Public Document Pack

Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group

Monday, 10th January, 2022
6.00 pm
Via Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

1.   Welcome and Apologies

To welcome those present to the meeting and to receive any apologies for absence.

2.   Declaration of Interest in items on this Agenda

A form is attached for completion by Members declaring an interest in items on the agenda.

3.   Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2021

For the Group to agree the Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group meeting held on 20th October 2021.

4.   Participation Update

For the Group to receive a verbal update on Participation from the Vice-Chair.

5.   Corporate Parenting Dashboard

For the Group to review and consider the latest monitoring reports on Looked After Children in the Borough provided by Judith Fennell, Head of Service Corporate Parenting and Permanence.

6.   Dental Health Update

For the Group to receive a dental health update on CIOC, delivered by Elizabeth Mannion, Service Leader CIOC, and Judith Fennell, Head of Service Corporate Parenting and Permanence.

7.   Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2020-21

For the Group to receive the Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report from Charlotte Hesketh, LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer.

Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2020-21

8.   Overview of Celebration of Achievement 2021

Charlotte Hesketh, LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer, will provide the Group with an overview of the Celebration of Achievement 2021.

9.   Care Leavers Update

For the Group to receive a Care Leavers Update from Alison Hartley, Leaving Care Team Manager.

10.   Foster Carers Update

For the Group to receive a verbal update from Foster Carer's Paula Quinn and Sam Briggs.

11.   Agenda Items for the next meeting

For the Group to discuss any agenda items they wish to be added onto the agenda for the next meeting scheduled to take place on 3rd March 2022.

Date Published: 23rd December 2021
Denise Park, Chief Executive

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN

ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Members attending a Council, Committee, Board or other meeting with a personal interest in a matter on the Agenda must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and, if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Other Interest under paragraph 16.1 of the Code of Conduct, should leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Members declaring an interest(s) should complete this form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer at the commencement of the meeting and declare such an interest at the appropriate point on the agenda.

MEETING:

DATE:

AGENDA ITEM NO.**:**

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

(Paragraphs 8 to 17 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Council refer)

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP
Wednesday 20th October 2021

PRESENT – Councillors: Maureen Bateson, Katrina Fielding, Jackie Floyd, Julie Gunn, Tony Humphrys, Akhtar Hussain, Mohammed Irfan, Sylvia Liddle, Jane Oates, Zainab Rawat Phil Riley, Dave Smith, Brian Taylor, and Ron Whittle.

OFFICERS –
Jayne Ivory – Director Children's Services & Education
Judith Fennell – Head of Service Permanence and Corporate Parenting, Children's Services
Karen Barrick – Adoption Now
Helen Kane – Service Leader Placements, Children's Services
Lisa Dunkerley – Team Manager Fostering, Children's Services
Janette Clark – Strategic Head of Social Care, Children's Services
Joanne Siddle – Deputy Director, Schools & Education
Paula Quinn – FCA Committee
Sam Briggs – FCA Secretary
Elizabeth Clarkson – Participation & Inclusion Manager, Children's Services
Care Leaver - Vice Chair
Paul Conlon – Democratic Services

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

   The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies were received from the following Councillors: Salim Sidat, Desai, Mark Russell, Jon Baldwin, Abdul Patel, Stephanie Brookfield, Ron Whittle, Vicky McGurk, James Shorrock, Lillian Salton, Zamir Khan, Parwaiz Akhtar, Iftakhar Hussain, Shaukat Hussain, John Slater, McFall, Jean Rigby, Kevin Connor, Jim Smith, Jacquie Slater, Yusuf Jan-Virmani, Suleman Khonat and Jim Casey. Caroline Waldron, Anna Howarth, Angela Allen and Martin Eden.

2. **Declaration of Interest in items on this Agenda**

   RESOLVED - There were no Declarations of Interest received.

3. **Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 27th July 2021**

   RESOLVED – The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th July were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

4. **Introduction From Emma Ford, Deputy Director, Children's Social Care**

   The Group welcomed Emma to the meeting and were appraised of her role within the department.

5. **Children and Young People's Participation Update 2021-24**

The Chair gave an update on the Children and Young People's Participation and Voice Strategy. A copy of the Executive Summary was circulated setting out

- What participation means to Children and Young people
- How children and young people wanted us to work with them
- The Value and Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills and processes and the doing of what young people feel and think.
- How we will know we are making a difference, and,
- The Participation Pathway

Members commented on the positive, professional and clear way that this had been presented. The committee discussed the key messages of the strategy which were 'to do with not to' and how the key message of the strategy would be disseminated. Members agreed that if we all owned the strategy the message would get out.

RESOLVED - That the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2021-24 be endorsed and all those involved in the production be thanks for their hard work and clear product.

6. **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The group were updated on the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The strategy set out the way that the council as corporate parents would look after children in our care and how we would give them the same level of care and support that we want to live to our own children. The strategy set out how we would seek to deliver to looked after children the very best chances in life. This meant we would:-

- Act in children's best interests at all times
- Promote children's physical and mental health wellbeing
- Encourage children to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- Take those views and wishes and feelings into account
- Make sure they could access the services that they need
- Encourage children to aim high and help them to achieve their goals
- Try and secure the best end results for them at all times
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

The strategy set out how the council will work with partners and service providers and would not be acting alone.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

7. **Corporate Parenting Dashboard**

The Group was presented with an update on the latest monitoring report of Children in Our Care as of the 3rd September 2021 and heard that the total number of children in care was 384. Of those, 45% were female and 55% were male.

Members noted the age profiles of children in care with 90 children aged between 15 to 17 years old. The group were informed of the age profile of the

children and the performance of the authority compared with national, regional and comparator averages.

Judith informed the Group that 79% of children in our care were of white / UK ethnicity.

Of the total number of Children in Our Care, Judith highlighted that a high proportion of children were placed in the following:- 113 were placed in in-house foster placements, 68 placed with family and friends, 65 placed with agency foster placements.

The Group then looked at the destinations of Care Leavers with 25% being placed on special guardianship, 21% had reached the age of 18 and 21% had returned to parents.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

8. **Cared for Children from other Local Authorities place within Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.**

The group received an update on cared for children in the borough from other local authorities.

The Group were informed of the legal framework and obligations that related to placements out of borough and within another borough. Local arrangements were agreed through the North West Help and Protection forum complimented by the Children's Safeguard Assurance Partnership Contextual Safeguarding Task and Finish Group. Partner agency were represented from health, police and children's services including Engage. Notifications were collated from other local authorities and recorded. There was also a duty to inform Health Authorities however there was a lack of consistency with police being notified of children coming into Lancashire. The group were updated on the numbers of children placed within the borough and by which authority and the types of placements.

The group were informed that the CSAP Board had identified 3 strands of work that they would now undertake these were:-

- Expectations on Local Authority's placing in the area
- Our own approach to children placed in our area
- Our approach to placing outside the area.

The next steps would also include:-

- A mapping exercise and open communication with regulated and unregulated private providers to build working relationships
- Develop a pack that can be shared with children's homes outlining expectations.
- Develop a provider forum and communication strategy for residential children's homes (information pack)
- Improve health notifications and information sharing
- Develop standard response to Local Authority making inappropriate placements in the area.

The group looked at the process and how children were received into the borough services and the way that services were accessed.

RESOLVED - That the work be noted and that the group be updated on progress at regular intervals.

9. **Foster Carer's Update**

Paula Quinn was invited by the Chair to provide an update to the Group.

Paula informed the Group of the success of the event held at the Tipis at Riley Green on Sunday 5th September.pm. Performers Without Borders had been present at the event, with lots of fun activities for children, young people and families to participate in.

The arrangements for attendance at the pantomime were outlined.

Paula expressed her thanks to Elizabeth Clarkson for putting her in touch with organisers of the recent fun fair in Blackburn, who kindly provided free tickets. This was greatly appreciated and positive feedback was received from those who managed to go.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

Vote of thanks for the Chair
The group thanked the Chair for the articulate and inclusive way that he had chaired the meeting**.**

RESOLVED- That the thanks of the group to the Chair be recorded

Signed: ………………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………….

