

Time 5.30 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Oversight

Venue MS Teams

Membership

Chair Cllr John Reynolds (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Rashpal Kaur
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Zee Russell

Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby
Cllr Udey Singh

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic services team:

Contact Shelley Humphries
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 554070 or shelley.humphries@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk>
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Tel 01902 550320

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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence |
| 2 | Declarations of interests |
| 3 | Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 (Pages 5 - 10) [To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 as a correct record.] |
| 4 | Matters arising [To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021.] |
| 5 | Schedule of outstanding matters (Pages 11 - 14) [To receive the Schedule of Outstanding Matters.] |
| 6 | Children in Care Council (CiCC) Annual Report 2019 - 2020 (Pages 15 - 34) [To receive the Children in Care Council Annual Report.] |
| 7 | Children's Services Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024 - (To follow) [To approve the publication of the refreshed Children and Young People's Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024.] |
| 8 | Virtual School Head Report 2020 (Pages 35 - 54) [To receive the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2020.] |
| 9 | Experience of an Apprenticeship [To receive a presentation of a first-hand account from an apprentice working within the Council.] |
| 10 | Increasing Not Engaged in Education Employment and Training (NEET) Care Leavers in the 19 - 21-year-old Cohort (Pages 55 - 62) [To approve the support to be offered to care leavers who are not engaged in education, employment or training.] |
| 11 | Health Assessments (Pages 63 - 68) [To receive the report on health assessments for children and young people in care.] |
| 12 | Performance Monitoring Information (Pages 69 - 76) [To receive the Performance Monitoring Information Report.] |

- 13 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**
[That in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.]

PART 2 - ITEMS NOT OPEN TO THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

- 14 **Councillor Visits to Establishments - Schedule of Visits**
[To receive verbal feedback on any visits to establishments undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting.]

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Attendance

Chair Cllr John Reynolds (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Martin Waite

Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Rashpal Kaur

Cllr Rita Potter

Conservative

Cllr Udey Singh

Employees

Alison Hinds

Deputy Director of Children's Social Care

Employees

Fiona Brennan
Alison Hinds
Shelley Humphries
Mark Tobin
Alice Vickers

Designated Nurse, Children and Young People in Care
Deputy Director of Children's Social Care
Democratic Services Officer
Head of Service, Adoption at Heart
Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Corporate Parenting Board: Councillor Paul Appleby.

Apologies were also received from Emma Bennett and Jazmine Walker.

2 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest made relative to the items under consideration at the meeting.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 Schedule of outstanding matters

The Chair noted from the Schedule of Outstanding Matters that the face masks had been sourced and distributed and that the Care Leaver Reach Team were working towards making progress on addressing public transport for care leavers.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Outstanding Matters be noted.

6 Adoption Service Interim Report

Mark Tobin, Head of Service for Adoption at Heart presented the Adoption Service Interim Report and highlighted salient points.

It was noted that the report jointly covered the full year 2019 - 2020 and the interim period of six months 1 April to 30 September 2020 and it was highlighted that the data and information within the report was accurate as of 30 September 2020. The interim report would normally have been presented separately to Corporate Parenting Board in the summer, however meetings had temporarily been stood down due to COVID.

The report provided detail of the performance and progress made by the new Adoption @ Heart service.

It was noted that since the first lockdown restrictions back in March 2020, effective ICT support from the Council had enabled the workforce to work successfully from home operating an almost fully virtual service (excepting the occasional face to face meeting when safe and necessary).

COVID had caused some delays to adoption proceedings moving through the courts, therefore this year's final adoption figures were predicted to be slightly lower than in previous years, although hearings had resumed from September 2020. It was noted that adoption numbers had reduced nationally since 2017.

It was noted that a great deal of interest had been generated and more people were keen to register interest although a campaign was planned for the autumn to reach out to an even wider audience. It was intended to inform the public and dispel any myths surrounding adoption that may have discouraged people in the past.

It was commended that the four authorities across the Black Country that made up Adoption@ Heart attempted to place children and young people as close as possible to where they were born or spent the early part of their lives as well as endeavouring to keep sibling groups together wherever possible. It was highlighted that these factors, amongst others, sometimes meant the process took longer but it was acknowledged that the priority was to get the placement absolutely right for each child. It was clarified that if keeping a sibling group together was not possible, every effort was made to keep those siblings in regular contact with each other.

It was noted that no formal analysis had taken place however, in some cases, people had expressed an interest but it then became apparent that uncertainty surrounding COVID or around their job security meant that they didn't want to proceed at that time. It was suggested that contact be maintained in case a change in circumstances meant they could proceed with joining the adoption pool. It was suggested that a campaign could be launched around the lifting of lockdown to attempt to reignite interest or that Radio Wolves could be used as a platform to reach out to inform that adoptions were still taking place.

Resolved:

1. That the Adoption Service Interim Report for Adoption@Heart be received.
2. That Corporate Parenting Board note progress made by the Regional Adoption Agency.

7 Performance Monitoring Information

Alison Hinds, Deputy Director of Social Care presented the Performance Monitoring Information Report and highlighted key points.

It was suggested that Councillors request any particular areas they would like to see highlighted or focused on when receiving the report at meetings.

A query was raised around the issue of domestic violence having increased during lockdown and if there had been any correlation between the number of domestic violence cases and numbers of children needing to be removed from these situations. It was reported that some cases of that nature had been received, which indicated that these cases were being received through the system.

A query was raised around whether there had been a spike in care referrals once schools reopened in September 2020 as schools were often the most common referral pathway. It was noted that such an increase had been anticipated, however it had not been as large as expected.

An increase in both long- and short-term placement stability was highlighted and this was attributed to the therapeutic support programmes in place for foster carers to ensure children felt more stable and settled. It was acknowledged that Wolverhampton's foster carers had continued to show great commitment to ensure stability for children throughout an uncertain situation and their efforts were commended.

A reduction in review participation had been noted and this was thought to be due to the new recording methods. An investigation into the figures was underway and it was agreed that the outcome would be fed back to Corporate Parenting Board.

Dental checks were showing as reduced from last year and, again, the Authority was working with health colleagues to review recording checks and meeting targets.

In terms of education, employment and training, it was acknowledged that this was an area of particular strength and, despite the slight downturn experienced, Wolverhampton was performing well against comparators. It was reported that work was underway to mitigate the long-term impact of national lockdown and school closures on young people's education. It was noted that the Virtual Head Annual Report was due at the next meeting and would include an overview of how children and young people in care were being supported in these areas. In addition, it was noted that ways mentoring and supporting young people into employment opportunities were being embedded into the Relight Out City strategy.

A query was raised around whether many children and young people in care were currently engaged with online learning and if they had access to resources to do this. It was reported that, as they were classed a vulnerable, children and young people in care were being encouraged to stay in school where possible. Children and young people in care who remained at home were being provided with devices and online access to study at home; information was also being provided to foster carers to ensure they could support the person in their care with online learning.

Resolved:

1. That Councillors identify areas of focus for the next Performance Monitoring Information report.
2. That the outcome from investigating the review participation statistics would be fed back to Corporate Parenting Board.

8 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information contained in paragraph 2 of the Act, namely information that is likely to reveal the identity to an individual.

9 **Councillor Visits to Establishments - Schedule of Visits**

No visits to establishments had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board.

Alice Vickers, Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager reported she had been in contact with two establishments, however it was reported that one was closed to residents at this time and the other had just taken in new residents therefore it was decided to wait until they had settled in before undertaking any virtual visits.

It was hoped that a virtual visit would be able to take place soon and an update would be provided once this had been arranged.

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Corporate Parenting Board 25 March 2021 |
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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Report title | Schedule of Outstanding Matters | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People | |
| Wards affected | All wards | |
| Accountable director | Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adult Services | |
| Originating service | Governance | |
| Accountable employee | Shelley Humphries | Democratic Services Officer |
| | Tel | 01902 554070 |
| | Email | shelley.humphries@wolverhampton.gov.uk |

Recommendation for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive and comment on the Schedule of Outstanding Matters.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to appraise the Board of the current position with a variety of matters considered at previous meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.

2.0 Background

2.1 At previous meetings of the Board the following matters were considered and details of the current position is set out in the fourth column of the table.

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Member / Officer | Current Position |
|------------------------|---|--|--|
| 21 January 2021 | A reduction in review participation had been noted and this was thought to be due to the new recording methods. An investigation into the figures was underway and it was agreed that the outcome would be fed back to Corporate Parenting Board. | Sonia Mahay, Service Manager Safeguarding and Exploitation | It has been reported that a change has been made to the forms to resolve the issue. In addition, since an initial drop in September after the Eclipse Migration, the proportion has increased again to 97.2% of children and young people in care recorded as participating in their review at the end of February 2021. |

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

3.2 The financial implications of each matter will be detailed in the individual report submitted to the Board.

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

4.2 The legal implications of each matter will be detailed in the individual report submitted to the Board.

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

5.2 The equalities implications of each matter will be detailed in the individual report submitted to the Board.

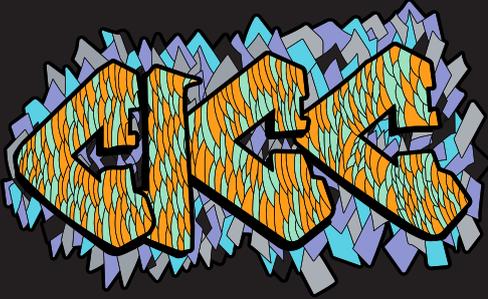
6.0 Any other implications

6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

7.0 Schedule of background papers

7.1 Minutes of previous meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board and associates.

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**WOLVERHAMPTON
CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**

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Children in Care Council

Annual Report 2019/20

Agenda Item No: 6



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CiCC 2019/20

This year's annual Children in Care Council report focuses on the outcomes of the **Children in Care Survey** and highlights the achievements of the Children in Care Council and their continued commitment to improving children's services.

