

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

9th July 2014

REPORT OF:

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
LIFELONG LEARNING**

Agenda Item No. 3

**EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN (LAC)**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update on the educational outcomes of Looked After Children (LAC) in Rhondda Cynon Taf during the academic year 2012/ 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

2.1 Note the information contained within this report.

2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

2.3 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Ymbarel Service works in collaboration with schools, foster carers, Children's Services and with external agencies to promote the educational outcomes, life chances and social inclusion of those children who are in the looked after system.

3.2 Looked After Children are some of the least powerful and most vulnerable members of our society. Many of those who are considered to be looked after have experienced neglect, abuse and multiple breakdowns within their families, foster care or education. Children whose early lives have been damaged in this way may experience low self esteem and have poor prospects.

- 3.3 Children who are looked after by a local authority are at a higher risk of poorer educational outcomes in comparison to their peers outside of the looked after system. Looked after children are at a higher risk due to the following factors:
- LAC pupils are at a greater risk of multiple placement breakdowns
 - LAC pupils experience multiple school moves
 - LAC pupils experience anxiety during periods of contact with their family members
 - LAC pupils are at greater risk if attachment disorder/ difficulties and trauma which hugely impact as behaviour
 - LAC pupils may have gaps to their learning as a result of long periods of non- attendance prior to becoming LAC
 - A lack of information sharing amongst professionals at crucial periods
 - LAC pupils are at a greater risk of experiencing bullying behaviour from their peers, subsequently affecting their behaviour
 - Changes to household composition with children moving placements/coming into placements
 - Difficulties in coping with changes to teaching staff when supply cover is used to cover training and illness
 - Support issues for those LAC placed out of county.
- 3.4 All of the factors listed above have a significant impact of the behaviour of LAC in school. These factors can also contribute to the increase in the level of exclusions.
- 3.5 The Ymbarel LAC education team endeavour to reduce the risk of poorer educational outcomes for all LAC and to enhance the capacity of RCT schools to meet the needs of children who are looked after effectively. This is achieved through the following means:
- Early intervention and support where children are at risk of exclusion
 - Assessment, consultation and advice from the Education Coordinator for LAC and/ or the Educational Psychologist for LAC (Senior Practitioner) in collaboration with schools, foster carers and external agencies
 - Planning of suitable interventions in order to support LAC
 - The involvement of Ymbarel Behaviour Support Assistants and/ or Learning Support Assistant to assist with the promotion of positive outcomes for LAC
 - Additional support or specialist placements through the Local Authority Access and Inclusion panels
 - Training provided to foster carers, social workers and schools to ensure the needs and difficulties of looked after children are met within an educational context
 - Effective communication and partnership working with school staff, foster carers and external agencies
 - Effective liaison with external agencies and individual schools outside of RCT.
- 3.6 There are now five full time Behaviour Support Assistants working as part of the Ymbarel LAC education team. The support received from these Behaviour

Support Assistants will enable LAC pupils to improve their educational outcomes. The Behaviour Support Assistants work collaboratively with school staff to promote inclusion in mainstream settings and to assist in the development of social, emotional and behavioural skills through structured interventions.

- 3.7 There is now only one Learning Support Assistant in the Ymbarel LAC education team who is funded through the School Effectiveness Grant. This member of staff is promoting and raising the literacy and numeracy outcomes for year 10 and 11 LAC pupils. This role also involves minimising academic underachievement for that same age group.
- 3.8 A new Assistant Educational Psychologist was appointed for LAC. This individual was in post for 14 months before obtaining the role as the Education Coordinator for LAC within RCT. This post has now been modified to include a part time (0.6) fully qualified Educational Psychologist. This will ensure the provision for an ongoing intensive support for LAC pupils with more complex needs.
- 3.9 In addition to the support provided by the Ymbarel LAC education team, schools are also able to access support from various Access and Inclusion Services. These services include; Learning Support Service, Behaviour Support Service and the Educational Psychology Service. Additional support and funding can also be sought through the Local Authority SEN panels and Local Cluster Group Panels to support the inclusion of LAC pupils within our schools.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 In the LAC End of Year Report, data is gathered to report on the outcomes for Looked After Children who have been in receipt of support from our services within the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning during the last academic year 2012/2013.
- 4.2 There are a number of performance indicators on which the service report to the Welsh Government. The performance of the service throughout most recent academic years can be seen as follows:

LEDU 406 - % LAC who achieved CSI at KS2:

Reporting Year	Target	Actual
2010/11*	32.00	37.5
2011/12*	39.10	44.44
2012/13*	46.4	40.74
2013/14*	50.00	55.56

* Please note data relates to previous academic year.

