

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER - EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOLS 2020-2021

SUMMARY REPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report and monitor the frequency and length of fixed term exclusions for Blaenau Gwent children looked after during academic year 2020-2021 to the Corporate Parenting Board.

During this period, there has been continued disruption to school operations: local Blaenau Gwent school closures at the end of the Autumn term followed by a further national period of school closure in the spring term. Schools were re-purposed again as hubs, for most of the Spring term 2021. Remote learning took place during periods of school closures. From March 2021 there was a gradual return of learners, with schools reopening to all learners at the start of the Summer term.

SUMMARY

During 2020-2021, incidents of exclusions issued in respect of children looked after have remained in line with the previous year. The number of individual children looked after who have received fixed term exclusions during the year has increased however the total number of days lost to exclusions has decreased when compared with the previous year.

The majority of exclusions continue to be issued for persistent disruptive behaviour. The majority of exclusions continue to be issued in respect of secondary aged pupils. The number of exclusions being issued for primary aged children remains low. Incidents of exclusion in mainstream school settings continues to be higher than in special or independent school settings.

More exclusions were issued by schools in Blaenau Gwent and on average, continue to be longer in duration than those issued by schools outside Blaenau.

There has been an increase in the number of exclusions being issued for Blaenau Gwent children looked after who have Statements of Special Educational Needs when compared with the previous year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board notes the incidents of exclusions and the decrease in length of exclusions being issued in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after.

It is also recommended that the action plan for 2021-2022 is agreed with the aim of reducing the incidents and duration of exclusions issued in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after.

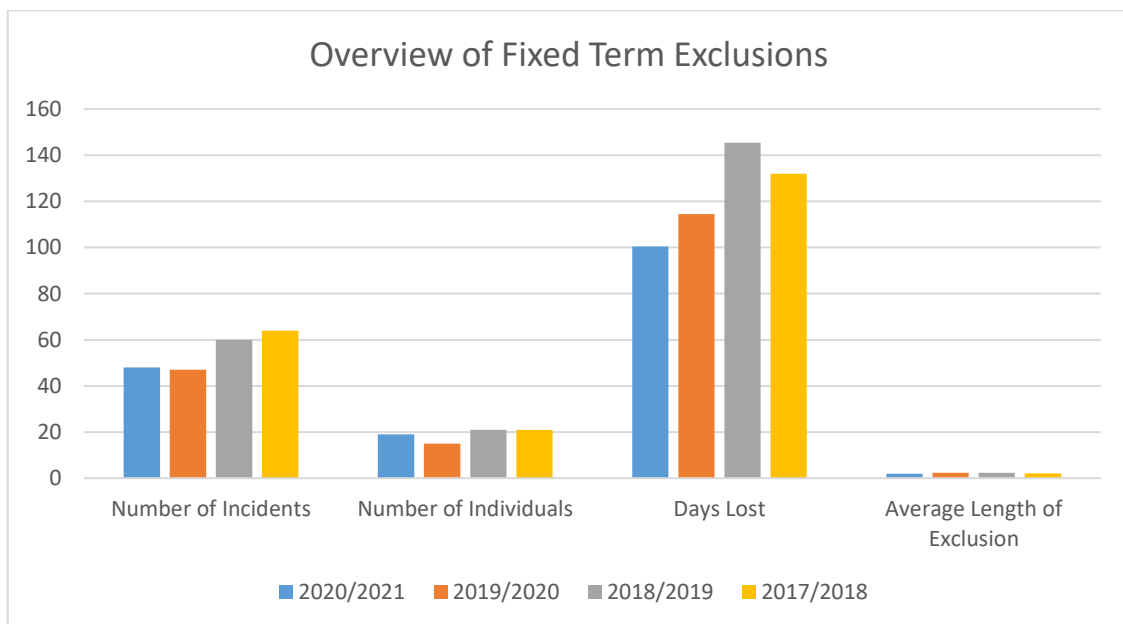
DETAILED REPORT

PRESENT POSITION

Number and length of fixed term exclusions

48 fixed term exclusions were issued in respect of 19 individual Blaenau Gwent children looked after during academic year 2020-2021. These 19 individual children account for 12% of the looked after population. A total of 100.5 school days were lost as a result. This is compared to a total of 47 fixed term exclusions issued in respect of 15 individuals and a total of 114.5 days lost for the previous academic year 2019-2020.

