TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	
DATE:	**20th January 2020**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**Linda Mason HEAD TEACHER Virtual School**
SUBJECT:	**Head Teacher's Report**
PURPOSE:	**FOR INFORMATION**

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 Looked After 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 2019 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 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Board is requested to receive the report for information

## 3. Context

At 31 March 2019, the number of children looked after (CLA) by local authorities in England increased by 4% since 2018 to 78,150 - continuing increases seen in recent years. This is equivalent to a rate of 65 children per 10,000 - up from 64 per 10,000 in 2018 and 60 per 10,000 in 2015.

The number of children starting to be looked after has fallen this year by 2% to 31,680.

The number ceasing to be looked after has fallen this year by 2% to 29,460 after a period of gradual increases and a high of 31,860 in 2016.

Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after in the year and numbers at 31 March England, 1994 to 2019
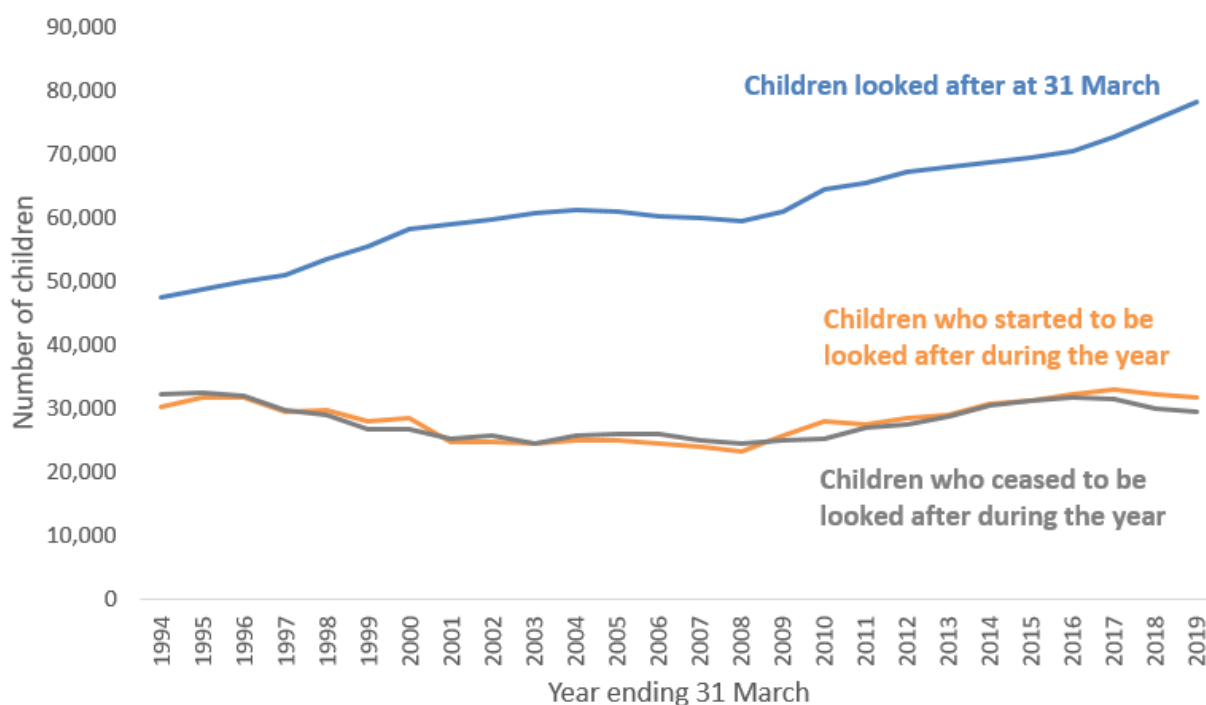
3.1   Characteristics of children looked after at 31 March

