CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

**JOINT EDUCATION & YOUTH AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting	Thursday 24th May 2018
Report Subject	Educational Attainment of Looked After Children in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report informs Members on the academic attainment of Flintshire Looked After Children (LAC) for the academic year 2016 - 2017. The data relates to the LAC cohort identified in line with the definition below:

'A child of statutory school age, i.e. between 5 and 16 years, who was looked after during the academic year 2016 - 2017, for at least one year prior to 31st August 2017.'

For the purposes of the report, children looked after under Short Breaks/Respite Care are not included in the statistical analysis. The data has been grouped into four age groups corresponding to the National Curriculum Key Stages.

Primary	School Year	Age	School Stage
Group 1	Reception	4 - 5	FOUNDATION PHASE
	Year 1	5 - 6	
	Year 2	6 - 7	
Group 2	Year 3	7 - 8	KEY STAGE 2
	Year 4	8 - 9	
	Year 5	9 - 10	
	Year 6	10 - 11	
Secondary	School Year	Age	School Stage
Group 3	Year 7	11 - 12	KEY STAGE 3
	Year 8	12 - 13	
	Year 9	13 - 14	
Group 4	Year 10	14 - 15	KEY STAGE 4
	Year 11	15 - 16	

	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	For Members to actively engage as Cooperate Parents for LAC, promoting awareness and challenging provision within Flintshire educational settings.
2	For Members to actively encourage all educational staff to promote the educational welfare of LAC within Flintshire establishments at a 'whole school level'.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE
1.01	The LAC cohort within Flintshire is fairly stable in terms of overall annual number (approx. 220) however, the individual circumstances and resulting needs vary from year to year. The following table gives an overview of numbers within each key stages for 2016–17 accounting for 170 individuals of statutory school age. Group 1 - Foundation Phase: 37 Group 2 - Key Stage 2: 48 Group 3 - Key Stage 3: 35 Group 4 - Key Stage 4: 50 As can be seen there is a fairly even spread across the key stages. The Average age at becoming LAC in 2016 - 17 was 7 years.
1.02	The varying nature of the cohort means that the individuals access their education through a range of educational settings and provision. Many of the children and young people have additional learning needs (ALN) and require targeted support and intervention to enable them to engage with the provision available to them. For the majority of children and young people, this can be accessed within mainstream settings however, for a small minority, specialist provision may be required to ensure their needs are effectively met. The figures below show that in line with this, the majority of Flintshire LAC attended mainstream provision with around 20% of the cohort requiring specialist or small group provision. The majority of placements are accessed within Flintshire however, 9% of pupils accessed their education in other Welsh counties and a further 11% accessed provision in England. **Type of provision accessed by Flintshire LAC 2016-17** • 79% Mainstream LA Maintained Schools • 9% Pupil Referral Units • 10% Non-maintained day/residential school or hospital • 2% Maintained Special School Further breakdown of the cohort indicates that 31% were identified as having special educational needs (SEN) with approx. 12% of these having a Statement of SEN; this is significantly higher than the average expected

