

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

AGENDA

Meeting to be held on Monday 6 March 2023 at 5.30pm in the Conference Room, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland, SR3 4EN

Part I

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1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
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	Minutes of Meeting held on 9 January 2023 (copy attached).	
4.	Change Council Update	9
	Report of the Change Council (attached).	
5.	Next Steps Team - Update	-
	Powerpoint presentation to be delivered.	
6.	Health of Cared for Children	15
	Report of the Designated Nurse for Cared for Children (copy attached).	
7.	CNTW – Sunderland Cared for Children	19
	Report of CNTW (copy attached).	

8.	Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2021-2022	23
	Report of the Acting Headteacher, Virtual School (copy attached).	
9.	Number of Changes of Social Worker for Children and Young People	41
	Report of the Head of Service, Cared for Children and Provider Services (copy attached).	
10.	Work Programme	45
	Report attached.	

ELAINE WAUGH
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

City Hall
SUNDERLAND

24 February 2023

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9 January 2023 at 5.30pm in the Conference Room, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland, SR3 4EN

Present:

Members of the Board

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor C Burnicle	St Chad's Ward
Councillor J McKeith	St Peter's Ward
Councillor P Smith	Silksworth Ward
Catherine Hearne	Non-Exec Director, Together for Children

Observing

Councillor J Price	Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills
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All Supporting Officers

Jill Colbert	Chief Executive, Together for Children
Majella McCarthy	Director of Children's Social Care, TfC
Tracy Jelfs	Head of Service for Cared for Children, TfC
Anita Swales	Acting Headteacher, Virtual School
Kathryn McCabe	Service Manager, Cared for Children
Michelle Ash	Adoption Officer
Kaye Fox	Foster Carer
Samantha Diston	CNTW
Wendy Coghlan	Prevention and Participation Manager
Alexandra Bowey	Participation and Engagement Officer
Chantelle	Change Council
Caitlin	Change Council
Katherine Corfield	Housing Strategy Officer
Gillian Kelly	Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laws and Tye.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

28. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

Change Council Update

The Change Council report had been submitted to the Board and was presented to Members by Chantelle and Caitlin.

The Change Council had continued to meet in their designated space and both the 10-15 and 16+ group were meeting fortnightly.

Planning had begun for the short films which the Change Council wanted to make raising awareness and challenging the stigma in education for cared for young people. The group were working with Sunderland University and they would be funding two students as part of their Changemaker scheme to take this forward with the Change Council. The students would be funded for 100 hours of work and it was hoped that a production student could start later this month.

A 'dry run' of the training for corporate parents had been undertaken with staff and this was now ready for elected Members. It was intended to organise a date for the training in the next month.

There were two new members attending the younger Change Council group and a leaflet was going to be created which social workers could give to young people to encourage them to come along to the Change Council. The Chair suggested that the Virtual School could also promote the Change Council and Anita Swales said that she could communicate this through the designated teacher network.

At the last Board meeting, the Change Council had put forward a proposal to make being care experienced a protected characteristic in Sunderland. The Chair reported that this had been formulated into a Notice of Motion to be presented to the Council meeting on 25 January 2023 which she would propose and Councillor Price would second. The Chair asked that if members of the Change Council had anything specific they would like her to raise in her speech, they should let her know.

Jill Colbert highlighted that she had been interviewed for a feature on the Radio 4 Today programme which had been guest edited by Dame Sharon White, which was focused on education, employment and training opportunities for care experienced young people. There was a strong focus on protected characteristics and what would make a difference for care experienced young people in relation to employment. The feature had run on 2 January 2023.

The Change Council reported that four young people had been given the opportunity to have a tailor-made dress for the Christmas party. It was an amazing experience and there would be a photo shoot for the young people who were lucky enough to receive the dresses. There was a tight timescale to get the dresses made so it was not possible for everyone to get exactly what they wanted and unfortunately more young people wanted dresses than were able to have them. The dressmaker was interested in continuing this process with other young people on a monthly basis and this would not be restricted to dresses. This offer would also be passed to the permanence and next steps teams.

The Chair commented that at the regional change council meeting it was noted that one local authority had provided prom outfits for cared for young people. This had been discussed for Sunderland's young people at the time but could potentially be put back on the agenda.

Chantelle said that wearing the dresses had made them feel really special and Jill suggested that it would be nice for the Board Members to see the results of the photo shoot.

The Change Council had been involved in the planning and set up for the Cared for Christmas event. The event had been a success but the young people would like to revert back to the previous venue for future events. The Change Council had also held a Bonkers Bingo event for both groups.

Activity coming up included the Winter holiday activities and food programme, the regional Children in Care Council meeting in January, Care Day in February and the Children in Care Council residential in April.

The planned work for January to December 2023 was as follows: -

- Drive forward the Change the Language campaign, including working groups and workshops
- Create leaflets to promote Change Council and encourage new members.
- Corporate Parenting introduction training and support the development of the corporate parenting strategy
- Engage young people in enriching activities to celebrate their hard work and increase engagement
- Consult and involve more cared for and care experienced children and young people.
- Alex was to regularly drop in to Children's Homes and Support 2 Independence and also to be around for Warm Spaces.
- To create easy guides to different aspects of being cared for/care experienced to support other young people with things they have been unsure of – accessing records, entering care.

The Chair asked if the Change Council had thought about having videos on TikTok and it was noted that this had been considered and may be looked at again.

The Chair thanked Chantelle and Caitlin for presenting the report and accordingly it was: -

29. RESOLVED that the Change Council update be noted.

Health of Cared for Children – Workplan Update

The Designated Nurse for Cared for Children submitted the designate workplan for 2022-2023 with updates under each area of work.

It was noted that the report included a link to the draft Health passport app which Members could view.

As Jo Morgan could not attend the meeting, Members were advised to direct any questions on the report to Jo via email.

30. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Response to the Urgent Action Required in response to the ‘Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings’ Phase 1 Report Letter

The Director of Children’s Services presented a report which outlined the approach and findings from the deep dive of children with complex needs and disabilities experience of living away from their families in residential settings. This was in response to National Safeguarding Panel request following the concerns which had been reported about three homes in and around the Doncaster area.

For the Sunderland review, the experience of all children with complex and additional needs living or staying outside of the area in a variety of different circumstances was investigated. An audit tool was developed and visits were made to all provisions to undertake quality reviews and the Quality Assurance team and IRO leadership team reviewed children’s case records and spoke to social workers and team managers to assess their understanding of children’s experiences and needs.

The report set out a number of excerpts from recorded exchanges between children and their workers giving an insight into their lived experience of care. There were detailed findings from the exercise and a number of recommendations which had been discussed with statutory partners. These were: -

Local actions: -

- A strengthened process was required for the Designated Officer (DO) and the Integrated Contact and Referral Team (ICRT) services to share/notify information regarding children currently placed in Sunderland from another local authority.
- The DO service should notify the placing local authority commissioning services alongside the allocated Social Workers of any referral that met the DO thresholds

relating to a care accommodation in Sunderland, to support a holistic analysis of risk for the child/ren and also to notify them of the referral outcome.

- More could be done to strengthen the recording and analysis of children's cultural needs. Although their voices were strongly present and captured clearly, the understanding of their culture and identity was implicit rather than explicit.
- Children's allocated Social Workers to ensure that children were regularly seen within their education settings.
- Work to be undertaken with providers to develop creative ways of ensuring all settings had a homely and nurturing feel.

National actions:

- There was no routine process for clinical experts (Named or Designated professionals or children's community nursing teams) to advise, support or assist in the assessment of the quality of care for children with complex needs who did not live at home some, or all, of the time. This was an area of anxiety for non-clinical children's services staff who were assessing the risks to children who often had complex diagnoses and presenting needs. Integrated multi-disciplinary assessment and oversight should be at the heart of children's care, and closely knitted together with regulatory processes. This was an area that Government could consider developing clear guidance for the ICB and local authority to take forward together.
- A national workforce development plan was urgently required for health and social care workers which reflected the pressures, skills and responsibilities of the role, particularly when working with children with disabilities.

Catherine Hearne commented that the report was very comprehensive and she asked if it was difficult to adapt Mind of My Own (Momo) to be used for all children. Tracy Jelfs said that Momo was picture based and was designed to be easy to use, however a child with complex needs might be used to working with only a small number of pictures. PECS was picture exchange and communication.

Jill noted that providers did need to be reminded that the tool was always there but a separate report could be run for those children who were unable to use Momo.

The Chair asked if Momo Express was designated for children with disabilities and Jill stated that this was used in an educational setting although some preferred STARS. Wendy Coghlan added that there was a lot more youth voice in schools than ever before.

Councillor Smith commented that some homes had lost staff after they had been inducted and queried when these roles would have the salary level which they deserved. Jill noted that nationally a significant number of homes had closed and she did find it strange that settings would recruit without being clear about what the job would involve. Sunderland was in a fortunate position in that children were able to be kept close by and with strong arrangements for managing placements. Sunderland children in private establishments did have agency workers but these workers were long term.

31. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Ofsted Inspection of the Adoption Service

The Board received a copy of the Ofsted report on the Together for Children voluntary adoption agency.

Michelle Ash, Adoption Officer, was in attendance to talk to the report. Ofsted had visited between 1 and 3 November 2022 and there were three elements of the inspection: -

- Overall experiences and progress of service users, taking into account;
- How well children and young people are helped and protected
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers.

All three elements had been judged to be good and the overall judgment of the inspection was good.

Inspectors had been impressed by the set up of the agency and that all social workers carried out all areas of practice which gave a more holistic picture of adoption and provided a realistic view for adopters. It was understood that prospective adopters would meet a lot of the team and were comfortable in asking for support. Ofsted had also attended 'children waiting' meetings and were impressed with Adoption Champions and the up-to-date planning for children. The training provided for adopters was praised and it was noted that the Adoption team were passionate about their role and aspirational for children and adopters.

Michelle drew the Board's attention to the quotes from adopters within the report which showed that they felt welcomed and supported. Ofsted had also been very interested in family network meetings where the identified support network for adopters was brought together and had been complimentary about child appreciation days which brought together all people who had worked with a child. The team also spoke with Ofsted about post adoption and birth parent support.

The Chair suggested that the Change Council might potentially include some life story work as part of the corporate parenting training.

Councillor Smith referred to the third recommendation in the report which said that the registered person should ensure that all managers, staff and volunteers were clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Jill highlighted that the service was inspected as a voluntary agency but in reality it had a far larger caseload and operated differently to any other voluntary agency; unfortunately the Ofsted framework did not recognise the very specific set up of Together for Children. The recommendation was around fostering to adoption placements and related to the number of visits received by one set of adopters.

Kathryn McCabe added that the service took away the good outcomes achieved by children who made attachment with carers who then became adopters and Tracy Jelfs stated that she was satisfied that relevant policies and procedures were being followed.

The Chair commended the positive report and noted that on reading it, the service felt better than 'good'. Jill highlighted that this was the second inspection of the Adoption service and it was subject to a higher level of assurance and oversight than other local authorities.

32. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Work Programme 2022/2023

The Board were informed of the work programme for the municipal year 2022/2023 and forthcoming agenda items.

33. RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair



REPORT AUTHOR:	Alexandra Bowey, Participation and Engagement Officer
SUBJECT:	Together for Children’s Change Council Report for Supportive Parenting Partnership Board (Corporate Parenting Board) 6th March 2023
PURPOSE:	To report on the activity of both Change Council 10-15 group and Change Council 16+ group (November 2022-December 2023)

Change Council have continued to meet regularly face to face throughout November-December 2023. Change Council are meeting in their designated space, both Change Council’s 10-15 and 16+ group are meeting fortnightly.