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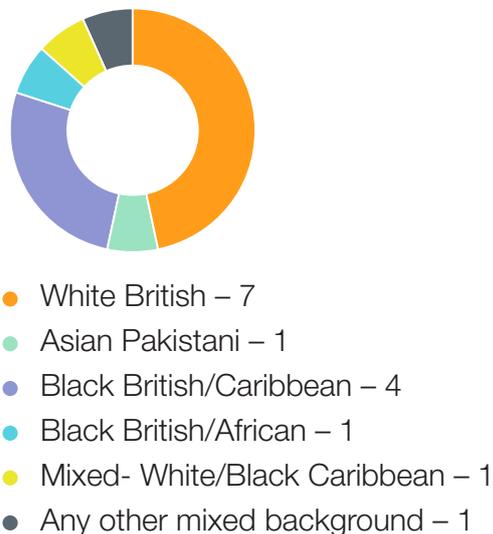
Group Demographic

Over the last 12 months **15 young people** have engaged as members of the Children in Care Council. The age range of members is between 11-17.

Sex



Ethnicity of CiCC Members



Placements



The group meets twice a month with a focus on an agenda-based meeting where professionals are invited to speak with group members and a workshop meeting where the group focus on project work and prepare for guest speakers.

The group consists of a chair and vice chair who both lead on agenda items in meetings and ensure all members have the opportunity to have their voice heard.

Two members from the group were also elected to represent the Children in Care Council on the city's Youth Council and more recently reps have been elected for the Youth Engagement Strategic Board. The diversity in engagement with the city's universal groups shows the commitment of member to make improvements for children in care and the wider population of young people in Wolverhampton.



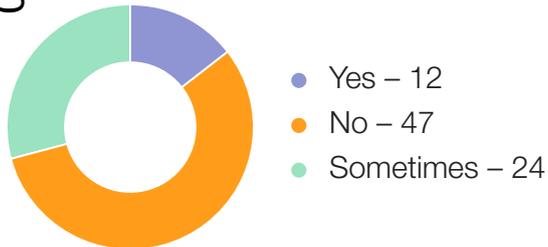
Annual Survey

In April 2020 the Children in Care Council co-produced the annual children in care survey. 84 young people completed the survey and provided feedback of their experience on the support they receive.

Below are the key highlights from the survey:

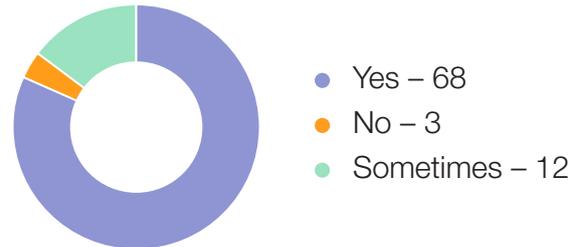
Being treated differently

Do you think people treat you differently because you are in care?



Feeling supported

Do you feel supported by your Social Worker?





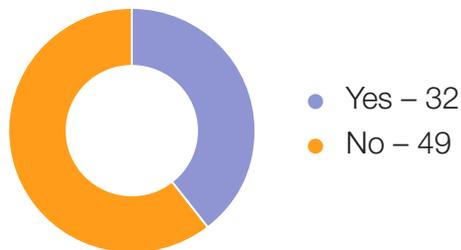
Advocacy

Do you know about the advocacy services available to you?



The Children in Care Council

Are you aware of the Children in Care Council and how you can join the group?



The feedback from the survey will form part of the Corporate Parenting Board Workplan. The Children in Care Council will be updated on the work plan at Corporate Parenting Board meetings and by guest speakers at their Children in Care Council meetings.

Annual Conference

The Children in Care Council hosted their virtual annual conference focussing on the key highlights from the survey and the achievement of the group over the last 12 months. Due to Covid-19 the conference was hosted for the very first time virtually. Children in Care Council members co-produced the running order of the conference and wanted to focus on the outcome of the annual survey. The key highlights from the survey were presented by the vice chair of the group during the conference. The group also produced a video about advocacy as they felt it was important young people knew about the services to support them.





In September the Children in Care Council focused on the results from the survey and attendance at the conference. After their discussion the group asked the following questions to service and team managers:

- Why was the attendance of the conference so low? Was attendance encouraged by staff and how?
- Why do young people not know about the CiCC and what are the reasons for them not getting involved?

Managers Response

Children and young people in care team managers and fostering team have taken on board the concerns of the Children in Care Council and have changed to fostering portal to promote more events such as the annual conference and the fostering team are supporting with Children in Care Council events such as the Virtual Christmas Party.

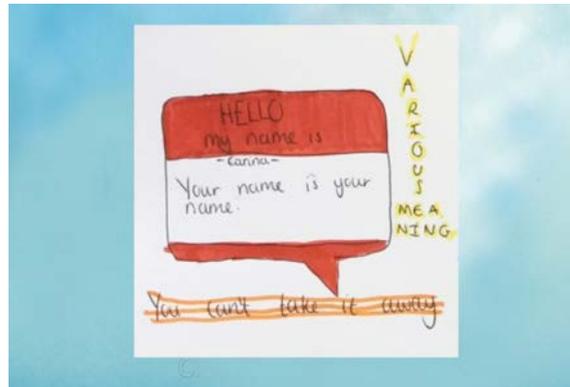
Managers also discussed changes to make sleepovers easier to organize for young people.

2020 Achievements

Floetry

At a regional event for children in care group members took part in a poetry workshop. The group created a poem based on how important names are for young people and produced a storyboard video.

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Sufficiency Strategy

On Friday 21st February members of our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Independence Collective took part in the Sufficiency Strategy workshop. The sufficiency strategy focuses on placement stability and making sure placements are best suited for young people. During the workshop professionals and young people took part in different activities highlighting the importance of placement stability and also areas which can be improved.

The group delivered a **Total Respect** activity which focuses on a young person in a placement. The activity addresses some of the issues which can affect a young person, issues which can affect placement stability and follows their journey into independence. Member co-produced the activity and changed the original activity to make it more relevant to the message they were trying to put across about young people's experiences.



Website

Members were involved with the development of the children in care/care leavers website proving feedback for the design and approving the layout of the website. The group regularly review the website during their meetings to make sure they are happy with the content. The website shares information and opportunities for both children in care and care leavers.



Covid-19

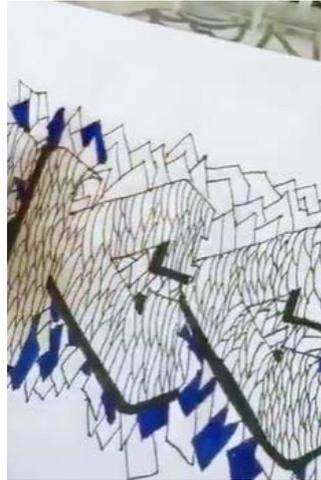
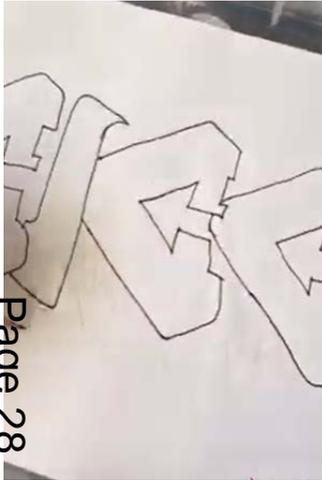
During the pandemic the group have continued to meet every two weeks virtually and have had a positive impact on children's services.

Here is what the group have done during the pandemic :

Page 27 **Keeping safe videos**

Children in Care Council members wanted to support young people and give them tips on things they could do during lockdown to keep safe and still have some fun. The chair produced a tutorial on how to draw graffiti and the impact art can have on wellbeing.





New Logo

The chair of the group produced a new logo.

New members

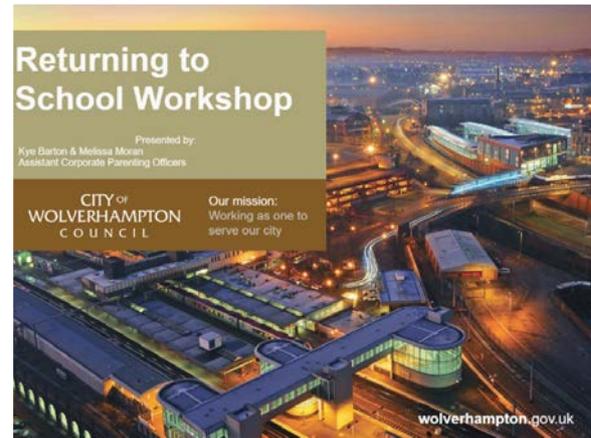
During the pandemic Children in Care Council meetings have taken place virtually. Three new members have joined the group since March 2020 and have now become established members of the group regularly attending and taking part in interview panels.

Newsletter

Children in Care Council regularly promote their work through the quarterly newsletter and keep other children and young people updated on their work and upcoming events they can get involved with.

Back to school workshop

Children in Care Council members took part in a virtual back to school workshop hosted by our Assistant Corporate Parenting Apprentices. They provided feedback for the support they felt young people would need returning back to school in September 2020 and some concerns they may have.



Children in Care Reviews and Independent Reviewing Officers

Children in Care Council have provided feedback on the review process and support they receive from their Independent Reviewing Officer.



Workshop with Independent Reviewing Officer

Kindness Conference

Children in Care Council members took part in a virtual kindness conference with other youth voice groups in the city and shared ideas on how young people can be more kind to each other.

Gamification

Children in Care Council have contributed to the development of online gamification modules which will be available for children and young people in the new year to complete. The modules are an interactive learning tool to give young people knowledge on these key topics:

- Bullying/internet safety
- Sexting
- Gaming
- Victim of crime
- Mental health
- Money management

Total Respect

Members have co-produced Total Respect activities so they can be adapted and delivered virtually.

Corporate Parenting Board Pledges

At the Corporate Parenting Board in early 2020 Children in Care Council members delivered an activity to board members about their roles as Corporate Parenting Board members and what the ideal board member should be like. Members of the board were asked by the Children in Care Council to produce pledges on how they will support the work of the group and young people in care.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Survey

Members took part in the survey and provided feedback for wellbeing support services.





