

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016- 2017

DATE: 27th September 2017

**REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
LIFELONG LEARNING**

Agenda Item No:

Outcomes of Children Looked After (CLA) in RCT during the academic year 2015/2016
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update on the educational outcomes of Children Looked After (CLA) in Rhondda Cynon Taf during the academic year 2015/ 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.
- 2.4 Consider whether they wish to receive a further data report on 2016/17 outcomes in June 2018.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Children Looked After Team within the Access and Inclusion Service works in collaboration with schools, foster carers, Children's Services and other external agencies to promote the educational outcomes, life chances and social inclusion of children who are looked after.
- 3.2 Children who are looked after can be extremely vulnerable, as many will have experienced neglect, abuse and multiple breakdowns within their families, foster care and/or educational placements. Children and young people who are looked after frequently experience multiple adverse childhood experiences. The Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences Study clearly highlights the impact that these experiences has on the health and wellbeing of children. Children who experience stressful or poor quality childhoods are more likely to adopt health harming

behaviours during adolescence which can lead to mental health difficulties and physical illnesses later on in life. Adverse childhood experiences are not just a concern for health outcomes but can also enhance the likelihood of individuals performing poorly in school and not progressing into further education. .

- 3.3 The adverse childhood experiences of many of our children who are looked after can have a direct and immediate impact on their development. Research clearly highlights the impact that traumatic stress in early life can have on brain development which can fundamentally alter nervous, hormonal and immunological system development. This can result in individuals whose systems are 'locked' into a higher state of alertness and permanently prepared for further trauma. Such physiological changes can adversely impact on health and wellbeing as individuals remain in a heightened emotional state of anxiety as the body prepares for a potential fight or flight response. This state of anxiety can result in children and young people being unable to engage and participate in learning, which can impact on educational attainment and progress. Children raised in environments where violence, assault and abuse are common are also more likely to develop social emotional and behavioural difficulties and to commit violent acts or be the victim of such acts in adulthood.
- 3.4 In view of these risk factors and the poor educational outcome data for this vulnerable group, the need for early intervention and access to timely and effective support is critical.
- 3.5 The Children Looked After Team within the Access & Inclusion Service endeavours to reduce the risk of poor educational outcomes through individual, group, whole school and strategic approaches. The team consists of a range of professionals including a Looked After Children Co-ordinator and Educational Psychologists. Support includes:
- Consultation, advice and guidance for children/young people, schools, foster carers and external partners on suitable interventions to bring about change;
 - Direct and indirect delivery of interventions and programmes aimed at overcoming barriers to learning and the development of key skills;
 - In-depth and detailed assessment of need and psychological reports as to inform specialist interventions, placements, legal proceedings and panels (e.g. Adoption/Foster Panel; Special Educational Needs (SEN) Panel Specialist Placement Panel; Court proceedings);
 - Effective communication and partnership working with school staff, foster carers and external agencies, both within and outside of the LA;
 - Recording, monitoring and evaluation of outcome data;
 - Therapeutic support and interventions, including post adoption support for families;
 - Systemic work and training with governing bodies, schools, carers and agencies to enhance strategic developments and the support provided for children and young people who are looked after;
 - Preparation, monitoring and recording of Personal Education Plans (PEP).
- 3.6 Every child who is looked after has a PEP and its timely completion is the focus of a local performance indicator. The PEP is an important educational document as it