Activity	What’s Working Well?	What’s Not Working So Well?	What needs to happen?
<p>Film - planning around education Change Council 10-15yrs - short videos to be made, raising awareness and challenging the stigma in education.</p> <p>Change Council 16+ to feed in with suggestions on post 16 education and how this impacts them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have started to plan and create a storyboard to create short films to be used for training around how a young person may be feeling to make professionals more aware of what might be going on for a young person. We have been creating characters and discussing why cared for/care experienced people may be struggling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been at a standstill until the students were appointed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions with students and group so that this can move forwards. Change Council 16+ to discuss how this can impact post 16 education and feedback to younger group.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunderland University has decided that this can be a part of their Changemaker scheme which funds two students to produce and animate the project for us. They will be funded for 100 hours of work. 		
<p>Training for Corporate Parents We have been working on a training workshop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have completed our first workshop with Corporate Parents. We delivered our Change the Language training and Changeable game. • Corporate Parents said that it gave them an insight into some of the life experiences of care experienced young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone was able to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will plan further dates so that everyone can have the training. • We will be delivering the Change the Language training to NHS England staff as part of a digital conference. 

<p>Regionals- Meeting with other CiCC in the region. 10th January 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 member attended. We discussed the local offers across the region and looked at how they vary across local authorities. • Regional residential to take place in April. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of our regional representatives has stepped down and we need a replacement. • The local offer varies widely across the region. Regional groups would like one local offer for the whole region so that care experienced young people have the same entitlements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be raised with the regional board. • Replacement representative to be chosen for regionals. • Regional residential April. •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was passed by the Council in January. • We have supported with a press release with Cllr. Farthing and Cllr. Gibson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to be a part of supporting the Council with implementing this if possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet with Council and talk about what we would like to see from this and how this will impact us.

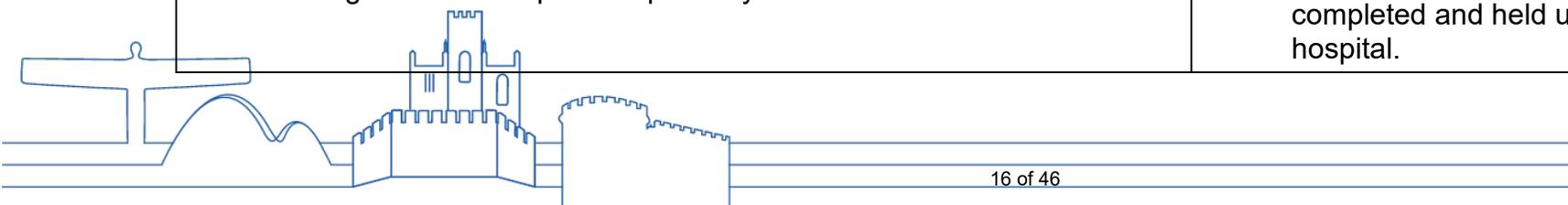
<p>Safeguarding conference- Safeguarding in Education conference with Ronnie Lynn. We delivered our workshop to education staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 members took part in the Safeguarding education conference. • We delivered Change the language and Changeable game to education professionals from across the city. • We had some really positive feedback from this and professionals told us it had made them really think about the language used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a lot of people in the workshops and not everyone got an opportunity to play the game. Smaller groups would have worked better for us but we understand that this was necessary for the programming of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to deliver this training and look at how we can push this further in schools.
<p>Care Day Care Day 2023 was on the 17th of February. We held a celebration on the 22nd February during half term so that people could attend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a really good day and everyone had fun. • Most members were able to attend and some past members came along which was nice. • Lots of TFC staff and the board of directors were able to attend and we felt appreciated. • It was nice to spend time with both groups as we enjoy spending time with each other and making those links. • We enjoyed just having time to spend with each other and just relax and chat as a group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone was able to come. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to celebrate important events and plan events with both groups. • To continue to encourage new members to the group.

- Consult and involve more cared for and care experienced children and young people. Alex to drop into Children's Homes and Support 2 Independence, also be around for warm spaces.
- To create easy guides to different aspects of being cared for/care experienced to support other young people with things we have been unsure of- Accessing records, entering care.

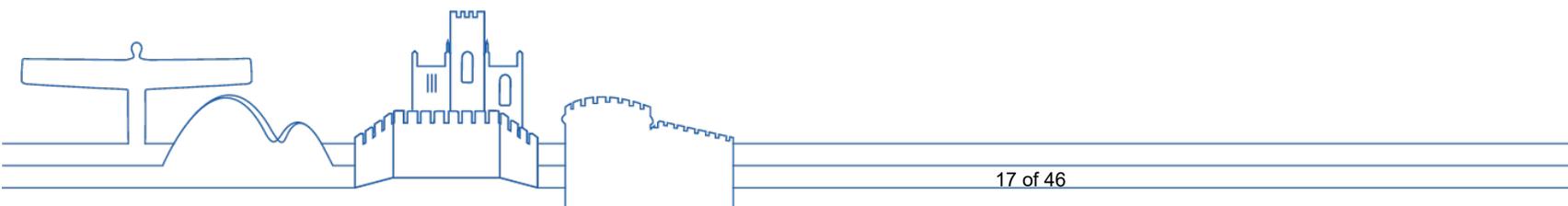
**Health Report for Corporate Parenting Board
March 2023**

Agenda item	Update	plan
<p><u>Health Partnership for cared for children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have held our first meeting in January, and plan to meet quarterly over the year. The plan will be for this meeting to develop a health workstream which will then be reported into Corporate Parenting Board. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For an invite to sexual health services, YDAP and voluntary sector for the next meeting. Going forward we would like to get a good understanding of emotional wellbeing support for cared for children within Sunderland. Dr Sarah Mills to share the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking project with TfC – meeting planned with Sharon Willis. Practitioner Forum is something that we are looking to hold with TfC and partners in 2023.
<p><u>Improving the mental and physical health of care leavers and care experienced.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that care leaver health needs are identified in broader commissioning processes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth almighty project have submitted a business plan for mentoring and social prescribing for children in care. The proposal has now been agreed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding obtained to produce health passport APP, app is in final stages of development. The APP is designed to encourage YP to be more independent in understanding their individual health needs and how they can meet them. • Assessment of health needs of looked after children and care leavers. • Obtaining free prescriptions for care experienced YP across the ICB is a future piece of work for 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health passport app is now back with the App Developer for amendments, the next step will be to test the app with the help of some young people. • to compile care leaver data. This will provide some evidence and understanding of the health needs of our young people transitioning out of care. This is ongoing • Jo Morgan has submitted a proposal for free prescriptions for care leavers across the NENC ICB. Currently awaiting figures from all areas across the ICB.
<p><u>The Looked After Health Team model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the provider unit in bringing their nursing staffing ratios in line with the intercollegiate document. • Develop and update Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Commissioners. • To work in partnership to look at the commissioning and intervention strategy and the development of mental health partnership arrangements SDQ process pathway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health model has been looked at with the provider, there is work within the provider unit looking at caseloads and a relationship-based approach to meeting health needs. Meeting in Jan 23 planning to look at current funding and SLA, ongoing work in this area. • Electronic completion of SDQ to be trialled in provider unit, pathways around managing mental health concerns to be created. This is still to be completed and held up due to IT within the hospital.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the cared for health assessments with IROs and their discussion in Care team meetings and reviews to ensure identified and outstanding health needs are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health needs impact audit jointly with the IRO service to demonstrate the effectiveness of health assessments in meeting the health needs of our young people. The plan is for children's social care managers to be involved in this to highlight some case studies.
<p><u>Raise local issues on a regional and national forum to seek good practice and influence priorities on a national level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> across the Northeast North Cumbria ICS NHSE Northeast and Yorkshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jo Morgan is leading the NENC ICB Professional Network for cared for children this year. Jo Morgan has proposed offering free prescriptions for care experienced across the ICB footprint. A proposal has been put to the Director of Nursing for Sunderland and she is going to take this to the Board. Sunderland Change Council are speaking at the Northeast and Yorkshire cared for children's conference. They will be sharing their work on language and the importance of this. This is exciting and a fantastic opportunity to influence health practitioners on a wider scale 😊



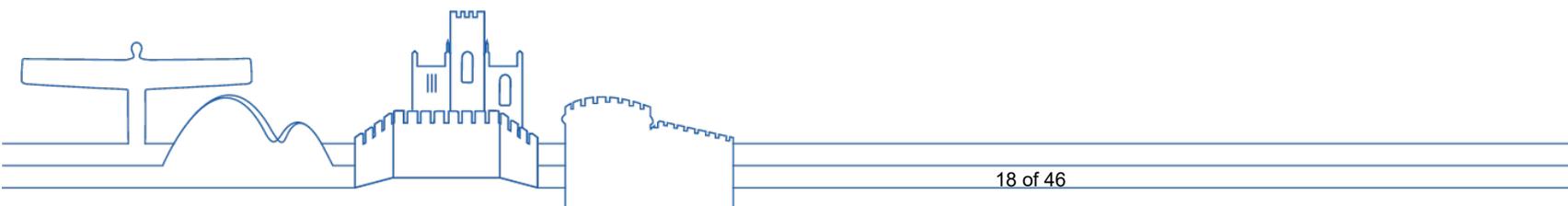
Team updates:

- Dr Sarah Mills will be standing down as the Designate Doctor for Cared for Children on the 1st April 2023. She will continue to work within STSFT as a Community Paediatrician and within the ICB strategically as she has been successfully appointed as the Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children. Sarah will continue to support in the interim whilst the ICB look to how they will fill the post.
- Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner Claire Elwell has now completed her 3 years of training. This is fantastic news for both Claire and our young people.

Jo Morgan

Designated Nurse Cared for Children

NENC ICB





Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust
Sunderland Children Cared for Report

March 2023 (November 2022 – January 2023)



Caring | Discovering | Growing | **Together**

Sunderland Children Cared for Report. November 2022 – January 2023

1. Activity

	November	December	January
Referrals	6	10	4
Referrals discharged unseen	1	5	1

Referrals discharged unseen

The following provides narrative in relation to reasons why the young people were not seen by the service.

November

Young person was declined for assessment due to information gathered from their social worker that they will soon be moving placement, which would result in an unreliable assessment.

December

Young person was declined due to being the subject of open Care proceedings, it was felt it would not be an appropriate time for them to be referred to CYPS.

Young person is currently awaiting adoption and is aware of this, along with undergoing therapy within their school. It was determined it would not be beneficial to receive support from another mental health service.

Young person was referred to CYPS services twice throughout December. One referral was discharged due to being referred to EIP services. The other referral remains open.

Young person was referred to CYPS services a total of four (4) times throughout December to various pathways (ICTS, PLT). Of these four referrals, two (2) were discharged, and referrals made to CYPS services. Young person has a history of struggling to engage with services, and during recent appointments continues to struggle to engage with staff. Two referrals remain open.

January

Young person was referred into the service however declined further engagement.

2. Referral Urgency

All young people referred to CYPS are either by phone and email or in written format are reviewed on a daily basis by a Clinical Lead. The purpose of this initial review is in order to signpost any cases that have been inappropriately referred and to ensure any cases that require an emergency or urgent response are highlighted and actioned immediately. Senior members of the Cared for Children Pathway triage any appropriate referrals weekly.

CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service (ICTS) offer a 24/7 service 365 days per year. ICTS will respond to the young person via telephone to offer a telephone triage within 1 hour.

