

# **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S EDUCATION – EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOLS** **2018-2019**

## **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 2018-2019 to the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **BACKGROUND**

Welsh Government no longer publish Council comparison exclusion data but they do publish national data. Nationally, fixed term exclusions of all pupils have increased over the last three years and pupils with Special Educational Needs have higher rates of exclusion than those without.

In Blaenau Gwent the total incidents of exclusions for the whole population of secondary aged pupils has recorded an increase in the number of days lost over the last four years.

An evaluation was undertaken at the end of academic year 2017-2018. A revised action plan for 2018-2019 was agreed which has informed the forward work plan of the CLA education service in addressing the issue.

### **SUMMARY**

During 2018-2019 there has been a decrease in the incidents of exclusions issued in respect of children looked after. The number of individual children looked after who have received fixed term exclusions has remained the same when compared with the previous year. The total number of days lost to exclusions has however increased when compared with the previous academic year.

The majority of exclusions continue to be issued in respect of secondary aged pupils. There has been a decrease in the number of exclusions being issued for primary aged children. There is an even split of exclusions being issued by schools in Blaenau Gwent and those outside the Blaenau Gwent area. Exclusions issued by schools outside the Blaenau Gwent area are on average longer in duration than those issued by Blaenau Gwent schools.

There has been a decrease in the number of exclusions being issued for Blaenau Gwent children looked after who have Statements of Special Educational Needs.

For those children looked after who have received fixed term exclusions from school there has been a decrease in the number experiencing a change of education

placement during the year however an increase in the number of children experiencing a change of care placement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board notes the decrease in incidents as well as the increase in the length of exclusions being issued in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after to fixed term exclusions during the year.

It is also recommended that the work plan for 2019-2020 is agreed with the aim of reducing the duration of exclusions and further reducing the incidents of exclusions issued in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after.

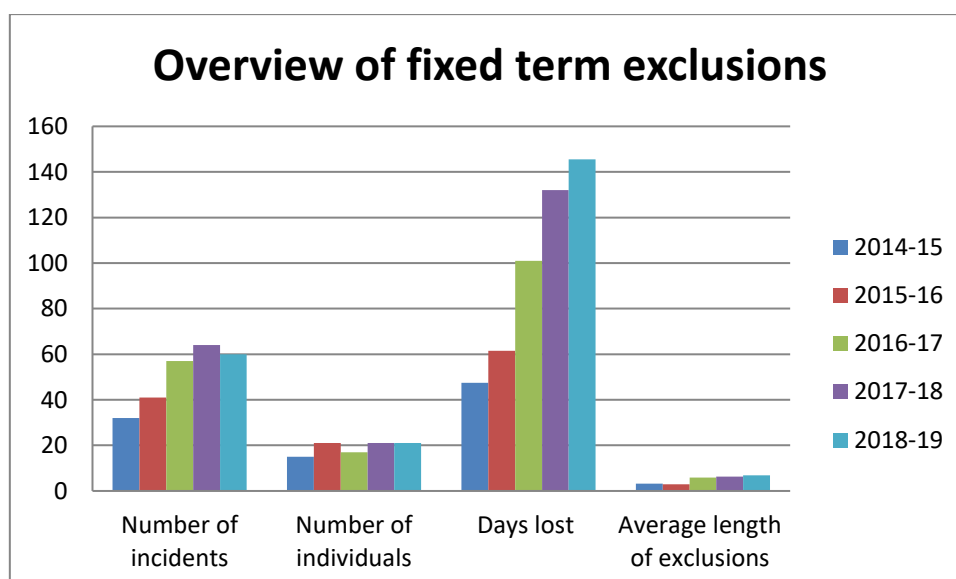
## DETAILED REPORT

### PRESENT POSITION

#### Number and length of fixed term exclusions

60 fixed term exclusions were issued in respect of 21 individual Blaenau Gwent children looked after 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.

