages _____	_____	_____
You've been hit with a stick, slipper etc. _____	_____	_____
You have been slapped _____	_____	_____
Other punishment (specify) _____	_____	_____

Please look at this card.
Show card No. 2.

How often do you get into a row at home ?

	YES	NO
every day _____	_____	_____
most days _____	_____	_____
once a week _____	_____	_____
once a month _____	_____	_____
hardly ever / never _____	_____	_____

When you have a row, who is this usually with ? _____

What happened the last time you got into a row at home ? _____

APPENDIX II

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

The undermentioned is due to appear before the Juvenile Court on _____ at _____ a.m./p.m. and you are requested to complete the form in BLACK TYPE - INK or BALL POINT and return it to me at Selectapost 9, 8th Floor, Merrion Centre, Leeds 2., as soon as possible.

D. C. JAMES
Director of Social Service

Children and Young Persons Act, 1969.

Name _____ Date of Birth _____
Home Address _____

Present or last school _____
Charge/Complaint _____

HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

1. ATTENDANCE

- (a) Date of Admission _____ Date when last in school _____
- (b) Regularity of attendance *'Satisfactory' 'Unsatisfactory'
- (c) If unsatisfactory and still of school age, please give attendances for the last six school weeks.
Actual _____ Possible _____
- (d) Comment upon unsatisfactory attendance _____

- (e) Previous school, if any _____
- (f) If left school, date of leaving _____

2. HEALTH

Record state of general health and handicaps or illnesses (if any) which in your opinion may have adversely affected him/her.

3. GENERAL MENTAL ABILITY

- (a) Present class _____ Average Age of Class _____
Attainment relative to age *'Forward' 'Normal' 'Backward'
- (b) General mental ability *'Above Average' 'Average' 'Below Average'
- (c) In your opinion are there any emotional disturbances due to retardation or backwardness? _____

(d) Special abilities in school work _____

(e) Special disabilities in school work _____

(f) To your knowledge has he/she been referred to a clinic as maladjusted, or for ascertainment as educationally subnormal?
If so give details _____

4. CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

(a) In School _____

(b) Out of School _____

5. OUTSIDE INTERESTS

Have you any knowledge of his/her interests outside school such as any connection with church, chapel, club, sporting or other organisations for juveniles?

6. Any other observations regarding the child which in your opinion should be brought to the notice of the Court, including any on the attitude of the parents, and whether, within your knowledge, they endeavour to exercise proper control, or any comments on home circumstances, undesirable associates, etc.

Date _____ Signed _____

Head Teacher

Pamphlet for the user of parents

THE LEEDS JUVENILE COURT

Notes for the guidance of parents of children appearing before the Juvenile Court in respect of CARE PROCEEDINGS.

1. The Juvenile Court

The juvenile court is a court of law, but it deals with only boys and girls under 17. The way the court is run is made as simple as possible so that the young people who appear before it can understand what is happening. The court consists of not more than three magistrates, one of whom is the Chairman, who will speak for all three. The magistrates are advised in legal matters by the Clerk to the Justices or his representative in court. Only court officials and others connected with the case are allowed to be present. Newspaper reporters are allowed to be present but they cannot publish, without the permission of the court, any information which could lead to the identification of any child who has appeared before the Juvenile Court.

2. Care Proceedings

In this type of case you will have received a notice setting out the reasons why your child is said to be in need of care or control. At the court hearing, the person who started the case has to satisfy the magistrates that the reasons he has given are true and that your child is unlikely to receive the care or control which he needs unless the magistrates make an order. Witnesses will give evidence to the magistrates and, if you are acting on your child's behalf, you or your child, if he is old enough, may question them. After this, you and your child may speak to the magistrates if you so wish, and call any witnesses you may have.

3. Representation of your child

Your child may speak for himself if he is old enough or he may have a solicitor acting for him or you may act on his behalf. In some cases, the magistrates may make an order preventing you from representing the interests of your child in court and, if they do so, they are likely to appoint a person described as a 'guardian ad litem' to act on your child's behalf. You will be told if this has happened and you will have the right to appoint a solicitor to tell your side of the story to the magistrates. You may apply for legal aid for this purpose.

4. Legal aid

Your child has the right to have a solicitor to speak for him and to conduct the case on his behalf. If you cannot afford to pay for a solicitor, you may apply for legal aid for your child. The magistrates grant legal aid, if it is considered necessary in the interests of justice, but you may be required to contribute to the cost of legal aid in

accordance with your means. Application for legal aid should be made as early as possible before the date of the hearing, to the Clerk to the Justices at the Magistrates' Court offices, in the Town Hall, Leeds.

5. If the Care Case is Proved

If the magistrates decide that your child is in need of care or control they will then have to consider what is best for him and they will have the benefit of reports. If the reports are not available, the magistrates may put off their decision to a later date. If this happens, they will either:-

- (a) allow your child home until reports are available; or
- (b) place your child in the care of the Local Authority until the next court hearing.