Any young person requiring an emergency appointment will be offered an appointment within 4 hours of referral being received and for urgent referrals the young person will be offered an appointment within 24 hours

	November	December	January
Emergency	0	0	0
Urgent	1	4	2
Total	1	4	2

3. Waiting Times (All Referrals)

Current Waiting Times to Treatment are detailed below. (Treatment is defined as second attended contact)

	November (Weeks)	December (Weeks)	January (Weeks)
Wait to Treatment	12	11	12

Referrals

During COVID the service has continued to accept all referrals and complete assessments and interventions. New Ways of Working have been fully embraced by the Team to facilitate contact with young people and their families / carers such as online consultation and phone contact. Young people can be seen in their school environment if this is their preference.

Children who are Cared for Pathway

This Pathway has recently been reviewed, it specifically undertakes direct therapeutic work with children and young people, along with Foster Carers where appropriate.

Consultation is provided in conjunction with Together for Children, and CYPS continue to scaffold and support to Residential Homes.

Young People are offered priority appointments within CYPS and following assessment will access treatment usually within 10 weeks. The Pathway is a multi disciplinary team consisting of nursing, Social Workers, Psychologists, Child Psychotherapists and are able to access Psychiatry if required.

The team have all completed specific formal training to deliver psychological therapies to meet the needs of the young people and their carers.

4. Current Caseload

	November	December	January
Total Children Cared For	84	83	77
Total CYPS Caseload	1510	1483	1473
Total % Children Cared For	5.6%	5.6%	5.2%

5. Examples of Good Practice

One of our consultant clinical psychologists, Liz Christie, works jointly with TfC and CNTW. Liz has delivered training around delivering Trauma Informed Care to new members of staff in all TfC Children's Homes. This training has also been offered to the new Next Steps Social Worker, the new TfC Edge of Care Team, and the person who is in the new post that is for Young Women who are at risk of or being exploited.

Liz has also been utilising her time to deliver training around Trauma Informed Support to Supported Accommodation provisions and provides ongoing consultation to those staff who are embedding a trauma informed approach within their practice.

Liz has also been working on a Model of Care, and with the Manager of Revelstoke Road has developed and published research around the effectiveness. This model is now being set up in other Children's Homes.

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

DATE:	6 th March 2023
REPORT AUTHOR:	Anita Swales Acting Headteacher Virtual School
SUBJECT:	Head Teacher's Annual Report 2021 -2022
PURPOSE:	FOR INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with the annual report of the outcomes for cared for children for the academic year 2021/22, including the key characteristics of the cohort and the work of the Virtual School. The report provides an overview utilising, where available, both National and Northeast Regional data sets (NCER and LAIT Jan 2022), alongside locally sourced data.

During the pandemic, assessment and exams were completed utilising school-based teacher assessment, therefore the last validated data set available prior to 2022 is for 2019. However, where more recent data is available this has been included. As data sets for both 2020 and 2021 are not validated for comparative purposes, trend comparisons have not been included for attainment in this report. Instead, 2021/22 data on attainment has been compared to validated data for Regional Northeast and National cared for children

Exclusion and attendance comparative data which enables three-year trends are available through Welfare Call Analytics, a G-Cloud based attendance collection tool commissioned by Together for Children, which collects this data on a daily basis from schools and provisions.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

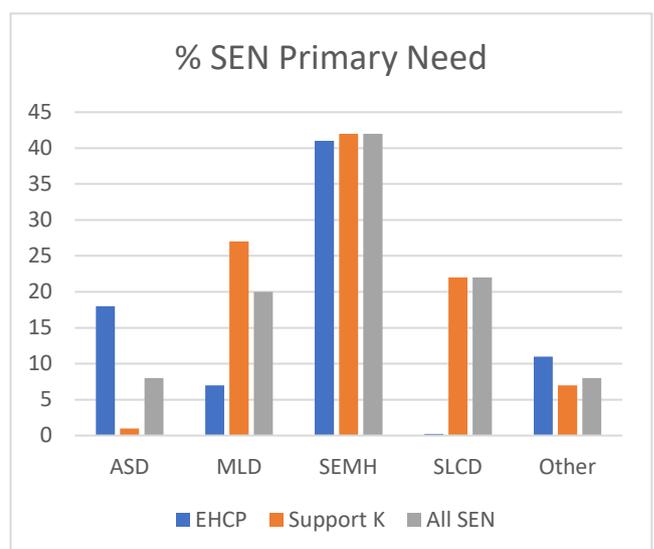
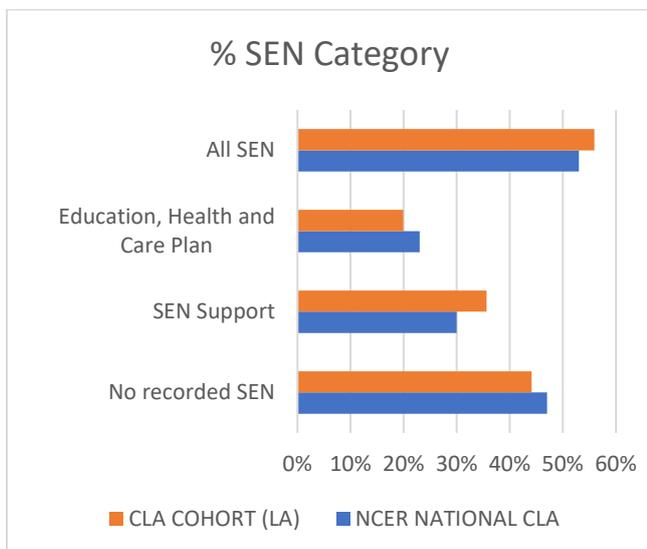
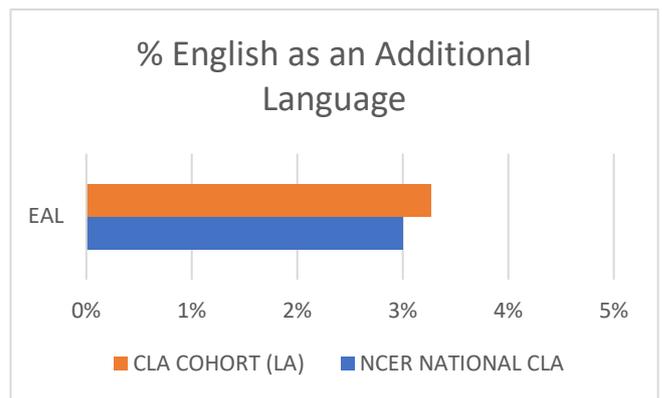
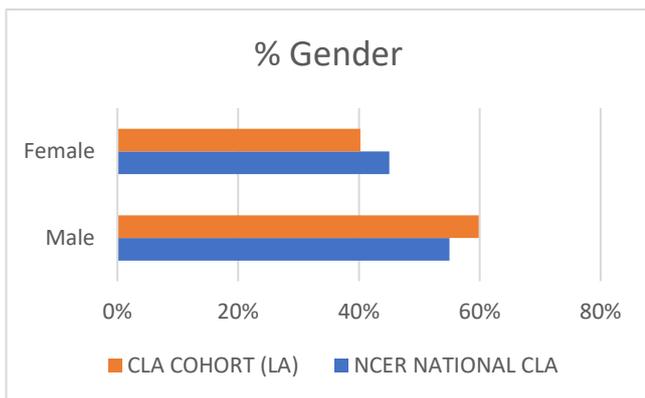
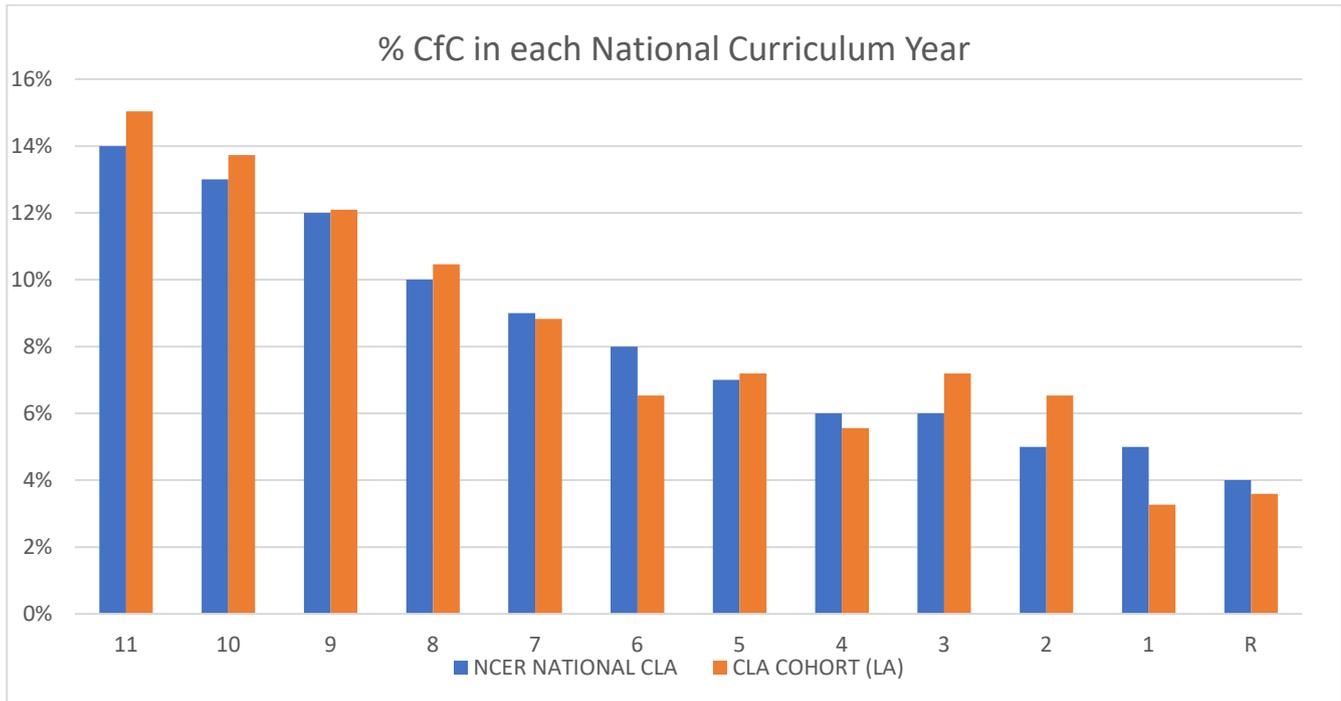
The Board is requested to receive the report for information

3. COHORT

The reportable cohort for statistical purposes is the number of Cared for Children who had been in our care for 12 months or more as of 31 March 2022. The table below shows the number of children and young people in each school phase, key stage and national curriculum year group.

