CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD   **21 January 2019**

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Report of the Virtual Headteacher

1.   SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with the statutory annual report of the Virtual School Head (VSH) and the Virtual School for Together For Children and Sunderland City Council. This report highlights the work of the Virtual School in improving the educational outcomes for children in care from the early years up to targeted care leavers aged 25. The report covers the outcomes for all key stages. It also outlines the activity of the Virtual School Head Teacher, the Virtual School and the 2018 educational outcomes of children in care. Data contained in this report, is for children who were in our care for a year or more as at 31 March 2018.

2.   RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Board is requested to receive the report for information

3.   Context

3.1   Looked after and previously looked after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational and mental health needs.

        Children in care are:

- 4 times more likely to have special educational needs than all children
- 10 times more likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

        When reviewing the primary need of the EHCP and SEND social, emotional and mental health was the highest category for the children in our care. 35% of our looked after children have an identified SEND. (see table 4.4 for a breakdown by age and stage of SEND)

3.2   VSHs have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role was made statutory. For looked after children, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH is the educational advocate that parents are for others.

3.3   For previously looked after children, the VSH is a source of advice and information to help parents advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs do not act as a corporate parent in these circumstances but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to those with parental responsibility

3.4   In order to achieve positive outcomes, the Virtual School team closely monitor the education outcomes of our looked after children. We have robust monitoring systems in place to ensure we keep track of educational progress each term. This enables us to evaluate the impact of the Pupil Premium Plus and identify pupils that may need additional support.

3.5   Our Pupil Premium process involves giving schools a termly payment on the receipt of a high-quality Personal Education Plan which details interventions and support against planned spend. An amount of the Pupil Premium is retained centrally and is available for crisis situations, individual requests for tuition, and ICT equipment for example.

3.6   Personal Education Plans are quality assured to ensure they contain the relevant information and include SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound) targets, these can be short, medium and/or longer term. The plans must link the targets to specific interventions and support as well as identifying how the pupil premium will be spent. The Virtual School will be promoting the work of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) who have done valuable research work based on the impact of school interventions focusing on cost and impact on pupil performance. Many schools are beginning to refer to this work in their annual pupil premium statements which are published on school websites. Our current PEP compliance rate is 92%, those that are complete and on time. A key improvement target for the Virtual School will be to move to an electronic EPEP. This is planned for implementation in September 2019

3.7   Research carried out by The Rees Centre, Oxford University, identified a range of factors that impacted most on the educational outcomes of looked after children. These included stability of placement and school, good mental health, SEN and remaining in mainstream provision, where appropriate.   The VSH will continue to work closely with social care, health and other agencies to ensure that together we can provide the support needed in pursuit of outstanding educational outcomes

3.8   Our looked after population still has a high proportion with SEN and for some pupils, a more specialist provision is what they require. Our focus is on ensuring pupils are assessed fully and their needs are understood.

3.9   Training is a key role of the Virtual School and this will include:

- Carers
- Adoptive parents
- Designated Teachers
- School staff

- SENCos
- Social Workers
- IROS

3.10   Structure of Virtual School

Head Teacher	1 FTE	Strategic Leadership
Teaching Staff	1.5 FTE	Specialist teachers
Support Staff	2.6 FTE	Post 16 and NEET Intervention and Support for most complex including SEND and special schools, and, out of area LAC Emotional and Mental Support
Business Support	1 FTE	
Data Technician	1 FTE	

The current structure is currently under review. The VSH is keen to enhance the current resource and has begun to develop proposals for a new structure which will be fully consulted on.

3.11   Governance

The Virtual School has its own governing body and this will provide support and challenge to the Head Teacher.   They have recently been involved in the process of recruiting to the substantive and permanent Head Teacher post and the recruitment of the Data Technician post. They will be fully involved in supporting and managing the restructure as it is finalised.

3.12 Working together for children

An essential aspect of the role of the VSH is to work closely with a wide range of agencies and partners and all schools both in Sunderland and those schools outside of Sunderland that provide an education for the children we care for. Our ambition is to get the best education for these children.   The VSH will also ensure that outstanding relationships are developed with regional VSH colleagues as we also educate a significant number of other local authority children in Sunderland schools (see table 4.5).

