

S48. ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED-AFTER AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The committee considered a report by the Joint Acting Director of Education Services which provided information on the attainment of looked-after children, school leaver destinations for looked-after children and action within the authority.

Nigel Fletcher provided an overview of the report.

The committee asked why the attainment of looked-after children in Falkirk was less than the national average. Nigel Fletcher advised that it was difficult to identify local trends as the number of children involved was so small that a yo-yo effect could occur. Whereas the national statistics, being drawn from a larger sample, appeared more stable, he did not think local performance was lagging behind other Councils. Further, the statistics provided a snapshot of a cohort's attainment rather than tracking their progress through their educational journey. Nigel Fletcher stated that academic attainment may not be the most appropriate pathway for all children. The Council utilised vocational qualifications and schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir awards to provide opportunities for looked-after children to succeed. There were broader outcomes such as leaver destination which could provide a better measure of the success of the Council taking on the role as corporate parent.

Members asked if the Council could learn from others best practice. David MacKay advised that he was involved in local and national groups which shared best practice. Officers from other Councils were due to visit the area to take learning from the practice in Falkirk. The service tried to build capacity within looked-after children to engage in lifelong learning. Looked-after children at home performed less well academically than those looked-after away from home but looked-after away from home could face reintegration issues when returning to the community.

The committee asked for a report at the end of the academic year on the progress of the 16+ School Transitions Group and nurture groups. David MacKay advised that there was an ex looked-after child on the scrutiny group and that they act as the representative of looked-after children on the group.

Decision

The committee continued consideration of whether the subject matter of the report is suitable for inclusion in the Council's scrutiny plan to the next meeting to allow consideration of all the reports requested on 14 August 2014.