

**Date:** Friday 9 August 2024 at 10.00 am

**Venue:** Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Stockton on Tees,  
TS18 1TU

**Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair)**  
**Cllr Carol Clark (Vice-Chair)**

Cllr Pauline Beall  
Cllr Mick Moore  
Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Cllr Alex Griffiths  
Cllr Hilary Vickers

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Minutes**  
  
To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 16 April 2024 and 14 May 2024 (Pages 7 - 12)
- 4 Corporate Parenting Commitments** (Pages 13 - 14)
- 5 Adoption Tees Valley - Annual Report 2023/2024** (Pages 15 - 50)
- 6 Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2022/2023** (Pages 51 - 72)
- 7 Development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy**
- 8 Forward Plan** (Pages 73 - 74)

**Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting**

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email [rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk)

**KEY - Declarable interests are:-**

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

**Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance**



**Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licences</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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## Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Tuesday, 16th April 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Susan Scott (sub for Cllr Alex Griffiths, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Cllr Hilary Vickers), Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**Officers:** Elaine Redding, Ruth Lacey, Jane Smith, Janet Wilson, Helen Cooke, Alison Cameron, Kelly Wigley

**Also in attendance:** Ryan Davies

**Apologies:** Alex Griffiths, Cllr Hilary Vickers,

### **CPB      Declarations of Interest**

**/24**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **CPB      Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2024**

**/24**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **CPB      Welcome and Introductions: Purpose of the Board**

**/24**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was being held at the recently opened No Limits Hub for children in our care and care leavers. Members, officers and other attendees introduced themselves and the Chair provided a brief overview of the purpose of the Board.

Members noted that work was ongoing to identify suitable representatives to serve on the Board, from partner organisations. It was suggested that a representative be sought from the DWP.

### **CPB      Presentation on Lifelong Links**

**/24**

The Board considered a presentation relating to the Lifelong links programme.

Members noted that the aim of the programme was to ensure that a child in care had a positive support network around them to help them during their time in care and into adulthood.

Members noted the key principles, benefits of the plan, what had been achieved and what the ambition was.

The Board was asked to contribute, as follows:-

- 'Relationships' to be a key theme within CPB
- Support the inclusion of Care Experienced Children and Young People in the programme
- Enable and support the workforce to be able to implement the programme to achieve best outcomes.
- Reinforce communication of the benefits and outcomes of the programme
- Lifelong links to be reviewed within the CPB agenda on a quarterly basis.

Discussion and key issues, included:-

- A link to a video 'Sandy's Story' would be forwarded to members.
- Once established the programme would look at areas such as unaccompanied asylum seekers, young people leaving prison.
- The programme would include Stockton children living out of area.
- It was planned to include 26 young people in the next 12 months but this would be expanded
- It was envisaged that the programme would be embedded in social care.
- A performance framework had been created and there would be an independent evaluation of the programme. It was hoped that officers would be able to clearly show the success and sustainability of the programme.
- The principles of the programme, and a great deal of the work was already embedded in Stockton. A key part of success was having strong relationships with carers e.g. Homes, Foster carers etc

RESOLVED that

1. the Board agree its support and contribution to the programme, as described above, however, given the frequency of the Board's meeting it was agreed that updates would be provided every 4 months.
2. The discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

**CPB**      **Update on No Limits Hub**  
**/24**

Members received an update on the No Limits Hub.

- The building had not been used for a short period, in order to address one or two safety issues.
- There were plans to decorate and furnish the hub.
- Young people would be encouraged and supported to apply for grants to bring items and activities to the Hub. There would need to be balance between activities that would raise aspirations and improve young people's outcomes, in life, and more recreational activities.

The Council had a commitment to maintain the Hub at its current building. PAs would be flexible and would work between their teams and the Hub.

There were plans to create a study group to assist young people who had missed out on some critical parts of learning, such as Maths and English.

The success of the Hub would be measured by metrics like Education, Employment and Training data, reductions in low mood, surveys of young people, Hub usage, young people's feedback to the Board.

It was suggested that a 6 monthly newsletter could be produced.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.



**CPB**      **Update on Let's Take Action and Participation Offer**

**/24**

The Board noted that a Children's Participation Manager had taken up their post on 11 March 2024 and had had an immediate positive impact.

Work had been undertaken relating to a large scale survey called Bright Spots, by Coram. The survey was important in getting the views of young people, including very young children. The results would be reported to the Board, at a future meeting.

The report included details of work undertaken and planned next steps.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CPB**      **Corporate Parenting Promise draft**

**/24**

The Board considered a presentation providing a draft Corporate Parenting Promise. The presentation would be circulated to members.

It was agreed that members and other attendees feedback any comments to Children's Services and a meeting be arranged to consider this matter further

RESOLVED that the report be noted

**CPB**      **Feedback on Care Experienced Mock Inspection**

**/24**

Members considered an overview of the feedback and identified learning from the Mock Inspection of the Service for Care Experienced Young People.

There was a request that the care leavers and practice guidance be circulated.

Young People, who indicated that they didn't want a access services, was recognised, but they were informed that the Council was still here for them and 'the door was always open'. Keeping In Touch guidance had been developed to reflect this.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

**CPB**      **Structure of the Board and Next Meeting**

**/24**

Consideration would be given to issues that members had raised around their availability for board meetings and joint informal meetings, with children and young people. It was suggested that meetings of the board continue in line with what had previously been scheduled. However, the meeting held with children and young people would be held at 6pm on flexible days that would attempt to maximise the availability of all members.

**CPB**      **Forward Plan**

**/24**

No Limits Hub Update to come to the Board every 4 months.

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## Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Tuesday, 14th May 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Alex Griffiths) Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**Officers:** Jane Smith, Majella McCarthy, Michael Henderson

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Norma Stephenson, Ryan Davies

**Apologies:** Cllr Alex Griffiths,

### **CPB /23**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **CPB /24**      **Our Promise to You – Corporate Parenting Pledge/Promise**

Members were provided with a presentation providing a draft of the Council's Corporate Parenting Board.

Discussion and points raised:-

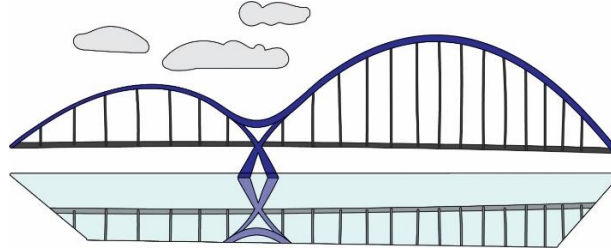
- Young People had indicated that they were unhappy with the word pledge. Members felt the word promise may also be problematic.
- Corporate Parenting was the responsibility of all members, all Cabinet portfolios, all services and partners. Each Cabinet portfolio had been challenged to identify what they would do for Children in Our Care and Care Leavers.
- Should include a promise to work with the family and aim for the child to go back to their family, safely.
- The document should be a single sheet.
- It was suggested that the document presented was closely linked to the local offer and children's services responsibilities and should be more aspirational.
- It was important to be ambitious but any promise had to be deliverable.
- The promises of other Local Authorities, like Bristol, Cambden and Luton, were highlighted as exemplars .

Members agreed that some of the principles of the draft were useful but wording

and format needed to be changed. It was suggested that the draft be reworded, based on discussion, and it be mocked-up using the Bristol example, as a guide.

RESOLVED that a further draft document be produced, based on discussion at this meeting and having regard to the Bristol exemplar. The draft to be further considered at a development session, involving Board members, officers and other relevant people.

## Stockton-on-Tees Commitments



### To all Children in Our Care and Care Leavers

**These commitments set out how we support you as children in our care and care leavers in the borough of Stockton-on-Tees. We are committed to listening to you, championing you and keeping you safer in everything we do.**

This means we will:

- Ask you for your views and let you know what we have done as a result of them
- Involve you in decisions that are made about you and your life so we better understand your needs and what makes you happy
- Make sure you know your rights and entitlements and what support you can expect
- Support you to feel safer and be able to live your life free from harm and abuse.

These are our commitments to you. We will work with people from other organisations in Stockton-on-Tees to help us do this:

#### A safe and stable home

- Make sure you live in a safe place where you are well cared for
- Check that you are happy and settled and getting good care
- When you are an adult and ready to live independently, we will help find you the right home

#### Opportunities to achieve and progress

- Help you to learn in the right school for you
- Support you to feel happy and settled at school so you can do your best
- Help you access work and learning opportunities that are right for you
- Celebrate your achievements and successes with you. We are proud of you.

#### Positive Relationships and Belonging

- Support you to be in contact with the people who matter to you the most, especially family and friends
- Help you understand your life story
- Support you with your identity including culture, faith, sexuality, disability and gender identity
- Help you build positive relationships which will support you when you are an adult

#### Good Health and Wellbeing

- Help you to have good mental and physical health by supporting you to access health care services
- Support you to be fit and active by promoting opportunities for you to play, have a hobby and play a sport
- Help you have someone to talk to who you trust and who can help with managing feelings and emotions.

#### Listening

- Ask you for your views and make sure there are lots of ways for you to give them – speaking, writing, drawing – however you choose to.
- Always take your views into consideration when decisions are being made about you and if we can't do what you have asked, explain why.
- Listen to your suggestions about how to improve the services that children and young people receive.

#### Ready for Independence

- Help you to apply for college, apprenticeships, university or jobs – and help you to decide what is the right path for you
- Support you to develop living skills like cooking, washing, ironing and managing your money
- Be there for you if you make a mistake and help you get back on track
- Be ambitious for you and support you

#### Good Corporate Parents

We want to be good corporate parents and make sure that we are keeping our promises to you. We would like to meet with you regularly so that you can share your ideas, views and experiences so that we are always improving. If you would like to get involved in our Let's Take Action group, please ask your social worker or PA or follow us on Instagram

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# Adoption Tees Valley

## Annual Report 2023-2024



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## **1. Executive Summary**

Adoption Tees Valley has continued to thrive and develop as a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), with this year seeing a greater degree of pan regional partnership working with our neighbouring North East RAA's- Adopt Coast to Coast and Adopt North East. We have also progressed the partnership with the North East Integrated Care Board (ICB) through our innovative work together in developing the Multi Disciplinary Adoption Support Service- MDASS. Regional partnership working has enabled the RAA to draw funding from Adoption England for development and positive impact, aligned to the objectives in the National Adoption Strategy. Adoption England has recently published its own strategic plan for the forthcoming 3 years, and ATV, overseen by the Board, has continued to develop in line with national strategic priorities.

### 1.1 Adoption Nationally

Nationally, the numbers of children being placed for adoption and numbers adopted has been falling, although for the year of 2023-24 there has been a small upturn. The numbers of adopters recruited has reduced, and there is some concerns around the gap growing between the numbers of children requiring adoption, and numbers of available families to adopt. We know nationally that adoption provides a stable and secure childhood for many children, however, there is an increasing awareness that adopted children have many complex long-term emotional, social, learning and health needs arising from early trauma, neglect, and harm. Their needs must be understood in the context of early care experience, and their adoptive parents need support to meet these needs and provide nurturing family life. Adoptive parents, and young people themselves, tell us they need services provide continuing support, available as and when needed throughout childhood and into adulthood.

### 1.2 Culture Change in Adoption

So, what is the future of adoption, and what will adoption look like for children and their families in years to come? Adoption England (AE) – the national collaboration of Regional Adoption Agencies, has implemented a programme of culture change in adoption- a long-term objective to change thinking and practice, underpinned by social and adoptee drivers for change. Key to the culture change agenda is to increase the understanding of the importance of maintaining significant relationships in adoption, for adopted people and their birth families.

The President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, made a significant speech on this matter at the POTATO (Parents of Traumatized Adolescents and Teenagers Organisation) conference in May 2024 referencing the research work of the University of East Anglia (UEA), around the importance of maintaining lifelong links for adopted children. We recognise the continued importance of the need to remain open to birth family contact, and investing our professional care, effort and resource into maintaining those relationships, whether directly, or indirectly. Through the research undertaken by UEA, and the Adoption Barometer (Adoption UK) we know that for adopted adults and young people there is a huge importance in understanding their families of origin, reasons for being adopted, and maintaining those lifelong links. ATV has engaged with the national programme and through discussion with the Board and partners, will be developing ethos and culture which promotes a greater understanding and opportunity for maintaining significant relationships.

### 1.3 Early Permanence

Early permanence in adoption continues to be a key priority nationally, and for the region and ATV has continued to focus on early work with the 5 partner Local Authorities, to consider early permanence planning, pre-birth and pre-care in some instances. There remain challenges to creating the opportunity for more children to access an early permanence placement, however, there is good evidence over this year of significant strengthening of practice and understanding. ATV believes that early permanence is aligned to culture change in adoption, whereby early contact between carers who may go on to adopt, and the child's birth family takes place during the fostering period. We know this builds relationships between adoptive parents, and birth relatives, which has importance for potential future contact, and identity needs. Unfortunately, ATV has continued to have lower numbers than hoped for of carers who will undertake EP, however, we know that where EP is planned, there is a significant strength of practice, with a stronger preparation course, more information and high-quality support for carers undertaking this route. ATV is offering a dedicated Early Permanence Support Group, and it is well received and well attended by all EP carers. Through the pan regional funded Concurrency Project, now in its second year, we have worked more closely with the regional fostering services, to embed a shared understanding of the role of EP, and the roles of professionals supporting these placements.

#### 1.4 Voice and Influence

During this period, we are proud to have strengthened the mechanisms by which young people and adopters can influence the direction of the RAA, and have their voice heard. Young, adopted people have a strengthened opportunity to meet with other adopted children, through the monthly “Youthy” group, which is now held in a local youth club. There is also a dedicated Voice and Influence group, Adoptbats, which is focused on young people having a say about what its like to be adopted, and how they think the system should change to improve the lives and experience of adopted young people.

