We have seen in the past that keeping an explicit focus on outcomes for looked after children has resulted in some improvement in this area. An example of this is the National Priorities in Education, which contained a Performance Measure relating to the attainment of looked after children. Local authorities were aware that they would be expected to plan for this and report back on an annual basis – and that this would form part of the annual progress report to the Scottish Parliament. Accordingly, performance began to improve. It is important to keep this issue in the ‘spotlight’.

Clear commitment and expectations at every level regarding this issue are vital for progress to be made, from the Scottish Government, through local authorities to schools and their partner agencies. One of the MSPs in my group picked up on this point and realised that a first step signalling the importance that the Scottish Government gives this issue could be by including it explicitly within the Single Outcome Agreement with local authorities.