

Agenda Item	14.
Report No	PEO 50/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People Committee

Date: 6 December 2017

Report Title: Education of Looked After Children

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out an improvement plan to address the education of Looked After Children.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Approve the attached improvement plan.
 - ii. Approve the creation of a time-limited post of Programme Manager for the Education of Looked After Children, which will be essential to the delivery of the plan.

3. Strategic context

- 3.1 Committee Members were provided with information on education outcomes for Looked After Children in a previous report. As reported, there are challenges in meeting the needs of this group of children and young people, not least because they are not a homogenous group with identical support needs. It is recognised that due to a mix of learning disability, complex health needs and adverse childhood experiences, young people may not be able to be maintained in mainstream school or, occasionally, in a Highland special school without additional tailored support.
- 3.2 If their needs are not addressed, they will not only fail to achieve their full potential (which is a concern from a Corporate Parenting perspective) but in turn this will impact on efforts in Highland to Close the Attainment Gap in terms of educational outcomes.
- 3.3 For some young people, this leads to further pressure on their home circumstances and often to the need for the young person to be accommodated. Experience has shown that even otherwise suitable foster or residential placements can break down where the young person has no effective education package in place.
- 3.4 This can lead, in turn, to a request for them to be placed in a spot-purchased placement outwith Highland which is able to offer a combined education and care package. These placements are expensive and are variable in quality of education. Hence, it is important to consider how to redress this cycle by investing in enhanced support in Highland, which would ultimately reduce costs.

4. Improvement plan

- 4.1 The proposed improvement plan, attached as **Appendix 1**, represents an ambitious and substantial set of actions and, if it is to be successfully delivered within the timescales, it will require an additional post of Programme Manager for the Education of Looked After Children. It is envisaged that this would be time-limited to 3 years.
- 4.2 There are links to the Council's Redesign programme, which has looked at the subject of Looked After Children and is currently considering services commissioned in Children's Services, which include a range of services for Looked After Children.
- 4.3 There will also be regular updates on progress at the People Committee.

5. Implications

- 5.1 **Resources:** the improvement plan is designed to maximise long-term savings on a budget which is currently projected to significantly overspend. Without a radical shift in approach, the overspend will continue and it is recommended that the improvement plan represents an opportunity to both produce lower costs and better outcomes. The main costs will be from revenue but there may be a need for some capital resource.
- 5.2 **Legal:** there are no legal implications.
- 5.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** Looked After Children are more likely to come from families who experience deprivation. They are also more likely to have particular needs due to health, disability or additional learning needs. The improvement plan is designed to ensure that these children are given a high priority for services.
- 5.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever:** a reduction in Out of Authority placements would

significantly reduce travel time for staff.

- 5.5 **Risk:** no new risks are identified. Services would be designed to meet the needs of young people.
- 5.6 **Gaelic:** if any young person was a Gaelic speaker, their support plan would take this into account.

Designation	Director of Care and Learning
Date	22 November 2017
Author	Sandra Campbell, Head of Children's Services

BRAG Key:
 Completed - **Blue**
 Not yet started - **White**
 On time - **Green**
 A little behind time - **Amber**
 Significantly delayed - **Red**

The Education of Looked After Children and Young People

Date of Plan – November 2017

Improvement priority:
1. Ensure an accurate data set for Looked After Children and Young People

Actions	Measures / evaluation	Timescale	Lead	BRAG
Gather data on a regular basis to track trends and improvements Data sets to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of LAC and the profile of the children/young people • Types and costs of placements • Number of placement changes • Type and number of ASN • Number on PT Timetables • Attendance • Exclusion rate • Attainment • Wider achievement • Post-school outcomes 	Tracking the outcomes for LAC in relation to the data sets agreed will demonstrate improved outcomes.	Baseline established for each data set by December 2017. Quarterly updates provided thereafter.	Head of ASN	
	Comparing trend data with national data sets and those from comparator authorities will show that YP in Highland achieve well			
		Data on LAC will be accurately recorded by schools on SEEMiS. 4 monthly cross checks will indicate 95% accuracy	Baseline by December 2017. Monitoring 3x a year thereafter	Programme manager and Head teachers
	Sense checking and sampling the data gathered will ensure 95% accuracy.		Programme manager	
Make use of improvement methodology to identify issues and assess the effect of addressing these.	Using the IHI improvement methodology and the data available, will demonstrate improved outcomes for LAC		Programme manager	

Progress since last Plan

Improvement priority:**2. Staff across the Care and Learning Service will prioritise CEYP and address their needs through their practice**

