

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

6 October 2016

Report of the Head of Participation Chris Millis

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Service Report Card for Looked After Children Education Support (LACES) Team

Purpose of the Report

To present to Members the Report Card developed by the Looked After Children Education Support (LACES) team.

Executive Summary

The attached Report Card summarises the functions of the LACES team.

Background

LACES sits within the Education Development Service (EDS) which support learners who are 'looked after'. The team aims to improve outcomes and overcome barriers that prevent learners achieving their full potential.

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 (2015/16) and £254,163 (2016/17).

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

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 Consortia and the Local Education Authority working closely with our schools.

For the financial year 2015/16 this has meant a distribution of grant funding of £265,050 (and £254,163 for 2015/16), 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 - 3 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 and act as Local Authority 'Champions'.

An additional 8 schools joined phase 2 of the project.

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

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

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 (2015/16) and £254,163 (estimated for 2016/17).

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

The future of this grant post for 2017/18 remains uncertain.

The impact of this funding no longer being available will potentially result in redundancy of 4 members of the LACES team. The regional Attachment Aware Schools project, the NPT 'Wellbeing Initiative' and the targeted support to individual pupils would cease to operate.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the purpose of this report.

Workforce Impacts

There are no Workforce implications for the purpose of this report.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal implications.

Risk Management

No requirement for risk assessment. However it should be noted that Welsh Government LAC Element of Pupil Deprivation Grant is not guaranteed to exist beyond March 2017.

Consultation

No requirement for consultation.

Recommendations

Items for monitoring only.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

N/A

Implementation of Decision

N/A

Appendices

Looked After Children Education Support Team Report Card

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