LEDU 407 - % LAC achieving CSI at KS3:

Reporting Year	Target	Actual
2010/11*	20.00	30.00
2011/12*	33.00	27.27
2012/13*	33.3	20.0
2013/14*	34.5	27.78

* Please note data relates to previous academic year.

LEDU 408 - % LAC achieving 2 or more GCSE's or equivalent points:

Reporting Year	Target	Actual
2010/11*	60	61.11
2011/12*	64.90	66.7
2012/13*	72.7	85.71
2013/14*	74.5	93.55

* Please note data relates to previous academic year.

- 4.3 Improvements are evident in the percentage of LAC achieving 2 or more GCSE's (or equivalent points) with 93.55% achieving against a target of 74.5%. Improvements are also noted in the percentage of LAC achieving CSI at KS2 and despite set targets not being achieved for LEDU 407. When considering the data for previous years, it can be noted that improvements are being made.
- 4.4 The percentage of pupils in LAC care and in any LA maintained learning setting, who attain at the age of 16 during the school year and leave full time education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification (NEDU 002ii) was as follows:

Reporting Year	Target	Actual
2009/10*	20	20.83
2010/11*	17.5	5.56
2011/12*	5.88	3.03
2012/13*	4.3	3.23

* Please note data relates to previous academic year.

Improvements are evident and a significant reduction in the number of LAC not in education, employment and training is noted.

- 4.5 The compilation and distribution of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are also subject to a performance indicator which is monitored and reported by Children's Services. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an important educational document as it helps professionals to gain a clear understanding of the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the educational needs of a child who is in care. The PEP is a statutory requirement for all LAC aged 5-16 years. It is intended to be the overarching education plan, which is in turn an integral part of a child's Care Plan. The PEP should make reference to all other existing education plans (e.g. Individual Education Plan, Individual Behaviour Plan, Careers Action Plan etc). The table below details progress over recent years:

The percentage of LAC with an up to date PEP within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school in the year (SCC: 024) was as follows:

Financial Year	Actual	Target
2009/10	77.77	70
2010/11	86.13	70
2011/12	70.89	70
2012/13	72.08	86
2013/14	63.3	80

- 4.6 Data suggests that some progress is now needed in the percentage of PEP completed within 20 days. RCT have developed existing PEPs making this document far more accessible along with the production of prescriptive guidance on the completion of the PEP. Training has also been delivered to Designated LAC Teachers within RCT on the purpose and completion of the PEP. A review is currently underway with colleagues at Children's Services in order to strengthen the completion of the PEPs within the agreed statutory timescales.

The following chart shows the number of Personal Education Plans completed per month as at 24/07/2013:

Month Due	Become Looked After	Change Of School	Annual Review	Total
Jul – 2013	3	1	12	16
Jun - 2013	3	2	11	16
May -2013	11	2	34	47
Apr - 2013	12	5	7	24
Mar - 2013	3	7	24	34
Feb - 2013	6	15	20	41
Jan - 2013	10	4	42	56
Dec - 2012	2	1	43	46
Nov - 2012	13	7	13	33
Oct - 2012	6	3	13	22
Sep - 2012	13	53	17	83
Aug - 2012	5	0	0	5
Total	87	100	236	423

4.7 Links have been established with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service to provide the results for the secondary school attendance and with Children's Services for the primary attendance for all RCT LAC pupils. Please see the table below detailing these figures.