	across the whole school population where typically 20% of children and young people have SEN, only 2% of which would have a Statement.
1.03	**Learner Outcomes: Group 1 - Foundation Phase** There were 37 Foundation Phase pupils in the cohort, 12 of which were in Year 2 and subject to the End of Key Stage Assessment which measures progress against the following outcomes: - Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity (PSD) - Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE) or Language, literacy and communication skills - Welsh (LCW) - Mathematical Development (MDT) The general expectation is that the majority of Year 2 pupils will attain Outcome 5 in each of these areas. To achieve the Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI), the pupils must achieve Outcome 5 in all 3 areas. Of the cohort of 12, 6 (50%) achieved the FPI. Of this group 3 (25%) had a Statement of SEN.
1.04	**Learner Outcomes: Group 2 - Key Stage 2** Reports on attainment at Key Stage 2 (KS2)) are based on the national baseline Core Subject Indicator (CSI). To achieve the Core Subject Indicator at KS2 the learner must gain a level 4 assessment in all Core Subjects, i.e. Maths, Science and English (or Welsh). In 2016-17 there were 48 learners within KS2, 11 of which were subject to the End of Key Stage assessment at the end of Year 6. Of the 11, 4 (36%) achieved the CSI. Of this group, 82% were identified as having SEN with 27% of these having a Statement of SEN.
1.05	**Learner Outcomes: Group 3 – Key Stage 3** To achieve the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3 (KS3) the learner must gain a level 5 assessment in all Core Subjects, i.e. Maths, Science and English (or Welsh). In 2016 - 17 there were 35 learners within KS3, 5 of which were subject to the end of key stage assessment at the end of Year 9, all of which (100%) achieved the CSI. None of the pupils were identified as having SEN.
1.06	**Learner Outcomes: Group 4 – Key Stage 4** Pupils at Key Stage 4 (KS4) are measured against a number of outcomes including Level 1 threshold (5 GCSEs, grade A*-G), Level 2 Threshold (5 GCSEs, grade A*-C) and Level 2 plus (5 GCSEs A*-C inclusive of Maths and English/Welsh). In 2016 - 17 there were 50 learners within KS4, 15 of which were subject to assessment at the end of Year 11. Of the 15, only 14 underwent formal assessment, with 50% achieving a formally recognised qualification, 1 pupil achieving the Level 1 threshold and none of the cohort achieving Level 2 or Level 2 plus. For this group 26% were identified as having SEN, with 7% having a Statement of SEN.

	Whilst the overall outcomes do not appear to be positive for this particular cohort, it is pleasing to note that of the 15 individuals, 13 of the 15 have overcome the factors affecting their success and have re-engaged in education to improve their outcomes and future prospects.
1.07	**Outcomes Summary** It is clear that the levels of SEN impact on the outcomes achieved by Flintshire LAC, this was particularly evident at KS3 where 100% of the cohort successfully achieved the expected outcome. It is important to note that as well having SEN, many of the pupils across the key stages have experienced significant levels of trauma which often translates into a range of difficulties resulting in inconsistent behaviours, dysregulated relationship and trust issues, which impact on their ability to form solid foundations within school settings with staff, teachers and/or peers. For this cohort, the outcomes were also significantly impacted on by a range of factors such as repeated placement breakdowns, pregnancy, mental health issues, experience of child sexual exploitation and custodial sentences.
1.08	**Attendance Rates** Attendance for primary aged LAC was 92.95% and 84.02% for secondary. Whilst below the Local Authority averages of 94.8% and 93.9% respectively, the levels compare well given the very small LAC cohorts in each sector.
1.09	**Exclusion Rates** There were no permanent exclusions of LAC for 2016-17. During the year, there were 17 fixed-term exclusions, 6 within the Primary Sector, 11 within the Secondary Sector which resulted in a loss of 39 school days. The main reasons for exclusion were physical aggression towards staff or pupils. In all cases, preventative intervention strategies were discussed with the individual, school, LACE coordinator and Social Worker to prevent recurrence and escalation. All schools concerned were supportive at these times, demonstrating their ongoing objective to implement their roles as corporate parents.
1.10	**LAC Educational Support, Provision and Coordination** The education of looked after children is a high priority in Flintshire and many initiatives have been instigated to improve the outcomes for this group of vulnerable learners. The LAC Strategic Planning Group comprising of a range of professionals who oversee the education of LAC, meet every 6 weeks. Members include representation from the Behaviour Support Service, Primary and Secondary schools, Children's Services, Pupil Referral Units, Education Welfare Service, Education Psychology Service and Independent Reviewing Officers along with the LAC Education Co-ordinator. All areas of LAC education and welfare are discussed with the aim of improving services and influencing policy and procedure. This group has been acknowledged as a model of good practice by Welsh Government, GwE and external auditors. The new Participation Officer for Social Services

will be invited to join the group, ensuring that the voice of the child is conveyed to the forum.