Interviews

Group members continued their influence on the recruitment of staff despite the Covid-19 pandemic and have interviewed for the following roles:

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- Assistant director of children's services
- Social workers
- Residential shift leader
- YPA
- Youth engagement coordinator
- Assistant director of children's services
- Head of safeguarding and exploitation
- Social workers
- Participation officer
- Corporate parenting officer
- Head of service – Children in Care
- Service manager – Social care
- Registered manager



Please visit our website for regular updates and to watch key events such as our annual conference

www.wolveschildrenincare.com

You can get this information in large print, braille, audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

  WolverhamptonToday  Wolverhampton_Today  @WolvesCouncil

City of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Corporate Parenting Board 25 March 2021 |
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| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Report title | Virtual School Head Annual Report 2020 | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People | |
| Wards affected | All wards | |
| Accountable Director | Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adult Services | |
| Originating service | Inclusion and Empowerment | |
| Accountable employee | Darren Martindale Tel Email | Service Manager 01902 556951 Darren.martindale@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Children and Young People in Care Leadership Team | 6 January 2021 |
| | Children in Care Council | 6 January 2021 |
| | Social Care Leadership Team | 7 January 2021 |
| | Inclusion and Empowerment Leadership Team | 28 January 2021 |
| | Education Leadership Team | 28 January 2021 |

Recommendation for decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2020.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to receive the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2020.

2.0 Background

2.1 To inform Corporate Parenting Board of the educational progress and achievements of our Children and Young People in Care, and previously in care, and the steps that the local authority has taken to support those achievements.

3.0 Report Contents

- 4.0 Cohort Information
- 5.0 School Ofsted Ratings
- 6.0 Supporting learning and achievement
- 7.0 Raising Aspirations – Aspire2Uni
- 8.0 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- 9.0 Pupil Premium Plus
- 10.0 Attendance
- 11.0 Inclusion
- 12.0 School Transition and Stability
- 13.0 Attainment and Progress
- 14.0 Post-16 Achievement
- 15.0 Participation
- 16.0 Strategic and Advisory Development
- 17.0 Conclusion

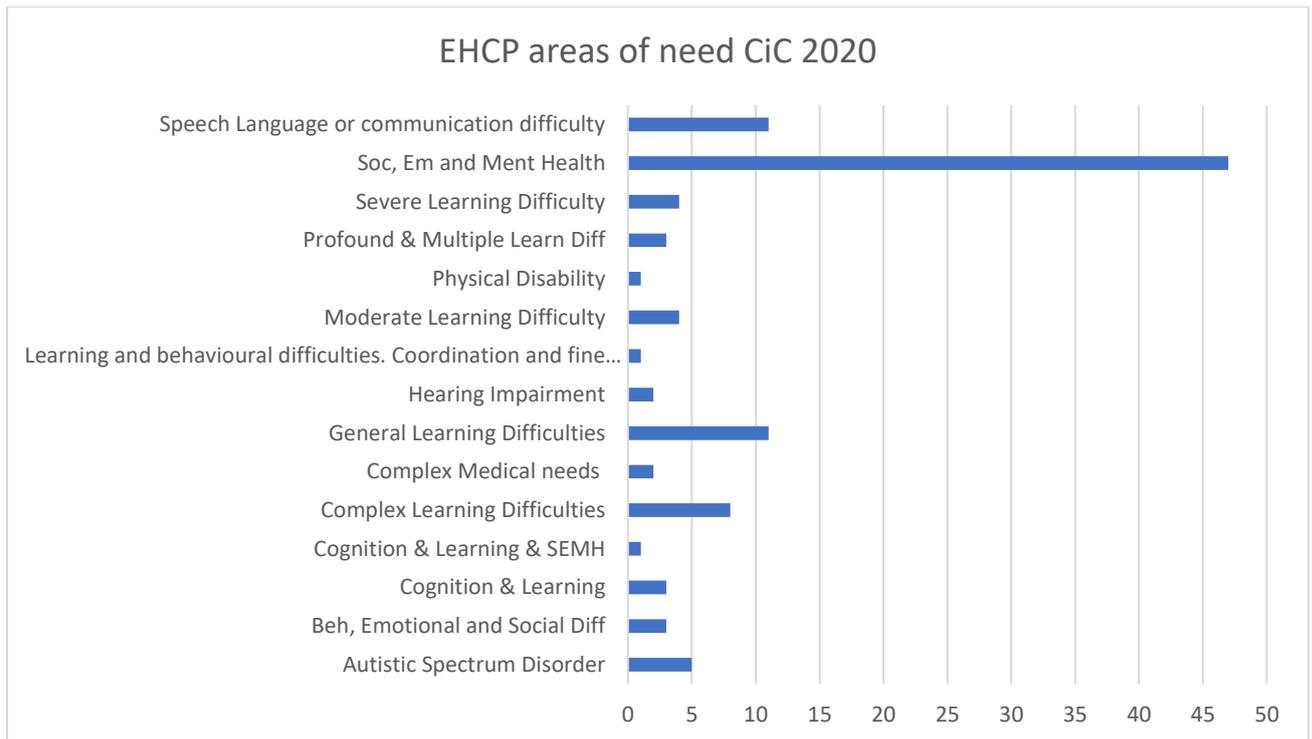
4.0 Cohort Information

4.1 At November 2020:

- Total pupils (Reception – Year 11) 409
- Placed in Wolverhampton 207 = 51%
- Placed out of City 202 = 49%
- Attending primary schools 165 = 40%
- Attending secondary schools 244 = 60%
- Attending Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) 10 = 2.4%
- Attending Special Schools 69 = 17%
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) 106 = 26%
- Boys 228 = 56%
- Girls 181 = 44%

- Total ethnic groups 15%
- Non-White British 40%

4.2 Among the children and young people in care with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulty is by far the most prevalent category of need, accounting for 44% of this cohort. The prevalence of each category of need, as a percentage of children and young people in care with EHCPs, is outlined in the chart below.



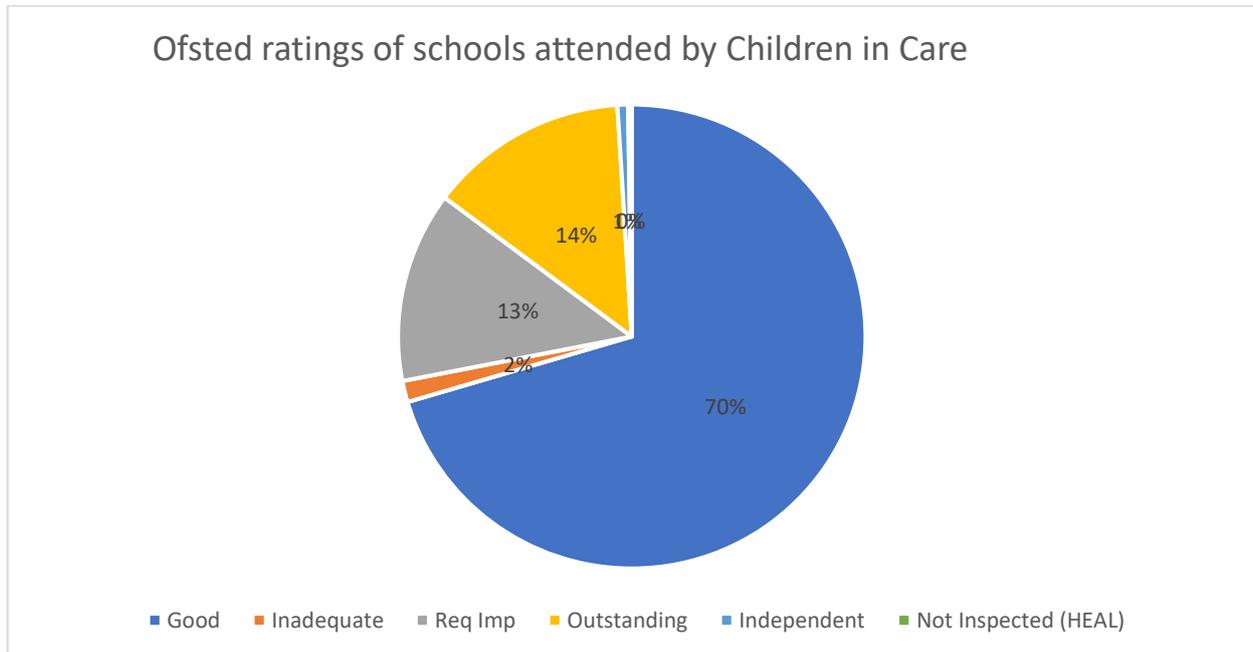
5.0 School Ofsted Ratings

5.1 Statutory guidance states that Children and Young People in Care should attend schools that are rated as either or Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.¹

5.2 At November 2019, 84% of children and young people in care attend a school which is rated as good or better by Ofsted, which is a 1% improvement on 2019. The ratings are summarised in the chart at 5.3.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

5.3



6.0 Supporting Learning and Achievement

- 6.1 Wolverhampton’s Virtual School team are committed to improving educational outcomes for children and young people in care through a combination of direct, advisory and strategic work with children, schools, social workers, carers and other partners.
- 6.2 The team consists of one full-time equivalent (FTE) Senior Education Advisor, 3.5 FTE Education Support Officers (ESO), one 0.5 FTE Data Officer and one full-time Administrator together with the VSH. We also benefit from the support of three Educational Psychologists (0.9 FTE) and a 0.35 FTE Assistant Educational Psychologist, as well as strong links with other key agencies. A full-time Education, Employment and Training (EET) Co-ordinator in the Children and Young People in Care Transitions team acts as an extended member of the team in her support for Children and Young People in Care post-16.
- 6.3 The Senior Education Advisor (SEA) provides strong support and challenge to schools, social care and other key partners to promote the inclusion and raise the achievement of children and young people in care. The SEA also acts as a team manager and deputy to the Virtual School Head. The SEA has been instrumental in ensuring that permanent exclusions remain at zero in 2019-2020, ensuring that appropriate school placements are secured in a timely manner and that children’s support plans are strong and appropriately joined-up.
- 6.4 The team promotes the educational achievement of children and young people in care in a variety of ways, However, key areas, in line with statutory guidance, include:
- Regular meetings with Designated Teachers in schools
 - Supporting and improving the Personal Educational Planning process
 - Tracking attendance, exclusions, attainment and progress

- Providing direct learning support to pupils, as well as
- Providing advice, training, challenge and support to schools and social care
- Interventions and wider activities to promote learning and raise aspirations

