

Dunbartonshire Council

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 20 February 2013

Subject: Educational attainment of West Dunbartonshire Council's children and young people who are "looked after."

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides information to members on levels of educational attainment for Looked After Children (LAC) at Primary 3 and 7, second year of secondary schooling (S2), and 4th, 5th and 6th year of school.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee members in their role as Corporate Parents are asked to:
- a) note the content of the report;
 - b) note that a follow up report will be provided to the Committee next year; and
 - c) to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of staff from Education, Social Work and Health and the pupils who have contributed to this performance.

3. Background

- 3.1** Children who are looked after is defined in law as the following:
- a) For whom the local authority is providing accommodation under s25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995
 - b) Who are subject to a supervision requirement and in respect of whom they are the relevant local authority;
 - c) Who is subject to an order made, or authorisation or warrant granted by virtue of Chapter 2, 3 or 4 of Part II of the 1995 Act (e.g. child assessment order, child protection order);
 - d) Who is subject to an equivalent order which has been made in England, Wales or Northern Ireland;
 - e) In respect of whom a permanence order is in force.

The majority of children who are considered to be Looked After will come into one of the following two categories:

- a) Looked After at Home;
- b) Looked After Away from Home

- 3.2** West Dunbartonshire Council is responsible to all Looked after Children whether they live at home or are placed elsewhere. At the time of preparation of this report, West Dunbartonshire Council is responsible for 361 LAC aged 0-19 years of whom 229 are looked after away from home, with the remaining 132 being looked after at home. Within Educational Services pupils who have been “previously looked after” are recorded within the SEEMIS information management system, as due to the complexities of their home situation they may return to being LAC. For the purposes of this report with regards to the results from Standardised Assessment the category of “previously looked after” is included.
- 3.3** The Scottish Government produces an annual report presenting key findings on a range of educational outcome statistics for children or young people who have been looked after continuously during the 12-month period in different types of care placements, and for pupils with multiple placements within the school year. There were only 10 West Dunbartonshire children in this category for the purposes of this report.
- 3.4** The statistics from the Government’s report have been supplemented by the addition of data from WDC thereby creating a second report which forms the basis of the analysis within this report and is found attached as an appendix. The total number of children reported on for the purposes of this final report is 89 out of a total of 361 LAC pupils (September 2012) which represents 25% of WDC’s LAC pupils. All young people’s results in S4 upwards who are deemed to be LAC are included in this report except for one young person.
- 3.5** For the purposes of this report the results from the GL Assessments in reading and maths and “tariff points” from SQA accreditation are used. The tariff score of a pupil is calculated by simply adding together all the tariff points accumulated from all the different course levels and awards he/she attains. It is an extended version of the United Points Score Scale and includes Scottish Qualifications Authority and some other qualifications.
- 3.6** The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) states that LAC are deemed to have additional support needs (ASN) unless proved otherwise. Therefore within this report the performance of LAC pupils is benchmarked against other ASN pupils as well as all pupils involved in the assessments.
- 3.7** Educational Services operates a process called *Staged Intervention* to identify and support pupils who have additional support needs. There are four stages of Staged Intervention with levels 3 and 4 representing the highest level of need and are used for the purposes of this report.
- 3.8** WDC’s Corporate Parenting Strategy states that Elected Members should be supported in discharging their role as Corporate Parents by having the necessary information to ask key questions regarding the care, education, health and wider opportunities of our looked after children and young people.

3.9 It should be noted that the standardised tests at P3, P7 and S2 referred to in paragraphs 4.1 - 4.5 of this report were introduced to West Dunbartonshire schools for the first time in 2011/12. The figures from these tests will provide a helpful benchmark against which performance in future years can be measured.

4. Main Issues

Results from Primary 3 and 7 standardised tests

4.1 Figures and tables 1 to 6 (to be found on pages 4 to 9) from the appendix show the reading and maths test levels of the various categories of LAC compared to the national benchmark and for ASN pupils with more complex needs.

4.2 The results of the maths and reading testing at Primary 3 show that pupils performed less well than the national benchmark. However, all categories of LAC scored higher than for pupils with ASN.

