

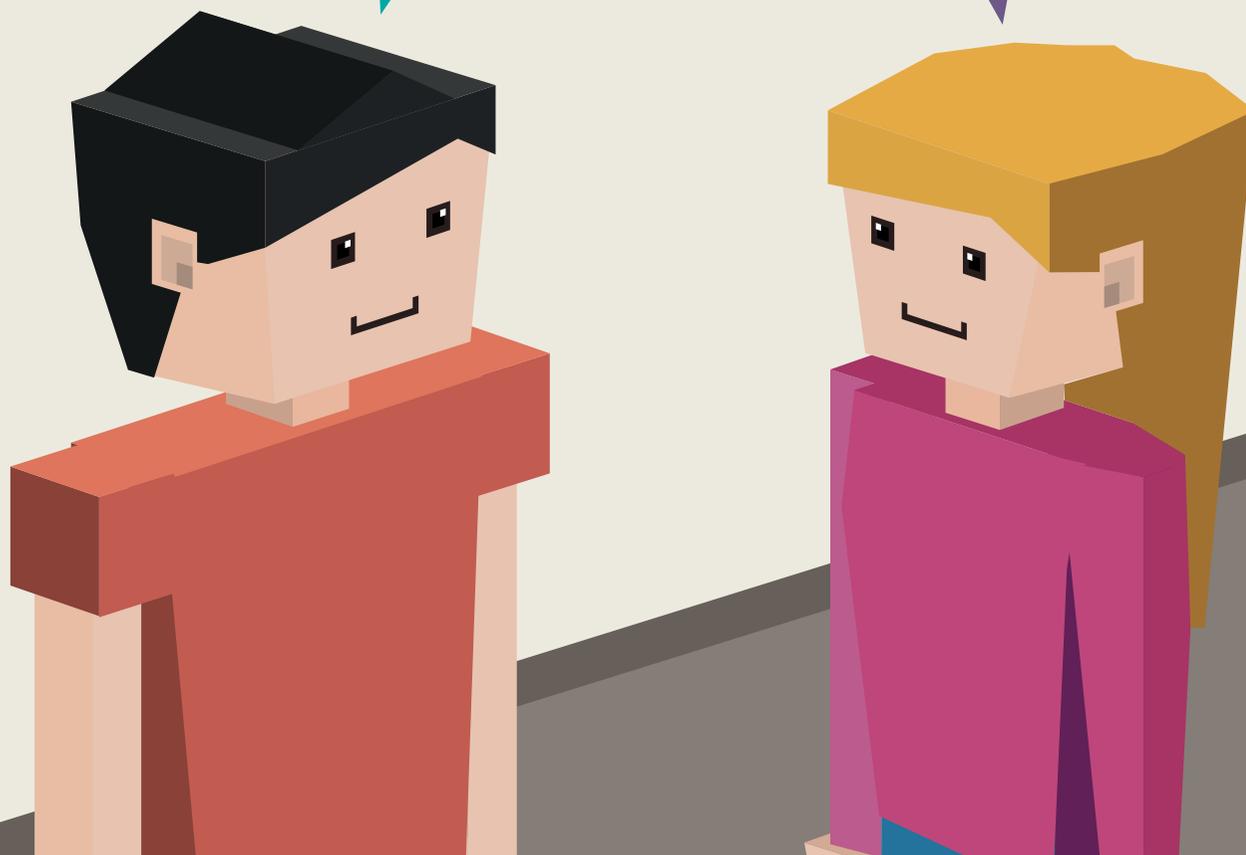
**Having
ambitions**

**Reaching
our goals**



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales



A strategy to support children who are looked after reach their goals in education and raise their ambitions.



The Welsh Government wants all children to reach their goals. Everyone should have ambitions (dreams) and opportunities.

Every child in Wales has the right to an excellent education. This includes children who are looked after.



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

We want to support all children who are looked after as much as possible.

We want them to have the same life chances and opportunities as everyone else.

**“...if your life is unstable,
your education is unstable...”**

Girl 16+ focus group

This booklet is about our new strategy (plan) to support children who are looked after.

Reasons for the new plan

A child or young persons' background should never stop them from being able to reach their goals.