- 6.5 During the summer term 2020, while schools were partially closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual school team provided ongoing support both to children and young people in care who had been identified by their social workers as needing to attend school, and those who were accessing remote learning at home. This support focussed on several areas, as outlined below.
- 6.6 Pupil Premium Plus was paid for the summer term, as planned, for all CYPIC up to and including Year 10. Schools were encouraged to use the funding as creatively as was needed, provided it corresponded to targets on the summer term's PEP, and were offered the option of deferring the summer PP+ spend, if they felt it would be more beneficial to the pupil, to roll it forward to the autumn term. The funding was available to pupils in year 11 by individual request, and these allocations were generally to support transition into post-16 education, employment and training (EET).
- 6.7 The team attended as many PEP meetings as possible, most of which were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. It was noted that some pupils took a more active part in their PEP meetings via this method, which was a positive development. The VS team, working with the Educational Psychology Service, developed an alternative 'Pupil Voice' section of the PEP which was tailored to reflect the current educational context of remote learning for many. This allowed for considerable differentiation between stages and ability levels and is a continuation of our increasingly flexible approach to capturing the pupils' views in the most effective way possible.
- 6.8 The Virtual School's Education Support Officers made frequent contact with Designated Teachers to monitor attendance and progress, and check for potential areas of concern. These discussions focussed various areas including access to, and engagement with, online work, effective home-school communication, Personal Education Planning, transition planning (e.g. primary-secondary, post-16), what to do if any assessment or intervention work had been interrupted due to COVID-19, and measuring pupil progress in the absence of summer tests or teacher assessments.
- 6.9 An arts and culture offer has been developed for CYPIC as part of the virtual school's partnership with others through the West Midlands Virtual Schools Network. Having previously been delivered partly through live events, this was adapted to become entirely online throughout the summer. This gave a wide range of activities were offered, including an 'Awesome Arts Festival' over 2 weeks in the summer break offering activities such as puppetry, visual arts, dance, theatre, circus, poetry, food, relaxation and a 'detective mission'. Carers were also advised in creative strategies and projects to support remote schoolwork, for example using creative arts and horticulture. A summer reading challenge developed by the City's library service and Arts Council was also actively promoted by the Virtual School.

6.10 The Virtual School worked in collaboration with the authority's Educational Psychology and Inclusion Team to offer a consultation service which was offered to all parents and carers of children both in City and in out of City placements. The service offered advice and support to carers in need of help with educational matters.

7.0 Raising Aspirations – Aspire2Uni

7.1 Aspire2Uni (A2U) is an innovative partnership project between Wolverhampton University and four 'virtual schools' for children and young people in care around the Black Country – Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Staffordshire. A2U is a long-term, intensive, progressive programme designed to raise the aspirations and support the achievement of children in care. Research shows that children and young people in care and care leavers do not regard Higher Education (HE) as a natural course and will often be looked after by adults who have little experience of HE themselves, or indeed an understanding of the value of HE or further training. It is important to note that this does not mean there is a lack of aspiration among these pupils, but less access to potential role models who have progressed to university, less established 'networks' which can combine to less knowledge of areas like HE or graduate careers. Research tells us that HE can be a critical first step to enhanced life opportunity, wellbeing and economic independence for children and young in care: In this context, Aspire2Uni has two underpinning goals:

- Raise aspirations (and increase knowledge)
- Break down barriers, and improve progression, to Higher Education

7.2 The programme aims to support children who reach the expected attainment in core subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 or have the potential to reach that level but underachieve. It completed its fifth year in 2020. At the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, there were 32 children from Wolverhampton on the programme (out of 137 pupils in total). The programme aims to support from Year 7 to 11, to university and beyond.

7.3 The VSH provides strategic oversight of the project from Wolverhampton's perspective, while one of the Virtual School Support Officers acts as an operational lead and all members of the team provide staffing, organisational and administrative support as required.

7.4 There are three main elements to the programme:

- **Outreach** - a series of university visits and other events, designed to raise aspirations, break down barriers and inform progression to higher education.
- **Mentoring** - a dedicated mentor is allocated to the young person and works with them in their home either once per week or once per fortnight. In 2018-2019, group and online mentoring sessions have also been organised for some older students who have been accessing A2U mentoring for a long time and are ready to move on to a different form of support.

Several mentors have been with the programme since the outset, have graduated the University and are now mentors in various schools and organisations.

- **Work Experience and Enrichment** - Working with local businesses, accesses high quality, bespoke work placements and group visits to local employers such as Jaguar Land Rover. In addition, the project offers enrichment experiences, such as visits to the theatre or outward-bound experiences, to broaden students' horizons and build their confidence.

7.5 A varied programme of **enrichment activities** were delivered between September 2019 and March 2020. These included a 'Preparation, Revision, Engagement, Participation (P.R.E.P) camp' to provide further support with preparing for assessments. This was a two-night residential which took place at Egmond Hall in Telford in February half term, 2020. The two days were a mixture of GCSE revision, finance and personal development workshops mixed with outward bound activities including a night walk and camp fire. Two year 11 pupils from Wolverhampton attended the camp and excelled in all activities. They were also 'buddied' with younger pupils for mutual support, which was very successful and beneficial to all. Participants were involved in conducting formal interviews for an A2U Coordinator – a new post - in 2019. Activities are outlined in the table below:

| Cohort/Year | Outreach Day |
|--------------------|---|
| Cohort 3 (Year 9) | FEHW Day Walsall Campus- Faculty Subject talk, Campus Tour. Workshops- SENDIS Institute of Education (Carl), Study of Human Sciences and P.E, First Aid session with A-Med training (Hayley and Rowena) A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 4 (Year 8) | Careers Day The Way Youth Zone- Careers Advice Sessions held at our Careers Day event with Connexions, Choosing Options performance by 2Engage, Adobe Spark session, Tag Line competition session, an activity of choice session (Football, Music, or Art) and A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 1 (Year 11) | Welcome Back The Way Youth Zone- Connexions careers workshop on action planning and next steps. University Challenge performance provided by 2Engage theatre company. 'Time to be a youth' – a free youth club activity session for A2U young people, and A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 5 (Year 7) | The Launch Cohort 5- Pupils arrival, welcome/health and safety, 'Why Uni' session, Pre Attitudinal Survey session for A2U evaluation purposes, Build a Lego University session, Carer arrival/refreshments, A2U speakers/music performances, Programme Info - MH, Access and Outreach Speaker- DH |
| Cohort 2 (Year 10) | FOSS Day- City Campus- Welcome, Business Studies session, Deaf Studies session, Law Session, followed by the final session- A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 2 (Year 10) | Speakers Trust Day- Event surrounding developing confidence in public speaking with Gabi Glover. Final session- A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 5 (Year 7) | FSE Day- Two alternating sessions 'Potions' and 'Robots' covering the Science and Engineering faculties. Final session- A2U evaluations |
| Cohort 3 (Year 9) | Birmingham City University Day- Academic session on 'Law' with Luke Mason, Study Skills Workshop, BCU campus tour, final session A2U Evaluations |

7.6 The partial closure of schools and other challenges presented by COVID-19 have made it impossible to deliver the project in the usual way between March and July 2020. Mentoring has continued via the 'Brightside' online mentoring platform. A 'lockdown challenge' ran throughout the summer period so that the young people, alongside their foster carers and other household members, can engage in active, positive activities and stay connected to the project. A theme of health and wellbeing has been a theme of many of the challenges. Participation has dipped somewhat since delivery became entirely 'virtual'. However, However, organisers continue to work hard to keep the project going and a delayed launch event for the new year 7 cohort is currently planned for late March 2021, with an online pre-launch in January 2021.

A2U Outcomes

7.7 In autumn 2019, we found that 75% were at the age-related expected standard in English and 72% in maths. This is significantly higher than average attainment for children and young people in care.

7.8 When asked about the impact of Aspire2Uni on their learning:

- 75% of pupils felt their attitude to learning had improved as a result of the programme
- 50% of pupils felt their ability in Maths had improved and 67% of pupils felt their English ability has improved as a result of the programme
- 75% of pupils felt they had improved abilities in other subjects and 67% said their 8
- Two of Wolverhampton's participants completed the programme in year 11 this year. They both achieved excellent grades (including grades between 4 and 7 in both English and maths) and are now in further education.

7.9 Feedback from participating young people and their foster carers has been very positive. Examples include:

"I saw an attitude change in the way she viewed her future. Initially she wanted to move out of home as soon as possible and pursue hairdressing. However, throughout discussion we established she had interests in other areas such as drama" - Mentor

"A2U and mentoring has really helped my confidence a lot" – Young Person

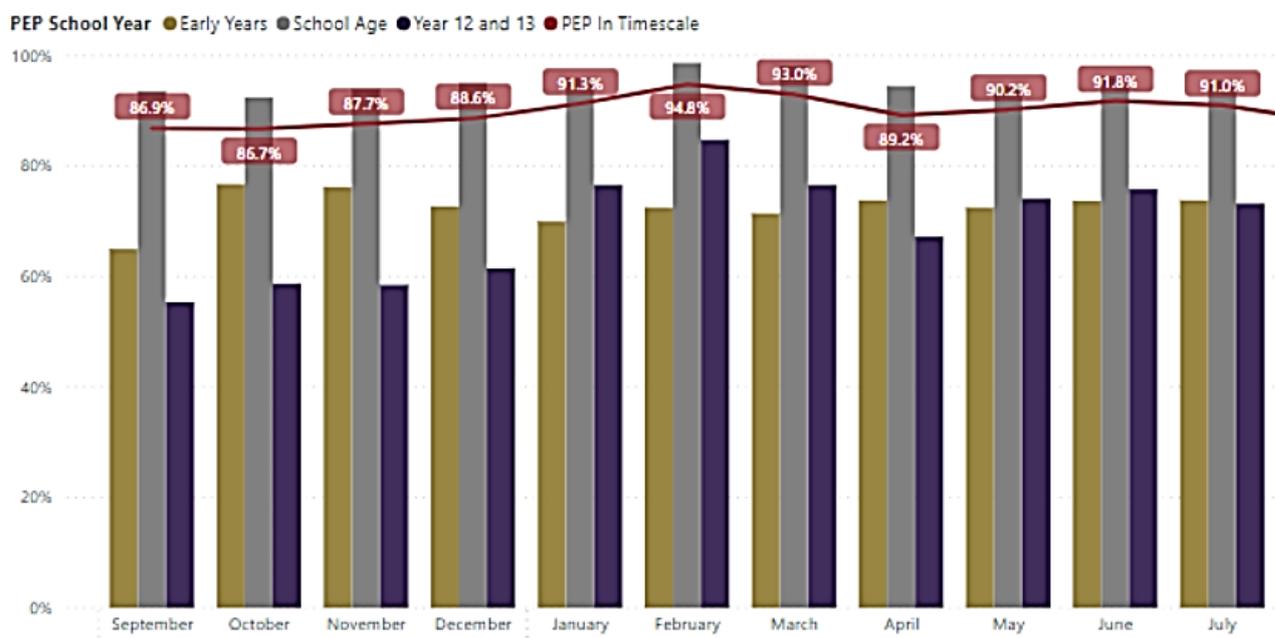
"A2U and the group mentoring has been very positive. The young people can relate to each other - all within the care system. It has built P.B's confidence, offers her additional support, is fun for her, and also offers her many new opportunities" – Foster Carer

8.0 Personal Education Plans

8.1 It is a statutory requirement of local authorities to ensure that all children and young people in care have a quality, up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP). At July 2020, Insight and Performance reported 91% of children overall having an up-to-date PEP. This

was an improvement on the 88% reported overall at July 2019. PEP completion rates throughout the 2019-2020 academic year are illustrated in the table below:

PEP Timescales



8.2 Despite implementation challenges and ‘teething problems’ - such as the large number of schools needing to securely access the system, changes of staff or the availability of internet access in schools – Wolverhampton’s electronic PEP form, hosted on the Eclipse system, has contributed to support good levels of both completion and quality.

