

# Education Children and Families Committee

**10am, Tuesday, 21 May 2019**

## **Improving attainment - Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund**

**Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments**

### **1. Recommendations**

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- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
- 1.1.1 note the work being taken forward to improve learning outcomes for Care Experienced Young People supported by the Fund.
  - 1.1.2 ask for a follow-up report to this Committee in early 2020 setting out progress on the implementation of current proposals and the outcomes of participation work with Care Experienced Young People and how that work will impact on Fund spend next year and beyond.
  - 1.1.3 agree that the Corporate Parenting Member Office Group will continue to oversee attainment and other learning outcomes of Care Experience Young People and report to this committee as necessary.

**Alistair Gaw**

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# Report

## Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 Educational outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People are generally poorer than the outcomes for non-Care Experienced Children. This is the case in Edinburgh, Scotland and the UK. The Scottish Government released additional Scottish Attainment Challenge funds in the 2018-19 session to help all local authorities achieve improvements and this report details the work that has been identified in Edinburgh to address the gap in educational attendance and, in particular, attainment.
- 2.2 The work programme has identified a Lead for each themed workstream who will track measures using qualitative and quantitative data. City of Edinburgh Council Participation Officers and other Care experienced young people will be key contributors to the oversight of the work as it progresses.
- 2.3 Evaluation of the outcomes of current activity and ongoing participation work with Care Experienced Young People will shape how the fund and other resources will be invested in future sessions.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Attendance at school is a fundamental pre-requisite for academic attainment. In December 2018, at a meeting of the Member Officer Group, discussion focused on the attendance of Looked After Children where attendance was poor. This comprised 95 pupils across all our secondary schools and 47 pupils across all our primary schools, and it was recognised across partners, officers and members that this required attention.
- 3.2 We are also aware that fewer care experienced young people stay on at secondary school beyond 4<sup>th</sup> year, that educational attainment is poorer for this group compared to children who are not care

experienced, and they are also more likely to be excluded from school. Data shows that this is particularly significant for care experienced young people under the legal status of Looked After at Home, and again this matches the UK picture.

- 3.3 It is recognised, therefore that despite considerable effort across agencies to improve this picture, different approaches are required to address the attainment gap for care experienced young people. Our focus going forward will be targeted primarily on improving the attendance and attainment of this most disadvantaged group – young people Looked After at Home, and this report outlines seven new initiatives that will be implemented using the Care Experienced Fund.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 The Care Experienced Fund (CEF) proposals were drafted following research into 'what works' (see Appendix 1) and following consultation with key partners, including our care experienced Participation Officers and members of HUB for Success, a partnership between CEC, higher and further education providers committed to improving the access and educational success of care experienced young people.
- 4.2 An Operational Group comprising the Leads for each workstream theme meets monthly with other relevant partners to review progress across each themed intervention. In addition, to ensure the full participation of care experienced young people in the work, Educational psychologists will collect individual feedback from Care Experienced Young People on their individual plans and, crucially, how their needs are being met.
- 4.3 The Edinburgh Learns Framework for Inclusion has the following vision for all learners: I belong, I learn, I am supported and I help others, I contribute and I am successful. This vision has been used as the basis for drafting the proposals to improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people. Specifically, this relates to improving attendance, improving the support in schools and empowering families (see below and Appendix 1)

### **4.4 Improving Attendance**

Maximise! Attendance: This project targets specific families where there is a history of non-attendance – including young people Looked After at Home:

- 4.4.1. Identification of all children and young people with poor attendance with Educational Psychologists and Social Work Practice Teams informed to target support to these families.

- 4.4.2 Identification of schools with good practice in maximising attendance and case studies shared on the Edinburgh Learns 365 (digital platform) to promote good practice across the City.
- 4.4.3 Parent Call, a system that alerts professionals when young people do not register at the start of the school day, will be linked to keyworkers to ensure actions are taken immediately to address attendance. Other digital platforms such as Mind of My Own are also being considered
- 4.4.4 Review of curriculum pathways and links with Edinburgh Learns Pathways and Inclusion Strategic Groups to ensure young people have tailored support.