Phase	Primary							Secondary				
Keystage	EYFS	Keystage 1			Keystage 2		Keystage 3			Keystage 4		
NC Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number of CfC	9	14	18	22	17	23	19	27	32	37	42	46

3.1 COHORT CHARACTERISTICS



From the above tables the following salient points can be noted:

- 40% of our children were in primary education and 60% in secondary
- Y9, 10 and 11 constitute 40% of all cared for children in statutory education
- Girls at 40.2% of the cohort were 20% fewer than boys at 60%, nationally cared for girls were only 10% fewer than boys
- Sunderland cared for children were broadly in line with the number of young people nationally who had English as an Additional Language

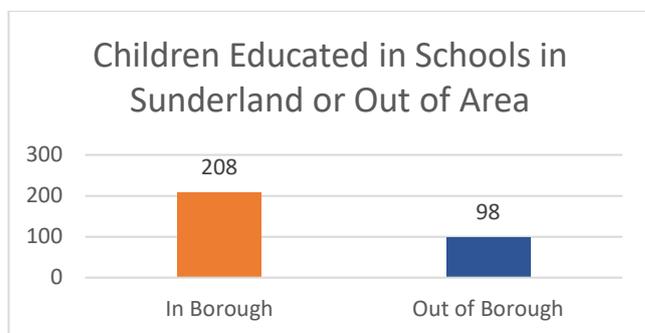
SEND

- There were 171 Cared for Children with Special Educational Needs, 55.5% of the cohort.
- 19.9% of children had an Education Health and Care Plan and a further 35.6% required additional in-school support to meet their needs.
- Of the CfC who had SEND needs, fewer had an Education Health and Care Plan than the national average and more were receiving SEN K in-school support
- By far the most prevalent SEND primary need was Social, Emotional and Mental Health, SEMH was also prevalent as a secondary need in an additional 7% of the cohort
- 18% of our cohort of Cared for Children were educated in specialist educational settings
- 60% of our children with an EHCP were educated in specialist provision whilst 40% were educated in mainstream schools
- 17% of children and young people requiring SEN K support were in specialist or alternative education settings
- Many of our young people within mainstream schools required additional support through the use of school nurture and inclusion provision. In addition, the Virtual School supported 10 schools with additional staffing through Teaching Assistants to provide the extra support a child needed whilst awaiting a place within a specialist setting, or as they went through the process of formal statutory assessment for an EHCP
- There remains a national shortage of specialist school places with more than half of specialist schools being oversubscribed, this is mirrored locally and brings significant challenges to providing for our children and young people's needs.

3.2 SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

School Ofsted Ratings

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate or awaiting inspection
2019 – 2020	14%	50%	14%	21%
2020 - 2021	14%	65%	14%	7%
2021 -2022	13%	71%	10%	6%



- 84% of our children were educated in Good or Outstanding schools, an improvement on previous years, and 10% were in schools which required improvement, predominantly secondary schools. When children and young people are educated in schools which Require Improvement, attention is always given to ensure care, guidance and support is at least Good.
- 2.5% of our children were educated in a Sunderland SEMH special school which had an Ofsted Inadequate rating. This does create challenge in finding appropriate specialist provision for pupils in Sunderland who are unable to cope within mainstream schools, are at risk of permanent exclusion and require specialist provision. This combined with an increase of young people coming into our care within Key stage 4, and the Virtual School support for schools to successfully apply for EHCP for those young people with additional needs, has led to an increase in demand for places.
- Of the remaining 3.5% of children, six were in schools which had recently joined another multi academy trust and awaiting their first inspection, two children were educated in Scotland, who do not have Ofsted judgements, one young person out of area was receiving Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) through SEN provision for EHCP and two young people out of area were awaiting placement on a school roll and receiving one-to-one tuition provided by the virtual school.
- 32% of our children were educated in schools outside of Sunderland, the majority of which were in our neighbouring authorities, however, children were educated in 27 different local authority areas across England and Scotland.

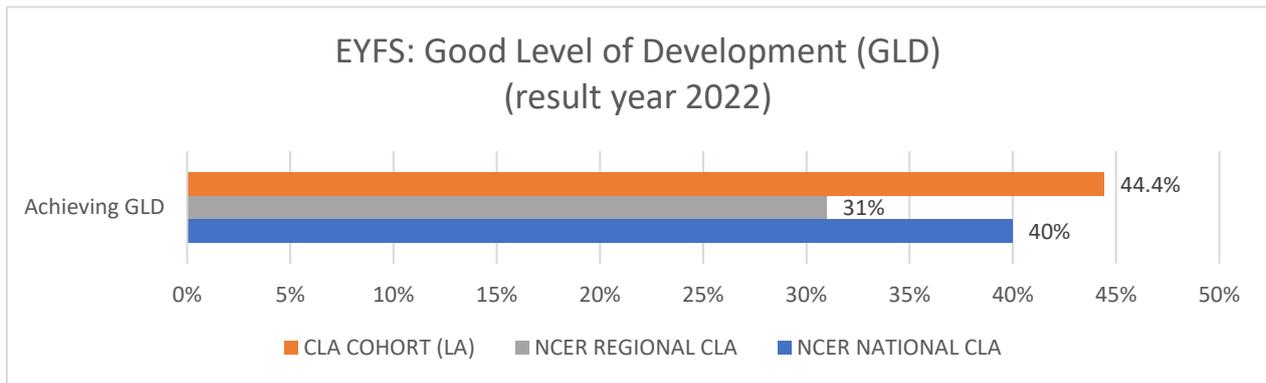
4. ACHIEVEMENT

Reportable data on achievement is for those children and young people who have been in our care for 12 months or more as of 31st March 2022. Due to the Covid pandemic validated Summer 2020 and 2021 data was not available for comparative trends due to teacher assessed grades and for some key stages the achievement data was not collected at all on a national or regional level.

The following data for Summer of 2022 has therefore been compared with all cared for children in England and also cared for children across the Northeast Region for Summer 2022.

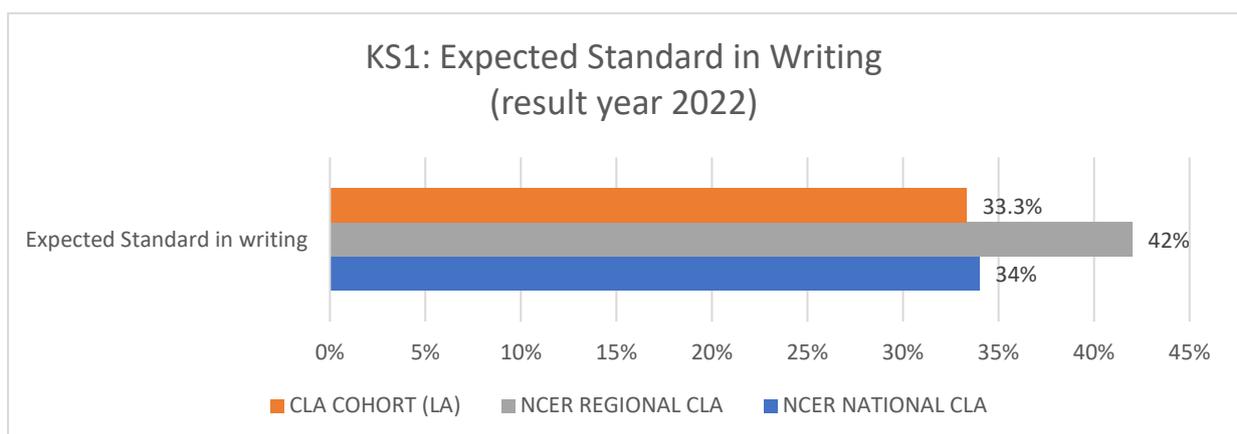
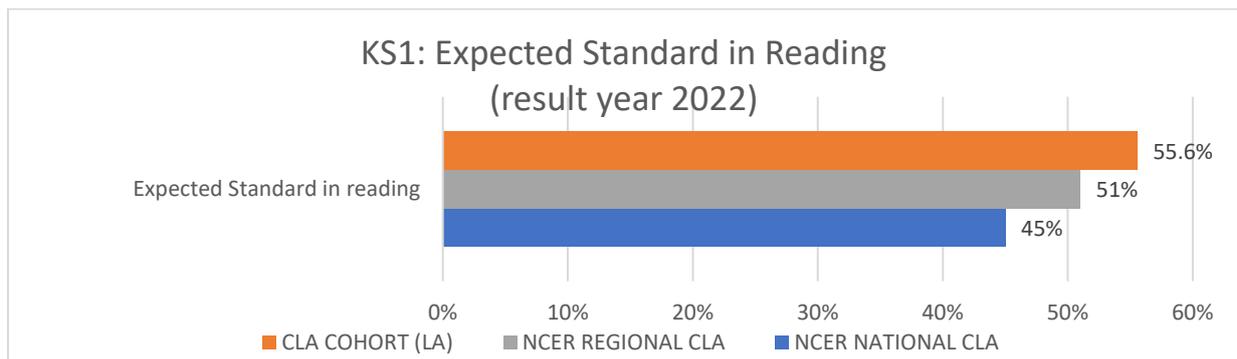
*Sunderland Cared for Children are in Orange, National in Blue and Regional in Grey

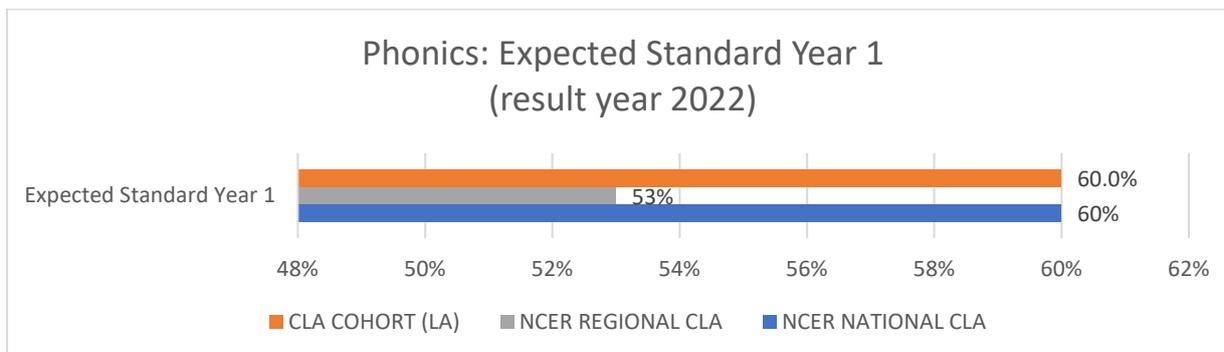
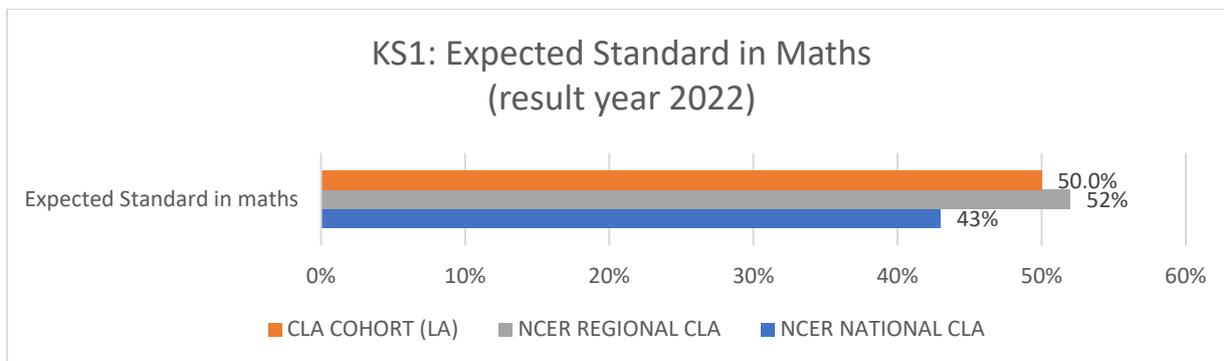
4.1 Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes



- The cohort was assessed using the early years foundation stage profile,
- 44.4% of children in Sunderland achieved a good level of development (GLD)
- This is 4.4% higher than the national (CLA) average of 40% and 13.4% higher than the regional (CLA) average of 31%.
- 60% achieved the expected standard of 32 in phonics which is equal to that of National (CLA) and 7% above that of the regional (CLA) cohort at 53%.

4.2 Key Stage 1 Outcomes

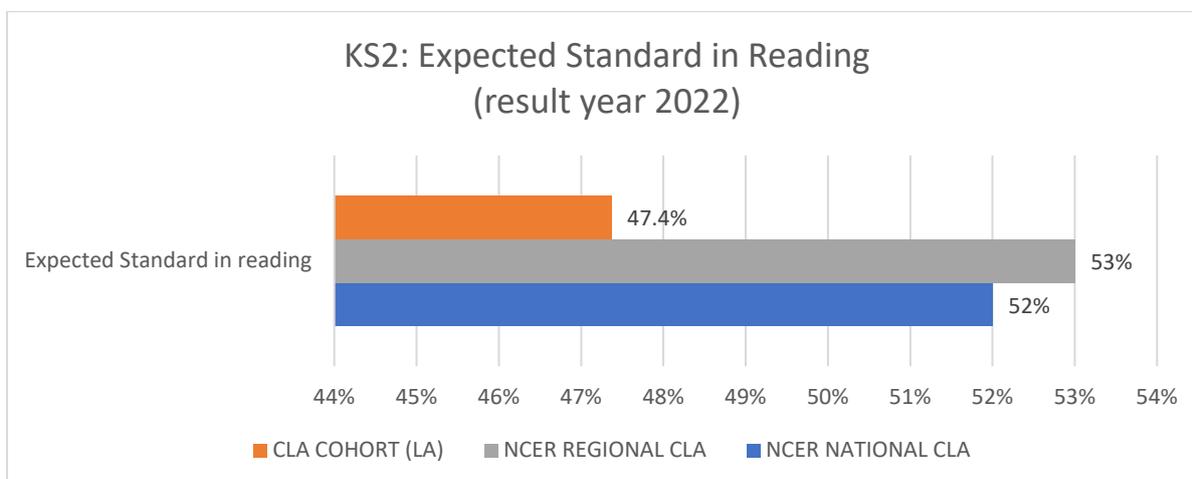


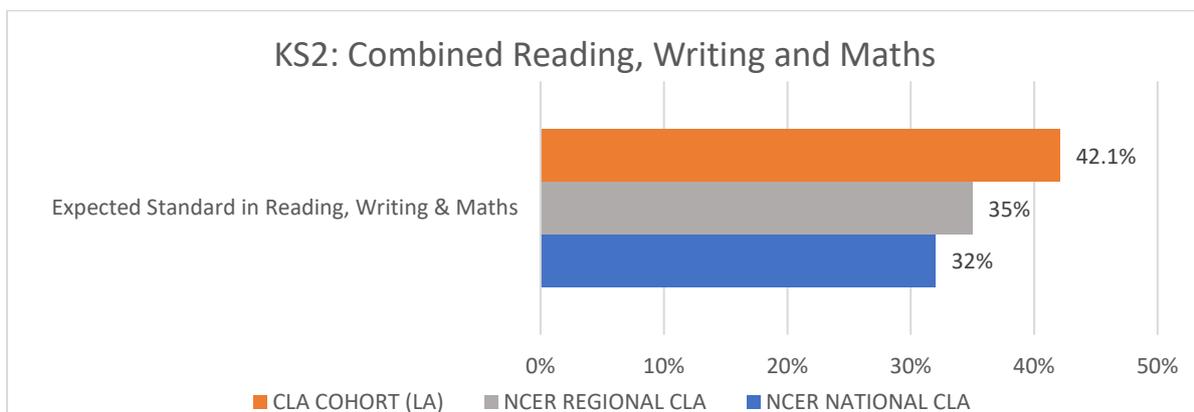
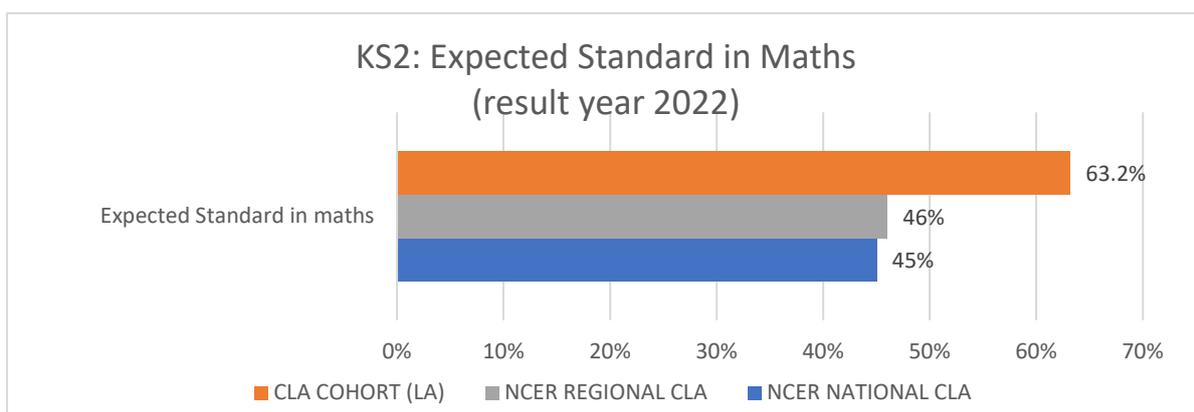
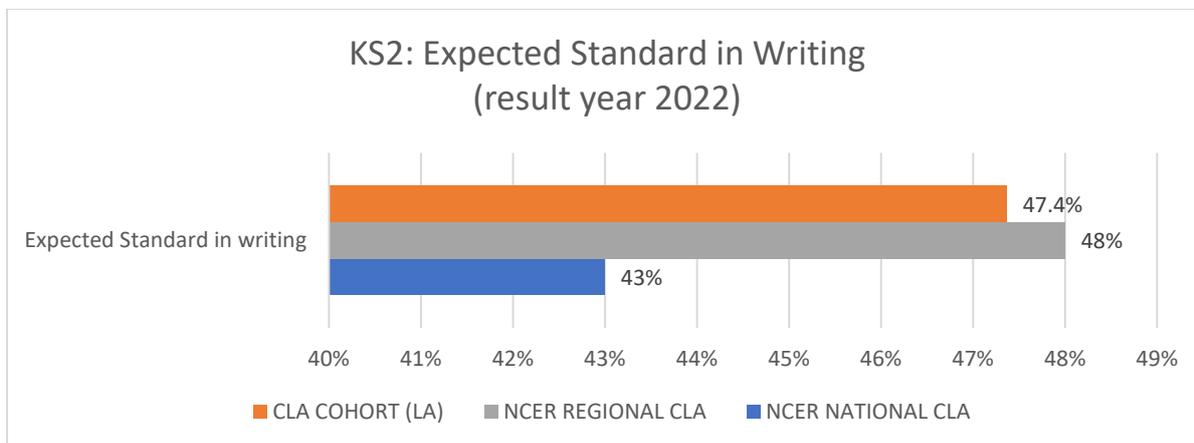


There were 18 pupils in the reportable cohort at the end of Key Stage 1:

- 55.6% achieved the expected standard in reading and 5.6% achieved a greater depth in Reading.
- This compares favourably with the regional average of 51% and is 10.3% above the national average of 43%.
- A third of pupils achieved the expected standard in writing, broadly in line with national average for Cared for children, however, this is lower than the regional average at 42%
- 50% of our children achieved the expected standard in Maths with 5.6% achieving a greater depth. This is 7% higher than the national average of 43% although slightly lower than regional at 52%.
- 60% achieved the expected standard of 32 in phonics at the end of Year 1 which is equal to that of National (CLA) and 7% above that of the regional (CLA) cohort at 53%.

4.3 Key Stage 2 Outcomes





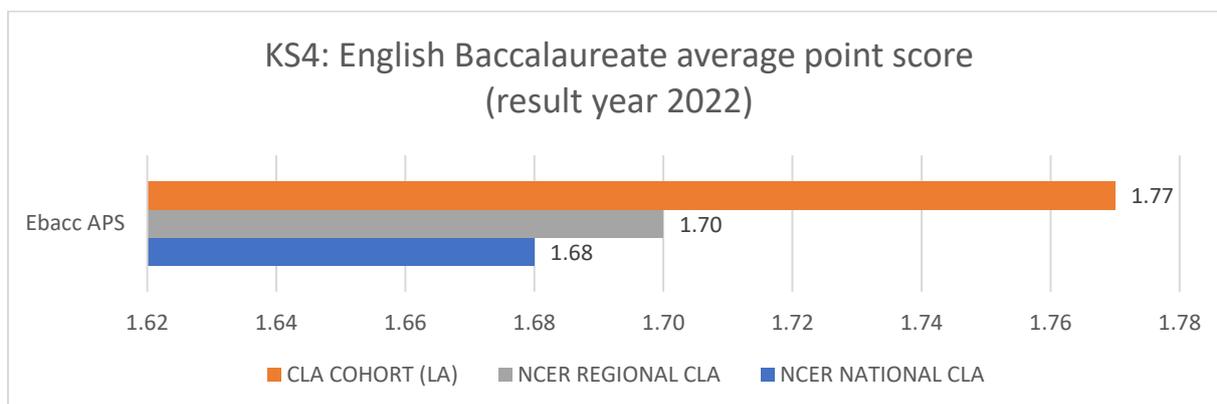
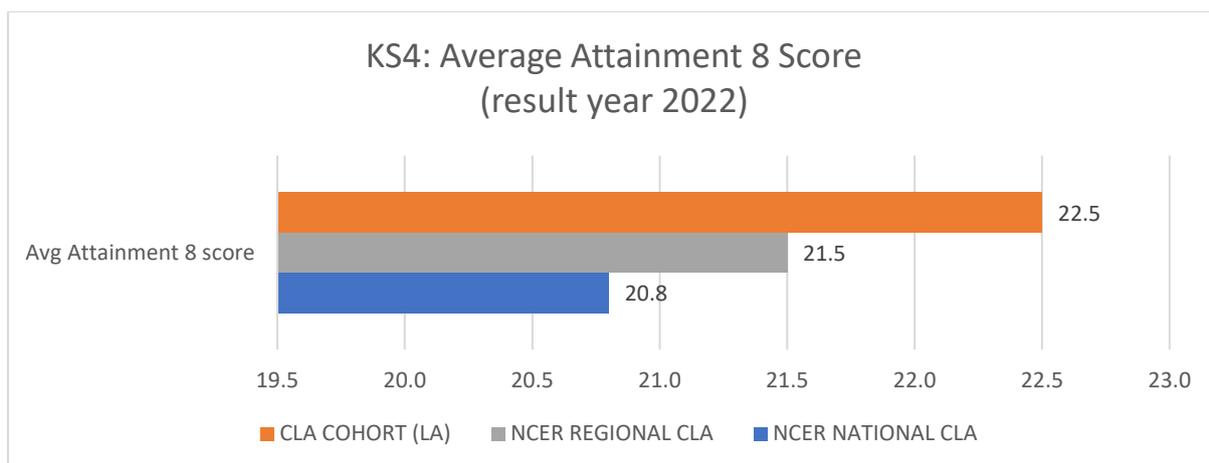
There were 19 pupils in the reportable cohort at the end of Key Stage 2:

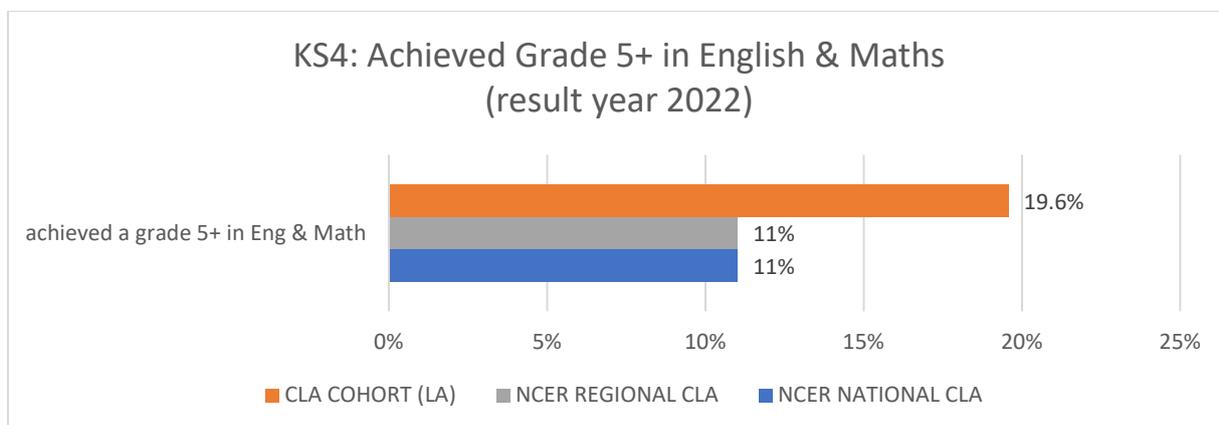
- In Writing, 47.4% achieved the expected standard broadly in line with regional and 4.4% higher than national average.
- In Maths, 63.2% of our children achieved the expected standard 18.5% higher than National at 45% and 17% higher than regional at 46%. 15.8% reached a higher standard,
- 47.4% achieved the expected standard in Reading, 4.6% lower than national and 5.6% lower than the regional average.
- The Combined measure for KS2 of Reading, Writing and Maths was 42.1%, this is 10% higher than the national average of 32% and 7% higher than the regional average of 35%
- An intervention programme has been developed for 2022/23 for early intervention and provide one to one tutoring through the National tutoring programme for children who

require additional support, and who are not already receiving that support within school, to close the gap from lost learning due to the pandemic. This will initially focus on Year 6 but will move to other year groups as in the Spring term.

- Where reading is of concern the newly formed primary team, through their attendance at PEP s, will be able to provide greater support and challenging for targets to be specific within PEPs
- Two reading programmes are being explored to encourage reading for our children, Letterbox Book Club and StoryTime Magazine, both specialising in encouraging reading with cared for children aged 4-9 years.

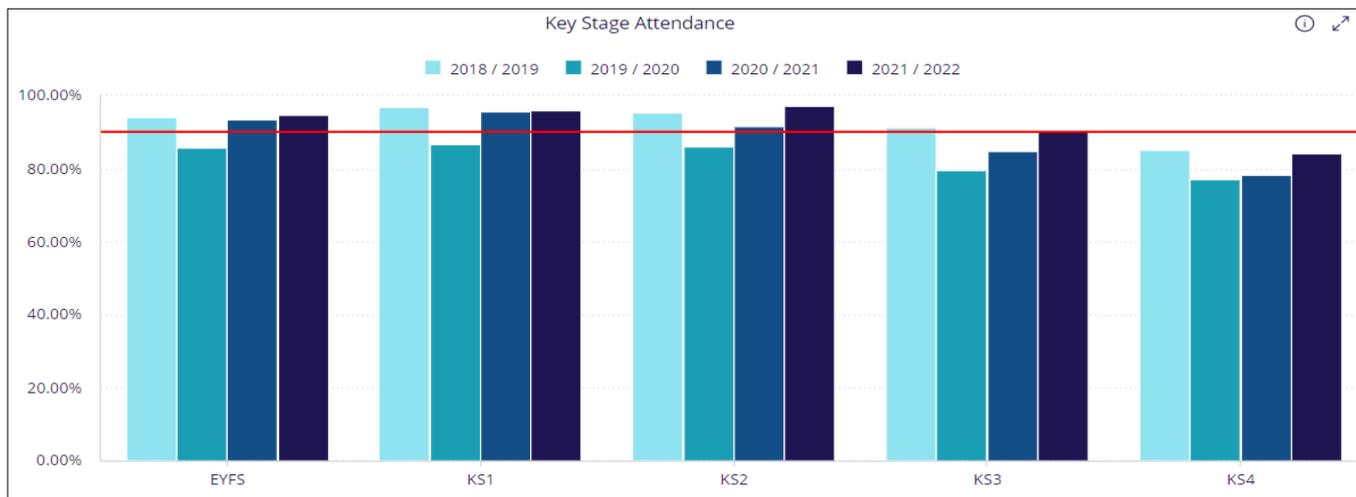
4.4 Key Stage 4 Outcomes



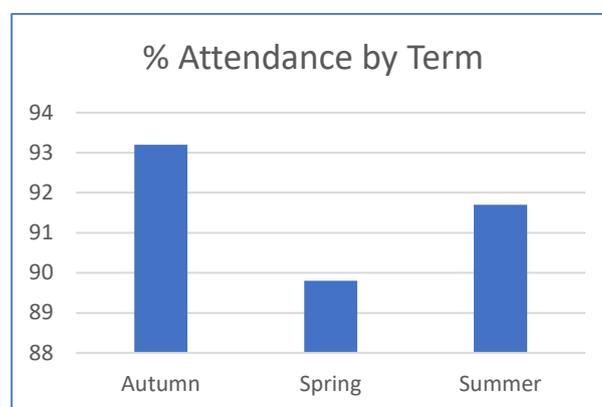
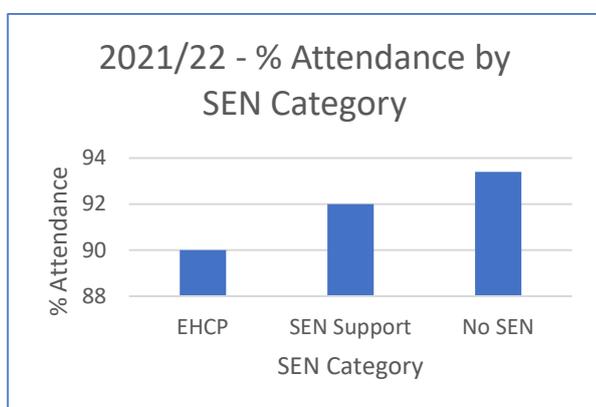


- There were 46 pupils in the reportable cohort at the end of Key Stage 4:
- The cohort in Sunderland has an Attainment 8 score of 22.5, which is 1.7 points higher than the national cohort at 20.8, and 1 point above regional average of 21.5
- The English Baccalaureate average point score is 1.77, which is marginally higher than the national and regional point scores, EBacc is a suite of subjects which includes English, maths, science, a humanities subject, and a modern foreign language
- 19.6% of our cared for children achieved a grade 5 or more in English and maths which is 8.5% higher than National and regional at 11%
- 26.1% of our young people achieved a grade 4 or more in English and Maths, prior to the pandemic this figure in 2019 was 17%
- A comprehensive identification and intervention programme has been introduced for September 2022 to provide individual 1:1 tuition through the National Tutoring Programme for any Year 11 pupil who is underachieving in English and/or maths. This will be extended to Year 10 by Spring term of 2023 and to Year 9 in the summer term of 2023. Meanwhile, the increased capacity of caseworkers affords greater support and challenge across all key stages through attendance at all PEP meetings.

5. ATTENDANCE



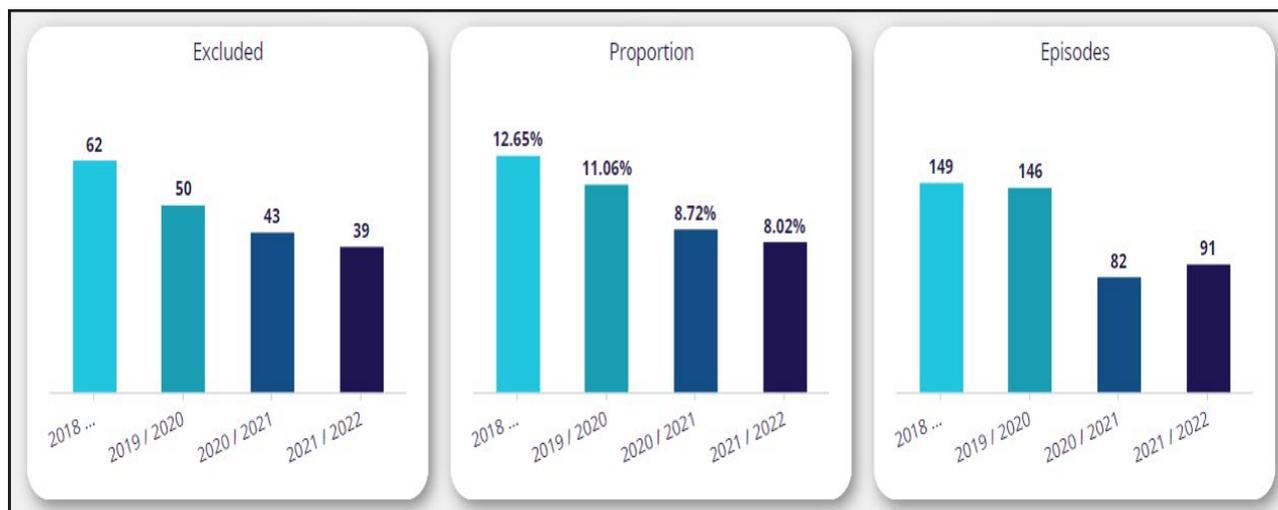
*Data Source: Locally Sourced Welfare Call



- Three year trend across all keystages has shown an improvement in attendance year on year since the dip in 2019/20 due to school closures during COVID-19.
- Attendance in all keystages returned back to pre-pandemic levels, although a dip was seen in the spring term across all keystages due to high COVID infection rates in Jan and Feb.
- Recording of absence and attendance during the pandemic and lockdown periods in 2019/20 included remote learning (authorised absence) and blended learning (in school part time, remote learning part time), comparative trends need to be taken in this context.
- Attendance for Cared for Children in Primary settings is 96% and secondary age children is 88%
- Attendance in KS4 although improving remained stubbornly low at 86% and continues to be a key area of action for the Virtual School and its partners in 2022/23.
- Attendance for those children and young people with special educational needs is below that of children with no identified SEN need
- Boys achieved a higher level of attendance than girls
- Children educated in out of borough schools had 1.7% lower attendance than those educated in Sunderland schools
- The Virtual School monitors attendance daily through Welfare Call and contacts carers to ensure attendance at school is a key priority should concerns arise.
- Analysis of the detail behind the data occurs half termly and virtual school staff work closely with schools, carers and social workers to ensure attendance is improved through the PEP.