Adoptbats are currently making a film about what its like to be adopted, supported by Blue Cabin, a local creative therapy charity.

#### 1.5 Multi-Disciplinary Support to adopted children and families- MDASS

During this period Adoption Tees Valley has worked closely with Adopt North East, Adopt Coast to Coast and the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) to develop a multi-disciplinary adoption support service, across the NE region. This is a funded project and is 1 year into the funding period of 2 years. This project sits under the national strategy to strengthen support to adopted children and their families. The new MDASS project is now staffed with a Service Manager, Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and 3 social work consultants. The Service Manager has begun to work with the team to develop the service specification, which will be offering a consultancy and therapeutic service to adopted families, and professionals across the region working with them. The model of support is Dyadic Developmental Psychology (DDP) which focusses on attachment, for children who have had early experience of trauma, neglect and harm. It is planned that service delivery will start from the summer of 2024, and the longer-term plan for sustainability is to draw funding from the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

The aim of MDASS will be to significantly strengthen the support to families, from a multi-disciplinary therapeutic perspective, providing access to psychological consultation, assessment and intervention, for children with multiple and complex needs. This service will be aimed at getting more quickly to delivery of a therapeutic plan which will help children. It will aim to reduce the pressures of children's needs, improve quality of family life and outcomes, and prevent family breakdown.

## 1.6 The work of ATV

Recruitment of prospective adopters has been a challenge for the agency over this year, a challenge also for many other regional and national RAA's. It is thought that the cost-of-living crisis, alongside the effects of the pandemic seeing a rise in adult mental ill health and increasing awareness of the complex needs of adopted children has impacted on the numbers of people wanting to consider adoption. We want to continue to show the public that ATV, and partners are there to support children and families in the short and longer term.

The numbers of children placed has been largely stable over this past year and is comparable with the previous year. However, we have seen a significant rise in the number of children who have had disruptions and have left placement, most of whom have had a change in plan for permanency. These disruptions are uncharacteristic of the pattern for children placed through ATV and have been considered at every level, including during a Board development session, to learn from the disruption meetings and reports. This matter will be considered in the chapter relating to children's placements, needs and outcomes.

During this year, ATV has restructured to strengthen management of the core areas of the adoption service, and to strengthen leadership for the future of ATV. This means that each of the areas of recruitment, matching and placements, and adoption support are led by a team manager, and the operational activity is overseen by a Deputy Service Manager.

## **2. Governance**

Adoption Tees Valley is overseen by the Board of Directors, which is comprised of Directors, or Assistant Directors of the 5 Local Authorities; an adoptive parent; a Virtual School Head. The ATV Service Manager attends all Board meetings. The ATV Board provide strategic direction, oversee finance and overall governance of the RAA.

Each LA Council oversees the work of the RAA through presentation of the Annual and Bi Annual reports at Scrutiny, and/or Corporate Parenting Boards, and in some cases, representation of elected members on the ATV Panel.

### 3. Key Performance Indicators for the period 1.4.23-31.3.24

Key Indicator	ATV 2022-23	ATV 2023-24	Current c/w previous	National Govt Target where applicable
Adopter Approvals	55	38	Dec 31%	N/A
Children referred to ATV	223	138	Dec 38%	N/A
Children with ADM -BID (Best interests' decision)	100	87	Dec 13%	N/A
PO	87	79	Dec 9%	N/A
Matches	81	75	Dec 7%	
Placed	76	78	Inc 2 %	N/A
Early Permanence	11	8	Dec 27%	
Adoption Orders	84	76	Dec 10%	N/A
Disruptions – pre order	1	12		N/A
Timescale – A2 (PO to match)	146 days	130 days	Improved	121 days
Timescale A10 – BLA-Moved in with Adopters	411	392 days	Improved	421 days

The above data will be referred to in each section, to provide a base line for discussion and review of the year's performance.

Where applicable, data for each Local Authority will be detailed within the report.

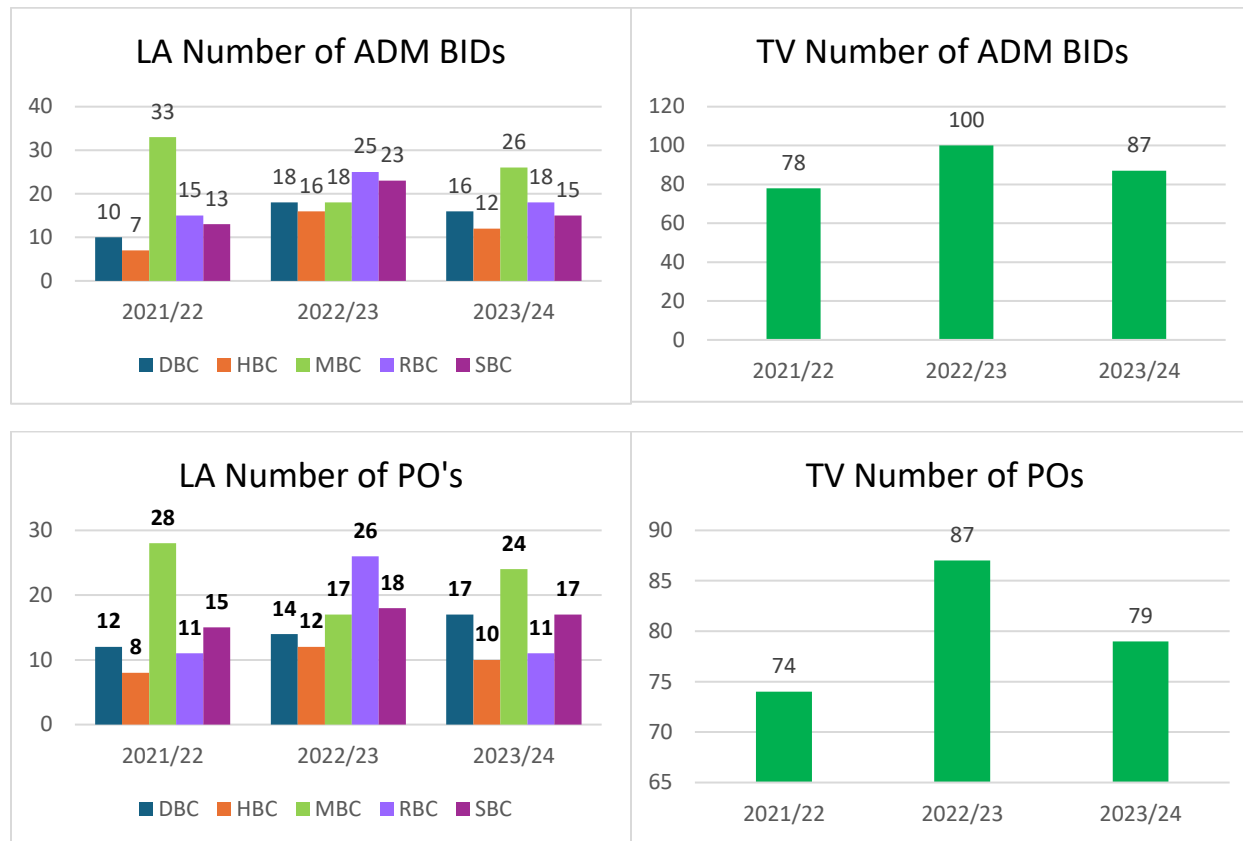
### 4. Children Referred, Permanence Planning, Matching and Placements

#### 4.1 ATV and Local Authority Data

The numbers of children referred to ATV has significantly decreased within this period, compared with previous years. We don't know why this is, as numbers of children with a LA decision on a plan for adoption and Placement Orders granted has reduced, but not by the same level as referrals. The LA's may be improving the earlier planning, and referring children who are more likely to go on to an adoption plan.

In the previous year the conversion from referral to ADM was 45%, while in this year the conversion rate was 63%. This means the children referred are more likely to go on to have an adoption plan.

The numbers of children where the Local Authority has made a Best Interests plan of adoption (ADM BID) has decreased by 13% to 87, and the numbers of children who have gone on to Placement Order (PO) is 79, a decrease of 9% on the previous year.

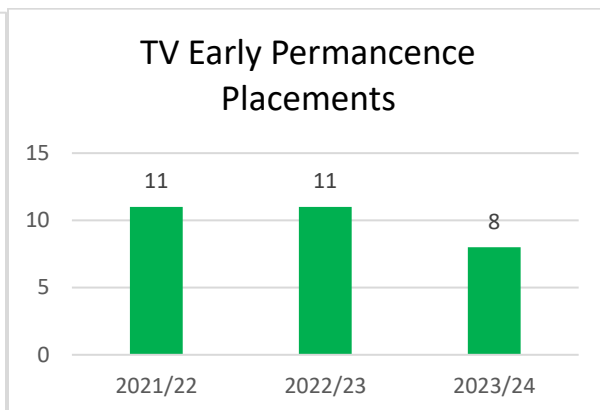
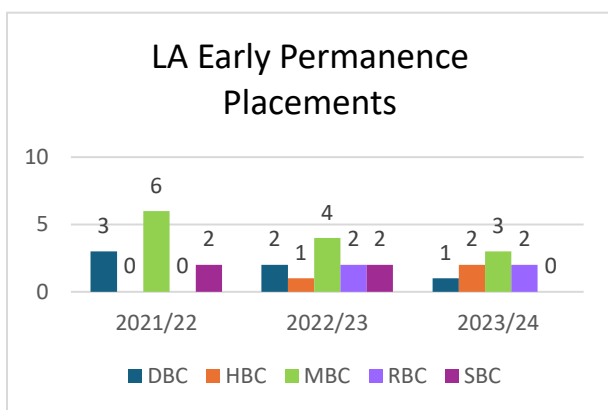
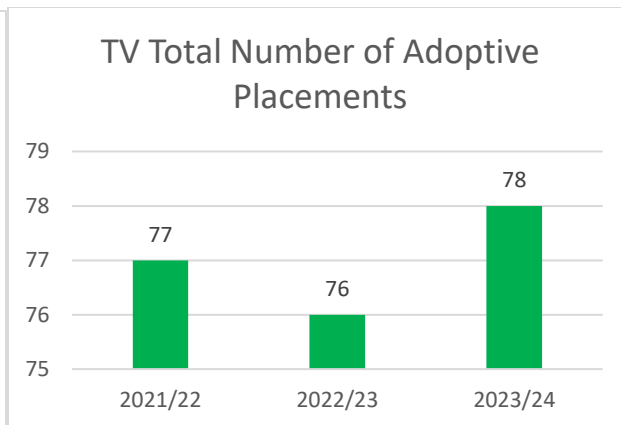
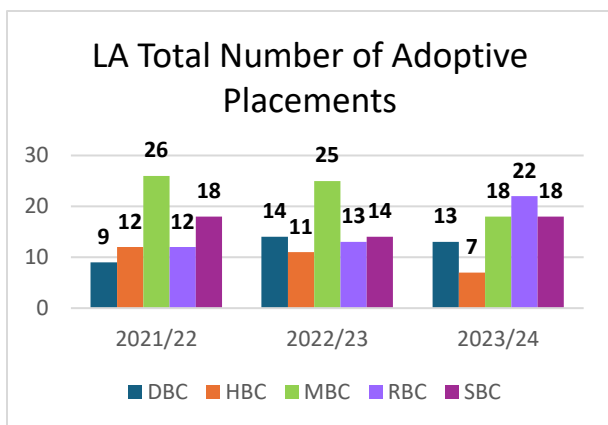


For individual Local Authorities, Middlesbrough has returned to the numbers of ADM's and PO's that is more consistent with previous years after a dip in adoption plans last year.

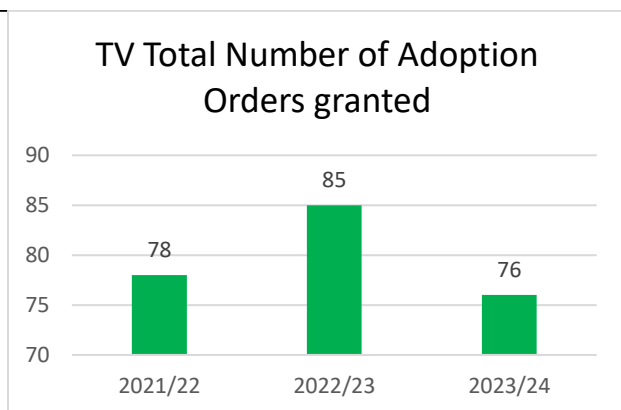
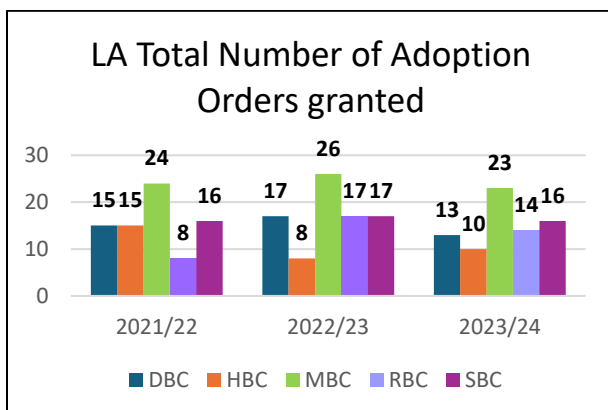
Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton have reduced the numbers of ADM's compared with the previous year, and Redcar and Cleveland had a significant drop in Placement Orders, from 26, to 11.

Hartlepool is seeing a year on year rise in the numbers of children with PO.

The number of children placed for adoption has remained consistent, while placements through early permanence have dropped by 27% (3) since last year.



The numbers of adoption orders have decreased by 10% compared with the previous year.



#### 4.2 Disrupted Placements prior to the Adoption Order

The biggest area of concern over this period has been the numbers of disruptions with 12 children having had a disruption compared with just 1 in the previous year.