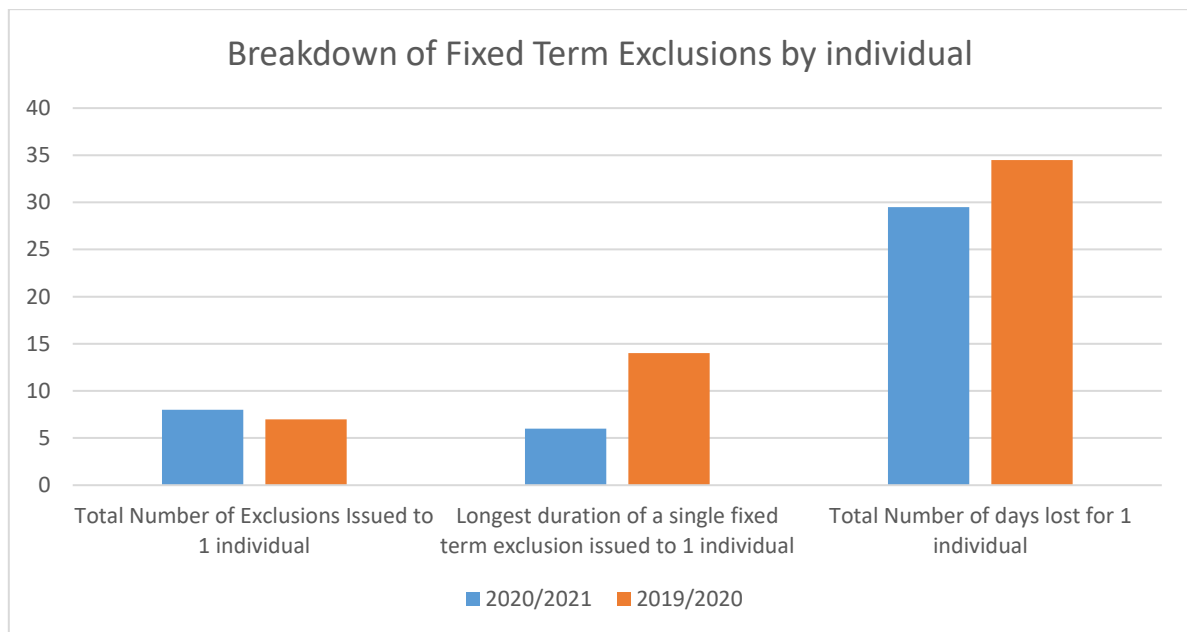
The average number of days spent out of school for an individual child looked after on fixed term exclusions during 2020-2021 was 2 days. This figure was 2.4 days for the previous academic year.



The highest number of fixed term exclusions issued in respect of one child was 8. This figure is an increase when compared with the previous academic year when the highest number issued in respect of one child was 7 exclusions.

The longest duration of a single fixed term exclusion issued in respect of one child looked after during academic year 2020-2021 was 6 days. This figure is a decrease when compared with the previous year when the figure was 14.

