

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES – 2018-2019

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report the educational attainment of our children looked after during academic year 2018-2019 and to provide an update on the support offered by the CLA education service

INTRODUCTION

At the end of academic year 2018-2019, 153 children of statutory school age were looked after by Blaenau Gwent local authority.

The majority of children who are looked after by Blaenau Gwent continue to be educated within Blaenau Gwent and attend mainstream schools. A small proportion of our looked after children attend more specialist education settings.

43% of our children looked after have additional learning needs and 23% of all our school aged children looked after have a statement of special educational needs.

During academic year 2018-2019, 100% of personal education plans for children becoming looked after within the year were updated within statutory timescales.

There has been a slight decrease in the number of looked after children experiencing a change of school during the year. When a child does have to move school, processes are in place to ensure that delays in admissions are avoided wherever possible.

The achievements and academic progress of our looked after children continue to be monitored by the LAC education service and recorded throughout each stage of their schooling.

Outcomes for our children looked after at the end of key stage 2 were considerably higher when compared with the previous year but lower at the end of key stage 3. A total of 16 children looked after completed their statutory studies in 2018-2019. 9 children looked after achieved recognised qualifications.

A permanent exclusion was issued in 2018-2019 in respect of one Blaenau Gwent child looked after which was later rescinded. There has been a decrease in the incidents of exclusion however an increase in the number of days lost to exclusions during 2018-2019 when compared with the previous academic year.

BACKGROUND

The CLA education service continues to sit within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team in Children's Services and is line managed by the Education Safeguarding Manager. The team structure comprises of a coordinator and two education mentors.

PRESENT POSITION

Overview of current LAC school aged population

During academic year 2018-2019, 153 school aged children remained looked after at the end of the school year. This figure remains in line when compared with the previous academic year

Primary aged children	72
Secondary aged children	81

Educated in Blaenau Gwent	87
Educated outside Blaenau Gwent	66

The educational settings of all Blaenau Gwent children looked after of statutory school at the end of the academic year were

Education Setting	Number of CLA
Mainstream	121
Resource Base	7
Special School	8
Pupil Referral Unit	3
Independent School	7
Tuition/ Alternative Education	7

During 2018-2019 a small proportion of our children looked after accessed more specialist education settings however the vast majority continued to attend mainstream school placements. During the year there has also been an increase in the number of children looked after accessing independent school placements. There has been a decrease in the number of pupils accessing alternative provision.

The number of children attending the local authority special school has increased. The number attending resource bases attached to mainstream school settings remains in line with previous years.

Additional Learning Needs

During academic year 2018-2019, 43% of all statutory school aged children who were looked after by Blaenau Gwent had additional learning needs sufficient for intervention at School Action, School Action Plus or statement level*. This figure is lower when compared with the previous academic year when the figure was 54%. Of this cohort more than half (53%) have a statement of special educational needs.

In total 23% of children who were looked after by Blaenau Gwent at the end of academic year 2018-2019 had a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This figure is slightly less when compared with the previous academic year.

