Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2021/22 (Draft)

All data is provisional until validated data is published by DFE

<u>Overview</u>

The Virtual School is responsible for supporting the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSH) in discharging their statutory duties as stated in the DfE statutory guidance, dated February 2018, Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children and previously looked after children.

VSHs, working with education settings, should implement Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) arrangements for all Children in our Care (CIOC) who need support. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PPP funding to maximise its impact for individual CIOC as well as the whole CIOC cohort.

The Virtual School works with educational providers and other professionals and partners to ensure that the educational achievement of CIOC is seen as a priority by everyone and that the needs of CIOC are understood. The Virtual School provides training, support, challenge, and signposting to providers to support them to meet these needs, contributing to improved educational outcomes and supporting CIOC to make at least expected progress and reach their full potential.

The functions within the Virtual School include:

- **Promoting a culture of high aspirations for our children.**
  - ➢ By striving to achieve accelerated progress and age-related attainment or better
  - ➢ Ensuring our children access high quality educational experiences
  - ➢ Promote consultation with the VSH prior to a CIOC moving placement
  - ➢ Children are prepared for adulthood and independence in the best possible way
  - ➢ Attachment aware and trauma informed practice is embedded in our day-to-day work
- **Ensuring efficient systems are in place to ensure good quality data, information, and monitoring**
  - ➢ The VSH holds a roll of all CIOC, which includes information on the name, type and quality of education provision, SEN status, attendance, exclusions, attainment, and progress.
  - ➢ Robust procedures are in place to monitor attendance and educational progress
- **Personal Education Plans (PEP)**
  - ➢ Ensure up-to-date, effective, and high-quality PEPs, that focus on educational outcomes, are in place and that education planning is aspirational and is an integral part of the care planning process
  - ➢ Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities
- **Pupil Premium Plus Funding (PPP)**
  - ➢ VSH are responsible for managing pupil premium plus funding for CIOC and for allocating it appropriately
- **Ensuring all statutory guidance is followed and drift and delay are avoided**
  - ➢ For admissions, exclusions, SEN procedures
- **Pupil Voice in education is sought and listened to**
- **Supporting schools and other Partners in meeting the needs of CIOC**
  - ➢ By supporting and challenging schools to ensure that they are working in the best way to identify and meet the needs of individual CIOC
  - ➢ By providing appropriate training to all partners
  - ➢ By signposting to appropriate services and resources
  - ➢ By supporting all professionals and stakeholders to focus on early identification of needs
  - ➢ By promoting the importance of effective transitions
  - ➢ Ensuring information sharing is appropriate and timely
  - ➢ By promoting evidenced based interventions, and an attachment aware and trauma informed approach

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Introduction

The following report is a summary of work undertaken by the Virtual School and the achievements of the Children in our Care whose education we support and oversee for the academic year September 2021 to August 2022

Post COVID Support

The mental health and wellbeing of everyone is particularly important following the two and a half years we have had with COVID 19 and the disruptions that this has caused in all aspect of daily life particularly for the CIOC. School, care placements, family time, additional activities and social opportunities have all had the potential to be disrupted, changed, or cancelled. As a group of young people who are particularly affected by change, and disruption to routine this has been in the forefront of our minds as we work to get children back into the school routine.

We have worked with schools supporting individual children and have looked closely at our training offer to ensure that this support is built into our daily work and training programme

Following on from our COVID 19 response documented in last year's Annual VSHT report, the Virtual School have developed our Post COVID response and used a model developed by Professor Barry Carpenter (Oxford University). This model is based on the common thread of loss (loss of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity, and freedom) that runs through the current lived experience of our children. This is particularly relevant to the CIOC who have experienced loss perhaps more than others. These losses can trigger the re-emergence of anxiety, trauma, and bereavement. To support the recovery from this experience, Professor Carpenter proposes the following five levers of recovery.

Lever 1: Relationships - we can't expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

Lever 2: Community - we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community, and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum - all our students will feel like they have lost time in learning, and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

Lever 4: Metacognition - in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

Lever 5: Space - to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue.

As stated above, as well as the interventions and work documented in our previous report, the Virtual School have added to and streamlined our offer to include the following responses to each of the fiver levers. Examples are shown below.

Lever	Virtual School Interventions
Lever 1: Relationships	- Promotion of a relational approach through our Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed training programme and development plan - Enhanced training offer (VS CDP Offer Booklet) - Promotion of the Thrive approach involving Thrive training, Thrive schools and Thrive assessments with accompanying action plans - Development of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Course to run in Autumn Term 2022

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	• Theraplay course completed • Family Thrive for Foster Carers delivered • Designated Teacher Network focused on training relating to AATI practices • Bespoke support for schools for whole staff training • Bespoke support for staff with individual CIOC
Lever 2: Community	• Virtual School Hubs to give CIOC an opportunity to voice their thoughts relating to identified issues • Student Voice in PEPs reviewed and updated • Emotionally Based School Avoidance framework introduced, and training delivered • Trauma Informed Practice in Stockton (TIPS) Network implemented to support professionals with developing their practice • Extracurricular activities supported (Care2Dance, MSLTP, Let's Take Action) • Carer questionnaire follow up
Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum	• Monitoring meetings and educational outcomes data analysis • Focus on Students Causing Concern • English Tuition • Booster reading sessions • Letterbox project • Middlesbrough Football Club Mentoring • School Led Tutoring • School support with individual CIOC • PEP quality assurance focus on high quality targets
Lever 4: Metacognition	• Executive functioning half day training session • As a result of the above three schools have requested bespoke whole staff training on executive functioning • Executive functioning as a topic for one of our Designated Teacher Network meetings
Lever 5: Space	• Introduction of St Johns Nurture Hub • MFC Mentoring • Preparation of ELSA training to run in Autumn Term 2022 • Solution focussed Planning Model used when working with Students causing concern • Circle of Understanding model led by the Virtual School EP • Circle of Adults model led by the Virtual School EP • SDQ collection as part of the PEP process and SDQ scores have been included in monitoring discussions

Virtual School Structure

The two new caseworker appointments are now in place and have added significantly to our offer and support for schools and for individual CIOC.