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

Corporate Parenting

Children in Our Care - 2nd December 2021

Gender of Children in Our Care

Female	180	46%
Male	213	54%
Total CIOC	393	

Age Profile of Children in Care

0 to 2	67	9 to 11	48
3 to 5	45	12 to 14	76
6 to 8	49	15 to 17	108

Ethnicity of Children in Our Care

White/UK	306	78%
Asian Pakistani	34	9%
Other	20	5%
Mixed	20	5%
Black	0	0%
White Other	9	2%
Asian Other, incl Indian	4	1%

Where are children in care placed?

Foster Placements (in-house)	118
Foster Placements (agency)	68
Placed with Parents	66
Friends & Family	63
Res Accom Not Subject to CH Regs	22
Children's Homes (agency)	19
Adoptive Placements	15
Other	8
Children's Homes (in-house)	7
Prison/HMYOI	3
Family Centre/Mother and Baby Unit	2
NHS	1
Secure	1
Residential School	0
Independent Living	0

# Children in Our Care with a Disability	22
% Children in Our Care with a Disability	6%

Entering Care Dec 20 to Nov 21

Age of children entering care

0 to 2	49 (41%)	11 to 15	28 (24%)
3 to 6	18 (15%)	16+	9 (8%)
7 to 10	15 (13%)		

Destinations of Care Leavers

Reached 18	6 (6%)
Returned to parents	23 (23%)
Moved in with relatives	7 (7%)
Other reason	11 (11%)
Child Arrangement Order	1 (1%)
Adopted	19 (19%)
Special guardianship	21 (21%)
Aged 18+ remain current carers	7 (7%)
Independent Living	5 (5%)

Children in Our Care since 2008

Number of Children in our care since 2008

Entering/Leaving Care since 2001

	Entering	Leaving	Net
Total in 2001	111	95	16
Total in 2002	103	117	-14
Total in 2003	131	134	-3
Total in 2004	102	104	-2
Total in 2005	119	100	19
Total in 2006	94	104	-10
Total in 2007	97	92	5
Total in 2008	114	104	10
Total in 2009	151	94	57
Total in 2010	112	123	-11
Total in 2011	155	128	27
Total in 2012	125	149	-24
Total in 2013	123	120	3
Total in 2014	89	125	-36
Total in 2015	163	139	24
Total in 2016	170	139	31
Total in 2017	161	143	18
Total in 2018	162	153	9
Total in 2019	155	144	11
Total in 2020	110	134	-24
Total in 2021	108	86	22

*Please note this table is calculated by calendar years

CLA as at 31st March

	2020/21	2019/20
CLA as at 31st March	374	411
Male	207 (55%)	228 (55%)
Female	167 (45%)	183 (45%)
0 to 2	57 (15%)	73 (18%)
3 to 5	55 (15%)	63 (15%)
6 to 8	49 (13%)	52 (13%)
9 to 11	43 (11%)	52 (13%)
12 to 14	78 (21%)	77 (19%)
15 to 17	92 (25%)	94 (23%)
White/UK	291 (78%)	327 (80%)
Asian Pakistani	37 (10%)	42 (10%)
Other	15 (4%)	13 (3%)
Mixed	20 (5%)	18 (4%)
Black	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
White Other	5 (1%)	4 (1%)
Asian Other, incl Indian	6 (2%)	6 (2%)

Entering Care / Destinations of Care Leavers

	2020/21	2019/20
Age of children entering care		
0 to 2	39 (44%)	57 (38%)
3 to 6	13 (15%)	35 (23%)
7 to 10	12 (14%)	20 (13%)
11 to15	20 (23%)	31 (21%)
16+	4 (5%)	8 (5%)
Destinations of Care Leavers		
Reached 18	27 (21%)	34 (24%)
Returned to parents	26 (21%)	32 (23%)
Moved in with relatives	5 (4%)	10 (7%)
Other Reason	14 (11%)	19 (13%)
Child Arrangement Order	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
Adopted	21 (17%)	21 (15%)
Special guardianship	31 (25%)	23 (16%)

*Please note the 2020/21 figures are provisional

Performance compared with national, regional and comparator averages

	Current - BwD***	Comparator Average*	Regional Average*	National Average*
Number of children in our care (CIOC) per 10,000 0-18 year old population	101	107	97	67
% in foster care	63%	73%	67%	72%
Of which - in-house provider or family and friends approved care	46%			
Of which - Other provider	17%			
% in adoption placements	4%	3%	2%	3%
% in residential/resi schools/secure/other residential provision	12%	14%	14%	15%
% placed at home with parents	17%	8%	13%	7%
Placement Stability (% of CIOC with 3 placements or more in a yr)	10%	10%	9%	11%
Placement Stability (% of CIOC in same placement for past 2 yrs & in care for 2.5 yrs+	65%	68%	69%	68%
% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 in touch with the LA	98%			
% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 years old in Education, Employment or Training	48%	51%	49%	53%
% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 years old in suitable accommodation	98%	88%	89%	85%
Adoption Scorecard (rolling 3 yrs) - entry into care to adoption placement (days) (A1	487			
Adoption Scorecard (rolling 3 yrs) - Placement Order to matching (days) (A2)	233			
% of children in our care aged 10-17, in care for over 12 months, who have offended	0.6%			
Number of unaccompanied asylum seekers in care	6			

*Comparable information as at March 2020 **CIOC offending data for Q2 2021/22 only ***Current BwD data as at 2nd December 2021

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Background and Purpose

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities in England to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, wherever they live or are educated. That person – hereafter referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH) - must be an officer employed by the authority or another local authority in England

The key responsibilities of the Virtual School Head (VSH) are:

- To ensure every looked after child has a suitable educational place that meets their needs
- To maintain an up-to-date roll of looked after children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.
- To inform headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the VSH's local authority
- To ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, reviewing and updating the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP
- To ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes and that all looked after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP
- Allocate the Pupil Premium Plus to support improved educational outcomes for children in care
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked-after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
- Report regularly on the attainment of looked after children through the authority's corporate parenting structure

In 2018, additional duties were added to the VSH role to include previously looked-after children. For this group the VSH acts as a source of advice and information to help their parents advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs are not acting as part of the corporate parent role in these circumstances, but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to relevant parties

The purpose of this report is to give the Virtual Head's overview of these areas for the financial and academic year 2020-21. Please note that due to a lack of nationally published data all data provided in this report is un-validated.

Structure and Governance

All school age Children in our Care (CIOC) are on the roll of the Virtual School. In BwD the Virtual School 'staff' includes the Virtual School Head, CIOC Education Manager, Education Support Workers, an Educational Psychologist and New Directions Advisors. In addition, there are close working links with Clinical Psychologist/Revive, Early Years, Leaving Care teams to support our children and young people holistically. The Virtual School is overseen by a Governing Body and reports to the Corporate Parenting Executive Boards and the Corporate Parenting Specialist

Advisory Group. The Virtual School also has working links with Adoption Now, our Regional Adoption Agency.

Virtual School Roll

The Virtual School has a challenging make-up in terms of its roll, is typically boy heavy (55:45) and made up of 80% White British (unusual for BwD). At the start of the academic year 2020/21 the Virtual School had 248 school aged Children In Our Care (CIOC) on roll, 117 primary and 131 secondary. 151 children attended school in the borough, 77 primary and 74 secondary and 97 attended out of borough schools, 40 primary and 57 secondary. The total school roll by the end of the academic year 2020/21 had decreased to 239. These figures are within the typical range of the Virtual School.