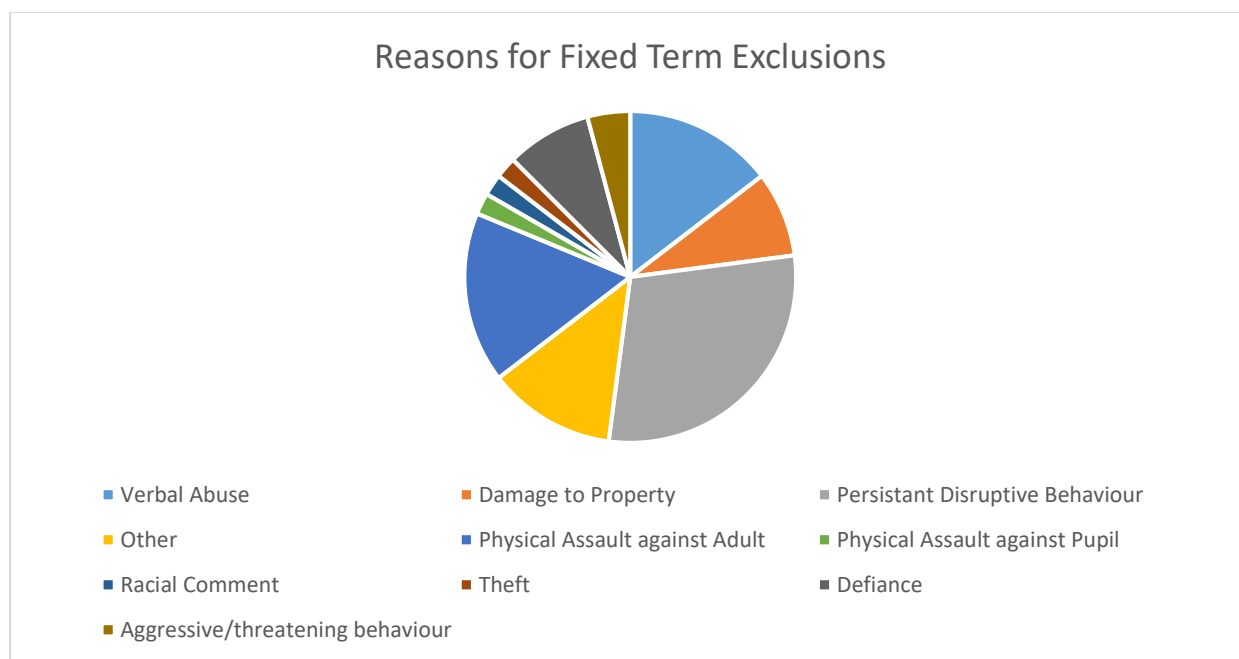
During academic year 2020-2021 the total number of days lost for one looked after child as a result of repeated exclusions was 29.5 days. This figure is a decrease when compared with the previous academic year when the figure was 34.5 days.



Of the 19 individual Blaenau Gwent children looked after who received fixed term exclusions from school, 68% received more than one fixed term exclusion during the year. This figure is lower when compared with the previous academic year when 85% of our children looked after received more than one fixed term exclusion.

Reasons for fixed term exclusions

The primary reason for the majority of the exclusions issued during academic year 2020-2021 was persistent disruptive behaviour.



Exclusions for primary and secondary aged looked after children

Of the 154 children of statutory school age who remained looked after at the end of the school year 2020-2021 there were more children of secondary school age than primary. In previous years, the numbers have been broadly equal across to the two stages. The larger proportion of secondary learners in 2020-2021 is a significant because the majority of exclusions issued are in respect of secondary aged learners.

Primary aged pupils	64
Secondary aged pupils	90

Almost all fixed term exclusions for Blaenau Gwent children looked after were issued in respect of secondary school aged children during 2020-2021 (45 out of 48 incidents/ 94%). 3 children of primary school age received fixed term exclusions during the course of the year. This figure is higher when compared with the previous academic year, when 2 children looked after of primary age were excluded. However, the number of days lost to primary aged CLA was considerably less (total of 3 incidents

and 6.5 days lost in 2020-2021) when compared with the previous year (total of 6 incidents and 16.5 days lost).

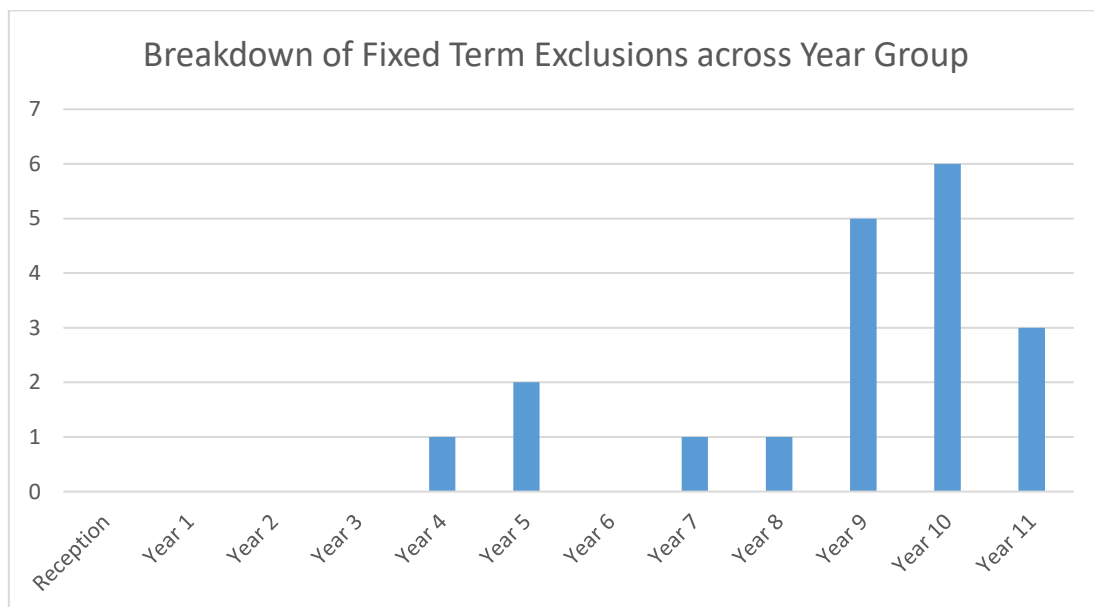
All primary aged pupils who received fixed term exclusions during the course of the year had additional learning needs. One child attends specialist SEBD school setting. One is awaiting a change of placement to a more specialist setting and is currently undergoing statutory assessment. One child has since been issued with a statement of special educational needs details support needs in a mainstream setting. All 3 children experienced a change of placement during the course of the year.

