

## Corporate Parenting Services Update

### Context

The local authority has a Corporate Parenting Strategy that outlines the measures it will take to ensure that outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are positive.

This strategy is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Panel of Elected Members, Directors and Heads of Service which meets quarterly.

This is an annual update summarising key outcomes and challenges for this service area.

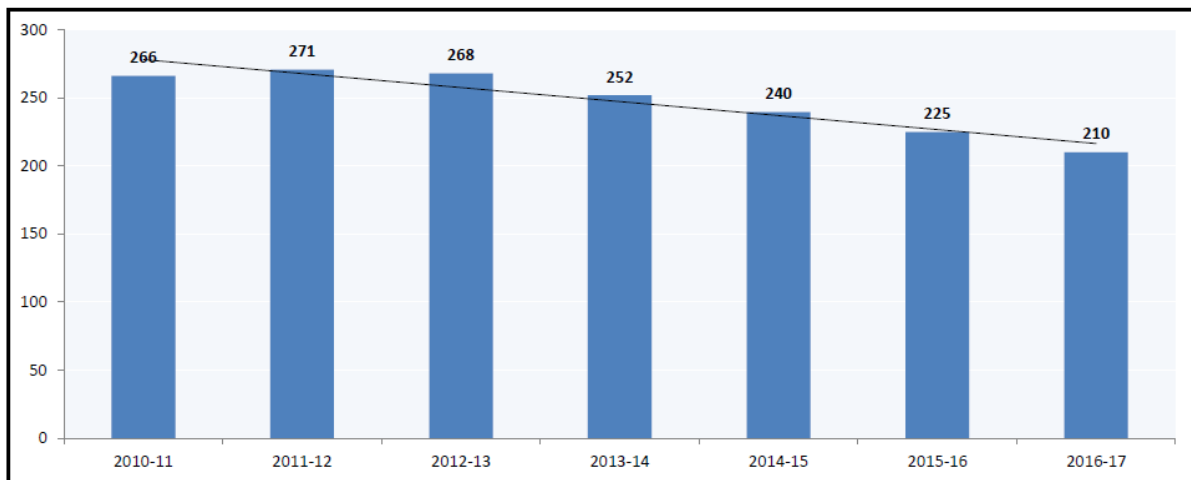
### Looked After Children

Looked after children are children for whom the courts have decided are unable to live with their birth families. These children are looked after by the local authority who act as Corporate Parents to these children.

### Total number of looked after children

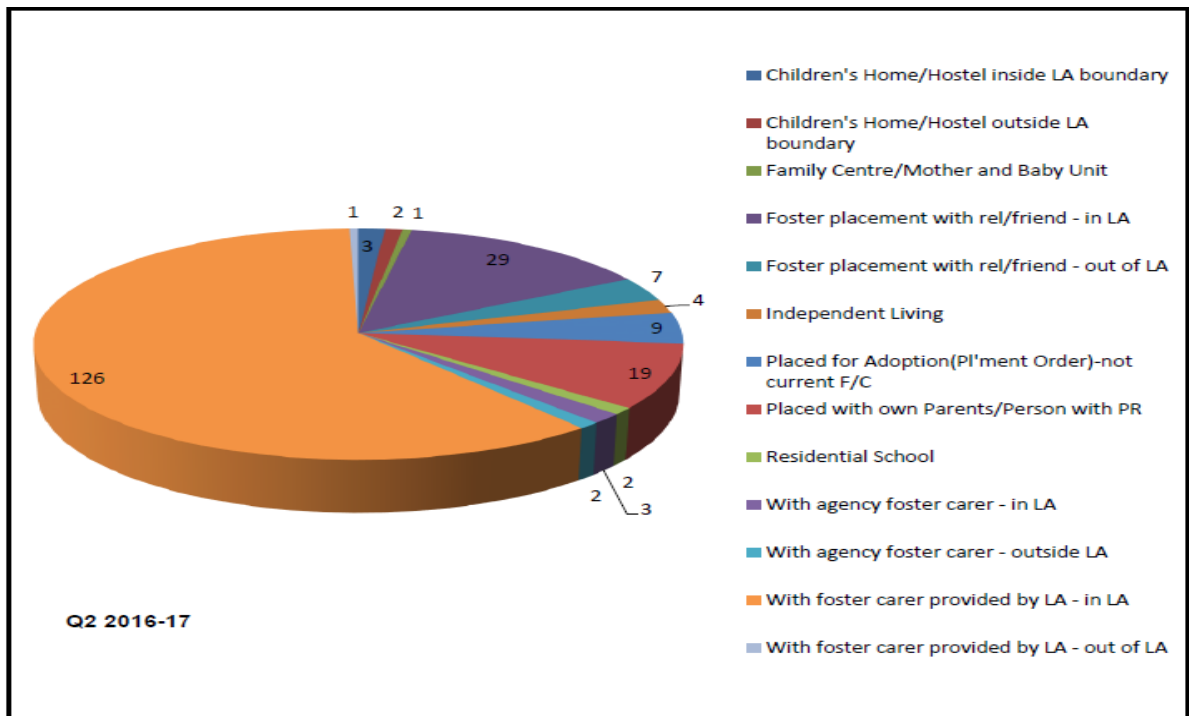
The local authority is currently a corporate parent to 210 looked after children.