6. SUSPENSIONS

% of children who have been cared for continuously for at least 12 months with at least one fixed term suspension



*Data Source: Locally Sourced Welfare Call

From the above table the following salient points can be noted:

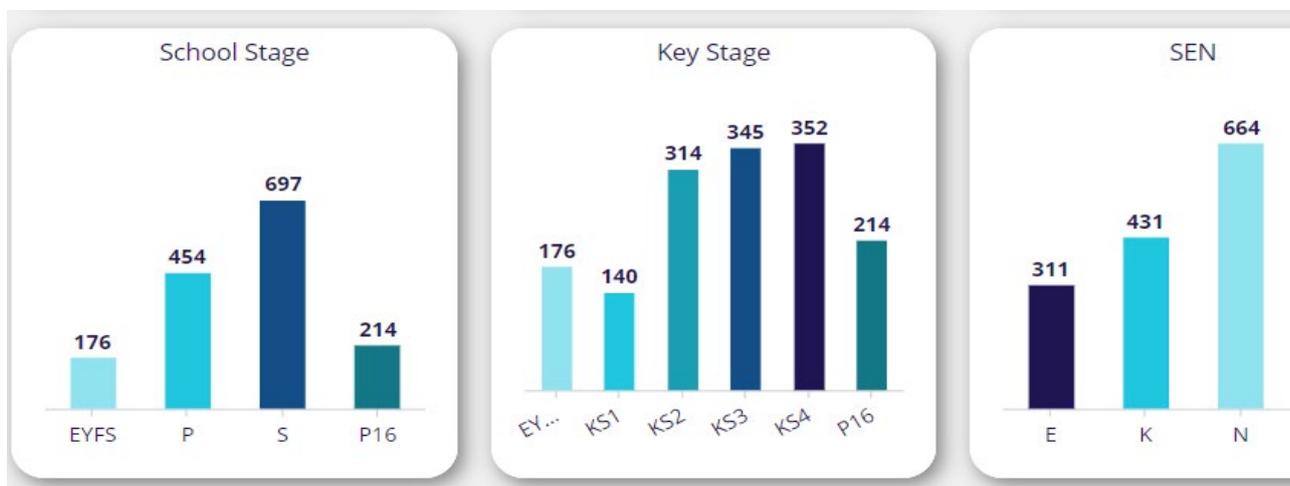
- The proportion of young people who had experienced one or more periods of suspension reduced from 12.6% in 2018/19 to 8.02% in 2021/22.
- The number of young people receiving suspensions dropped from 62 to 39
- The total number of suspension episodes in 2021/22 was 91 days, this was a significant fall from 149 in 2018/19 and 146 in 2019/20, however, is slightly above the 82 days in 2020/21
- Of the 39 children who received suspensions:
 - 18 (46%) received more than 1 suspension
 - 20 (51%) were in Key Stage 4
 - 11 (28%) had an EHCP of which 7 attend specialist provision
 - 12 (38%) received SEND in-school support
 - 13 (33%) attend schools outside of Sunderland LA

Caseworkers continue to monitor data to ensure suspensions occur as infrequently as possible. The Virtual School caseworkers liaise closely with schools, carers and social workers when suspensions occur to understand the antecedents and to ensure appropriate support and plans are put in place to prevent further suspensions. This includes the use of the SEND ranges to ensure needs are identified and resources are put in place, but also referrals to other agencies are aligned such as CYPS, CAMHS for example. Alongside our partners we explore strategies which can be employed as an alternative to suspension wherever possible.

Permanent Exclusion - The Virtual School will intervene at the earliest opportunity when informed by a school that they intend to permanently exclude a child or young person. Working with school leaders, carers and our partners we avoid this course of action at all costs, ensuring the school can reconsider, or that the young person is placed in an alternative and appropriate education setting as quickly as possible to meet their ongoing needs. As a result of this partnership, we have had **no Permanent Exclusion** of a Cared for Child/Young Person in Sunderland in five-years.

7. PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

Personal Education Planning meetings (PEPs) take place termly for statutory age and early years children and 6 monthly for Post 16 young people. PEP compliance with statutory timeframes remains **over 97% (an improvement from 86% in 2020)**.

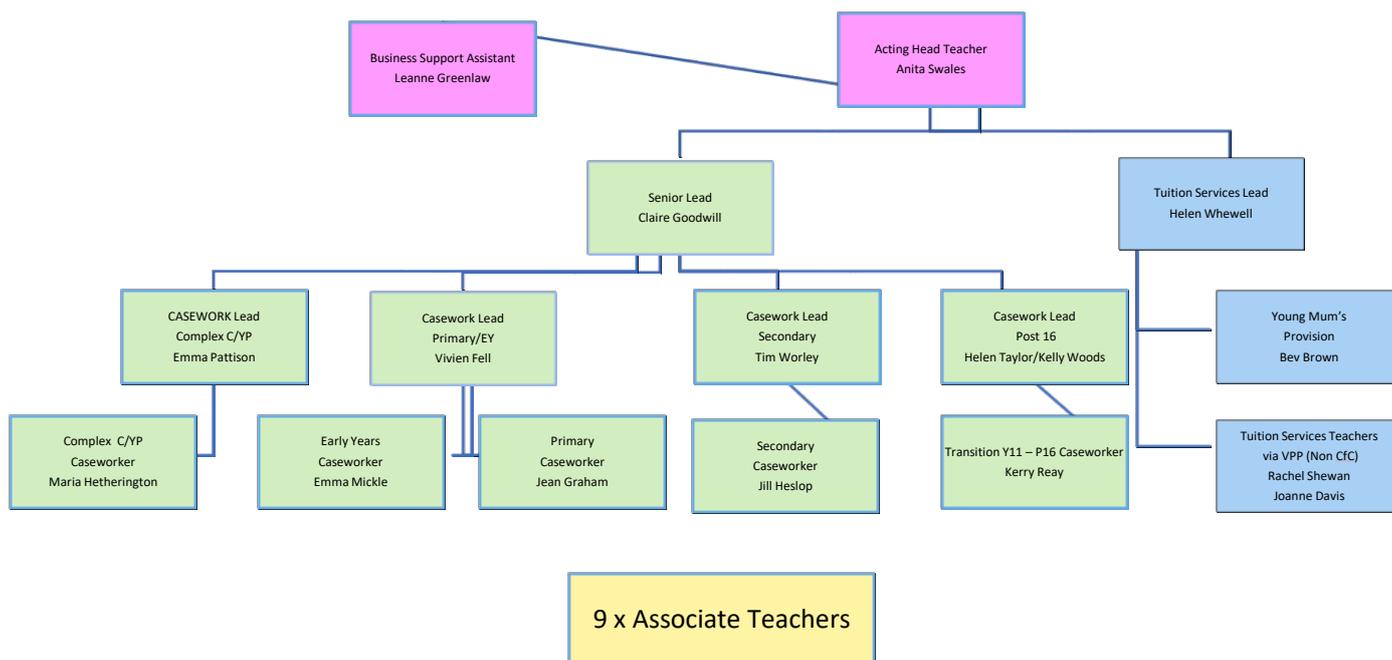


- Over the academic year 2021/22, a total of 1,541 PEP meetings took place for 629 young people in 229 education provisions within 38 different local authorities.
- **46 statutory aged children changed provision in 2021/22, a reduction from 58 children in 2020/21.** Avoidable changes to education provision are robustly challenged by the Virtual School as often school is the only stability many of our children have in their lives, with trusted adults who know them well.
- **92.7% of PEPS were quality assured as Good** (effective plans to ensure continued progress is achieved) with 7.3% rated as Amber, **this is an improvement from 2020/21 academic year** when only 87% of PEPS were rated Good.
- All PEPS are quality assured by the VS caseworkers to ensure they are fit for purpose. Quality assurance continues to be a key area of focus this year. Each section of the PEP is assessed, and this is fed back to schools using a RAG rating. If there are concerns about the quality of the PEP, a discussion is held with the school or the Social Worker to consider how it can be improved.
- The average number of days from PEP meetings being held to completion of the PEP document is now 11.8 days, which is a **significant improvement on the previous year**, however, the target for completion which is within 10 days of the PEP meeting date has yet to be reached. Early completion of a document ensures the targets contained can be shared in a timely manner with all professionals so that identified support can be given to enable maximum impact to achieve successful outcomes.
- Due to the increased capacity of caseworkers within the Virtual School, for the coming academic year they will be able to attend all PEPS to ensure support and challenge is given to maximise outcomes for our children.

8 . STRUCTURE AND WORK OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Virtual School was restructured during 2021/22 with the formation of four distinct teams to focus specifically on key stage issues and was strengthened with the appointment of five new caseworkers supported by new middle leaders with responsibility for a key stage or cohort of young people.

NEW VIRTUAL SCHOOL STRUCTURE- MAY 2022



The new structure has been in place since 1st May 2022 and affords for greater capacity and reduced caseloads for virtual school staff, with the average caseload dropping from 80 plus in 2021/22 to less than 60 for the coming academic year 2022/23.

The recruitment process attracted candidates with a wide range and level of experience, all newly appointed staff joined us directly from roles in primary, secondary and special schools, as well as an early years setting and Post 16 college provision. All new staff have received a full induction, including a range of mandatory and additional training.

Caseworkers ensure all children and young people under their care:

- are in the most appropriate education setting to meet their individual needs
- maximise school attendance, working closely with carers, social care and school colleagues
- identify any additional educational needs in a timely manner
- ensure additional support is provided through the function of the Personal Education Plan
- avoid exclusions and provide for additional support to achieve inclusion
- maximise achievement through robust targets set through the PEP and provide for interventions when barriers are faced

Caseworkers also:

- provide support for schools to understand the needs of our children
- assist schools in securing external professional support for those with additional needs
- attend all PEP meetings, alongside Cared for Reviews and Care Team Meetings, where appropriate, for children on their caseload
- liaise with carers on a regular basis to provide early identification of educational concern they may experience

Caseworkers provide information, advice and guidance to colleagues in education and social care, as well as foster carers and residential staff, on a wide range of educational issues, this includes:

- School admissions (including appeals)
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Emotional Health and Well-being
- Exclusions
- Alternative Education Provision
- SEN/D
- Referrals to LA support services
- Transition

In line with the extended duties of the virtual school brought in by the Government this advice, information and guidance is not only in relation to our cared for children but extended to previously cared for children; those who have been in the care of the local authority for at least 24 hours prior to an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order being awarded by court. In addition, the virtual school duties were further extended in 2021 to 'promote educational outcomes for children with a social worker'.

During the academic year, virtual school staff delivered a range of training/awareness raising sessions on the education issues above to stakeholders, including:

- Designated teachers
- School Governors
- Social Care Colleagues
- Foster Carers
- Adoptive Parents
- Connected Carers

The Virtual School also hosted a regional conference in May 2022 on 'The Effects of Attachment and Trauma on Children's Learning'. This conference was sponsored by Sunderland University and facilitated by Lisa Cherry, from the REES Centre, Oxford University, an international expert on the subject. It was well attended by education and social care colleagues from across the region, alongside care experienced young people and carers.

9. PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

PP+ grant is additional funding for Cared for Children to support their educational outcomes and to close any gaps due to adverse childhood experiences and educational neglect. For the academic year 2021-22 an allocation of £2,410 was received per child based on the CLA Data Return (SSDA903) March 2021. Of this per capita funding, £1,900 was allocated directly to the

schools our children and young people attend within Sunderland and in other local authority areas.

Schools use this funding to provide additional resources to support the child's needs as identified and monitored through their PEP. Schools have used their PP+ allocation in several ways, including:

- 1:1 and small group tuition
- Alternative education provision outside of the school environment
- Extra staff to support individuals and groups of children, i.e. play therapist or CfC Mentor
- Alternative Emotional Literacy Programmes/Nurture Groups
- Whole school and Designated Teacher training
- Provision of additional homework clubs and revision clubs
- IT equipment and resources
- Music lessons
- Contributions toward extended educational trips
- Transition activities
- Extra-curricular activities

The Virtual School retained £510 per CfC to facilitate the work of the Virtual school in supporting those young people who struggled to attend and/or access mainstream or specialist provision. In recognition that some children may have a greater level and more complex needs than others, arrangements are in place to enable schools to apply through their nominated caseworker for additional funding where needed.