Children who are looked after can reach their goals if education services, social services and others work together.

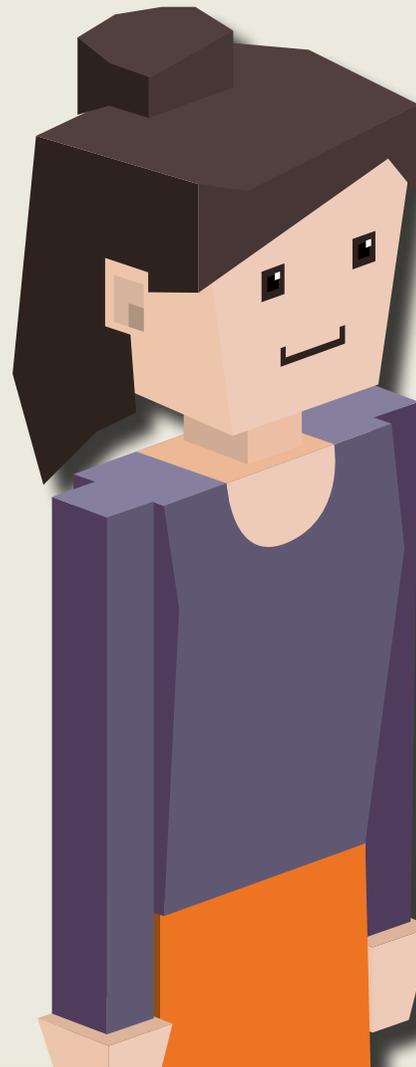


Our aims

We think this new plan will:

- help children to fulfil their ambitions and reach their goals
- show everyone who is responsible for looked after children how important their role is
- make people think about children's education when making decisions
- help children who are looked after make positive life choices
- help to reduce the number of children who become involved in crime and enter the youth justice system
- use information to plan better and share things that work.

This plan has **3** main areas for change.



1. Leadership – roles and responsibilities

We want to have strong leadership that works well.

Leadership in the Welsh Government:

We want clear steps for everyone who works with children who are looked after.

Education departments from across Wales come together to make up four 'regional consortia'.

Regional consortia – look after the education of all the learners in their area.



Actions

We want each regional consortium to have one main person to help children who are looked after. They will manage funding, share good practice and give training to schools.



Every school has a designated lead person (DLP) and governors.

Designated lead person – makes sure children are safe.

Governors – have policies in place to make sure the school is run well and is safe.

Actions

We will set out new guidance (rules) for DLPs and governors.

There's a new law – the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It says all looked after children should be able to have the best possible education. Everything should work towards that goal, including decisions about where they live.

Actions

We will:

- have steps (Code of Practice) that Directors of Social Services have to follow
- listen to other consultations to see if we need extra support for children who are looked after with extra learning needs.

Other countries (like Germany or Denmark) support children in different ways. They include lifelong learning goals when making decisions about support, education and care.

Actions

We want to try this in one area of Wales to see how it works.

Leadership in local authorities and regional consortia:

local authority members carry out the role of parents for children who are looked after. They should always think 'would I do it this way if this was my child?'.



Actions

We want:

- to raise awareness so local authority members understand their responsibility
- local authorities to have one main person who handles the education needs of children who are looked after
- to look at the role of social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers
- make sure Looked After Children in Education (LACE) Coordinators and school DLPs work together
- involve foster carers more in supporting education.

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

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) – make sure social services support looked after children properly.

Foster carers say:

- they need better training
- they want better connections with schools
- they want others to understand how they support children's learning.

Actions

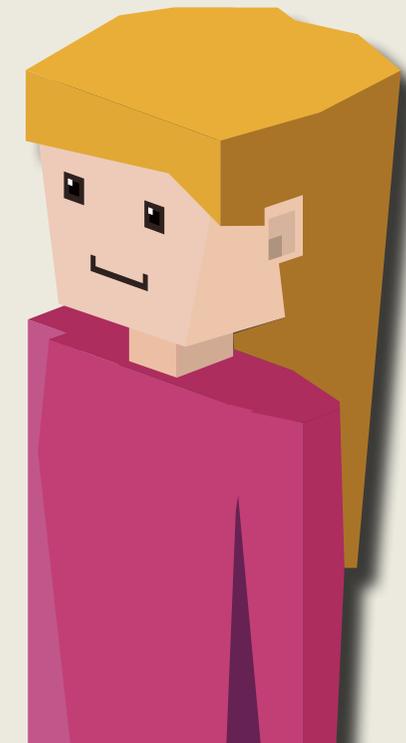
We want regional consortia to use funding for this.