School Location 2020/21
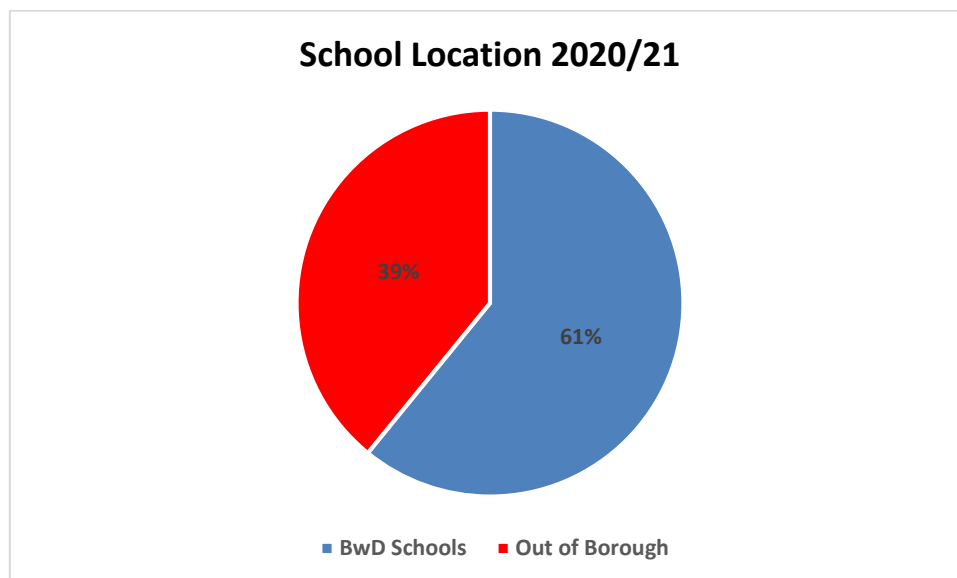
The Virtual School roll includes learners aged 16-18 of which there were 60 on roll with 30 students in Year 12 and 30 students in Year 13. Within the post 16 cohort, students attend a range of establishments to continue their education with 3 students (Year 13) recorded as NEET (not in education, employment or training). 1 NEET student has complex mental health issues and were not well enough to continue into EET. Another NEET student later returned to college and has completed the year of her course and has plans to attend University. The third NEET student did re-engage and attended provision but then dis-engaged. On-going support for NEET students is provided through our New Directions commission working closely with Leaving Care team. All Year 12 students had a destination and were EET.

School Ofsted Categories

The Virtual School is committed to providing a high quality education or training placements where learning is inspiring and challenging, leading to the best possible outcomes for every child and preparing them well for adult life. The school the child/young person attends plays a vital role in meeting this commitment and as such the Virtual School monitors the Ofsted grades of the schools/settings attended both through the PEP and a monitoring system. If a school is inspected and deemed inadequate or requires improvement consideration is given as to whether a change of school would be appropriate. However, it is unlikely that a school move would be instigated if, following review, the child/young person is making good progress, is settled socially and their wider needs are being met.

An analysis of the inspection judgements at the start of the academic year 2020/21 for schools with Blackburn with Darwen children attending show that 84% of looked after children attend schools judged good or better, with 0% attending inadequate schools and 2% in schools that have not yet been inspected.

Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision

Children in our Care are typically identified as a group more likely to have Special Educational Needs. 23% of CIOC who have been continuously looked after for 12 months have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which impacts significantly on overall outcomes for CIOC but also illustrates the range of additional challenges faced by our pupils. In addition, a further 28% do not have an EHCP but are identified as having special needs and receiving SEN Support. The majority of CIOC attend mainstream schools however a number do receive their education in special and alternative provision settings in order to ensure their needs are fully met. The number of school age CIOC in special school was 24 with 11 attending alternative provision. The Virtual School works closely with the SEND team around provision and meet regularly to discuss 'fragile cases' and also the outcomes at commissioning panel which may mean a young person with SEND and may need a new school place, often out of area. A small number of our young people (3) who were of secondary age receive a reduced curriculum on a planned/short term basis in order to best meet their educational, social, emotional and mental health/medical needs at this time. Regular 1:1 tuition on a personalised curriculum or online learning is used on occasion to enable the process of re-integration to full time education at a pace that best meets the needs of the young person whilst giving a continuing emphasis on the importance of education in their lives.
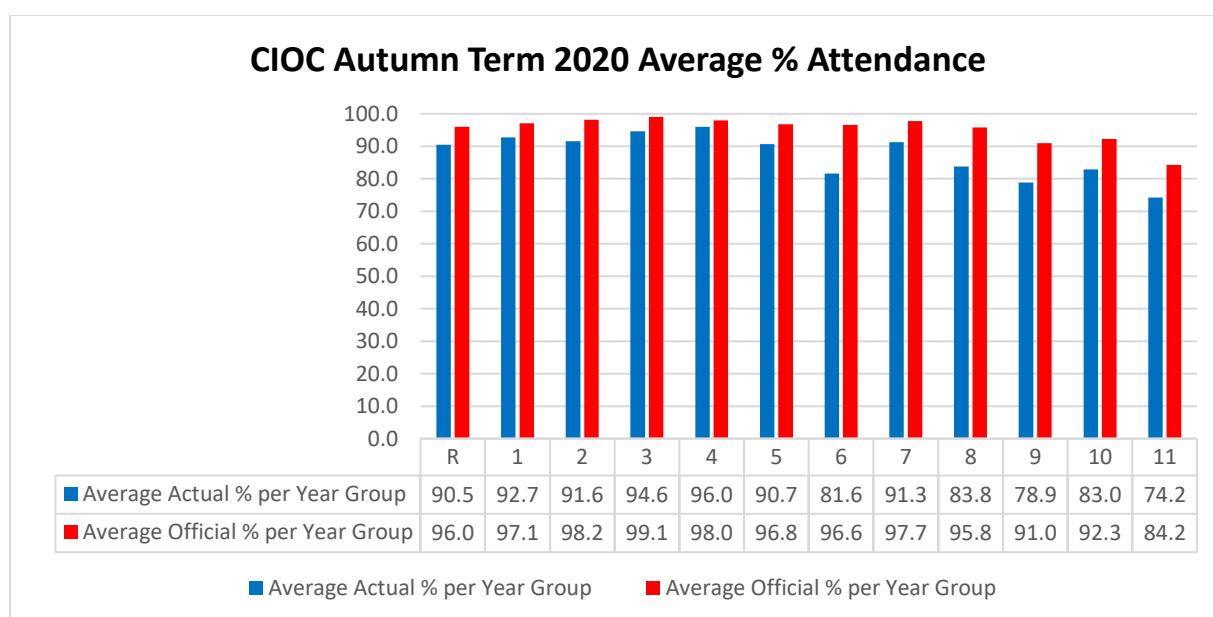

CIOC School Type 2020/21
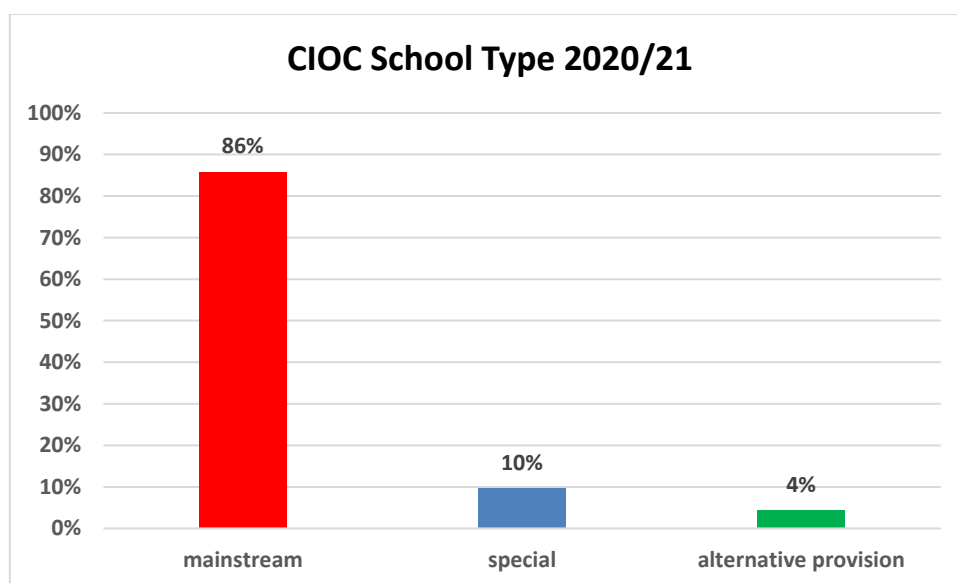
Attendance and Exclusions

Performance in attendance and fixed term exclusion is strong demonstrating that BwD Local Authority and its schools are very inclusive. Average termly attendance for 2019-20 prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic was 94%. Daily attendance is monitored through the Welfare Call service commissioned by the Virtual School. This data can be viewed online in real time by the Virtual School and enables the Virtual School to intervene promptly to individual cases and develop strategic responses to trends when looked after children are absent from school. This system also gives early warning of exclusions with the provider collecting relevant notification letters.