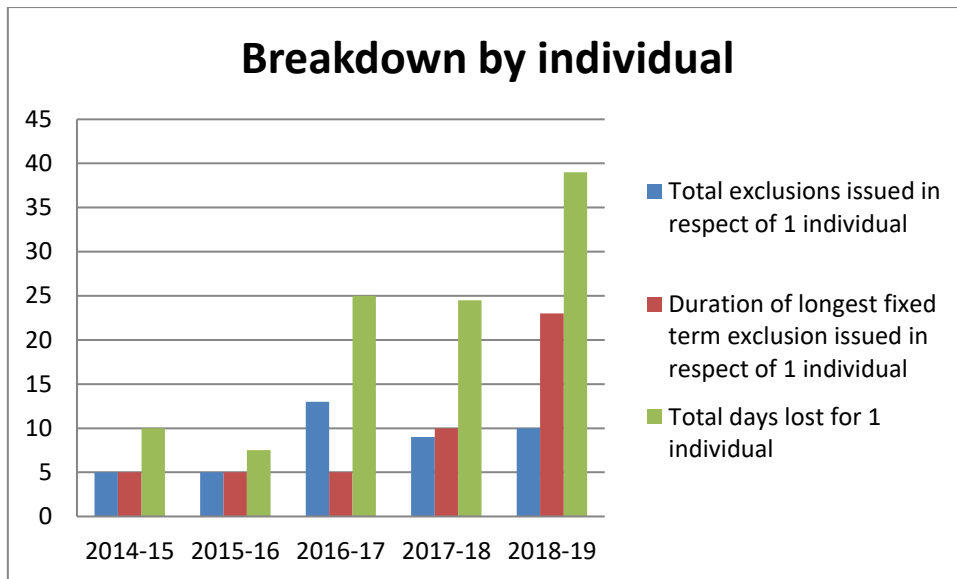
The average number of days spent out of school for an individual child looked after on fixed term exclusions during 2018-2019 was 6.9 days. This is an increase when compared with an average length of 6.3 days for the previous year.



The highest number of fixed term exclusions issued in respect of one child was 10. This figure is an increase when compared with the previous academic year when the highest number issued in respect of one child was 9 exclusions.

The longest duration of a single fixed term exclusion issued in respect of one child looked after during academic year 2018-2019 was 23 days. This figure is a significant increase when compared with the previous year when the figure was 10.

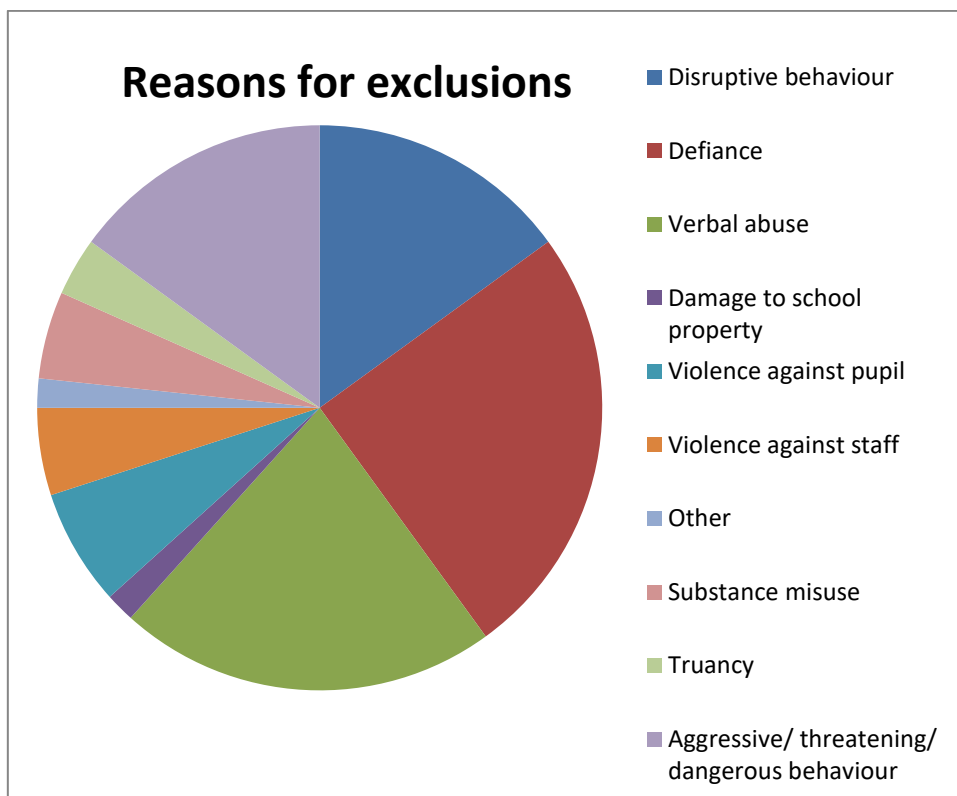
During academic year 2018-2019 the total number of days lost for one looked after child as a result of repeated exclusions was 39 days. This figure is an increase when compared with the previous academic year when the figure was 24.5 days.