LAC School Attendance	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
PRIMARY - % Attendance ALL children Looked After during the school year	92.9%	93.8%	94.1%	93.7%
Total number of sessions Missed - ALL LAC - PRIMARY	3056	2664	3018	3947
SCC/022 a)				
Total number of sessions available	43014	42994	50760	62405
Percentage missed	7.1%	6.2%	5.9%	6.3%
SECONDARY - % Attendance ALL children Looked After during the school year	91.9%	91.8%	91.6%	91.3%
Total number of sessions Missed - ALL LAC - SECONDARY	2929	2992	3268	3517
SCC/022 b)				
Total number of sessions available	36368	36672	39084	40632
Percentage missed	8.1%	8.2%	8.4%	8.7%

Attendance for LAC children 2013

School name	% Attendance LAC	% Unauthorised LAC	% Authorised LAC	% Attendance Not LAC	% Unauthorised Not LAC	% Authorised Not LAC
Aberdare Girls Comprehensive	95.66%	0.53%	3.81%	92.23%	1.98%	5.79%
Aberdare High School	94.41%	0.22%	5.37%	91.95%	2.27%	5.79%
Blaengwawr Comprehensive	87.12%	7.10%	5.79%	89.02%	3.47%	7.51%
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	93.19%	3.16%	3.65%	92.34%	2.35%	5.31%
Cardinal Newman Comprehensive	98.27%	0.17%	1.57%	94.19%	1.86%	3.94%
Ferndale Community School	95.57%	1.97%	2.46%	89.84%	3.12%	7.04%
Hawthorn High	92.44%	3.74%	3.82%	91.78%	2.75%	5.47%
Mountain Ash Comprehensive	95.63%	0.77%	3.60%	89.63%	3.67%	6.70%
Pontypridd High	95.63%	0.98%	3.39%	91.05%	2.39%	6.56%
Porth County Community School	94.49%	0.56%	4.94%	90.78%	2.60%	6.62%
St John Baptist C in W High	95.32%	0.20%	4.48%	93.10%	1.18%	5.72%
Tonypany Community College	93.03%	3.31%	3.66%	90.52%	2.44%	7.04%
Tonyrefail School	94.72%	2.22%	3.06%	91.03%	1.86%	7.11%
Treorchy Comprehensive	95.86%	0.10%	4.04%	93.61%	0.93%	5.46%
Y Pant Comprehensive	95.22%	0.64%	4.14%	93.31%	1.29%	5.40%
Ysgol Gyfun Cymer				92.69%	0.84%	6.48%
Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg				93.96%	0.63%	5.41%
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	85.10%	1.60%	13.30%	92.66%	0.64%	6.70%
Ysgol Llanhari	87.09%	2.65%	10.26%	93.37%	1.45%	5.18%
RCT	94.02%	1.78%	4.21%	92.03%	1.91%	6.06%

It is evident from the data analysis that LAC pupils consistently have achieved higher attendance rates than those non LAC pupils.

- 4.8 The percentage of LAC pupils being excluded per 1000 pupils has decreased from 80.54 in 2010/11 to 70.40 in 2011/12. There has been a slight increase to 78.72 per 1000 pupils in 2012/13. The Looked After exclusion data can be seen in the table below.

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total	Excluded cohort	per 1000 pupils
2010/11	54	23	77	956	80.54
2011/12	59	19	78	1021	76.40
2012/13	61	13	74	940	78.72

- 4.9 Within this academic year, there have been a number of staffing developments within the Looked After Children Team following the review of the Ymbarel Service. The team works across the Behaviour Support and Educational Psychology Services and within the Access and Inclusion Service.