4   **LAC POPULATION**

At 31 March 2018, the number of children looked after by local authorities in England increased, up 4% to 75,420 from 72,590 in 2017, continuing increases seen in recent years. This is equivalent to a rate of 64 per 10,000 in 2018, which is up from 62 per 10,000 in 2017 and 60 per 10,000 in 2016.

The number of children starting to be looked after has fallen slightly this year, by 3%, after a period of gradual increases. 32,050 children started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2018, down from 32,940 in 2017.

The number ceasing to be looked after has fallen again by 5% to 29,860, from a high of 31,850 in 2016. After falls in the last 3 years, the average duration of the latest period of care rose slightly this year, up from 758 days in 2017 to 772 days in 2018.

The tables below provide the data for Sunderland in this context.

Table 4.1

Total Number of Children 0-18 years looked after as at 31st March				
2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
490	570	550	540	579

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2017 – 2018 15 November 2018

Table 4.2

	Number of Children looked after: rates per 10,000 children aged under 18 years				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sunderland	89	105	101	100	106
National	60	60	60	62	64
Difference	+29	+45	+41	+38	+42

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2017 – 2018 15 November 2018

Table 4.3

Number of children in care of Sunderland City Council for at least one year as at 31st March				
2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
260	330	371	287	335

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2017 – 2018 15 November 2018

What is important to note is that whilst 579 children and young people were in the care of Sunderland City Council during the academic year, 335 were in care for at least one year as of 31st March, between the ages of five and sixteen, and are therefore used for statistical purposes throughout this report when looking at educational outcomes.

Table 4.4

SCHOOL ROLL	Total	Male	%	Female	%	EHCP	SEND Support
Pre School	85	36	42	49	58		
Nursery 1	19	12	63	7	37		1
Nursery 2	19	10	53	9	47		1
Total	38	22		16		0	2
Reception	22	11	50	11	50		6
Year 1	22	14	64	8	36	2	4
Year 2	21	10	48	11	52	1	4
Year 3	17	8	47	9	53	1	4
Year 4	25	13	52	12	48	3	7
Year 5	28	15	54	13	46	5	10
Year 6	34	17	50	17	50	4	9
Total	169	88	52	81	48	16	44
Year 7	42	27	64	15	36	8	9
Year 8	45	29	64	16	36	9	12
Year 9	33	20	61	13	39	6	12
Year 10	38	22	58	16	42	4	14

Year 11	42	26	62	16	38	9	15
Total	200	124	62	76	38	36	62
Year 12	50	26	52	24	48	13	18
Year 13	49	29	59	20	41	19	6
Total	99	55	55	44	44	32	24
Of which NEET	17 (1.7%)	11	68	6	32	9	8
TOTAL LAC Population	591	325	55	266	45		
TOTAL SEND Population	208	35%				84 (14%)	124 (21%)

Source Virtual School Data 2018

Table 4.5

Sunderland LAC placed in other Local Authority Schools   OOA
Other Local Authority LAC placed in Sunderland schools   OLA

OOA	90	20 LAs	
OLA	63	12 LAs	29 of which are in Post 16 provision eg Sunderland College

Source Virtual School data Welfare Call

Table 4.6

Pupils in schools by OFSTED Category

OFSTED RATING	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not applicable
Reception to Year 6 (177)	29 (16.4%)	125 (71%)	8 (5%)	7 (4.2%)	

Year 7 to Year 11 (205)	27 (13.1%)	95 (46.3%)	55 (28%)	15 (7.5%)	
Year 12 and Year 13 (106)	12 (9.4%)	51 (48%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	30 (30.3%)
TOTAL 488	68 (12.9%)	271 (55.5%)	67 (14.3%)	23 (5%)	
	69.4 % in Good or better schools				

Source Virtual School Data and OFSTED 2018

Table 4.6
Ethnicity

Ethnicity		Number	%
White	British	566	95.7%
White	Scottish	1	0.17%
White	Eastern European Slovak Russian	7 1	1.2% 0.17%
Asian	Bangladeshi	2	0.34%
Asian	Asian	3	0.51%
Asian	Indian	1	0.17%
Black Black British	Black British	4	0.68%
Black Black British	Black African	1	0.17%
Mixed/dual background	Mixed White African	1	0.17%
Mixed/dual background	Mixed White	3	0.51%
Other ethnic		1	0.17%

Source Virtual School Data 2018

5   Educational Outcomes

5.1   Virtual school heads now have access to the national NCER (National Consortium for Examination Results) database. A specific set of reports have been developed that brings together education and care data. This is especially useful when trying to make national comparisons. Our cohorts in Sunderland are often very small and outcomes vary year on year, depending on the profile of the pupils. The new system enables us to compare cohorts by

gender, time in care, type of provision, number of care placements and age entering care. We can compare LAC performance with national and regional LAC and this is more meaningful than comparing LAC performance with national and local non LAC performance. I have included the provisional, unvalidated data for all schools nationally and in Sunderland for each stage.