Leadership in schools and colleges

Teachers and other staff must have the right skills. They should understand the effect being in care has on education.

Actions

We will encourage every school to have a governor to work with staff to support children who are looked after.



2. Building better partnerships and working together

Social services and education services must work together to help children and young people stay in education.



Actions

We want:

- to set up an online community to share good practice across Wales
- more opportunities for local authorities to work together
- to work with Estyn (school inspectors) to make support better
- to set up a new Strategic Steering Group of professionals from local authorities and organisations to help improve services for looked after children
- local authorities to look at their systems and if something isn't working – change it
- regional consortia to work with schools to help foster parents.

The Reaching Wider project aims to help more young people go on to Higher Education.

This helps children who are looked after.

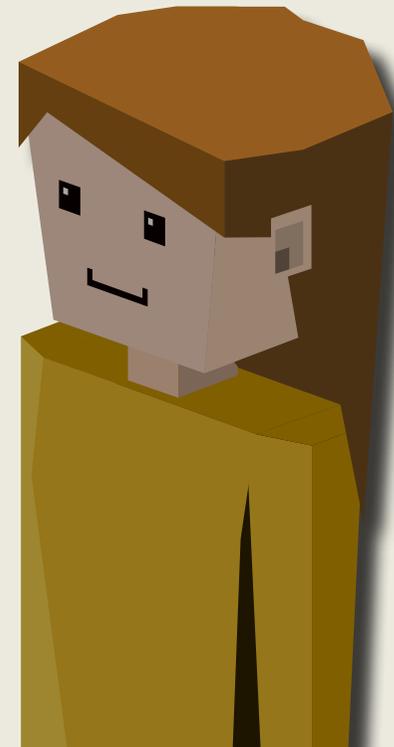
Actions

We will put on events that support services working together through the Reaching Wider project and other national groups.

When young people go to college or university they have to say they were 'looked after' to get the funding to support them. This can be embarrassing and some young people don't do it.

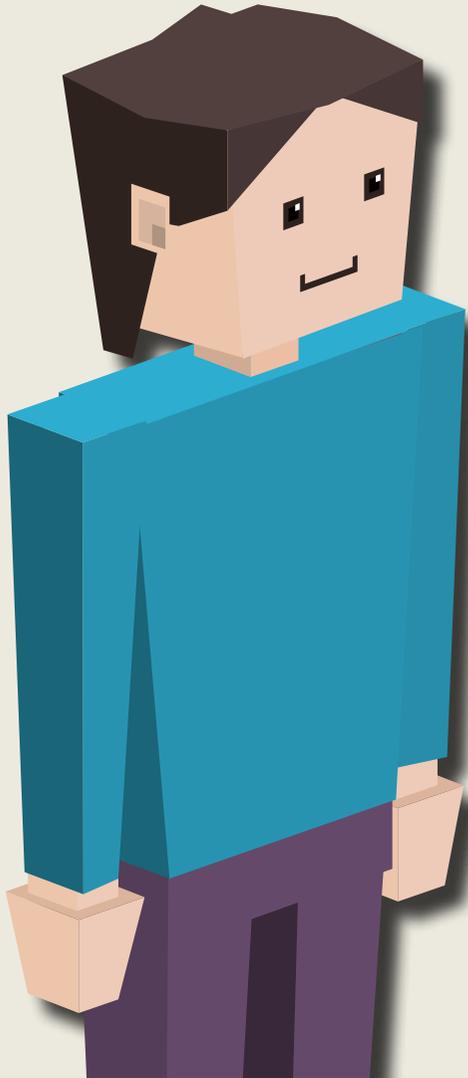
Actions

We want better ways of sharing information so this doesn't happen.