When the magistrates have obtained all the information they need and have talked to you and your child, they will make an order saying what action is to be taken. There are a number of orders the magistrates can make; the meaning of the order that is made will be carefully explained to you. If you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask the Clerk to the Justices to help you. When they have told you, you may say whether there is any reason why you think that what they propose to do is wrong for your child.

After hearing what you have to say, the magistrates will reach their decision and must then explain to your child, if he is old enough to understand, what it will mean to him.

6. Appeals

Your child may appeal against the way in which the magistrates have decided to deal with him. Your child's solicitor, if he has one, or the guardian ad litem, or a court officer will be able to explain how to appeal and also how to apply for legal aid.

If an order has been made preventing you from representing your child, it will continue to be effective during any appeal proceedings. If you wish to be heard on your own behalf in the appeal proceedings, you may be entitled to legal aid in your own right and should ask your solicitor or a court official to explain to you how an application should be made.

CASE STUDY (1)

School

A 15 year old boy whose attendance is 'very sparse'. The school believe that most of the absence is parentally supported or condoned. The boy is of average ability, but below average in achievement although he is a good artist. He is weakest at Maths and the school think that his absence has affected his performance in other subjects as well. In school he is described as being 'very quiet and something of a loner'. The school also report that he has been the victim of some bullying.

Home and Family

Youngest in a family of 8 children. Father is in the painting and decorating trade and mum does not work. Both parents seem to be concerned about the absence but cannot seem to affect an improvement in school-attendance. Living conditions are good and fairly comfortable; the family live in a pre-war council house. The boy does not seem to have any physical medical problems which would need absence from school. An older sister had previously had action taken for poor school attendance. The absence appears to be truancy.

Interview with researcher

Mum is fairly elderly (57) and not too bright although she was fairly chatty and forthcoming on general things. She had difficulty in reading some of the pre-printed questions and accepted help. She did seem unsure of herself and rather over-protective towards the lad who was at home when I visited. The boy seems to be able to do more or less as he likes, but mum did not find what he did do unacceptable. Mum spends quite a lot of time visiting the older children, some of whom are married, live locally and are producing grand-children.

Father was not much in evidence on any visit, and apart from one comment 'that he was sometimes a bit difficult' he was not mentioned.

The boy was very quiet, fairly cooperative and seemed to try quite hard when asked to do some reading. He has a preference for spending his time at home and seems quite small for his age. He did not seem to be able to explain why he found school so unattractive.

CASE STUDY (2)

School

A 14 year old girl with very poor school attendance. She has suffered from some health problems 'related to growing up' but nothing is seriously wrong with her. She is described by the school as being 'backward and of below-average ability'. When in school, the girl causes no problems to the staff, being described as no trouble at all. The school have commented that the "parents seem to keep her off school for the slightest possible reason". The school do not know of any out-of-school interests of the girl.

Home and Family

3rd of 5 children. Dad is in full-time employment and earns a reasonable wage. Mum described herself as a house-wife, but is in fact a registered child minder and has one child regularly. Because of the recent problems over school attendance there have been tensions in the home, which seems comfortable and caring. The girl is helpful at home and is good with the other children. Both parents are described by the Education Welfare Officer as being anxious to get the girl attending school regularly. They repeatedly affirm that she is not a truant and that the only time that she has been absent has been when genuinely ill. The family live in a pre-war semi-detached council house on an estate in a high-delinquency area. Mum has commented to the EWO that the girl now seems terrified of missing school for any reason at all and they have been assured that genuine medical reasons will be acceptable.

Interview

Pleasant home, warm, comfortable and well furnished. Mum sent the other children to play upstairs so that we could have an undisturbed discussion - she is obviously in control of them and they did not appear to cause any trouble while upstairs. Mum was complimentary of the school medical service who had "helped sort things out" and she said that the girl had only ever been off school when poorly. She remarked that there were other children in the locality that had 'more time off' than her children. Mum seemed quite anxious to do the best she possibly can for the children as did Dad who appeared towards the end of the interview. Mum gave the impression of not quite understanding WHY all the fuss was being made about absence which she considers to be genuine.

CASE STUDY (3)

School

A 15 year old boy, 2nd eldest of 6 children. He has truanted on numerous occasions and frequently absconded, sometimes immediately after registration. A chronic absentee. He has average ability but the school consider that he under-achieves because of poor-motivation and much absence. Because he is 'in school so seldom' his range of friends is extremely limited in school, and the contacts he does have are with boys whom the school say also truant or who are absent a lot. The school has no knowledge of how the lad spends his time out of school and report very little contact with the parents despite the fact that the lad has spent a period on daily report which is taken home and signed by the parents nightly.

Home and Family

Mum has remarried and the boy doesn't appear to get on very well with his step-father. Mum does not seem to be able to enforce school attendance on her son. The family home is comfortable, if a little cramped. Dad is an engineer and there is some financial stability. The boy has been before the Education Sub-Committee about poor school attendance in the past, but there was little improvement. Mum said that 'many absences are due to him sleeping in or just not being bothered to get up in the morning'. She doesn't seem to be willing or able to force him to get up.