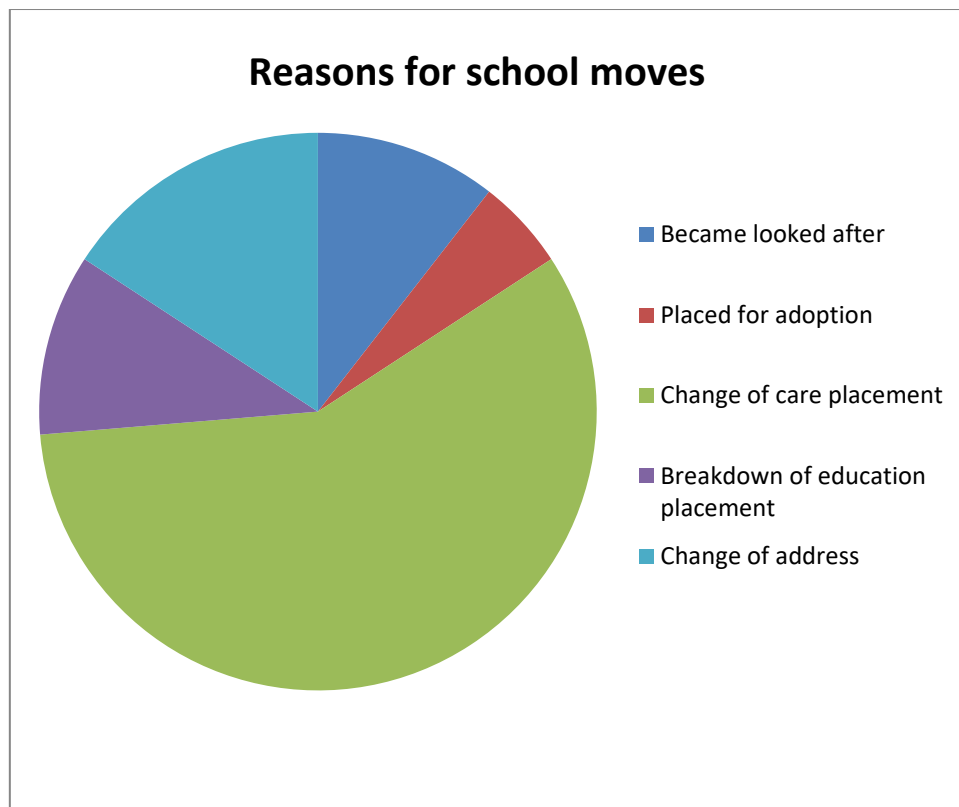
Personal Education Plans

The Social Services & Well Being Act notes the duty on the Local Authority to ensure that a personal education plan is in place for each looked after child. 'Except where a child enters care in an emergency, the PEP must be initiated as part of the Part 6 care and support plan before the young person becomes looked after. In an emergency placement, the PEP should be initiated within ten working days.

During academic year 2018-2019, 100% of PEPs for newly accommodated children and those who changed school were updated within statutory timescales. This figure remains in line when compared with the previous academic year.

School Moves

12% of Blaenau Gwent statutory school aged LAC experienced at least one or more non-transitional school moves during 2018-2019. This is a slight decrease when compared with the previous academic year when the figure was 13% in 2017-2018 and a significant decrease when compared with 2016-2017 when 26% of Children looked after experienced a school move.



Three children were required to change school due to a move to a residential care setting. Two children experienced changes to their schooling as a result of their education provisions no longer being able to meet their needs.

Academic attainments

The academic progress and attainment of our looked after children continues to be monitored by the LAC education team.

In 2018-2019, outcomes for our LAC at the end of key stage 2 assessments were considerably higher when compared with the previous year. 70% [7 out of 10] looked after children achieved their core subject indicator (CSI)* at the end of key stage 2 in 2018-2019 compared with 12.5% [1 out of 8] of our looked after children who achieved their core subject indicator (CSI)* at the end of key stage 2 in the previous academic year.

All the children in this cohort attended mainstream schools. Only one child in this cohort has a statement of Special Educational Needs and was provided with full time support in school. This is considerably lower when compared with previous years when 75% of the children in this cohort had additional learning needs with half of the children having statements of special educational needs.

In 2018-2019 outcomes for our LAC at the end of key stage 3 assessments were lower when compared with the previous year. 60% [12 out of 20] of our looked after children achieved their core subject indicator (CSI)* at the end of key stage 3 in 2018-2019 compared with 67% [6 out of 9] in 2017-2018.

85% of children in this cohort attended mainstream school settings. 9 (45%) of the children in this cohort have additional learning needs with a quarter having a statement of special educational needs.

In 2018-2019 of the 16 looked after children who completed their statutory studies 9 achieved recognised qualifications.

Of the 7 children who left school without recognised qualifications as of September 2019 2 have remained on as year 12 pupils in post 16 special school settings, 2 have continued their placement with a work based learning provider. 1 learner commenced a college placement and 1 has sourced work. Only one of the young people is NEET.

Three quarters of our looked after children who completed their statutory studies in 2018-2019 had additional learning needs and more than half (56%) had a statement of special educational needs. 5 of the 16 children attended mainstream school settings, 3 attended special schools settings, 2 attended independent schools a further 3 attended alternative provisions including tuition and the remaining 3 attended pupil referral units. Of the 5 children who followed the mainstream curriculum none achieved level 2 inclusive*. However

4 children who attended mainstream school and one child who attended an alternative provision achieved Level 1**.

Note: Level 2 inclusive – a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to 5 GCSE's at grade A-C including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics.

**Note: Level 1 – a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to 5 GCSE's at grade A* - G including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics.

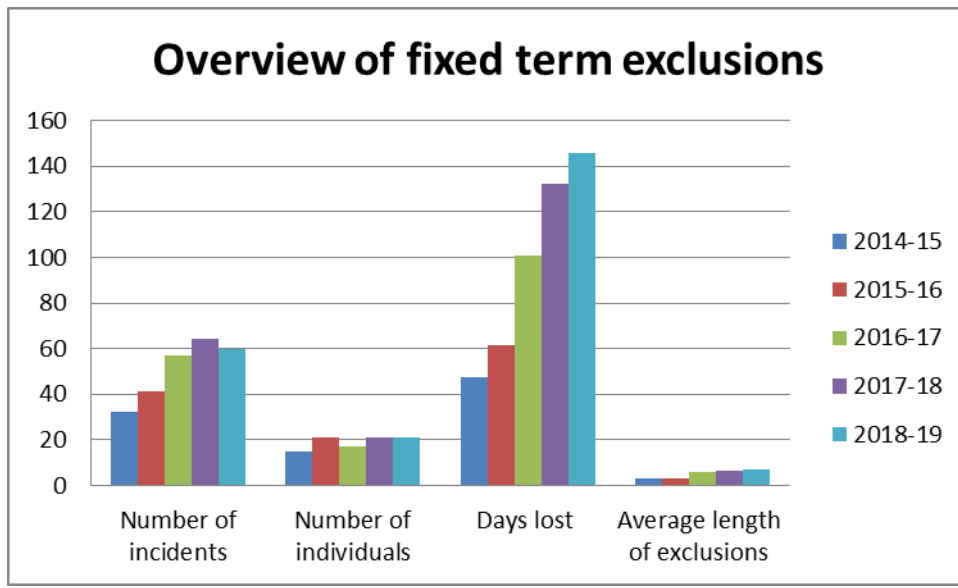
The academic attainment figures included in this report for the performance indicator return 2019 are subject to change following the end of year validation process, which will take place in April 2020.