Actions	Measures / evaluation	Timescale	Lead	BRAG
Provide training for staff on developmental approaches, adverse childhood experiences (ACE), resilience, building positive relationships, trauma informed practice etc.	Training on ACE to be provided to all staff groups Training on Autistic Spectrum Disorder	by June 2018 By October 2018	Head of ASN Head of ASN	
Follow established procedure for exclusions so that exclusions of LAC only take place as a very last resort and only after discussion and joint planning with the Lead Professional or manager, and plans to re-integrate are immediately addressed.	Audit of practice in relation to exclusion will demonstrate that the needs of LAC are considered and discussed with the Lead Professional prior to any exclusion from school and that the number of exclusions is reduced.	Audit to be undertaken by December 2017 and quarterly thereafter.	Head teachers Audit by Programme manager Care and Learning managers to discuss with HTs.	
The ASN manager (for the area in which a new placement is being planned) will facilitate an education package being put in place when they return to Highland.	LAC are able to access education on return to Highland without significant delay.	From January 2018 onwards	ASN Managers	
Create a flow chart for social workers/Lead Professionals showing how to negotiate an education package.	Reduced delays when LAC move placement.	By April 2018	Programme manager	
Re-inforce the role of Designated teacher for LAC in all schools.	Needs of LAC are addressed.	From February 2018	Head of Education	

LAC with additional learning needs will have their learning needs specified in the Child's Plan	Reduction in number of LAC on part-time time-tables	By April 2018	Lead Professionals	
	98% of Child's Plans for LAC will have the level of ASN (1-4) clearly identified in section 1.	By April 2018	Lead Professionals	
	Audit of Child's Plans LAC will clearly articulate learning needs	By April 2018	Programme manage	

Progress since last plan

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Improvement priority:**3. Ensure equity of educational provision and experience for Care Experienced C/YP**

Actions	Measures / evaluation	Timescale	Lead	BRAG
Use child's planning process to consider what could be put in place to return a child/young person to Highland in an Out of Authority Placement, at each review.	Reduce the number of LAC attending schools outwith Highland by returning some YP to Highland	By February 2018	Head of Children's Services	
Review the educational experiences of children and young people at residential schools. Create a process involving the Lead Professional and Educational Psychologist to track the attendance, educational programme and educational outcomes for children/young people.	Information on the educational programme, expectations and outcomes will be clearly identified within the child's plan for all c/yp in schools out of authority.	By June 2018	Head of ASN/ Programme Manager	
<p>Work with care providers to develop a range of care plus education placements in Highland</p> <p>Work with contracted residential providers to develop education support linked to care homes.</p> <p>Assess the need for additional education support linked to Highland Council residential provision</p>	Reduce the number and cost of OOA placements	By December 2018	Head of Children's Services	
Create a new post of Programme Manager for the Education of LAC to lead on actions and work across services to take forward the entire	Ability to progress actions in the plan	By February 2018	Head of Children's Services	
Progress since last plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 				

Improvement priority:**4. The education of Care Experienced children and young people will be prioritised in the allocation of resources**

Actions	Measures / evaluation	Timescale	Lead	BRAG
Review the model of off-site and enhanced provision in Highland and review the allocation of places to ensure that the needs of LAC can be effectively met and the need for OOA placements is reduced.	Review completed	by April 2018	Head of ASN	
Explore the enhanced use of third sector provision to support a range of effective preventative strategies for LAC to support access to education locally in Highland.	Reduce number of LAC in Out of Authority placements	From December 2017	Head of ASN	
Gather examples of creative planning and flexible use of budgets at an Area level that have led to positive outcomes for LAC	Case examples shared at Directorate and across Area teams	By February 2018 and ongoing	Programme Manager for alternatives to OOA placements	
All new school provision to be planned to meet the needs of pupils who require additional support and/or are on the Autistic Spectrum who may require some small group support.	New schools are better equipped to sustain LAC and those with ASD	From April 2018 onwards	Head of Education	
Create new in-house resources which combine care and education support similar to the Killen model.	Reduce the number of Out of Authority placements	From April 2018 onwards	Head of Children's Services	
Deliver an integrated model of support for placements in Highland, including support to families, to foster carers and to residential carers, with input from CAMHS and educational support. This is a Redesign action.	Reduce the need for Out of Authority placements	By April 2019	Head of Children's Services	
Improve the capability of special schools in Highland to hold onto young people with ASD who would otherwise be at risk of being placed Out of Authority.	Reduce the need for Out of Authority placements	From April 2018	Head of ASN	

Continue and expand the use of placement funding to create education support packages enabling LAC to return to Highland.	Return LAC from Out of Authority placements	Ongoing	Head of Children's Services	
Continue to review the possibility of devolving the Out of Authority placement budget to area level.	Flexible funding available at area level, not requiring Head of Service approval.	By December 2018	Head of Children's Services	
Progress since last plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 				