



Report of the Director of Place

Safeguarding Policy Development and Delivery Committee – 21 February 2018

Education Support for Looked After Children

Purpose:	To provide information aimed at raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales
Policy Framework:	None
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The report be noted.
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Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Stephanie Williams
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides information relating to Education Support for Looked After Children.

2. Welsh Government Guidance

- 2.1 The Welsh Government Guidance document – Making a Difference – a Guide to the Role of the Designated Person for Looked After Children in Schools, (Circular 255/2017, date of issue: November 2017) identifies that:

'In discharging their duties under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 responsible authorities are required to designate a specialist practitioner (the LACE Coordinator) to coordinate the child's education plan and address the education needs of looked after children and care leavers in the local authority area. In addition the responsible authority must ensure that every child looked after by them has an effective and high quality PEP'.

<http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/171123-making-a-difference-looked-after-children-en.pdf>

2.2 Further information on this role is at **Appendix A** attached.

3. Local Authority Role

3.1 In Swansea, the Local Authority employs an Education Looked After Children's Co-ordinator (ELACC) to undertake the above role. The post holder took early retirement in October 2017 and a replacement Co-ordinator has been appointed and is due to commence duty on 1 April 2018. The ELACC undertakes the duties outlined below at **Appendix A**.

3.2 In addition, Swansea Council engages a Deputy LAC Co-ordinator and four LAC Project Workers, one part time LAC Administrator and one part time LAC Education Welfare Officer. One LAC Project Worker and the part time LAC Education Welfare Officer are core funded and the other 3 LAC Project Workers and part time LAC Administrator are funded from the Pupil Development Grant (PDG LAC).

4. School Support

4.1 Each Swansea school has a Designated Person for LAC – usually a teacher but in some primary schools the Designated Person for LAC is the Headteacher. Swansea Council Education Department outlined a role profile for each designated school person for LAC (see below at **Appendix B**) and this has been adopted by ERW. Swansea schools have a designated LAC person even if they do not have any LAC pupils attending the school. This is to ensure that support can be put in place if a LAC pupil starts at the school at any time.

5. Governing Body

5.1 Since September 2013 all school governing bodies are required to designate a governor to take responsibility for looked after children (LAC) at the school. In Swansea each school has a designated governor for LAC. Each year in September a reminder is issued to headteachers and chairs of governing bodies to remind them of the need to assign a governor with responsibility for LAC and an information sheet on the Role of the LAC Link Governor has been drawn up and is issued to each governor assigned to take on the role. A copy of this document is attached at **Appendix C**.

6. Governance

6.1 Swansea Education Department has always operated an Education LAC Management Group to oversee the work of the ELACC and the Education LAC Team. The Management Group was made up of representatives from the primary and secondary education sectors in Swansea, a Children and Family Services Principal Officer and a Challenge Advisor. The Head of School Support Unit – who is the line manager for the ELACC, was the Chair of this Group.

6.2 When the Corporate Parenting Forum (CPF) was reviewed the Education LAC Management Group evolved to become a sub group of the CPF under the auspices of the Multi-Agency LAC Group. This new Group has only operated since October 2017 and continues to be chaired by the Head of School Support Unit. A copy of the Terms of Reference for this group is attached at **Appendix D**. The Group meets once per term and comprises membership from the following organisations:

- Education
- Health
- Children and Family Services
- Gower College
- BAYS
- Poverty and Prevention
- Swansea Primary School Headteacher – nominated by YCA
- Swansea Secondary School Headteacher – nominated by SCCASH

The Chair of this Group is the link between the CPF and the Group.

7. Equality and Engagement Implications

7.1 There are no Equality and Engagement implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Welsh Government Guidance

Appendix B - The Role of LAC Designated Teachers

Appendix C - The Role of the LAC Link Governor

Appendix D - Multi-Agency Looked After Children's Group Terms of Reference

Welsh Government guidance:

The Looked-After Children in Education (LACE) Coordinator In discharging their duties under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 responsible authorities are required to designate a specialist practitioner (the LACE Coordinator) to coordinate the child's education plan and address the education needs of looked after children and care leavers in the local authority area. In addition the responsible authority must ensure that every child looked after by them has an effective and high quality PEP.