- 4.10 The team now consists of:

- Educational Psychologist (Senior Practitioner)
- Assistant Educational Psychologist (changed during February 2014 to a part time (0.6) qualified Educational Psychologist)
- Learning Support Assistant for LAC pupils years 10 and 11
- Education Coordinator for Looked After Children
- 5 x Behaviour Support Assistants for Looked After Children
- Data and Administrative Officer/ PEP co-ordinator

- 4.11 The Ymbarel LAC education team provide a range of support as listed below:

- Targeted groups to improve and monitor attainment levels
- Individual targeted support to improve identified areas of work
- Monitoring the provision of private tuition
- Screening all in county LAC attainment and progress
- Respond to referrals for support where appropriate
- Liaising with foster carers, social workers and educational settings
- Implementing a reward scheme for Looked After Children that have achieved their potential
- Distribution and coordination of the Letterbox Club
- Preparation, monitoring and recording the Personal Education Plans
- Recording, monitoring and evaluating the data for Looked After Children
- Maintaining databases

4.12 Following a referral for Behaviour Support involvement, the LAC will be supported by a Behaviour Support Assistant and will be set 3 targets in conjunction with the class teacher. During 2012/13, 61 individual pupils received input and targets were set of which 53 (87%) were reviewed compared to the 2011/12 figure of 53 pupils receiving targets. Of the reviewed pupils:

- 19% achieved their 3 targets compared to 2011/12 figure of 57%
- 65% targets set were on-going compared to 2011/12 figure of 41%
- 4% were not achieved

Of the 103 targets which remain ongoing, improvements were still evident in 96% of cases. Of those 29 were reassessed:

- 19 or 66% of pupils overall behaviour had improved
- 10 or 3% of pupils behaviour score had deteriorated

4.13 Referrals to the service are recorded on the Tribal system, which is an electronic system used by the Access and Inclusion Services. This allows for an analysis to be completed regarding the number of referrals received, the main referrers and the outcome of each referral.

A total of 122 referrals were received in 2012/ 2013 compared to 2011/ 2012 figure of 92 referrals:

- Referrals were received from:
 - 77 from Children's Services (63.11%)
 - 31 from Schools (25.41%)
 - 6 from Health (4.92%)
 - 6 from other (4.92%)
 - 1 from SEN Administration (0.82%)
 - 1 from Educational Psychology Service (0.82%)
- Services received as a result of these referrals:
 - 92 LAC referrals (to the Educational Psychologist and Education Coordinator for LAC)
 - 30 SEG LAC referrals (Educational Psychology involvement)
- Outcome of these referrals included:
 - 46 assessments
 - 20 consultations
 - 18 on-going intervention
 - 14 awaiting outcomes
 - 4 Multi agency meeting
 - 4 no further action
 - 4 Referrals refused
 - 4 Observations
 - 3 Advice Given
 - 3 Programme Resources Provided
 - 1 Therapeutic Work
 - 1 Written report

4.14 The Letterbox Club is a programme managed by the Book Trust in partnership with the University of Leicester. The aim of the Letterbox Club is to improve the educational outcomes for LAC aged 7-13 by providing them with a parcel of books, maths activities and educational materials once every month for a period of six months. Each child participating in the programme will receive the parcels directly addressed to them at home. The Letterbox Club is also suitable for other vulnerable children who would benefit from receiving the resources. This year RCT have added additional books, colouring pages, puzzles and a quick read book for the carers/parents.

Samples of children are tested to establish if they meet the criteria for receiving the Letterbox pack. They are then tested following distribution of the packs to establish if any improvements are found in their maths and reading skills. On an annual basis, evaluation sheets are sent out to the children to gain their feedback on the parcels received. This feedback is used by both the Book Trust Letterbox Club and Ymbarel LAC education team in attempt to monitor the effectiveness and impact of the resources provided. The feedback received from completed evaluations is extremely positive.

4.15 Additional external funding allows individual targeted support for LAC pupils in years 5 and 6 to provide extra literacy intervention. This cohort of pupils was identified using local authority reading results and any LAC pupil highlighted to be 24 months or below their chronological age by their schools. These pupils were prioritised for intervention funded through the SEG LAC budget to implement literacy intervention within the school identified for each LAC pupil.

School staff were asked to evaluate this intervention provided to LAC pupils during the academic year. Evaluation and feedback from school staff was extremely positive.