helps professionals to gain a clear understanding of the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the educational needs of a child who is looked after. It is a statutory requirement for all children who are looked after between the ages of 5-16 years to have a PEP as it is intended to be an overarching education plan, and an integral part of a child's care and support plan. Local guidance has been developed and training provided to improve the effective completion of PEPs by relevant professionals with Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- 3.7 In addition to the support provided by the Children Looked After Team, schools are also able to access generic support from various Access and Inclusion Services, including the Learner Support Service and the Educational Psychology Service. Schools are also able to utilise delegated additional needs funding (£2.7M) to support the inclusion of children and young people who are looked after and have significant special educational needs.
- 3.8 The local authority has a clear strategy for supporting and raising the achievement of children who are looked after and outcome data is reviewed to inform service self-evaluation and service improvement planning. Improving the outcomes of children who are looked after continues to be a strategic priority within the local authority.
- 3.9 Relevant information relating to children and young people who are looked after is shared with the Corporate Parenting Board. The joint action plan devised by Education and Children's Services as a result of two Scrutiny Committee Working Groups has been successfully implemented.
- 3.10 Outcome data for children and young people across a range of measures are routinely shared with schools across Central South Consortium. These data sets are also shared with Challenge Advisers and senior officers within the LA, so as to inform support and challenge visits in schools.
- 3.11 Welsh Government provides additional resources for schools in order to narrow the attainment gap between learners who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not. There is a separate element for children and young people who are looked after. The Pupil Deprivation Grant for Looked After Children (PDGLAC) is administered by Central South Consortium (CSC) and resources are directly delegated to schools to ensure timely interventions and support.
- 3.12 Pro-active attempts are taken to ensure that the voices of children who are looked after are heard. As a result of PDGLAC funding for 2015/16, a joint consultation event was convened with a neighbouring local authority to establish what the barriers to achieving positive education outcomes were. This information has been used to inform the development of a CLA Friendly Schools resource, which was launched in September 2017 as tool to support improved outcomes for this vulnerable group of learners.

Children's Services also have the 'Blueprint Forum' and members of this group regularly contribute to Corporate Parenting Board and strategic developments within the Council.

4. CURRENT POSITION

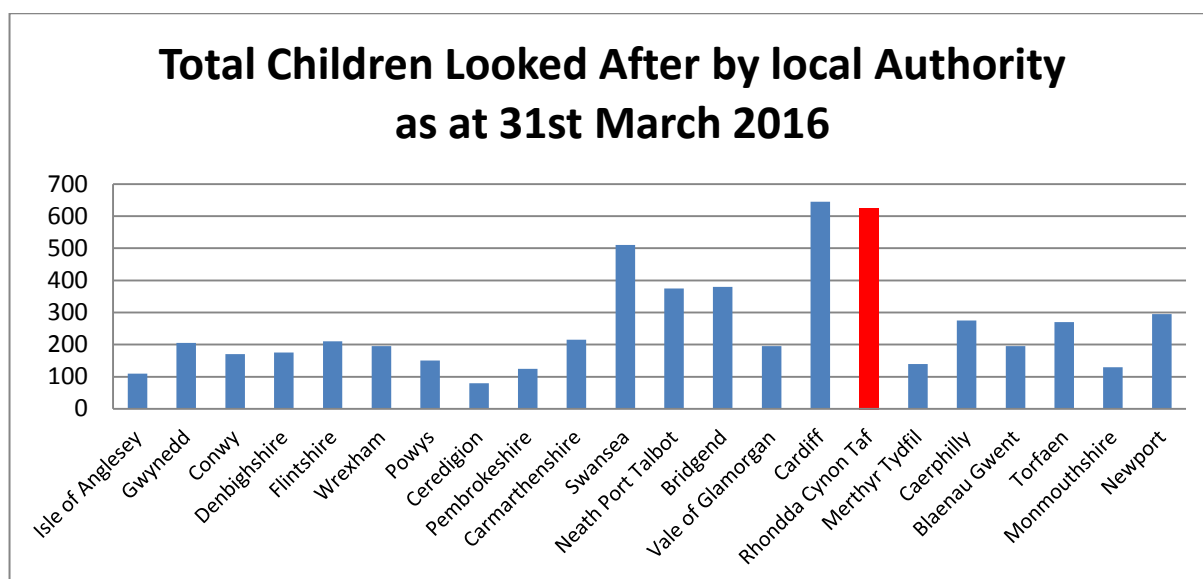
4.1 Both local and national data will be presented in this report but it should be noted that there are different reporting mechanisms for these data sets. National data considers all looked after children regardless of where they are placed in their respective care placements. The local data reports relate to children and young people who are looked after and educated in Rhondda Cynon Taf only. The scope for making direct comparisons between local and national data sets are therefore restricted.

4.2 NATIONAL DATA

National data detailed on the Welsh Government Stats Wales website, suggests that on the 31st of March 2016, there were 625 looked after children and young people within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Both Table 1 and Graph 1 provides an overview of the national context and suggests that Rhondda Cynon Taf had the second highest total number of children and young people who were looked after and the highest number of statutory school aged children within Wales.