In all cases an independently chaired disruption meeting has been convened to understand the reasons why a placement didn't continue as was planned.

Some notable factors have emerged during this analysis, case by case, enabling themes to be considered and analysed.

- All but one child were in a sibling group.
- All the sibling groups included a child over age 7 at the time of placement.
- All but 1 of the children were placed with external adopters, from VAA's or another RAA/LA.
- All but one of the children were placed some distance from the home area.

Other factors associated with assessment of children's needs, care planning, transitions, adopter assessment and contingency planning have emerged. There has been significant reflection on learning from the disruption meetings including with partner LA's at Board, and within ATV. New measures have been put in place to address factors identified from learning and review. However, it is recognised that for older children, there are some inherent risks that moving to a new family, especially at some distance may not work out as planned.

The ATV Board has agreed that increased access to assessment of children's therapeutic needs is required when planning for adoption, and it is agreed that such specialist assessments will be resourced in more cases, and especially for older children and sibling placements.

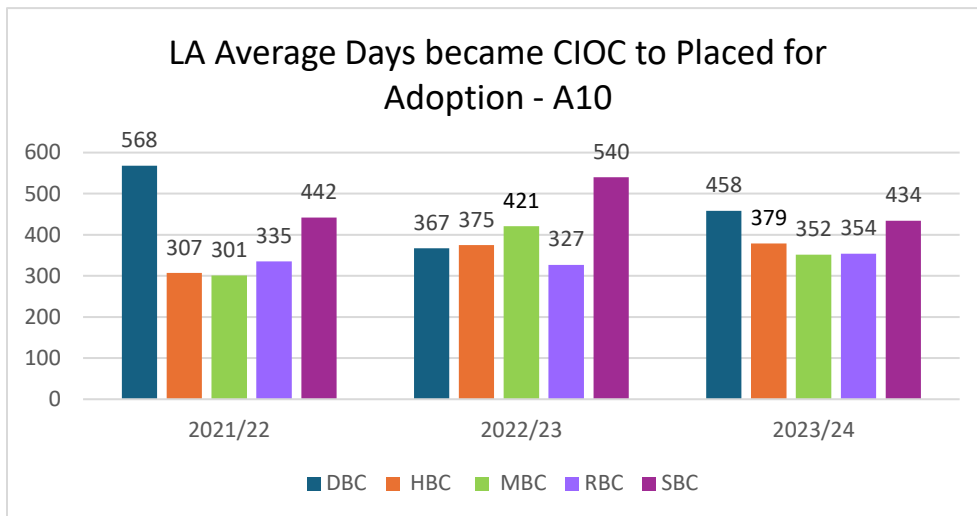
#### 4.3 Timescales for children for matching and moving in with their adoptive family

Timeliness of adoption for children has improved compared with the previous year, and ATV continues to find families and progress them to match and placement in good time, on average.

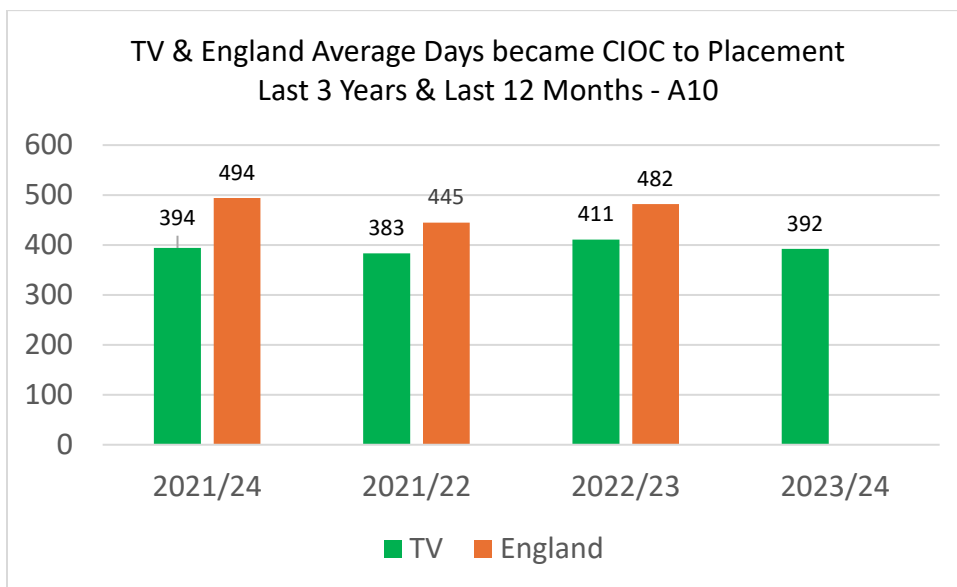


### A10- became Child in Our care, to Moving in with Adopter

In adoption we focus most significantly on the time between the child becoming a child in our care and moving in with adoptive parents. This is the A10 timescale, and the government sets 421 days as its target.



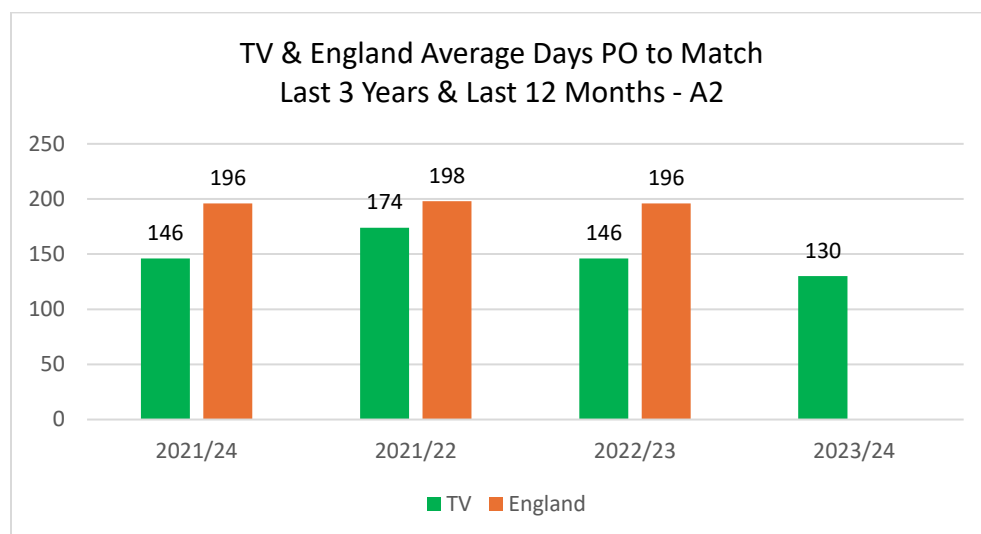
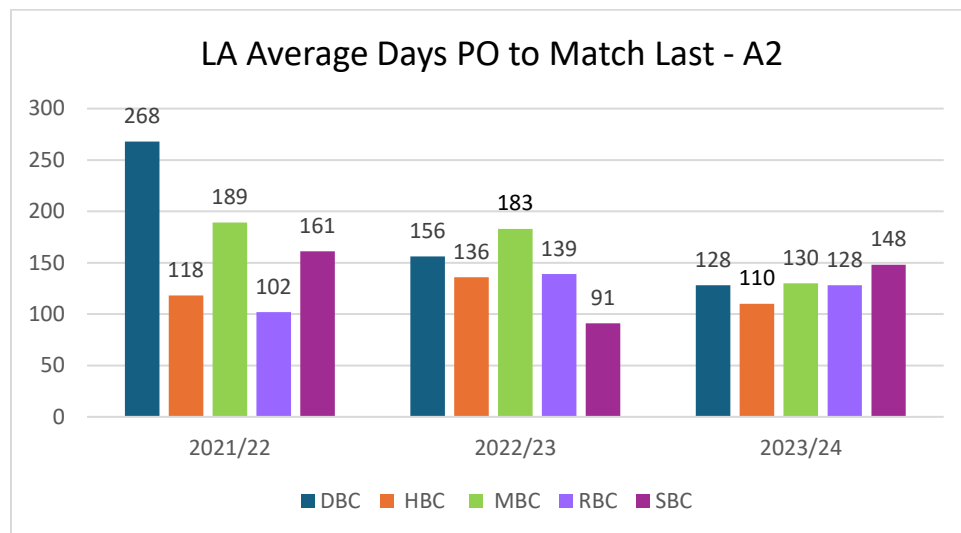
(Data based on children who have been adopted in this year).



ATV continues to perform well against national comparisons and has improved this year. There is an embedded process for early referral of children, and early consideration of potential families who may be linked to the child, in advance of the Placement Order being granted. Its important therefore to monitor the numbers of referrals to ensure that all children are considered at an early stage, even where adoption does not go on to be the final plan.

## A2- Placement Order to Match

ATV also measures the time between Placement Order (PO) and matching a child for adoption, this being the time beyond Court decision to award a PO to confirming the match with a family. This is the A2 figure, and the government target timescale is 121 days.



In Tees Valley this figure has reduced over the previous year on average, but remains a little over the government target, although has been better than England average for RAA's.

There is variation in the Local Authority performance around timescale over this year, and caution should be noted in that numbers in adoption are relatively small, therefore small changes in numbers can affect averages.

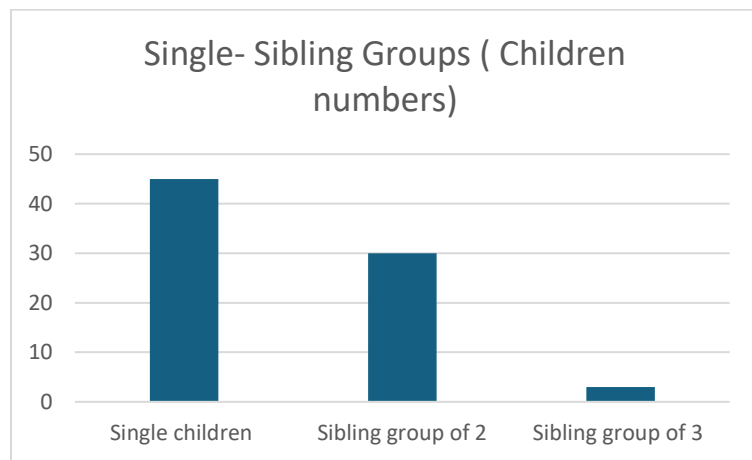
For children adopted in Middlesbrough and Stockton this year, the timeliness of becoming a child in our care to move in with adopters has reduced considerably, while it has increased for Darlington children.

For children from Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland, timeliness from Placement Order to match has reduced in this year, while it has increased for Stockton children.

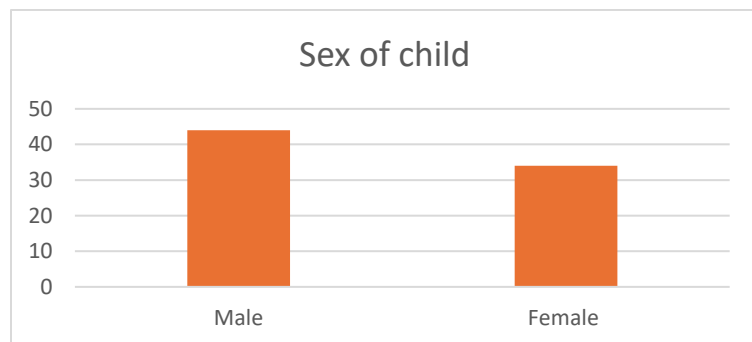
The data is based on the timescales for children who have been adopted in the year.

#### 4.4 Needs of Children Placed and Children Waiting with Placement Order

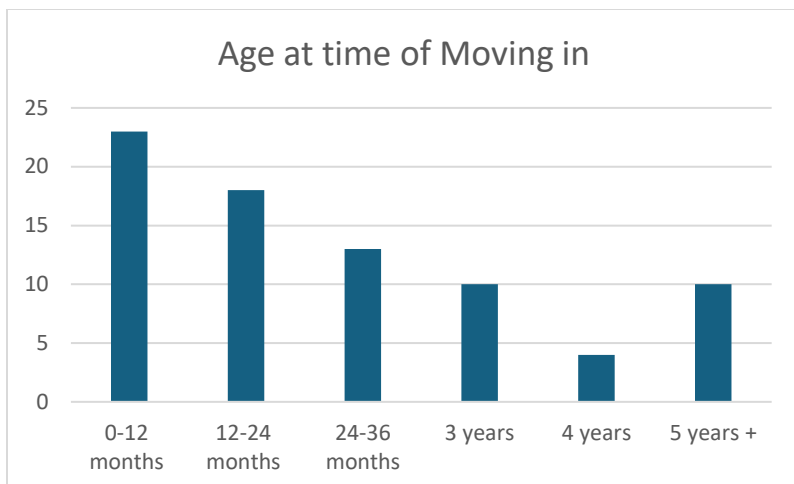
##### Children Placed



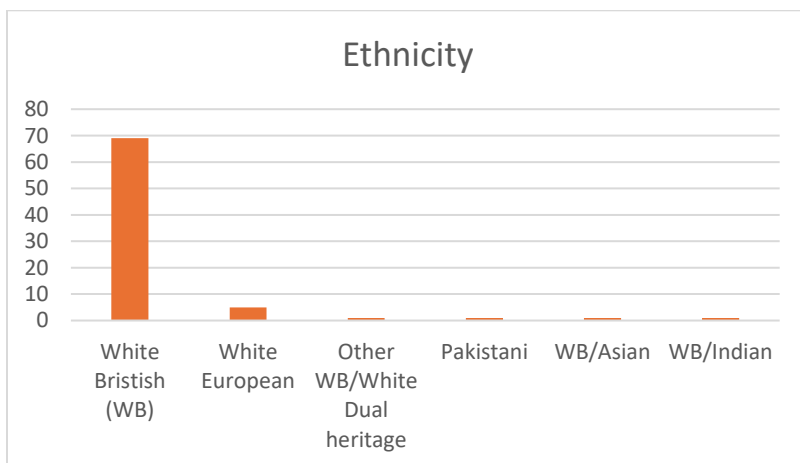
58% of children placed were single children, and 42% of children were in a sibling group, with one sibling group of 3 having been placed together.



