

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee

11 February 2016

Report of the Head of Participation – C. Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Looked After Children Pupil Deprivation Grant (2015-17)

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the delivery plan for the Looked After Children element to the Pupil Deprivation Grant (2015-17).

Executive Summary

2. It is Welsh Government's intention that Local Education Authority's adopt a more strategic approach towards the delivery of services for our most vulnerable children, and greater emphasis be placed on regional working. The funding for Looked After Children changed during the 2015/16 financial year and the Local Education Authority is now responsible for the strategic deployment of the funding.

This has meant additional grant funding has been provided to Neath Port Talbot Council of £265,050.

The terms and conditions of this additional grant created the need to build additional capacity with our Looked After Children Education Support Team (LACES).

Background

3. The LACES team provide a wide range of detailed support, interventions and extra curricular opportunities, to ensure participation and enjoyment of learning for children 'looked after'. The team raise standards for learners 'looked after' through supporting Children's Services staff, carers and schools to reduce barriers to learning, and providing individual needs led packages of additional support.

Communication and regional partnerships are strong, contributing towards comprehensive strategic direction, policy and practice, in order to meet local, regional and national need for children 'looked after'.

Traditionally the Looked After Children Education team comprised of two full time permanent employees:

- Looked After Children's Education Coordinator
- Looked After Children's Education Officer.

The funding was previously directly passed out to schools on a per pupil basis. The fund is no longer ring-fenced per child.

The funding is now managed by the Regional Consortium and the Local Education Authority working closely with our schools.

4. For this financial year 2015/16 this has meant a distribution of grant funding of £265,050, with £10,000 having been top-sliced to contribute towards the regional project.

Children eligible for support are presently 'looked after' and children who have left local authority care for one of the following reasons: adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangement order, a residence order. It is anticipated that all children may potentially benefit from staff training and development, but it is the expectation that there will be a greater benefit on children who are looked after.

Within Neath Port Talbot schools there are 270 pupils 'looked after', reception to year 11 (these figures can vary).

In order to build capacity within the LACES team the following temporary/seconded posts have been built into the existing structure to 31st March 2017:

- Temporary Teacher Development Officer - 0.8 FTE
- Seconded Educational Psychologist - 1 FTE
- Temporary Teaching Assistants - 2.5 FTE
- Seconded Resource and Communications Officer - 0.2 FTE

There are three strands of activity:

1. Regional 'Attachment Aware Schools' pilot project

This project is coordinated by the ERW Training and Quality Assurance Officer working with pilot schools from across the six ERW Local Authorities, to build capacity to better meet the needs of pupils who have experienced relational trauma.

Crynallt Primary and Llangatwg Comprehensive schools are representing Neath Port Talbot in phase one; attending the 'Ignition Conference', developing a whole school action plan and receiving whole staff training delivered by Kate Cairns Associates. These schools will be expected to contribute by sharing their learning and development experiences at Summer term conference and act as Local Authority 'Champions'.

Additional schools are currently being invited to express their interest in participating in phase two.

2. Neath Port Talbot 'Wellbeing Initiative'

This initiative continues to build capacity within schools to better meet the individual needs of pupils who have experienced relational trauma, and to support individual pupils to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst respecting the feelings of those around them by:

- Delivering 'bespoke' training to meet individual school staff training and individual pupil needs.
- Delivering Emotional Literacy Support Assistant training and on-going supervision.
- Supporting the communication and relationships of children aged 6 or below, recently placed in a foster or adoption placement, by the delivery of Video Interaction Guidance.

3. LAC Education Support

The team continues to track and support learners, formulate initial Person Education Plan targets, design and facilitate additional targeted packages of needs led learning support, and develop specific learning support materials and resources.

The development of the 'Improving LAC Reading Attainment Policy' and action plan is now fully embedded and remains a priority focus for the team.

Financial Impact

5. All activity is 100% grant funded.

Workforce Impacts

6. Increased capacity within the Looked After Children Education team to work with vulnerable pupils.

Legal Impacts

7. No legal implications

Risk Management

8. Failure to implement would mean the Authority would not be able to deliver services to Looked After Children in line with Welsh Governments recommendations and a potential repayment of the additional grant funding.

Consultation

9. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

10. The report to be noted.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

11. Matter for information, no decision required.

Officer Contact

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