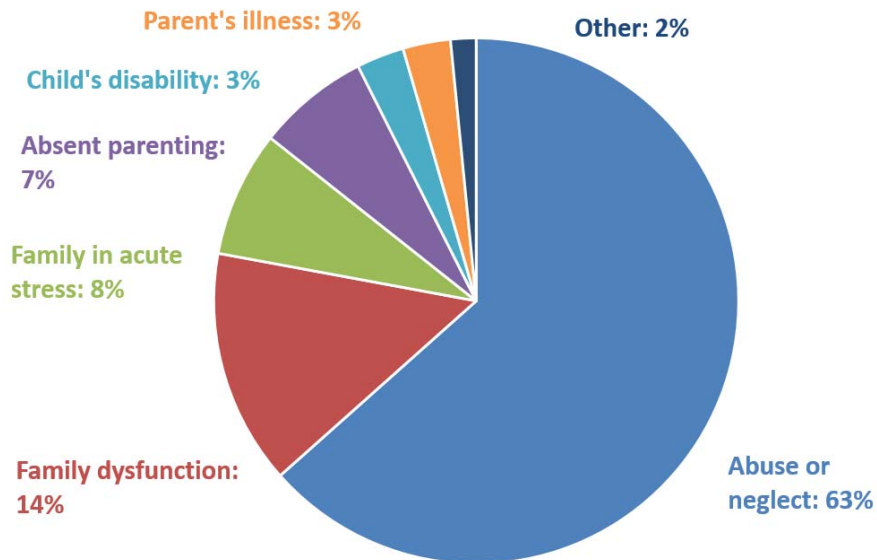Just over half are male (56%) - 44% are female; similar to 2018.

The largest age group (39%) are aged 10-15 years; 24% are aged 16 years and over; 18% are aged 5-9 years, 13% are aged 1-4 years and 5% are aged under 1 year. Over the last 5 years the average age of CLA has been steadily increasing.

The majority are of white ethnicity (74%). 10% were of mixed ethnicity and 8% were of Black or Black British ethnicity. Since 2015, the proportion of CLA of white ethnicity has decreased steadily from 77%. It is likely this slight change is due to the broadly non-white make up of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), a group which has recently grown in number.

3.2   Reason for being looked after

When a child is assessed by children's services their primary need is recorded. There are a range of reasons why a child is looked after including being looked after:

- as a result of or because they were at risk of abuse or neglect - 49,570 children - the most common reason identified
- primarily due to living in a family where the parenting capacity is chronically inadequate (family dysfunction) - 11,310
- due to living in a family that is going through a temporary crisis that diminishes the parental capacity to adequately meet some of the children's needs (family being in acute stress) - 6,050
- due to there being no parents available to provide for the child - 5,410
- due to the child's or parent's disability or illness - 4,580
- due to low income or socially unacceptable behaviour – 1,230.

Parent's illness: 3%

Child's disability: 3%

Absent parenting: 7%

Family in acute stress: 8%

Family dysfunction: 14%

Other: 2%

Abuse or neglect: 63%

3.3 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. 34% of our looked after children have an identified SEND. (see table 4.4 for a breakdown by age and stage of SEND)

3.4 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 head teacher role was made statutory. For children looked after, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH is the educational advocate that parents are for others.

3.5 For children previously looked after, 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

3.6 In order to achieve positive outcomes, the Virtual School team closely monitor the education outcomes of our children looked after. 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.

3.7 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 complex and immediate need for support, individual requests for tuition, and ICT equipment for example.

3.8 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. We have trained all Designated Teachers both in and out of Sunderland Local Authority in the use of the electronic PEP (EPEP). This has been successfully implemented with a compliance rate of 88%, that is completed in the Autumn Term 2019. Schools are now expected to complete a termly review with a new EPEP each term. The Virtual School is working closely with the Next Steps team in Social Care in further developing the use of the Pathway Plan education section as the plan for Post 16 Children Looked After. Following this term's implementation, a key area of focus is on the quality assurance through a moderation programme and sharing of good practice. A key target for the Virtual School will be to implement the EPEP and provide training for all social workers and IROs in the Spring Term 2020.

3.8 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.

3.9 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, their needs are understood and appropriate placements are sought.