**Average Number of Looked After Children 2010-2017 (by Qtr/Yr)**



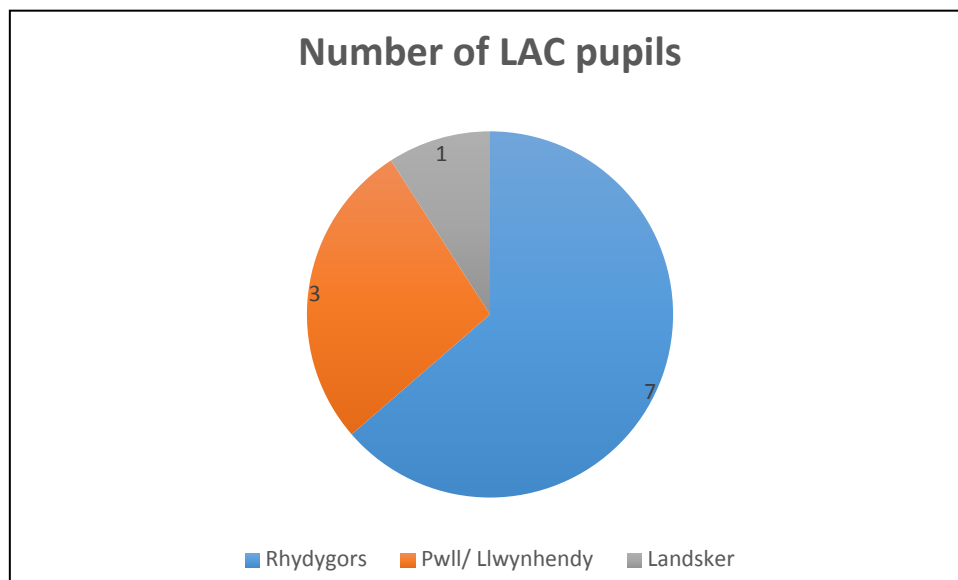
### Accommodation

Of the 210 children who are looked after by Carmarthenshire 3 reside in children's homes, 55 reside with family or relatives and 147 live with foster families. We have 4 young people living independently under the age 18 and 1 young person in a mother and baby placement.