Attendance

Autumn Term 2020 Attendance

The return to school in September 2020 went smoothly, prior to the return we re-issued information to foster carers and schools and advised to raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity. Due to the on-going prevalence of Covid-19 in the BwD area and the on-going use of X codes to record Covid related absence, the Virtual School continued to record actual and official attendance figures for those on roll. This means that we have an accurate picture of those physically present in school as well as their officially recorded attendance. Overall attendance was positive despite the on-going impact of Covid related absence, bubble closures and individual periods of self-isolation. **Average actual attendance was 87.4% and average official attendance was 95.2% for the Virtual School overall.**
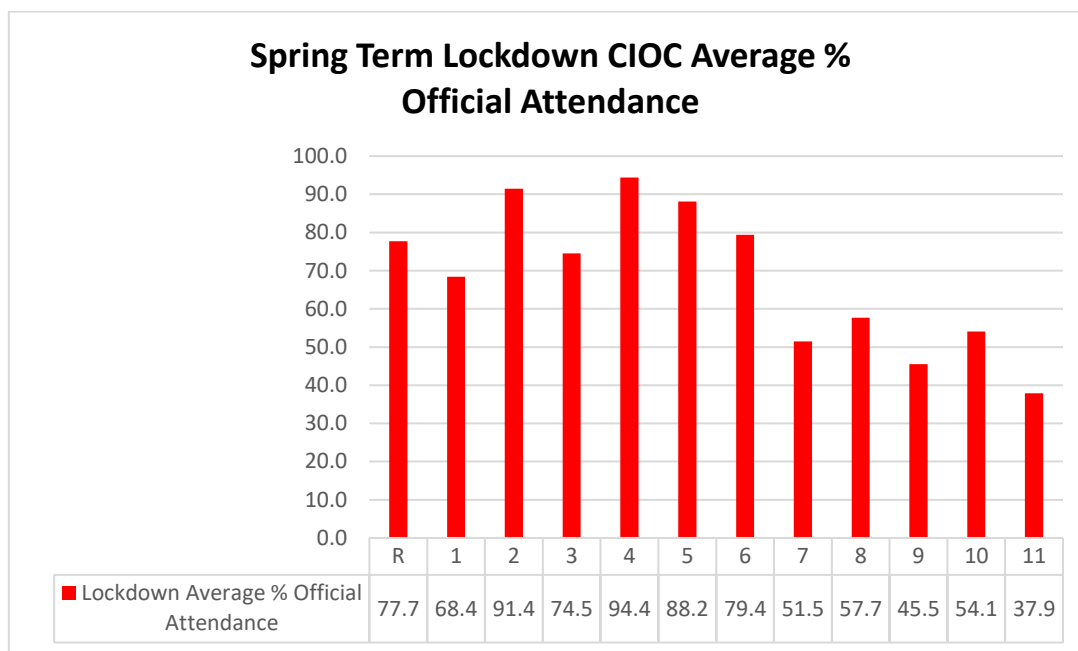
CIOC Autumn Term 2020 Average % Attendance

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Average Actual % per Year Group	90.5	92.7	91.6	94.6	96.0	90.7	81.6	91.3	83.8	78.9	83.0	74.2
Average Official % per Year Group	96.0	97.1	98.2	99.1	98.0	96.8	96.6	97.7	95.8	91.0	92.3	84.2

■ Average Actual % per Year Group   ■ Average Official % per Year Group

Spring Term 2021 Attendance

During Lockdown

A national lockdown was implemented in January 2021 just as CIOC were due to return to school. All CIOC under DfE guidelines were expected to attend during this period and if they did not then they were marked absent using a C code rather than the X code that their non-looked after peers received. In BwD we took a more nuanced approach to school attendance focusing on the needs of the child and their individual circumstances, this approach was agreed with senior leadership with Children's Services & Education and with social care managers. The Virtual School RAG rated each child from an educational perspective, this was then reviewed by their social worker including discussions with carer and school. A decision was then made based on this information as to whether the child would attend school or access remote learning. Carers and children welcomed this approach and were disappointed by the stance taken by DfE, this was raised regionally and nationally by VSHs however the approach to attendance coding remained.
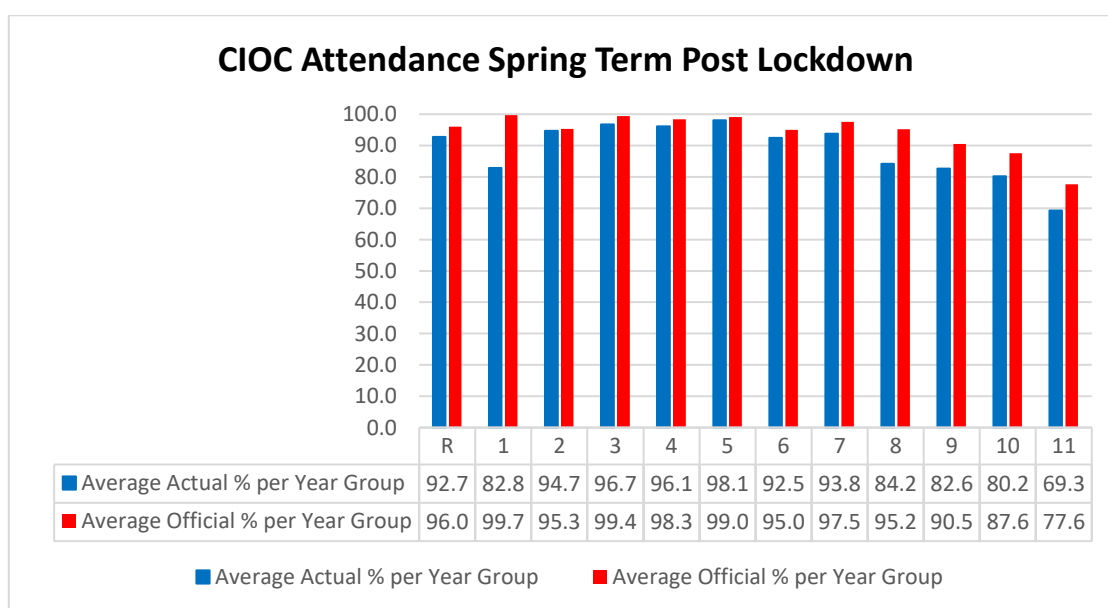
Average official attendance during this period was 68.4% for the Virtual School overall. More CIOC took up places at primary schools than those in secondary schools. **Average official**

attendance in primary age children was 82% compared with 49% of secondary school age young people.

Spring Term Lockdown CIOC Average % Official Attendance

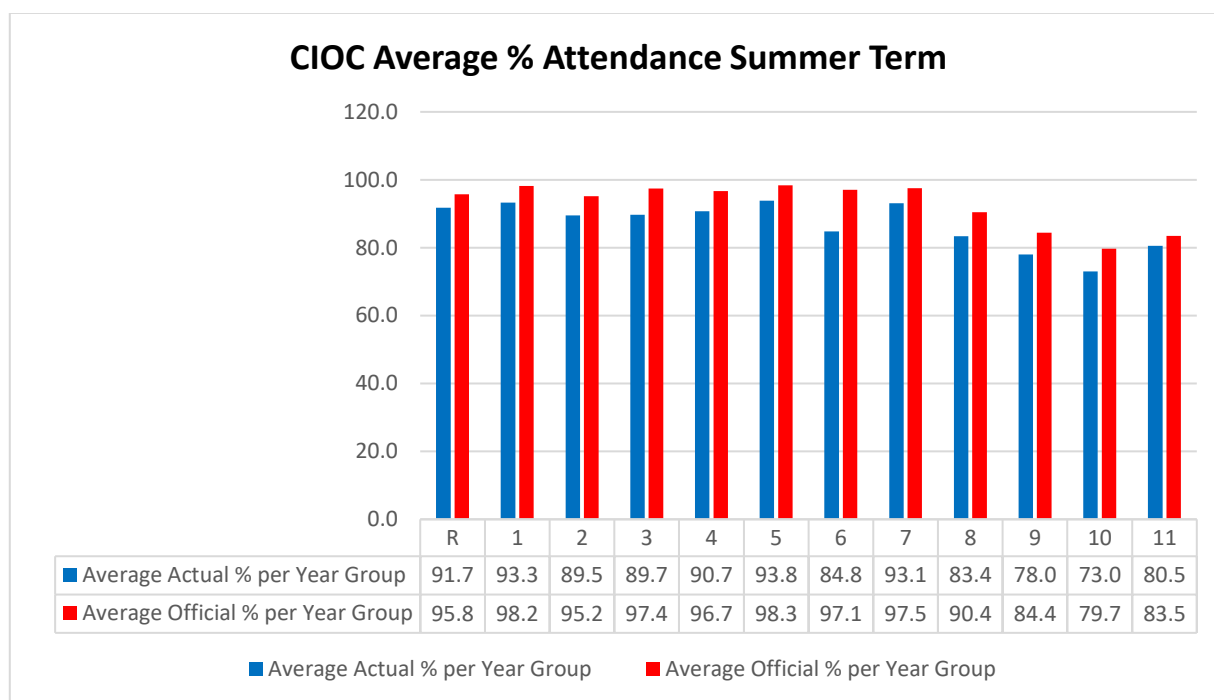|	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Lockdown Average % Official Attendance	77.7	68.4	91.4	74.5	94.4	88.2	79.4	51.5	57.7	45.5	54.1	37.9