56% of children placed were male, and 44% female.



While it continues to be the case that most children placed for adoption are aged under 1 year (29%), and aged 1-2 years (23%) the data shows that in this year 18% of all children were over 4 years, and 13% of the children were over 5 years. ATV has therefore been seeking to find suitable families for a high number of children who are considered harder to match due to age, and factoring in the older children in sibling groups, shows how there are greater risks of disruption, or of not finding suitable families.



The significant majority (88%) of children placed within this year have been of White British background. There were 5 children of White European background, and 4 children of Asian ethnicity, with 3 of these being dual heritage.

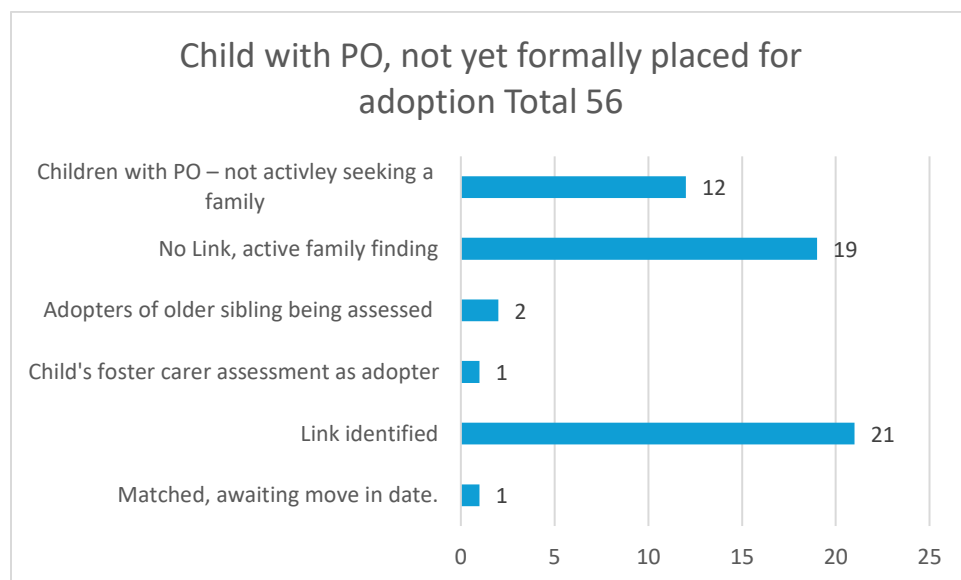
Of the children placed, 13 were considered to have significant emotional/health/learning or neurodivergent needs.

Children waiting with a Placement Order, not yet placed as of 31.3.24.

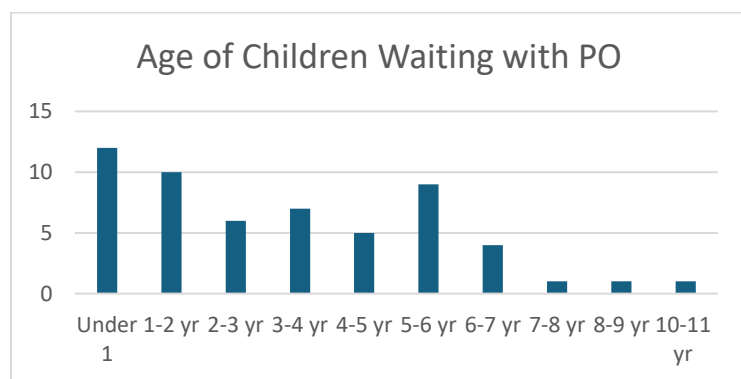
There were 56 children with a Placement Order not yet formally placed for adoption on 31.3.24.

25 had active plans progressing to be adopted by an identified linked family, 19 had no link at that time, and a further 12 were children for whom the Local Authority had ceased active family finding, including children who had had a disruption.

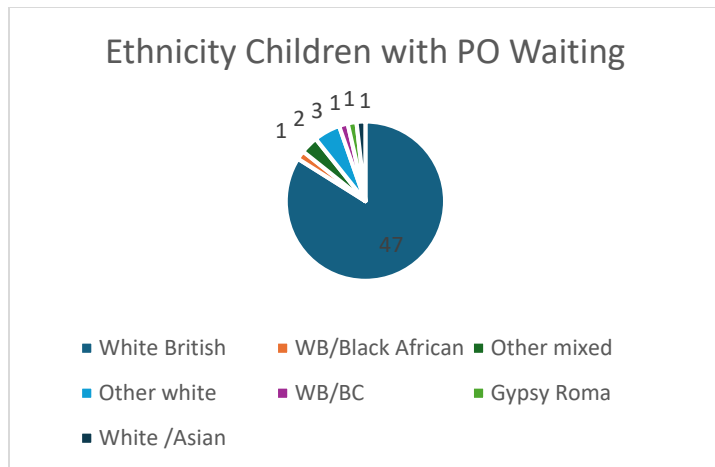
Thus, of the 56 children with a PO, not placed, 19 were children for whom there was active family finding.



Needs of children with a PO, not placed



- Single children- 27
- Sibling groups of 2 children – 10 groups, 20 children
- Sibling groups of 3 children – 3 groups, 9 children



22 children waiting were identified as having additional complex needs, including emotional, attachment, behavioural, and neurodivergency needs.

#### 4.5 Summary of the priority needs for children requiring adoption in Tees Valley

In summary, ATV is currently identifying a high number of children who have a plan of adoption, and with a Placement Order who:

- Are in sibling groups
- Are older children, aged 4 +
- Have additional complex needs associated with early health ( FASD), trauma, attachment difficulties, and neurodivergent conditions.

Many of the older children have experience of living in harmful environments, with poor care, and have moved around the foster care system, prior to coming for a plan of adoption.

The implications for strategic planning, and assessment of these children's needs will be part of the forward planning priorities, and vision for ATV moving forward.

#### 4.6 Finding Families for Tees Valley Children

The priority for seeking suitable families for Tees Valley children is internally approved ATV adopters.

Where it is clear no suitable family is available for a child with a progressing adoption plan, ATV uses the strong links established with regional Voluntary Adoption Agencies to seek a placement. The agency also seeks placement with other RAA's in the region.

Children are placed on Linkmaker, the data system for sharing details nationally of children needing families, and of approved adoptive families. Through Linkmaker families are identified across England who wish to express and interest in children waiting.

ATV has promoted children for adoption through Activity Days, funded nationally, and Activity Days held within the RAA's own centre.

#### 4.7 Internal – External Placements

Year	Internal ATV	External	Total
2021-22	58 (75%)	19 (25%)	77
2022-23	52 (67%)	25 (33%)	77
2023-24	51 (65%)	27 (35%)	78

There has been an increased reliance on external VAA's for ATV placements over this year. This is due to lower numbers of approvals, and ATV adopters being unwilling to consider older children and older children in sibling groups.

Notably in this year, more children have gone to VAA's outside of the North East region, with 6 regional VAA placements, and 12 wider external VAA placements.

21 children have been linked through Linkmaker; 1 through an Activity Day; and 4 through local VAA meetings.

### 5. Recruiting, Preparing and Approving Adopters

Recruitment of adopters has been challenging in this period, for reasons outlined in the Executive Summary.

Additionally, there have been some challenges with timescales for assessment, with stage 1 timescales having met significant delays in some cases due to a small number of factors:

- Delays associated with medical checks. There have been some delays in awaiting the Medical Advisor summary, and in turn the MA's awaiting GP reports. Where prospective adopters (PA) complex health needs, these require further understanding by the MA in stage 1, and this can take time, as the PA consultant is required to provide their opinion.

To address delays, ATV has now worked with the ICB to introduce an additional MA, who will have responsibility for all adult health reports and working with regional GP's.

- Delays associated with worker absence or change of worker.

	Total 2022-23	Total 2023-24	Current c/w previous	England 2023-24 where applicable
<b>Initial contacts/enquiries</b>	309	232	Dec 25%	
<b>Initial Visits to prospective Adopters</b>	106	92	Dec 13%	
<b>Stage 1 Starts</b>	58	60	Inc 3%	
<b>Stage 2 Starts</b>	51	50	Dec 2%	
<b>Adopter Approvals</b>	55	38	Dec 31%	
<b>Carers approved who can do early permanence</b>	10	6	Reduced	
<b>Numbers in assessment at the end of the period</b>	38	41	Inc 8%	
<b>Numbers waiting to be matched at end of period</b>	29	22	Dec 24%	
<b>Timescale S1 (Govt target 60 days)</b>		101	Improved	134
<b>Timescale S2 (Govt target 121 days)</b>	156	139	Improved	150

The key challenge is achieving adoptive parents in this region for the needs of children who require adoption. The high numbers of children who have had a disruption to placements, almost all of which were out of area, indicates that we need to find more people in this region who can offer permanence via adoption to our children.

During this year there has been an adjustment to the settling in allowance offered to the prospective adopters of siblings, whereby all the budget is now



profiled to adopters who will take siblings, with a payment of £3000 to adopters internally approved, who adopt siblings. This in recognition of the very real financial pressures of taking on more than one child at the same time. We need to consider more active profiling of this allowance, and additional supports available to adoptive parents, to encourage more people to feel confident to take the children we need to find families for.

The numbers of prospective adopters who want to do early permanence has reduced in this year which is a downturn from the previous year, and goes against the national trend, which is an increase.

There is a Pan Regional Project for early permanence, which ATV are actively involved in. The reflections from the project consultant, based on analysis of the ATV data is that ATV is operating with a threshold for a concurrency project- a greater emphasis on children returning home, which is leading to more families dropping out of the EP route. This feedback has also been received from adopter feedback. To address this, ATV are refocusing on the balance between preparing carers for the potential for a child to return home, with a realistic picture that most who are placed through EP go on to be adopted.

## **6. Early Permanence**

### **6.1 Support to Early Permanence carers.**

The following supports are available to early permanence carers:

- Dedicated adoption social worker throughout the process
- Training and preparation for early permanence- a 2 day course
- Social Worker led EP support group- STEP
- Additional training and preparation around the fostering role.
- Peer buddy system
- Allocated supervising social worker from the Fostering Service
- Fostering allowance during the fostering period

The Adopter Survey completed in April 2024 gave positive views from adopters who had undertaken early permanence, especially in relation to the support received for EP carers (average 4.8/5). The survey provided feedback that the training is very focused on preparing carers for a child returning home, and as detailed above, the balance of preparation is being reviewed.

Carers feel clear about their fostering role, and the expectations of them during this period, and feel the benefits are an earlier relationship with the child.

## 6.2 EP Children's Care Plan Outcomes

In this period, all 8 children placed under early permanence have continued with an adoption plan, with no children having been reunified with parents.

## 6.3 Working in Partnership with LAs and other agencies

Following national learning, ATV has worked with the 5 LA's to implement the practice of an ATV worker attending all Legal Gateway meetings. This means early permanence is discussed before the LA initiates care proceedings. At the time of this report, this practice is embedded in 2 of the 5 LA's- Stockton and Middlesbrough. We are now beginning to see effectiveness in this practice, with more early referrals of children and consideration of EP more widely.

We know we need to influence wider stakeholders to understand and feel confident in planning for early permanence, including understanding it is not a plan of adoption until the PO is granted, and that EP carers are well prepared for this.

There will be a pan regional conference in October 2024, aimed at wider stakeholders in LA's, CAFCASS and the Judiciary to promote a shared understanding of EP.

There is a decision to plan an Adoption Subcommittee of the Local Family Justice Board, to ensure wider stakeholder engagement with early permanence.

## 7. Adoption Support

Adoption Tees Valley continues to offer a 3 tier Adoption Support Offer.

<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Universal</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allocated Social Worker until 12 months post adoption order</li><li>• Adoption Support Plan in all cases</li><li>• Young People's Group, exclusively for adopted children within a local youth club venue (age 7-16)</li><li>• Play and Stay group weekly in ATV, providing support and relationships for adoptive parents and younger children (age up to 5)</li><li>• Access to CATCH</li><li>• Loud and Clear music group, run by the Sage within ATV</li><li>• Family and Friends Network training</li><li>• Parties and activity days within ATV</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to Keep In Touch (formally Letterbox) – for children, birth parents, and adoptive parents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 2 Targeted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therapeutic parenting support training</li> <li>• Future Stars</li> <li>• Nurturing Attachments</li> <li>• Non-Violent Resistance</li> <li>• Education Support from ATV Education Support Worker</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 3 Therapy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therapeutic services provided commissioned services, and funded through the Adoption Support Fund</li> <li>• Specialist assessment, where needed, through commissioned services</li> <li>• Allocated social worker, for assessment of adoption support needs, and development of an adoption support plan to meet needs.</li> </ul>

### 7.1 Assessment of Adoption Support Needs

ATV has implemented a different process for beginning the assessment of adoption support needs when this is requested by an adoptive parent. There is now an early duty response and a booked telephone session to commence the assessment.

In this period there were 127 assessments of adoption support needs completed, compared with 126 in 2022-23.

The average timescale from enquiry to allocation to a social worker was 7 days.

The number of applications to the Adoption Support Fund was 267. In many cases the applications are repeated applications and have not had a new assessment of adoption support needs. In 2022-23 this was 289.

The value of applications submitted was £943,112.35, compared with £1,060,650 in the previous year.

68 Adoptive parents completed the survey around satisfaction of timeliness of adoption support, and the average rating was 3.99 out of 5.