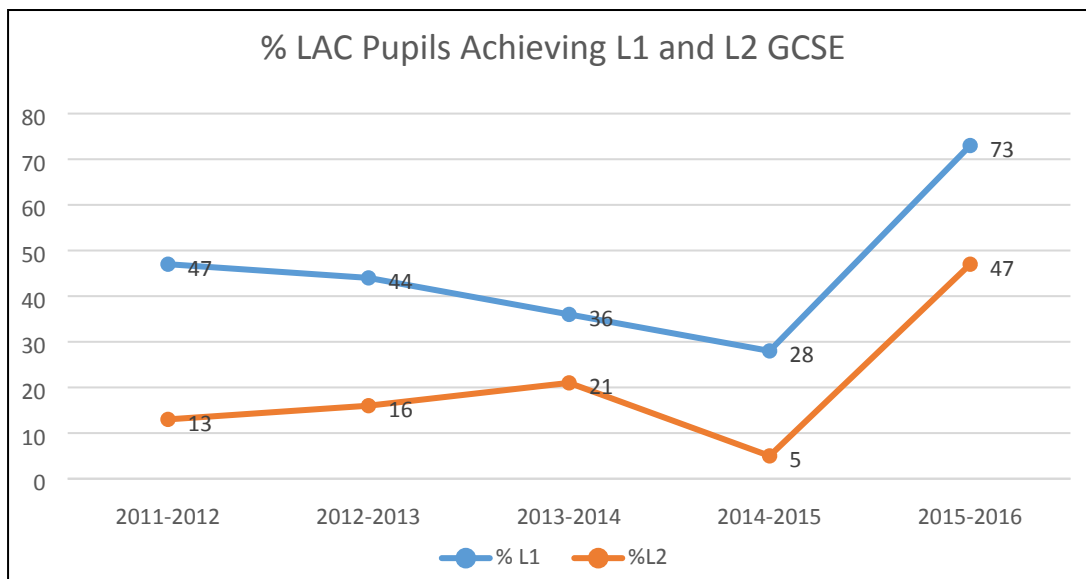


## Education

There are currently 60 looked after children in Primary School and 96 in Secondary Schools. Most children are educated in mainstream education, only 11 children are accessing alternative education provision.



School attainment is generally good with 62.5% of looked after pupils without a statement of SEN achieved KS2 CSI in 2016, 85% of pupils achieving KS3 CSI, and 73% achieving level 2 at GCSE.



Additional support and advice is provided to schools in managing and supporting the attendance and attainment of looked after children. In the last 18 months the Corporate Parenting Team have directly supported 79 secondary pupils and 62 primary pupils across 73 schools. The support can be in the form of training, support groups and advice for staff; in-school support from Teaching Assistants; or direct tuition and resources for the children and young people.

### **Emotional Health Support**

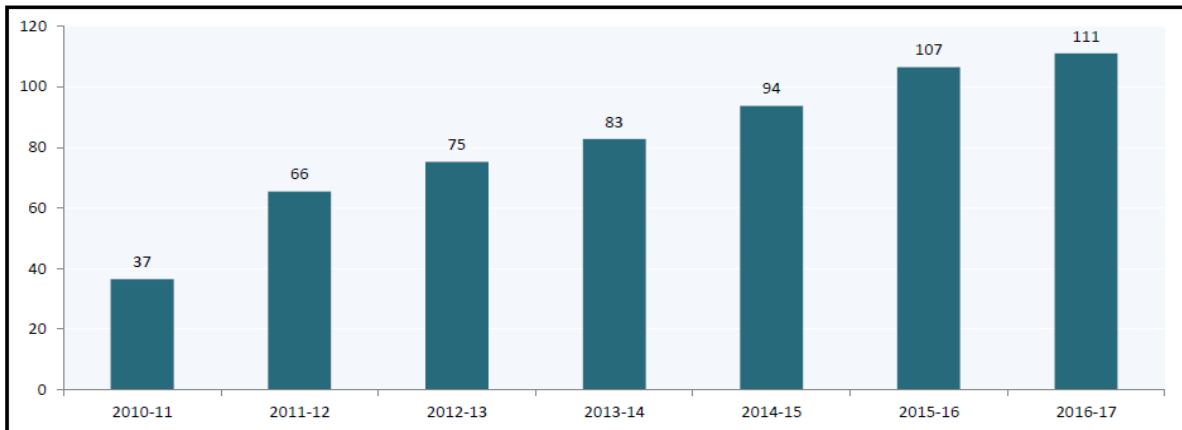
Corporate Parenting Services provide access to therapy, counselling and therapeutic interventions for looked after children and their carers. Currently this service supports 1/3 of all children who are looked after.