We have appointed two members of staff to support with the delivery of the Virtual School extended duties, promoting the educational outcomes of Children with a Social Worker. An Education Development Adviser in post for two years, will lead on the delivery of this project supported by a Senior Officer Information and Intelligence.
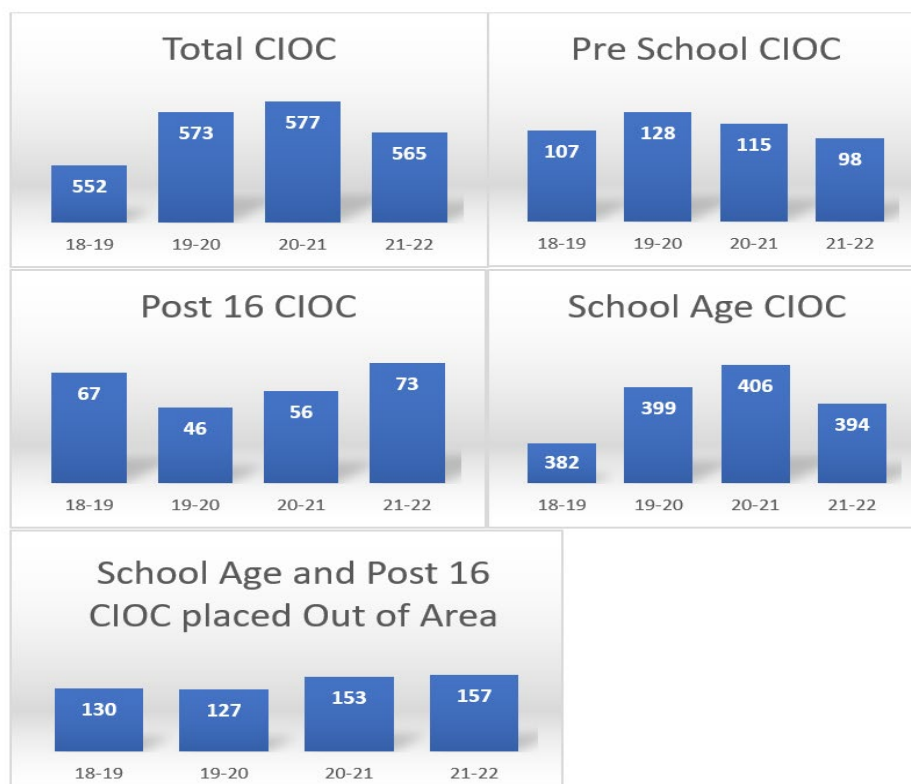
This will enable the Local Authority to work on a co-produced plan for this vulnerable group of children, working in partnership with Schools, social care, and other partners.
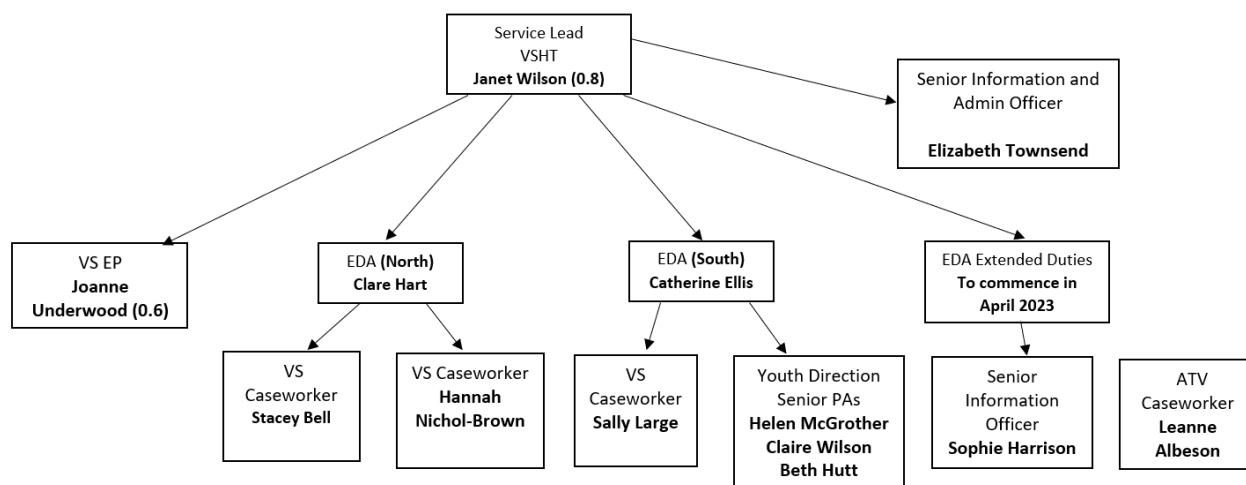
The team are a highly motivated and committed group of professionals who are committed to ensuring that the best interests of the children in our care are prioritised. They have responded skilfully and enthusiastically to the many challenges and changes required of them.

Virtual School Roll

The graphs below show the trend over the previous four years for our cohort of CIOC.
(Data taken from the July 2022 Virtual School Roll, L3 report)

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The diagrams below show the current cohort as of July 22, broken down into key groups

Total – 565
School Age - 394

- In Stockton - 348 / Out of area – 154 / No school - 63
- EHCP – 101 / SEN Support – 104 / No SEN - 360
- Female – 246 / Male - 319
- EYFS – 98 / School age – 394 / Post 16 - 73
- Primary – 17 / Secondary – 221 / Largest Year Group / Year 12 60