5.2   Early Years Foundation Stage Profile EYFSP

EYFSP	GLD[1]	PRIME[2] GOALS	ALL GOALS
National ALL Schools	71.7%	79.4%	70.3%
Sunderland ALL Schools	71.1%	79.6%	70.8%
National LAC	48.0%	57.0%	47.0%
NE Region LAC	51.0%	63.0%	50.0%
Virtual School LAC	46.8%	57.4%	46.8%

Source NCER 2018

Key

GLD   good Level of development
COM[2] communication and language
PHY[2] physical development
PSE[2] personal, social and emotional
LIT[2]   literacy
MAT[2] maths
UTW   understanding the world
EXP   expressive arts and design

1   Good Level of Development GLD: pupil will have achieved at least expected level in all Prime, LIT and MAT goals.
2   Prime goals

There were 47 children in this cohort 46.8% achieved a GLD compared with the national figure of 48.0% and a regional figure of 51.0%. An individual pupil analysis is available, and this will enable us to identify the children who did not perform well and work with schools and settings to support improvements, this will be reflected in future PEPs. Our Early Years Foundation profile for looked after children is not as strong as it could be. An improvement target for the Virtual School will be to work with schools and designated teachers to consider how we can improve performance in this area.

5.3 Key Stage 1

Expected Level or above

KS1	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	RWM
National ALL Schools	75.4%	69.9%	76.1%	82.4%	65.3%
Sunderland ALL Schools	76.0%	71.0%	77.0%	83.2%	67.7%
National LAC	52.0%	43.0%	51.0%	60.0%	38.0%
NE Region LAC	54.0%	47.0%	55.0%	63.0%	42.0%
Virtual School LAC	51.7%	48.3%	51.7%	65.5%	41.4%

Source NCER 2018

Key
RWM = Reading, Writing and Maths combined at expected level or above

There were 29 children in this cohort 51.7% were working at or above the expected standard in reading compared with the national figure of 52.0% and a regional figure of 54.0%. In writing 48.3% were at the expected standard or above compared with a national outcome of 43% and 47% regionally. 51.7% were at the expected standard or above in maths compared to a national figure of 51% and 55% regionally. In Science 65.5% of our LAC were at expected levels or above compared to the national figure of 69% and a regional outcome of 63%. When the outcomes for reading, writing and maths (RWM) are combined 41.4% of Sunderland LAC achieved the expected standard or above compared to a national figure of 39% and a regional 42% LAC. Performance at KS1 is very close to or above national and regional data.

An individual pupil analysis is available, and this will enable us to identify the children who did not perform well and work with schools and settings to support improvements, this will be reflected in future PEPs.

5.4 Key Stage 4

KS2	RWM Exp	RWM High	R Exp	R High	WTA Exp	WTA High	M Exp	M High	GPS Exp	GPS High
National ALL Schools	64.4%	9.9%	75.3%	28.1%	78.3%	19.9%	75.6%	23.6%	77.7%	34.4%
Sunderland ALL Schools	67.9%	10.9%	77.5%	29.8%	81.2%	23.5%	78.7%	24.2%	79.6%	37.9%

National LAC	35.0%	2.0%	51.0%	13.0%	40.0%	6.0%	47.0%	8.0%	50.0%	14.0%
NE Region LAC	44.0%	2.0%	57.0%	13.0%	58.0%	6.0%	57.0%	9.0%	57.0%	16.0%
Virtual School LAC	41.7%	6.3%	60.4%	14.6%	58.3%	12.5%	58.3%	10.4%	54.2%	18.8%

Source NCER 2018

Key

RWM	Reading Writing and Maths combined
R	Reading
WTA	Writing Teacher Assessed
M	Maths
GPS	Grammar Punctuation and Spelling
Exp	At expected level
High	At higher level

There were 48 children in this cohort. Outcomes for reading, writing and maths were above both national and regional outcomes at expected and higher levels. For the combined indicator of reading, writing and maths (RWM) outcomes we were higher than national performance, lower than regional performance but had a significantly greater percentage performing at higher levels than national and the region. This was also reflected in the grammar, punctuation and spelling outcomes. This is strong performance at key stage 2. There is a further KS1 – 2 progress measure, not shown above, this shows that we are significantly above national and the region in all areas.