Exclusions

One child looked after was permanently excluded from school during academic year 2018-2019. The exclusion was later rescinded following the conclusion of the statutory assessment process and offer of additional support in a new school setting. The child is now subject to a Statement of SEN and is attending an alternative mainstream school. In line with the issuing of the Statement of SEN, the child is in receipt of an appropriate level of support in school.

There has been a decrease in the incidents of exclusions issued in respect of children looked after however an increase in the number of days lost to exclusions during academic year 2018-2019 when compared with the previous academic year. The number of Blaenau Gwent children looked after who have received fixed term exclusions during the year has remained the same as the previous year.

60 fixed term exclusions were issued in respect of 21 individual Blaenau Gwent looked after children during academic year 2018-2019. A total of 145.5 school days were lost as a result. This is compared to a total of 64 fixed term exclusions issued in respect of 21 individuals and a total of 132 days lost for the previous academic year 2017-2018.



The average number of days spent out of school for looked after children on fixed term exclusions during 2017-2018 was 6.9 days. This is compared with an average length of 6.3 days for the previous academic year.

The LAC education coordinator and mentors continue to attend re-admission meetings wherever possible. In addition to attendance at meetings advice and guidance is provided to schools with regard to the content and implementation of Pastoral Support Plans.

*Note: A Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) is a school based programme which is meant to help a child to improve their social, emotional and behavioural skills. A PSP may be necessary if a child's behaviour at school means that they have been permanently excluded or are "at risk" of permanent exclusion.

LAC Education Service

LAC Education Mentoring

All Blaenau Gwent children looked after continue to be allocated to an education mentor. Where possible and deemed to be necessary our children looked after are offered direct mentoring support. The take up of CLA mentoring support continues to be good. A total of 25 children looked after received direct mentoring support sessions during the year.

Mentoring support continues to be targeted towards those children and young people working towards their end of key stage assessments, GCSE and alternative qualifications at the end of year 11. Of the 25 children looked after who received mentoring support, 7 children were in year 11 and received support which focused on exam preparation and revision. Sessions are also targeted at those children in transition year groups, with 1 year 6 pupil being supported and a further 2 pupils being supported during the autumn term of year 7 to further assist their transition. Sessions were also targeted at those pupils on reduced timetables and those who are at risk of or have been excluded from school, 6 children were mentored from

this cohort of children. Additionally CLA education mentors have supported learners who are engaged with further education courses.

Annual Celebration of Achievement Event

Our annual celebration of achievement event was held in November 2019. A significant number of our children looked after, 73 in total, were recognised for their achievements both within school and in terms of their participation in extra-curricular activities, including sporting achievements and amateur dramatics. Out of the 73 children nominated for an award, 43 children attended the celebration of achievement. 27 schools in total, including those within the local authority and neighbouring authorities nominated our children looked after with further nominations being made by independent and special school settings.

The event this year was child led with examples of children and young people's work being shown and performances for those in attendance. The event was attended by representatives from Children's Services including schools social workers, personal advisors, Independent Reviewing Officers as well as foster carers and family members of our children looked after.

The event recognised those children of primary and secondary school age as well as those young people who had completed their statutory studies and moved onto post 16 education and training opportunities. A specific focus was given to those young people who have successfully completed college and university courses and those who have now moved on to further and higher courses.

Letterbox

The LAC education service continues to distribute parcels on a monthly basis between May and October with an additional festive parcel roll out in December each year to our children looked after in year 1-2, year 3-4, year 5-6, year 7-8. A total of 24 Blaenau Gwent children looked after received parcels during the course of the 18-19 programme.

Designated Teachers for CLA

Half termly meetings are held with Designated CLA Leads in each of the secondary school settings. The meetings offer the opportunity to consider the progress of each child looked after and address any issues or concerns. The meeting ensures that our CLA are prioritised for interventions where necessary. From January 2020 this opportunity will be offered to Special Schools and Primary schools on a cluster basis.

Cath Edwards

Children looked after education coordinator