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

- Carers
- Adoptive parents
- Designated Teachers
- School staff
- SENCos
- Social Workers
- IROS

3.11 Structure of Virtual School

	November 2018		January 2019	Current Proposals
Head Teacher	1 FTE	Strategic Leadership	1FTE	Strategic Leadership
Senior Lead			1FTE	Leadership EPEP and Children Previously Looked After
Teaching Staff	1.4 FTE	Specialist teachers	1.9 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 CLA Emotional and Mental Support	2.6 FTE	Support, Intervention and Safeguarding Officers: Early Years KS1 KS2 KS 3 and 4 Post 16
Business Support	1 FTE		1FTE	
Data	1 FTE		1FTE	
Associate Teachers				10 teachers employed on variable hours to provide support in school, home tuition and tuition on site

The current structure has been reviewed and new proposals will be consulted on in January 2020.

3.12   Governance

The Virtual School has its own governing body and this will provide support and challenge to the Head Teacher. With the support of a National Lead for Governance and support from the National Association of Virtual School Head Teachers (NAVSH) through the information on governance in their Handbook they have reformed and established a new Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference. A number of new members are being sought to ensure breadth of experience and skills.

3.13 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   **CLA POPULATION**

The tables below provide the data for Sunderland.

Table 4.1

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2018-2019

Total Number of Children 0-18 years looked after as at 31st March				
2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
570	550	540	579	595

Table 4.2

Number of Children Looked After: rates per 10,000 children aged under 18 years					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
National	60	60	62	64	65
Region	81	84	92	96	101
Sunderland	105	101	100	107	109

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2018 – 2019

Table 4.3

Number of Children Looked After by Sunderland City Council for at least one year as at 31st March				
2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
330	371	287	335	xxx

Source National Statistics Children Looked After in England including adoption 2018 – 2019

What is important to note is that whilst 595 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	108	52	48	56	52	0	0
Nursery 1	17	14	82	3	8	0	0
Nursery 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	125	66	53	58	47	0	0
Reception	18	8	44	10	56	0	3
Year 1	18	11	61	7	39	0	5
Year 2	20	10	50	10	50	2	4
Year 3	25	14	56	11	44	1	3
Year 4	18	9	50	9	50	1	4
Year 5	27	15	55	12	45	4	6
Year 6	31	18	58	13	42	5	9
Total	157	85	54	72	46	13	34
Year 7	38	20	53	18	47	4	11
Year 8	41	25	61	16	39	8	10
Year 9	50	30	60	20	40	10	12
Year 10	37	24	65	13	35	8	12
Year 11	38	19	50	19	50	2	14
Total	204	118	59	86	41	32	59
Year 12	47	29	62	18	38	8	15
Year 13	36	16	44	20	56	9	12
Total	83	45	54	38	46	17	27
Of which NEET	26	31%					
TOTAL CLA Population	569	314	55	254	45	62	120
TOTAL SEND Population	182	32%				34%	21%

Source Virtual School Data 2020

Table 4.5

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

OOA	98	23 LAs	
OLA	37	10 LAs	17 of which are in Post 16 provision eg Sunderland College

Source Virtual School data Welfare Call 2020

Table 4.6

Pupils in schools by OFSTED Category

OFSTED RATING	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not applicable
Reception to Year 6 (157)	19 (12%)	125 (80%)	8 (6%)	5 (2%)	0
Year 7 to Year 11 (204)	36 (18%)	72 (35%)	49 (24%)	41 (20%)	6(3%)
Year 12 and Year 13 (83)	7 (8%)	27 (33%)	4 (5%)	0	45 (54%)
TOTAL 444	62 (14%)	224 (50%)	61 (14%)	46(10%)	51(11%)
	64% in Good or better schools				

Source Virtual School Data and OFSTED 2020

Table 4.6
Ethnicity

Ethnicity All CLA (569)		Number	%
White	British	539	94.7%
White	Scottish	1	0.17%
White	Irish	1	0.17%
White	Other	5	0.87%
White	Romanian	4	0.70%
Asian	Bangladeshi	2	0.35%
Asian	Other	5	0.87%
Asian	Indian	1	0.17%
Black	Other	3	0.52%
Mixed/dual background	Mixed White African	4	0.70%
Mixed/dual background	Mixed White Asian	2	0.35%
Other		2	0.35%

Source Virtual School Data 2020

5 Educational Outcomes

5.1 Virtual Schools 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 CLA performance with national and regional CLA and this is more meaningful than comparing CLA performance with national and local non-CLA 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 EYFS