The overall satisfaction with adoption support provided was 4.12 out of 5

It's been brilliant to know we have support if we need it

They have explained all the processes and kept me informed throughout, they have provided good training opportunities and tailored them for my circumstances. They have been a great support through an emotional time. I feel reassured and have no doubts that they will continue to support us after the adoption order has been granted.

My child is benefiting from Theraplay and she is processing information well. Having sessions myself with the same therapist is helping me to help my child and to teach school good therapeutic parenting strategies to help my child. whilst also gaining confidence in the way that I am doing things and handling behaviours at home.

While there were many positive examples of how adoption support assessments have helped children and families, we know some families still feel they wait too long. We aim to increase early access to a social worker where needed and reduce waiting times. We will do this by reviewing the case allocation system and introducing new staff to support Adoption Support Fund applications, giving our social workers more time to undertake face to face work with children and families.

We are introducing a new set of national measures through our case management system to help us improve the quality of data and management oversight of cases, and of timeliness of completion of assessments.

## 7.2 Stay and Play

The group continues to run weekly within ATV and is well attended by adoptive parents and children in the pre school years. The groups tend to be attended while parents are on adoption leave.

On average 8 parents and their children attend the Play and Stay group each week.

19 families have accessed this support group over the year.

The average satisfaction with Stay and Play in the Adopter Survey was 4.71 out of 5.

To be with other adopters is an amazing source of support and advice.

I love attending group, I feel a connection with all the parents and it's great to discuss my thoughts and get others advice.

We will continue to run our weekly Stay and Play sessions, which we know is great source of peer support, and early help for families.

### 7.3 Education Support

Education Support is funded via the partnership of the Virtual Schools within the 5 Local Authorities of ATV and continues to be a unique offer within Tees Valley, when considered across the national adoption system. The education support offered is through advice and information, rather than direct classroom support to children, which is provided through the education plan for the child, where needed. The Education Support worker is trained in the Thrive Approach, which is a developmental and trauma sensitive approach and model, also used within education and development settings within this region. The Thrive approach helps to identify gaps in the child's development due to early life experiences and uses games and activities to start helping to address those needs. It is a holistic approach so that schools and parents can deliver the games and implement a consistent approach.

The ESW is also delivering a course on attachment for schools, as part of the Local Authorities and Schools Qualification for teachers. The course is rooted in attachment awareness and trauma informed practice, with an aim of helping education staff to attend to the attachment systems of children, to better help them to settle and to learn.

The course utilises Virtual Reality headsets to help participants engage experientially with the child's lived experience.

The dedicated education support worker within ATV has this year worked with 118 children. This is an increase of 10 children on the previous year, and 26 more than in 2022-23.

The breakdown by Local Authority is set out below.

<b>DBC</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>HBC</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>MBC</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>R&amp;CBC</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>38</b>
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In the adopter survey 43 families said they were aware of the education support service, 18 said they weren't aware, and 10 were not sure.

Of those who had used the service, the satisfaction with the education support service was 4.67 out of 5

She (ESW) has attended meetings at school and provided school with Thrive training

Attended meetings with school and I to support my son in getting the right help in school to meet his needs.

School staff have also fed back, showing the beneficial impact of the course for teaching staff ...

It was really interesting training, and I loved the VR headsets, as it created a real-life feeling for what some children experience in their everyday life. I still think about it to this day., and how I can adapt my own approaches to fully support our children.

The training yesterday was very eye opening for me. I did the training in my teacher training year with RCTTP and it was hard to relate to the training as much as I couldn't really apply it to my class as I didn't have one at the time. Now having my own class and redoing the training it helped me identify children who could be vulnerable or need additional support.

#### 7.4 Pan Regional Commissioning Project – Innovation in Adoption Support

ATV is working with the wider pan regional RAA's on a commissioning project to innovate in adoption support services. This project is managed alongside the MDASS Project and has input from the North Tyneside lead Commissioning Manager in Children's Services. The vision is that all 3 NE based RAA's will use the experience and guidance of the commissioning project to develop a new adoption support offer across the 3 RAA's, which will serve to better unify the supports available to all North East based adoptive families, and will meet current gaps in service delivery.

This funded project is in its early days, however, a needs analysis exercise has taken place, and all adoption staff across the 3 RAA's have been surveyed for their views on where are the gaps, and what the barriers are.

## 7.5 Birth Parent Support and Access to Records

ATV has commenced a new contract for these 2 elements of adoption support, following a re-tendering process, supported by Stockton BC Procurement team.

The contract was awarded to Arc Adoption NE, having previously been delivered by Adoption Matters. Arc Adoption NE provided best value in tendering and offer significant expertise in the specialist adoption arena.

The contract commenced 1.4.23 and is a 2 year contract.

### *Birth Parent Support*

Arc Adoption NE provide the statutory independent birth parent support through counselling advice and information, from the time at which adoption is the local Authority plan for the child. This service is complemented by ATV who can offer support to birth parents, in setting up Keep In Touch arrangements, and with ongoing Keep In Touch.

There were 94 new birth parents referred to the service within this period.

At the yearend, 74 birth parents were "active" to the service, i.e. actively engaged with receiving a service from Arc Adoption NE in respect of support around their child's adoption.

### *Access to Adoption Records*

Arc Adoption provide the statutory service to adult adoptees and their birth relatives in respect of accessing birth records around adoption. The service requires sensitive and experienced counselling, redaction of records as required, and provision of a report for the adult adoptees. The service interfaces with each of the 5 Local Authorities in the partnership, who continue to hold children's adoption records.

55 individuals accessed their birth records in this period, of which 48 were pre-commencement and 7 were post commencement. This refers to the legislation governing access at the time of the adoption, which changed in December 2005, to increase rights and access to information for any adopted person over the age of 18.

Overall, Arc Adoption NE have worked closely with ATV to take on the existing cases, and new referrals, ensuring a smooth transfer of responsibility for this

sensitive area of the work. ATV and Arc meet quarterly to review the contract and ensure any anomalies are given due focus.

## **8. Voice and Influence of Young People, and Adoptive Parents**

ATV has an established young people's group which has run for the previous 2 years and was in operation prior to the pandemic.

Over this year, the groups for young people have changed, with the previous 2 young people's group being brought to one single group, for adopted children and young people aged 7-16 years.

A second group is the Voice and influence Group and has a clear focus on enabling children and young people to have a voice and influence ATV practice and that beyond.

### 8.1 Young People's Group

In ATV we are proud that we now have an established group for adopted young people and have directed its development with the feedback received from young people and their parents. We have brought together adopted children from age 7-16 to meet monthly, with the aim of promoting a positive identity for young people around adoption and enabling them to build friendships and confidence through the group.

Young people fed back last year that they would like more opportunity for activities and a more "young person" focused setting. Previously the group ran in the ATV Centre, however, now runs in a local youth club, with dedicated access only to ATV for that evening session. This means that ATV can offer the opportunity for young people with a wide range of needs and preferences to meet and use the facilities and activities on offer, while building friendships and relationships. Activities such as table football, crafts, and games consoles are taken up by the young people. The young people wanted to have a tuck shop available which is now running, and there is also a sensory room for young people who need a calmer environment.

Feedback is positive from children and parents, with many parents also taking the opportunity to meet with other adopters and build their own networks too.

In the period November 2023- July 2024 there have been 8 sessions run in the Youth Club, with 29 young people accessing this group regularly, and 9 who have attended all sessions.



Children said...

I have made 2 friends, and they are nice and so are the ladies who are there.

I have enjoyed meeting other adopted children.

A parent said....

"As a family I wish we had done this a long time ago. It is really heartwarming to us all as a family especially A and myself. Knowing that there is support. Also, it helps both boys build up a resilience. Seeing others in a similar situation. I feel this will help both of the boys feel and see that adoption is just part of life. They are no different. To see other children feel as ease., play, chat. .. take part in activities gives them all a great foundation and positive memories to hold on to always".

"For a little while B has often felt different due to being adopted and has had lots of questions. She finds it reassuring and comforting when she spends time around other adopted children, she finds it comforting that she's not the only one. B benefits from attending the group as it gives her the chance of socialising with other adopted children".

Feedback through the Adopter Survey indicated that there is a gap for children aged 5-7 as children pre-school can access the Play and Stay Group and aged over 7 can access the Youth Group. Currently, ATV doesn't have staffing resources to run a third group, however, we will continue to look at what can be offered to children in this age group, on a regular basis.

## 8.2 Voice and Influence

The ATV Voice and Influence group has been running now for around 12 months. 4 young people are active members. ATV reached out to all families in regular contact, however, this small group are the pioneers of Voice and Influence in ATV. The group have named themselves AdoptBats, and they meet monthly with 2 staff from ATV.

Currently, they young people are bringing together their voice and view through a creative project with Blue Cabin which is co-producing a film about what its like to be adopted. Young people are concerned about how adopted

young children feel and cope in school; about life story work, and about Keep in Touch arrangements with birth family and parents.

Current plans are underway to deliver a launch of their film, at a dedicated event for wider stakeholders, which will include Board members, Virtual School Heads, adoption social workers and other young, adopted people.

The young people attended and met with the Middlesbrough Council Corporate Parenting Board in 2023, to share their ideas about what work they are doing and what's important to them.

### 8.3 Adopter Forum

ATV Adopter Forum runs monthly and is a small group of adoptive parents who meet with managers from ATV to review agency practice with adopters' views in mind. The Adopter Forum have supported the implementation of a weekend event and have advised that more support forums and groups should be held outside of usual working hours, leading to a co-produced event with the Darlington heritage railway museum due to take place in July 2024.

The forum has shared views about the way in which early permanence is supported and have assisted with development of the 2024 adopter survey, and have reviewed feedback.

## **9. Panel**

The Adoption panel sits weekly and is now held once per month as a face to face panel, with all other panels being virtual. Due to pressure on panel, it has been operation practice to schedule 5 panels per month.

There have been 61 panel meetings in the year.

There are 2 Independent Chairs of Panel, and 2 vice chairs of panel, 3 of whom are social workers, with significant senior management experience in adoption work, and one who is an adoptive parent with significant panel experience. There are 32 central list members, and 5 Medical Advisors. Diversity of adoption panel members has increased over the last year in respect of more males, and a member with lived experience of being adopted. Despite significant efforts it has not been possible to recruit a more ethnically diverse panel to date.

Panel is managed and led by a manager within ATV, who also acts as the Agency Advisor to Panel.

The panel manager has developed a stronger quality assurance (QA) mechanism, with QA feedback from all people who are involved in panel helping to improve quality, consistency and the experience of adopters and others attending. There is a quarterly quality assurance report which is provide to Local Authority senior managers to provide feedback on the quality of reports presented.

Central list members have a programme of training and engagement, with quarterly newsletters providing feedback on the outcomes of panel, and updates on relevant agency or legislative matters.

Panel members have undertaken training within this year on:

- Cultural Humilities
- Trauma Timeline, and trauma informed practice
- Early permanence
- Culture change in adoption

A full report on panel business and quality of practice is provide to the ATV Board on a 6 monthly basis.

## **10. Quality Assurance**

ATV operates from a position of continuous improvement, across all areas of the work. The service continually develops and seeks to improve through alignment with wider sector influences, changes, and developments; its own feedback mechanisms; audit; research; inspection; self-assessment.

Quality assurance is carried out through a variety of mechanisms. Key means of assuring quality are outlined below, and the service plan 2023-25 is underpinned by a cross cutting platform of continuous improvement and quality assurance. The ATV Board has a role in being assured of quality of the service delivery, and a risk register is in place around key areas of risk for delivery, and/or quality concerns. At a recent Board Away day it was decided that we will work together to review the vision for ATV moving forward.

### *Service Plan*

There is a service plan, which has been developed through work with managers and staff, and is reflective of local development, and the national strategy and agenda on adoption. This plan will be updated quarterly and presented to the ATV Board with monitoring of progress against target measures, and outcomes.

### *Practice Models*

The service adopts elements of several key practice models in delivery of the adoption service.

The **Secure Base Model** (Schofield and Beek) is an operational model of attachment for children placed with alternative care givers and is used in preparation training and in assessment of adopters, and adoption support.

The **UEA Moving on to Adoption** is adopted in practice in many cases and is adapted dependent on the needs of the child, and family. Learning from our disruptions indicates we have more work to do within the wider system to understand the core principles of this model and implementation in practice. Moves due to foster carer circumstances remain a stubborn issue in this region. As detailed above, the service has adopted the **Trauma Timeline**, and is promoting trauma informed practice, within the RAA's own work, and across partner agencies.

Aspects of **Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Practice (DDP)** (Dan Hughes) are supported through the service delivery, including PACE parenting. 8 staff have now received level 1 training in DDP and it is planned for more to undertake this.

The Education Support worker is trained in the **Thrive** approach and adopts this within work with families and across schools.

ATV adopts a relational based approach throughout its work, both with families and children, and with staff in the service.

### *Performance Monitoring*

The RAA collates detailed adoption performance data, as required by the (former) ASGLB for quarterly returns. ATV has a key role in co-ordinating with partner LAs on adoption performance data. A quarterly balanced scorecard (BSC) is produced, which details performance measures, as set out within this annual report. There is a quarterly meeting with each Local Authority adoption service lead, to review each individual LA performance, key practice themes, and also for the LA to be assured about the adoption service. The BSC is presented quarterly to the ATV Board.

### *Panel*

Panel forms a key QA function for the work of ATV and partner agencies. In this year a separate Panel Quality Assurance Action plan has been developed, which is shared and reviewed by the Panel manager, Service Manager, and panel chairs.

### *Surveys and Feedback*

An adopter survey has been undertaken, as reported on above. Changes have been made as a result of feedback and will continue to be made.