Of the 21 individual Blaenau Gwent looked after children who received fixed term exclusions from school, 16 (76%) received more than one fixed term exclusion during the year. This figure is higher when compared with the previous academic year when 62% of our children looked after received more than one fixed term exclusion.

#### Reasons for fixed term exclusions

The primary reasons for the majority of the exclusions issued during academic year 2018-2019 were defiance and verbal abuse towards staff.



## Exclusions for primary and secondary aged looked after children

Of the 153 children of statutory school age who remained looked after at the end of the school year 2018-2019 there were slightly more children of secondary school age than primary.

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Primary aged pupils   | 72 |
| Secondary aged pupils | 81 |

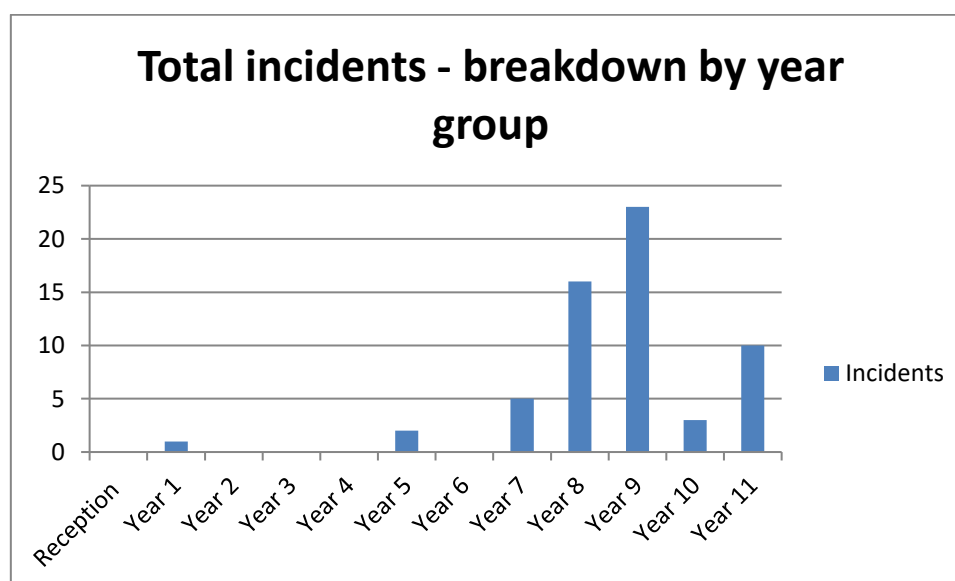
95% of all fixed term exclusions (57 out of 60 incidents) for Blaenau Gwent children looked after were issued in respect of secondary school aged children during 2018-2019. Only 2 children of primary school age received fixed term exclusions during academic year 2018-2019. This is a decrease when compared with the previous academic year when 5 children of primary school age received fixed term exclusions.

## Exclusion incidents by year group and gender

During 2018-19 - year 1 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 19 individuals of secondary school age who received fixed term exclusions during the year, 6 children were in key stage 3 (13 incidents) and 13 were in key stage 4 (44 incidents). 18 of the 44 (41%) exclusions issued in respect of children in key stage 4 can be attributed to two children.

There is no discernible difference between female and male pupils receiving exclusions with an almost even split.



