

Regarding grammar school places for young people in care.

When I first came into my current post, I was asked to support an appeal for a young woman, who was academically bright but had failed her eleven plus. She was ambitious and keen to progress and really wanted to go to a grammar school. Due to the significant trauma she had endured during her younger years and the physical and emotional abuse she had suffered, XXX had fared remarkably well in the level of educational progress she had attained.

I attach the letter which was written to the appeal committee. The appeal was subsequently upheld and XXX is now very happily settled at XXX and is doing very well there. XXX would eventually like to be a teacher.

### **Recommendations**

- That appeal committees treat the cases of Looked After Children with special consideration, because there is extensive research evidence to show that children are unable to reach their academic potential when they are suffering any form of abuse and the aftermath of such trauma may have a lasting impact into their adult life,
- That the appeal committee liaise with the social worker who can advocate for the young person.
- That all young people in care who are sitting the eleven plus exam be given a supporting letter which should be taken into account if they were expected to pass the exam but did not do so. Consideration should also be given to their academic ability over time rather than a specific exam. It might even be that an exam could be devised specifically for Looked After Children and a set amount of places be allocated for such a cohort in a grammar school setting, in line with equal opportunities.
- Training should be given to teachers in grammar schools about the specific needs of Looked After Children, since relatively low numbers attend such schools. This could be delivered by social workers from the Children In Care Teams.
- The PEP process could be used to identify which young people may have the ability to sit the eleven plus exam and extra support could be given during the year if it is felt that they are not quite at the necessary academic standard.