#### **4.5 Improved Support in School**

- 4.5.1 Forest schools: Each locality will offer a forest school based on outdoor learning that targets young people who have experienced trauma. If after a multi-agency assessment access to a forest school is regarded as the best resource a place will be guaranteed for Care Experienced Children. Our Forest Kindergarten initiative and our two pre-existing Forest Schools have had positive evaluations and this project is viewed as a targeted extension of this work for older primary age pupils. Disrupted attendance at mainstream school is a factor in selecting those children who will benefit from this work.
- 4.5.2 Secondary Wellbeing Bases: All secondary schools will offer an inclusive resource base which will cater for young people affected by trauma. Several bases already exist in Edinburgh and pupils who are Looked After at Home are often included in nurture classes. The roll out of this approach is combined with the existing Wellbeing Academies, which address lower level mental health issues in young people, and in our wider work on resilience. As part of this combined work, schools will be able to appoint well trained Pupil Support Officers to support the inclusion in school of pupils who are Looked After at Home.
- 4.5.3 MCR Pathways: This project exists to mentor secondary pupils to improve attendance and attainment. The project has started at Craigroyston High School and will be extended in the first instance to five other secondary schools in Edinburgh. Positive evaluations of this work can be found on Scottish Government and MCR Pathways websites. Mentors have been recruited and are ready to meet with individual young people.

4.5.4 The quality of teaching and learning is one of the highest factors in raising attainment for disadvantaged groups:

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“What happens in the classroom makes the biggest difference: improving teaching quality generally leads to greater improvements at lower cost than structural changes. There is particularly good evidence around the potential impact of teacher professional development”

(Education Endowment Foundation The Attainment Gap Report 2017)

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The Edinburgh Learns Teaching and Learning Team offers a range of core and intensive professional learning for teachers and managers. These universal offers are designed to ensure there is no gap in the quality of teaching received by pupils who are Looked After at Home compared with other children. Lesson Study is the methodology, which is based on proven techniques used to improve teaching and learning. It features in International research and is endorsed by Education Scotland and the Education Endowment Foundation.

## 4.6 Empowering Families

- 4.6.1 Maximise! Income: Benefits advisors and employability workers will combine their input at four different clusters in the four localities. This work is an extension of the positively evaluated project covering Tynecastle, Liberton and Gracemount High Schools. Lack of income is a large factor in disrupted school attendance and a factor in the inequalities of childhood as set out in the literature around Entitlements (e.g. Edinburgh’s 1in 5 project). Supporting families to increase their household income is an important way of improving outcomes and experiences for Care Experienced children and young people. It also gives direct autonomy to the families and allows them to determine their own outcomes.
- 4.6.2 School Matters (Family Group Decision Making and Multi-Systemic Team): Specific families where children are Looked After at Home will be targeted for input from Family Group Decision Making (FGDM). The aim is to maximise the capacity of the wider family in helping children attend school and achieve their academic potential. Within this group of families, a smaller set of parents and young people will be identified to receive input from the Multi-systemic team (MST) in combination with

FGDM. The MST approach (a well regarded evidence based and licensed model) involves the families in fine tuning plans that have been created to make them more effective in delivering outcomes. Evaluation of this combined approach has been positive. Evaluations of each of the approaches (FGDM and MST) are also positive.

#### **4.7 Communication and Promotion**

- 4.7.1 To promote the role of the Corporate Parent amongst teaching staff a short film by care experienced young people and adults is being prepared. The film will form part of a training offer for all schools. This film is designed to motivate frontline staff to improve attendance and attainment for care experienced children and young people.

### **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 In line with Scottish Government reporting requirements, the above projects will be evaluated for their impact, which will help to determine future funding. A further report will be prepared for Committee in early 2020 that sets out initial progress, with at least one interim report to the Corporate Parenting Member Officer Group planned for 2019.
- 5.2 The Council's Participation Officers, who are Care Experienced, will be invited to co-lead the evaluation work and participation activity in shaping future developments to improve attainment of care experienced children and young people. Future developments could include increased use of personalised budgets and self-directed support.

