

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 5th June 2019**

Subject: Scottish Attainment Challenge Care Experienced Children Fund in West Dunbartonshire Schools**1. Purpose****1.1** The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform members of West Dunbartonshire Council's Scottish Attainment Challenge grant offer for Care Experienced Children and Young People
- Inform of governance and scrutiny arrangements for planning outcomes, spending and reporting.
- Inform of outcomes of spend for session 2018-2019

2. Recommendations**2.1** Members of the Educational Services Committee are asked to:

- a) discuss and note West Dunbartonshire Council's (WDC) practices in relation to Care Experienced Children Fund between Integrated Children's Services partners.
- b) discuss and note West Dunbartonshire Council's Governance for the Care Experienced Children's Fund.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in education. This can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 3.2** The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in February 2015. It is underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.
- 3.3** For session 2018-2019, West Dunbartonshire was allocated £243,200 in Care Experienced Children's funding. This funding is aimed at providing support to narrow the attainment gap in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, similar to Pupil Equity Funding managed by Head teachers. However this is aimed at supporting care experienced children and young people aged from

birth to 25 and will be managed directly by Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Worker Officer.

3.4 The Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Worker have planned with partners to improve outcomes, informed by assessment information. Partners are expected to collaborate to agree funding and plans to close the gap and overcome barriers to accessing education.

3.5 Educational research from around the world has identified some key ways in which attainment can be raised and gaps between peers narrowed. No one way of narrowing the gap and raising attainment is proven to be the definitive answer for a range of settings. It is clear from research that schools can do this best working in collaboration with others.

4. Main Issues

4.1 We are committed to ensuring positive outcomes and life chances for all of our children and young people and to the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child. We support collaboration with partners in ensuring planning which is focussed on interventions which will ensure best outcomes to narrow the gap. We are committed to ensuring our strategies are informed by relevant data reflecting the needs the community we serve. We have ensured appropriate governance and support procedures are in place for planning, financial scrutiny and reporting on impact of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding for Care Experienced Children and Young People.
(App 1)

4.2 In session 2018 -2019 partners successfully engaged in a range of interventions to narrow the gap; reflecting the twelve identified interventions for equity.

4.3 Care Experienced Children Fund plans and spend for session 2018-2019 were:

Workstream:	Targeted cohort:	Rationale:
MCR Pathways	Care Experienced and vulnerable young people of secondary age.	To improve life chances and outcomes for care experienced young people of secondary school age with group and individual support programmes aimed at improving resilience, commitment, confidence and motivation. The service provides 1-1 mentoring opportunities which is school based. Our aim is to address the outcome gap between care-experienced young people and their peers and support

		young people in or on the edges of the care system to realise their full potential through education. MCR recruits, trains and matches each volunteer mentor with a young person.
Interrupted Learners' Outcomes	All care experienced children and young people	To improve involvement and engagement in education for Looked After children, young people and their carers leading to raised attainment, increased attendance and motivation. To establish and support schools, Children's House staff and educational establishments in identifying, developing and improving tracking and monitoring systems for involvement and engagement of care experienced pupils, not in education and lead the development of wide ranging opportunities for children, young people and their carers to be engaged and included in the lives of their schools and plan necessary supports required to do so.
Speech, language and communication skills	Care experienced and vulnerable 0-5 year olds	To narrow the vocabulary gap between care experienced and vulnerable children and their peers. To build capacity in parents and carers to develop and apply modelling skills in the home and community setting. This is a bespoke programme of work targeting children and families identified through attainment and engagement data; aimed at supporting and encouraging enhanced involvement and proven language development strategies.
Family Group Therapy	All care experienced children and young people	To provide and facilitate a family group conferencing approach. This methodology has been proven to be effective in reducing the numbers of children looked after away from home, while supporting families to identify their own strengths and draw on their own resources to support children and young people at risk of becoming looked after and accommodated.
Comedy and Confidence	Young people between 15-18 years of age struggling to maintain engagement with education and training or work placement	To improve young people's life chances by developing their communication skills and self confidence. This programme of intervention is targeted at young people currently struggling to attain relevant training, qualifications and opportunities. It supports development of a range of inter and intra -personal skills; leading to increased ability to improve outcomes and

		life chances.
Champions' Board-supporting engagement and involvement	All care experienced school aged children	This project aims to further develop liaison between carers, the Champions Board and Educational settings. It will develop and improve joined up approaches to improving engagement and involvement in the wider life of the school and community for care experienced children and young people. It will establish effective support partnerships and networks for carers with regards to accessing supports; enabling or continuing participation and involvement in the range of in and out of school wider experiences on offer.
Y-Sort It – mentoring service	Young people 12 plus who are Looked After at home	This programme provides weekly mentoring opportunities for those looked after at home. It aims to improve life chances by providing 1-1 relationship with a trusted adult. It supports the development of skills in establishing and maintaining relationships which might be challenging and builds confidence and ability to self regulate behaviour.
Homemakers	All children and young people Looked After at home.	This intervention will target cohorts where engagement with school, attendance and late-coming are impacting on attainment. Staff will plan with carers a package of homemaker support aimed at increasing above with a view to raising attainment, engagement and school experiences for the children.

4.4 Measurements of success and impact have varied from project to project; containing a range of statistical and softer data. Realistically, it is expected that longitudinal analysis of impact is necessary to determine the success of most interventions in narrowing the gap. It is also apparent that no one intervention alone will raise attainment.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications as a result of this report, however, these outcome focussed plans aim to improve the life chances of care experienced children and young people.
(App 2)

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Financial scrutiny has been ensured via monitoring at Integrated Children's Services level, reporting updates to Senior Officers and WDC Finance Business Partners.

6.2 WDC's allocation was £243,200 based on 304 Looked after Children aged 5-15 (as at 31 July 2017). As funding was for part year only the amount of grant per child was set at £800 (rather than £1,200 as is the case with PEF funding). At 31 March 2019 the full amount of the grant had been spent.

6.3 We are currently in the process of formally procuring the services of MCR Pathways and Y-Sort It with the support of procurement services.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 If the Council is unable to ensure positive outcomes for children, we will not be meeting their needs (Children and Young People Act 2014) (Equalities Act 2010).

7.2 If the Council is unable to narrow the poverty related gap this may result in reputational damage.

7.3 If the Council were not able to manage and monitor spends appropriately then there is risk of reputational damage and inequity.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The supports and guidance enhance the quality of the service provided to children and young people and therefore can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities.

9. Consultation

9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

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Appendices: 1. Governance Framework
2. Panel application form

Background Papers: Getting it Right for Every Child (Scottish Government
2015)

Wards Affected: All Wards