Post Lockdown

Following the lockdown, pupils returned to school on the 8th March. For the period 8th-26th March attendance was tracked as actual and official as our pupils continued to be affected by bubble closures and individual periods of self-isolation. Despite this, overall attendance for the Virtual School remained positive with **average actual attendance at 88.7% and average official attendance at 94.3% during this time period.**

CIOC Attendance Spring Term Post Lockdown

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Average Actual % per Year Group	92.7	82.8	94.7	96.7	96.1	98.1	92.5	93.8	84.2	82.6	80.2	69.3
Average Official % per Year Group	96.0	99.7	95.3	99.4	98.3	99.0	95.0	97.5	95.2	90.5	87.6	77.6

Summer Term 2021 Attendance

During the summer term attendance again remained positive, there was a noticeable impact of Covid with as much as 20% differences between actual and official attendance weekly figures

5

during June and July where BwD faced extremely challenging circumstances once again. **Average actual attendance was 86.8% and average official attendance was 92.8% for the Virtual School overall.**

CIOC Average % Attendance Summer Term

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Average Actual % per Year Group	91.7	93.3	89.5	89.7	90.7	93.8	84.8	93.1	83.4	78.0	73.0	80.5
Average Official % per Year Group	95.8	98.2	95.2	97.4	96.7	98.3	97.1	97.5	90.4	84.4	79.7	83.5

■ Average Actual % per Year Group   ■ Average Official % per Year Group

Remote Learning

Many children and young people have accessed remote learning at various points throughout the academic year, this is captured in the PEP document. The Virtual School led the work around roll out of DfE laptops and children in care were prioritised, this information is also captured in the PEP. The Virtual School carried out follow up activity to understand the impact receiving the devices had on children and young people:

88% were using the device to support their education/learning.

12% were using the device for social activities and/or staying in touch with services only.

82% felt that having the device had benefitted their education.

Exclusions

There have been no permanent exclusions, 9% (23 young people received fixed term exclusions for a total of 87.5 days in the academic year 2020/21, 22 of secondary school age and 1 in primary (Year 6). 9 of these young people was excluded from alternative provision, 4 from special schools and 10 from mainstream schools. Reduction in exclusions remains a priority for the Virtual Schools across the North West.

PEPS

The Personal Education Plan is an important document which provides the opportunity for care and education professionals to work together with children and their carers/parents to support their

educational achievement. As such, improving practice and outcomes through high quality PEPs, effectively delivered and monitored is a priority area for the Virtual School. PEP documentation is reviewed and updated annually ready for the start of the academic year. There has been a focus on the roll out of the Delegation Portal, which links to the Protocol application for the completion of PEPS. This will provides secure access for schools as well as social workers with write back directly to the social care system. The portal was made live in September 2019 and although there have been some challenges in establishing the process and technology overall this has worked well and been positively received by professionals. The roll out was extend in September 2020 for Post 16 PEPs and preparatory work has begun to move to the system for Early Years PEPs.

A PEP tracker is in place to monitor termly completion rates, audit and other key information. A quality assurance process is an important part of using PEPs to drive improved educational outcomes. All PEPs receive an initial quality assurance and compliance check whereby the PEP is returned to the social worker and school with immediate feedback if there are queries or it is non-compliant. PEP audit 'weeks' also take place the 'week' is split over 2 separate weeks with the first part over 3 days soon after the deadline date and the second part taking place in the later part of the term. This was implemented as a split week as findings showed that PEPs submitted in a timely fashion were often from the same social workers and schools and therefore those that arrived later were not picked up through the process when a standard set week was used. The audit comprises of a large sample PEPS for that term taken from a cross section of in and out of borough schools and across the range of social work teams. The document is reviewed using the PEP audit tool and the audit team comprises of the Virtual School team and a QA Officer plus volunteers from social care, education, school staff etc. The completed audit tool is sent as feedback to SW, SW manager, Designated Teacher and Headteacher and funding is not released where a PEP is judged inadequate although there is an opportunity for this to be rectified and re-submitted. School staff and social workers who have taken part have reported that the process has aided their own professional development in terms of producing high quality PEPs. Outcomes for the previous academic years are detailed below and demonstrate that there is still a need for a constant drive in this in both completion rates and quality of documentation, this area has been a corporate priority for 2019/20. This analysis has also enabled the Virtual School to identify training and development activities needed to support practitioners in different areas. Unfortunately, due to VS Team pressures during Covid and capacity/availability of other professionals at this time only a small number of PEPS were audited in during the 2019/20 academic year and similar challenges in the 2020/21 academic year although an increase on the previous year with 30% receiving a full audit.

Term	Completion Rate	Quality % Good or Better (audited)
Autumn 2018	89%	34%
Spring 2019	90%	52%
Summer 2019	73%	52%

Autumn 2019	97%	51%
Spring 2020	90%	93%*
Summer 2020	83%	61%*
Autumn 2020	95%	60%
Spring 2021	94%	71%
Summer 2021	91%	79%

* only a small number of PEPs (10% Spring 2020 6% Summer 2020) audited due to Covid 19 pressures therefore figures should be treated with caution. Covid pressure remained but this increased in 2020/21 to 30%. Of PEPs receiving a detailed audit – note all PEPs have an initial QA check.

Completion rates for Summer term 2021 were impacted slightly by the local issues with the pandemic but overall despite the challenges and average completion for the academic year of 93% was reached. Although this is slightly below our target it is a realistic and positive figure given the circumstances and from our baseline of 84% in 2018_19.

Pupil Premium Plus

In 2020/21 (financial year) the total pupil premium allocation was £715225 (not including final EYPP). The spend on centralised resources in 2020/21 was approximately 35% of pupil premium budget. During the 2020-21 financial year, a Pupil Premium Plus Policy for CIOC has been maintained. A Pupil Premium Plus tracker has been used to ensure that the VSH can effectively manage the statutory responsibilities in these areas. This includes dates when PEPs including costed provisions are submitted, when payments have been made, to whom and for which CIOC and outcomes of quality assurance processes. In addition to the standard allocation of £2345* per CIOC per annum is tracked and impact measured through the PEP/ provision map we have also been able to centrally fund the following:

Virtual School Use of PP+	**Impact /Evidence**
Virtual School Educational Psychologist.	Exclusion rates remain relatively low with few children being re-referred following EP involvement. School are provided with appropriate strategies to best support the child/young person in meeting their learning and social, emotional and mental health needs. Those who need it are progressed to EHCP panel at which the EP report is essential. 36 new requests for EP involvement were received during this period.
Welfare Call, attendance monitoring service.	Although there has been significant disruption attendance within the Virtual

	School is good – please refer to attendance section for a detailed breakdown. Attendance monitoring and reports provided by Welfare Call allow for swift intervention where attendance drops below expected thresholds or if there are emerging patterns. Fixed term exclusions are picked up quickly from the attendance reports and inform discussions with schools regarding any necessary interventions. Social workers also receive direct notification of any absence.
Letterbox (book parcels) for Pre-School and Primary aged pupils to promote reading.	Reading is an important aspect of learning at all ages and we actively promote this at home. Children tell us they enjoy receiving the parcels and actively engage with these alongside foster carers and social workers. Some foster carers fail to collect parcels if they are not at home when the post arrives and these parcels are then returned to the Virtual School. Where this is an issue, it has been raised by Virtual School with social workers/fostering to ensure these are collected and used. Some social workers like to take the packs when they undertake visits and engage with CIOC about them.
GCSE Maths and English tuition for students via Kip McGrath study centre.	From autumn of the academic year 2020/21, the sessions have been delivered virtually. We have found that more young people have taken this up and it is accessible for all wherever they live. To support recovery we have expanded our offer from Year 11 and 10 to include Years 5, 6 and 9 and offered sessions during the summer holidays. Feedback from one of our Year 11 young people… '*The Kip McGrath sessions helped me out well as it supported me with my English and maths and helped me get a better grade. With Kip I was able to achieve a grade 5 in maths! It helped me with education of subjects I didn't usually enjoy but I do now*'.
Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) full training and supervision	Following our ACE pathfinder work the roll of the ELSA was identified as a key role within school for supporting children and also driving change. The Virtual School has funded a programme to ensure all BwD schools have at least one qualified ELSA. Where possible we have extended this to out of borough schools who have

	our CIOC on roll. To date 155 new ELSAs have been trained.
Events including the Annual CIOC Celebration of Achievement.	The highlight of the Virtual School Year is this event. This year we came together virtually to celebrate the successes of our children and young people. As no venue was needed funding was used to provide gift vouchers to a higher value as well as Just Eat vouchers so children, young people and their families could still enjoy a special meal of their choice together. We even had a video message from celebrity Fleur East.
New Directions Commission	All of our young people in Years 9 to 13 on the roll of the BwD Virtual School with high quality, impartial careers, advice and guidance wherever they live or are educated. 95 % of our Year 12/13 cohort were in EET in September 2020 with the remaining 5% being actively supported.
PEP Quality Assurance Officer	All PEPs have an initial QA check with immediate feedback to social worker/school where they do not meet requirements linked to the needs of the CIOC. This role ensures that the drive to ensure all CIOC have a high quality PEP that meets their educational needs is maintained and that social workers and school staff are supported in achieving this. PEP QA Officers have been fundamental to the roll out of the ePEP via the Delegation Portal.
Additional resource/support on a case by case basis such as 1:1 tuition.	1:1 tuition and Nisai online tuition is used to support our young people on a short-term basis often when they have moved placement and are awaiting a school place out of area. Nisai core curriculum allows us to give young people access to a core timetable of on-line learning with less than 24 hours' notice to the service. Bespoke support through 1:1 tuition was funded to a young person who had to move out of the area temporarily at short notice. As her plan was to return to BwD she remained on roll at her BwD school and accessed remote learning due to lockdown. When schools returned we were able to provide some 1:1 tuition in Maths and English additionally to the remote learning provided by school.

*For 2020/21 the additional £33 allocated to the PP+ in April 2020 was not directly released to schools but used to partially fund a £50 payment to in-house carers, vouchers for agency carers and resources for those on care orders at home to support home learning during lockdown.

In response to Ofsted recommendation relating to *'Ensure that personal education plans for children looked after involve children and young people and are specific about targets and achievements, and that the impact of pupil premium funds is monitored and used to best effect'.* During the Summer terms of 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 a piece of audit work was commissioned to look specifically at this area with the outcomes listed in the table below. In the financial year 2020/21, £332,630 was requested and allocated to schools via pupils' PEPs.

Question	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Are schools spending the PP+ funding on CIOC?	**68%** of PEPs show that the full funding is being spent **23%** show that the funding is partially spent 9% do not show that PP+ is being spent	**71 %** of PEPs show that the full funding is being spent **22 %** show that the funding is being partially spent **7%** do not show the PP+ is being spent	**74%** of PEPs show that the full funding is being spent **14%** show that the funding is partially spent **12%** do not show how/if PP+ is being spent	**54%** of PEPs show the full funding is being spent **35%** show that the funding is being partially spent 11% do not show how/if PP+ is being sent
			There is an improvement in schools being clearer in their description and putting costs against it - but still some schools showing limited completions on the PEP (TA time)	*The variation in the full funding being spent is due to the impact of the Covid pandemic and children not being physically in school. Schools may have struggled to offer their originally planned interventions due to restrictions and limits on staffing. This will be monitored following the return to*

				school for 2021/22.
How is it being spent?	There is a focus on improved academic progress in **71%** of PEPs and **28%** focus on behaviour and pupil engagement. The remaining **1%** are unclear.	**86%** of PP+ is spent on improving academic outcomes **12%** show spend on improving behaviour and engagement **2%** unclear	**79%** of PP+ is spent on improving academic outcomes **21%** show spend on improving behaviour and/or engagement with education	**80%** of PP+ is spend on improving academic outcomes **20%** is used to support school engagement and inclusion
			Some improved clarity on what schools are spending it on allows us to cleaner breakdown between the these two criteria	
Are people recording in the pep what they are spending the money on and how much of it they are spending?	**93%** of PEPs record specific interventions in 9 different categories covering academic, behavioural/emotional, equipment and extra-curricular areas.	**97%** of PEPs record specific interventions in 9 different categories covering academic, behavioural/emotional, equipment and extra-curricular areas.	**88%** of PEPs record specific interventions in 9 different categories covering academic, behavioural/emotional, equipment and extra-curricular areas.	**97%** of PEPs record specific interventions in 9 different categories covering academic, behavioural/emotional, equipment and extra-curricular areas.
Are the PP+ funded pep targets SMART-	**26%** have Good SMART targets **40%** have Average SMART targets **34%** have Poor SMART targets	**33%** have Good SMART targets **36%** have Average SMART targets **31%** have Poor SMART targets	**40%** have Good SMART targets **37%** have Average SMART targets **23%** have poor SMART	**29%** have Good SMART targets **36%** have Average SMART targets **33%** have Poor SMART targets

	Target setting is less good and SMART in secondary PEPs compared to primary.	Target setting is less good and SMART in secondary PEPs compared to primary	Target setting remains less good and SMART in secondary PEPs compared to primary PEPs	Quality of target setting remains a challenge and has declined during the pandemic. School report finding it more difficult to set suitable targets when children are not in school and resources are restricted due to the pandemic.
Do the PEPs show good detail of the PP+ spend?	Not measured	36% show good 30% show average 31% show poor 3% not used	74% show good detail 14% show average detail 12% show no workable detail	41% show good detail 24% show average detail 22% show poor detail 10% not used
What is the dominant focus of PP+ targets/interventions – e.g. are they academic?	*The dominant PP+ funded interventions are academic both in 1:1 and small group.*	*The dominant PP+ funded interventions are academic both in 1:1 and small group work*	*The dominant PP+ funded interventions are academic both in 1:1 and small group work*	*The dominant PP+ funded intervention is academic 1:1 at 52% some group work but much less than previous years.* *24% of PP+ is used to provide behaviour/emotional support*
	71% show improving academic performance as a primary use of the funding 28% show improving behaviour and	87% show improving academic performance as a primary use of the funding 12% show improving behaviour and	**79%** show improving academic outcomes as the primary use of the funding **21%** show improving behaviour or engagement with school as	**80%** show improving academic outcomes as the primary use of the funding **20%** show supporting school engagement and inclusion

	engagement was the primary use of the funding 11% were unclear what the primary focus was	engagement was the primary use of the funding 1% are unclear on what the primary use of the funding was	the primary use of the funding	as the primary use of funding
Do the PEPS tell us that PP+ funded targets are being reached	**42%** fully met targets with the remainder either met partially or not at all.	**45%** show last terms targets gave been fully met **10%** showed the targets were partially met **17%** are unclear if the targets were met or not **28%** show last terms targets were not met	**65%** of PEPs show PP+ funded targets were met or partially met from previous term **29%** show last terms targets have been fully met **36%** showed the targets were partially met) **31%** show last terms targets were not met) **4%** are unclear if the targets were met or not)	**74%** of PEPs show PP+ funded targets were met or partially met from previous term **40%** show last terms targets have been fully met **34%** showed the targets were partially met) **16%** show last terms targets were not met) **3%** are unclear if the targets were met or not)
Are CIOC pupils making their age related expectations – is the extra investment helping?	**38%** are described as making their age related expectations **40%** are described as not making them **22%** unclear	**30%** are described as making their age related expectations **61%** are not making them **9%** unclear	**27%** are describes as making their age related expectations **57%** are not making them **17%** it's unclear from the PEP	**34%** are described as making their age related expectations **53%** are not making them **11%** are partially making them **1%** unclear
			Not an unusual picture for CIOC but of concern. However on	*It is pleasing that despite the challenges faced, an increased*

			reading the PEPs many children are described (in teacher comments) as making good academic progress (as well as personal progress happy/settled etc) but still below ARE.	*number have made age related expectations.*
Can we see if pupils are making good personal progress?	**69%** are described as making good personal progress **13%** are not **18%** unclear	**73 %** of children are described as making good personal progress **15%** are not **12%** unclear	**80%** of children are described as making good personal progress **7%** are not **13%** are unclear	**85%** of children are described as making good personal progress **11%** are not **1%** partially **3%** unclear
				CIOC are consistently described as making good personal progress,
How are the PP+ interventions being delivered – are there different ways of spending the grant?	Next steps: School visits and training from September 2018.		Mainly schools are using TAs and costing the salary to the PP+ **9%** = Boosting academic progress 1:1 **6%** Boosting academic progress small groups **40%** = Academic catch up 1:1 **17%** = Academic catch up in small groups **6%** = Purchase of learning tools **4%** = Support for behavioural	**10%** Academic booster work in a 1:1 setting **1%** Academic booster work in class or small groups **42%** Academic remedial work in a 1:1 setting catch up **9%** Academic remedial work in class or small groups **9%** The purchase of learning equipment **20%** Behavioural or emotional support in school

