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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 25th July, 2019
Report Subject	Educational Attainment of Looked After Children in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and 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 2017 - 2018. 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 on the 16th January 2018 (date of the Pupil Level Annual School Census, PLASC)'.

Whilst the overall number of LAC pupils remains relatively constant across the school year, the cohort of children identifiable as LAC can vary from month to month. Outcome data within the report relates to those children identified as LAC on the date of PLASC 2018. This is in line with published data collected by the regional school improvement service (GwE).

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 Corporate 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 number of children who are looked after within Flintshire is fairly stable, annually approximately 221, however, the personal circumstances and resulting needs of these individuals varies from year to year. The data included in this report relates to 140 school aged children who were distributed across the academic key stages as follows: • Foundation Phase – 33 pupils • Key Stage 2 – 43 pupils • Key Stage 3 – 42 pupils • Key Stage 4 – 22 pupils
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 special educational needs (SEN) 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 looked after children (LAC) attended mainstream provision with slightly over 20% of the cohort requiring specialist or small group provision. The majority of placements are accessed within Flintshire however, 10% of pupils accessed their education in other Welsh counties and a further 11% accessed provision in England. **Type of provision accessed by Flintshire LAC in 2017-18** • 78.5% Mainstream LA Maintained Schools • 4.5% Pupil Referral Units • 15% Non-maintained day/residential school or hospital • 2% Maintained Special School Further breakdown of the overall cohort indicates that 58% were identified as having SEN with approximately 11% of these having a Statement of SEN, 27% at School Action Plus, and 19% at School Action. 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: Foundation Phase** All Year 2 pupils are subject to the End of Key Stage Assessment which measures their progress against the following outcomes: • Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity (PSD) • Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE) • 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 4 areas. In 2017/18, 8 pupils in Year 2 who were identified as LAC on the census date. Of these, 100% achieved the FPI.
1.04	**Learner Outcomes: Key Stage 2** Reports on attainment at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) 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/Welsh. There were 13 year 6 LAC pupils who were subject to the end of Key Stage 2 assessment. Of these, 8 achieved the expected level (61.5%). All of the 5 pupils who didn't achieve the CSI were identified as having SEN with one having a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
1.05	**Learner Outcomes: Key Stage 3** To achieve the Core Subject Indicator at KS3, the learner must gain a level 5 assessment in all Core Subjects, i.e. Maths, Science and English/ Welsh. Of the 16 year 9 LAC pupils, 10 achieved the expected level for the end of Key Stage 3 CSI. All 6 of the pupils who did not reach the expected level had SEN, with 4 of these having a Statement of Special Educational Need.
1.06	**Learner Outcomes: 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 (5GCSEs, grade A*-C) and Level 2 plus (5 GCSEs A*-C inclusive of Maths and English/Welsh). There were 8 year 11 LAC who completed end of Key Stage 4 assessments in 2017/18. Of these, 4 achieved the Level 1 Indicator, 1 achieved the Level 2 indicator and 1 achieved the Level 2 plus indicator. Of the 2 pupils who did not achieve any of the indicators, one was identified as having SEN.

1.07	**Outcomes Summary**
	The number of children undergoing an end of key stage assessment is extremely low making year on year comparison difficult. Pupils undergoing end of key stage assessment in 2017/18 achieved a good level of individual attainment despite in excess of 60% being identified as having SEN. It is important to note that as well as having SEN, many of the pupils across the key stages have experienced significant levels of trauma in their lives. This often translates into a range of difficulties resulting in inconsistent behaviours, dysregulated relationship and trust issues, which impact ultimately on the pupil's ability to form solid foundations within school settings with staff, teachers and/or peers.
1.08	**Attendance Rates**
	The following table shows the attendance rates for LAC for the last 3 years. It can be seen that pupils in 2017/18 achieved higher levels of attendance as compared with the previous 2 years. There was a significant difference in the attendance of KS4 pupils as compared with 2016-17. The impact of this can be seen in the positive outcomes achieved by the pupils this year.

Comparison of attendance rates for LAC							
	All Learners	Foundation Phase	KS2	KS3	KS4	Number at 100%	Number less than 85%
2017-2018	94.52%	93.72%	95.17%	94.08%	95.61%	20	11
2016-2017	90.84%	88.86%	95.37%	95.95%	85.01%	6	20
2015-2016	93.80%	86.29%	96.97%	95.40%	95.49%	2	9

1.09	**Exclusion Rates**
	There were 10 LAC who were excluded from school in 2017/18 which was a reduction on the 15 who were excluded in the previous year. The number of fixed term exclusions (FTE) remained fairly static, 48 in 2016/17 and 47 in 2017/18. There was a noticeable shift in that all FTE in the last academic year were for pupils in the secondary sector, whereas there were 5 primary aged pupils in the previous year. There was 1 pupil who was permanently excluded in 2017/18, an increase from the previous year.
	The main reasons for exclusion were verbal and physical aggression/threatening behaviour and towards staff or pupils. Schools continue to engage services to support pupils in need of additional intervention to reduce the risk of exclusion and are trying to be creative in their use of the LAC Pupils Development Grant.
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.

Flintshire officers have worked collaboratively with colleagues in GwE, the regional school improvement service, which oversees the expenditure of the PDG, to ensure that schools are aware of the funding and that it is allocated appropriately to those that need it most. Schools are required to submit bids and these are scrutinised to ensure the funding is targeted at LAC to support their academic achievement.

The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) for 2017-18 was allocated to the following areas:

- After school 1:1 tuition for Key Stage 3 & 4 learners in core subjects
- Play Therapy
- Nurture group provision
- Hopes and Dreams Project
- Braveheart Training
- Lego Therapy
- Residential Trips
- Forest School
- Additional Teaching Assistant and Teacher support
- Purchase of IPads and relevant software
- Creative Arts Resources
- Hidden Sentence Training
- Literacy and phonics, language/communication aids and programmes
- Unearthing Programme
- Staff training on: leadership, water activities, bush craft
- Handwriting Support Training
- Music Lessons
- Yoga for Children
- Playful Futures Training
- Lunchtime Assistant
- Thrive Training/Resources
- Theraplay Conference

Training has also been identified as a key priority for all Flintshire staff who support LAC. Specific training has been provided to 40 delegates in the form of two days of Hidden Sentence training, provided by Barnardo's Cymru. This raises awareness of the impact on children and families of having a relative in prison.

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. To further support schools, the local authority has purchased a licence for each school to access the Boxall Profiling tool. This provides a framework for the precise assessment of children and young people's social and emotional aptitudes. It provides staff with insights, allowing teachers to think about what lies behind the pupil's behaviour, and how to plan for effective intervention.

Communication and interaction with a wider range of interventions such as curriculum enrichment opportunities and personalised support through 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.

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 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 in partnership with GwE.
4.02	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, with officers from both portfolios exploring ways to reduce the level of OOC placements.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. **Contact Officer:** Jeanette Rock, Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression **Telephone:** 01352 704017 **E-mail:** jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk

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.