The Strategic Planning Group holds the remit to develop plans for use of the LAC Pupil Development Grant in line with the regional funding model set by Welsh Government in 2015-16. GwE has a lead role in supporting a regional policy approach. The Flintshire LACE Coordinator is a member of the National and Regional groups, disseminating all relevant information to schools and other professionals as and when required.

Training has been identified as a key priority for all Flintshire staff who support LAC learners. Specific training has been provided to 21 key representatives from schools and the Local Authority by 'Touchbase Training' via the University of Brighton; Louise Bomber is nationally recognised in the training of professionals in 'Attachment Theory' and associated best practice. All candidates were offered 15 weeks training at Level 6 to become 'Attachment Leads' within their schools and cluster groups, with a view to sharing and developing good practice across the authority. Flintshire was the first authority in Wales to train staff to level 6 and this has resulted in greater awareness and understanding across schools as a result. A network has been established to disseminate information and share effective practice.

On-going workshops and networking events continue to 'up-skill' staff and develop awareness to all school staff of the needs of children who have difficulties in making positive relationships due to past distress. Child Mental Health and Trauma is a key area of focus which has been identified by Flintshire staff, with the aim to better understand the need of the child and better support the staff who engage with them.

The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) for 2016-17 was allocated to the following areas:

- Play Therapy
- Breathing Space Training (Mindfulness MSBR) for staff to encourage pupils to relax and engage with learning.
- Unearthing Training and resources for all Flintshire Schools
- Residential Trips
- Equine Residential Summer School
- Braveheart Training
- Sensory Room / Nurture Room Resources
- Pets as Therapy (reading dogs)
- Talk About Therapy
- Art Therapy workshops
- Gardening resources and equipment – sensory garden
- Wrexham FC Literacy project
- Science workshops
- Attachment friendly resources and books
- Music Lessons
- Lego Therapy
- Numicon Resources
- Forest School
- After school 1:1 tuition for Key Stage 3 & 4 learners in core subjects

- Access to 1:1 in class support to maintain engagement
- Support to access After School Clubs, Breakfast Clubs and other extra-curricular activities
- Literacy and phonics, language / communication aids and programmes
- Study packs for exams, coursework & specialist text books
- 35 laptops and licences issued
- Specialist software packages to assist learning
- Higher education bursary £2000 for care leavers entering university
- Additional Teaching Assistant and Teacher support
- Purchase of IPads and relevant software
- Letter Box Club (literacy and numeracy materials) resources

The Flintshire LAC Education Co-ordinator has focused on strengthening the links between Children's Services and Education Inclusion Service staff to support better outcomes for LAC. Communication between both services has improved and a greater awareness of the educational procedures has been shared as has knowledge of how schools can support their LAC learners via the LAC PDG.

Communication and interaction with a wider range of interventions such as Curriculum enrichment opportunities and personalised support through the European funding stream, TRAC, has also supported a reduction in the number of LAC learners who become NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) as individual cases are identified in a timely manner resulting in referrals to appropriate partners/providers. Of the 2016-17 cohort, 2 individuals were classed as NEET on the census date.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The PDG offers additional funding to schools and LAs to supplement and enhance the provision for LAC. A key role of the LAC Education Coordinator and the Strategic Planning Group is to ensure that schools maximise the use and impact of this at a time of financial pressure, with a view to reducing the need for non-maintained specialist provision.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None required.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The risks associated with the effective use and allocation of the PDG are managed through the Strategic Planning Group in partnership with GwE.
	Expenditure on specialist non-maintained 'Out of County' provision constitutes an ongoing financial risk to the both the Education & Youth and Social Services Portfolios. This is subject to ongoing review through the

	relevant Programme Boards and a joint project is underway to explore and identify ways of reducing this increasing expenditure.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	None.

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	None.
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7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
	Pupil Development Grant – Welsh Government funding to improve outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and Looked After Children (LAC). It is intended to overcome the additional barriers that prevent learners from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential. **GwE**: Regional school improvement service **TRAC:** European grant funded project offering individualised support to prevent young people from disengaging from education **Out of County provision:** Specialist education/residential provision which is not maintained by local authorities but offered through independent providers.