Exclusion incidents by age and gender

During 2020-2021, year 4 (age 8-9) was the lowest age that a child looked after was excluded from school. There is no real pattern in primary schools given the very low numbers involved.

Of the 16 individuals of secondary school age who received fixed term exclusions during the year, 5 children were in key stage 3 (17 incidents) and 11 were in key stage 4 (28 incidents).

There was an almost even split between the total number of exclusions issued in respect of girls (10) and boys (9). The average length of exclusion was longer for boys (6 days) than girls (4.7 days).



Exclusions for children attending Blaenau Gwent schools

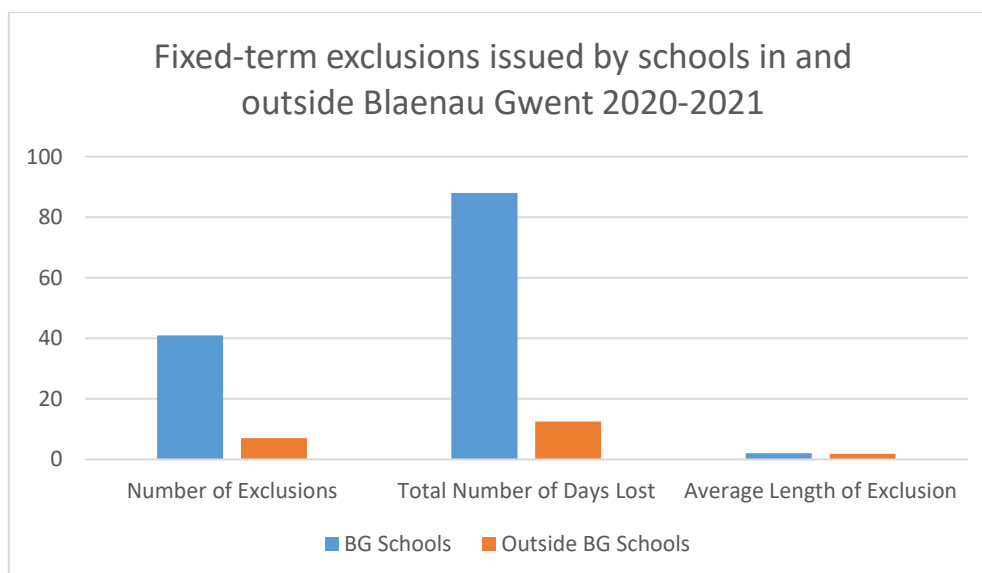
Of the 154 children of statutory school age who remained looked after at the end of the school year 2020-2021 the majority continue to be educated in mainstream school settings in Blaenau Gwent.