### **Care leavers**

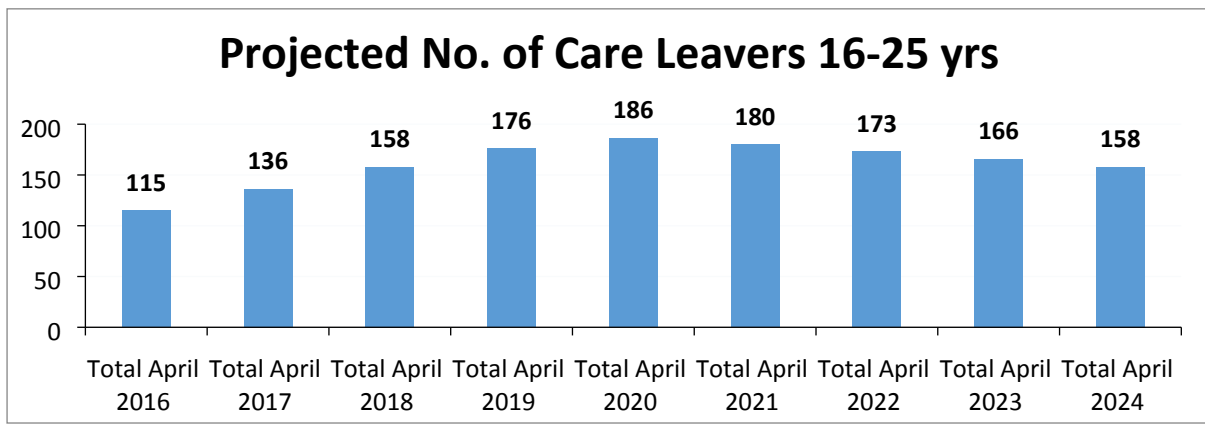
Care leavers are young people between the age of 16 and 25 who have previously been looked after by the local authority. They are entitled to advice, guidance and support from Children's Services.

### **Total number of care leavers**

At the end of January 2017 we were supporting 111 and at the end of March 2017 we are currently supporting 123 care leavers.



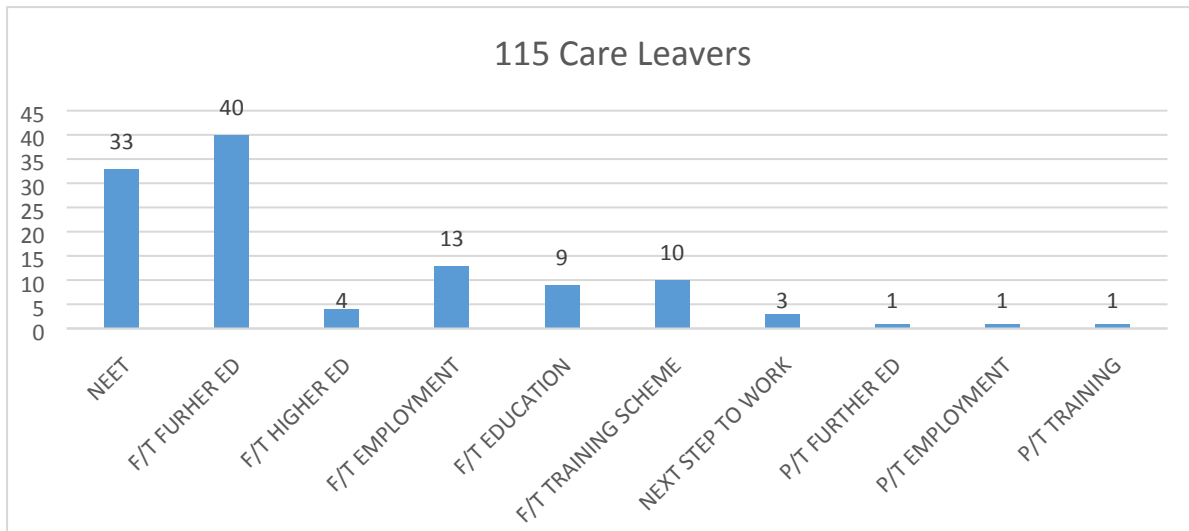
**Care Leavers are a projected growth area**