Table 1: Children looked after at 31st March 2016 by local authority

	All Welsh local authorities	Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham	Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Bridgend	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Merthyr Tydfil	Caerphilly	Blaenau Gwent	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport
		North Wales Education Consortia							South West and Mid Wales Education Consortia					Central South Education Consortia				South East Wales Education Consortia					
Total Looked After Children	5660	110	205	170	175	210	195	150	80	125	215	510	375	380	195	645	625	140	275	195	270	130	295
Number of LAC of statutory school age	3648	69	127	131	102	152	129	110	46	85	155	307	245	237	127	372	381	96	220	120	177	73	185

Graph 1: Children looked after at 31st March 2016 by local authority

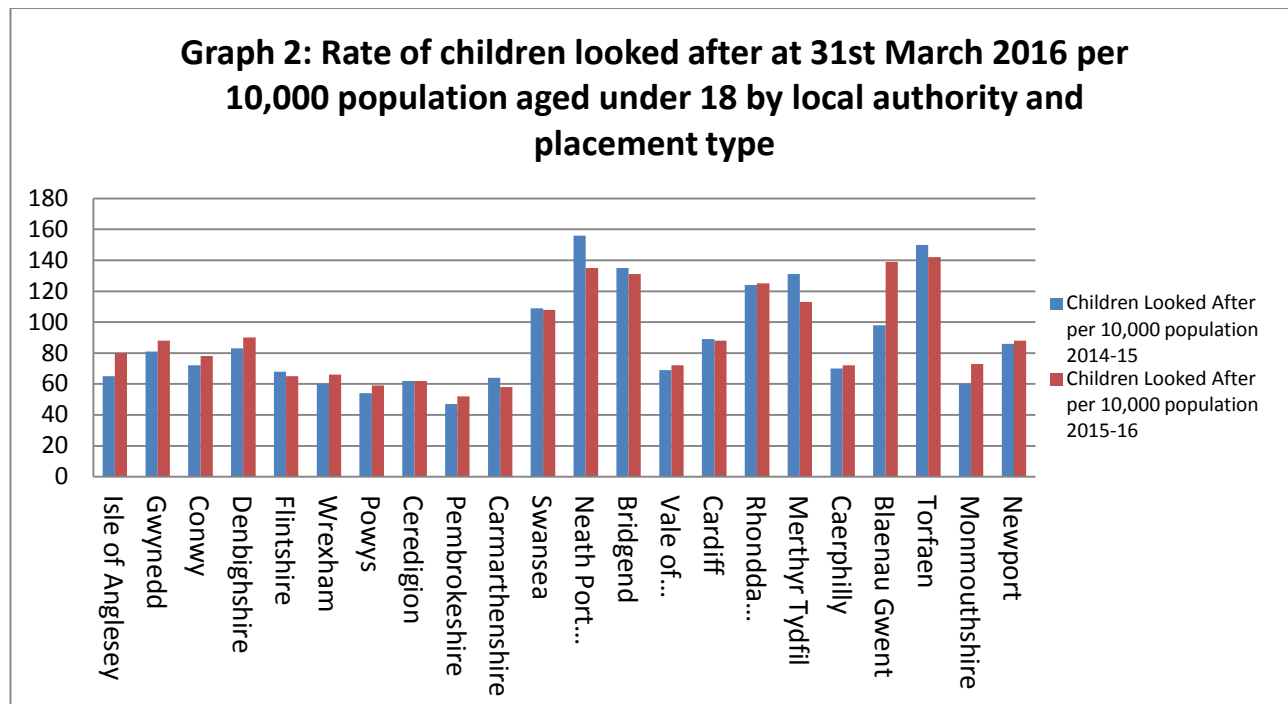
- 4.3 Table 2 and Graph 2 highlights the recent growth in the number of children and young people who are looked after per 10,000 population (aged 18 and under) within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Numbers have increased by 0.81% from 2014/15 to 2015/16 but national ranking shows some relative improvement (from 19th to 18th) from 2014/15 to 2015/16.