Results from second year of secondary schooling (S2)

4.3 The results of the reading testing at second year of secondary show that all pupils performed less well than the national benchmark. Children looked after away from home have performed better than the other categories of LAC and ASN. The score for children being looked after at home was significantly worse than the other categories.

4.4 The results of the maths testing at S2 show that for all pupils including looked after children and those with more complex additional support needs the average score was significantly below the national average.

4.5 Pupils with additional support needs (stages 3 and 4) have performed better when compared with looked after children.

Results from SQA from the fourth year at secondary school and above (Section 2 of the report)

4.6 Tables 7 & 8 and figure 7 to 12 (to be found on pages 11 to 16) from the appendix shows the reading and maths test levels of the various categories of LAC compared to the national benchmark and for ASN pupils with more complex needs.

4.7 Figure 8 on page 12 shows that in 2011/12 the average tariff score of lowest performing 20% of looked after children in S4 was 62; slightly lower than 68, the lowest performing 20% of West Dunbartonshire pupils in S4. The national figure for this performance measure is not available.

- 4.8** Figure 9 on page 13, shows that the average tariff score of looked after children in S4 was 117, compared with 170 for all S4 pupils in West Dunbartonshire for the year 2011/12. The national figure for this measure will be available in December 2013.
- 4.9** Figure 10 on page 14, shows that in 2011/12, the average tariff score of looked after children in S4, S5 and S6 from West Dunbartonshire was 128. The figure is higher than the national average tariff score of 79 for all looked after children leaving school in 2010/11.
- 4.10** Figure 11 on page 15, shows that the average tariff score of children looked after at home in stage S4, S5, and S6 from West Dunbartonshire was 147; and for those looked after away from home was 113. Collectively, their average tariff score for the year 2011/12 was 128.

School Leavers' Destinations

- 4.11** Figure 6 shows the percentage of WDC's LAC school leavers in positive destinations for 2011/12 compared to the national figures. Initial destinations of LAC from WDC in positive destination was 80% per cent compared to 64% at the national level.
- 4.12** Across Scotland the attainment levels of LAC pupils are lower than the average for all pupils; however, in terms of tariff points WDC's LAC pupils are performing strongly when compared to the national LAC average.
- 4.13** Within the Council, LAC pupils' average score is higher than those for ASN except for the S2 maths results
- 4.14** The category of LAC that generally performed less well, as evidenced from the GL Assessment, was the one for "previously looked after."
- 4.15** The percentage of LAC in positive destinations is significantly higher when compared to the similar cohort elsewhere in Scotland and stands comparison with the national norm for all pupils.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There continues to be a significant financial investment in school based measures for children deemed to be looked after particularly if at risk of being excluded or not attending. Many of the measures are dependent on enhanced pupil-staff ratios, and intensive input from specialist staff from Education, Social Work and Health. These services require additional funding on top of the mainstream budget which is provided from the Community Planning Partnership investment.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Failure to deliver improved educational outcomes for LAC represents a risk to their future wellbeing and achievements.
- 7.2** Failure to deliver services for looked after children represents a risk that the Council may fail to discharge its duties under the terms of the Additional Support for Learning Act and various Children Acts.

8. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** Educational Services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change of policy.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Regular consultations on the views of all pupils being looked after take place. The views are collected by Social Work and Education from the various review meetings that take place to consider an individual pupil's progress.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The information from this report demonstrates that LAC are being supported and are therefore better equipped to benefit from employment, training or education opportunities thereby contributing to the social and economic regeneration priority.
- 10.2** The information from this report demonstrates that the judicious application of funding within an early intervention preventative model may prevent the need for high levels of public resources to be spent at a later date to alleviate social problems and tackling "failure demand." This accords with the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 10.3** As part of the strategic aim of improving life chances of children and young people, it is essential that West Dunbartonshire Council fulfils its Duty as corporate parent to Looked After Children. Improving attainment levels for this vulnerable group is an essential element of this Duty.

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Background Papers: EIA Screening

Appendix: Educational Services report on Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children in West Dunbartonshire Council

Wards Affected: All