12 months + Total - 441

- Largest Year Group / Year 12 - 46
- EHCP – 91 / SEN Support - 90 / No SEN - 260
- EYFS – 53 / Primary – 143 / Secondary – 177 / Post 16 - 68
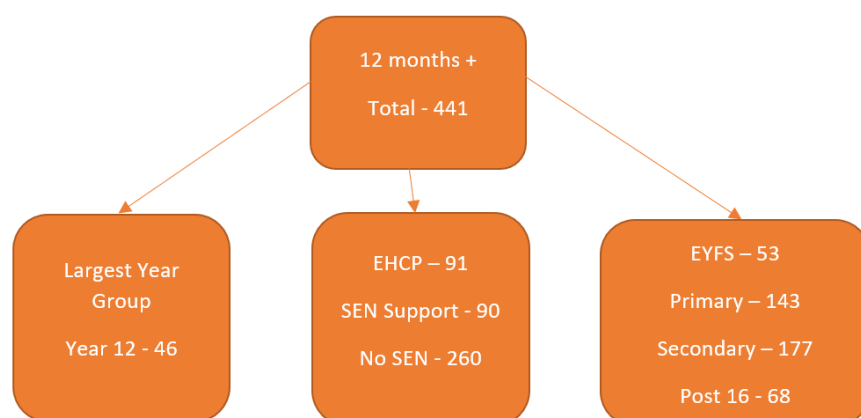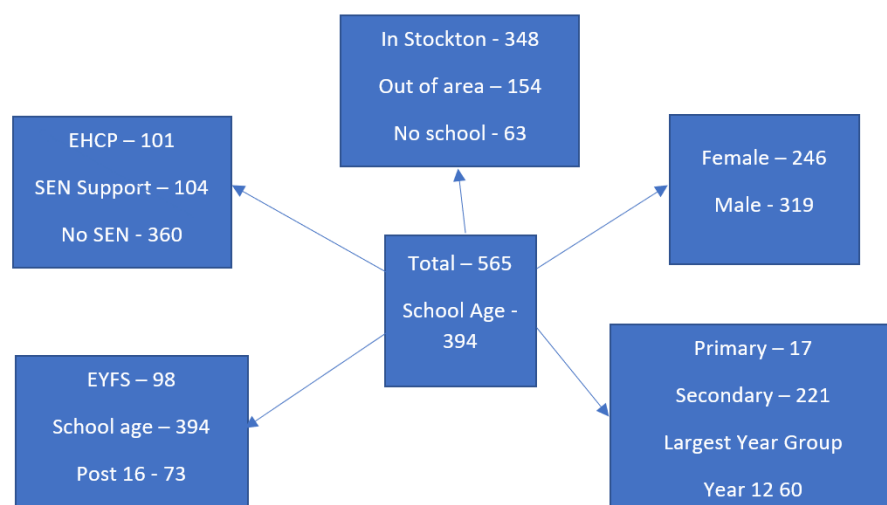
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

	SEN Identified		EHCP	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
19-20	47.3%	193	21.3%	87
20-21	38.2%	220	17.7%	102
21-22	36.5%	206	18.1%	102

An Education Development Adviser specialises in SEN support, attends Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) panel, and supports school and partners to ensure statutory timescales are followed and appropriate interventions are in place. The Virtual School Head sits on the Senior Leadership Team of SEND and Inclusion and works closely with the other Service Leads to ensure provision for CIOC is timely and appropriate wherever possible. The Virtual School and SEN colleagues work closely to ensure that drift and delay is avoided when placing pupils in specialist provision by:

- Liaising closely with one another when informed of a CIOC who has an EHCP and who has a potential care placement change where it may result in a change of school
- A change of school is only considered if necessary or it is deemed appropriate through the EHCP process.
- The Virtual School Education Development Adviser supports with the consultation process whenever necessary.
- Virtual School and SEN work together to provide interim provision whilst a placement is found, or work to arrange a bespoke package where necessary.

Key Indicators

Quality of Education

OFSTED Ratings	No of CIOC	No of Schools
Outstanding	67	20
Good	275	100
Requires Improvement	22	10
Inadequate	4	1
Not Applicable	7	7
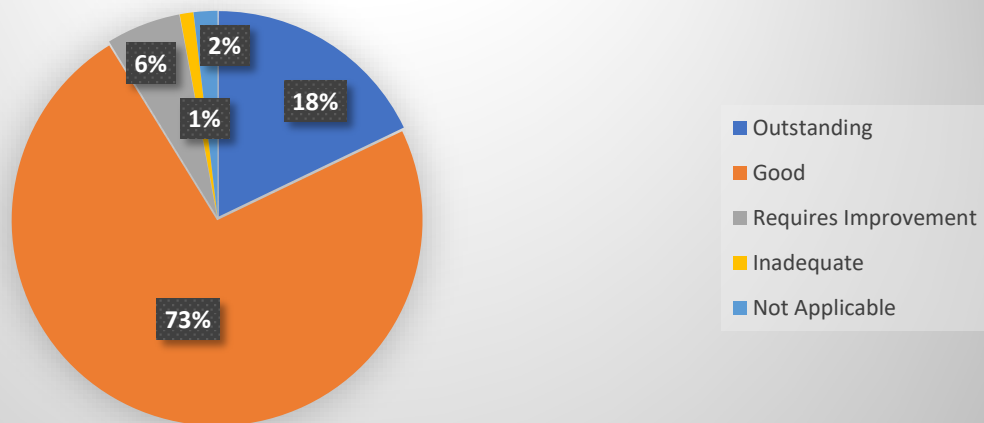
Concerted efforts are made to ensure that CIOC attend good or better schools. Currently 92% of CIOC attend good or better schools. In exceptional circumstances the Virtual School may agree to enrol a child into a school graded requires improvement. Where this may be appropriate, the Virtual School Head will discuss this with their equivalent Virtual School Head Teacher in another LA to ensure provision is appropriate for the needs of an individual child and that the decision is evidence based. Where a child already attends a school, which is judged to be less that good before becoming looked after or the school receives a lower grade at inspection while the child is already at the school the VSHT must consider whether a fall in OFSTED grading would justify disrupting a child's education with a school move. The Virtual School will monitor the education that is provided for children in less than good schools closely through our half termly monitoring meetings.

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Attendance

	2018-19	2019-20		2020-21	2021-22
		Before Lockdown	Total		
Overall attendance	96.8%	95.7%	94.6%	87.7% Validated - 90.6%	91.9%
National	94.9%		No data	90.9%	No data
Primary	97.3%	96.8%	96.7%	93.7%	96.1%
Secondary	93.1%	94.7%	92.6%	82.5%	85.5%
Persistent absence (<90%)	8.3%		No data	26% Validated 33.9%	16.1%
National	12%		No data	30.4%	No data
100% attendance				63 Children (14.4%)	49 Children (15%)

Exclusions

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
% Of children with 1 Fixed term exclusion	No Data	4.2	8.2	11.7	12.2
Number of pupils with 1 Fixed term exclusion	12	16	33	44	58
Total days lost to exclusion	63.5	132	No Data	239	440.5

For the first time this academic year we have had three permanent exclusions, three boys, one in Year 8 (serious incident), one in Year 9 (serious physical assault against a pupil) and one in Year 10 (persistent disruptive behaviour and physical assault against an adult.)