Reported benefits identified included:

- 'Giving any child additional support is always very positive'
- 'Responded very positively by having her own 1:1'
- 'Continuity and individual support'
- 'Ensured confidence grew'
- 'Had a positive effect'
- 'Helped transition to my class'
- 'The topping up of support was a huge bonus to the young person'

School staff were requested to evaluate the service and support provide to LAC pupils during the academic year.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1. Over the last year has the looked after children's educational support provision been as expected?					1	3	19/20

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2. How would you rate the support provided?						4	20/20

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
3. Did the support achieve the targets set?					1	3	19/20

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
4. Do you feel the support provided was effective?						4	20/20

- 4.16 External funding provided additional educational support for KS4 LAC pupils identified by schools as underachieving or causing concern. Individual support has been provided in addition to resources where appropriate (e.g. laptops, revision books, tuition, equipment etc). Pupils were requested to evaluate the service and support they received during the academic year.

The benefits reported by LAC on this educational support included:

- 'Support has made a big difference'
- 'Confidence has improved'
- 'Hope that support can continue'
- 'Clearer understanding of school work'
- 'Expectations are realistic'
- 'Wouldn't have gained a C in GCSE without this support'
- 'Books handy for revising'

Improved KS4 outcomes for LAC suggests that this input has been positive.

Key Stage 4 Evaluation of Educational Support Key: 0 to 5 with 5 being the highest

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1. Over the last year has the looked after children's educational support provision been as expected?				1	1	3	22/25
	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2. How would you rate the support provided?			1	1		3	20/25

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
3. Did the support achieve the targets set?						5	25/25
	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
4. Do you feel the support provided was effective?			1	1		3	20/25

- 4.17 Links have been developed with Services for Young People to ensure data is shared regarding the numbers of LAC pupils engaging in the activities provided by this service and the outcomes achieved. The raw data has been provided by the Service and analysed as follows. 347 pupils were supported by Services for Young People compared to 569 in 2011/12.

Section	Individuals	Contacts	Sessions	Accredited Outcomes
5X60	51	746	464	0
Blue Light Disco	7	17	17	0
Detached	70	647	230	15
Duke of Edinburgh Award	10	23	7	7
E3+	91	1459	1114	3
Environmental Education	2	77	36	5
Key Worker	10	129	73	11
Outdoor Education	13	23	19	1
Participation/Youth Forum	8	19	16	1
Special Projects Team	12	35	19	12
Voluntary Organisations	20	143	98	0
YAT	9	24	11	34
Youth Club	44	374	303	0
Total	347	3716	2407	89

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 It is apparent from the information provided in this report that the risk factors affecting the educational outcomes for looked after children are significant. However, it is also evident that additional support and intervention can help to reduce the risks but are unable eradicate them altogether. The Local Authority continues to address the many challenges faced by the LAC population and the Ymbarel service continues to assist in supporting LAC pupils.

5.2 The data included in this report highlights the breadth of support provided to LAC through the Ymbarel LAC education team. Particular areas of strength in relation to promoting the educational outcomes for LAC through involvement with the Ymbarel LAC education team are as follows:

- The Performance Indicator for LAC who have achieved CSI at KS2 was exceeded
- The Performance Indicator for LAC who have achieved CSI at KS3 was not achieved however, improvements were noted
- The Performance Indicator for LAC with two GCSEs or more has increased significantly
- An improvement of 66% was recorded for the baseline assessments, targets and progress of pupils receiving Behaviour Support Assistant involvement
- 57% of LAC supported by Behaviour Support Assistants achieved their three targets that were set for them
- There are 103 targets ongoing but of those 103, 96% had an increase rating or showed improvement
- Data suggests that there is an increasing demand placed on the intervention provided by the Ymbarel LAC education team. This is reflected through the increase in the number of referrals made to the service in 2012/2013 (122) compared to 2011/2012 (92)

5.3 However, a number of areas for development have been identified. These include:

- Encourage schools to access LAC training provided
- Pupil data, collated by the Behaviour Support Assistants is to be updated regularly i.e. checklists and target sheets
- Review the collation and analysis of Out of County data
- Attendance and attainment data needs to be fully utilised to ensure targeted support is appropriately provided.
- Continue with the improvements in the performance indicators.

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