

## **The overall cost to and value for money of the range public services aimed at improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people**

The most important and powerful influence on looked after children is their placement and the carer's ability to meet their holistic needs.

There has been no increase in the amount of funding for care leavers year on year, despite increasing costs (e.g. due to inflation). Projection of numbers for post 18 yrs care leavers shows growth nevertheless.

Whilst we fully acknowledge that many care leavers make great successes in terms of their personal, social and educational achievements, the needs of the more complex young people within the cohort are great; there is no specific long-term funding allocation for this complex group to fund the right type of accommodation to meet their needs. The same applies to educational/training provision for those who are not receiving their entitlement.

Corporate Parenting is sometimes required to pay for accommodation/education provision to meet the needs of the individual. This comes out of core funding.

We acknowledge that recently Supporting People monies (to be spent in 2017/18) has recently been made available to Children's Services. Other funding has been allocated from Welsh Government to address NEET to 2019/20.

## **Whether the Welsh Government's desired outcomes for care experienced children and young people are being delivered by the current levels of public expenditure**

At times the desired outcomes, regardless of costs, are undermined by the urgency to find a placement and there is a lack of choice to allow the placement to be truly based on need. Matching children to appropriate placements can be very challenging in the current climate and this naturally can have a negative impact on the child at the time and also on their future development as grounded adults.

At times, placing authorities can find themselves in difficulty when a child or young person with challenging behaviour is being refused placements. Numbers of children and young people entering the secure estate under criminal orders are

reducing year on year this needs to be sustained; lack of appropriate “welfare” placements could have a negative impact on this progress

Placement in the secure estate is not a long term plan – these children and young people need to be prioritized for release. These are not new messages, they are repeated time and again, for example, they are contained in “Tell them not to forget about us” 2006.

There is need for a wrap-around holistic response to deal with the most complex young people. A bespoke model allowing for young people to ‘fail’ and get another number of chances to succeed is critical.

### **Whether the extent of spending specific to care experienced children and young people is sufficiently transparent across the range of public services**

Whilst LA colleagues are transparent in relation to spend it is difficult to express confidence that the services delivered are as transparent.

There is no budget allocation per care leaver across services such as housing; leisure; education and health. There needs to be more of a multi-agency response and approach to care experience children and young people.

In Carmarthenshire PDG LAC money is held centrally and is used to train schools (attachment aware schools); provide for problem solving and support as well as upskilling of staff.

Children who have been removed from families can very often fall behind in their educational achievement due to the circumstances of the home life. Multiple moves can result in multiple schools or no school at all. The quality of education delivered in house by providers does not always meet minimum requirements or the child’s entitlement?

All looked after children are not currently, but should be prioritised for CAMHS consultation, assessment and therapy if required. CAMHS should receive additional funding for Looked After Children specifically as currently they are unable to prioritise this group due to overstretched resources. The children with unresolved psychological issues, whilst not presenting with mental illness, are quite likely to present these problems as adults therefore this should be considered as an important preventative approach to practice. This is supported by

Adverse Childhood Experiences research. Whilst pockets of good practice may exist, it does not appear to be consistent across Wales.

Being in the looked after system coupled with a criminal record are barriers to this group of young people with enhanced support and allowances to maintain work placements could be overcome. There should be increased opportunities for them not to have to compete with peers.

Carmarthenshire offers apprenticeships and traineeship to Care Leavers. This requires considerable investments of time, support.

**Whether public bodies have placed sufficient emphasis on a long-term preventative spend approach, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to maximise the benefits of public expenditure for this group of children**

We support the emphasis on early access to services and early intervention for those families who need additional support building resilience and the vision of Wales having self-sufficient confident future generations. This over time should reduce the number of children needing to be looked after.

The growth in the need for prevention and early intervention is not reflected in budgets for care experienced children. To be effective, it is felt that expertise need to be 'front loaded' so provide the right level of support and guidance.