EYFSP	2018 GLD[1]	2019	2018 PRIME[2] GOALS	2019	2018 ALL GOALS	2019
National ALL Schools	71.7%	71.8%	79.4%	79.2%	70.3%	70.7%
Sunderland ALL Schools	71.1%	72.6%	79.6%	72.5%	70.8%	71.9%
National CLA	48.0%	47.0%	57.0%	57.0%	47.0%	46.0%
NE Region CLA	51.0%	51.0%	63.0%	60.0%	50.0%	51.0%
Virtual School CLA	46.8%	55.6%	57.4%	69.4%	46.8%	55.6%

Source NCER 2019

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 36 children in this cohort 55.6% achieved a GLD compared with the national figure of 47.0% 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 has improved this year and compares favourably against regional and national figures overall. The Virtual School will work with schools and designated teachers to consider how further work on the Early Years EPEP and attainment and progress can support further improvement of performance in this area. The Head Teacher, together with the newly designated Intervention, Support and Safeguarding Officer Early Years, KS1 and KS2 and virtual school teachers will monitor termly the attainment and progress and associated targets within the EPEP. Emphasis will be put on the new SEND ranges to ensure early identification of need to ensure appropriate support and intervention can be provided in a timely manner.

5.3   Key Stage 1

Expected Level or above

KS1		Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	RWM
National ALL	2018	75.4%	69.9%	76.1%	82.4%	65.3%
	2019	75.0%	69.0%	76.0%	82.0%	
Sunderland	2018	76.0%	71.0%	77.0%	83.2%	67.7%
	2019	74.9%	71.1%	77.0%	81.2%	67.6%
National CLA	2018	52.0%	43.0%	51.0%	60.0%	38.0%
	2019	52.0%	43.0%	51.0%	61.0%	38.0%
NE Region CLA	2018	54.0%	47.0%	55.0%	63.0%	42.0%
	2019	59.0%	51.0%	57.0%	67.0%	46.0%
Virtual School CLA	2018	51.7%	48.3%	51.7%	65.5%	41.4%
	2019	61.09%	52.4%	61.9	64.3%	42.9%

Source NCER 2019

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

There were 42 children in this cohort, 61.09% were working at or above the expected standard in reading compared with the national figure of 52.0% and a regional figure of 59.0%. In writing 52.4% were at the expected standard or above compared with a national outcome of 43% and 51% regionally. 61.9% were at the expected standard or above in maths compared to a national figure of 51% and 57% regionally. In Science 64.3% of our CLA were at expected levels or above compared to the national figure of 61% and a regional outcome of 67%. When the outcomes for reading, writing and maths (RWM) are combined 42.9% of Sunderland CLA achieved the expected standard or above compared to a national figure of 38% and a regional 46% CLA. Performance at KS1 has improved compared to last year's data is above national 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 EPEPs.

5.3 Key Stage 2

KS2		RWM Exp	RWM High	R Exp	R High	WTA Exp	WTA High	M Exp	M High	GPS Exp	GPS High
National ALL Schools	2018	64.4%	9.9%	75.3%	28.1%	78.3%	19.9%	75.6%	23.6%	77.7%	34.4%
	2019	65%	10%	73%	27%	78%	20%	79%	27%	78%	36%
Sunderland ALL Schools	2018	67.9%	10.9%	77.5%	29.8%	81.2%	23.5%	78.7%	24.2%	79.6%	37.9%
	2019	66%	11%	80%	22%	81%	24%	83%	38%	79%	29%

		RWM Exp	RWM High	R Exp	R High	WTA Exp	WTA High	M Exp	M High	GPS Exp	GPS High
National CLA	2018	35.0%	2.0%	51.0%	13.0%	40.0%	6.0%	47.0%	8.0%	50.0%	14.0%
	2019	36.0%	2.0%	49.0%	12.0%	50.0%	6.0%	51.0%	9.0%	53.0%	15.0%
NE Region CLA	2018	44.0%	2.0%	57.0%	13.0%	58.0%	6.0%	57.0%	9.0%	57.0%	16.0%
	2019	45.0%	3.0%	56.0%	14.0%	59.0%	10.0%	61.0%	12.0%	60.0%	19.0%
Virtual School CLA	2018	41.7%	6.3%	60.4%	14.6%	58.3%	12.5%	58.3%	10.4%	54.2%	18.8%
	2019	43.9%	2.4%	58.5%	7.3%	65.9%	12.2%	58.5%	4.9%	63.4%	14.6%

Source NCER 2019

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 41 children in this cohort. Outcomes for reading, writing and maths were above national and regional outcomes at expected and above 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 similar percentage performing at higher levels as 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 EPEPs.