Table 2: Rate of children looked after at 31st March 2016 per 10,000 population aged under 18 by local authority and year

Children Looked After per 10,000 Population			
Local Authority	2014-15	2015-16	% difference
Isle of Anglesey	65	80	23.08%
Gwynedd	81	88	8.64%
Conwy	72	78	8.33%
Denbighshire	83	90	8.43%
Flintshire	68	65	-4.41%
Wrexham	60	66	10.00%
Powys	54	59	9.26%
Ceredigion	62	62	0.00%
Pembrokeshire	47	52	10.64%
Carmarthenshire	64	58	-9.38%
Swansea	109	108	-0.92%
Neath Port Talbot	156	135	-13.46%
Bridgend	135	131	-2.96%
Vale of Glamorgan	69	72	4.35%
Cardiff	89	88	-1.12%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	124	125	0.81%
Merthyr Tydfil	131	113	-13.74%
Caerphilly	70	72	2.86%

Blaenau Gwent	98	139	41.84%
Torfaen	120	142	18.33%
Monmouthshire	60	73	21.67%
Newport	86	88	2.33%

Graph 2: Rate of Children Looked After as at 31st March 2016 per 10,000 population



4.4 Table 3 highlights that the majority of children who were looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf on the 31st of March 2016 were placed in foster care placements (78.4%). Encouragingly, a total of 20 children were placed for adoption (3.2%).

Table 3: Number of children looked after at 31st March 2016 by local authority and placement type

	Looked after children as 31st March 2016 by Placement Type							Total looked after children
	Placed for adoption	Foster placements	Local authority homes	Private or voluntary registered homes	Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	Living independently	Absent or other	
All Welsh local authorities	260	4265	230	20	625	100	165	5660
Isle of Anglesey	*	90	*	*	10	*	*	110
Gwynedd	5	145	10	*	25	*	20	205
Conwy	5	125	5	*	20	10	5	170
Denbighshire	10	125	*	*	30	*	*	175
Flintshire	5	135	*	*	40	*	20	210
Wrexham	15	130	5	*	35	10	*	195
Powys	5	115	10	*	10	*	*	150
Ceredigion	*	60	*	*	10	*	*	80
Pembrokeshire	*	95	10	*	10	*	10	125
Carmarthenshire	10	175	*	*	20	5	*	215

Swansea	25	390	*	5	50	*	35	510
Neath Port Talbot	30	285	5	*	45	*	*	375
Bridgend	15	305	20	*	40	*	*	380
Vale of Glamorgan	10	140	*	*	25	*	15	195
Cardiff	20	440	50	*	75	40	10	645
Rhondda Cynon Taf	20	490	50	*	50	5	5	625
Merthyr Tydfil	*	125	*	*	10	*	*	140
Caerphilly	15	225	10	*	25	*	*	275
Blaenau Gwent	15	145	*	*	15	*	10	195
Torfaen	10	210	*	*	45	*	10	270
Monmouthshire	10	90	10	*	15	*	*	130
Newport	25	220	20	*	15	*	5	295

* no pupils were recorded or numbers were too low to report on.

4.5 Table 4 suggests that the percentage of children looked after by Rhondda Cynon Taf who experienced 3 or more placements during the year equated to 6%, which was the lowest level for Wales.

Table 4: Children looked after at 31st March 2016 by local authority, number of placements during year and measure

	Number of Children with 3 or more placements during year	Percentage of Children with 3 or more placements during year
All Welsh local authorities	560	10
Isle of Anglesey	10	9
Gwynedd	15	8
Conwy	20	11
Denbighshire	15	8
Flintshire	15	7
Wrexham	25	12
Powys	15	9
Ceredigion	10	12
Pembrokeshire	10	9
Carmarthenshire	30	15
Swansea	50	10
Neath Port Talbot	30	8
Bridgend	50	14
Vale of Glamorgan	20	10
Cardiff	65	10
Rhondda Cynon Taf	35	6
Merthyr Tydfil	15	9
Caerphilly	35	13
Blaenau Gwent	25	13
Torfaen	25	10

Monmouthshire	10	9
Newport	30	10

4.6 Table 5 suggests that within RCT, there were 381 children in care on the 31st March 2016 who were of statutory school age. Of this cohort only 14% experienced one or more change of school that was not due to transition. This places Rhondda Cynon Taf's ranking as joint 12th with two other local authorities this suggests that school placements are generally maintained where possible, particularly in Key Stage 4. However, it should also be recognised that a change in school placement can sometimes be a positive and essential change when long-term changes in care placements are planned.