Educational Outcomes

Children in care are not a homogenous group, mobility is often pronounced, many factors impact on their educational achievement and there is a high number who have a Special Educational Need. Overall, the circumstances are often complex, and oversimplification of results can be misleading. In many cases analysing attainment or progress alone does not always reflect the progress or impact of targeted support implemented by schools or the Virtual School.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
In 2022, attainment at the end of EYFS, as determined by children achieving a Good Level of Development (the number of children achieving at least 'expected' in each of the Prime Areas and in the Specific Areas of Literacy and Mathematics) is 27.3%. This is well below pre pandemic levels.

	Stockton 2019	Stockton 2022	National 2022
% Achieving Good Level of Development (GLD)	60%	27.3%	40%

It should be recognised that the SEN needs of this cohort is greater in comparison to previous years. Within the cohort 5 children were registered as SEN support and a further 2 have an EHCP.

It should also be noted that, out of the 22 children,

- 12 (55%) of the children were admitted into care during the pandemic (Jan 20- Dec 21)
- 13 (60%) had attendance below 90% during their reception year. In most cases this was due to poor attendance prior to being admitted into care.

Reception 22-23 GLD Reflection

In comparison, the current Reception cohort is notably different. The cohort consists of 26 CIOC pupils. 85% are predicted to meet GLD in comparison to 32% this time last year. 1 pupil has an EHCP, and no further pupils are recorded as needing SEN support.

In looking at their admission to care dates, 9 children were admitted between 2020-2021 and a further 5 in 2022. It is worth reflecting on the fact that this cohort will have had a full uninterrupted year in nursery and a full autumn term this academic year. This may account for the significant increase in the GLD predictions.

Phonics Screening Check in Year 1

In 2022, 69.2% of children in Year 1 achieved the required standard in the Phonics Screening Check. This is below 2019 but is well above national average for children in care. (61%)

	Stockton CIOC 2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	National CIC 2022
Phonics required standard	75%	69.2%	61%

Key Stage 1

Outcomes are well below pre pandemic levels but are broadly in line with the national average for children in care in 2022.

	Stockton 2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	National CIOC 2022
EXS Reading	78.6	44.4%	45%
EXS Writing	71.4	44.4%	34%
EXS Mathematics	78.6	44.4%	43%
EXS combined RWM	71.4	61.1%	57%

Key Stage 2

In 2022, Key Stage 2 results are broadly similar to pre pandemic levels. The provisional data for Key Stage 2 shows that Stockton CIOC have performed well above the national average for children in care and North East Children Looked After in all areas. (Reading, Writing, Mathematics and combined RWM).

	2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	National CIC 2022
Expected Standard Reading (EXS)	47%	64.7%	52%
EXS Writing	53%	55.9%	43%
EXS Maths	59%	58.8%	45%
EXSRWM combined	44%	41.2%	32%

The progress of Stockton CIOC (12+ months) compares favourably to National and Regional data.

Boosting Reading Programme

In 2019 reading attainment was identified as an area for improvement and as part of our improvement plan, we implemented the booster reading programme. Reading attainment this year is much improved, well above 2019

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outcomes and above the national average for all Children in Care. The reading booster programme has had excellent impact. Of the 10 children accessing this intervention in 2021-22, three out of four Year 6 children achieved the expected standard in reading and on average CIOC made 15.5 months progress in their reading age over the 10 months intervention period.

Key Stage 4

It is nationally recognised that the system for measuring and comparing the attainment and progress of looked after children is problematic and often not of significance due to the often small and diverse cohorts. For that reason, it is often useful to look at the make-up of the cohort and consider how this impact upon outcomes.

- 42 pupils were in the Year 11 (12 months +) cohort, 1 pupil is equivalent to 2.4%
- 38% has some recognised special educational need
- 26% had an EHCP and 12% had SEN support
- 25 pupils were educated in schools in Stockton (66%)
- 16 pupils were educated in schools outside of Stockton (38%)
- 12 pupils attended specialist, specialist independent or alternative provision (29%)

Provisional outcomes for Key Stage 4 are above pre pandemic levels but follow the national trend of being slightly below 2021 results at Level 4+. However, Level 5+ measures have improved. Examinations over the last three years have been based on different criteria for each of the academic years 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 so comparisons are hard to make due to the different assessment methods used.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Level 4+ English and Maths	17.8%	20%	27.5%	31.7%	28.6%
Level 4+ English	32.1%	33%	42.8%	46.3%	35.7%
Level 4+ Maths	17.8%	27%	27.5%	34.1%	33.3%
Level 5+ English and Maths	3.6%	10%	14.2%	9.7%	21.4%
Level 5+ English	14.3%	17%	22.8%	19.5%	33.3%
Level 5+ Maths	7.1%	13%	14.2%	19.5%	26.2%

Key Stage 4 Attainment and progress measures

	Stockton CIOC 2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	National CIC 2022
Attainment 8	21.2	28.3	26.4
Progress 8	-1.42	-0.65	-1.02

Results for both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 for Stockton CIOC are better than in 2019 pre pandemic and are better than all CIC nationally in 2022.

The attainment and progress, as well as the overall progress of children regardless of their attainment, and their engagement, is recorded on a child's PEP document. Every term information is collated and analysed.   As part of our monitoring schedule, the Virtual School scrutinise this information and identify those children who are causing concerns. We will then aim to attend the next PEP meeting or contact the school for further information, ensuring effective interventions are in place and to offer support.

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Post 16

To support CIOC with their preparation for adulthood and in making appropriate decisions for their education Post 16, the Virtual School has appointed a Youth Direction Participation Adviser, this adviser works alongside a colleague appointed by the Opportunities Service, in Help and Support. A further adviser has been appointed to support the outcomes of the Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus pilot. These advisers support the Virtual School in delivering independent careers advice, guidance, and support.