### **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The Scottish Government, through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, has provided funding of £723,200 in 2018/19 to support this initiative. Funding for 2019/20 has yet to be confirmed but is expected to be approximately £1,084,500 based on the criteria used to determine the 2018/19 allocation.
- 6.2 The funding will be utilised to support new and enhance existing initiatives as set out in this report. In accordance with the guidance issued by the Scottish Government all funding allocations will be agreed jointly by the Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Work Officer.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Relevant social work teams and education staff have been consulted as have the Participation Officers. The views of care experienced young people on the success of their individual plans will also be collected and analysed and the learning paths of care experienced young people will also be followed in each theme.
- 7.2 There are no health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to consider.
- 7.3 There are no impacts relating to carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development. However in future we are seeking to expand our digital offer to make our Virtual Learning available where relevant to all pupils who are LAC and where attendance is disrupted.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/care-experienced-children-and-young-people-fund-operational-guidance/>

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 Background Report
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Care Experienced Plan

## Improving the academic attainment of Looked After Children – 2018-19

### Summary

This report presents information on the attainment of looked after children in relation to their non-looked after peers. It describes strategic actions to raise attainment for all, as well as presenting new evidence of the need to strengthen actions for specific equity groups: the care experienced and those living in poverty. It recognises the need to adopt a full partnership, Getting it Right for Every Child approach with actions to improve teaching and learning, targeted supports such as nurture and mentoring, and developing parental capacity and learning together at home.

