

**CORPORATE PARENTING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

2 October 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS SERVICES

**CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT AND VIRTUAL
SCHOOL AND VIRTUAL HEAD TEACHER UPDATE**

Reasons for the Report

1. This report has been prepared to provide the Committee with an update in relation to Children Looked After (CLA) in Education and the Virtual School and Virtual Head Teacher update- **Appendix A**.
2. The report will discuss how the Virtual School and Virtual Head Teacher is working to further Priority 4 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy: Educational achievement and Training.

Background

3. Since the last Educational Report to CPAC 2021-2022 there have been changes to the LACE (Looked After Children in Education) Team, the assessment processes for schools linked to the curriculum changes as the Curriculum for Wales is adopted across the year groups and key stages and the continued implementation of the ALN Reform.

Issues

Child Looked After Virtual School Cardiff

4. The application for Welsh Government pilot funding was successful in July 2022 and the pilot for the Virtual School and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher in Wales started for Cardiff in July 2022.
5. The application for the next year of Welsh Government funding for the Virtual School and Virtual School Headteacher has been received. The completed application was submitted on 20th September.

Curriculum for Wales

6. For primary schools, the roll-out commenced in September 2022. Secondary schools who chose to roll-out the curriculum to Year 7 also started in September 2022; with the curriculum being mandatory for Year 7 and Year 8 from September 2023. The curriculum will roll-out year by year until Year 11 by 2026.
7. Assessments across the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 have changed in line with the curriculum. Schools will develop their own assessment and tracking processes to measure individual pupil progress and the VS and VS HT will be working with schools to review the Personal Education Plans (PEP) format.
8. GCSE qualifications remain for 2022-2023. There are plans to reimagine a new generation of GCSE qualifications and reshape the wider 14-16 qualifications offer through Qualifications Wales.

ALN Reform

9. There are a number of challenges faced by Education as a result of the ALN reforms. They are facilitating the transfer of existing statements to Individual Development Programmes, carrying out reviews and ensuring that there is the correct provision to meet the many complex needs of the children and young people. A Specialist Inclusion Teacher oversees our children and young people who have identified Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
10. The numbers of Local Authority maintained Individual Development Programmes for our children and young people are increasing. In 2021-2022 there were 7 new notifications in mandated years and in 2022-2023 there were 24.
11. The number of Children Looked After in Cardiff continues to increase, as of 31st March 2023 there are 1057 CLA in Cardiff. The needs of the children in the system are becoming more complex and we are still experiencing the challenges brought by the pandemic the subsequent recovery from it. This remains an issue for all children, but for our children and young people who have already experienced high levels of trauma and attachment difficulties, the pandemic has brought further challenges.
12. The Virtual School and the Virtual School Head Teacher work closely with schools and education settings, Children's Services and Health to make sure our Children Looked After's ability to learn and readiness to learn are prioritised, as their social and emotional and mental health wellbeing is central to their educational outcomes.
13. Performance Information
 - 63% of Cardiff Children Looked After are educated in a Cardiff School or setting
 - 31% of Cardiff Children Looked After are educated in an out of county setting

- 5% of Cardiff Children Looked After are Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)
- 1% of Cardiff Children Looked After not in provision

14. What is being done to support Children Looked After in education?

- Collaborative and integrated working with Education and Children's Services
- Working with schools and other education settings in and out of county
- Leadership and managing the change from the Looked After Children Education to the Virtual School Team
- Developing partnerships and relationships with other professionals and agencies

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications relating to the Virtual School and Virtual Head Teacher. The service is funded through the Welsh Government & Central Government via pilot funding. The application for the next year of Welsh Government funding has been received and the completed application must be received by 20th September 2023.

Legal Implications

16. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

17. To note the update on the Annual Education Report of Children Looked After and the Virtual School and Virtual Head Teacher update and to make any observations or comments.
18. To consider how the service meets the needs of our children who are looked after and how it is reported to the Committee going forward.
19. To engage with the Welsh Government to consider its plans and expectations regarding the grant funding arrangement of the Virtual School and Virtual School Head Teacher. Specifically, the CPAC is asked to explore the length of the grant with the Welsh Government, which will support increased longer-term planning of the service.

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
Director, Childrens Services
13 September 2023

Appendix A- Children Looked After In Education Annual Report And Virtual School And Virtual Head Teacher Update