8.3 The Virtual School Team audit PEPs on a termly basis, focussing specifically on two key areas: (1) whether the individualised learning targets contained in the PEP are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related) and (2) whether the Pupil Premium Plus is being effectively utilised for the pupil, as recorded in the PEP. Focussing on these key areas, in particular, allows the team to formally audit at least one PEP for every child in each school year (all PEPs are monitored by the team, but these are formally audited and the results recorded). 150 PEPs were audited in the summer term 2020. Of these:

- 81% had SMART targets recorded (compared to 85% in summer 2019)
- 77% demonstrated appropriate use of the Pupil Premium Plus (compared to 78% in summer 2019)

8.4 There is evidence to suggest that PEP quality dipped slightly in 2020, therefore, though it remains higher than in previous years.

9.0 Pupil Premium Plus

9.1 The Pupil Premium Plus is the main form of financial support for local authorities to promote the education of children in care, in accordance with their statutory duty in this

regard (DfE 2014, updated 2018). The PP+ is allocated to local authorities at a rate of £2,345.00 per pupil, per annum, and is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH).

- 9.2 In accordance with DfE statutory guidance, the majority of the grant is allocated to schools to support the individualised learning targets of their children and young people in care. This is monitored through the Personalised Education Plan (PEP) process and by the Virtual School Team, in their scrutiny of PEPs and regular communication with schools and social workers. £1,900.00 has been allocated to schools for each child and young person in care, in termly instalments, in 2019-2020.
- 9.3 The remainder is utilised on a range of projects, interventions and resources to target support where it is most needed, and to support the strategic priorities of the Virtual School. These interventions include Aspire2Uni, Beanstalk Volunteer Reading Help, Welfare Call (service commissioned to monitor the attendance and attainment of children and young people in care educated outside Wolverhampton) and training for Designated Teachers. The grant also funds the staffing of the Virtual School Team, other than the Virtual School Head’s post.
- 9.2 Following changes introduced under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, an additional, smaller grant was allocated to local authorities to support the extension of the VSH’s role to provide information and advice around children who have left care via an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. £30,000 has been allocated to Wolverhampton for this purpose in 2020-2021. This funding is utilised to support the work of the virtual school generally, rather than utilised to fund (for example) a separate, dedicated post. Some PPG-funded resources, such as Britannica School online learning, have been made available to adopters and the take-up of this has been very good.

10.0 Attendance

- 10.1 The average attendance of children and young people in care, prior to the partial closure of schools in March 2020, was as follows:
- Wolverhampton schools: 95.21%
 - Out-of-City schools: 91.43%
 - All schools combined: 93.32%
- 10.2 This is slightly lower than the averages for 2018-2019, which when the total for all schools combined was 94.59%. Very slight fluctuations are to be expected, however.
- 10.3 The percentages of children and young people in care who has school attendance below 90% in 2019-2020 are captured below.

| | No. of CiC with less than 90% attendance 2019/2020 | No of CiC in cohort 2019/2020 | % of cohort |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------|
| In City | 41 | 207 | 19.81% |
| OOC | 17 | 202 | 8.42% |
| Total | 58 | 409 | 14.18% |

- 10.4 These percentages are higher than in 2018-2019. An analysis by school of year has revealed that pupils in year 11 account for almost 37% of the persistent absentees in Wolverhampton schools, with the combined year 11 cohort accounting for 33% of persistent absentees. The percentage was also high in year 10 – 18.97%. With that said, however, the education setting with the highest number of persistent absentees was Evergreen Pupil Referral Unit, which serves the primary phase.
- 10.5 The high percentage of persistent absentees at Key Stage 4 is due to a number of pupils with very high levels of need and, in some cases, ongoing difficulties outside of education. This area will be monitored very closely, however, in 2020-2021, with additional resource allocated where necessary to ensure that action plans are put into place wherever persistent absence becomes, or looks likely to become, an issue.
- 10.6 Following the partial closure of schools in the spring 2020, some children and young people in care continued to attend school, along with some other pupils from vulnerable groups. The attendance of these pupils, from 1 June 2020 until the end of the summer term, was high considering the additional challenges and uncertainties of this period, and higher than for other groups of vulnerable pupils:
- Wolverhampton schools - 103 children attended during this period with an average attendance of 91.35%
 - Out-of-City schools - a total of 43 children attended school with an average attendance of 89.18%
 - Combined - 146 children, so 35% of the total cohort, attended school during this period with an average attendance of 90.26%

11.0 Inclusion

- 11.1 There was one permanent exclusion of a Wolverhampton children and young people in care in 2019-2020. Permanent exclusions are very rare for Wolverhampton children and young people in care – 0 in 2018-2019, one in 2017-2018, two in 2016-2017 and one in 2015-2016. This is a notable outcome (statistically, children in care are far more likely to be excluded than their peers) which reflects the concentrated, proactive work by the Virtual School alongside schools, social care and other key partners, in challenging exclusions, promoting inclusive practice and ensuring that the right support is in place for children and young people in care.
- 11.2 54 fixed term exclusions (FTE) were issued to Wolverhampton children and young people in care in 2019-2020. Even allowing for the fact that many did not attend during the summer term, this constitutes a significant reduction on previous year (there were 163 FTE in 2018-2019). 43 children received at least one FTE, compared to 64 in 2018-2019. 31 fixed term exclusions were for pupils attending Wolverhampton schools, while 23 were for the out-of-City cohort.

11.3 The table below summarises the reasons for fixed term exclusions. Persistent disruptive behaviour is the most common reason, in line with all pupils in Wolverhampton. FTE for physical assault has reduced significantly since 2018-2019, when it was the most common reason, accounting for 55 fixed term exclusions in that school year.

| Exclusion type | No of exclusions | No of children | No of days |
|--|------------------|----------------|------------|
| Persistent Disruptive Behaviour | 14 | 12 | 35.5 |
| Physical Assault Against an Adult | 9 | 6 | 25 |
| Physical Assault Against a Pupil | 3 | 3 | 15 |
| Racist Abuse | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Verbal Abuse/Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult | 10 | 8 | 16 |
| Damage | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| Drug and Alcohol Related | 1 | 1 | 14 |
| Verbal Abuse/Threatening Pupil | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| Other | 10 | 6 | 19 |
| Totals | 54 | 43 | 141.5 |

11.4 The Virtual School Team closely monitors the relatively small number of children and young people in care who are on **modified or reduced timetables**. The number of pupils on modified timetables fluctuates but is generally between 10 and 20 and the use of modified timetables is usually a short-term measure, due to a change in either care or education provision or another change that necessitates a short-term provision or intervention. In such cases, the Virtual School Team works closely with education providers, social care and, where applicable, other local authorities to ensure that each pupils' educational offer is suitable and that they return to a full-time timetable as soon as possible and appropriate.

12.0 School Transition and Stability

12.1 Research shows that children and young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.² The Virtual School works closely with social workers, schools and carers to maintain existing school placements, wherever possible and appropriate. If a change of school is the best option, then we help to ensure a successful transition and support joined-up working with all key partners.

12.2 Social workers are expected to consult the Virtual School Head prior to any change of school for a child in care, so that advice can be given as to the suitability of any potential school placement. This requirement is highlighted in PEP training, as well as in Wolverhampton's Education Policy for Children and Young People in Care and our Model School Policy, which was updated and reissued to schools in 2019. We provide support for children and young people in care if they do have to move schools, ensuring

² http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenKeyMessages_Nov2015.pdf

a successful transition through 1:1 support, in-class support and close partnership working with all key agencies.

- 12.3 The transition from primary to secondary school can be particularly difficult for many children and young people in care. The Virtual School ensure that all are supported with a successful transition through 1:1 meetings with year 6 pupils and their teachers, and follow-up meetings in their new secondary school before and after secondary induction sessions. We also help to ensure that children are given their preferred choice of secondary school. Out-of-City pupils are given additional information and support by a dedicated Education Support Officer.

