

Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund: National Operational Guidance 2021-2022.

The Independent Care Review published its [conclusions and final reports](#) on 5 February, which were guided by the voices of over 5,500 people, over half were children and young people with experience of care. The Promise outlined the vision and approach for care experienced children and young people to enable them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected, supported by the people and structures around them.

The Promise team began work in July 2020 and is responsible for translating the findings of the Care Review into Plan 21-24. Plan 21-24 is the first of 3 plans. It sets a series of outcomes that must be fulfilled by 2024. One of the five foundations of The Promise is 'Scaffolding' and it identifies that 'children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed'. Building on this foundation, The Plan 21-24 was published in March 2021 and outlines some of the commitments to CECYP. These include:

- every child that is 'in care' in Scotland will have access to intensive support that ensures their educational and health needs are fully met
- Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.
- Care experienced young people will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools
- The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from education will end
- Schools will support and ensure care experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment.

In June 2021, [The Promise Change Programme](#) was published. It details the requirement for investment in the lives of children and families to be considered strategically and holistically in the context of their experiences. The Human and Economic Cost modelling that underpinned Follow the Money and The Money reports will be embedded into organisational and budgeting processes across Scotland. That process will have involved organisations working together to spread investment, align budgets and pool resources.

In March 2021 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was incorporated into Scots law. As a result of the Bill recognising and realising children's rights are now a legal requirement and not just good practice. The 54 Articles of the Convention outline how children should be protected, provided for, and given the opportunity to participate in decisions made about them.

Additionally, all care experienced children and young people are entitled to support through the amended Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 until they are assessed as not requiring that support.

About the Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015, focusing on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

In 2021/22, over £215 million of targeted funding will be invested to help close the poverty related attainment gap. It marks the first year of investment in an expanded £1 billion Attainment Scotland Fund which will be provided over the new Parliamentary term after an investment of over £750 million in the previous Parliamentary term.

In the 2021/22 academic year, local authority work to help improve the attainment of care experienced young people will be supported with over £11.5 million, through the Care Experienced Children and Young People Grant.

This national operational guidance is intended to help local authorities determine how to invest this funding in ways which could improve educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people. The term 'care-experienced' refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care, or through being looked-after at home with a supervision requirement. The reason this guidance uses this term as opposed to the statutory term 'Looked After Child' is to ensure that this policy is inclusive and provides for all groups of young people who experience care and could benefit from this funding. This could include children and young people who are on the edges of care and who need support in order to avoid becoming care experienced.

The Scottish Government and local authorities are committed to ensuring that all care experienced children and young people receive the vital support they need, to improve their life experiences and educational outcomes. While the funding is provided to local authorities, it can be used for young people up to the age of 26 and therefore, the statutory duty of corporate parents to collaborate should be considered to include other services and post-16 institutions and organisations

Key principles

- This funding stream is designed to enable local authorities, as corporate parents, to make strategic decisions around how best to improve the attainment of care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of 26, in line with The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This includes appropriate engagement with agencies and institutions involved

in the delivery of services for young people aged 0-5 and 15-26, including working with other Corporate Parents such as Further and Higher Education Institutions, other national bodies, Early Years providers and post 16 employment, training and education providers.

- The Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Education Officer should work together to ensure there are strategic plans in place with processes for reporting on impact.
- Local Authorities should work in collaboration with each other to ensure the needs of children and young people educated outside the authority who look after them are considered and that appropriate plans and support are put in place for children and young people in these circumstances
- Local Authorities **should** consider where the Regional Improvement Collaboratives can play a role in coordinating and supporting activity, or through establishment or participation in networks, such as the Virtual School Head Teacher and Care Experience Team network, facilitated by [CELCIS](#).
- The Scottish Government recognises that to improve a child's attainment support may be required in all aspects of their wellbeing, in line with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. The funding should be used in developing new, or supplementing existing supports or initiatives. This activity should address the factors which could impact on the child or young person's **wellbeing and** attainment, which are not exclusively within the educational setting.
- This funding must enable local authorities, working in partnership with other agencies, to deliver additional activities, interventions or resources, specifically for the benefit of care experienced children and young people, and/or to enhance any current provisions. The funding must not be used to replace existing services.
- Funding should be used to enhance care experienced children and young people's wellbeing and capacity and/or readiness to learn.
- Decisions around how the funding is used should be made within existing corporate parenting mechanisms and statutory corporate parenting duties; and in line with existing planning processes and procedures. Examples of this include, integrated children's service planning and strategic commissioning processes.
- **Decisions should be informed by robust data (high quality, timely and complete) and take account of care experienced voices (voices of CECYP, their families and /or those who know them best) in order to ensure that the use of funds is centred on overcoming the key barriers to achieving the best outcomes for their care experienced children and young people**

