

CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The main purpose of this report is to update members of the Business Continuity Committee with information about interventions being taken within Education Services to ensure that Care Experienced Children and Young People achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

1.2 The report also details the expenditure against the grant allocated by Scottish Government to Argyll and Bute for session 2019/20 from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund.

1.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Business Continuity Committee:

- a) Continues to endorse the work undertaken by Argyll and Bute Education Services as part of the Corporate Parenting Board to improve the educational attainment and life chances of Care Experienced Children and Young People.
- b) Notes that the spending plan for the grant allocated by Scottish Government to Argyll and Bute for session 2019/20 from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund has been produced and monitored by the Education Lead (Principal Teacher) for Looked After Children, in consultation with key partners and specifically the Social Work Lead for Looked After Children, the Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Worker.
- c) Agrees that the Chief Education Officer, Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support continues to provide updates on the improved outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People to Corporate Parenting Board and Business Continuity Committee/Community Services Committee.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 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 term 'care experience' is now a widely used term within the sector to describe any person who has experience of being in care, regardless of their placement length, type or age; this term is used (as opposed to the statutory term 'Looked After Children') to ensure that our practice is inclusive and provides for all groups of young people who experience care.

Argyll and Bute Council was awarded a grant of up to £118,800.00, payable over the current academic year 2019/20 (up to £79,200.00 payable by 14 February 2020 and the remaining amount of up to £39,600.00 by 29 May 2020). An evaluation of spend for financial year 19/20 was submitted and approved by Scottish Government in February. The spend plan for the remainder of the grant had also been approved but due to COVID 19, an update was issued from Government at the end of March, stating that flexibility will be offered in the use of this funding to address changing needs.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Business Continuity Committee:

- a) Continues to endorse the work undertaken by Argyll and Bute Education Services as part of the Corporate Parenting Board to improve the educational attainment and life chances of Care Experienced Children and Young People.
- b) Notes that the spending plan for the grant allocated by Scottish Government to Argyll and Bute for session 2019/20 from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund has been produced and monitored by the Education Lead (Principal Teacher) for Looked After Children, in consultation with key partners and specifically the Social Work

Lead for Looked After Children, the Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Worker.

- c) Agrees that the Chief Education Officer, Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support continues to provide updates on the improved outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People to Corporate Parenting Board and Business Continuity Committee/Community Services Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Argyll and Bute Council was awarded a grant of up to £118,800.00, payable over the current academic year 2019/20 (up to £79,200.00 payable by 14 February 2020 and the remaining amount of up to £39,600.00 by 29 May 2020). The spend evaluation submitted to Scottish Government was as follows:

Item (e.g. staffing, resources, training, intervention etc)	Amount (£)	Additional detail
Staffing	66,941.21	Education Lead post Looked After Health and Wellbeing Liaison Officers
Activities	5,000.00	Enhanced Curriculum activities for our Children's Houses
Transport	4,258.79	Transport to allow extended curriculum provision for pupils on flexible learning plans.
Emotional/Wellbeing Support	2,000.00	Cool2Talk contribution.
Training	1,000.00	Staff training in nurturing and trauma-responsive family support.
TOTAL	79,200.00	

- 4.2 The spend plan for the uncommitted remainder of the fund, to cover the period until June 2020, was as follows:

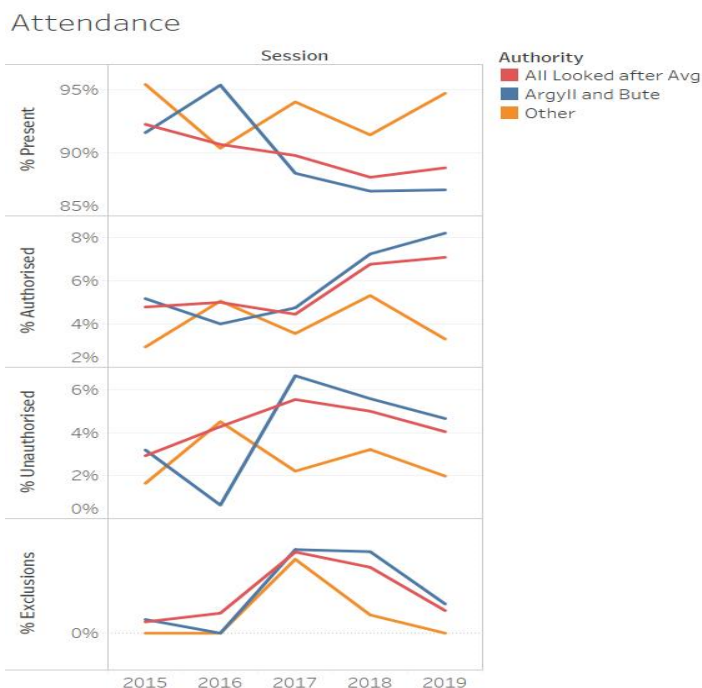
Item (e.g. staffing, resources, training, intervention etc)	Additional detail
Staffing	Education Lead post Looked After Health and Wellbeing Liaison Officers
Activities	Small test of change trial for development of

	Inspiring Internships Programme to allow pupils under 16 to access nurturing work experience placements.
Transport	Transport to allow extended curriculum provision for pupils on flexible learning plans.