13.0 Attainment

- 13.1 Attainment and progress data for early years foundation stage, key stage 1 and key stage 2 were not made available by schools in 2020, due to statutory assessments at those stages being abandoned as a result of the partial closure of schools over the summer term. Attainment 8 and Progress 8 data was also not made available in 2020.
- 13.2 The tables below illustrate the percentage of eligible children (in care for 12 months or more at 31 March 2020) in year 11 who achieved GCSEs at grade 4 and grade 5 in maths and English in 2020. The figures in brackets represents the same outcome when we have removed pupils who attended schools that didn't take GCSE examinations (e.g. special schools). 2020 data is currently provisional and has been collated by the Virtual School Team with the support of colleagues in Research and Assessment.

| In-City cohort (24 pupils) | 2020 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| English Grade 4+ | 10 = 42% (50%) |
| Maths Grade 4+ | 10 = 42% (50%) |
| English & Maths Grade 4+ | 7 = 29% (35%) |
| English Grade 5+ | 7 = 29% (35%) |
| Maths Grade 5+ | 5 = 21% (25%) |
| English & Maths Grade 5+ | 4 = 17% (20%) |

| Out-of-City cohort (20 pupils) | 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| English Grade 4 or above | 4 = 20% (24%) |
| Maths Grade 4 or above | 7 = 35% (41%) |
| English & Maths Grade 4 or above | 4 = 20% (24%) |
| English Grade 5 or above | 1 = 5% (6%) |
| Maths Grade 5 or above | 2 = 10% (12%) |
| English & Maths Grade 5 or above | 0 = 0% |

| Combined cohort (44 pupils) | 2020 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| English Grade 4 or above | 14 = 32% (38%) |
| Maths Grade 4 or above | 17 = 39% (46%) |
| English & Maths Grade 4 or above | 11 = 25% (30%) |
| English Grade 5 or above | 8 = 18% (22%) |
| Maths Grade 5 or above | 7 = 16% (19%) |
| English & Maths Grade 5 or above | 4 = 9% (11%) |

- 13.3 GCSE outcomes for Wolverhampton children and young people in care have improved significantly in 2020, compared to previous years, based on the data above. For example, in 2019 (according to data published by the Department for Education) 15% of the combined cohort for Wolverhampton achieved GCSEs at grade 4 and above in both maths and English, while 13% achieved the same benchmark in 2018.
- 13.4 Nationally, 17.9% of children and young people in care achieved GCSEs at grade 4 and above in both maths and English, while 7.2% achieved GCSEs in both maths and English at grade 5 and above in 2019.
- 13.5 It can be seen, therefore, that outcomes are significantly better than 2019 national averages as well as Wolverhampton's previous outcomes. A comparison of GCSE performance with pupils' predicted grades does suggest that this cohort would have performed slightly stronger than the 2019 and 2018 cohorts (18% were predicted to achieve GCSEs in English and maths at grade 4+). The more significant factor, however, is likely to be the removal of examinations in 2020 and results being based instead on teacher assessment - evidence that our children and young people in care tend to be disadvantaged by an exam-based system, as can be seen by the following:
- Of the **14 pupils 12m+** that achieved their **grade 4 or above in English**, **4** of them were not predicted to achieve grade 4+ in the spring term 2020.
 - Of the **17 pupils 12m+** that achieved their **grade 4 or above in Maths**, **7** of them were not predicted to achieve grade 4+ in the spring term 2020.
 - Of the **11 pupils 12m+** that achieved their **grade 4 or above in both English & Maths**, **3** were not predicted to achieve grade 4+ in the spring term 2020.
- 13.6 At the same time, however, other virtual school heads in the west midlands region have told me that their GCSE results have been varied, and where results do seem to have improved in 2020, improvements have been more marginal than for Wolverhampton. It will be interesting to see, once GCSE results for children and young people in care have been validated and reported by the Department for Education, whether there were significant improvements nationally in 2020.

14.0 Achievement at Post-16

14.1 In Further Education (FE), of the 84 young people in year 12 and 13 (aged 17-18) who were studying for recognised qualifications during 2019-2020, 80% either achieved a qualification or progressed to the next year of their course. Several other young people achieved FE qualifications. In total:

- 24 students achieved Level 3 (A-level or equivalent) qualifications
- 17 students achieved Level 2 qualifications
- 26 students achieved Level 1 qualifications
- 4 students passed GCSE resits
- 10 students achieved entry level qualifications

14.2 Six Wolverhampton care leavers graduated from university in 2020. One of these achieved a first-class honours degree, three achieved upper second class (2:1) honours (one is still to be confirmed), one achieved lower second class honours (2:2) and one achieved third class honours.

14.3 Wolverhampton currently have 27 confirmed care leavers in Higher Education (HE), which is a significantly higher than the national average percentage of care leavers in HE. Five care leavers started university in September 2020, as outlined in the table below:

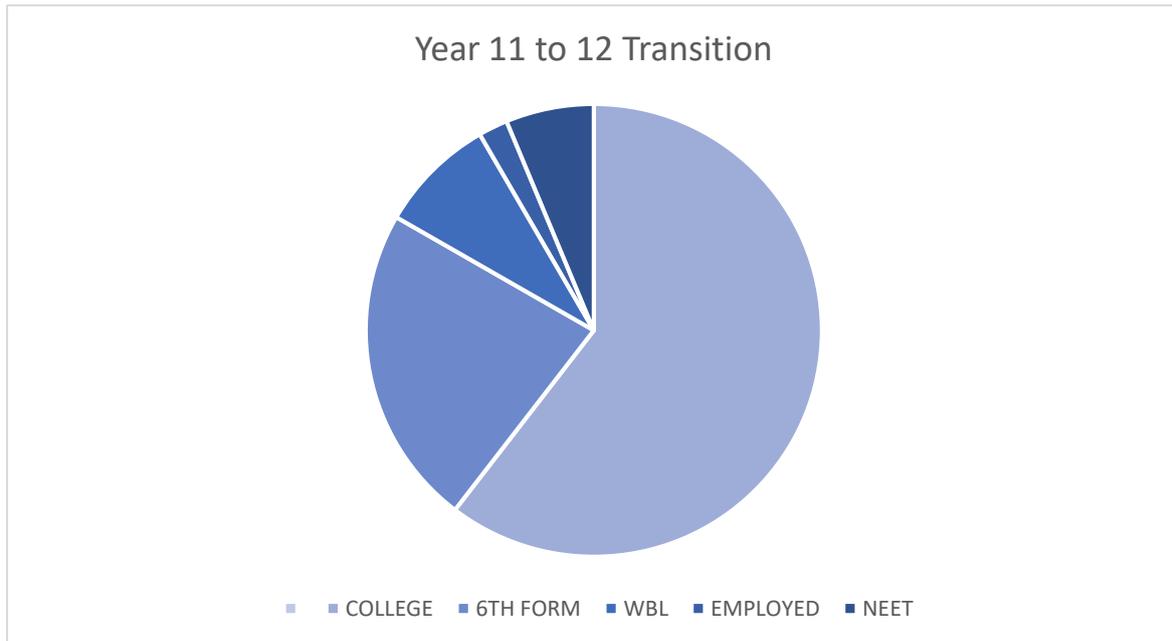
| University | End Date | Subject | Course length |
|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| University of Kent | 2023 | Psychology | Three Years |
| University of West London | 2023 | Aviation and Airport Management | Three Years |
| Wolverhampton University | 2023 | Early Childhood studies | Three Years |
| Wolverhampton University | 2024 | Social Care Plus Foundation | Four Years |
| Wolverhampton University | 2023 | Early Childhood Studies | Three Years |

14.4 88% of Wolverhampton children and young people in care that completed year 11 in 2020 made a positive progression to post 16 education, employment or training (EET).

14.5 The 12% (six young people) that were not in EET in September 2020 had reduced to 8% (four young people) in October 2020 and 6% (3 young people) by November 2020.

14.6 From this cohort of 52 young people:

- 29 progressed into college further education (FE)
- 11 progressed to Sixth Form FE
- five progressed to training
- one progressed to employment



14.7 The Children and Young People in Care Service and key partners ensure that all children and young people in care and care leavers have access to impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) at the appropriate stage, and are consistently supported with a pathway through education, enabling them to positively engage in the labour market. The VSH attends a monthly EET panel and supports strategic developments to help to ensure that all key partners working effectively together to create opportunities, enhance support and break down the barriers to EET. Numerous other initiatives are in place which to consolidate this support, including:

- A weekly **EET Drop In** session, involving Housing, Health and Education
- A designated **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Black country Impact Worker**, alongside a named Connexions officer, including specialised support such as counselling, mentoring or arts therapy to increase confidence and engagement.
- **DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) Protocol** protocol in place providing post-18 Care Leavers who are accessing benefits with Work Coaches and other bespoke support from day one (other recipients of these benefits have to wait six months to access this support).
- A full-time **EET Co-ordinator** and an EET Apprentice. The EET Co-ordinator also leads on support for HE students, conducting visits to students and completing personal education plans and supporting post graduate opportunities and careers progression support.
- There are currently four **ringfenced apprenticeships** available within the Children and Young People in Care Service. Additional support, and pre-apprenticeship support, is available.
- **Guaranteed interviews** for Care Leavers and Children and Young People in Care are offered for apprenticeship roles in the local authority.

- The **Workbox** website is being developed to highlight pathways and support into EET for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers.
- A designated connexions advisor is available to assist with planning for post 16 destinations and NEET cases up to 18 in City.

15.0 Participation

- 15.1 Wolverhampton has a very strong and well-established Children in Care Council (CiCC) which benefits from close links with the Youth Council, and with elected members via the Corporate Parenting Board. The CiCC is actively involved in Participation at a regional and national level, enabling our children and young people in care to act as a real force for change and the improvement of services. This report is shared and discussed with the CiCC as well as Corporate Parenting Board.
- 15.2 Work is ongoing to strengthen young people's contribution their PEPs, to ensure the plan is properly informed by their views and that the PEP process feels meaningful to them. During the partial closure of schools, many PEP meetings were held online via Microsoft Teams and it was felt that this enabled a fuller contribution from some young people who enjoyed the online format more than face-to-face meetings in school. Other tools, such as more child-friendly versions of the section of the PEP form which captures the young person's contribution, tailored to different ages and ability levels, have also been trialled with some success.

16.0 Strategic and Advisory Development

- 16.1 The Virtual School Head's role includes strengthening the awareness of key professionals around the needs of children and young people in care, building strong working partnerships and developing policy and procedure in this area. This involves a combination of advisory and strategic work with a range of agencies.
- 16.2 In 2019-2020, the following training sessions were delivered by the Virtual School Team:
- Half-termly 'PEP clinics' for social workers and Designated Teachers as well as continual support around the introduction of the electronic PEP on Eclipse
 - A termly twilight Forum for Designated Teachers, including training on child exploitation
 - Two half-day training sessions on the role of the Designated Teacher
 - Two training sessions for social workers on the SEND Code of Practice and EHCP process
 - Half-termly sessions for foster carers on supporting education
 - Training for school governors on supporting Children and Young People in Care in school and on helping to prevent school exclusion
 - A range of online courses made available to Designated Teachers and other school staff in key areas, such as attachment aware and trauma-informed practice.
- 16.3 Training sessions were delivered online via Microsoft Teams since April 2020. Sessions were consistently well attended and received.