Table 5: Number of looked after children of statutory school age who have experienced one or more changes of school, during a period of being looked after which were not due to transitional arrangements as at 31st March 2016

	Wales	Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham	Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Bridgend	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Merthyr Tydfil	Caerphilly	Blaenau Gwent	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport
The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more changes of school, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March	433	12	23	5	19	19	13	18	5	7	6	44	23	35	16	34	53	15	11	21	14	15	25
The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March	3648	69	127	131	102	152	129	110	46	85	155	307	245	237	127	372	381	96	220	120	177	73	185
The percentage of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more changes of school, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March	12	17	18	4	19	12	10	16	11	8	4	14	9	15	13	9	14	16	5	18	8	21	14

4.7 National datasets detailed in Table 6 illustrate the outcomes of children who are looked after at key phases and stages in their primary and secondary education.

4.8 A total of 68% of children who were looked after in March 2016 achieved the Foundation Phase Indicator which was above the national average for Wales (64%). At Key Stage 2, 66% achieved expected outcomes which was in line with the all Wales average. 61% achieved the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3,

which was a significant increase of 29% from the 32% achieved in 2014/15 and 4% higher than the all Wales average. Key Stage 4 outcomes in 2016 included 70% achieving Level 1 threshold (5 GCSEs A*-G) and 53% achieving Level 2 threshold (5 GCSEs A*-C). Performance in Level 2 threshold attainment represents a 5% increase from the previous year but Level 1 and Level 2 threshold outcomes remain below the all Wales average of 79% and 56% respectively.

Table 6: Educational attainment of children looked after by local authority as at 31st of March 2016

	Wales	Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham	Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Cardiganshire	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Bridgend	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Merthyr Tydfil	Caerphilly	Blaenau Gwent	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport
Percentage of children who achieved Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)	64	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	71	48	47	*	62	68	*	*	60	80	*	*
Percentage of children who achieved Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2	66	*	67	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	42	64	50	64	*	73	66	*	*	*	71	*	75
Percentage of children who are looked after achieving Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3	57	*		55	80	*	*	69	*	*	67	50	29	60	*	65	61	64	50	*	56	*	*
Percentage of Key Stage 4 children who achieved Level 1 threshold	79	*	100	92	*	*	56	45	*	77	71	100	79	69	*	84	70	*	72	*	79	*	69
Percentage of Key Stage 4 children who achieved Level 2 threshold	56	*	55	67	*	*	39		*	46	64	65	71	48	*	65	53	*	52	*	64	*	*

- 4.9 Table 7 details primary attendance data and suggests an encouraging rate of 97.31% attendance for children and young people looked after by Rhondda Cynon Taf. This equates to a ranking of 5th within Wales.

Table 7: School attendance of primary aged children looked after by local authority as at 31st of March 2016

	Total number of sessions missed by looked after children in primary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after	Total number of sessions looked after children in primary schools could have attended in the most recent school year whilst looked after	% of sessions missed by looked after children in primary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after	% attendance by looked after children in primary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after
Wales	19,223	540,423	3.56%	96.44%
Isle of Anglesey	270	10,285	2.63%	97.37%
Gwynedd	734	22,365	3.28%	96.72%
Conwy	843	17,259	4.88%	95.12%
Denbighshire	484	18,347	2.64%	97.36%
Flintshire
Wrexham	746	13,288	5.61%	94.39%
Powys	516	11,730	4.40%	95.60%
Ceredigion	269	7,663	3.51%	96.49%
Pembrokeshire	326	9,880	3.30%	96.70%
Carmarthenshire	929	24,747	3.75%	96.25%
Swansea	1,985	39,395	5.04%	94.96%
Neath Port Talbot	2,261	57,010	3.97%	96.03%
Bridgend	1,122	40,721	2.76%	97.24%
Vale of Glamorgan	1,127	19,939	5.65%	94.35%
Cardiff	1,390	42,402	3.28%	96.72%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2,117	73,860	2.87%	97.13%
Merthyr Tydfil	580	18,102	3.20%	96.80%
Caerphilly	945	24,807	3.81%	96.19%
Blaenau Gwent	460	14,973	3.07%	96.93%
Torfaen	1,058	36,563	2.89%	97.11%
Monmouthshire	280	11,176	2.51%	97.49%
Newport	781	25,911	3.01%	96.99%

4.10 Rhondda Cynon Taf primary attendance rates for children who are looked after is 0.87% higher than the all Wales average.

4.11 The secondary school attendance rates of children looked after by RCT detailed in Table 8 are also encouraging at 94.25%, which is 1.79% higher than the All Wales average. This equates to a very favourable national ranking of 6th.