During 2021/22, schools have been supported with additional Teaching Assistant support, the cost of alternative education provision for those young people who are at risk of exclusion, as well as the provision of school fees or top up fees for specialist provision when a young person does not have an EHCP, and therefore does not qualify for High Needs Funding. Cared for Children are also supported through one-to-one tuition, whilst awaiting admission to schools following a return to Sunderland or a move to another LA area.

Alongside the National tutoring Grant, Pupil Premium funding provided over 5000 hours of additional one to one tuition in 2020/21 to support catch up with education lost through the pandemic.

Early Years Pupil Premium grants were introduced in the 2015 and are paid to the settings where our early years children attend, including school nurseries and other childcare provisions. The VS introduced an Early Years PEP to support children in these settings in January 2021.

In 2021/22, the Virtual school received no pupil premium funding for Post 16 young people, however we have supported several young people with resources, including laptops for college work, as well as additional costs incurred through attending alternative provisions.

10. POST 16 SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (EET/NEET)

Ongoing NEET support from the Virtual School:

- Post 16 Caseworkers offer NEET mentoring and support tailored to meet the needs of each cared for young person who is not in education, employment or training. This involves home visits to offer information, advice and guidance, multi-agency working to support young people in exploring options, accompanying young people on visits to local providers, interview preparation and in some case creating bespoke programmes to meet the needs of the individual that cannot be met by mainstream provision.
- The expansion of the team and increased hours in September 2022 will allowed team members to offer more intensive support to our NEET young people.
- Regular NEET PEPS are undertaken to review barriers to engagement and agree actions to provide support and facilitate engagement.
- Multiagency and focused based approach to prevent NEET and re-engagement of those young people who are long term NEET, working in close partnership with training providers, colleges, housing providers and carers.
- The team have set up a NEET support panel for Autumn 2022 which will meet on a monthly basis and will be attended by Virtual School, Tfc Careers Team and Next Steps Activity Co-ordinator. The purpose of this is to explore creative solutions for our post 16 hard to reach young people who are NEET and to improve retention in EET using a multi-disciplinary approach.

NEET Preventative work from Virtual School:

- Regular PEPs to review what is going well relating to their education, as well as any needs/concerns, agreeing targets and support to promote retention and prevent disengagement.
- Year 11 Risk of NEET Indicator created for implementation Autumn 2022 for the Year 11 cohort based on school PEP information. Students will be RAG rated and targeted transition work undertaken in the Spring and Summer term on NEET prevention.
- A dedicated member of the Virtual School team has been employed in the new structure to support transition from year 11 to year 12 providing mentoring for transition plans and to provide NEET prevention support and strategies.
- For our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), we have a core offer which includes the provision of laptops to access online language tuition and college work, educational assessments of language acquisition and prior learning, targeted support using

the Flash Academy framework and arranging additional face to face EAL tuition in preparation for full time learning.

Pupil Premium Plus (Post 16 Pilot):

- Sunderland Virtual School have been selected to participate in a one-year pilot to start in September 2022 of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding for post 16 cared for young people with a focus on improving retention and raising attainment in Maths and English.
- The cohort will be 16/17 years olds in Further Education with some flexibility to support young people in other circumstances, including those who are seeking education, training and employment, the pilot has been awarded to focus on the following three priority areas:
 1. Raise the profile of Cared for and Care Experienced Young People in FE through multi agency working practice to improve retention and participation of our young people on appropriate post 16 pathways
 2. Improve the attendance and outcomes for Level 2 English and Maths courses
 3. Better support the delivery of Personal Education Plans at both an individual and whole cohort level.

Innovation and Sharing Good Practice

- Virtual School are working collaboratively with partners to develop additional Post 16 UASC provision to meet the increasing need in the city. The Virtual School is also part of a North of England regional UASC focus group working on regional solutions to support USAC cohorts through NEET preventative strategies.
- Virtual school are meet with other professionals and young people to explore and develop creative bespoke solutions for young people with complex needs, such as personal development, preparing for adulthood and independence and how this can reduce NEET eg 1-1 tuition, ASDAN, positive activities
- Post 16 Caseworkers attend the Northeast Raising Aspiration Partnership, Care Experienced Student Steering Group
- Post 16 Caseworkers have setting up a Regional Post 16 Virtual School Steering Group

11. GOVERNANCE

STRUCTURE OF GOVERNING BOARD 2021/22

The full governing board held three termly meetings during the academic year and a challenge committee met on two occasions to provide additional scrutiny to the work of the Virtual School.

The board had representation from Headteachers /Principals from all sectors of education as well as a care experienced young person, a foster carer, an LA Counsellor, and representatives from TfC strategic leads in social care and education. This broad representation allowed for a range of support and challenge to the headteacher and virtual school staff not only during termly meetings but throughout the year.

Co-opted	Special Schools Representative	Rachel Hargreaves Headteacher	4 Years
Co-opted	Nursery Schools Representative	Catherine Barnett Headteacher Challenge Committee	4 years
Co-opted	Primary Schools Representative	Anna Young Head Teacher Wessington Primary School Vice Chair and Chair of Challenge Committee	4 Years
Co-opted	Secondary Schools Representative	Sue Hamilton Washington Academy Challenge Committee	4 Years
Staff	Head Teacher	Linda Mason	N/A
Staff	Senior Lead	Anita Swales	N/A
Co-opted	Sunderland University/HE Representative	Wendy Price Head of Widening Access and Participation CHAIR - Feb 2022	4 Years
Co-opted	LA Councillor	Vacant	4 Years
Co-opted	Sunderland College/FE Representative	Mike Hall	4 Years
Co-opted	Social Care - Head of Service Cared For Children and Provider Services	Tracy Jelfs	4 Years
Carer	Carer	Julie Wyatt	4 Years
Young Person	Care Experienced Young Person	Chantelle	N/A
Associate Member – with voting rights	Strategic Service Lead Education	Kimberley Richardson	4 Years

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

6 March 2023

NUMBER OF CHANGES OF SOCIAL WORKER FOR CARED FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report of Tracy Jelfs, Head of Service Cared for Children and Provider Services

1. Purpose of the Report

A number of members of Corporate Parenting Board took part in the Changeable game on 7 February 2023. As a result, a request was made for a report to come to the Board in relation to the number of changes of Social Worker cared for and care experienced children and young people have, whilst in the care of Together for Children.

2. Introduction/Background

Historically in Together for Children there had been a significant use of agency Social Workers, due to an inability to recruit appropriately experienced workers. Teams were often made up of a high proportion of agency staff, with very few permanent staff (if any) in the team. Agency Social Workers, have different terms and conditions to permanent staff, and are only required to give one weeks' notice. This resulted in a high number of children and young people experiencing multiple workers, sometimes in short timeframes and often without knowing that their worker had left, as there was no time for an appropriate handover to the new worker. This was a concern for all children known to Children's Social Care at that time.

Stability within the social care workforce developed within Together for Children, with the permanent staff in the Senior Management Team all in post from mid-2019 and then permanent Team Managers also in post following this. This then further developed into increased permanent staff taking up Social Worker posts as well.

The data below shows the number of changes in Social Workers from 2018-2022, for cared for and care experienced children and young people, this data was available annually:

Year	Changes	Number of Children
18/19	892	435
19/20	604	362
20/21	599	381
21/22	576	389

3. Current Position

Although the trend of high usage of agency workers in many Local Authorities in England remains an issue, this has not been the case for Together for Children. The Senior Management Team in Children's Social Care had taken a number of steps from 2019 onwards to become a more competitive recruiter, for example, we increased the support offer to staff, developed creative advertising, flexibility with hours, established an effective programme for newly qualified Social Workers, all of which in turn, has created increased stability in the social care workforce.

Stability of our workforce is key in delivering good outcomes to children and young people and as such, there is now increased monthly monitoring of this. The Senior Leadership Team is sighted on this issue, via the development of the Meaningful Measures report, one aspect of which reports on changes in Social Workers for cared for and care experienced children. This has been established for this data stream monthly since December 2022.

The data below provides an overview of the changes and reasons for the change in Social Worker:

December 2022:

Reason	Number of Workers	Number of Children
Social Workers leaving TfC	1	1
Social Workers changing role in TfC	4	29
Social Workers off sick	2	7
Social Workers changed due to process	5	6
Child requested a change in Social Worker	1	1
Total	13	44

January 2023:

Reason	Number of Workers	Number of Children
Social Workers leaving TfC	0	0
Social Workers changing role in TfC	1	1
Social Workers off sick	1	13
Social Workers changed due to process	5	5
Total	7	19

The above information shows that 2 Social Workers were on sick leave with some children moving in December 2022 to new workers and others moving in January 2023.

One child requested a change in worker from a male to a female worker due to disclosures being made by children in the family of sexual harm and we felt that more disclosures may be made. The Team Manager progressed this request as this would be beneficial to support the child.

There remains increasing complexity regarding legislation and guidance across Children's Services and some specialist teams and ways of working are needed, to ensure the most effective support is provided to children and young people. This results in children moving to a different Social Worker as part of our processes and structure, noted as 'Social Workers changed due to process' above. This approach is kept under review by the Senior Management Team. The data shows relatively low numbers of children moving as a result of the process.

Some children prefer to have a change in Social Worker, for example, when they reach the conclusion of Court proceedings and prefer to have a new worker, who has not been involved in that aspect of their lives. In other instances, we work flexibly to reduce the number of changes. For example, a worker may be leaving the Permanence Team and a new worker would be allocated from within the team. However, if the child is approaching the age where Next Steps would take over the care planning, but perhaps not for 6 months, discussion would take place for the child to have a new worker in Next Steps earlier, as opposed to having two new workers, from two different teams, within a short space of time.

The year to date, continues to show an improving trend:

Year	Changes	Number of Children
01/04/2022- 14/02/23	320	220

From April 2023, Together for Children will be required to collate data regarding changes of Social Worker to the Department for Education. This will be reported in what is known as the 903 data return and provided for the first time in June 2024 for 23/24.

However, although there is increased stability in the workforce within Social Care, there will always be changes in staff, due to promotion, sickness absence or changes in personal circumstances, all of which could result in staff leaving. This is inevitable, the Senior Management Team and Team Managers within Children's Social Care continue to work to minimise the impact on children, when changes in worker occur.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to accept this report for information only.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

6 March 2023

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

Report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the draft work programme for the municipal year 2023/2024 and forthcoming agenda items.

2. Work Programme

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Officer Responsible
22 May 2023	Change Council Update Health of Cared for Children CNTW Cared for Children Update Update from the Virtual School – Spring Term Reg 44 Visits 2023/2023 Annual Fostering Report NYAS – My Things Matter Campaign	Alexandra Bowey Jo Morgan Samantha Diston Anita Swales Gavin Taylor Kathryn McCabe Tracy Jelfs
17 July 2023	Change Council Update IRO Annual Report Adoption Annual Report	Alexandra Bowey Gavin Taylor Kathryn McCabe
25 September 2023	Change Council Update Health of Cared for Children CNTW Cared for Children Update Update from the Virtual School – Summer Term	Alexandra Bowey Jo Morgan Samantha Diston Anita Swales
20 November 2023	Change Council Update Health of Cared for Children CNTW Cared for Children Update	Alexandra Bowey Jo Morgan Samantha Diston

15 January 2024	Change Council Update	Alex Bowey
	Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report	Anita Swales
11 March 2024	Change Council Update	Alex Bowey
	Health of Cared for Children CNTW Cared for Children Update	Jo Morgan Samantha Diston
20 May 2024		

3. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the work programme and suggest any additional topics which may be discussed at a future meeting.