Interview

Mum was pleasant and forth-coming. She is a tiny lady, very thin and looked old for her years. The lad is much bigger than she is. She has a two year old child who disrupted our conversation considerably, and obviously he is very spoilt by a 'doting mum'. She had concealed the boy's absences from his step-father who was extremely angry when he found out and some strain in family relationships has resulted from this. Because of a cleaning job, mum is nearly always out at tea-time. The boy is extremely helpful in seeing to the younger children's tea and stays in to look after them until mum gets in from work. Mum didn't seem to have any positive ideas to offer concerning getting the boy to attend school regularly.

CASE STUDY (4)

School

A nine year old girl, the eldest of five children. She started middle school in the previous year and since then her attendance has been described by the school as "frequently absent for odd days". She is of average ability, her attainment is described as 'below average' in all subjects, although she does work hard. The school say she is cheerful but often requires a lot of attention. Other children do not seem to like her very much and she sometimes is 'smelly'. The school report that she is registered as a child at risk. As far as they know she is not a member of guides, brownies or any other clubs or societies outside school.

Home and Family

Parents separated. Mother is at home and seems to take an interest in the children although the Education Welfare Officer commented that mum doesn't seem to realise the need for them to attend school because she frequently keeps the girl off to help her. The home is rather untidy and unkempt. The family receive social security. Mum seems to be rather overwhelmed in trying to cope with all the children. The house is a three-bedroomed pre-war council semi-detached on a high-delinquency estate.

Interview

Father was present at the interview and had recently moved back into the family home. The house was absolutely shambolic. Mum seemed totally disorganised and had to move clothes off a chair to let the interviewer sit down. Father took over most of the interview and mum let him although all of the questions were in the first case addressed to her. Over the last year, there have been marital problems but recently they have made efforts to 'make things up'. Overall, the impression gained was that the parents had as little to do with the school as possible and did not really realise how much time the child had had off. No suggestions were made over improving matters except for father saying 'she'll have to go more'.

CASE STUDY (5)

School

15 year old boy whose truancy from school coupled with bad behaviour led to admission to a detached exclusion centre. The school consider he is of average mental ability and has attained normally. He does not make any effort in school and the school describe his class-work as 'slip-shod'. He never does any homework and rarely turns up to classes with writing implements or the correct exercise books. When the school put him on a 'trial' period there was an improvement in behaviour but this was not sustained. Matters deteriorated so that there were regular outbursts of rude, insolent, disobedient and non-cooperative behaviour. The school regard him as a bad influence on others. He has been known to steal cars. The school understand that the mother and step-father are having difficulties with the boy at home. The school will not have the boy back.

Home and Family

The boy is the eldest of three children at home. Father works intermittently as a window cleaner and the relationship between parents appears settled. In the past the lad's behaviour has caused disputes in the family, but the boy is fond of his family and is very good with the younger children. The house is adequately furnished and the interviewer was given a warm welcome. It was untidy because of two small children. The boys health is generally good, but his mum insists that he suffers from migraines. The boy has appeared before the school-attendance sub-committee in the past and also the disruptive panel after the school refused to have him back.

Interview

Welcomed by mum who was convalescing after surgery. She seemed cheerful and not desperately over-concerned about her son not going to school, nor about his other 'criminal' activities which she talked about. Father was not at all in evidence and was not mentioned. The boy does no wrong in his mums eyes - he is just a typical teenager. He is good in the home and fairly quiet. Mum sees the education on offer as irrelevant, and feels the school took the easy option of throwing the boy out rather than trying to help him. She is of the opinion that the school took this line of action because he had got into trouble with the police. The boy himself was co-operative, bright and cheerful. He doesn't like school and wants to leave as soon as possible and 'work'. He enjoys looking after younger children and manages to earn some money baby-sitting sometimes.

CASE STUDY (6)

School

14 year old girl whose school describes her as a truant. She is of average intelligence and attainment and has no known ill-health or disabilities which would mean having so much time off from school. The school describe her as well-behaved.

Home and Family

Eldest of 4 children. Both parents live in family home. Father works full-time but mother has recently given up a full-time secretarial job in the hopes it might help solve school attendance problems, but it hasn't. This has resulted in a substantial drop in the family income. The girl bullies her younger brother. The family live in a pleasant semi-detached council house in a reasonable area. The home is well furnished, but the garden is a shambles. Recently, father left home for a short time following marital disputes, but has now returned 'for the sake of the kids' and to try and do his bit to sort out the schooling problems. He seems the weaker of the two parents. Both parents have taken the children into school on several occasions, but this did not seem to have helped improve matters at all.

Interview

Mum was welcoming and anxious to cooperate. She had held down a responsible secretarial position until 2 months previously when she gave it up due to problems with the children truanting from school. She recognised that the children need an education. Mum divorced her husband the previous year, but he still lives in the house. She gets no financial support from her ex-husband, and depends now on FIS. Despite the difficulties, the household appears to be well-run with a code of discipline for misdemeanours. Father was off work sick at the time of the interview and had been for 4 weeks. Mum seemed to be at her wits end as to what action to take next to try and improve matters. Dad didn't seem to have many ideas and went along with what his ex-wife was saying.