Table 8: School attendance of secondary aged children looked after by local authority as at 31st March 2016

	Total number of sessions missed by looked after children in secondary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after	Total number of sessions looked after children in secondary schools could have attended in the most recent school year whilst looked after	% of sessions missed by looked after children in secondary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after	% attendance by looked after children in secondary schools in the most recent school year whilst looked after
Wales	36,350	482,076	7.54%	92.46%
Isle of Anglesey	535	8,010	6.68%	93.32%
Gwynedd	1,050	20,579	5.10%	94.90%
Conwy	2,094	27,264	7.68%	92.32%
Denbighshire	695	12,515	5.55%	94.45%
Flintshire
Wrexham	959	9,436	10.16%	89.84%
Powys	1,151	17,700	6.50%	93.50%
Ceredigion	499	8,763	5.69%	94.31%
Pembrokeshire	2,173	16,720	13.00%	87.00%
Carmarthenshire	1,366	28,034	4.87%	95.13%
Swansea	3,189	34,729	9.18%	90.82%
Neath Port Talbot	3,871	35,287	10.97%	89.03%
Bridgend	2,009	33,237	6.04%	93.96%
Vale of Glamorgan	1,406	23,474	5.99%	94.01%
Cardiff	2,943	36,084	8.16%	91.84%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2,317	40,285	5.75%	94.25%
Merthyr Tydfil	609	13,213	4.61%	95.39%
Caerphilly	1,693	29,179	5.80%	94.20%
Blaenau Gwent	677	10,844	6.24%	93.76%
Torfaen	2,019	27,958	7.22%	92.78%
Monmouthshire	806	10,967	7.35%	92.65%
Newport	4,289	37,798	11.35%	88.65%

5. LOCAL DATA

- 5.1 Within Rhondda Cynon Taf, data for children who are looked after is routinely gathered, monitored and evaluated. There are a number of local performance indicators which are reported Corporately. Please note that local data relates to children and young people who are looked after and educated within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the data detailed in Table 9 for key reporting periods relates to the previous academic year e.g. 2016/17 datasets relates to 2015/16 outcomes. The data presented suggests that 60% of children who were looked after achieved expected outcomes in the Foundation Phase for the 2016/17 reporting period. As this is a new local performance indicator there is currently no historical comparative data.

Performance within Key Stage 2 highlights that 66.7% achieved expected outcomes which is comparable to last year's performance. There has been a steady increase in the number of learners achieving Core Subject Indicators during Key Stage 3, with the exception of a slight dip in performance during the 2015/16 reporting period. An increase of 19.56% achieving expected Key Stage 3 outcomes in 2016/17 is evident.

Table 9: Local Performance Indicators

Performance measures	2012/13*	2013/14*	2014/15*	2015/16*	2016/17*
Percentage of children who are looked after who achieved Foundation Phase Indicator	New performance indicator				60
Percentage of children who are looked after who achieved Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2	40.74	55.56	55.17	66.7	66.7
Percentage of children who are looked after achieving Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3	20.00	27.78	40.74	38.50	58.06
Percentage of children who are looked after achieving Level 1 Threshold	New performance indicator			35	64.00
Percentage of children who are looked after achieving Level 2 Threshold	New performance indicator				52.00
Percentage of children who are looked after local authority care and in any local authority maintained learning setting, who attain at the age of 16 during the school year and leave full time	2.86	3.23	0	0	0

education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification					
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* Please note data relates to previous academic year

- 5.3 Table 9 highlights that significant improvements are evident in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 1 threshold with a 29% increase on the previous year's data set. Level 2 threshold data is a new performance indicator so comparisons are not available at this stage.
- 5.4 Table 9 also suggests that despite a cohort of Key Stage 4 pupils with a range of complex needs, no young persons who were looked after left full time education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification in the 2016/17 reporting period (academic year 2015/16). This has been the trend for the last three consecutive years.
- 5.5 Table 10 highlights the range of specialist placements accessed by children who are looked after, both within and outside of the county. Of this cohort 82.33% (417 learners) were educated within a mainstream setting, both in and out of county. A total of 86 learners (17.17%) accessed more specialist placements due to severe and persistent special educational needs. This inevitability impacts on the capacity of some of our more vulnerable learners to achieve expected outcomes at critical stages in their school careers.