LACE Coordinators' exact roles are defined by individual local authorities and can vary throughout Wales. They are there to make sure that looked after children get any additional support they need with education and are based within the social care or education departments of the local authority. The LACE Coordinator should have the relevant skills and competencies to undertake their role. They should have a clear remit to establish and enforce joint procedures and protocols, provide information as appropriate to all involved in corporate parenting and to act as a champion for young people in public care.

As the designated local authority officer, the LACE Coordinator, as a minimum, is expected to perform the following roles:

- work towards the Welsh Government's objectives on the education of looked after children 9
- promote the education of all looked after children for whom the local authority is the corporate parent, whether placed in or out of the authority
- liaise with their counterparts across counties to effectively meet the needs of the looked after child when placement changes occur across counties
- monitor attendance, exclusion, progress, well-being and achievement data; collate and analyse performance information on an individual and collective basis. Use the calculation of 'value-added' data and 3 year rolling averages
- establish and maintain a list – through the admissions process - of looked after children who are placed in the authority by other local authorities
- liaise with the relevant lead person of the corporate parent local authority i.e. social worker, virtual headteacher (from English local authorities) or LACE Coordinators on educational provision and transitional arrangement as appropriate
- in conjunction with social workers, ensure that schools know which children are in care
- develop and promote a means of engaging looked after children and obtaining their views on educational provision. The individual needs, requirements and opinions of looked after children should be considered when places for them are made available on interventions and programmes
- act as a conduit between social services, schools and other education professionals on Special Educational Needs (SEN), admission arrangements, policy etc.
- liaise with Careers Wales, Youth Services, the Leaving Care Team and other relevant managers to ensure appropriate and timely support and access to universal entitlements

- provide support and challenge to local authorities relating to school admissions and exclusions
- working with schools, help minimise the impact of disruptive home circumstances on the looked after child's learning by arranging 'catch up' sessions, one-to-one support or other targeted support
- disseminate good practice including training for elected members, foster carers, social workers, school governors and the designated person for looked after children in schools
- ensure high quality PEPs/Individual Development Plans (IDPs) 10 are in place for each child and provide guidance on their implementation
- submit robust budget proposals that enable the purchase and allocation of educational resources for looked after children as appropriate – in the case of the 10 IDPs will replace the existing Statement of Special Educational Needs over a phased period and be used for learners from the age of 0 to 25. 10 Pupil Development Grant (PDG) for looked after children close working with consortia and individual schools is essential
- establish and maintain a list of designated persons for looked after children in each school in their authority and for schools attended by children placed out-of-authority
- attend looked after children reviews as appropriate
- contribute to strategies and operational plans to promote the engagement, attendance and achievement of looked after children and of vulnerable groups
- help deliver the local authority strategy and policy for looked after children in the consortia region
- report to corporate parenting panel / elected members / senior management team on the educational outcomes of looked after children against the local authority strategy
- work closely with the Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) to ensure that looked after children who are at risk of disengagement are supported and have a planned transition to an appropriate post-16 setting.

The Role of LAC Designated Teachers

The Designated Teacher will be someone with sufficient authority to access support and will be responsible for ensuring that the school demonstrates a philosophy of high expectations for looked after children. It is recommended that the Headteacher in Primary Schools and a senior member of staff in Secondary Schools will have overall responsibility for liaison with Social Services and will provide support and guidance to individual teachers who have a looked after child in their class or form.

- Access services and support and ensure that the school shares and supports high expectations for LAC;
- Ensure that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan and that a home school agreement is drawn up with the primary carer. The plans should aim to minimise disruption and broken schooling, signal individual needs, establish clear and challenging goals and act as a record of progress and achievement. The plan should set clear objectives with academic, personal behavioural goals with an identified timescale and review;
- Attend statutory LAC Reviews, if appropriate;
- Ensure that the school contributes to the pupil's Care Plan and the Assessment and Action Records;
- Liaise closely with carers and ensure that they are invited to all school activities and functions as other parents.

The Role of the LAC Link Governor

Contact

The Designated Teacher for LAC pupils is encouraged to contact the Designated Governor for LAC to arrange to meet with him/her to begin ongoing liaison as needed.

Confidentiality

There is a need to maintain pupil confidentiality and so the following suggestions are made for anonymous information rather than information where names of pupils would be provided.