## Exclusions for children attending Blaenau Gwent schools

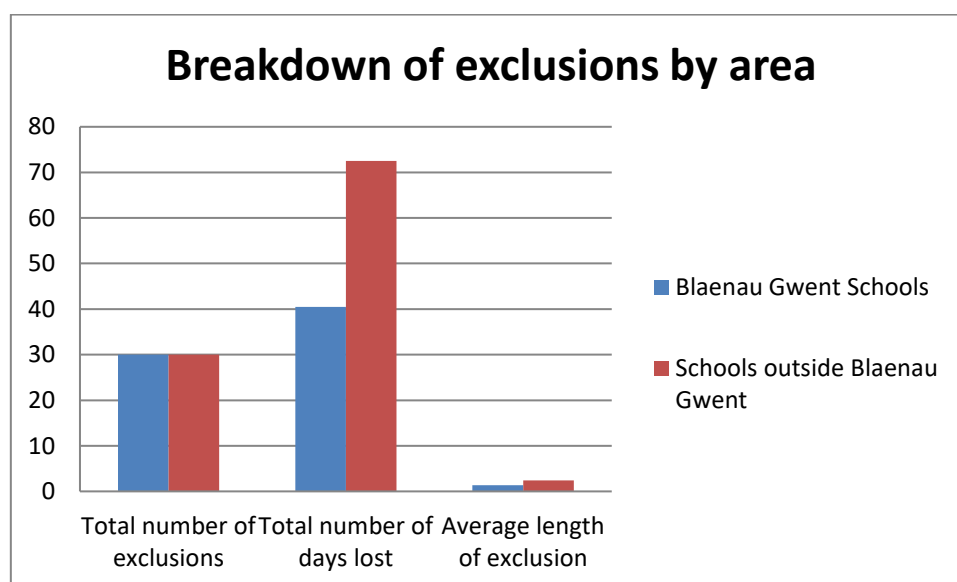
Of the 153 children of statutory school age who remained looked after at the end of the school year 2018-2019 the majority continue to be educated in mainstream school settings and in Blaenau Gwent.

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Educated in Blaenau Gwent      | 87 |
| Educated outside Blaenau Gwent | 66 |

During academic year 2018-2019 half of the fixed term exclusions were issued in respect of our looked after children attending Blaenau Gwent schools (total 40.5 days lost) of this 87% of fixed term exclusions were issued by mainstream schools.

Over a quarter of all fixed term exclusions issued by mainstream secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent were attributed to one child looked after.

The average length of fixed term exclusions issued by schools in Blaenau Gwent was 1.35 days and 2.4 days for schools outside of Blaenau Gwent.



#### **Breakdown of exclusions from mainstream secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent**

| School                                     | Number of pupils excluded | Number of incidents | Number of days lost | Average days lost per incident of exclusion |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Abertillery Learning Community - Secondary | 3                         | 7                   | 7                   | 1   |
| Ebbw Fawr Learning Community – Secondary   | 2                         | 10                  | 11                  | 1.1   |

|                            |   |   |     |     |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----|-----|
| Brynmawr Foundation School | 2 | 3 | 8   | 2.6 |
| Tredegar Comprehensive     | 1 | 3 | 5.5 | 1.8 |

### Breakdown of exclusions from special school settings in Blaenau Gwent

| School           | Number of pupils excluded | Number of incidents | Number of days lost | Average days lost per incident of exclusion |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| The River Centre | 2                         | 4                   | 6                   | 1.5   |

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

Half of all fixed term exclusions were issued by schools outside Blaenau Gwent (total of 72.5 days lost) of this more than a third (37%) were issued in respect of one child.

| Local Authority   | Education setting   | Number of exclusions | Number of days lost | Average days lost per incident of exclusion |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Bristol           | Special School      | 2                    | 8                   | 4   |
| Caerphilly        | Mainstream          | 4                    | 39.5                | 9.9   |
| Carmarthenshire   | Mainstream          | 10                   | 16                  | 1.6   |
| Pembrokeshire     | Mainstream          | 3                    | 4                   | 1.3   |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | Pupil Referral Unit | 4                    | 13                  | 3.3   |
| Swansea           | Independent School  | 1                    | 17                  | 17  |
| Torfaen           | Mainstream          | 7                    | 8.5                 | 1.2   |

Of the exclusions listed above, 3 children have undergone statutory assessment which has resulted in either a change of school placement to a more specialist setting, for the academic year 2019/20 or an enhanced level of support.

