ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

CUSTOMER SERVICES: EDUCATION **13 JUNE 2019**

CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The main purpose of this report is to provide members of the Community Service Committee with information in regard to steps being taken within Education Services to ensure Looked After Children get the most out of their education opportunity and further consideration on how the Council can develop best practice as a corporate parent.

1.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

a) Endorse the work undertaken by Argyll and Bute Education Services as part of the Corporate Parenting Group to improving life chances of Care Experienced Children and Young People.
b) Agree the attainment funding for Care Experienced Children and Young People will support the continued input from the Principal Teacher (PT) for Looked After Children role.
c) Requests that the Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support provides updates on the improved outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People to Corporate Parenting Board and Community Services Committee.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Corporate Parenting is the responsibility that councils have for children and young people who are Looked After under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and are known as Care Experienced Children and Young People.

2.2 The establishment of Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board was central to the Council response to improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers. It was also a key element of the Getting it Right for our Looked After Children's Improvement Plan.

2.3 As employees of the local authority, education staff are corporate parents and have a clearly defined role to play alongside the other 23 corporate parents defined in Schedule 4 of the Act. However staff working in education need to be aware of the unique role that they play in ensuring that looked after children and young people experience a positive learning environment, strong, nurturing relationships, encouragement and protection against poor outcomes in adulthood. Managers need to ensure support and ongoing professional learning opportunities for education staff to allow them to fulfil this crucial role. This is clearly stated in the Framework on Supporting Looked After Children in Education settings in Argyll and Bute that was produced during 2016, presented to the Corporate Parenting Board on 1st July 2016 and launched in schools during session 2016/17 – January 2017 (Appendix 1). The Framework was created following work by a multi-agency working group and after partnership working with CELCIS. It draws heavily on the national best practice guidance: https://www.celcis.org/files/3615/0721/5871/Looked_After_and_Learning.pdf

2.4 During session 2018/19 there have been significant developments in supporting the educational experiences and outcomes for our children and young people in Argyll and Bute.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommend that Community Services Committee:

a) Endorse the work undertaken by Argyll and Bute Education Services as part of the Corporate Parenting Group to improving life chances of Care Experienced Children and Young People.
b) Agree the attainment funding for Care Experienced Children and Young People will support the continued input from the Principal Teacher (PT) for Looked After Children role.
c) Requests that the Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support provides updates on the improved outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People to Corporate Parenting Board and Community Services Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 In 2018, as part of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and Attainment Scotland fund (a targeted initiative focused on supporting young people affected by poverty and deprivation across Scotland), specific funding was directed towards supporting Care Experienced Children and Young People.

The operational guidance on this funding can be found here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/care-experienced-children-and-young-people-fund-operational-guidance/.

4.2 As of May 2019 there are 177 Looked After Children on the rolls of Argyll and Bute schools. This number comprises 42 children who has been placed in Argyll from other authorities and 135 children who are looked after by Argyll and Bute. There are an additional 9 young people accessing Continuing Care from Argyll and Bute.

4.3 Argyll and Bute Council were awarded £88,000 for session 2018/19 to take forward improved outcomes for our care experienced children and young people. The outcomes were to be identified and agreed by the Chief Social Worker and the Chief Education Officer.

4.4 Based on the qualitative and quantitative data available, the following areas of development were identified and agreed:

Area of Development	**Amount**
Staffing	£38,199
Welfare Call	£40,000
Resources (Laptops/licences)	£6,913
Uncommitted	£2,888

4.5 A Principal Teacher for Looked After Children was appointed in January 2019 to support improved educational outcomes. It was recognised at this point that there had been an implementation dip around the authority guidance document since its launch in 2016 and that a key role of the Principal Teacher would be to ensure compliance across all education settings with the recommendations in order to ensure an equity of experience and outcomes. There was a key outcome identified relating to the need to reduce exclusions of looked after children.

4.6 The PT has facilitated the following areas to support the educational opportunities and achievements of our care experienced young people:

- Supporting establishments to improve learning for care experienced young people;
- Working with partner agencies to support the Corporate Parenting Board plan;
- Ensuring care experienced children and young people have a robust, personalised and achievable individualised learning plan;
- Supporting our care experienced children and young people to gain accredited qualifications and awards;
- Supporting the timeous implementation of appropriate interventions, where needed, to ensure the best possible attainment outcomes;
- Tracking and monitoring the attainment of looked after children and young people, including those attending specialist placements outwith Argyll and Bute;
- Providing termly updates on the progress of looked after children and young people through tracking and monitoring their progress and attendance;
- Championing the needs of care experienced children and young people across the authority;
- Liaising with educational establishments, Additional Support Needs Area Principal Teachers and pupil support teachers to ensure additional teaching input is provided when required to reduce the impact of interrupted learning;
- Liaising with establishments to collate a range of appropriate teaching resources in a central space to allow pupil access for those who may be unable to attend school for short periods of time;
- Working strategically across the authority to promote the rights of care experienced children and young people, working within the Rights Respecting Schools framework, and
- Working closely with colleagues in Children and Families Social Work to enhance effective multiagency working to improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

4.7 An important role in providing the termly updates on the progress of care experienced children and young people is achieved by tracking and monitoring progress and attendance. A significant element of the PT's role over her first months in post has been to determine the best measures of evaluation and to ensure that comparative data is measuring like against like. The Scottish Government will use a range of measures to determine improvements in educational outcomes. Nationally published data, such as the annual Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked after Children statistics will be one specific resource for considerations on measuring impact. Improved school

attendance, evidence of better engagement with education, or specific improvement in relation to a specific action in the child's plan or education support plan have also been acknowledged as also being useful measures of evaluation.