The Virtual School Youth Direction Participation Advisers play a vital role in supporting other professionals, carers, young people who are in our care or care leavers in respect of education, employment, or training. They work in partnership with colleagues in social care, Youth Direction, SEN, carers, schools, colleges, universities, and training providers to ensure pathways support young people in their aspirations and independence.

The roles and responsibilities of the Participation Advisers include:

- Offering advice guidance and support to CIOC
- Attending PEP meetings from Year 9 onwards to support and advise on transition plans into further education, employment, and training
- Liaising with other professionals in the LA to secure work experience opportunities/apprenticeships, training, and employment
- Ensuring that CIOC have a careers information, advice, and guidance interview
- Maintaining positive links with local colleges, training providers and schools to support young people's attendance and engagement in their education and training
- Mentoring and supporting young people regarding accessing and engaging in educational opportunities
- Advising and guiding with transition plans and exit plans between courses of education, employment, and training.
- working with other professionals to ensure support for the young person is in place to overcome barriers to engagement,
- keeping other professionals up to date with any relevant information in respect of the young person's attendance, engagement, disciplinary action in respect of their education and training

The Participation Advisors work closely with the Virtual School Education Adviser and attend termly Post 16 meetings to ensure future destinations are shared and communicated to receiving colleges. In 2020-21 the Participation Advisers carried out 1287 significant interventions ranging from attendance at a range of meetings, home visits, support taking CIOC to interviews and college visits, emails, telephone calls and texts.

Destination data

	Sept 2017 (23 young people)	Sept 2018 (28 young people)	Sept 19 (34 young people)	Sept 20 (36 young people)	Sept 21 (41 young people)	Sep 22 (50 young people)
Education	96%	76%	74%	75%	(27) 66%	(39) 78%
Employment	0%	8%	3%	0%	0%	(1) 2%
Training	0%	8%	15%	22%	(8) 20%	0
NEET	4%	4%	9%	0%	(6) 14%	(8) 16%
Other	0%	4%	0%	3%	0%	(2) – 4% Secure/Prison

From destination interviews in year 12 and 13 (July 2022), 67% of year 12 and 65% of Year 13 are planning to progress and stay in education, employment, or training.

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In Year 14 Employment and Education figures are below

EET (33)		NEET (19)	
Apprenticeship	4	NEET	6
Army	1	NEET – Re engagement	1
FE College	9	NEET – Pregnant	2
Employed	13	NEET – Parent	1
Training	1	NEET - Illness	2
Project Choice	1	NEET – Not Ready	2
University	4	NEET - Refuser	5

University figures

Progression to University is pleasing. 23 Care Leavers currently attend University, 10 started university courses, in Year 1, in Sept/Oct 2022. Six care leavers completed their university degree in Summer 2022. Four students completed their Honours Degree. One completed a master's degree, and one completed a Foundation Degree and progressed onto an Honours Degree.

University	Number of care leavers 2021	Type of degree	Number of care leavers 2021	Type of degree
Total	26		23	
Year 1	12	1 Foundation Degree 9 Honours degree 2 Masters	10	1 x Foundation Degree 7 x Honours Degree 2 x Masters
Year 2	6		6	5 x Honours
Year 3	7		4	4 x Honours
Year 4	1		2	1 x Honours 1 x PGCE
Year 5			1	
Completed 20-21	5		Completed 2021-22	First - Masters (Medical and Molecular Virology) Graphic Art Degree – Hartlepool 2:1 (BA) Hons 2 x BA (Hons) Educational Studies BA (Hons) Criminology and Law

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The statutory guidance published in 2018, Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children emphasises the importance of PEPs as an integral part of the care plan of all children in our care (CIOC) from pre-school to age 18. Currently all children who are school age (age 5 to 16) have their PEP reviewed termly, those pre-school and Post 16 are reviewed every 6 months. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school that the child attends. The PEP is quality assured by Virtual School staff with support from other LA colleagues following a quality assurance framework devised by the Virtual School. All PEPs are quality assured, and feedback is provided to schools.

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In September 2019 the Virtual School focused on the submission of PEPs as a priority for schools and this has seen a significant improvement in the completion rates by schools. This work is being accompanied by the production and sharing of PEP completion guides and additional support and training from the Virtual School. We have also listened to Designated Teachers and implemented several changes to the PEP document to help them use their time more efficiently.

The Virtual School cannot attend all PEP meetings due to capacity, so we currently prioritise our attendance using the following criteria

- Requests to attend from Social Worker and/or Designated Teacher
- Identification of pupils though our regular data meetings where analysis of data allows us to identify students, we feel may need additional support
- A new admission to care
- CIOC who have recently moved out of the area, or it is proposed that they may move out of the area
- CIOC attending schools that are graded less than good, where we have concerns

Record of PEPs in place

Early Years

	As reported in VSHT report (19-20)	Summer Term 20-21	Summer Term 21-22
PEPs in Place	44.1%	64%	57.5%
PEPs to be closed off	45%	37% (inc. 5% below)	37.4%
PEP no date set	10.9%	5%	5.1%

School Age

	As reported in VSHT report (19-20)	Summer Term 20-21	Summer Term 21-22
PEPs in Place	84.9%	87%	87%
PEPs to be closed off	13.3%	13% (inc. 0.5% below)	11.5%
PEP no date set	1.8%	0.5%	1.5%

Post 16

	As reported in VSHT report (19-20)	Summer Term 20-21	Summer Term 21-22
PEPs in Place	85.7%	41%	62
PEPs to be closed off	13%	35% (a PEP is in place, but it is out of timescales)	31
PEP no date set	1.3%	24%	6.7

Quality Assurance of PEPs

Cohort	Number of PEPs quality assured in 2021-2022	Green	Amber	Red
Early Years	155	112 = 72.3%	40 = 25.8%	3 = 1.9%
School Age	1,040	679 = 65.2%	343 = 33%	18 = 1.7%
Post 16	144	101 = 70.1%	41 = 28.5%	2 = 1.4%
Total	1,339	892 = 66.6%	424 = 31.7%	23 = 1.7%

