

Carmarthenshire County Council

Attachment awareness training

Carmarthenshire County Council has been able to make a great impact on the learning and attainment of children who are looked after and those that have previously been looked after. The project has been a really exciting time for all those involved and nearly all schools in Carmarthenshire have accessed Attachment Awareness training. We held an Ignition Event to launch the Project in Parc y Scarlets in March 2016 and successfully sparked awareness across a plethora of agencies. Since then, Attachment Awareness has gathered momentum across the county.

We have been able to employ staff with skills to train school staff and other professionals as well as working directly with the pupils. We have also been able to access additional resources through partnership agencies.

21 Carmarthenshire schools have accessed Attachment and Trauma Awareness Training. Carmarthenshire County Council has added capacity by commissioning the same training provider – Kate Cairns Associates – and offering training to all schools in Carmarthenshire. This is in line with the ERW PDG/LAC plan to ensure that all schools recorded as having children who are looked after in their 2016 PLASC returns should have undertaken training by the end of March 2017.

Over 70 schools have accessed some level of training since the project launched in September 2016. There are now only 3 schools with children who are looked after who have not accessed any training. These schools will be encouraged to attend through Head Teachers' forums and generic training promoted by the county INSET team. The training will upskill schools to develop the skills necessary to meet the needs of learners who have experienced relational trauma in order to maximise learning in the classroom. We have captured best practice, built on this and shared locally and regionally.

In house training has included whole school, group and individual training. Individual training has utilised the Circle of Understanding tool which enables the adults to think reflectively about what factors are driving the behaviour of the child. This is a collaborative effort encouraging multi-agency work, and can result in the production of an Emotional Support Plan and this has been taken up by over 30 schools.

The bespoke work is supported and embedded by the authority's team of Attachment and Trauma Teaching Assistants, who support the TAs and teachers working with our children in school. The TAs help to implement the Emotional Support Plan, provide further suggestions and training, as well as being valuable sounding boards in supporting the staff who are doing difficult work with challenging children. The team recognise the negative impact that secondary trauma has on staff in schools and part of the TA role is to provide additional emotional support for school staff. This is also supported by our Attachment and Trauma Professional Network Group which provides a forum for TAs and Attachment Leads to network, share good practice and support each other in finding solutions to difficult situations.

A team of 'Attachment and Trauma Aware' Champions across multiple services in Carmarthenshire has been created. These professionals come from a range of settings: SLT, class teachers, TAs, specialist behaviour teachers, social workers, school nurses, fostering, youth workers and FE representatives. This team of approximately 40 people has had two days of professional training with KCA, followed by an in-house training day on the Circle of Understanding and Emotion Coaching. More follow-up days are planned with the group preparing to embed their knowledge within their practice and consider how they can support other colleagues on their attachment journey. The end goal is for a group of schools to develop a blueprint for what an Attachment and Trauma Aware setting should look like in terms of policy and practice.

Education Engagement Workers have been able to work directly with pupils in secondary settings who have been at risk of exclusion, re-engaging them in learning through bespoke alternative curriculum packages and reintegration back into full time school. The majority of the pupils who have accessed this resource have been in year 10 and 11.

The authority has been able to target pupils who have needed additional support prior to GCSE exams by providing them with a learning mentor who has been able to assist with study organisation, curriculum knowledge and developing relationships between the pupil and the key staff in school. The GCSE results this year have been the best in the last 5 years.

Transition groups have been facilitated by our specialist Teaching Assistants and Education Engagement workers. This has been to specifically support all year 6 and year 11 pupils. There have been additional visits to the new school/college, meetings with key staff and opportunities for information to be shared.