5.4 Key Stage 4

KS4		Att8 APS	Progress 8	9-5 in EM	EBacc entry
National ALL Schools	2018	46.6	-0.02	43.3%	38.4%
	2019	46.7	-0.30	43.0%	40.1%
Sunderland ALL Schools	2018	43.2	-0.36	36.2%	41.9%
	2019	42.7	-0.40	37.0%	39.1%
National CLA	2018	17.5	-1.10	9.6%	11.0%
	2019	23.3	-1.12	10.0%	13.0%
NE Region CLA	2018	18.9	-1.27	10.4%	9.4%
	2019	20.1	-1.46	8.0%	8.0%
Virtual School CLA	2018	17.7	-1.17	8.6%	8.6%
	2019	21.3	-1.55	16.0%	4.0%

Source NCER 2019

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 38 children in this cohort, performance at attainment 8 was above both the national and regional figures. Progress 8 for these children was -0.05 below the national average, although both regional and national also have a negative progress measure. 23.7% of the cohort achieved the higher, strong 9-5 outcome for English and Maths and 39.4% achieved the previous, standard 9-4 outcome for English and Maths both indicators were above national and regional CLA outcomes.

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

5.6   Post 16/Key stage 5

2019 Cohort

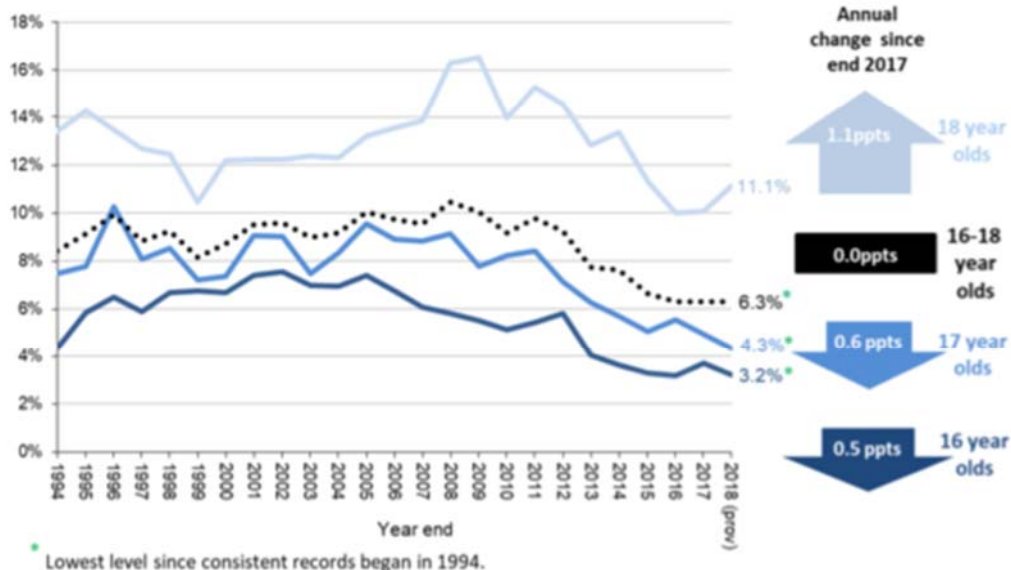|	Cohort	Further Ed Inc 6th form	Training & Employment	Other	NEET	Total % in ETE
2019	56	14	16	12	14	54%

NEET

There are currently 83 post 16 young people on roll with the Virtual School, 47 in year 12 and 36 in year 13 (classed as "relevant"). As of January 2020, 26 of these are identified as NEET, 31% of the cohort. Nationally figures relate to the year ending March 2019, 27% of 17year olds were NEET and 30% of 18-year olds were NEET (SSDA930). The Virtual School has similar outcomes. National figures for NEET are in the table below.