An individual pupil analysis is available, and this will enable us to identify the children who did not perform well and enables us to work with secondary schools and settings to support improvements, this will be reflected in future PEPs.

5.5 Key Stage 4

KS4	Att8	Progress 8	9-5 in EM	EBacc entry
National ALL Schools	46.6%	-0.02	43.3%	38.4%
Sunderland ALL Schools	43.1%	-0.36	36.2%	41.9%
National LAC	23.1%	-1.10	9.6%	11.0%
NE Region LAC	23.1%	-1.27	10.4%	9.4%
Virtual School LAC	21.2%	-1.17	8.6%	8.6%

Key

Att 8	Attainment 8 is a measure of a pupil's average grade across a set suite of 8 subjects
Progress 8	Progress 8 is based on a pupil's performance score across 8 subjects a value-added measure from KS2 – 4. 0 is average.

All the Progress 8 outcomes above represent performance significantly below average.

9-5 in EM	A grade in English and maths at level 5 or above. 5 is equivalent to a strong pass between a C and B grade. Level 4 represents the old C pass
EBacc entry	The % of pupils who study a suite of EBacc subjects: English language and literature: maths; the sciences; geography or history and a language

There were 35 children in this cohort, performance at attainment 8 was below both the national and regional figures. Progress 8 for these children was significantly below the national average, although all have a negative progress measure. Only 8.6% of the LAC cohort achieved the higher 9-5 outcome for English and Maths but this was below both national and regional LAC outcomes. Previous years comparisons would have considered 9-4 levels.

Further individual pupil analysis will provide key information and case studies as to why performance is low, this will inform post 16 activity, interventions and support and the content of post 16 PEPs. An improvement target for the Virtual School will be to work with schools and designated teachers to consider how we can improve performance in this area.

5.6   Post 16/Key stage 5

2018 Cohort

	Cohort	Further Ed Inc 6th form	Training & Employment	Residential placement	NEET	Total % in ETE
2018/19	50	30	10	7	10	80%

NEET

There are currently 99 post 16 young people on roll with the Virtual School, 50 in year 12 and 49 in year 13 (classed as "relevant"). As of 7th January 2019, 17 of these are identified as NEET, 10 in Year 12 and 7 in Year 13, that equates to 17.7% across the two year groups (28% NEET in Year 12 and 14.28% in year 13, 100% of information checked for each young person), which is significantly lower than the National Average (see excerpt from DfE 2018 below).
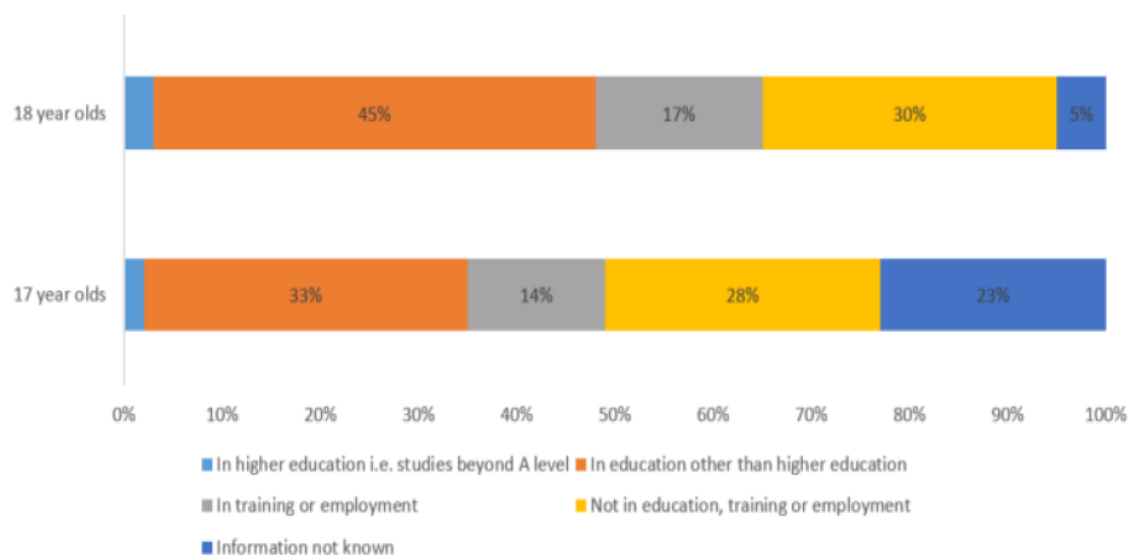
Source: SSDA903

These figures are in contrast to 15.3% for non-looked after young people in the North East and 14% nationally (based on latest cohort figures published by the DfE).