Children and Young people have fed back on the groups that have been run. The voice and Influence group will have a role in seeking children and young people's views more widely.

### *Policies Review 2024*

ATV policies have been reviewed to ensure that they reflect current and most up to date practice and expectations.

Policies will be available on the ATV website.

### *Supervision*

All staff receive monthly supervision in ATV, which includes reflective practice.

All staff have an annual appraisal which sets out their further personal development plan for the year ahead, aligned to their own career and role, and service planning.

### *Workforce Development*

The service offers and supports workforce development, aligned to service and sector development, and learning needs of staff. Workforce development may be through attending a training event, shadowing, or through group reflective sessions.

Examples within this year are:

- Culture Change in Adoption
- DDP training – level 1
- Matching Standards Training
- EP Practice Standards

3 managers have undertaken level 5 management qualification. This will strengthen the management capacity in ATV and support overall succession planning.

### *Audit*

Audits have been regularly carried out with staff involved in individual cases. The audit process has been LA specific in this year, due to a number of partner LA's undergoing full ILACS inspections by Ofsted.

Audit has helped the service reflect on quality of case records and ensuring that records reflect what an adopted person may need in the future. It has also informed practice standards and implementing these within the team.

*Ofsted*

One of the partner LA's, Hartlepool, has been inspected by Ofsted, which includes inspection of the RAA- Adoption Tees Valley, through the lens of the Local Authority. Hartlepool received an Outstanding grading, and ATV was positively recognised within the report.

**11. Finance**

11.1 2023/24 Financial Year End Position

The year end position for the Adoption Tees Valley budget is presented below:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Budget 2023/24</b>	<b>Outturn 2023/24</b>	<b>Variance 2023/24</b>
Employees	1,767,000	1,680,000	(87,000)
Running Costs	264,000	349,000	85,000
Support Service Costs	113,000	115,000	2,000
Interagency Fees	500,000	525,000	25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,644,000</b>	<b>2,669,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>

Employee costs underspent due to delays filling vacant posts in year and savings on staff mileage.

Running costs overspent due to:-

- additional utility costs of premises, noting that the Emergency Duty Team has been co-located for the past 24 months and utility costs have risen due to this (24-hour heating and lighting)
- additional adoption support and post adoption costs, associated with placements with Voluntary Adoption Agencies where the child (ren) has not been adopted within a 12-month period.

11.2 Interagency Fees

Interagency fees exceeded the budget figure by £25,000. Additional contributions from each Local Authority are as follows:

	Percentage	Budget 23/24	Actual Cost 23/24	Additional 23/24
Darlington	15.95%	80,000	84,000	4,000
Hartlepool	14.22%	71,000	75,000	4,000
Middlesbrough	27.16%	136,000	142,000	6,000
Redcar & Cleveland	15.95%	80,000	84,000	4,000
Stockton	26.72%	133,000	140,000	7,000
	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>525,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>

### 11.3 Contributions for 2024/25

Contributions from each Local Authority will remain at the same percentages in 2024/25, as in 2023/24.

The ATV Board has commenced a review of the financial contribution percentage from partner local Authorities, to ensure that there is an equitable and fair allocation of costs, commencing 2025-28.

## 12. Priorities for Forward Planning

The annual report and review provide the data evidence, linked to the wider national adoption strategy, for setting priorities for ATV for the forthcoming year. As detailed in the Executive Summary, ATV Board have sought to establish a Vision for ATV for the next 3 years, based on national adoption developments, and learning from practice through independently chaired disruption meetings. What is clear is that children's long-term outcomes, and the wellbeing of adoptive and birth families is a high priority for ATV, and its partner agencies. The priorities for the forthcoming year are:

1. Recruiting more adoptive parents locally, who can take the children we need to find families for.

We will strengthen marketing, and the first contact enquiry process, to reduce delay, and strengthen a consistent approach from a small dedicated and experienced team.

We will promote the offer of the settling in allowance for ATV adopters who can take siblings.

We will continue to review the core “offer” for adopters for more complex children with our partner LA’s and Board.

We will work together with partner LAs to ensure that there is an adoption experienced, ATV led consideration of local adopters, for children, when planning for permanence.

2. Children’s voices will be heard, and young people will have an influence in how adoption services and wider services consider the needs of adopted people.

We will produce the Voice and Influence film with Adoptbats, and will ensure that it s used for wider stakeholder awareness raising.

We will hold an event for Board and stakeholders, with Adoptbats, to share young people’s views on what needs to change.

We will ask Adoptbats to help achieve the engagement and views or more adopted young people, to make sure we are listening to, and involving adopted children in having their say.

3. Learning from Disruptions

We will use the learning from independently chaired disruptions to inform ATV practice, and wider LA practice in care planning for adoption.

ATV Board will have oversight of disruptions in adoption.

We will work with the national planned research into disruption in adoption.

4. Early Permanence Planning will continue to be a priority

We will review the balance of key messaging around what early permanence is for adoptive parents in the early stages of their journey with ATV.

We will work with all 5 LA’s to develop mechanisms for ATV involvement in legal gateway planning.



We will involve ADM's in the LA where there is a difference of view between ATV and the LA around an EP plan for the child.

We will contribute to leadership of the pan regional conference on EP for wider stakeholders.

We will contribute to a LFJB plan for early permanence, and be part of a wider Adoption Sub Committee on Adoption.

5. Culture change in adoption practice will be promoted through ATV and partner agency practice and development

We will hold a team event on Culture Change in Adoption.

We will promote learning and awareness through workforce development in partner LA's and wider stakeholders.

The ATV Board will provide leadership on Culture Change through their role in ATV and in partner agencies, and through a shared vision statement.

We will promote the pan regional conference at which the UK leading adoption academic, Professor Beth Neil, will provide the keynote speech on Culture Change and Early Permanence.

6. Access to Adoption Support – the right help at the right time.

We will review the caseload allocation and our case holding system, to reduce active case holding by a social worker, enabling swifter access to assessment of adoption support needs.

We will work with the pan regional MDASS service, and with the pan regional commissioning project, to seek to implement new and better ways of allocating the right assessment and support to families.

We will implement the new data reporting measures in the AS system, to ensure we can deliver the new national AS data reports.

We will continue with our 3 tier adoption support system, encouraging take up and access to all tiers, by children and parents.

## 7. Retaining a high-quality staffing team

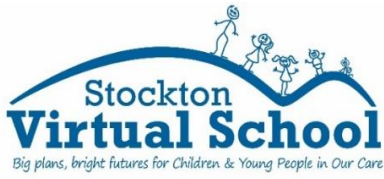
We will work to ensure that staff have access to high quality training and supervision that gives high job satisfaction and maintains skills and motivation.

We will create opportunities for progression and development wherever possible.

We will creatively use the skills and experience of ATV staff to help ATV development, and to develop the workforce in wider partner agencies.

**Vicky Davidson Boyd**

**July 2024**



## Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2022/23

All data is provisional until validated data is published by DFE

## Overview

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, which 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

## **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 2022 to August 2023.

## **Extended Duties of the Virtual School**

From September 2021, the role of the Virtual School Head was extended to include all children who have or have previously had a social worker. The objectives are to ensure that there would be a local champion for children with a social worker (CWSW) in each Virtual School to increase the profile of this cohort of children and young people in school. The aim is also to promote their educational needs within children's social care and to provide strategic leadership in order, 'to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with a social worker to make educational progress.' Currently these duties are non-statutory however all local authorities received grant funding under section 31 of the Education Act 2022 to deliver this extended role and we are taking part in national research conducted by the Rees Centre at Oxford University commissioned by the Department for Education to measure the impact of our work.

[Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Phase one evaluation of the virtual school head's extension of duties to children with a social worker and the post-16 pupil premium plus pilot \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The funding received has been used to provide additional staffing, one Education Development Adviser who will be the strategic lead for this project and one senior data officer who will support the strategic work by providing the data that will allow us to analyse patterns and trends both from a national, regional, and local perspective.

The extended cohort is defined as 'Children with a social worker' (CWSW) and includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past six years (Ever6). It includes children and young people aged 0-18 across all educational settings. For children and young people in Stockton this includes all children subject to a Child in Need plan (CIN), or a Child Protection plan (CP) and children who have had a social worker in the previous 3 years (Ever3). The previous 3 years is used due to availability of data following the move from RAISE to Liquid Logic.

Implementation of the Virtual School Head Teacher's Extended Duties:

- A key aspect of the extended duties is the accurate identification of our CWSW cohort. Our Data Officer has built a new vulnerable children's database which includes data on SEN status, attendance, suspensions, allocated social worker, social care status, Early Help involvement, allocated Early Help Team and Co-ordinator, and latest referral/incident dates.
- Next steps for the database will involve collaborating with key partners in schools and social care to monitor its use, discuss new suggestions/innovations, and share emerging best practice in tackling the disadvantage gap that exists for this cohort of young people.
- To support schools in identifying the key barriers and challenges facing this cohort, the Virtual School undertook a survey of primary and secondary schools. This information has been analysed, compared with other local data relating to disadvantage gaps (e.g., Pupil Premium strategy data), and shared with school staff.
- The extended duties team have analysed exclusion data for academic year 2022-23, finding that CWSW are significantly more likely to be excluded. The Virtual School will continue to analyse exclusion data to identify key trends or risk factors for this cohort.
- To raise awareness of the trauma that some of our CWSW may have experienced, the Virtual School is delivering training that looks at 'in situ' child's perspective views of trauma, neglect, abuse, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) using virtual reality technology.

- To date, the average evaluation score for the extent to which the VR training has helped staff understand the potential effects of trauma on pupils is 4.66/5.00.
- The average evaluation score for the extent to which VR encourages a greater sense of empathy and understanding is 4.97/5.00.
- To support colleagues in social care, the extended duties team have provided:
  - A named education contact for assessment team social workers.
  - A survey for social workers to identify key training needs (training and support will then be offered).
  - Analysis of multiple CIN and CP plans to identify key education objectives to target.
  - A selection of exemplar education SMART goals to support social workers when writing CIN and CP plans.
  - A training offer for ASYE Academy covering CIN and CP plans (including objectives to support attendance) and VR training on trauma and neglect and how this might affect a child's presentation in school.
- To continue to improve the quality of the education content of CIN and CP plans. The extended duties team has proposed some joint work with CP conference chairs to audit and monitor ICPC minutes and plans, and to co-create with conference chairs and school safeguarding leads some agreed education-focused questions that will be asked and recorded at all ICPCs.
- This cohort of children also benefit from the work of the Virtual School for CIOC, particularly with regards to the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed training and networks that are offered to schools, colleges, and early years settings.
- Briefings and information sessions have been provided for Local Authority staff, Head Teachers, Safeguarding Forum attendees, Special Educational Needs Coordinators, Designated Teachers, CAMHS colleagues.

## Virtual School Structure

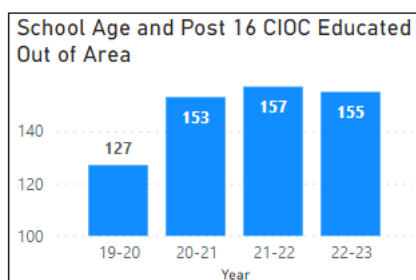
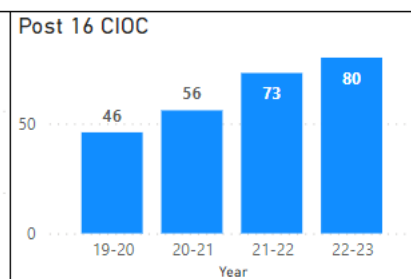
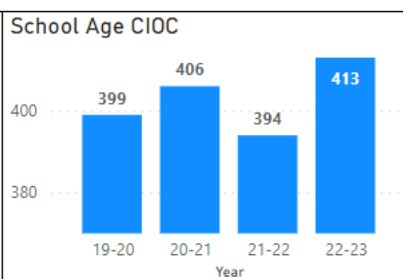
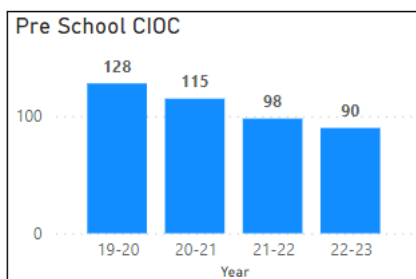
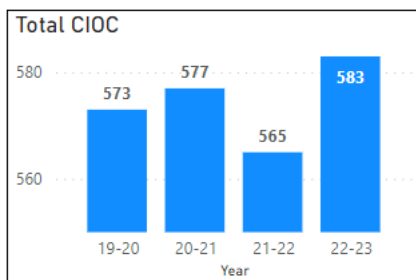


The team are a highly motivated and committed group of professionals who are dedicated to ensuring that the best interests of the children in our care are prioritised. They respond skilfully and enthusiastically to the many challenges and changes required of them.