Discussion on Looked After Children Could Include:

General Information:

- How many children are Looked After at the school?
- Has this number increased or decreased?
- If increase/decrease what was the reason for this – family becoming looked after, family move, adopted, returned home, etc.
- Are children looked after by Swansea or other counties?
- Is communication good with social workers?

Arrangements in Place to Support LAC:

- What arrangements has the school put in place to support any new looked after children starting at the school?

LAC with SEN:

- What arrangements has the school put in place to accommodate any additional needs the children may have?
- Are the looked after children on the SEN register –if so at what stage eg school action, school action plus or statement of SEN?
- What additional support for LAC is/will school be providing from their new PDG LAC premium?
- What outcomes are sought as a result of this additional support?

LAC Personal Education Plans:

- Look at the format of a blank Personal Education Plan.
- Use anonymised version of PEP to go through the type of things that are included in a PEP.
- Explain why a PEP is put in place ie requirement for PEP to be in place within 20 school days of pupil becoming looked after.
- Explain how the PEP is reviewed.

- Outline who attends PEP Review meetings.
- Be aware of need for support for staff completing PEP and attending eg. time allocation, debriefing if needed, training etc.

Pupil Discipline Committee:

- In circumstances where the Governors' discipline body is meeting regarding a looked after child it would be helpful for the lac designated Governor to be updated fully by the Lac designated teacher before the meeting (in this instance looked after child would need to be identified).

Governor Training

LAC Governors should be encouraged to attend the LAC Governor Training delivered as part of the School and Governor Support Governor Training Programme.

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Multi-Agency Looked After Children's Group Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the sub group will be to ensure that appropriate procedures and policy are in place and followed, that quality of provision and practice are monitored and appropriate developments are implemented in order to improve outcomes for looked after learners.

2. FUNCTIONS / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work as a multi-agency to consider challenges and oversee procedures to support development for looked after learners.
2. Monitor provision for looked after learners.
3. Oversight of quality and monitor process of personal educational plans for looked after learners.
4. Ensure that systems and protocols are working in practice.
5. Receive reports from the Education LAC Coordinator and others as identified.
6. Address legislative requirements in respect of looked after learners.
7. Operate as a sub group of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to ensure all looked after children get a good education (objective 4 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy)

3. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Frequency: One meeting per school term and others identified as required.

Chair: Appointed from within the group with responsibility for communications between this sub group and the Corporate Parenting Forum.

The group will appoint a Vice Chair to deputise as Chair if not available.

Meetings will be supported and administered initially by the Education department subject to review.

Agenda items and papers will be distributed electronically to members at least 7 working days prior to the meeting. Paper copies available upon request.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Title	Representing
Head of School Support Unit KT	Education
Education LAC Co-ordinator SP	Education
Service Manager SQU – Team Manager	Child and Family Services – From August
LAC Social Services Team Ben Anderson	Child and Family Services
Young Peoples Advisor	BAYS
Young Peoples Services Manager – Gavin Evans	Poverty and Prevention
Primary Headteacher Representative	Appointed by YCA
Secondary Headteacher Representative	Appointed by SCCASH
Education Challenge Advisor – Karen Draper	ERW
LAC Health Team – Sharon Buckley- Draisey	ABMU Health Board
LAC and Care Leaver Officer – Julie Rees	Gower College, Further Education

5. ATTENDANCE/DEPUTISING ARRANGEMENTS

Members are obliged to identify and ensure attendance of an appropriately senior representative in their absence.

Representatives must be able to make representation and decisions for their respective service area and must be fully briefed in order to be able to contribute to decision making.

If a nominated representative is not able to attend a scheduled meeting, they must send a designated deputy, who must be able to bring a definitive decision on the proposals being considered.

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, this is not possible, their decision must be communicated to the Chair in writing via email, at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

In the event that no officer attends from a particular service area and no final decision is communicated to the Chair, the group will proceed on the assumption that there is agreement with the proposals put forward.

All decisions taken at meetings will be final.

6. GOVERNANCE

This group will feed directly into the Corporate Parenting Forum and the chair of the group will be a member of the Corporate Parenting Forum.

Additionally, this group may decide to inform others of progress e.g. Education Department Senior Leadership Team (EDSLT).

Kathryn Thomas
Head of School Support Unit
30 January 2018

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