### Fixed term exclusions for looked after children with special educational needs

Of the total number of children looked after who received fixed term exclusions from school during academic year 2018-2019, 8 (38%) had statements of special educational needs. This is a decrease when compared with the previous academic year when almost half (48%) 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 all of these pupils was social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The primary reason why Blaenau Gwent children looked after with statements of SEN were excluded from school was for violence against other pupils.

27% (16 out of 60 incidents) of the overall exclusions issued were in respect of children who had statements of special educational needs.

### **Breakdown of exclusions by individual school settings**

The majority of fixed term exclusions (82% - 49 incidents) continue to be issued by mainstream schools. The remaining exclusions were issued by alternative settings.

A total of 4 exclusions were issued by Pupil Referral Units. 1 fixed term exclusion was issued by an independent school setting outside the local authority area. 6 exclusions were issued by special school settings for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The number of exclusions issued by Pupil Referral Units is slightly lower when compared with the previous academic year when the figure was 5. The number of exclusions issued by independent school settings during the year has also decreased when compared with previous years.

### **Changes to education placements following fixed term exclusions**

3 of the children who received fixed term exclusions in 2018-2019 experienced changes to their education placement following the exclusions prior to the end of the academic year 2018 19. This is lower when compared with previous years when the figure was 9 in 2017-2018 and 7 in 2016-2017.

| <b>Number of pupils</b> | <b>Change of education placement</b>                     |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1                       | Mainstream to Pupil Referral Unit outside Blaenau Gwent  |
| 1                       | Mainstream to Special school setting in Blaenau Gwent    |
| 1                       | Mainstream to alternative package of education - tuition |

These children were responsible for 12% of the overall exclusions issued in respect of Blaenau Gwent children looked after in 2018-2019 and 29% of the total days lost during the year.

In all three cases there have been no further exclusions issued in respect of any of the above children following the change to their education placement.

### **Placement breakdowns following fixed term exclusions**



Of the 21 children looked after who received fixed term exclusions during 2018-2019, 10 experienced permanent changes to their care placements during the course of the year. This higher than the previous year when the figure was 5 in 2017-2018.

| <b>Number of pupils</b> | <b>Care placement at end of academic year</b> |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1                       | Independent Living                            |
| 5                       | Foster placement                              |
| 1                       | Placement with family member                  |
| 3                       | Residential                                   |

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## **Action Plan 2019-2020**

### **Evaluation:**

- Incidents of exclusions are still too high
- A very small number of children are responsible for a significant proportion of the overall exclusions
- Monitoring of pupil level exclusion data is embedded within the LAC education team and is effective in informing Officer work and dialogue with schools
- Transition to secondary school and within year groups is a key area for monitoring and action
- Some secondary school settings issue longer exclusions in duration on average than others. This is particularly evident when considering schools outside the Blaenau Gwent area
- The proportion of exclusions from Blaenau Gwent schools issued in respect of children looked after has decreased when compared with the previous academic year
- There is a correlation between care placement instability and exclusions.
- The use of exclusions by independent specialist out of county schools has considerably reduced and no longer appears to be impacting on the vulnerability of placements in the way that they previously.

### **Actions:**

- Wider representation at re-integration meetings by appropriate agency supporting the child/young person
- Share good practice in the development and coordination of effective Pastoral Support Plans, promoting school to school working.
- Scrutinise exclusion data with relevant education officers on a regular basis
- Termly meetings with secondary schools to include a focus on those children at risk of exclusion and those who have experienced exclusions.
- Evidence of good practice and challenges in relation to exclusions are reported to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting group and Wider Group
- Share the exclusion report with schools and education directorate

- Overview of exclusions to be considered by the Vulnerable Learners Sub-group with a view to providing additional support for learners at risk of further exclusion attending Blaenau Gwent schools.