



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



**Having
ambitions**



**Reaching
our goals**

One year on

Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of
children who are looked after in Wales

May 2017

Young people's summary

Introduction

In 2016, the Welsh Government started a new plan called:

Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales.

i **Looked after** – when a local authority takes on the responsibility of a parent so children are safe and get what they need.

Everyone should have dreams, ambitions and opportunities. Education can help you reach goals and have more opportunities in life.

Some children face issues that make it harder to do well in school.

This isn't okay.

Your background shouldn't stop you being able to reach your goals.

This plan is about children getting support and opportunities to reach their goals.

One year on

This booklet tells you what we did in 2016. It also tells you what we plan to do in 2017–18.

There are six main areas we focus on:

1. Leadership – roles and responsibilities
2. Building partnerships and working together
3. Learning and teaching
4. Making better use of data
5. Making better use of funding
6. Participation.



1. Leadership – roles and responsibilities

The plan says:

Everyone needs to do their job well all the time. We want:

- to have strong leadership that works well
- local authorities to look at workers' roles and change them if needed
- schools to understand the needs of children and to have the right staff with the right skills.

What we've done so far

We have:

- helped **regional consortium** to have a main lead person for children who are looked after
- produced '*A guide for the designated person for looked after children in schools*' – it will be published soon
- written a new code of practice on the role of the Director of Social Services
- worked with the Fostering Network to help people in schools understand the problems children face in education
- worked with the Fostering Network to publish a guide for adoptive parents a '*A foster carer's guide to education*'
- worked with the Fostering Network to train foster carers
- helped the Fostering Network to write a new resource called '*Making it happen*'.

i **Regional consortium** – look after the education of all the learners in their area.

Designated person in school – makes sure children are safe.



1. Leadership – roles and responsibilities (continued)

Local authorities and regional consortia

Each Regional consortia plans how the **Pupil Development Grant (PDG)** money is used. They work with local authorities and schools so all children get the support they need.

Together they have:

- made sure the PDG is used in the right way
- supported **LACE Coordinators**.

i **Pupil Development Grant (PDG)** – extra money that a school can use to support needs.

LACE Coordinators – work with children in school to make learning plans and get them support.

They've also agreed the grant will be used:

- for training school staff, foster trainers, adoptive parents/carers and school governors
- for training coordinators
- for getting schools to work together and learn from each other
- to run a small grant fund to help groups or people.

Schools and colleges have:

- been learning from each other and sharing good practice
- a designated lead person who is part of their student support package
- made a 'toolkit' with the Learning and Work Institute.

The Learning and Work Institute has also supported seven colleges to get a Quality Mark to show they have the systems in place to support care leavers.

What we're going to do

We will:

- look at what other training would help staff
- continue to work on the Fostering Well-being project
- get local authorities to check workers' roles and make changes if needed
- make sure education and social services continue to work together.



2. Building better partnerships and working together

The plan says:

We need to work with social services, education, foster carers, and others to support children.

What we've done so far

We have:

- set up a National Strategic Group of professionals
- worked with CASCADE – Cardiff University, to make a new on-line community of practice for workers with case studies, resources and guidance
- run events to connect workers and build a better network
- an Estyn report on '*Raising the attainment, achievement and aspiration of children who are looked after*'
- started writing guidance on sharing information
- set up a Ministerial Advisory Group to look at ways to improve outcomes for children who are looked after.

What we're going to do

We will:

- work with services and organisations so they can give more support to children who are looked after
- help local authorities share good practice and support each other
- develop a new framework (steps) for fostering services
- have more advocates for children who are looked after.

i An **advocate** – is someone on your side that helps you be heard.



3. Learning and teaching

The plan says:

Schools and colleges need to understand their role in improving outcomes for children who are looked after.

What we've done so far

We have:

- a new national contact list of all workers
- worked with Adoption UK to publish '*Getting it right for every child – a school's guide to working with adopted children and their families*'
- worked with Adoption UK to publish a guide for adoptive parents '*Getting it right for every child – A parent's guide*'
- run surveys in schools and colleges in Wales
- found and shared good practice examples.

South East Wales consortia covers schools in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen. They've started a project that:

- monitors attendance and how well children who are looked after are doing in school
- checks that funding is making a difference
- finds and shares good practice
- checks they have the right support plans.

Schools and colleges have:

- trained staff on the issues children face
- run events
- made sure their designated person gives the right information to students.

What we're going to do

We will:

- look at how information is shared
- make sure children moving schools get support quickly
- work with colleges to write a guide on how to help young people who are looked after as they leave school.

We're training a group of care leavers so they can check colleges and tell us what works and what needs to change.



4. Making better use of data

The plan says:

We need to collect information in better ways.

What we've done so far

We have:

- asked Fischer Family Trust to write a report
- a new system that will match statistics from each year and show us what we need to work on
- looked at new ways to collect and present statistics in local authorities
- asked LACE Coordinators to write a guide on how to collect and share information
- got local authorities to decide which statistics are most helpful and how to report them.

5. Making better use of funding

The plan says:

We want funding to make the biggest difference it can.

What we've done so far

We have:

- supported regional consortia to work together so they find the best ways to use funding to help children who are looked after
- got the Wales Audit Office to look at how funding was used in 2015–16
- checked spending plans for 2016–17
- made a guide on funding and how it should be used.



6. Participation

The plan says:

We want all children and young people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

What we've done so far

We have:

- worked with the Fostering Network and Voices from Care to listen to the views of carers and children in care
- made sure local authorities have ways to involve young people.

Next steps

We'll continue to work on this plan and let you know how we're doing.

The next report will be in 2018.

Thanks for reading this.

You can find out more by going to:

gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/educational-attainment-of-looked-after-children