Unfortunately, the Virtual School has been without a Post 16 Coordinator for 12 months, this post will be recruited this term and will

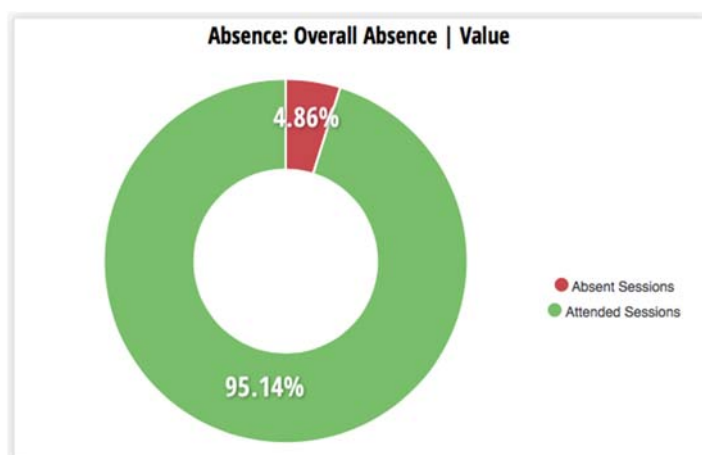**NEET rate down at ages 16 and 17 but up at age 18, overall 16-18 NEET rate stable**

Proportion NEET by academic age, England

Annual change since end 2017

18 year olds — 1.1ppts — 11.1%

16-18 year olds — 0.0ppts

17 year olds — 0.6 ppts — 4.3%*

16 year olds — 0.5 ppts — 3.2%*

6.3%*

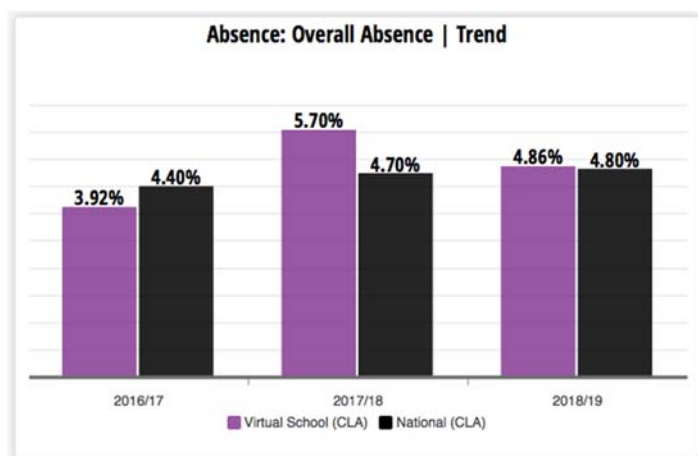* Lowest level since consistent records began in 1994.

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 significant work being done across key partners related to post 16 NEET vulnerable groups including CLA.

6   Attendance

Absence: Overall Absence | Value

4.86%

95.14%

- Absent Sessions
- Attended Sessions

Absence: Overall Absence | Trend

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Virtual School (CLA)	3.92%	5.70%	4.86%
National (CLA)	4.40%	4.70%	4.80%

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 has been a declining trend but this data shows a return to 95% + The Virtual School will continue to scrutinise the attendance of any looked after child whose attendance falls below 95%, intervention and support will be provided where appropriate.

7   Exclusions

2018/19 data demonstrates there has been 54 CLA fixed term excluded. This equates to 253 days of exclusion across 31 schools.

The main reasons that CLA were fixed term excluded was due to Persistent Disruptive Behaviour (34%) and Verbal Assault of an Adult (15%).

34 of the 54 CLA 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 school self-evaluation reflects the outcomes in this report and the school improvement plan identifies the key actions to improve the outcomes of CLA in 2019/2020

Key priorities will be:

Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management
Raise attainment and progress for CLA
To engage Partners in improvement of educational outcomes for CLA
To raise profile of Sunderland Virtual School

- EPEP development and improvement of quality and timeliness of completion
- Improving attendance
- Reducing Exclusions

- Education placement for all CLA
- 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

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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