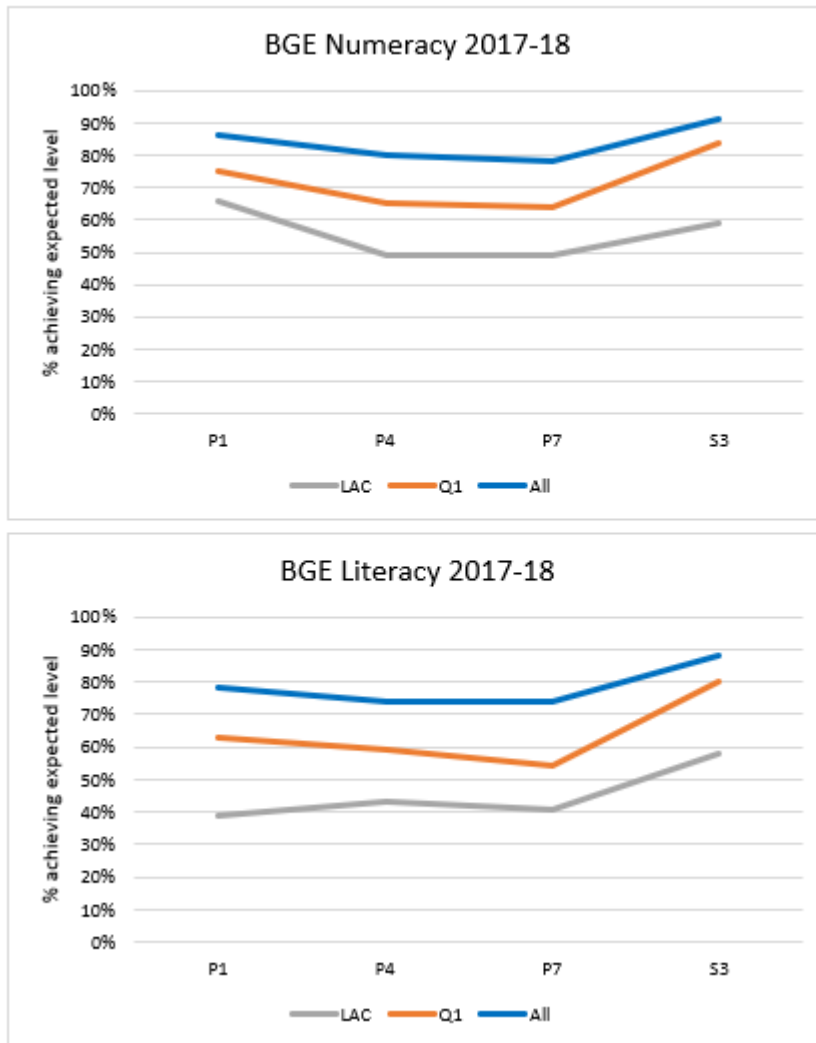
### Background

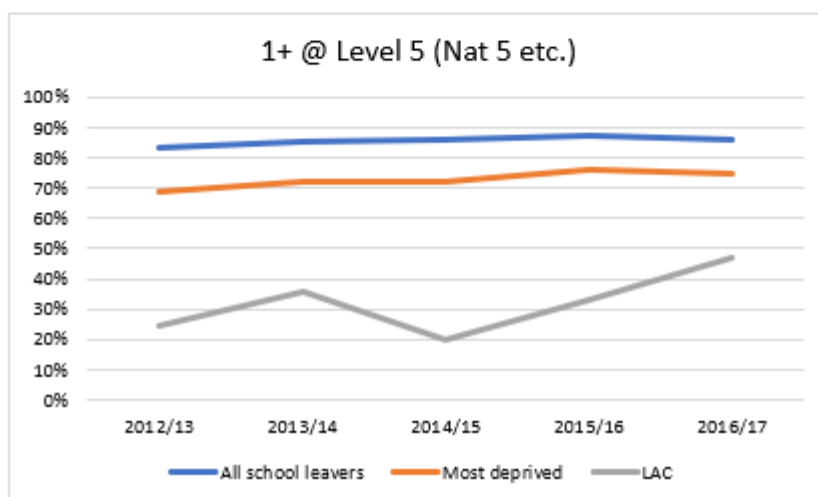
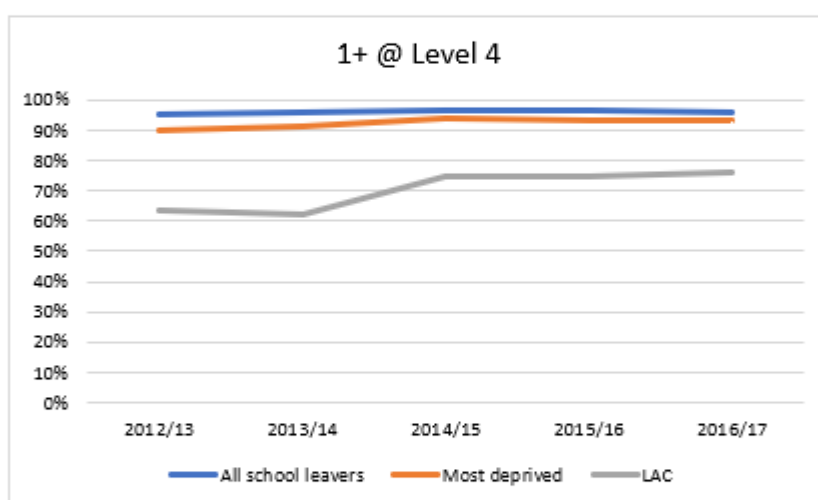
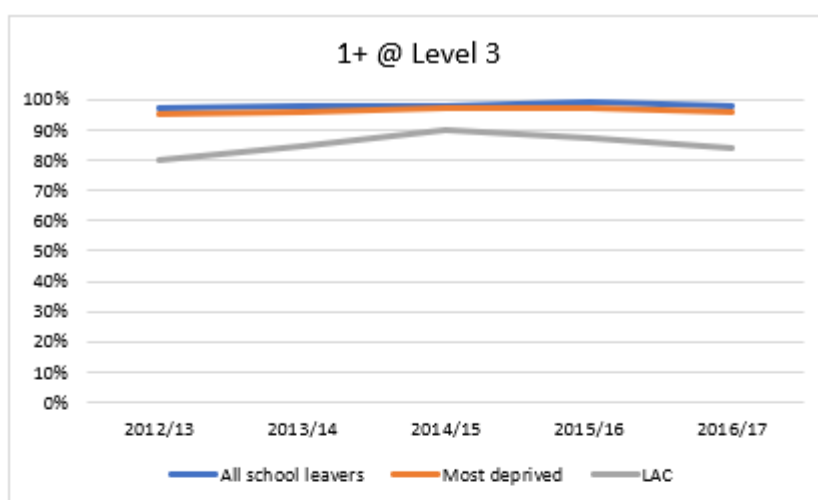
- 1.1 National and local evidence demonstrate that looked after children's attainment falls significantly behind other learners. This is a longstanding picture that gave rise to recognition in law that Looked after Children are deemed to require additional support for learning.
- 1.2 The principal factors that give rise to additional support needs of looked after children are:
  - Learning Environment
  - Family circumstances
  - Developmental factors
  - Social and emotional factors
- 1.3 Poverty is a key factor in the lives of most looked after children. Whilst the effects of poverty do account for part of the picture looked after children's attainment is 30-40% below those of children living in SIMD 1 households overall.
- 1.4 Looked after children are more likely to have had adverse childhood experiences that impact on the development of their language and emotional regulation. Their parents are more likely to have had similar experiences and/or to have wider support needs arising from a learning disability, poor mental health.
- 1.5 A key principle in the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme: 'to improve a child's attainment support may be required in all aspects of their wellbeing, in line with GIRFEC. Funding should be used in developing new or supplementing existing interventions or initiatives. This activity should