Allocation amounts

Over £11.5m is available to local authorities across the 21/22 academic year to support care experienced children and young people, provided at a figure of £1,200 per looked after child aged 5-15 as outlined in the [Children's social work statistics, 2019/20](#). This is the same methodology as used for allocation in previous years which saw £1,200 provided per looked after child aged 5-15.

Although the allocations are based on the 5-15 age group who are currently looked after (agreed with COSLA as the best proxy for needs-base distribution), Local Authorities should use their local data to understand which individual children, groups of children, or families would benefit most from this additional funding. This includes considering the needs of all young people aged 0-26 who are eligible to be supported and engaging with partner agencies and establishments to provide this.

How it can be used

It's important to note that all care experienced children and young people aged between 0-26 are eligible for support.

Local authorities, as corporate parents, should identify the ways in which the funding will be best used to improve attainment of their care experienced children and young people. This may include working with other Corporate Parents such as Further and Higher Education Institutions, other national bodies, Early Years providers and post 16 employment, training and education providers. In addition, third sector and voluntary sector organisations can provide support and services to children and families for both school based and non-school based issues.

The funding is allocated to local authorities, with the Chief Social Work Officer and the Chief Education Officer working in collaboration with planning partners, and other professionals, carers and children and young people, to assess where the funds could have the most impact on attainment. The funding should have a clear focus on delivering equity and improving educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people so the involvement/views of children and young people should be sought at all stages of the process, from planning through to delivery and evaluation. Details of the methods used to involve the views of children and young people in the planning process would be welcomed in reporting.

Funds will be allocated at the direction of the Chief Social Work and Chief Education Officers to ensure that the funds improve attainment in a way that is consistent with the Getting It Right for Every Child approach.

The money can be used to fund initiatives that benefit a number of children, families or activities that are specific to an individual child's or family's needs and impact positively on their attainment. Use of the money for individual children should be discussed within existing planning processes for children in accordance with their local authority's additional support policies and/or GIRFEC. Examples of this include additional support plans, Child's Plans, Looked After Children reviews, or integrated children's services plans.

Local authorities may wish to work with their champions boards or other groups of care experienced young people to coproduce approaches, interventions or activities which could be funded in line with the guidance above.

All support should be planned through a trauma responsive lens, with acknowledgement that most Care Experienced Children have experienced developmental trauma and are protected under article 39 of the UNCRC: Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration).

Outcomes, impact and measurements

Local authorities will be accountable for the use of funding allocated and required to report on its spending, using any outcome measures available, as outlined in the grant letter terms and conditions. Reporting will be done as part of existing relevant authority reporting requirements highlighting evidence of the impact on attainment alongside qualitative and, where available, quantitative information.

Measures should reflect the strategic decisions taken around how the funding is used and local authorities should agree the mechanisms which best illustrate impact on attainment. These can be quantitative or qualitative measures, for example capturing the experiences and feedback from care experienced children and young people, or through the Chief Social Work Officer Reports. **Outcomes, measures of success and evaluation of impact should be built into any programme or initiative at the outset and clearly set out in the relevant plans.** Measures for individual children should also be included in the child or young person's plan. A key consideration and focus should be strategic planning to ensure the sustainability of the plans in place to support care experienced children and young people.

