



## **Agenda Item 9**

**Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund  
(SACF) – Additional Support for  
Care Experienced Children and  
Young People**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund (SACF) – Additional Support for Care Experienced Children and Young People  
**Meeting:** Education Executive  
**Date:** 4 September 2018  
**Submitted By:** Director of Children's Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- advise the Education Executive that the Scottish Government have recently announced additional funding to support and improve the outcomes for care experienced children and young people;
- confirm Falkirk Council's funding allocation; and
- provide the Education Executive with a strategic overview of how Children's Services plan to utilise and target this funding through the 'Closer To Home' Strategy.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:

- (i) note the additional funding received and the plan, set out in section 4, to undertake four tests of change; and
- (ii) agree that the Director of Children's Services provides a progress report early in 2019.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund (SACF) was launched in February 2015, with the aim of focusing on improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, with the aim of closing the poverty related attainment gap in some of Scotland's more deprived areas.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government have now allocated funding to directly focus on support for care experienced children and young people.

## 4. Considerations

### Funding

- 4.1 This element of the SACF has allocated £33m nationally. Falkirk Council have been awarded funding of £0.196m for 2018/19, which is based on 245 looked after children being recorded on the annual census at 31 July 2017. As this funding element covers the period August 2018 to March 2019, a further £0.098m is due in 2019/20 to cover the period April to June 2019.

### Key Principles

- 4.2 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.

### Proposals to Use 2018/19 Funding (£0.196m)

- 4.3 Initial discussions have taken place between the Heads of Education and Children and Families and Social work, to agree broad areas of activity to guide the consultation discussions and the four tests of change. The planned projects are set out below:

#### **(i) Pilot School Based Social Worker**

12 month test of change joint funded by Falkirk High School and Children's Services for an experienced Social Worker to join the school's multi- agency hub which prioritises supporting their most disadvantaged pupils, all of which are looked after. Falkirk High School have undertaken significant analysis of the unmet needs of their pupils. They have developed resources and an ethos in the school that is making a real difference to the educational experiences of these children.

Focussing on looked after children and their siblings, the new social work post aims to contribute to this change by:

- improving attendance, attainment, participation, engagement and inclusion;
- reducing placement breakdown and escalation of need;
- providing advice to the staff team in relation to child welfare and child protection concerns;
- being the lead professional to a managed case load of looked after children who attend Falkirk High school and to link with their families and, where appropriate, younger siblings and associated primary schools; and
- working alongside staff in developing knowledge of trauma informed practice, the impact of adverse childhood experiences and nurture.

#### **(ii) Pilot project in Carrongrange High School (Social Worker embedded in school)**

12 month test of change for an experienced Social Worker to join the school's multi-agency team which prioritises support for their most disadvantaged pupils, all of whom are looked after.

Focussing on looked after children and their siblings, the new social work post aims to contribute to this change by;

- enhancing the already positive collaborative work between Education, Social Work and Health;
- developing: family networks, complex care skills, family support and independent living skills;
- establishing a multi-agency team within the school to work on staff development, future planning and development of the curriculum to improve attainment for this group of children; and
- working alongside families to develop the provision and support available to meet their needs.

### **(iii) Pilot Project in the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service (Social Worker embedded in Service)**

12 month test of change for an experienced Social Worker to join the service's multi-agency team which prioritises support for their most disadvantaged pupils, all of whom are looked after.

Focussing on looked after children and their siblings, the new social work post aims to contribute to this change by;

- jointly design intervention approaches with children, young people, their families and schools to further develop their pro-social skills and enhance positive engagement with their communities;
- developing: family networks, complex care skills, family support and independent living skills;
- establishing a multi-agency team within the service to work on staff development, future planning and development of the curriculum to improve attainment for this group of children; and
- working alongside families to develop the provision and the support available to meet their needs.

### **(iv) Leaving Care Worker- Participation and Attainment**

Currently only 32 of the 88 young people provided with Aftercare by Falkirk Council are in education, training or employment. This reflects national statistics. Currently, several factors inhibit the participation of care experienced young people in education, training or employment. These are:

- carers lack knowledge of the opportunities available;
- carers lack of confidence in how best to support young people to participate; and
- young people's lack of the confidence to participate without support.

The Leaving Care Team have developed working practices to increase their reach and to ensure they are targeting resources to those in most need, through developing:

- Eligible Needs Criteria;
- an intake/duty system for older young people; and
- working agreements and protocols with partner agencies and corporate parents to enable effective signposting.

By increasing capacity by an additional post, the leaving care team would be able to promote greater use of the projects and initiatives listed above as well as new opportunities by:

- organising bi-annual roadshows publicising the activities available to carers and young people, where young people could “sign up” to opportunities and carers could “sign up” to support them;
- prioritising individual young people’s participation through a combination of monitoring placements as well as practically supporting the young people to become involved;
- extending support response for care experienced young people; and
- providing additional support and advice beyond crisis intervention.

The Educational Psychological Service will support the evaluation of these projects.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Children’s Services will engage with and consult with the following stakeholders to firm up the proposals for this funding:

- Falkirk Council Champions Board;
- Community Learning and Development;
- Early Years, Primary and Secondary educational establishments; and
- Children and Families Social Work colleagues and teams.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial / Resources**

6.1 Projects will be developed within the funding envelope and are fully funded through the SACF from Scottish Government.

### **Legal**

6.2 None

### **Risk**

6.3 None

## **Equalities**

6.4 None

## **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

6.5 None.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 Full project briefs will be developed through consultation with the broad range of groups indicated. It is essential that the Falkirk Council Champions Board are involved to ensure they have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the shaping of proposals and ongoing developments.

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## **Appendix:**

None

## **List of Background Papers:**

None