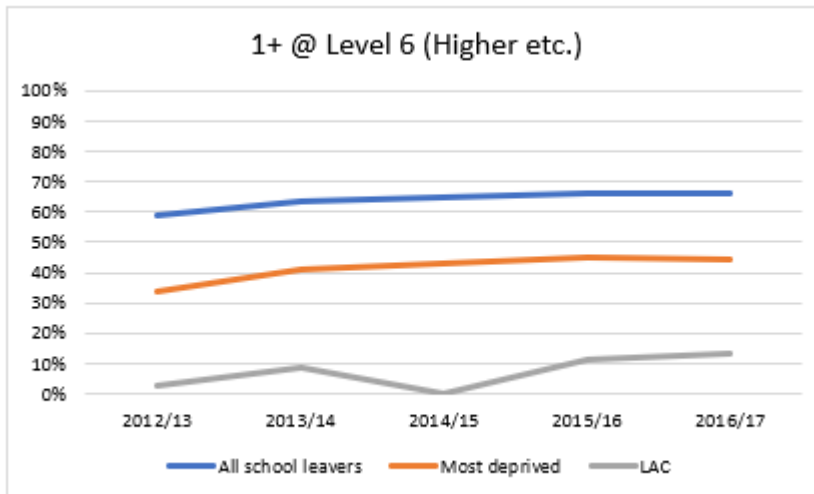


address the factors which could impact on the child or young person's attainment, which are not exclusively within the educational setting'. Scottish Government National Operational Guidance Note (2018-19) ([attach link](#))

### Attainment of Looked After Children in Edinburgh







## 2. Improving Attainment for Edinburgh's Looked After Children 2018-21

- 2.1 This strategy is informed by Edinburgh's 2050 vision which describes an inspired, connected, fair, and thriving city, where all Edinburgh's children enjoy their childhood and achieve their potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2 As an inclusive City we are committed to:
  - closing the gap
  - work with children and families using a strengths-based approach,
  - building compassionate relationships and supportive communities
  - using restorative approaches to resolving differences
  - removing barriers to learning
  - avoiding working in ways that *create* problems for children and their families.
- 2.3 Our strategy to improve attainment outcomes for looked after children needs to address all the factors that give rise to barriers to learning.
- 2.4 We will improve attainment for looked after children in Edinburgh through:
  - Improving teaching and learning experiences, including universal and targeted support
  - Improving pathways and supports to achieve positive and sustained destinations
    - Supporting the families of children looked after at home to support their children's learning

<sup>1</sup> The Edinburgh Children's Partnership's vision

## Improving Teaching and Learning Experiences

- 2.5 There is well established evidence that schools can make a difference and that children and young people attending a school with a positive school climate have been found to do better than might be expected based on their socio-economic background. <sup>2</sup>
- 2.6 In line with the National Improvement Framework, reducing inequality is the prime aim of the Edinburgh Education Improvement Plan 2018-21. The plan identifies improving the attainment of Looked After Children as a key priority.
- 2.7 *Edinburgh Learns* is the City of Edinburgh Council's strategy to raise attainment for all. It comprises six key frameworks, each of which provide guidance for Headteachers on the main drivers known to raise attainment, and each cross referenced to ensure equity groups are prioritised.
- 2.8 Key among these are the frameworks regarding Equity, Inclusion, Pathways (forthcoming) and Teaching and Learning.
- 2.9 Based on extensive research, guidance from the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELGIS), and knowledge gained from our Scottish Attainment Challenge schools, our guidance to raise attainment for equity groups, specifically including care experienced children and young people, is themed in three areas:
- Teaching and Learning
  - Leadership
  - Families and Communities
- 2.10 Each of the frameworks provides clear guidance, is overseen by a strategic group and underpinned by professional learning. The delivery of high-quality professional learning is fundamental to ensuring the success of the frameworks, and implicit within the delivery are quality assurance approaches which will monitor success and make suggestions for next steps.
- 2.11 To fully and consistently ensure that looked after children experience the highest quality professional learning, a team of expert practitioners will work with schools to
- Conduct a needs analysis to embed the authority guidance on Teaching and Learning for Looked After children
  - Prepare personal action plans for staff
  - Deliver high quality professional learning, incorporating ACEs
    - Provide a structured model to ensure sustainability
- 2.12 *Edinburgh Learns* is supported by additional guidance such as the Equity Framework, which details actions schools can take to poverty-proof the

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<sup>2</sup> Children's social circumstances and educational outcomes. Dr Jane White, Evidence for Action Team, NHS Health Scotland 2018

school day and ensure all children have an equal entitlement to participate in the full life of the school including out of school activities/clubs etc which are known to develop cultural and social capital.