3. Good teaching and learning

Schools and colleges make a real difference to the education of children who are looked after.



Actions

We want:

- schools to give places to children who are looked after and check on absences
- schools to share information better
- teachers to have all the training they need
- all learning plans to be up-to-date
- schools to work with children when setting goals.

Schools need to work together more with colleges to help children who are looked after stay in education and not drop out.

Actions

We want:

- local authorities to put together a list of information to help students get the right support
- schools to have day-visits to colleges for year 11 pupils
- colleges to have a designated lead person there for children who are looked after
- schools and colleges to have better ways to share information
- mentoring schemes for children who are looked after.

Other things we want to do!

We want to use data better.

We want to collect information in better ways and share good practice.



Actions

We will:

- get local authorities to check information already collected and make systems easier
- gather more information on adopted children
- collect more information on care leavers after they leave the school system.

We want better funding arrangements.

Regional consortia look after all the funding to support education for children who are looked after. We want the funding to make the biggest difference that it can.

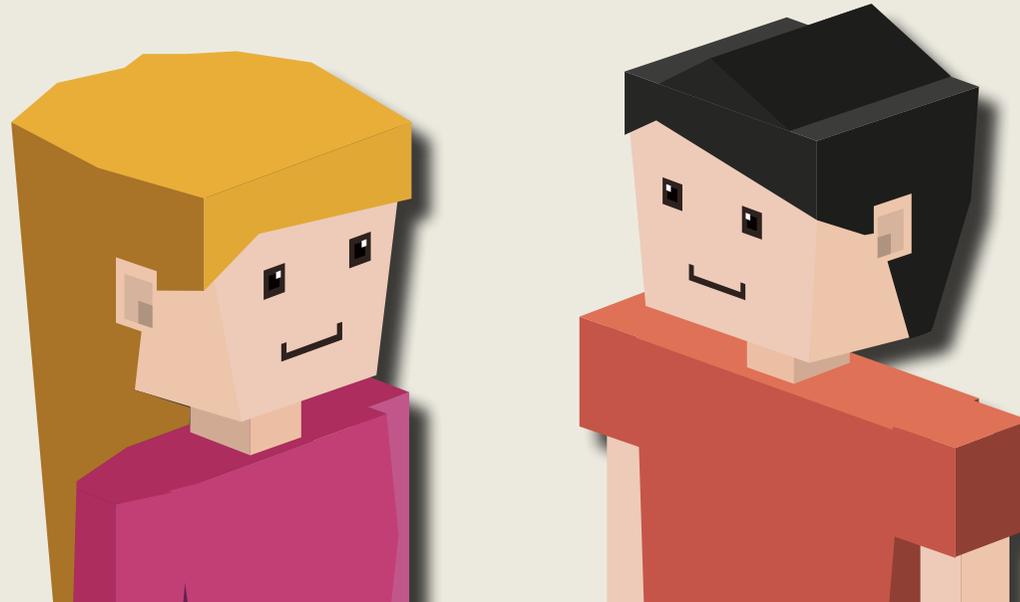
Actions

We want more ways of reporting so we can track funding and the difference it makes.

Children and young people often face issues even after they're adopted.

Actions

We will look at the best ways to help adopted children.



We want to involve children who are looked after in planning and decision-making.

Children and young people should have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

We worked with children who are looked after to develop this strategy.



They told us:

- sometimes adults and support services didn't listen
- some of them weren't offered someone who can help them be heard when they feel their opinions weren't being listened to
- some teachers don't understand what it's like to be looked after or adopted
- they would like to be involved in training teachers about the issues they face
- they want more say in their learning plans
- they don't want meetings about their care being held during school hours
- if they have to move school they want to feel part of the decision
- they want more support and information about the options available when they leave school at age 16.

Actions

We will:

- give more opportunities for children to have their voices heard
- ask children who are looked after if this strategy helps their education
- work with regional consortia to involve children in planning and funding
- support the Charter for children who are looked after.

Next steps

This plan has steps for schools, colleges, local authorities and regional consortia.

Each year we will write a report on how well the plan is working. The first report will be in 2017.

Thanks for reading this.