Where quality is judged to be Red, the quality assurance process ensures that comprehensive feedback is given, and Virtual School staff encourage the designated teacher to resubmit. If necessary, or if requested the Virtual school Staff will offer bespoke advice and/or training.
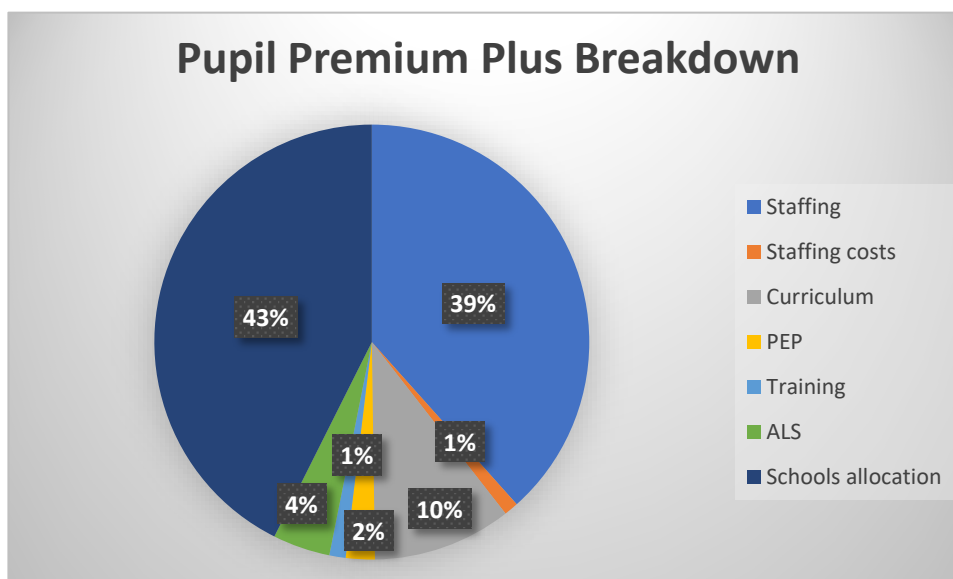
Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

Looked-after children are one of the groups of pupils that attract PP+ funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Local authorities receive a PP+ grant allocation (£2410 per child) based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 on 31 August, as recorded in the latest looked-after children data return. VSHs, working with education settings, should implement PP+ arrangements for all looked-after children. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PP+ funding to maximise its impact for individual looked-after children as well as the whole looked-after cohort. This grant cannot be carried forward into the new financial year and must be spent within the allocated financial year or returned to the Department for Education. As a result, this budget needs careful management and the Virtual School Head Teacher works closely with the Finance team to ensure this grant supports the CIOC appropriately and effectively.

The majority of pupil premium plus funding is made available to schools to meet the specific needs of individual children in line with the targets in their PEP and is paid on submission of a completed PEP document.

The remaining proportion is held by the Virtual School to support the Cohort as a whole. This part of the grant supports much of the Virtual school staffing and the associated costs. It provides:
- Employment costs
- Associated employment costs (Staff CPD, equipment, expenses)
- Curriculum interventions
    - Partnership places for children in crisis
    - Middlesbrough Football Club Mentoring
    - Letterbox
    - Nimbl (online curriculum support)
    - MSLTP (More Stuff Like This Please)
- PEP costs (Welfare Call, QA costs)
- Training for Schools and other partners
- Additional Learning Support Fund (schools can request additional pupil premium plus funding to support additional learning interventions)

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Pupil Premium Plus Breakdown

Legend:
- Staffing
- Staffing costs
- Curriculum
- PEP
- Training
- ALS
- Schools allocation

Values shown: 43%, 39%, 1%, 1%, 10%, 2%, 4%

Previously Looked After Children

The role of the VSH for previously looked-after children is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators, and others who the VSH considers necessary.

The Virtual School work very closely with Adoption Tees Valley and with the other Tees Valley Virtual School Head Teachers. To support us in discharging this duty the Tees Valley VSHTs have appointed an Education Support Worker to sit within Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) to promote education and support this service with education advice, guidance, and support. The Education Support worker has been employed since July 2019 and has made a significant impact within the ATV service. The worker has worked intensively with over 40 Stockton families, contributes to Designated Teacher meetings, liaises regularly with the Virtual School, and has accessed Thrive training along with Stockton Virtual School colleagues ensuring that a consistent message is given to schools about meeting the needs of this group of children. As well as working closely with the education support worker the five Tees Valley Virtual School Head Teachers meet regularly with the Service Lead and key staff within ATV to coordinate and support the Education Support Worker in their role. A comprehensive education development plan has been produced by this group to support and enable previously looked after children to thrive in school and be supported to reach their potential in a nurturing and highly supportive school environment

ATV Education Support – Stockton (report from Leanne Longstaff, Education worker ATV)

During the school year 2021 to 2022 I have provided support for a total of 94 families in the Tees Valley area, 40 of the families were from the Stockton area.

The recurring themes for support have been.
- Helping schools to understand developmental trauma and the impact of the child's early life experiences on the behaviour and at times their ability to manage the school environment.
- Understanding adoption and the impact of the early life experiences.
- Instances where more support is required in school from Individual education plans to the school being encouraged to apply for extra funding to meet the child's needs.
- A lack of understanding and awareness of Foetal alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the impact of the child's daily life has been evident.

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- Behaviour systems and policies that have a detrimental effect on the young person and the need to make reasonable adjustments at times.
- Managing transitions to secondary schools.
- This year as part of my support, I have also observed some of the children within the classroom setting. This has been extremely helpful and well received so I can help teachers identify strategies for support or suggest when the child requires periods of self-regulation.

Training
- Delivered Adoption and developmental trauma training at Christ the King Primary School in Thornaby
- School Readiness training for adopters – 5 families attended the training, and this will be offered on an annual basis as part of ATV's training offer.
- Worked with Digital Voice and the ATV's children group to produce a film to raise awareness of adopted children's experiences of schools. This has been well received and is now used in the training sessions within schools.
- Attended the Stockton Leaders in Education meeting
- When reflecting on my cases I identified that there was a training need within schools for understanding Foetal Alcohol spectrum disorder. Therefore, I arranged for Maria Catterick from FASD UK to deliver training. This was offered to all the schools in the Tees Valley. 46 people attended the training sessions at ATV and 47 people attended the online training session. The feedback from the sessions was extremely positive and those that attended were going to feedback the main messages to their schools.

Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed (AATI) Journey

In May 2022, The Rees Centre at Oxford University published a piece of research on Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed schools' programmes which emphasised that schools tend to conceptualise the embedding of AATI practice as a lengthy journey.
This journey towards understanding how best to support children who have experienced trauma, ACES or disrupted attachments is recognised by schools and Virtual Schools nationally and locally.

The research has prompted the Stockton Virtual School team to reflect on our journey both in terms of our own learning and with colleagues in Stockton Schools and in many cases out of area schools. The Virtual School believe that our role in this work is to support schools and encourage them to consider their AATI offer to support children in care primarily but also to embed AATI practice for the benefit of all vulnerable learners.

It is pleasing to reflect on the progress that has been made since starting this work in 2017-18 despite the COVID pandemic.

A brief history of the journey so far comprises of:

2017-2018
- Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (22 participants, 7 LA Officers, 8 schools represented)
- 2-day Group Theraplay – 8 schools represented
- Emotion Coaching 2-day course organised by Stockton EP service

2018-19
- KCA Whole School AATI Practice with focus on Emotion Coaching project with 5 schools, evaluated by the Rees Centre
- 2 Cohorts of 2-day Group Theraplay – 25 schools and 2 Early Years settings represented
- Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (24 participants, 1 LA Officer, 15 schools)
- PAC UK Whole School Attachment Awareness training delivered to 24 schools and 2 Early Years settings, 1 session also provided to Stockton DTs and Residential Care Home Staff

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2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were disrupted significantly by COVID, however some work did continue
- AATI Awareness training delivered by the Virtual School to 22 schools
- Jan 20 KCA Emotion Coaching 1-day CPD – 36 delegates, 2 Virtual School colleagues and 20 schools represented
- 5 Virtual School Staff and 2 SEND colleagues participated in Thrive Licensed Practitioner CPD
- Spring 21 and Summer 21 - Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (16 participants, 5 LA Officer, 5 schools and 4 representatives from other regional VS)
- KCA Training 2 half day sessions related to relevant issues (Sexualised Behaviour and Self Harming Behaviour) were delivered virtually
- The Lisa Cherry Conference arranged for April 2020 was disrupted due to COVID, it did run virtually over two half days. However, it is felt that the aim of bringing colleagues across the borough together to explore how relevant teams could contribute to a single borough vision around Trauma Informed practice was not achievable at that point in time.

2021 – 2022
- **Autumn 2021 2-day Group Theraplay 2 cohorts 16 schools represented**
- **A series of 6 stand-alone training sessions delivered by the Virtual school EP, one every half term**
- **Thrive Licensed Practitioner CPD attended by 2 new Virtual School case workers**
- **Two Family Thrive Programmes delivered to two groups of Foster Carers**
- **Compassionate Stockton: Trauma Informed Practice in Schools Network launched and working party established**
- **Good practice hubs established, working with the Virtual School EP to develop practice**

54 schools (68%) have engaged with one or more training sessions this academic year
49 schools (63%) have attended Designated Teacher Meetings where training on Transitions and Executive Functioning was delivered
17 schools were represented at the Compassionate Stockton TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Schools) Network launch

The Rees Centre research highlights other research (Tah et al., 2021) to reflect that there is no one definitive list of the elements needed to configure a school's AATI offer but that there are common elements that tend to include
- A focused training programme, often provided by educational psychologists and covering all staff (including non-teaching staff).
- A commitment to building trusted and respectful relationships between children and staff, including staff 'open door' policies.
- The adoption of 'emotion coaching' techniques for staff based on validating children's emotions, whilst supporting them to self-regulate their responses to events.
- The use of 'calm down' spaces and/or 'time out' cards to enable children to voluntarily and discreetly remove themselves from stressful situations.
- Changes to behaviour policies to remove externalised sanctions and/or introduce restorative justice approaches, or their wholesale replacement with relationship policies.
- The use of nurture groups, 'theraplay' and access to talking therapies.

This has reinforced that our work does contain most of the key ingredients needed to support schools on their journey. This includes:
- Organised and subsidised external training (Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course, Theraplay, The Thrive Approach, and Emotion Coaching)
- Half termly, stand alone, training sessions
- Bespoke training packages for school staff
- Bespoke consultations and packages for individual CIOC
- Compassionate Stockton: TIPS Network and working party, coproducing our offer and support across Stockton Schools

However, the team also recognises there is still further work to be done and through the AATI Action Plan 2022-23 have identified next steps on our journey including

- The need to secure Headteacher and SLT commitment to this work
- Work with schools to develop their AATI Offer and support with evaluation and development of this
- Work with schools to develop their AATI toolkits which in turn will impact on Behaviour Policies and hopefully support the development of Relational Policies
- Revisit Emotion Coaching CPD and engaged with National and Regional communities
- Work with Virtual Reality Head Sets to change hearts and minds in schools
- Work with CAMHS to investigate how we can get access to talking therapies to support CIOC further
- Work collaboratively across Children's Services to ensure our work is coordinated, aligned and complimentary of work on-going in other service areas to encourage a broad common ethos across the Local Authority

Challenge and Support

Partnership Working

Partnership working is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the Virtual School and our support of CIOC. As one part of the Corporate Parenting Body we strive to support all partners to ensure that the educational provision and opportunities that our children receive are of the highest quality and that children are supported to make at least expected progress and achieve their potential.

