Evaluation of Alternative Education Initiatives
- Background to the research
- Aims of the evaluation
- Data collection
- The content of AEI programmes
- Variations in AEI programmes and structures
- AEI clientele
- Outcomes
- Reasons for change
- Retention
- Aspirations and destinations
- Offending behaviour
- Effectiveness
Methodology

- Background to the research
- Aims of the evaluation
- Data collection
Background to the research

- Study commissioned by Home Office and DfEE in April 2000

- Study part of the Home Office’s Crime Reduction Programme

- Six alternative education initiatives (AEIs) were selected for involvement in the study
Aims of the evaluation

To examine the effectiveness of the intervention programmes, measured in the terms of AEIs’ success in:

- returning pupils to mainstream education educational attainment
- post-16 outcomes and
- reducing anti-social behaviour including offending

Establish the costs associated with each AEI in order to conduct a cost-benefit analysis.
Data collection

- Data collected on 162 AEI students in five target areas: attainment, exclusion, bullying, attendance and offending

- Self-report offending and attitudes questionnaire completed by 97 young people at the start of the evaluation and by 57 at the end

- 100 interviews: 63 young people, 18 AEI staff, seven parents and 12 other agency representatives

- Project costs and input data
Content of AEI programmes

- Delivery of relevant and positive learning experiences
- Responsive and flexible programmes
- Adult-like relationships, based on respect
Content of AEI programmes

- Educational programmes
- Work experience
- Vocational training
- Careers education
- College placements
- Personal and social education
- Counselling
- Leisure-based activities
- Environmental activities
Variations in AEI programmes and structures

- Degree of dispersal to outside providers
- Level of contact time
- Generic or individualised programmes
AEI clientele

- Year 7 to Year 11
- Two-thirds male
- 10 per cent looked after
- 69 per cent special educational needs
- Reason for referral
Accreditation outcomes

- Wide range of accreditation opportunities
- Half of young people awarded some form of accreditation
- Most common - ASDAN
- Of those awarded accreditation:
  - Over a half received vocationally-orientated certification
  - Nearly four-fifths received personal and social skills awards
  - Just over four-fifths received educationally-focused certification
Attitudes to learning

- In the pre-questionnaire:
  
  half agreed that they enjoyed learning (increased to two-thirds in the post-questionnaire)

  half agreed that what they learnt was important to them (increased to 89% in the post-questionnaire)

- 30 out of 38 young people interviewed said they found it easier to learn at the AEIs compared to school
Reasons

Scale of AEI:

- Fewer students
- Less disruption
- More attention from staff
Attendance outcomes

- Attendance in mainstream described as ‘poor’

- 89% of those interviewed described AEI attendance as good compared to school attendance

- Median attendance for all provisions was over 50%, ranging from 56-71%
Reasons for improved attendance

- Social elements of AEI attendance
- The AEI environment
- Time-tabling of AEI programmes
Other outcomes

- Behaviour
- Retention
- Destination data
Behavioural outcomes

- Three-quarters of students noted improved personal behaviour
- Half noted improved family relationships
- Three-quarters noted improved staff/student relationships
Reasons for improvement

- The character of the other young people
- The size of the group
- The qualities of staff and staff techniques to prevent or address problematic behaviour
Reason for improved behaviour

They calm down … I mean it’s that you are not having to assert yourself because you are accepted, you are part of a special group, and they don’t have to be rowdy and loud and showing off (project staff)
Reason for improved family relationships: decrease in offending

I think that it’s because I’ve been coming here and staying out of trouble in the daytime and that. Because I used to never go to school, I used to be always in trouble (young person).
Retention

- Retention rates varied between the AEIs
- A third of students left the AEIs over the course of the evaluation
- Reasons for leaving were both positive and negative: non-attendance was most common reason for leaving
Destination of AEI students

Most common destinations:

- Nearly a quarter (40) remained at the AEI
- ‘Unknown’ destination (28)
- Employment (23)
- College (21)
- Training (21)
- Reintegrated to school (10)
### Offending history of AEI pupils between 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AEI</th>
<th>No. enrolled over the year</th>
<th>No. with record of offending</th>
<th>No. of offences</th>
<th>Total % of offences across AEIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13 (59%)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10 (43%)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11 (73%)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10 (30%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23 (59%)</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Self-reported offending during the AEI project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since being on the project, I have committed ...</th>
<th>N = 57</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot less offences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few less offences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped committing offences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few more offences</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot more offences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None ticked</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>