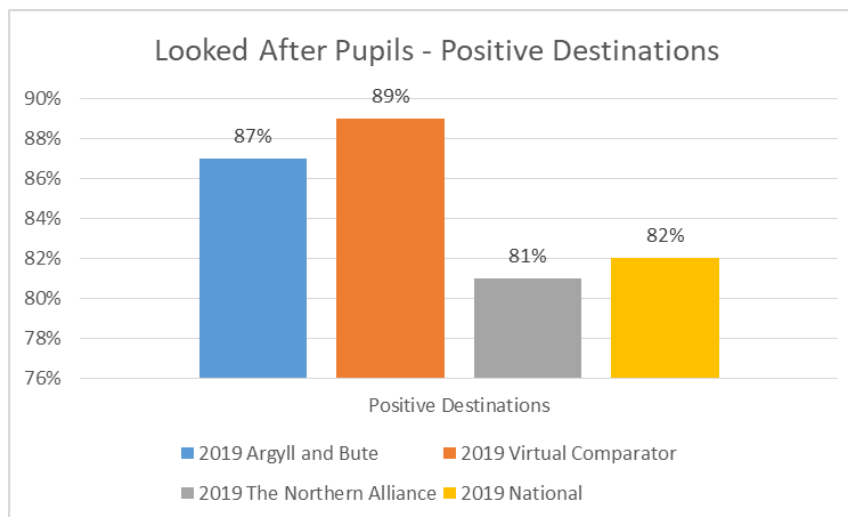
The spend plan for the remainder of the grant had also been approved but due to COVID 19, an update was issued from Government at the end of March, stating that flexibility will be offered in the use of this funding to address changing needs. A further update on this was due from Scottish Government in the week beginning 8.5.20.

4.3 Data on attendance, exclusions and attainment has been provided throughout the last session to the Corporate Parenting Board and to the Community Services Committee. Both qualitative and quantitative data has shown significant improvements in relation to education provision for our Care Experienced Children and Young People, increased scrutiny and tracking of progress, reduced exclusions, increased use of flexible approaches to learning and increased understanding of the impact of trauma amongst staff. Capacity has also been increased to support this cohort through the creation of a new casual Looked After Health and Wellbeing Liaison Officer Post. Recruitment is currently underway to ensure that there is a bank of officers across the authority who can provide trauma-informed mentoring and support for pupils who might struggle to engage with a more conventional curriculum offer. Applications to the post have been of a very high quality.

The following tables (produced in January 2020) show improvements in attendance and exclusions data:



A detailed analysis of SQA and Insight data relating to Care Experienced Young People was included in the Education Performance Data Analysis Report, presented to Community Services Committee on 10.12.19. Additional data from the February 2020 Insight update showed that positive destinations for Looked After Children who left education in 2019 were as follows (figures rounded up or down):



Although below the virtual comparator, we are in line with our service plan success measure and above the Northern Alliance and National figures. This is a greatly improved position. The impact of the dedicated lead for Care Experienced Young People has enhanced greater scrutiny and monitoring procedures.

- 4.4 As of 8th May 2020 there are 128 Looked After Children on the rolls of Argyll and Bute education settings (of whom 86 are looked after away from home and 42 at home). This number comprises 31 children who have been placed in Argyll and Bute from other authorities and 97 children who are looked after by Argyll and Bute. An additional 109 children have a status of Previously Looked After. 25 pupils who are Looked After by Argyll and Bute are in education settings outside of Argyll and Bute (in residential, foster or kinship placements). These figures refer to pupils in Early Years, Primary and Secondary settings.
- 4.5 During the lockdown resulting from Covid-19, the remit of the Education Lead (Principal Teacher) for Looked After Children has been extended to include additional duties pertaining to supporting children and families. This has involved adapting the GIRFEC Practice model to ensure a continued focus on wellbeing and the mitigation of shifting risk factors at this challenging time. Duties undertaken include:
- Working with The Education Psychology Team to develop the Argyll and Bute Vulnerability Assessment and Support Framework, to identify and provide support for vulnerable children and young people across agencies including Social Work, Health and Education. This is supported children and young people and their families to access provision in Hubs and with relevant specialists.

- Working with The Principal Educational Psychologist and Lead Officer for Child Protection to ensure that robust child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place so that no child is invisible to education. Offering support for school staff on understanding the ways in which they can continue to carry out statutory duties in relation to child protection: <https://youtu.be/3oSEDRe-HVM>.
- Working with the Lead Officer for Child Protection to communicate key child protection messages directly to all children, young people and families.
- Auditing support for individual children who are currently on the child protection register.
- Working with our IT department and raising awareness around digital poverty and alternatives to online connection.
- Creating a support website and weekly video updates for parents and carers: <https://sites.google.com/ab.glow.scot/carexperiencedlearners/home>

4.6 The impact and benefit of having a dedicated post-holder who has a close focus on the educational attainment and experience of Care Experienced Children and Young People is evidenced in all of the reporting and evaluation provided to the Corporate Parenting Board and Community Services Committee since the current post-holder commenced in January 2019. There is an early indication from national evaluation work around the use of the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund that this impact is replicated across Scotland where such a post has been created. There is funding within the allocated grant to continue current position of PT Care Experienced Children and Young People.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Significant improvements were made in relation to scrutiny, audit and outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People during Session 2018/19 and have been sustained into Session 2019/20. This work will continue to address raising attainment and closing the gap for Care Experienced Children and Young People in session 20/21 and support additional challenges related to the impact of Covid 19.

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 – Ongoing scrutiny and audit will provide better outcomes for Care Experience Children and Young People. Sustainability- and future-planning will mitigate future risk.
- 6.7 Customer Service – Improvements in service to meet individual needs are being sought

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