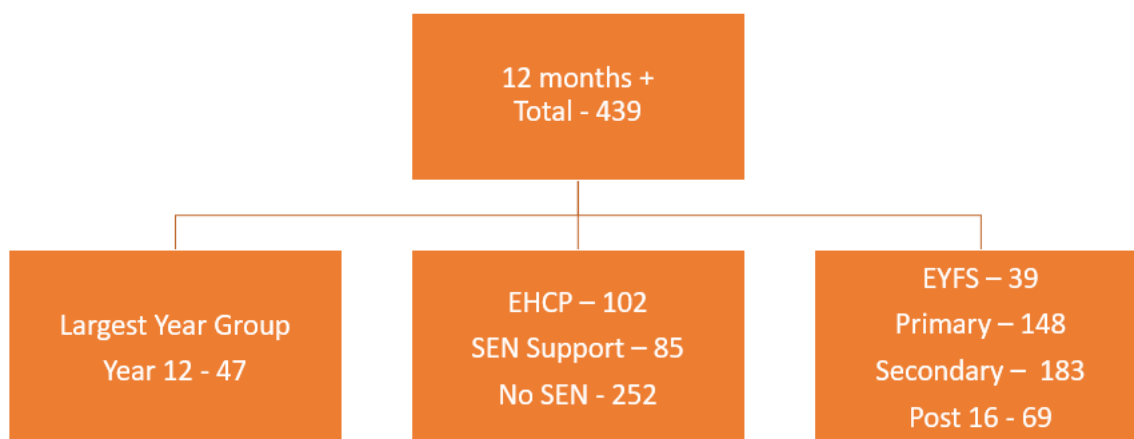
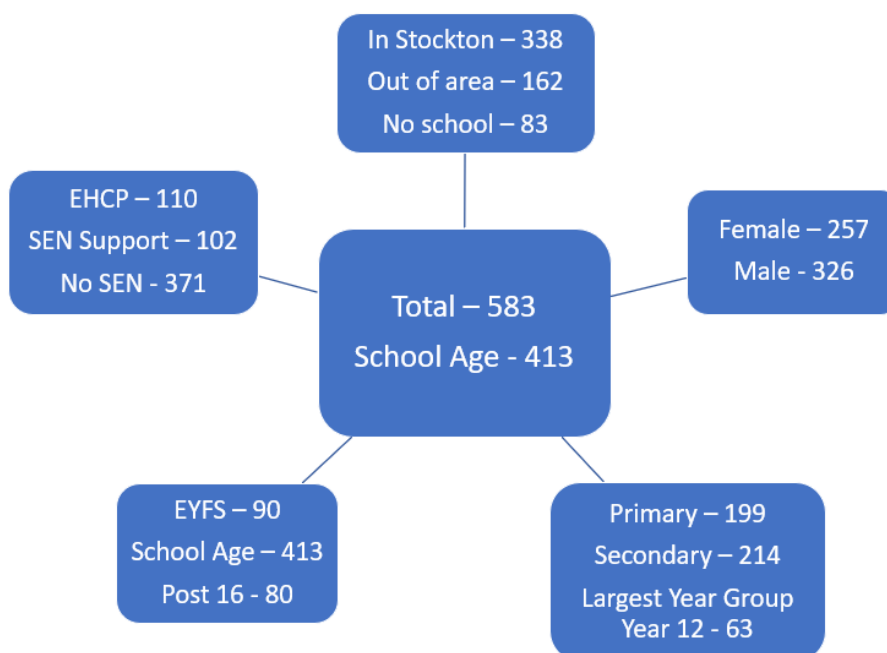
### Virtual School Roll

The graphs below show the trend over the previous four years for our cohort of CIOC.

(Data taken from the July 2023 Virtual School Roll, L3 report)



The diagrams below show the current cohort as of July 23, broken down into key groups. The blue diagram shows all children in care, the orange shows those who have been in care for over 12 months. The majority of children with no school are those aged under two.



### 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
22-23	36.4%	212	18.9%	110

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



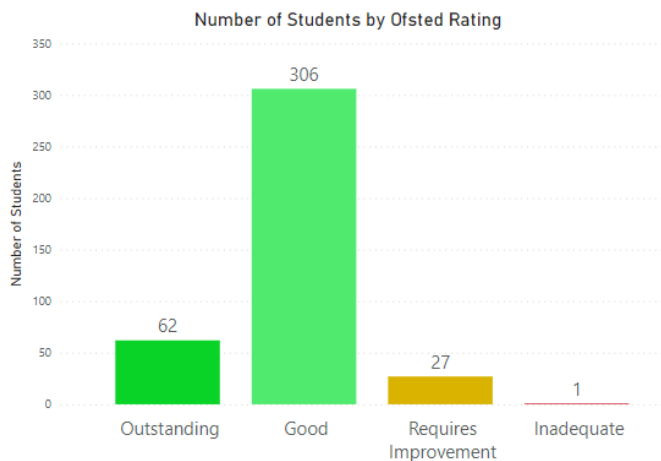
other Service Leads to ensure provision for CIOC is timely and appropriate wherever possible. The Virtual School and SEN colleagues work closely to ensure that drift and delay is avoided when placing pupils in specialist provision by:

- 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**

School OFSTED Ratings	No of CIOC	% of children	No of Schools
Outstanding	62	15.6%	17
Good	306	77.3%	98
Requires Improvement	27	6.8%	11
Inadequate	1	-	1



- 92.9% of our students attend good or better schools
- 6.8% attend Requires Improvement Schools
- 33 students attend 17 schools who do not have an OFSTED rating following academy conversion.
- 4 students attend 2 independent schools who have Independent School Inspections
- 2 students attend 2 schools in Scotland
- 1 student attends a school in Wales

Concerted efforts are made to ensure that CIOC attend good or better schools. Currently 92.9% 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 than 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.

## Attendance

	2018-19	2019-20		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
		Before Lockdown	Total			
Stockton CIOC overall attendance	96.8%	95.7%	94.6%	90.6%	91.9% Validated – 92.2%	90.5%
National (England CIOC)	94.9%		No data	90.9%	92.2%	No data
Primary	97.3%	96.8%	96.7%	93.7%	96.1%	93.2%
Secondary	93.1%	94.7%	92.6%	82.5%	85.5%	87.2%
Persistent absence (<90%)	8.3%		No data	33.9%	16.1% Validated – 17.9%	15.3%
National	12%		No data	30.4%	19.1%	No data
100% attendance				63 Children (14.4%)	49 Children (15%)	35 Children (8.5%)

### How is Attendance monitored and supported by the Virtual School

- Attendance is monitored by a data feed direct from schools for children attending Stockton Schools. For children attending out of borough schools we use an external attendance monitoring service (Welfare Call) that collects daily attendance
- The data is collated in the Virtual School Dashboard
- All CIOC have a named allocated Virtual School Caseworker who monitors attendance on a weekly basis and follows up any concerns that arise
- Caseworkers advocate for children that have been suspended and/or at risk of permanent exclusion with a great deal of success and find solutions with schools

### Persistent Absentees (those children who have attendance below 90%)

- CIOC are monitored weekly at Virtual School team meetings where progress is reviewed, and impact of action evaluated
- All persistently absent CIOC should have an attendance plan in place, drawn up in partnership with the young person and the care team
- The Virtual School follow the ATTEND framework, an emotionally based school non-attendance model
- Caseworkers support, advise and challenge the school to ensure they are following the Local Authority Tier 1 level interventions
- Caseworkers signpost colleagues to the Tier 2 Interventions and then collaborate with colleagues in the Vulnerable Learners Team at Tier 3.
- Additional pupil premium funding can be requested from the Virtual School to support interventions, transitions, and reintegration back into school
- The Virtual School have challenged permanent exclusions, with success, when the situation has required a challenge
- The Virtual School promote statutory assessment for SEN when appropriate
- The Virtual School support social workers to secure education when a child has had a placement change, where appropriate, as quickly as possible to support the stability of a care placement although this is often dependant on support from other Local Authorities. We work closely with these colleagues to avoid drift and delay. If possible, we would try to avoid a school placement change as this is often a place of stability and positive relationships.

- Where there is drift and delay bespoke packages are considered and implemented, these packages often involving tuition and/or alternative provision and are short term measures whilst a placement is secured.

## Exclusions

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
% of CIOC with at least 1 Fixed term exclusion	No Data	4.2	8.2	11.7	12.2 Validated – 10.37%	11.3
Number of pupils with at least 1 Fixed term exclusion	12	16	33	44	58	66
Total days lost to exclusion	63.5	132	No Data	239	440.5	499.5

This academic year we have had four permanent exclusions, two boys, both in Year 10, and two girls, one in Year 6 and one in Year 9. Three of the exclusions were challenged: one was upheld by the Independent Review Panel; one was overturned by the Governing Board, and one was rescinded prior to the Independent Review Panel.

## Children Missing Education

### Definition of Children Missing Education

“Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life.”

The whole CIOC cohort (0-18) is reviewed every half term to ensure that we are aware of any child who is missing education or who is receiving a bespoke education package due to complex personal circumstances and the delay in securing a school place. Actions are taken to secure education and to ensure that children are placed in high quality regulated education provision that meets their individual needs,

### Some reasons why children may be missing education

1. New into care
2. Placement moves
3. Placed in short term unregulated care provision
4. Prior to coming into care a child was not attending school or was electively home educated
5. Children leave secure or residential accommodation with education on site
6. A child is permanently excluded, and no 6-day provision is available
7. Local SEN teams (LA where child is placed) are unable to source specialist provision that can meet a child's needs
8. A local school refuses to admit a CIOC and a direction from the DCS may need to be requested

In July 2023 we had 9 students who are not accessing high quality education provision

Gender	Placed	Reason	
Female	Durham	8	
Male	Blackpool	3	
Male	Stockton	7	
Male	Durham	3	
Male	Preston	3	

Female	Northamptonshire	7	
Female	Redcar and Cleveland	7	
Female	Scotland	8	

Children who are not accessing high quality provision are offered a bespoke package that may include, online learning, face to face tuition or alternative provision.

There is active advocacy from the Virtual School, Social Care Colleagues, SEND Colleagues, Foster Carers and Residential staff to secure education as quickly as possible.

Reasons for delays

- Nationally the largest barrier in delaying school placement is specialist school sufficiency across the country
- Increase in complex needs
- Difficulty in finding care placements

## **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 we were disappointed in the Good Level of Development (GLD) results as they were well below pre pandemic levels and well below national figures. As described in last year's report the cohort had very specific needs and attendance at school was low. It is pleasing to see that the results this year (2023) have improved and are above national, however we will continue to work with schools and early years setting on closing the gaps.

	Stockton 2019	Stockton 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
% Achieving Good Level of Development (GLD)	60%	27.3%	46.2%	41.0%

### **Phonics Screening Check in Year 1**

The 2022 cohort above sat the phonic screening check this summer. We continue to support this cohort and have secured a reading intervention teacher through a supply agency as part of the school led tutoring initiative to work with Year 1 and Year 2 children on literacy and reading interventions.

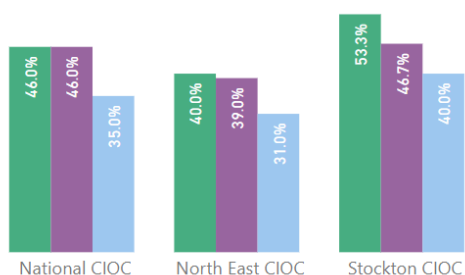
	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
Phonics required standard	69.2%	45.5%	61%

### **Key Stage 1**

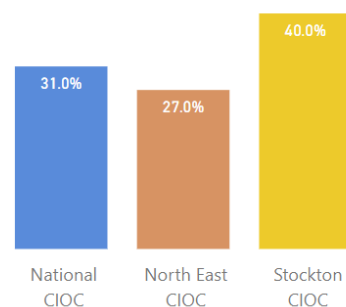
Outcomes are still below pre pandemic levels but are above the national average, and in most cases significantly above the national average for children in care in 2023.

Subject ● Maths ● Reading ● Writing

## KS1 2023



## KS1 Combined 2023



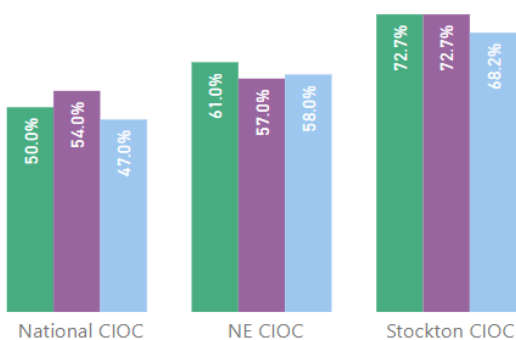
	Stockton 2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
EXS Reading	78.6	44.4%	46.7%	46.0%
EXS Writing	71.4	44.4%	40%	35%
EXS Mathematics	78.6	44.4%	53.3%	46%
EXS combined RWM	71.4	38.8%	40%	31%

**Key Stage 2**

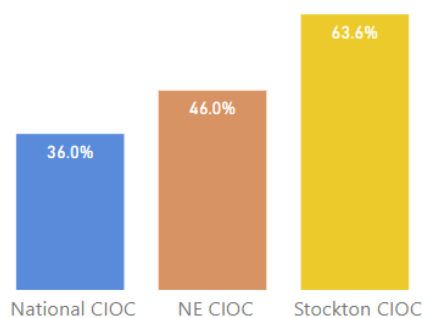
In 2023, Key Stage 2 results are well above pre pandemic levels. The provisional data for Key Stage 2 shows that Stockton CIOC have performed well above the national average for children in care and North East Children Looked After in all areas. (Reading, Writing, Mathematics and combined RWM).

Subject ● Maths ● Reading ● Writing

## KS2 2023



## KS2 Combined 2023



	2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
Expected Standard Reading (EXS)	47%	64.7%	72.7%	54%
EXS Writing	53%	55.9%	68.2%	47%
EXS Maths	59%	58.8%	72.7%	50%
EXSRWM combined	44%	41.2%	63.6%	36%

**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 is continuing to improve and is now well above 2019 outcomes and above the national average for all Children in Care. The reading booster programme has had praiseworthy impact.

## Key Stage 4

In 2022/23 there was a return to pre pandemic standards for GCSE, AS and A 'Level qualifications. This follows three years of changes to assessment criteria and disruption due to the COVID pandemic. 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 may impact upon outcomes. Nationally it is recommended that the more meaningful comparison is with 2019 outcomes as the last year that summer exams were taken before the pandemic. It is expected that performance in 2023 will generally be lower than 2022.

DfE Key Stage 4 Performance, Oct 2023

### Year 11 cohort

- 45 pupils were in the Year 11 (12 months +) cohort, 1 pupil is equivalent to 2.2%
- 56% has some recognised special educational need
- 33% had an EHCP and 23% had SEN support
- 9% (4 CIOC) had significantly poor attendance
- 32 pupils were educated in schools in Stockton (71%)
- 13 pupils were educated in schools outside of Stockton (29%)
- 20 pupils attended specialist, specialist independent or alternative provision (44%), of which, only 2 achieved L4+ in Maths and English
- Of the 25 who attended mainstream school, 11 achieved L4+ in Maths and English (44%)

Results at Level 4+ are in line with last year and slightly better than 2019, however L5+ results have decreased from last year but are slightly better than 2019.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Level 4+ English and Maths	20%	27.5%	31.7%	28.6%	28.9%
Level 4+ English	33%	42.8%	46.3%	35.7%	37.8%
Level 4+ Maths	27%	27.5%	34.1%	33.3%	31.1%
Level 5+ English and Maths	10%	14.2%	9.7%	21.4%	13.3%
Level 5+ English	17%	22.8%	19.5%	33.3%	22.2%
Level 5+ Maths	13%	14.2%	19.5%	26.2%	17.8%

### Key Stage 4 Attainment and progress measures

Attainment and progress measures are not yet available.

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 where their attainment is a cause for concern. 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.

### 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 2022-23 the Participation Advisers carried out 1926 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 (Year 11 into Year 12)

	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)	Sept 23 (54 young people)
Education	96%	76%	74%	75%	(27) 66%	(39) 78%	(42) 78%
Employment	0%	8%	3%	0%	0%	(1) 2%	(4) 7%
Training	0%	8%	15%	22%	(8) 20%	0	(2) 4%
NEET	4%	4%	9%	0%	(6) 14%	(8) 16%	(6) 11%
Other	0%	4%	0%	3%	0%	(2) 4% Secure/Prison	0

From destination interviews in year 12 and 13 (July 2023), 73% of year 12 (compared to 67% in 2022) and 51% of Year 13 (compared to 65% in 2022) are planning to progress and stay in education, employment, or training.

In Year 14 Employment and Education figures are below

EET	34 (51%)	NEET	33 (49%)
Apprenticeship	1	NEET	26
Education	22	NEET – Re engagement	1
Employed	7	NEET – Pregnant	1
University	4	NEET – Parent	1
		NEET - Illness	1
		NEET – Custody	3

### University figures

Progression to University is pleasing. 17 Care Leavers currently attend University, 7 started university courses, in Year 1, in Sept/Oct 2023. Five care leavers completed their university degree in Summer 2023.

University	Number of care leavers 2022	Type of degree	Number of Care Leaver 2023	Type of degree
Total	23		17	
Year 1	10	1 x Foundation Degree 7 x Honours Degree 2 x Masters	7	6 x Honours degree
Year 2	6	5 x Honours	7	7 x Honours degree
Year 3	4	4 x Honours	3	3 x Honours degree
Year 4	2	1 x Honours 1 x PGCE	N/A	
Year 5	1		N/A	
	<b>Completed 2022</b>		<b>Completed 2023</b>	
	First - Masters (Medical and Molecular Virology)		BSc (Hons) 2:1 Computer Science – now Teacher training	
	Graphic Art Degree – Hartlepool 2:1 (BA) Hons		BSc (Hons) 2:1 Physiotherapy Degree – now working as a Physiotherapist	
	2 x BA (Hons) Educational Studies		BA (Hons) 2:1 Film Production – Exploring carer in wind farm industry	
	BA (Hons) Criminology and Law		BA(Hons) 2:1 Law – Year out to Travel	
			BA (Hons)2:1 in Social Policing Degree and Master’s in Law. – Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate	

### 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, pre nursery 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.

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 aims to attend at least one PEP for each child in an academic year. All CIOC have an allocated virtual school caseworker. Priority will be given to:



- 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**

	Academic Year 20-21	Academic Year 21-22	Academic Year 22-23
Total number of PEPs	546 (summer term only)	1708	1844
PEPs in Place	71.5%	82%	86.2%

PEP completion rate is continuing to improve. We strive for 100%

### **Quality Assurance of PEPs (2022-23)**

Cohort	Number of PEPs quality assured in 2022-23	Green	Amber	Red
Early Years	217	68.2%	22.5%	9.2%
School Age	1191	73.6%	21.9%	4.5%
Post 16	360	74.1%	19.4%	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

The quality of PEPs is also improving. PEPs rated green have improved from 67% in 2022 to 73% in 2023, again we strive for the highest quality PEPs and work with all education providers and social care colleagues to continuously improve quality. 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 (PPP)**

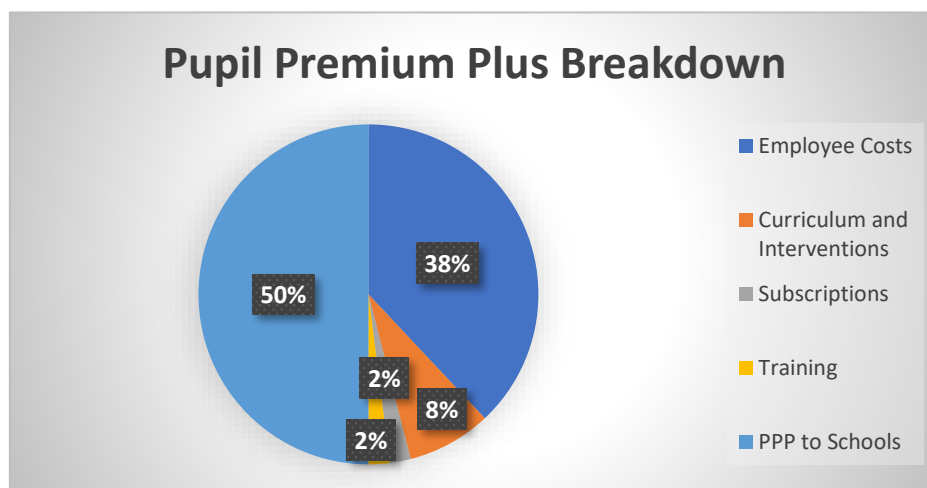
Looked-after children are one of the groups of pupils that attract PPP funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Local authorities receive a PPP grant allocation (£2410 per child) based 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 PPP arrangements for all looked-after children. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PPP 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, the Virtual School Head Teacher works closely with the Finance team to ensure this grant supports the CIOC appropriately and effectively.

50% 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 Virtual School Head Teacher holds the remaining proportion to support the Cohort as a whole. This part of the grant provides:

- Virtual School Employee costs (Staff salaries, Staff CPD, equipment, expenses)
- Curriculum interventions

- Subscription costs (Welfare Call EPEP, Welfare Call Attendance Monitoring, National Association of Virtual School Headteachers, Attachment Research Community, Thrive Approach)
- Training for Schools and other partners
- Additional Learning Support Fund (schools can request additional pupil premium plus funding to support additional learning interventions)



## Virtual School Interventions – Academic Year 2022-23

### Funding

- Allocated Pupil Premium Plus (currently £1400)
- Additionally allocated Pupil premium Plus (paid April 2022 and again in April 2023, £200)
- Recovery premium – given to schools (£156 per CIOC in 2022, allocations in guidance for 2023)
- School Led Tutoring – a proportion is given to schools (different amounts depending on reported use, VS to provide the required additional percent - 25% in 2021-22, 40% in 2022-23)

### Staffing

- Virtual School Educational Psychologist
- Increased number of caseworkers
- Increased number of Youth Direction participation advisers (1.2 increased to 2) – Post 16 Pilot
- Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) Education Support Worker
- Education Development Advisor (Extended duties) support for Previously Looked After Children
- St John's Hub (In-reach and Out-reach work)
- Senior Data Officer (Extended duties)

### Interventions

- Thrive Approach
- Sensory Profiling
- English tuition
- Boosting Reading Intervention
- Letterbox parcels
- Middlesbrough Football Club Mentoring
- CAMHS support

## Training

- Training booklet
- TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Stockton) Offer
  - 7-day Touchbase Attachment Lead Course (External training provider)
  - Theraplay (External Training provider)
  - Emotion Coaching (External Training Provider)
  - ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant). Training delivered by VS Educational Psychologist
  - TIPS Network Meetings
  - EP training
    - Supporting Transitions
    - Executive Functioning
    - Stress
    - ATTEND Framework (EBSA)
    - PACE Approach
    - Power of relationships
  - Bespoke Virtual School training (AATI)
    - Bespoke support and training for School Leadership
    - Bespoke training for whole staff
    - Bespoke training for small staff groups
    - Bespoke training for staff working with individual CIOC
    - Key Adult training
    - DT termly Network meetings
  - Carer training
    - Family Thrive
    - Emotion Coaching for parents

## EP Support

- Assessment
- Reports
- Solution Focussed planning
- Circle of Understanding model
- Circle of Adults model
- Consultations
- ELSA Supervision

## Other

- Virtual School Hubs
- MSLTP
- Care2Dance

## SEND and Inclusion

- Link with Statutory SEN, SENDCO briefings and training
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to Vulnerable Learners Team (VLT) training offer
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to Specialist Teachers
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to VLT HLTA support

## **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 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.

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

The number of families and children requiring support continues to increase annually. This school year (2022 to 2023) I have provided education support to 108 families in the Tees Valley area a total of 44 families were from the Stockton area.

The recurring themes for support have been.

- Helping schools and nurseries 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.
- Trying to reduce the risk of exclusions and permanent exclusions.
- 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.
- Supporting cases involving Emotional Based School avoidance

### **Training**

- Delivered adoption training to the Darlington Early Years network and raised awareness regarding support.
- Presented at the Darlington Head teachers Network meeting
- Delivered training on Developmental Trauma and teaching strategies, to schools in the Tees Valley which included using the VR Headsets.
- Delivered a workshop on Education Support for PLAC at London's Regional Adoption Agencies event in London.
- Delivered Education support training and advice to RAA Coast to Coast

## **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, Adverse Childhood Experiences (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 their journey both in terms of their 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

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

#### 2022 – 2023

In 2022-23 we have followed a similar model to that delivered in 2021-22 in order to embed the work that we do. In addition to the above we have also:

- Introduced a comprehensive Training booklet detailing our training offer
- Completed Instructor training for the Virtual Reality Headsets to start rolling out training in Sept 23
- Hosted two courses on Emotion Coaching, one for Education professionals and one for Foster Carer/Residential staff, delivered by external providers Emotion Coaching UK
- Hosted a 1-day Conference in partnership with Horizons Academy - Margot Sunderland Trauma Informed Schools UK Virtual Conference

59 schools (66%) have engaged with one or more training sessions this academic year

50 schools (62%) have attended Designated Teacher Meetings

17 schools were represented at the Compassionate Stockton TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Schools) Network launch

Oxford University, Rees Centre research, Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Schools Programme, Positive Practice Examples from Local Authorities, 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

## **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)
- VSHT sits on Placement Panel held weekly
- Attendance at the Children in our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG)
- Provide training sessions as part of the Foster Carer Preparation Training
- A Virtual School EDA sits on the Fostering Panel
- Attendance at Social Care Team Meeting to update staff on local and national developments
- Virtual School Youth Direction Participation Adviser attends Accommodation Panel
- 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)
- VSHT sits on the monthly CAMHS Referral panel
- 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. We produce a training booklet, setting out our training programme for the academic year, which is shared with Schools, Colleges and Early Years Setting. We also promote the training and initiatives offered by SEND and Inclusion, and the Education Improvement Service.

The following training events were delivered by the Virtual School in 2022-23

- Termly DT meetings/briefings
- Half termly DT Newsletters
- Bespoke training for Designated Teachers new to post
- PEP training for all professionals
- Online SEN training for Social Care Colleagues
- 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).
- 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
- 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
- Family Thrive for Foster Carers, delivered to two groups of Foster Carers with very positive feedback

External training organised by VS

- Emotion coaching was arranged and delivered in January 2023

## **High Aspirations**

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 EPEP system, Welfare Call. We meet weekly to identify areas of concern and actions to be taken. A School Summary 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 experienced in 2019-20 and 2020-21, 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 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 works closely with a group of Head Teachers and Designated Teachers to share decision making about how CIOC funding (Pupil premium plus, Recovery premium, School Led Tutoring) is allocated. The Virtual School work in partnership with this group to discuss what interventions and support is needed in schools so that Virtual School can respond to need in the best way possible.

The VSHT presents biannually to the Corporate Parenting Board

### **Child Engagement/Celebration**

- 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. One Hub event culminated in an exhibition of work at the ARC in Stockton Town Centre
- Following the Children's Service Review the Youth Participation Advisors have supported the Let's Take Action/ Positive Activities Group
- Pupil voice is collected termly on a child's PEP
- 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 Big Goals, Big Life 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 and have been devised with schools and young people.



## Corporate Parenting Board

### Forward Plan

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
<b>Friday, 11 October 2024</b>	<p>Corporate Parenting Strategy (Jane Smith)</p> <p>Life Long Links Programme – Update (Kellie Wigley)</p>
<b>Friday, 6 December 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual School Update (Janet Wilson)</li> </ul>
<b>Friday, 7 February 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Tees Valley – (Vicky Davidson-Boyd)</li> <li>Lifelong Links Programme (<b>Kellie Wigley</b>)</li> <li>No Limits Hub Update ( )</li> </ul>
<b>Friday, 11 April 2025</b>	

#### Standing Items:

- Adoption Tees Valley – (**Vicky Davidson-Boyd**) (Usually February and August each Year)
- Corporate Parenting Performance Update (To be determined)
- Virtual School Update (**Janet Wilson**) (Usually June and December each year)
- Lifelong Links Programme (**Kellie Wigley**) (Usually October, February and June)
- No Limits Hub Update ( ) (Usually October, February and June)

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