We will use a range of measures to determine improvements in educational outcomes. Nationally published data, such as the annual Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked after Children statistics will be one specific resource for considerations on measuring impact. Improved school attendance, evidence of better engagement with education, or specific improvement in relation to a specific action in the child's plan or education support plan would also be useful measures of evaluation.

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan is designed to help us deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity; galvanising efforts and aligning our collective improvement activities across all partners in the education system to address our key priorities. At national level, this Improvement Plan summarises the key evidence and identifies both ongoing and new improvement activity that we will be taking forward or supporting at national level. These plans will play an important role in measuring ongoing activity and the impact of this work stream.

Resources

Attainment Advisors from Education Scotland will engage with local authorities to provide professional advice and guidance, on a local and regional basis, to support planning, implementation and reporting, taking account of national guidance.

Examples of this include Attainment Advisors:

- working with Chief Social Work officer and Education Director to support joint planning and development of collaborative approaches to the use of the CECYP fund;
- providing advice and support to local CECYP officers on planning and reporting on CECYP Fund initiatives and the use of impact evaluation data and evidence to identify successful approaches and areas for improvement;
- supporting review of local authority SAC self-evaluation framework and approaches and providing advice on how this could be expanded to include work related to the CECYP Fund
- working with local CECYP officers to support enhanced tracking and monitoring of attainment for CECYP and collaborative working with a variety of local authority partners.

Local Authorities may wish to consider the guidance produced by the Centre for Excellence for [Children's Care and Protection \(CELCIS\)](#), [Looked After and Learning](#), in developing their plans. These cover seven distinct areas; Commitment to the designated manager role, support for teachers, promoting resilience and positive attachments, planning for education, developing engagement between schools, parents and carers, inclusive and relational approaches to education, and planning for improvement.

The [National Improvement Hub](#) is a platform developed by Education Scotland that provides information and support that enables practitioners to improve their practice and increase the quality of learners' experiences and outcomes. It provides access to: self-evaluation and improvement frameworks, research, teaching and assessment resources, exemplars of practice and support for on-line collaboration and networks through Glow. This will be a helpful resource for considerations relating to allocation of this funding. The section on [corporate parenting](#) contains an extensive suite of links and resources with specific relevance to this funding stream.

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) lead on the National Trauma Training Programme and have developed a suite of universally accessible and free resources to support awareness raising and training. The latest addition to these resources is a very helpful training module for people who work with and care for children and young people. This module is open to anyone and is available on the NES learning platform, Turas Learn. Anyone can register on Turas using an e-mail address (personal or company) and you will be able to access this module and other learning resources.

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/52040/national-trauma-training-programme/trauma-skilled/developing-your-trauma-skilled-practice-2-trauma-in-children-and-young-people>

[Intandem](#), is Scotland's mentoring programme for young people looked after at home, launched in November 2016. It is funded by Scottish Government and

delivered by Inspiring Scotland. Intandem provides mentors for young people aged between 8-14 years who are looked after by their local authority but living at home. Intandem and Inspiring Scotland can provide a range of support across a range of activities including recruitment, training, safeguarding, and evaluation as well as capacity building and organisational support.

Additional support and resources are provided by a range of national, local and third sector organisations which can provide support for vulnerable young people and their families. These include organisations such as [MCR Pathways](#), whose mentoring programme is making a significant positive impact on educational outcomes for care experienced young people in Glasgow and other areas of Scotland, and [Includem](#), who are developing new services focused specifically on raising attainment, which will be beneficial in identifying and addressing barriers to attainment.

Some Local Authorities have established a Virtual School /Virtual School Head Teacher or a Care Experienced Team. These teams and roles have a specific focus within their local authority to bring about improvements in the education of Looked After (Care Experienced) children and to promote their educational achievement as if they were in a single school. **The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building but is an organisational tool which has been created for the effective co-ordination of support for this vulnerable group at a strategic and operational level.**

Publications

[Children's social work statistics: 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[School education statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Looked after children: education outcomes 2018-2019 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Additional support for learning: action plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Review of additional support for learning implementation: report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)