These figures are affected by a number of young people recently returning to the Sunderland area from out of area and secure units who are being re-engaged into mainstream training and education, some of whom are struggling to maintain residential placements. There are also several young people in later stages of confinement who do not wish to engage until after the birth of their child. There are also some young people who refuse to engage with education or training support from either Connexions or the Virtual School.

The NEET figures are also affected by changes in education and training offers within the area such as, closure of training providers, discontinuation of specific courses and discontinuation of rolling enrolments leading to difficulty in some instances enrolling young people onto new courses speedily.

To address this, approaches have been made to Sunderland College, the Sunderland Training Providers Association and individual training providers to source new courses and potential new provision as well as discussion about the re-introduction of rolling enrolments. There is also a renewed focus on multi-agency working with re-engagement 1 day per week co-located and

working with the ELEET team at a service delivery level and an extensive re-structuring at a senior strategic level to provide extensive multi-agency support into education and training.

6   Attendance

2014/2015	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018	Autumn 2018
97.2%	96.2%	94%	92.6%	92.2%

We commission Welfare Call to collate this data on a daily basis (this organisation works with 112 local authorities nationally), this enables us to work with schools, social workers and the child to intervene quickly to reduce any persistent or unauthorised absence. There is a declining trend and one of the improvement targets for the Virtual School will to be to scrutinise the attendance of any looked after child whose attendance falls below 95%, intervention and support will be provided where appropriate.

7   Exclusions

2017/18 data demonstrates there has been 37 LAC fixed term excluded. This equates to 123 fixed term exclusions totalling 201 days

Historical data indicates that there has been a continuing decrease in the number of looked after children fixed term excluded over the last three academic years, however there has been an increase in the number of fixed term exclusions during 2017/18 compared to 2016/17. There has been an increase of 50% compared to 2016/17 figures. This came to TFC's attention during the academic year and discussions between the Head Teacher of Virtual School and one particular school in Sunderland during the academic year of 2017/18 resulted in the number of days that a LAC was fixed term excluded being reduced and a fall in the number of fixed term exclusions during the academic year for LAC.

The main reasons that LAC were fixed term excluded was due to 'other' (27%) and persistent disruptive behaviour (24%). Once again, discussions have taken place with the exclusion officer and head teachers regarding the use of Other when recording the reason for an exclusion. It is also worth mentioning that there has been 13% points decrease in the percentage of fixed term exclusions relating to physical assault against an adult, compared to 2017/18.

It is worth noting that there was a decrease in the number of LAC fixed term excluded in Special schools over the last three academic years.

18 of the 37 LAC pupils were fixed term excluded more than once.

An improvement target for the Virtual School will be to analyse the data to determine which looked after children have been involved in fixed term exclusion, what is known about the antecedents leading up to these

exclusions and, the relationship this has to planned and actual interventions and the role of education, social care and partner agencies. The outcomes of the analysis will be used to inform future practice.

8   Next steps

The VSH will, in conjunction with governors, complete a full school self-evaluation and produce a school improvement plan.

Key areas of focus will be:
- Improved outcomes for EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4
- Leadership and Management
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Early Years
- Post 16
- Joint Working
- EPEP development and improvement of quality and timeliness of completion
- Improving attendance
- Reducing Exclusions
- Education placement for all LAC
- No drift on admissions to new schools
- New structure including the development of Associate Tutors
- Annual training programme

9   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Full utilisation of the Pupil Premium grant in support of improving educational outcomes

10   BACKGROUND PAPERS (hyperlink)

DFE   Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children
Statutory guidance for local authorities   February 2018

DFE   The Designated Teacher for looked-after children and previously looked-after children
Statutory guidance for local authorities   February 2018

National Association of Virtual School Head Teachers
The Virtual School Handbook 2018

11.   CONTACT

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