At present it is relatively easy to extract data on the attendance and exclusions of our Looked After Children from SEEMIS and this data has been presented to Education Managers and the Corporate Parenting Board on a regular basis; the March report to the CPB is attached (appendix 2) and the next report will be presented in June.

In the past, Senior SQA and Insight data has been one of the only measures that has been used to report annually on attainment (as reported to the CPB in the November 2018 meeting) but work is currently being done to identify how attainment can be tracked using a broader range of quantitative and qualitative measures and benchmarks that can track attainment from birth to 26.

4.8 In order to raise attainment and positive outcomes for our care experienced young people the PT is liaising with establishments, Area PTs (Additional Support Needs) and pupil support teachers to ensure an additional teaching input is provided when required. To date, this has involved school staff providing teaching input at home or in a Children's House, staff using Google Classroom to provide pupils with online teaching and learning activities and engagement with an E-Sgoil pilot involving real time, online teaching to pupils who are currently unable or unwilling to attend school.

Due to the strategic nature of the post, the PT has been able to identify areas of good practice in the authority and is sharing this at training events within locality areas. A presentation was also given to all Head Teachers at the Head Teacher Conference on March 28th 2019 where this good practice was shared and there was a refresher on The Framework on Supporting Looked After Children in Education settings in Argyll and Bute.

4.9 To support the tracking and monitoring of attainment, attendance, exclusions and positive destinations a support tool called Welfare Call has been accessed and provided key data to look at patterns and establish rich data which will support improvement.

The PT has worked with this information and has analysed specific areas for improvement.

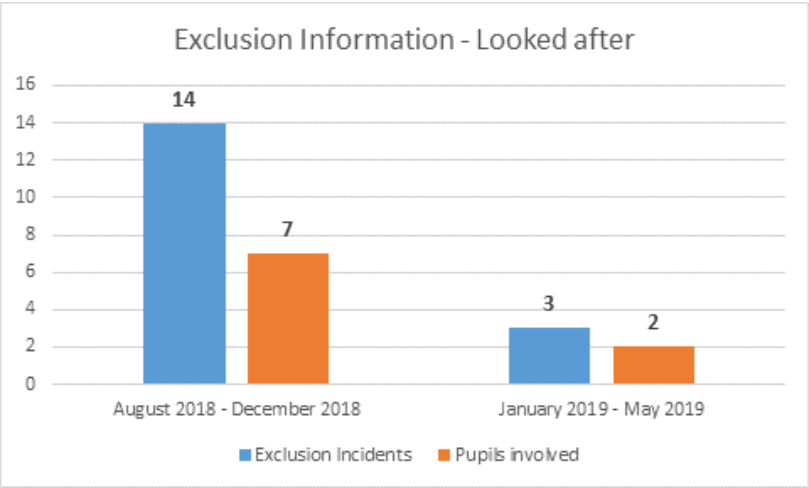
4.10 The use of Welfare Call by Education and Social Work will provide us with both real time attendance information and performance trends for our Looked After pupils. This will enable us to share information timeously between both services to enable early interventions where poor attendance could previously have become an issue.

4.11 Access to online provision to support learning was also identified for some specific care experienced young people and an allocation of £6,913 was made to purchase laptops.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 There is significant data to evidence the impact of the Principal Teacher in the short time that the post has existed:

- Positive relationships established (or in some cases re-established) with a number of colleagues in education settings and other agencies. Many have said that they really value the PT being involved in authority level work with Looked After Children.
- Schools have reported feeling supported through her actions and interventions of the PT.
- The Authority Framework on Supporting Looked After Children and CELCIS document Looked After and Learning were very well received by schools when re-issued. Many Head Teachers and Designated Managers are more confident in their understanding of statutory issues.
- A new needs analysis tool has been developed for when pupils move school and has been used very successfully to ensure smooth transitions for a number of pupils.
- A new timeous contact protocol has been introduced to support schools where a child has become looked after, stopped being looked after or moved.
- The support and challenge offered to schools around the formal and informal exclusion of looked after children has been very successful. The impact can be measured by the fact that there has been a huge reduction in the exclusion of looked after children since January (see table below) and in the increased use of flexible learning plans by schools to address the need for alternative curriculum approaches for some of our reluctant and most vulnerable learners;



- The tracking and monitoring system that introduced using the baseline, most recent and current attainment data of our Senior Phase pupils to ensure that

they are supported and challenged to achieve the best possible results in the summer.

- There is significant progress being made in supporting Looked After Children in providing better educational outcomes. This will be a key area of service delivery for session 2019/20 and beyond.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – None

6.2 Financial – Appropriate allocation of the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund Grant

6.3 Legal – The statutory duties of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and all previous relevant acts will be met.

6.4 HR – None

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: Providing equity and inclusion to meet the needs of all young people.

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – All legislative requirements will be met

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – N/A

6.5.3 Islands – No differentiated impact.

6.6. Risk – Improved scrutiny and audit will provide better outcomes for Care Experience Children and Young People.

6.7 Customer Service – Improvements in service to meet individual needs are being sought

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework on Looked After Children in Education settings in Argyll and Bute.

Appendix 2 – Education Report for Corporate Parent Board – February 2019