- 16.4 The Virtual School team also provide information and advice in relation to supporting the education of children and young people who have left care via an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order receive additional support with their education, as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This duty is covered in Designated Teachers training and the Designated Teachers Forum and further training is made available to schools. The Virtual School team regularly respond to requests for advice and information regarding the education of children previously in care, from schools, adoptive parents / special guardians and social care, in accordance with the duty.
- 16.5 The Virtual School team have continued working to promote effective joined-up working between different teams and partners services that support the education of vulnerable children. The creation of the Inclusion and Empowerment Service, alongside the Virtual Head's wider role around the inclusion and attendance of vulnerable learners, has helped to facilitate further collaborative working and information sharing. While the widening of the VSH role has presented challenges in terms of capacity, two additional specialist staff have been added to the team in the autumn 2020 to compensate for this and ensure that children and young people in care have access to the support that they require.
- 16.6 The VSH has continued to work closely with the **Youth Offending Team (YOT)** to improve the educational engagement of young people in the criminal justice system in Wolverhampton. This work started in 2016, prior to which the school attendance of young offenders in Wolverhampton was low, with around 50% of the school-aged cohort attending education full-time. By the summer 2018, that figure had improved to 73% and at summer 2019 it had risen by a further 3%. In 2020, full-time school attendance rose again to 85% for the school-aged cohort.
- 16.7 Further plans for improvement, including the development of a Virtual School Stakeholders Group, which will be developed in the spring term 2021, are outlined in the Attainment Improvement Plan for Children and Young People in Care 2020-2021.

17.0 Conclusion

- 17.1 2020 has been an unusual and challenging year for all. The Virtual School Team, alongside schools and other partners has worked very hard to support our children and young people in care though the additional challenges that have been presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to find new ways to engage with young people and ensure continuity of support. Some of our regular events, such as the I-Awards ceremony and regional and national virtual school conferences, have not gone ahead due to restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19, and if restrictions remain well into 2020, alternative ways to deliver these will be explored.
- 17.2 Once again, there is much to celebrate regarding the educational achievement of the children in our care. A very small percentage of Children and Young People in Care are attending schools which are rated as requiring improvement or inadequate by Ofsted. Temporary exclusions have decreased, and permanent exclusions remain extremely rare

for Wolverhampton children and young people in care. Attainment has improved significantly at Key Stage 4, with notable successes at post-16 including a high number of care leavers attending and achieving at university. Personal educational planning is generally strong, with the introduction of the Eclipse electronic PEP allowing greater flexibility and quality control, and our schools and other partners have a good understanding of their corporate parenting responsibilities. Aspire2Uni is demonstrating excellent outcomes for participating young people and supporting positive progression to FE and HE. The positive impact of the Virtual School Team's interventions on so-called 'soft outcomes', such as children's confidence, self-esteem and attitude to learning is also clearly demonstrated in reports from interventions such as A2U. The school attendance of young people in the youth justice system also continues to improve, reflecting the development of stronger monitoring and support around this cohort and vulnerable pupils more generally.

- 17.3 At the same time, however, there are always areas for development. School attendance dropped somewhat before March 2020, with a rise in persistent absence, though this was linked to particular cohorts and settings and the school attendance is generally good. PEP quality, though strong overall, has not shown continued improvement through audits since 2019 so this is an area for further investigation and improvement. It has not been possible to report on attainment and progress at early years and primary phase in 2020, and these areas will be closely monitored throughout 2020-2021. The development of a multi-agency stakeholder group for the Virtual School, to promote the contributions of other teams and services to raising the achievement of children and young people in care, is another priority for 2020-2021. There is also opportunity for a Wolverhampton's virtual school to become more actively involved with the regional network and National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH) to ensure that we stay abreast of new developments and research as we continue to strive to improve the life chances of children and young people in care and previously in care.

18.0 Financial Implications

There are direct financial implications arising from this report

[SB/07012021/O]

19.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report

[TS/07012020/I]

20.0 Equalities Implications

An equalities analysis will be undertaken if required, in partnership with the Equalities and Diversities Team. As the work that underpins this strategy is to overcome any inequality, the analysis is aspirational and will need to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken.

21.0 All Other Implications

There are no other implications arising from this report.

22.0 Schedule of background papers

There are no background papers

23.0 Appendices

There are no appendices

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Corporate Parenting Board 25 March 2021 |
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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Report title | Increasing Not Engaged in Education Employment and Training (NEET) Care Leavers in the 19 – 21-year-old Cohort | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People | |
| Wards affected | All wards | |
| Accountable director | Emma Bennett, Director of Children’s and Adult Services | |
| Originating service | Children and Young People in Care | |
| Accountable employee | Helen Woodvine | Education Employment and Training Coordinator |
| | Tel: | 07900 708268 |
| | Email: | helen.woodvine@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Children and Young People in Care Managers Meeting | 3 March 2021 |
| | Childrens Social Care Leadership Team | 11 March 2021 |
| | Education Leadership Team | 4 March 2021 |
| Report to be considered by | Corporate Parenting Board | 25 March 2021 |

Recommendations for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the support offered to those young people who have left care and are not engaged in education employment or training as proposed in section 3.0 of the report.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 In the City of Wolverhampton Council, Education, Employment or Training (EET) figures for care leavers aged 19-21 decreased from 61% in 2018 - 2019 to 57% in 2019-2020. This paper provides an update on current performance, the impact of Covid-19, and the local authority's approach to engaging and supporting care leavers who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) in order to improve their employability and life chances.

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2018 - 2019, of the cohort consisting of 190 young people in total, 32 were classified as NALM leaving a cohort of 41 NEET equating to 22% NEET.

2.2 In 2019 - 2020, of the cohort consisting of 161 young people in total, 22 were classified as NALM, leaving a cohort of 43 NEET and equating to 27% NEET.

2.3 The 4% decrease in EET figure has been impacted by the decrease in the population of care leavers aged 19-21. There were two more young people who were NEET compared to the previous year (2018-2019 to 2019-2020).

2.4 The table below illustrates, despite the recent reduction in EET performance, Wolverhampton's performance remains positively higher than statistical and regional neighbours as well as national figures.

| 19-21 Year Old Care Leavers in EET | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | DoT | % change |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|----------|
| Wolverhampton | 31.0 | 42.0 | 41.0 | 56.0 | 56.0 | 61.0 | 57.0 | Down | -4.0 |
| West Midlands | 41.0 | 41.0 | 47.0 | 46.0 | 50.0 | 51.0 | 50.0 | Down | -1.0 |
| Statistical Neighbours | 40.0 | 45.7 | 44.4 | 46.7 | 47.6 | 47.6 | 48.1 | Up | 0.5 |
| England | 45.0 | 48.0 | 49.0 | 50.0 | 51.0 | 52.0 | 53.0 | Up | 1.0 |

2.5 As of the end of 8 March 2021, of the cohort consisting of 153 young people in total, 23 were classified as NALM, leaving a cohort of 53 NEET, equating to 34.6%. Of the 53 NEET young people there are eight young people due to start a provision, dependent upon COVID-19 restrictions. This is 15% of the total NEET cohort.

2.6 In Wolverhampton, we have success in supporting care leavers to attend university. There are currently 27 young people attending university with up to 10 young people starting a university course in September 2021.

2.7 There has also been progress made in the number of apprenticeships which have increased from one to four apprenticeships within the Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) Service over last two years and senior managers have committed to continue to increase this number across the service. In addition, Reconomy are offering five apprenticeship positions for care leavers.

The impact of COVID-19 on EET

2.8 Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a large increase in unemployment and a large fall in employment for young people aged 16-24 (see <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05871/>). Comparing the latest

quarter, October-December, with the pre-pandemic quarter of January-March 2020, unemployment for young people has increased by 66,000, a 13% increase. In Wolverhampton, the NEET percentage has increased by 7.6% between April 2020 and 8 March 2021. This is less than the national impact and reflects the judicious efforts of our EET Co-Coordinator and Reach Care Leavers Team.

- 2.9 The implications of the rising unemployment figure for our care leavers is that it will be increasingly challenging to source opportunities within the sectors currently affected (hospitality, retail, leisure) and that they now face increased competition for current vacancies.
- 2.10 There has also been an increase in state benefits (£79.90 plus housing benefit) during COVID-19 so young people are better off, giving them less incentive to find EET.
- 2.11 In terms of local impact, the Reach Leaving Care Team has not been able to continue their weekly drop-in face to face service since COVID-19 and the EET Co-ordinator was the most utilised service. Young people do not want to attend a virtual drop-in as they can call primary workers directly for advice, support and guidance. The EET Coordinator however has continued to offer Friday afternoon drop-in sessions for care leavers wishing to engage for advice and guidance.
- 2.12 Talent Match, Connexions and Black Country Impact are not undertaking face to face visits. Also, young people who are hard to engage do not want to meet new workers virtually.

Response to the increase in number of NEET young people

- 2.13 Despite, the limitations posed by the national lockdown restrictions, the EET Coordinator has worked closely with CYPiC Service, colleagues across the council, and partner agencies to identify several ways to monitor and support care leavers and promote EET opportunities.
- 2.14 The EET Co-ordinator works with a cohort of 415 young people, including the 21-25-year olds who are now entitled to support, to monitor progress and provide advice and guidance. An EET Apprenticeship has been recruited to further increase support to this cohort. Young Persons Advisors (YPA) continue to support and offer additional support to their young people who are NEET to actively support them to partake in opportunities.
- 2.15 The CYPiC Service Manager chairs a monthly EET Panel meetings, which the EET Co-ordinator attends, to review the support offered to young people who are EET. The EET Co-ordinator has attended the CYPiC managers meeting once a month since September 2020 to share information and opportunities for care leavers. The EET Co-ordinator also attends the Supported Accommodation Team and the Reach Care Leavers Team meetings.
- 2.16 New activity to improve EET, since February 2021, includes:
 - YPAs complete an EET case summary for each young person specifically to look at barriers to EET, their wishes and feelings and employment aspirations (to be

able to tailor and source opportunities that are relevant to each young people). The deadline for this is the 31 March 2021 for case summaries to be returned to the EET Coordinator.