**Education, Employment and Training**

**Corporate Parenting**

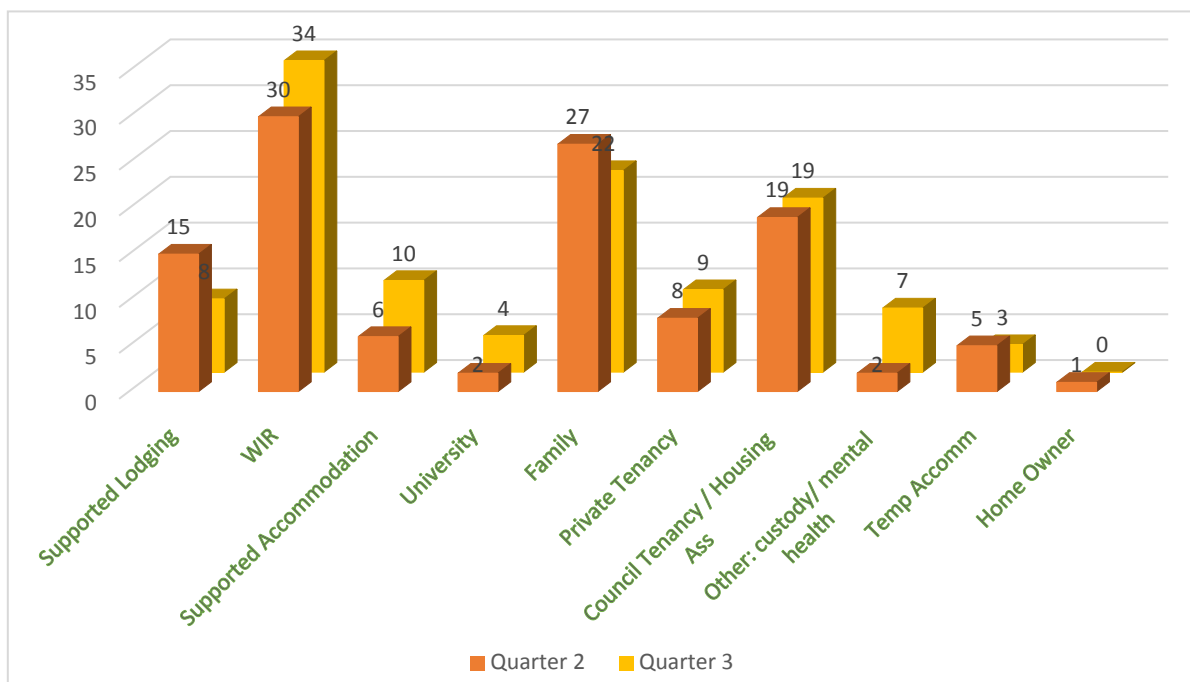
As of January 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 29% of Care Leavers were NEET (33 out of 115 young people). The Leaving Care Team increasingly provide a range of training and support for care leavers that they can't access elsewhere, helping to reduce the NEET figures. 40 children were in further education, 4 in Higher education and 13 in employment. When compared to other authorities in Wales, the outcomes for our care leavers are good.



### **Accommodation**

Most Care Leavers remain in Foster Care, Supported Lodgings or with Family members. As Corporate Parents we aim for our young people to remain in their local communities and live in accommodation that is conducive to emotional wellbeing. Children's Services have a duty to ensure that Care Leavers are in appropriate accommodation and not in B&B, and this year we have not had any care leavers in B&B.

### **Where our care leavers are currently residing**



## **Challenges moving forward**

### **Ensuring we meet the emotional health needs of looked after children.**

There is growing recognition for the need to ensure that looked after children have early access to emotional health support. Services within health under Specialist CAMHS are limited and it often falls to the local authority to deliver this therapeutic work. There is no additional funding provided by Welsh Government to prioritise this work.

### **Developing Attachment Aware Schools.**

Through utilising the pupil deprivation grant for looked after children, Corporate Parenting Services will continue to offer ongoing support to schools.

### **A growing number of care leavers.**

Meeting the projected growth in care leavers will be challenging and there will be a need to expand the numbers of staff to support these young people.

### **Ensuring our care leavers live in appropriate accommodation.**

The current spend for 2017/19 on supporting and providing accommodation for care leavers for Children's Services is £293,000.00 which falls into overspend as this is not a statutory funded area. Some accommodation provision is not in the most appropriate geographical areas or in the most appropriate condition. Care leavers tell us they would like more flexible, responsive support in meeting their accommodation needs; with some flexibility to try independent living but then have increased support if it doesn't work.

### **Ensuring we have sufficient foster carers to meet demand.**

While the numbers of looked after children are dropping the complexity of their needs remain challenging. Carmarthenshire provides one of the lowest reimbursement to foster carers and this impacts on the availability of skilled carers to meet complex needs of children. Recruiting and retaining foster carers will continue to be a challenge.