

REPORT TO:	CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL Wednesday 8 January 2014
AGENDA ITEM:	8
SUBJECT:	VIRTUAL SCHOOL UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director, Children, Families and Learning
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tim Pollard, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learners
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: CYPL Service Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoying and Achieving. CYPL Departmental Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the outcomes for vulnerable and underachieving groups 	
NATIONAL INDICATORS: National indicator 99: Children in care reaching level 4 in English at KS2 National indicator 100: Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at KS2 National indicator 101: Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs at KS4 including English and Maths.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There are no financial implications to this report.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not applicable	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

If the

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of key developments and priorities within the Virtual School. It includes staffing and service delivery changes, 2012/13 local statistics against national indicators 99, 100 and 101, as well as an update on Personal Education Plans (PEPs), tracking of attainment and progress and training delivery and needs.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The primary focus for the Virtual School, since I last reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel in March 2013 has been around creating a service which was fit for purpose and consequently creating a team which was best placed to meet the changing needs and demands of Croydon's CLA population. The end of the 2012/13 financial year was an unsettling time with the impending cuts to VS staff, including the loss of the dedicated UASC officer post and the administrator/data manager which would have seen the team reduced to 3. In response to the planned reduction in staff and the subsequent impact this would have on service delivery, the VS head constructed a growth business case which outlined the associated risks of such changes. It was presented to Schools Forum in June 13 by the Director of Learning and Inclusion and subsequently funding was approved from DSG to expand the team to 15 permanent full time members of staff, purchase external data systems, as well as a budget for raising achievement projects. The Virtual School head spent the remainder of the summer term 2013 recruiting to these posts, with the view that they will be filled by January 2014. The intended staffing structure will allow greater capacity to work with Post 16 CLA and care leavers, as well as appoint education caseworkers and post 16 personal advisers to provide intensive support to schools, colleges, foster carers and social workers for our most vulnerable learners as early as possible after the identification of needs.
- 3.2 Analysis of the termly tracker information provided for individual children enabled the Virtual School to set targets relating to National Indicators 99, 100 and 101 for the previous and current academic year.
- 3.2.1 National Indicator 99: Children in care reaching level 4 in English at KS2. Target for 2012/13 based on tracker information: 50% (7/14). **Achieved 57% (8/14) – Exceeded expectation.**
- 3.2.2 National Indicator 99: Children in care reaching level 4 in English at KS2. Target for 2013/14 based on tracker information: 42% (10/24), 19 SEN - 9 full statement, 6 SA+, 4 SA
- 3.2.3 National Indicator 100: Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at KS2.

Target for 2012/13 based on tracker information: 43% (6/14). **Achieved 57% (8/14) – Exceeded expectation.**

3.2.4 National Indicator 100: Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at KS2. Target for 2013/14 based on tracker information: 46% (11/24), 19 SEN - 9 full statement, 6 SA+, 4 SA.

3.2.5 National Indicator 101: Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GSCEs at KS4, including English and Maths. Target for 2012/13 based on tracker information: 16% (12/77). **Achieved 12% (9/77). Did not meet expectation.** The 3 students who did not obtain their expected results were recorded as being on track by the school in their tracker returns, however, their results highlighted considerable discrepancies with 2 not even obtaining 5 A*- C.

3.2.6 National Indicator 101: Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GSCEs at KS4, including English and Maths. Target for 2013/14 based on tracker information: 6.8% (5/74).

3.2.7 Although targets are considerably lower than the previous year, it is important that we have the story around our young people to qualify this figures. Hence, it is worth noting that of the 74 who will contribute to our KS4 statistics, 43 are UASC, 24 of whom will have spent less than 2 years in care at the point they sit their examinations, with the majority of the remainder having been in care for less than 3 years. Most of the UASC arrive with no formal education history and limited, to no English Language. Whereas schools can discount a young person who entered the country after 1st Sept 2012 we are required to include them in our figures, this equates to 13 CLA, who given their limited time in education will inevitably impact on our KS4 targets. Of the total cohort (74), 16% have a statement of SEN and a further 34% are recorded as having SEN (School action/school action plus). It is however worth noting, that in many cases UASC SEN will not be identified as it is often attributed to their limited language rather than other learning needs. Another contributing factor to the lower targets is the number educated in non-mainstream settings which equates to 35%. These young people are educated in either PRU's, secure settings, independent or alternative provisions or special schools, depending on their level of need.

3.2.8 To raise achievement at Key Stage 4, the VS have identified young people who are on the C/D borderline and are working with the school to identify the gaps in their learning. This information will be used to work with a tutoring agency that we are in the process of commissioning for January 14, to deliver one to one tuition in English and maths for an identified cohort of young people.

3.3 The tracker form has also enabled the Virtual School to identify persistent absentee rates (below 85%) and the percentage of fixed term and permanent exclusions for 2012/2013. For CLA of statutory school age, 13% have attendance below 85% (21% out of borough, 15% in-borough secondary and 1% in-borough primary). This is an increase of 3% on last year's figures and is solely related to the increase in out of borough statistics. With respect to CLA fixed term exclusions, last academic years figure of 6% is in line with the

previous year. In relation to permanent exclusions, we recorded 1 at primary age and 6 at secondary age, equally split between in and out of borough; which represents 1% of the total CLA cohort.