## **Targeted Support for Looked After children**

- 2.13 The social backgrounds of Looked After Children indicate that they most likely to come from families in the lowest SIMD deciles.
- 2.14 Not all Looked After Children face the same challenges. Barriers to learning come in many forms and supports should be timely, relevant and proportionate. We need to ensure that we have the best possible understanding of each individual child's wellbeing in order to anticipate needs, plan and delivery support and monitor progress. Additional support may take the form of, for example:
- creating opportunities for the strengths, talents and interests of a Looked After child to be recognised developed and supported/celebrated in school
  - enhanced support such as Nurture and Wellbeing bases, key adult time, breakfast club, literacy interventions, homework club, appointing a Mentor etc.
  - individual adjustments such as a soft start to the day, movement breaks, etc.
  - additional targeted support such as Emotion Talks, ASL Service, Parent Mentoring, Parent coaching, Trauma informed support for Edinburgh Together or another partner, extended 'school day'/tutoring/after school Family Clubs
- 2.15 *'additional support is not limited to educational support, but can include multi-agency support from health, social services and voluntary agencies.... education authorities have a duty to make provision for the additional support needs of certain looked after children ..... and this support, as above, is not limited to educational provision. 'Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017 Chapter 2 para 9*

## **Improving pathways and supports to achieve positive and sustained destinations**

- 2.16 In addition to experiencing high quality learning, as they progress through the education system, care experienced young people increasingly require targeted support in the form of key adults and mentors.
- 2.17 Various mentor schemes have been in place in Edinburgh and other authorities over many years, with varying success. Among these are Plusone (YMCA) and Intandem which offer mentoring to LAC at home cohorts of children (and perhaps other cohorts). Children working with the mentors in these projects are age 8-14. MoveOn provide a

mentoring programme for 14-18 year old Looked After Children at home. There is a report on their work from 2015.

- 2.18 All three Edinburgh programmes are clear they work with looked after children and possibly in the future with mentoring whole families but their work is out with school hours. One option is a proposal to lengthen the school day for targeted LAC pupils / other under privileged cohorts, and should present an opportunity for existing or new mentoring programmes to be involved in a wrap around care and education programme for this longer day.
- 2.19 Before proposing such a radical option it is also important to look at what already exists and their overall aims, which to date have focussed more on health and wellbeing rather than academic improvements. There are other projects such as MST and FHS which provide support to families on the boundary of statutory engagement. Edinburgh Together also offers a range of support to families and schools focussing more on the behaviour of children and young people. Safer Families for Children are also intervening to help Edinburgh families in practical ways. Psychological Services have also helped to deliver the Psychology of Parenting Programme to parents of LAC at home (and carers of Looked after children). Gorton (2018 – personal communication) reports this was a successful intervention.
- 2.20 However, if we are to specifically improve the attainment of CEC LAC cohorts and particularly the attainment of LAC at home there is a need to develop or amend the existing work.
- 2.21 In 2016-17 a cohort of 90 children in Glasgow who were ‘care experienced’ was supported through the MCR Pathways mentoring programme and achieved similar grades and other outcomes to non-care experienced pupils. MCR Pathways has been working in Glasgow for nearly a decade and the results in 2016-17 have been achieved following a long build up in specific schools and a gradual roll out to all secondary schools in Glasgow.
- 2.22 The cost/benefit analysis of procuring a service such as MCR Pathways would indicate that after a long lead-in they appear to have good results. Such results cannot be simply replicated by a “lift and shift” methodology. MCR Pathways can begin to provide mentoring in Edinburgh but this will not mean that we quickly replicate the results of the 2016-17 Glaswegian cohort. The model for Edinburgh should be bespoke to the needs of this city, rather than simply replicating that which worked elsewhere.