Examples of how we work in partnership are detailed below.
- As a Service Lead the VSHT attends Children's Services Management Group (CSMG)
- Attendance at Joint Area Managers Meeting (JAMM)
- VSHT sits on Resource Panel held fortnightly
- Attendance at the Children in our Care Core Group (CIOC group)
- Attendance at the Children in our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG)
- Provide training sessions as part of the Foster Carer Preparation Training
- Attendance at Social Care Team Meeting to update staff on local and national developments
- Virtual School Youth Direction Participation Adviser attends Accommodation Panel
- Virtual School Caseworker attends and is part of the Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) strategy group (previously VEMT)
- IRO information and briefing sessions, with any necessary identified training or bespoke support
- As a Service Lead in the SEND and Inclusion Service, the VSHT attends senior leadership meetings
- VS Education Development Adviser (EDA) attends SEN EHCP Panel
- VS contribute to SENDCo briefings, Safeguarding Forum, Education Matters, Closing the Gap, Schools Causing Concern, Secondary Heads and Principals Group (SHPG)
- Half termly meetings are held with the Looked After CAMHS team
- VS Educational Psychologist attended the Early Years Strategy meetings
- VSHT is a member of the Healthy Schools Steering group, and the VS is represented on the development groups of the four strands and contributes to the accreditation process

Meetings organised by the Virtual School to aid partnership working include:
- Virtual School Monitoring Meeting (chaired by VSHT), these meeting look at students who may be struggling and who may need additional support. Held at the beginning of every half term
- Post 16 Meeting (chaired by EDA) held termly
- Early Years (0-5) (chaired by EDA) held termly
- SEN placement meetings held weekly
- LAC CAHMS joint working meetings held every term

Within the wider partnership working the VSHT attends The Tees Valley Adoption Education Group, the North East Virtual School Head Teachers regional meetings and the National Association of Virtual School Heads webinars and Annual Conference

Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

As well as attendance at meetings the Virtual School (VS) supports a comprehensive training package for school and partners.

The following training events were delivered by the Virtual School in 2021-22

- Termly DT meetings/briefings
- Half termly DT Newsletters
- Bespoke training for Designated Teacher new to post
- Ongoing Bespoke Training for individual teachers, Teaching Assistants, and whole school training on Attachment Difficulties/Developmental Trauma/ Emotion Coaching and Theraplay.
- Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed whole school training sessions (3 different sessions).
- December 2020 - Core responsibilities for LAC, Making Sense of Education - provided for Social Care colleagues and Residential Care staff
- Newly Qualified Teacher training on Attachment Aware and Trauma informed classroom approaches
- Stockton Campus Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) – Training delivered on Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Approaches
- VS is currently producing a whole school training offer to support schools in enhancing their provision for CIOC
- Education Psychologist half termly training sessions (session 1 – ATTEND Framework (supporting emotionally based school avoidance), session 2 – CIOC and Stress, session 3- reframing behaviour, session 4 – executive functioning skills, session 5 – Power of Relationships, session 6 – using creative approaches therapeutically in school)
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training – to be completed in the Autumn Term 2022
- Family Thrive for Foster Carers, delivered to two groups of Foster Carers with very positive feedback

External training organised by VS

- Theraplay (two-day face to face training postponed to Autumn 2021, this has now taken place and involved 36 staff from Stockton schools)
- Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Conference led by Margot Sunderland in partnership with Horizons Trust
- Emotion coaching is arranged for January 2023

Challenge

The VS will challenge decisions and interventions that we feel are not in the best interests of our children. We will challenge decisions that are not in accordance with statutory guidance or the law or are causing drift and/or delay to our children accessing appropriate provision in a timely manner. This is done through professional dialogue with colleagues and partners and by using the processes within the Virtual School and Children's Services to document, escalate and inform.

Currently the Virtual School accesses outcomes data via our own monitoring systems and reports provided from the web-based PEP system, Welfare Call. We meet half termly to identify areas of concern and actions to be taken. A Virtual School monitoring report has been devised to support schools with their readiness and ability to support CIOC and this is used to support schools in the development of their work with CIOC. It also allows us to identify and celebrate the good work of many of our schools who provide outstanding provision for the CIOC.

School monitoring visits have continued to take place for the CIOC in key year groups to work with schools to support children in making expected progress and making up for lost learning. This is particularly important following the interrupted and often variable provision that children have received over the previous two years, including national lockdowns, teaching bubbles and individuals needing to self-isolate.

Virtual School Accountability

The Virtual School are held to account through key performance meetings within Children's Service.
The VSHT attends the SEND and Inclusion Service Performance Clinic and presents to that group every half term on progress and outcomes for the Virtual School and for CIOC. The Virtual School Head also presents key performance indicators at the Social Care, Team Operational Performance (TOP) meeting at the beginning of each term.

The Virtual School have a school improvement plan that is shared with the SEND and Inclusion Service manager. This plan is available on request. The Virtual School Head Teacher and the Education Development Advisors lead on the Education section of the CIOC Strategic Group CIOC and Care Leavers Action Plan 21-23.

The VSHT presents biannually to the Corporate Parenting Board

Child Engagement/Celebration

- The VS continues to work in partnership with Social Care Service Leads to organize and support the Annual Celebration of Achievement events
- The Virtual School supported with the organisation and delivery of the CIOC celebration event held in October 2022
- VS have supported the More Stuff Like This Please (MSLTP) initiative, and the Care 2 Dance Project
- Implementation of Primary and Secondary hubs have continued. COVID restrictions meant that only two hub events took place in the summer term, but both were very successful. (28 Primary School Pupils /14 Secondary School Pupils attended)
- Following the Children's Service Review the Youth Direction Senior Participation Advisors have supported the Let's Take Action/ Positive activities Group
- The VS continues to encourage schools to celebrate pupil achievement in its widest sense on the child/young person's PEP. Schools are encouraged to use the VS Ten Challenges, which links into the Preparation for Adulthood Framework, and supports schools in engaging pupils in a variety of activities that evidence social skills and personal development. The challenges are bespoke to the different educational Key Stages.

We are particularly proud this year of:

- Outcomes for GCSE's have been very positive, there was some excellent individual results and numbers gaining level 5 or above in English and Maths have significantly improved.
- Following restrictions because of the COVID 19 pandemic our Training offer and AATI offer has developed substantially and our CPD Offer booklet for 2022-23 offers more than ever before.
- Again, following the COVID 19 pandemic and the need to challenge provision for gaps in learning our data monitoring has become more comprehensive and follow up activities such as monitoring meetings with schools are proving very successful.
- Numbers of Care Leavers starting University have remained high and our data capture of retention and progression rates has improved our knowledge of this group of students
- 58 CIOC have recorded 100% attendance with an additional 53 CIOC with attendance over 99%