Educated in Blaenau Gwent	115
Educated outside Blaenau Gwent	39

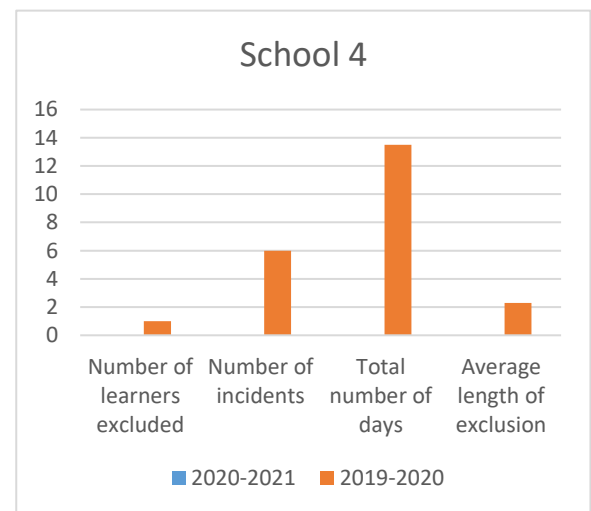
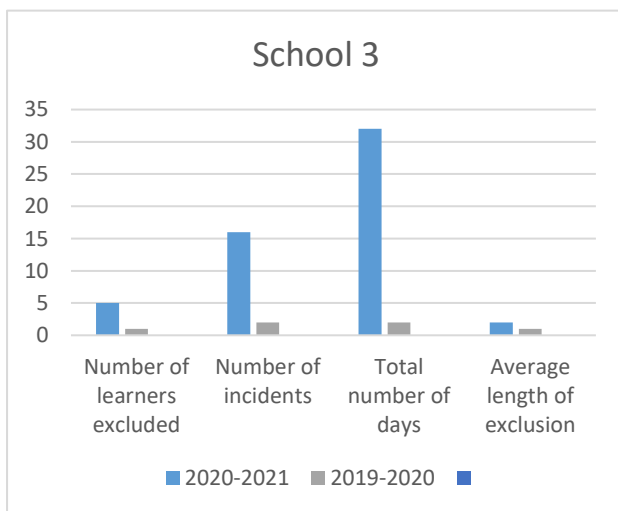
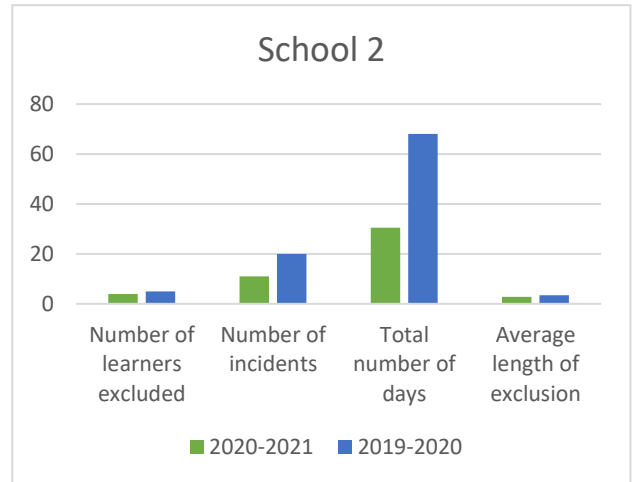
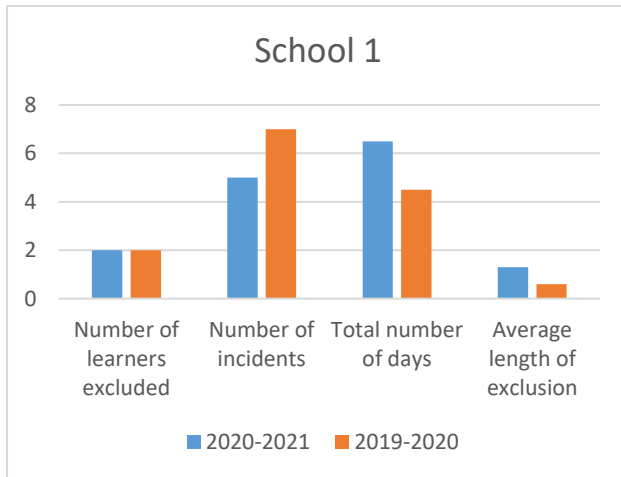
During academic year 2020-2021, 85% of the fixed term exclusions were issued in respect of our children looked after attending Blaenau Gwent schools (total 88 days lost).

The average length of fixed term exclusions issued by schools in Blaenau Gwent was 2 days and 1.8 days for schools outside of Blaenau Gwent.

This figure for Blaenau Gwent schools is lower when compared with the previous academic year 2019-2020 when exclusions issued by Blaenau Gwent schools were on average 2.7 days but an increase when compared with the length of exclusion issued by schools outside the local authority area which was 1.3 days.