## **Learning Together: Supporting the families of children looked after at home**

- 2.23 For some children and young people who are Looked After at Home parents may not be fully engaged with their children's education. A Children's Hearing has determined that compulsory measures of care are necessary and social work services are involved in supporting families with these difficulties.
- 2.24 Services needs to build on families' strengths and compensate for potential deficits. One way of doing this is to extend Wellbeing (nurture and 'enhanced' nurture) bases to more centres across the city. Other approaches are to target families for wrap around care and education services.
- 2.25 Most schools now run breakfast clubs. It is therefore imperative that LAC at home pupils can benefit from these clubs. Activities at lunch time and after school should also be combined with balanced meals, the opportunity to be active in exercise/sport and participating in homework clubs. Homework clubs can be fun and could include enjoyable software such as the Sumdog programme which is a computer games based approach to supporting high quality maths teaching.
- 2.26 Edinburgh recently ran Discover - a holiday programme in the summer holidays which has been a great success and engaged families in activities and provided two meals each day. Psychological Services have helped to train staff in 25 schools who are striving to be Wellbeing Academies. This approach can be targeted at LAC cohorts. School staff are becoming more trauma informed and aware of the impact of ACEs. Nurture training is also being rolled out. NHS staff such as CAMHS workers could become involved in such initiatives.
- 2.27 City of Edinburgh also has children who are fostered out with Edinburgh. Psychological Services are monitoring as many of these children as they can and we seek to create a Virtual School for these pupils.
- 2.28 Recent research by the London School of Economics reference? concluded that poverty impacts on children's engagement and attendance, test scores, and their choices are decision making points in their school careers.
- 2.29 In addition, it provides strong evidence that addressing the impact of poverty in the home is as powerful as intervention in the school environment: *'Effects from the most robust studies*

*were found to be comparable in size to effect sizes for spending on school or early education interventions... that increases in household income would not eliminate differences in outcomes between low-income children and others but could be expected to contribute to substantial reductions in those differences.'* P1

2.30 The evidence demonstrates that the effects start early and that they escalate over time. The effects are evident from an early age, Growing Up in Scotland demonstrated that children from low-income families were about 13 months behind in vocabulary skills and 10 months behind in problem-solving skills at school entry compared to their more affluent peers. Cohort studies demonstrate that these effects on children's wellbeing increase over time impacting on learning and behaviour in school.<sup>3</sup>

2.31 In light of this effective intervention for looked after children living at home needs to incorporate a robust approach that work *with* families to address:

Direct and indirect effects of poverty

- Strengthening children's resilience in particular in relation to language development and emotional regulation
- Strengthening parental resilience and providing the emotional and practical support parents may require.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> Primary schools and the amplification of social differences in child mental health: a population-based cohort study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* Jan 2018

<sup>4</sup> **Supporting families at the early help stage**

1. Provide early help based on an assessment of the needs of children, young people and families.
2. Discuss early help support and interventions with children, young people and families as part of building close working relationships with them and gaining their consent
3. Explain what the support will involve and how you think it may help.
4. Give children, young people and their families a choice of proposed interventions if possible. Recognise that some interventions may not suit that person or family. **NICE Guideline NG76 2017**

# EDINBURGH LEARNS

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Care Experienced Children and Young People Plan

2018-2021

**I belong**  
**I learn**  
**I am supported and I help others**  
**I contribute**  
**I am successful**

	<b>High level improvements</b>	<b>Authority Actions /Themes</b>
<b>I belong</b> <b>I am supported and I help others</b> <b>I contribute</b>	Ethos, Climate, Relationships and Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved attendance at school or base</li> <li>• Improved number of schools graded good or better in 3.1</li> <li>• Improved engagement and participation of learners</li> <li>• Improved parental engagement and involvement</li> <li>• Reduced exclusions</li> </ul>	1. Maximise Attendance (Martin Gemmell) 2. Income maximisation and entitlements to cultural and leisure activities 3. Primary Forest Schools are established in each locality (Joanne Matchett) 4. Secondary Wellbeing Bases are established (including special) featuring (Lorna Sweeney) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nurture and high quality inclusive practice</li> <li>2. Multi-agency Team around the cluster/Pupil Support Group</li> <li>3. Access to Multi Systemic Therapy and Family Group Decision Making</li> </ol>
<b>I learn</b> <b>I am successful</b>	Personalised Support, Attainment and Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve CfE levels in reading, writing talking and listening, and numeracy attainment at P1, P4, P7 and S3</li> <li>• Improve average complementary tariff score for school leavers</li> <li>• Improved number of schools graded as good or better in QI 2.3</li> <li>• Improved Annual Participation Measures</li> </ul>	5. Edinburgh Learns Teaching and Learning Team professional learning (Louise Stevenson) 6. MCR Pathways (various schools) (Lorna Sweeney)