Table 10: The number of statutory school aged RCT children who are looked after according to type of school placement as at 9th November 2016

School Placement/ Type	RCT children who are looked after educated Out of County	RCT children who are looked after educated in RCT	Total
Mainstream	107	308	415
Learning Support Class/ Communication Disorders	0	3	3
Learning Support Class/Complex Learning Difficulties	2	7	9
Learning Support Class/Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)	0	3	3
Awaiting placement	0	3	3
Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty Placement (full time)	0	10	10
Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty Placement (part time)	0	7	7
Special School	13	31	44
Education Otherwise Than In School/Tuition Service	0	7	7
Total	122	379	501

- 5.6 There are currently 74 pupils (14.77%) educated both within and out of county with a statement of special educational needs (Table 11), which is once again a disproportionately high level. This data, coupled with the high number of learners also requiring school based intervention at either school action or school action plus suggests that 61.08% of the cohort placed both in and out of county have SEN of some description.

Table 11: SEN of children who are looked after of statutory school age as at 9th November 2016

Code of Practice	RCT children who are looked after educated out of county	RCT children who are looked after educated in RCT	Total	%
Early Years/School Action	27	89	116	23.15
Early Years/School Action Plus	18	81	99	19.76
Statement of Special Educational Needs	24	50	74	14.77
No Special Educational Needs	51	144	195	38.92
Undergoing Statutory Assessment	3	14	17	3.39
Total	123	378	501	

- 5.7 Table 12 highlights an increase in the number of PEPs completed within 20 days. This is encouraging and suggests that recent training and revised processes have been effective.

Table 12: The percentage of children who are looked after with an up to date PEP within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school in the year

Academic Years	Actual
2011/12	70.89
2012/13	72.08
2013/14	63.30
2014/15	57.95
2015/16	73.10

- 5.8 The attendance rates achieved for children who are looked after within Rhondda Cynon Taf are detailed in Table 13. The data for children and young people who are looked after was better than the general attendance of the wider local population (by 1.28%). The contrary was the case at secondary level, with children looked after generally attending marginally less frequently (by 0.29%) than the wider population. Clearly this is an area for further development in future.

Table 13: Primary and secondary school attendance for children who are looked after 2015/ 2016

School	Total percentage of attendance children who are looked after	Total percentage of attendance all RCT pupils (exc special schools)	RCT attendance target (exc special schools)
Primary	95.91	94.63	95.30
Secondary	93.71	94.00	94.30

5.9 Exclusion rates show improved trends for children who are looked after. The rate of children and young people being excluded per 1000 pupils has decreased from 76.40 in 2011/12 to 39.26 in 2015/16. This represents significant improvement.

Table 14: The percentage of children who are looked after pupils being excluded per 1000 pupils

Academic Year	Male	Female	Total	Excluded cohort	Days Lost	per 1000 pupils
2011/12	59	19	78	1021		76.40
2012/13	61	13	74	940		78.72
2013/14			52	840		61.90
2014/15	15	26	41	895	256	45.81
2015/16	10	22	32	815	220	39.26

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has a significant looked after population. It is evident from the data provided that the risk factors which can adversely impact on educational outcomes remains prevalent and can be a significant and long term barrier to achievement. Nevertheless through effective early intervention these risks can be minimised but often cannot be entirely eradicated.
- 6.2 The outcome data for this group of highly vulnerable learners suggests that whilst there is evidence of progress in very many areas, there is still scope for further improvement particularly in relation to educational attainment in Key Stage 4. All data sets have to be viewed within the context of the high levels of SEN evident within this cohort of learners.
- 6.3 The data for children who are looked after children will continue to be robustly scrutinised and evaluated in order to inform key areas for further strategic development and improvement.
- 6.4 Continued focus on narrowing the attainment gap between children and young people who are looked after and their peer group is essential if they are to achieve academic and personal success. Prompt and timely access to high quality services will be key in identifying any underlying needs and intervention strategies to bring about positive change. Ongoing focus on up skilling designated teachers through continued training, support and guidance will also be necessary so that schools and Governing Bodies are better equipped to help learners to achieve success. Support and challenge for schools will continue to be provided where there are concerns

relating to outcomes and continued opportunities for sharing good practice and training will be provided to ensure that schools, carers and external agencies are well supported;

The Local Authority will also continue to seek further improvements in the performance indicators and to target those which suggest a lack of progress overtime.