Breakdown of exclusions from mainstream secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent



School	Year	Number of learners excluded	Number of incidents	Total number of days	Average length of exclusion
1	2020-2021	2	5	6.5	1.3
	2019-2020	2	7	4.5	0.6
2	2020-2021	4	11	30.5	2.8
	2019-2020	5	20	68	3.4
3	2020-2021	5	16	32	2
	2019-2020	1	2	2	1
4	2020-2021	0	0	0	0
	2019-2020	1	6	13.5	2.3

One school has issued no exclusions in respect of Blaenau Gwent CLA. There has been a significant reduction in the incident of exclusions issued by the highest excluding school last year.

Breakdown of exclusions from special school settings in Blaenau Gwent

Number of learners excluded	Number of incidents	Total number of days	Average length of exclusion
3	7	14.5	2.1

The figures for 2020-2021 are an increase when compared with the previous year. In 2019-2020 one CLA received one fixed term exclusion for a total of 4.5 days.

Breakdown of exclusions issued by schools outside the local authority area in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after

Of the total number of fixed term exclusions issued, only 7 were issued by schools outside the Blaenau Gwent area.

Local Authority	School setting	Number of learners excluded	Number of incidents	Total number of days lost	Average length of exclusions
LA 1	SEBD	1	1	3.5	3.5
LA 2	PRU	1	2	1.5	0.75
LA 3	Independent SEBD	2	4	7.5	1.9

Breakdown of exclusions by individual school settings

The majority of fixed term exclusions 71% (34 incidents) were issued by mainstream schools. A total of 14 exclusions were issued by special school settings or Pupil Referral Units for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Fixed term exclusions for children looked after with special educational needs

Of the total number of children looked after who received fixed term exclusions from school during academic year 2020-2021, 9 (47%) had statements of special educational needs. This is an increase when compared with the previous academic year, when 6 (40%) of all children looked after who received fixed term exclusions from school had statements of SEN.

Of the children who were excluded who had statements of SEN the primary educational need for almost all of these pupils was social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. More than half (52%, 25 out of 48 incidents) of the overall exclusions issued, were in respect of children who had statements of special educational needs and the total number of days lost were 55.5. This is higher when compared with the previous year when 36% of the overall exclusions issued were in respect of children who had statements of special educational needs and the total number of days lost were 46.

Changes to education placements

Three of the children who received fixed term exclusions in 2020-2021 experienced a change to their education placement during the course of the year. This figure is a decrease when compared with the previous academic year, when 4 children experienced a change of school.

Two learners moved from one mainstream school setting to another, one did so as a result of moving out of residential care into a foster placement, the other as a result of a change of foster placement. One learner moved from a mainstream school placement to a specialist SEBD setting.

Number of Individuals	Change of education placement
1	Mainstream to Special School for SEBD
2	Mainstream to Mainstream

Changes to care placements

7 of the children who received fixed term exclusions experienced changes to their care placements during the course of the year. This figure is less when compared with last year when 5 children who were excluded from school experienced changes of care placement.

Of the 7 children in 2020-2021, 4 had more than one change of placement during the course of the year. These 7 children were responsible for a third of the total days lost to fixed term exclusions issued during the year.

Action Plan 2021-2022

Evaluation:

- There is a more even distribution across those CLA who have experienced exclusions than in previous years. Of the total exclusions 56% were issued in respect of 9 individuals.
- There are a small but significant number of exclusions for primary aged CLA. Of the primary aged CLA experiencing exclusions in 2019-2020 one received no further exclusions and the other has received one, compared to 4 the previous year.
- There has been appropriate action planning for those primary aged CLA who have received exclusions.
- Schools in Blaenau Gwent are overall issuing shorter exclusions when compared with the previous year.
- The majority of secondary schools have reduced the incidents of exclusions
- There is a reduced correlation between care placement instability and exclusions. In 2020-2021 the children who experienced changes to placement were responsible for less of the overall exclusions. In 2019-2020 it was almost half.

Actions:

- Share the exclusion report with schools and education directorate.
- Close tracking, monitoring and mentoring support of those primary aged CLA who received exclusion during the course of the year.
- Offer advice to the secondary school that has issued the higher proportion of exclusions.

Catherine Edwards

Children Looked After Education Coordinator

December 2021