



Corporate Parenting Board

12 March 2014

Report title	Future Aspirations for the Education of Wolverhampton's Looked after Children
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	Sarah Norman, Community
Originating service	Looked after Children's Service
Accountable employee(s)	Darren Martindale 01902 551039
Report to be/has been considered by	Steve Cox Head of LAC Service

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider proposals for future education support for Wolverhampton's Looked after Children and approve the formation of a Board of Governors for the Virtual School.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Board of proposed improvements to education support for the Council's Looked after Children (LAC), and for approval of items.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council has responded to its statutory duty to support the education of LAC with a restructure of the Looked after Children's Education (LACE) Team to form the new Corporate Parenting & Education (COPE) Team, bringing remaining LACE members together with colleagues in Corporate Parenting and Participation to form a multi-disciplinary team. The report originator has taken up the previously vacant post of Team Manager and Virtual School Head (VSH) for LAC (soon to be made a statutory post), and has identified several opportunities for service improvement under the new structures. The educational elements have been realigned to priorities outlined in the 2013-14 LACE improvement plan.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

3.1

Priority	Action	Desired Outcome
Improve support (<i>and challenge</i>) to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve links with School Improvement Officers to share knowledge and best practice • VSH to manage pupil premium for LAC • Re-brand Designated Teacher's termly training as a network forum, significantly increase participation and attendance – DM to lead • Increase training on LAC and attachment/trauma for school staff – DM to discuss with MAST managers • Re-brand and re-launch the COPE Team: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refresh COPE newsletter format and relaunch 2. Standard format needed for school visits, reports and recording attainment and progress 3. Clarify processes for referral, prioritisation and assessment of outcomes • Improve joined-up working between local authority and schools –WSIP 	<p>COPE working closely with School Improvement</p> <p>Premium better used to support attainment of LAC Increased attendance and engagement from DTs Strengthened status of the role of Designated Teacher (DT) School staff better able to support vulnerable LAC in schools COPE Team to be better known and better used by schools and social care teams</p> <p>Improved clarity about the role and functions of COPE</p> <p>VSH recognised as a head teacher within</p>

	<p>meetings as the starting point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DM to attend head teacher’s conference and write to all HTs • Establish a Board of Governors for the Virtual School • Improve support for nominated school governors for LAC • Establish VSH involvement in Ofsted inspections of Wolverhampton schools 	<p>Wolverhampton, improving awareness of LAC, better joint working with, and between, schools</p> <p>Increased awareness and improved scrutiny and support for LAC in schools</p>
<p>Improve attainment and progress</p> <p>Improve attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase targetted support by COPE to under-achieving LAC • COPE, PRU managers and residential managers to meet termly to address attendance issues • Promote EPS monthly clinic for carers • Improve educational training for carers & residential staff, increase attendance and renew focus on raising aspirations (e.g applying to universities etc) • Establish a more efficient system for monitoring of attainment & attendance of LAC –processes to be streamlined and clarified to allow for efficient monitoring of educational progress of all LAC • Improve monitoring of OLA education placements • Increase and embed COPE OSHL offer, e.g. homework clubs, outdoor education days • Increase use of state-funded boarding school project • LAC literacy strategy: maintain current projects and build new initiatives to improve literacy levels for LAC at Key Stage 1 and 2 	<p>Stronger working relationships with schools leading to improved progress and engagement of most vulnerable LAC</p> <p>Carers better enabled to support LAC in both care and education. Stronger culture of educational engagement in residential homes.</p> <p>Improved progress monitoring to ensure SMART interventions, best value and improved educational outcomes</p> <p>Improved literacy levels for LAC at Key Stage 1 and 2, leading to improved educational outcomes more widely</p>
<p>Improve quantity and quality of PEPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed audit and breakdown of PEP quality and performance • Re-design (simplify) PEP form and process, update PEP policy and procedure, PEP targets clearly linked to pupil premium funding • Compulsory PEP / educational training for social work teams and IROs, more training for designated 	<p>Improve PEP quantity & quality – more intelligent use of attainment data to support SMART target-setting, fuller engagement of key partners and involvement of LAC, leading to improved educational outcomes</p>

	<p>teachers / nominated governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue revised PEPs guidance to schools, carers, IROs and S/Ws • Improve recording of PEPs on Carefirst • Discuss PEP issues with Children in Care Council 	
Improve transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACE staff to meet termly to review progress of LAC at transitional stages and to identify necessary interventions • Termly strategic meetings between LACE/transitions/Careers • 16+ PEP to be established as standard practice • Review EET Action Plan with a focus on early intervention • VSH to be consulted before any change to a school placement for a LAC – DM to discuss with LAC managers 	More proactive and targeted support to LAC at transitional stages School / placement changes conducted in a planned way which prioritises educational stability
Regional / national strategic work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair West Midlands Virtual Schools Network • Represent the above at National VSH Steering Group meetings and National VSH Conference <p>Note: the statutory status of the VSH role will receive royal assent on 21 March 2014</p>	Mutual support, challenge sharing of best practice between Virtual Heads, improvement of policy and procedure relating to LAC
Work with Ofsted to raise profile of VSH/LAC in school inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend regional Ofsted conference and meetings to deliver training around LAC • VSH to be involved in school inspections for all Wolverhampton schools • Assess the advantages of VSH becoming an Attached Ofsted Inspector 	Increase and Improve Ofsted's scrutiny of schools' support for LAC
Establish national protocol / guidance for out-of-authority placements & notifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft protocol to be agreed at spring meetings of regional network and national steering group, then taken to the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to be agreed 	School / placement changes conducted in a planned way which prioritises educational stability, leading to improved outcomes for LAC placed out-of-authority

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The approved revenue budget for 2013/14 for the Looked after Childrens' Education Team (LACE) is £461,000.
- 4.2 Any costs associated with the proposed developments in section 3 of the report will be met from within existing resources.

[NM/03042014/D]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications to this report. [RB/04032014/E]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 The work of the LACE Team supports some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in their education. Looked after Children, statistically, do not achieve as highly as their peers. There is an expectation that Wolverhampton City Council will contribute to raising standards of educational opportunities for LAC, therefore this plan aims to improve equality of opportunity for this very disadvantaged group. No other groups will experience any loss of opportunity as a result of this plan, and mechanisms for impact assessment are built in to the processes described.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no identified Human Resource implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 LACE Action Plan 2013-14: attached