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			or emotional issues 1:1 **13%** = Support for behavioural or emotional issues other **5%** = Extra-curricular support (e.g. sport) Life enrichment cultural activities (e.g. arts etc.)	**4%** Behavioural or emotional support (other) **1%** Extra-curricular support - Clubs or sports **1%** Life enrichment activities **3%** Cultural activities Not stated or unclear
Does the PEP show the pupil has good attendance?		90% of PEPs show good attendance 8% showing concern 2% showing poor attendance	93% of children show good attendance 7% show concern	86% of children are described as having good attendance 14% show concern
			Attendance remains very good across the sample in line with VS attendance records.	Overall attendance has been good despite the pandemic. Agreements were reached where children did/did not attend school – see attendance section.

This area of work was identified as a continuing priority in the 2020-21 academic year and will continue into 2021-22 which will commence with mandatory PEP training to be attended by all Designated Teachers, Social Workers and relevant CIOC professionals. The PEP audit tool includes recording of use and impact of PP+ at school level. Where necessary this is followed up with school visits and training. It is clear that whilst we are still seeing positive outcomes in terms of progress for CIOC there are issues with the quality of target setting and costing PP+ which will be re-visited as part of the mandatory training.

Attainment and Progress

Note:

*It is important to recognise that due to the relaxation in requirements for end of Key Stage tests and GCSE data reporting for schools the attainment data used is un-validated and collected directly by the Virtual School. There is no or very limited comparative data available. The data below (unless otherwise stated) is for **those children and young people who were looked after continuously for at least 12 months up to and including 31 March 2020 for outcomes in that year and 31st March 2021 for 2021***.

Summary

In more typical years, although overall, gaps in performance between looked after children and their peers remain large there are many strengths for BwD CIOC. In 2019_20 which is the last validated data we have access to.

Performance at the end of KS4 is often a challenge but our KS4 young people had much success in 2020 and 2021 despite the turbulent times. It is important that these figures are contextualised for each cohort given the complexity of their individual circumstances, consideration should be given for example to Gender, SEND status, when the young person came into care and the number of placements (stability) they have had during this time, size of the cohort clearly impacts on percentages when the group is small.. An overview of this is provided at the start of each section for each key stage.

KS2 Attainment Expected Standard 2021

Key Stage 2 attainment is normally based on tests and teacher assessments undertaken at the end of primary school. For 2020 and 2021 these tests did not take place. For 2020 we did not request this data from schools nor was it published. For 2021, school provided this information voluntarily and it is un-validated data.

Virtual School	2021 TA Outcome In Care 12+ Months	2021 TA Outcome Full Cohort
Cohort	8	13
Male	5	6
Female	3	7
EHCP	2	2
RWM	38%	38%
Reading	50%	46%
Writing	38%	38%
Maths	63%	54%

Key Stage 4

Virtual School Context	2020	2021
Cohort In Care 12 months +	22	32
Gender (Boys)	77%	50%
Gender (Girls)	23%	50%
EHCP	36%	31%
Educated in LA	55%	56%
In care age 12+	23%	56%

GCSE Grades – GCSEs are now measured as 9-1 (9 being the highest), Grade 4 is a 'standard' pass and Grade 5 is a 'strong' pass. A key measure is whether pupils achieve both English and Maths.

BwD Virtual School		2020 In Care 12+ Months (22)	2020 All Pupils on roll (30)	2021 In Care 12+ Months (32)	2021 All Pupils on roll (39)
GCSE English	Standard, 9-4	36%	37%	41%	44%
	Strong, 9-5	5%	7%	19%	23%
GCSE Maths	Standard, 9-4	23%	23%	44%	44%
	Strong, 9-5	18%	17%	16%	18%
Achieved English & Maths	Standard, 9-4	18%	20%	34%	36%
	Strong, 9-5	0%	3%	9%	13%
Achieved Any Qualification		82%	87%	94%	95%

Destinations

2020 and 2021

In both 2020 and 2021 all Year 11 all young people had an offer of Education, Employment or training or continued in their existing provision.

In 2020 12 Care Leavers were attending university. The number of Care Leavers attending university increased in 2021 to 17.

Management Information

The Virtual School has continued its use of a management information system to enable effective tracking and analysis of data utilising SIMS. The development of the system to date incorporates the following:

- Maintenance of the Virtual School roll incorporating pupils from Reception to Year 13.
- Termly assessment data collected and imported into the system.

- Appending PEPS, Educational Psychology reports and other relevant documents to each child's file.
- Recording of SEN status.
- Recording of Protocol ID to enable matching to the social care system Liquid Logic.

Children in their Early Years

Early Years Personal Education Plans (EY PEPs) are a statutory requirement for three and four-year-old children who are accessing their free early learning offer. In Blackburn with Darwen, as good practise, early years providers also encouraged to submit documentation for two year olds who are accessing early education places. Additional EYPP funding is provided to early years settings to support children aged three plus who are looked after, the EY PEP details how this is spent to provide support and resources for the individual child.

The Early Help and Support service oversees the EY PEP process including auditing submissions. In the last academic year, the following areas were identified as areas of focus:

- **Returns** – social workers currently submit electronic forms rather than using the online portal process used by primary schools, and this affects the number of returns as settings are not yet set up to do this.
- **Tracking termly EY PEPs** - when a termly EY PEP is not submitted it leaves a gap in the understanding about the child's progress and the opportunity to track this though the year is lost.
- **Children's voices** - the use of the children's interest and feedback (their voice) should shape targets and this is an area that needs further development with early year's settings.

Actions and progress against these development areas:

- The online digital platform is now in its testing stage.
- We are inviting all early years settings to receive training on the portal.
- Support settings to complete EY PEPs on the portal once trained

Data for academic year September 2020 – July 2021:

Term	No of stat. aged children		No received	No of non-stat aged children		No received
Summer Term – 10th June 2021	3 year olds	21	8	2 year olds	26	1
	4 year olds	21	5			
	Totals	**42**	**13**	**Totals**	**26**	**1**

Term	No. of stat. aged children		No received	No of non-stat aged children		No received
Spring Term - 25th February 2021	3 year olds	20	7	2 year olds	26	2
	4 year olds	16	8			
	Totals	**36**	**15**	**Totals**	**26**	**2**

Term	No of stat. aged children		No received	No of non-statutory children		No received
	3 year olds	20	6	2 year olds	26	1

| Autumn Term – 5th November 2020 | 4 year olds | 16 | 9 | | | |
| | Totals | 36 | 15 | Totals | 26 | 1 |

Quality Assurance

The Early Help and Support Service undertake quality assurance work of the EY PEPs. Feedback to social workers and early years settings is provided where a EY PEP is considered less than good, to support ongoing improvement.

The last audit (summer term) highlighted that the majority of EY PEPs have good quality work being recorded and evidenced, however there were issues in relation to missing or incomplete information, hence the overall quality grade was reduced. Evidence of children driving their early education is still an area of development. Targets should link to the voice of the child i.e. following their interests and this remains and area for development in target setting

The lower return rate and dip in the quality of information in EY PEPs may be because of the changes for early years children during COVID19. Many children remained at home whilst their settings were closed or because of carer choice, and other children attended a different setting than usual.