- 3.4 The number of CLA out of education in the last academic year remained on average at 6%. This was primarily due to issues relating to the in-year admission of UASC. On average we saw 4 new CLA per week entering the care system, most of whom had no education provision in place. The spread of YP out of education included those placed in Croydon, as well as those placed out of borough. The Virtual School team continued to make contact with social workers and foster carers to ensure applications were placed and once this had happened chased the respective LA to find suitable provision. This provision is monitored on a monthly basis by the Department Leadership Team. In order to support placement and information-sharing, the VS Head, now meets with admissions/alternative provision and CME on a regular basis to look at numbers and discuss cases for in- borough CLA. Through this forum concerns were raised about access to alternative provision for our newly arrived UASC, as we filled our allocation at John Ruskin College within the first month of the autumn term. New places have been commissioned for January 2014; we are focusing on ensuring that Yr 10 UASC are placed in school, freeing up places for Yr 11 and that through the twin-tracking process young people are moved into schools, should places become available and be deemed appropriate. The main outstanding concern is around access to education for our CLA placed in other local authorities, particularly Kent and, until recently, Lambeth. Issues around access to suitable education have been raised with the DfE through the VS heads network as it is a common problem, although the DfE asserts that with LA's powers to direct this should not be an issue. In addition to raising these concerns with lead associates within the DfE, the VS are working closely with social care to ensure that education planning is conducted in advance of any placement moves and where we have highlighted particular areas where accessing education is a problem, such as in Kent, this is considered in the decision around placement location. This is particularly pertinent for CLA with additional needs where there isn't a statement of educational need.
- 3.5 The secure spreadsheet which was introduced to track all aspects of education for Croydon CLA has been refined since its conception and continues to provide the VS with the information it requires to identify underachievement and target resources. However, obtaining returns from all schools is exhaustive in terms of time and human resources, with chasing of outstanding trackers taking up to two months. Given that there is only a 3 month gap between trackers this means there is limited time to input the data received onto our attainment tracker database and analyse the information. The responsibility to chase outstanding data is undertaken by all members of the VS team, with our data manager/administrative support also maintaining the database. Although an improvement on the previous system, we recognised that for information such as attendance it only captures the data at a moment in time and in order to allow early intervention we need to have a live system that alerts us to concerns in respect of education immediately. As part of the growth business case we now have the funds to purchase such a system and therefore we have met with a variety of providers Virtual Schools Portal, Welfare Call and Looked

After Call and will be considering all our options during the Spring term 2014.

- 3.6 PEP quality and completion continues to be a high priority for the Virtual School. The dashboard to Directors, Heads of Service and Social Care Managers is circulated on a weekly basis highlighting current statistics by team, in addition to a spread sheet containing a list of outstanding PEPs by team and allocated social worker. The percentage of completed PEPs stands currently at 72%, and through the above process SC managers have the relevant information to support completion through supervision with their teams. With the administrative responsibilities assumed by the newly appointed statutory school age data manager, it has allowed the rest of the team to focus their attention on improving the quality of PEPs through development of appropriate resources, training of social workers, designated teachers, governors and foster carers and where appropriate attending PEP meetings to model good practice. Consequently the quality of the PEP documents received is a marked improvement on those submitted previously. The new VS team are also currently amending the PEP template in preparation for the next cycle. To make completion easier there will be a separate primary and secondary version, with the secondary one also including a post 16 section to support transition into EET. Given the number of UASC we have also developed an out of school PEP template to support provision placement.

- 3.7 The Virtual School has continued to develop relationships with a number of organisations to increase provision and services for CLA. The letterbox pilot was highly success and consequently we are looking to commission further places for this academic year. As previously mentioned we are in the process of commissioning a tutoring service to provide all our one to one/small group tutoring needs and this service will hopefully be available from January 2014. We have re commissioned Aim Higher to work with our secondary and Post 16 CLA to raise aspirations and provide support and pathways to Higher Education. The Jamie's Farm provision continues to be utilised by groups of vulnerable young people and the impact is apparent in the attitudes and attainment of the young people on their return to school. We are witnessing an increase in mental health issues within our primary CLA cohort and for this reason we have commissioned a mental health programme which focuses on emotional resilience called Ziggy's Friend. The programme is for two members of Virtual School staff to be trained to deliver the 24 session programme.
- 3.8 The Virtual School continues to provide training for a range of professionals who support the education of our CLA, including designated teachers, social workers, foster carers, governors, as well as school improvement colleagues. Previously training was delivered according to need and staff availability. However, with the growth of the team the intention will be to have a planned approach to training in the future, with the introduction of regular DT network forums.
- 3.9 In conjunction with social care colleagues, the Virtual School was highly instrumental in coordinating the CCIC celebration event, which took place On Monday 25th November 2013. The ceremony was a resounding success and suitably recognised the achievements and progress of a large number of Croydon CLA.
- 3.10 In relation to the VS focus for future developments, the raising achievement plan targets based on the new staffing structure have been set for the next 3 years.
- 3.11 The following areas for development have been identified:
- To maximise progress and close the attainment gap for statutory school age CLA by informed use of data
 - To improve the quality of targets being set in PEP meetings to raise the attainment of CLA through further training of SW's and DT's
 - To work closely with Social Workers, Foster Carers and educational settings to improve the overall attendance to school of CLA
 - To offer targeted support to CLA most at risk, through improved initial assessment for identifying educational needed of UASC, more comprehensive data collection and analysis and utilisation of new education caseworkers and post 16 personal advisers

- To reduce the number of NEET post 16 CLA and care leavers
- To maximise progress and close the attainment gap for Post 16 CLA and care leavers by informed use of data
- To improve the provision and support for Young Carers

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 There are no consultation issues in relation to this report.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 There are no financial considerations to this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 There are no human resources implications to this report.

8. CUSTOMER IMPACT

8.1 The new structure of the Virtual School will improve systems for tracking and monitoring the educational outcomes of Children Looked After.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

9.1 An EIA is not required for this report.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN IMPACT

10.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

11.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

12.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 There are no considerations within this report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: