

Care-Experienced Children and Young People Attainment Fund

Background

1. In June 2018 [Scottish Government announced additional funding](#) for local authorities of £1200 per year, per school aged looked-after child, to improve educational outcomes for **care-experienced children and young people between the ages of 0 and 26**. This additional funding is made available through the [Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund](#). The money is made available to local authorities, with the responsibility for spending plans lying jointly with the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Education Officer (or their equivalents). There is a strong emphasis in the [National operating guidance for use of the Care-Experienced Fund 2019-20](#) on a joined up, collaborative and multi-agency approach to the use of this additional funding. There is also the recognition that issues which can impact on attainment and achievement for care-experienced pupils don't always originate or take place in school and that additional resource may be required to support families in a more holistic way.
2. Local authorities have taken varied approaches to the planning and implementation of this additional fund. Flexibility and creativity in approaches has been encouraged by Scottish Government in an attempt to allow a needs led planning process. Due to the number of looked-after children varying between local authorities, there is a difference in funding allocations for each local authority. This [part year breakdown of allocations from 2018](#) shows this local variation in allocated amounts. Grant awards for 19/20 have not been updated on the Scottish Government website and there will be some change due to the fluctuation in numbers, but it is unlikely that the funding amounts will have changed substantially at a local level from the 2018 figures. Some local authorities have located the funds solely within either education or social work budgets, necessitating single agency planning; some have split the money between departments, with each department agreeing on an amount to spend, and some have taken a joint approach to planning and implementing the spending.

Current Approaches

3. Education Scotland carried out an analysis of the range of approaches that were being taken in each local authority after the 2018-19 government returns and [presented this overview](#) to the CELCIS Education Forum in November 2019.
4. One approach which has emerged in a number of local areas is that of the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT). A relatively new role in Scotland (Aberdeen City has had a VSHT for 4 years) 15 other local authorities are now trialling this approach in an effort to improve educational outcomes for care-experienced children and young people. Aberdeen City define the Virtual School and VSHT as:

'a local authority champion to bring about improvements in the education of our Looked-After (Care-Experienced) children and to promote their educational achievement as if they were in a single school. Ensuring that they receive a high quality education is the foundation for improving their lives.

The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building. Children do not attend it - they remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled. Virtual School Aberdeen is simply an organisational tool which has been created for the effective co-ordination of support for this vulnerable group at a strategic and operational level.

5. CELCIS has agreed to convene and facilitate a network of these new VSHTs to support understanding of the responsibilities and roles associated with the post, begin to look more deeply at the local impact and share learning from this work across the education sector.
6. This approach is just one amongst many that is being taken. Some areas have used their data to identify particular age ranges of children, or specific settings that children live in to target their resources. Some areas are putting the majority of their funding into one approach whilst others are using the funding to trial or provide a number or smaller supports or projects.

Questions that the governance group may want to consider

7. Funding is allocated to local authorities based on the number of legally looked after children aged between 5 and 15 on a specific date in the year. The national operating guidance states though that the funding can be used for care experienced young people from the ages of 0 – 26. There will be a significantly higher number of care-experienced young people within the 0-26 age group compared to those who are looked-after between 5 and 15 years of age.
 - Are members aware of any local authorities involving local institutions in spending decisions or planning discussions around this funding?
 - How could schools and institutions, as corporate parents, work more closely together to collaborate and plan for the spending of this funding?
 - In light of the coronavirus outbreak, are there issues that institutions are anticipating in relation to care-experienced learners that could be addressed through working with local authorities around the planning for the spending of this fund?
8. Whilst the Care-Experienced Fund is a separate funding stream from [Pupil Equity Funding](#) (PEF) the Scottish Government have [updated their guidance on the use of PEF](#) in light of the coronavirus outbreak and have instructed local authorities to use this updated guidance in relation to the Care-Experienced Fund.

Further information

9. Thanks to Linda O'Neill, CELCIS and Lorraine Moore, Hub for SUCCESS who helped develop this paper. Nick Stansfeld, nstansfeld@sfc.ac.uk