Since September 2021, settings have returned to more or less normal operation, so due to regular attendance and consistency, the impact on children's learning and development and wellbeing should improve.

This year we will:

- Through existing forums, we will share the findings of audit work and reiterate expectations about the quality of information.
- Work with settings to identify and develop creative ways of gathering information for children's EY PEP and linking the target setting to the voice of the child.
- Using attendance/funding data to develop a targeted approach to supporting and improving the quality of children's voice in developing and driving their EY PEP.

Post 16

The Virtual School roll incorporates Post 16 students in Years 12 and 13 recording where they attend for their education, employment, and training or if they are NEET or Not Known. Post 16 PEPs have been established and are now delivered via the Delegation Portal. Leaving Care Personal Advisors undertake PEPs working with young people and their education providers. A commission is in place utilising the Pupil Premium Plus funding with the New Directions team to provide all of our young people in Years 9 to 13 on the roll of the BwD Virtual School with good quality, impartial careers, advice and guidance wherever they live or are educated. As young people officially come off the role of the Virtual School when they turn 18 we have worked with New Directions to extend the commission to the end of Year 13 so that young people are supported in progression to Higher Education or work. The main focus of work in the Autumn term

was to engage with Year 11 pupils regarding their post 16 options. Support at this time was also focused on the Year 12 and 13 that are at College or NEET. During the Spring and Summer terms, the focus has been to engage with Year 9 pupils supporting them through their option choices and with Year 10 pupils in preparation for Year 11 whilst providing continued support for the Year 11, 12 and 13 young people. Typical work involved assisting with CV creation, applications for part & full -time employment, apprenticeships and training opportunities, working closely with Leaving Care PA's. New Directions Advisors have attended PEP meetings held in school/colleges and seen the pupils individually in school and through home visits. They have been able to feedback to school and support pupils with their choices. New Directions Advisors also attend selected LAC reviews, particularly in years11-13 where concerns regarding education, training and employment have been highlighted. They have continued to work closely with Social Workers, Designated Teachers and carers to ensure that they are kept informed of the New Directions role and how they can support. Our advisors also work with SEND teams regarding post 16 destinations and funding and Youth Justice Service for a small number of our young people both pre-post 16. By the end of the summer term all Year 9 to 13 pupils have been seen or offered the services of New Directions, working to ensure that post 16 young people access and then remain in post 16 education, training and education which makes a positive difference to their lives. As ensuring CIOC and Care Leavers are EET at both 16 and 18+ a working group has been established comprising of CIOC Service Lead, Leaving Care, Post 19 Manager/New Directions, HR and Virtual School. This group focuses on strategies to support young people and includes a focus on development and support of apprenticeships for CIOC and Care Leavers within the council. Good practice developed in the Virtual School pre 18 is reflected on and good practice developed and applied to the Post 18 group.

Training and Events

A training plan was offered through the Virtual School to support the priority 'CIOC make good progress through supported, trained and developed Virtual School staff/governors, designated teachers, social workers and foster carers'. Due to the pandemic, training has been adapted to be delivered over Team and the following sessions were offered:

- NEW Designated Teacher Training
- Promoting the Educational Achievement of CIOC and PLAC for Governors
- Emotional Literacy Support Supervision for SSAs ELSA
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant – full course
- Social Worker Induction/training – Education
- Service Development Day Workshop
- Foster Carers Virtual Forum

The focus for training was around the return to school and ensuring ELSAs were trained and supported to work with our children. The VSH and CIOC Education Manager also delivered essential training for Designated Teachers school governors and attend Foster Carers Association or forum meetings as required. During this period we have worked with the FCA and our Virtual School EP to develop capacity within the service to deliver Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for foster carers. This follows a train the trainer model and we now have 2 EPs qualified to deliver the course with delivery started in Autumn term 2021.

The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) course continued having begun in the summer term 2019, with the Virtual school agreeing to fund 1 place per BwD school or for a school out of area where BwD CIOC attend. This has been delivered utilising Pupil Premium Plus funding. The course comprises of 5 sessions and then on-going group supervision and focuses on building capacity in schools to help meet the social and emotional needs of our children and young people. To date we have trained 155 new ELSAs in BwD schools and some out of borough schools who have BwD CIOC on roll who requested a place. We recognise this need for our CIOC and the additional support that is often needed but what is good practice for this group is also good for all children and therefore the wider school population can benefit from this investment in key support staff. The programme for new ELSAs is to conclude in Autumn 2021 after which the focus will be on supervision sessions for this group and reviewing their use and impact within schools.

The Children in our Care Celebration of Achievement Award Ceremony is an annual event which provides an opportunity to meet together to celebrate the achievements of our children and young people. This year the event took place virtually on 1st December 2020 and was the final of a series of events throughout November as Corporate Parenting month. Although very different to our usual event, the evening went very well with very positive feedback from all involved. The event was proudly sponsored by OSMIS Education Limited and the John Bury Trust. As well as receiving a certificate and gift voucher children and young people were also provided with Just Eat vouchers to enjoy a special meal with their carers/families, special awards were issued along with personal letters from Executive Member for Children's Services Julie Gunn. The event was delivered over Teams with a mixture of live presentation from our DCS Jayne Ivory, Chief Executive Denise Park, Deputy Director Education Joanne Siddle and Executive Member Children's Services Cllr Julie Gunn along with pre-recorded video messages. Nominations were read out and carers were invited to present certificates to their children/young people and everyone received a virtual live round of applause! To round the evening off in good style we had video performances pre-recorded by some young people and a video message of congratulations from celebrity Fleur East.

The Virtual School team contribute to various activities/working groups across the council and externally. These have included:

- Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group
- Corporate Parenting Executive Board
- Governor Services Training Programme
- Practice Month
- Commissioning Panel
- EHCP Panel
- Foster Carers Association Meetings
- St Thomas's Centre Management Committee
- School governing body
- NW ADCS groups
- School Improvement Board
- Ofsted Education Meeting
- NW VSHs

Staff CPD

It is important to build the expertise of the team through relevant CPD and to ensure that the needs of our children and young people are met. The following has been undertaken by members of the Virtual School team:

- North West VSH Network meetings
- NAVSH Conference
- COVID-19 Awareness
- Infection & Prevention Control for Frontline staff
- DOJO Cyber Security Awareness
- BwD Information Governance Training
- Critical Incident Training - Winston's Wish Training
- Dynamic Assessment Training
- The Link Programme)
- PAMS Training
- Loss & Bereavement
- Taking a Whole School Approach to Nurture
- Emotion Coaching Training
- MHFA trainer course
- ACE Training
- Prevent Refresher
- Nitrous Oxide
- Protocol training
- Student Finance England update
- Careers in RAF and Armed Forces
- CV workshop
- Routes into Nursing
- Writing Personal Statements
- Veterinary Science Degrees
- Apprenticeships within NHS
- Neglect Training
- General Safety Awareness
- Infection & Prevention Awareness
- Planning Powerful Presentation

Next Steps and Areas for Development

The Virtual School, like all schools, has a School Improvement Plan, which focuses on key priorities for the year alongside the corporate plan and wider departmental plan. In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic there is a focus on ensuring 'recovery' from missed education with the following key areas identified as priority:

1. Ensure that CIOC attendance is closely monitored following the disruption due to the Covid 19 pandemic with a clear plan for those where issues arise.
2. Implement systems to monitor and promote educational attainment and achievements of CIOC and care leavers to improve outcomes, which include reviewing the 'recovery' support in place in their schools.
3. Develop and implement specific systems and process for monitoring VS SEND pupils with/or potentially in need of an EHCP, wherever they live or are educated.

4. To improve practice and outcomes through high quality PEPs, effectively delivered and monitored.
5. Pupil Premium Plus policy is implemented to ensure its use has clear impact on the outcomes for our CIOC
6. CIOC and PLAC make good progress through supported, trained and developed Virtual School staff/governors, designated teachers, social workers and parents/carers.
7. Give priority support to CIOC and care leavers aged 14-18 to increase education, employment and training (EET) activity
8. Ensure Virtual School staff have a safe working environment and opportunities for professional development.
9. Implement a new service offer for our previously looked after children
10. Further develop our understanding of the specific educational needs of BwD children with a social worker and implement a response to the new duties for Virtual Schools.

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