- YPAs now identify the allocated Job Centre Plus (JC+) work coach details for their young people and attend JC+ review meetings with young people to encourage and support EET activity. They also share the EET case summary to enhance and support care leavers aspirations.
- Regular review of NEET cases with the team manager and advance senior YPA to look at specific NEETs on a monthly basis to look at long term NEET cases and the support that is being offered and formulate an EET action plan for the care leaver and YPA to work towards.
- A data base of contact details for young people has been developed so opportunities can be sent directly to them without having to rely on their YPA.
- A lead YPA is working with our Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) link and Intensive support is now being offered.

2.17 The local Authority has a City-wide strategy “Relighting Our City” which aims to support all Wolverhampton citizens to access EET and reduce the impact of COVID-19. The strategy includes a workstream called “Wolves Youth Offer” which aims to deliver a package of support to help young people (aged 16-29) into employment and to retain employment through the youth hubs, Kickstart provision with the DWP and Black Country Impact. There is also a specific focus on those with Special Educational Needs, Care Leavers and the long term unemployed. The EET Coordinator has requested to join the operational group and identified 10 care leavers have been highlighted with an aspiration target of 20 care leavers being supported.

2.18 The Corporate Parenting Officer has committed to working with the EET Co-Ordinator to further explore traineeship opportunities, that lead into employment not just work experience, within the local authority. Activity includes:

- A drop-in session for partners on the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board. This drop-in session is to discuss opportunities that organisations and departments can offer care leavers as part of the REACH Care Leaver offer.
- Joint work with the Senior Manager Adult Education Service which in partnership with Wolves at Work has secured a six-month programme to offer traineeship for anyone age 19 years.
- Joint work with Head of Organisational Development to further explore internal apprenticeship opportunities within the council which are wider than business administration and with easier entry access requirements to reduce barriers to the most vulnerable learners.

- Explore further opportunities around ICT within the local authority with an initial ask of ICT to support Office 365 for purchased equipment.
- 2.19 The Virtual School Head has committed to the following activity for care leavers who are relevant and former relevant:
- Joint EET action plan with the CYPiC Service and the Virtual School which was last updated in the Autumn Term 2020.
 - The Virtual School Head vice chairs the monthly EET Panel meetings.
 - Support access to devices for a number of our care leavers who are currently NEET that do not have an appropriate device to engage in EET activity. This is now in progress, with costings being sought and devices to be purchased for approximately 25 young people.
- 2.20 Care leavers are over-represented in the increasing number of unemployment figures and we continue to work in partnership with external organisations to explore not only employment opportunities but also education and training opportunities to support our young people to be able to access suitable services to bridge the gap in allowing them to sources and actively engage in the labour market actively.
- 2.21 In July 2016, the Government published 'Keep on Caring' to support young people from care to independence. A key policy commitment in the paper is a strategic pledge to introduce a Care Leaver Covenant. The Covenant is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. Organisations that sign up to the Covenant make 'offers' of support relating to education, employment, training, housing, security, health, financial stability and more. To ensure Wolverhampton care leavers benefit from the Covenant and to increase partnership working the Care Leavers Covenant Engagement Advisor will be sharing national practice and ideas for development across Wolverhampton with the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board on 31 March 2021.
- 2.22 The DWP drop in for the Reach Leaving Care Team has resumed which will offer young people and staff extra support. This takes place monthly to address and support universal credit claimants.
- 2.23 Kickstart vacancies are now live and all 36 young people living in the city who are NEET have been referred to the provision, their work coach will discuss live opportunities they can apply for with in work support.
- 2.24 All young people living in the City who are NEET have also been referred to Black Country Impact if they haven't already engaged and achieved a sustainable outcome. Care leavers can access loan devices if they are engaged with Black County Impact. There is a working group looking at connectivity and devices for care leavers. The EET Coordinator will continue to work with the designated Black Country Impact advisor to highlight young people eligible for the support.

2.25 Support is in place through Wolves at Work to support job search techniques, job matching, interview skills and reviewing and updating a CV. They also offer 12 weeks in work support. The designated Wolves at Work Coach has completed Total Respect training and so understands the barriers and challenges facing children in care and care leavers.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is requested to support the following proposals to further enhance the EET opportunities available to care leavers:

- Local businesses in Wolverhampton to engage in further work or work experience placements for care leavers with on the job training (to make up for lack of formal qualifications). Action: the Parenting Partnership Board members will be requested to see if they can offer further additional traineeship placement experiences on 31 March 2021.
- Closer work with the Covenant for increased tailored opportunities to meet our young people's needs. Action: this is to be explored and progressed through the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board on 31 March 2021.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

[JG/03032021/E]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The legal implications for this report are set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 in section 1 Corporate Parenting for children and young people in and leaving care. In carrying out its functions in relation to children and young people, the local authority must have regard to sections (a) to (g) of Section 1 and the implications of this report may also depend upon to what extent care leavers have expressed their views on the options available and to what extent the local authority has taken those views into account.

[SB/26022021/N]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people. This can make them more vulnerable, isolated and unsure how to ask for help. This experience means that nationally compared to the general population care leavers are (DoE, Published 12 August 2019):

- Less likely to be in education, employment or training - over a third of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment or training.
- More likely to be attempting to live independently - some are unable to remain in their placements beyond the age of 18. They are therefore likely to experience compressed and accelerated transitions to independence.

- Impact of childhood trauma means they are more likely to suffer with issue relating to emotional health and wellbeing.
- More likely to have a criminal conviction and may have experienced unnecessary criminalisation. Care leavers are estimated to represent between 24% and 27% of the adult prison population. This is despite less than 1% of under 18s entering local authority care each year.

6.2 The demographic makeup of the care leaver population compared to their Wolverhampton peers is represented in the below tables. This shows the male care leaver cohort is 63.4% which is higher than the City-wide gender split for those age groups which is approximately 50/50 male/female City-wide.

6.3 The table below outlines, in terms of ethnicity, there is an over-representation of mixed ethnicity groups with 16.3% of the care leaver group from a mixed ethnic background, whereas 8.6% of the Wolverhampton population are from a mixed ethnic background.

| | % of total Care Leavers aged 19-21 | % of 18-19 yr old CWC population* | % of 20-24 year old CWC population* |
|--------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Male | 63.4% | 50.4% | 49.6% |
| Female | 36.6% | 49.6% | 50.4% |

| | % of total Care Leavers aged 19-21 |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| With a disability | 17.0% |
| No disability recorded | 83.0% |

| | % of total Care Leavers aged 19-21 | % of 18-19 yr old CWC population* | % of 20-24 year old CWC population* |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| White: Total | 58.8% | 63.7% | 63.5% |
| Mixed/multiple Ethnic Group | 16.3% | 10.2% | 8.6% |
| Asian/Asian British | 2.0% | 17.0% | 19.1% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black | 11.1% | 7.6% | 7.1% |
| Other Ethnic Group | 11.8% | 1.5% | 1.7% |

* 2011 census data

6.4 There is also an under-representation of young people from an Asian background, with 2% of care leavers recorded as Asian, and a Wolverhampton population of around 18%.

7.0 All other Implications

Covid-19 Implications

7.1 As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the numbers of care leavers experiencing unemployment has increased and the report outlines the level of support offered to mitigate against this.

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Corporate Parenting Board 25 March 2021 |
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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Report title | Health Assessments | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People | |
| Wards affected | All wards | |
| Accountable director | Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adult Services | |
| Originating service | Children and Young People in Care | |
| Accountable employee | Jazmine Walker | Head of Children and Young People in Care |
| | Tel: | 07971 843891 |
| | Email: | Jazmine.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Children's Social Care Leadership Team | 11 March 2021 |
| Report to be considered by | Corporate Parenting Board | 25 March 2021 |

Recommendations for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Approve a further update on health assessment performance be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in six months' time for review.

Recommendations for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The challenges and actions identified to improve the completion and timeliness of initial and review health assessment for all children and young people in care.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the challenges and actions identified to improve the completion and timeliness of initial and review health assessment for all children and young people in care.

2.0 Background

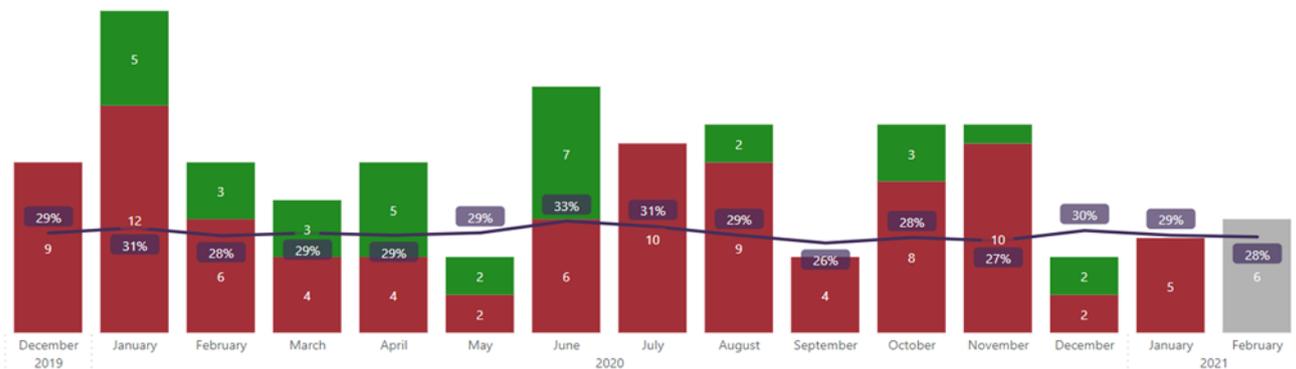
- 2.1 The performance data for initial and review health assessments which were previously an area of strength have seen a continued month on month reduction since July 2020. This report outlines the findings of a manual trawl and data quality activity undertaken with health and Local Authority colleagues in order to understand the reasons for this poor performance. The data quality activity provides assurance about the number of children with an in-date review health assessment as well as assurance about how the Local Authority will further monitor and improve performance in this area.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children (March 2015), is the statutory guidance that outlines that local authorities' responsibilities in making sure health assessments for our Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) take place as below:
- Initial Health Assessments (IHA) - The initial health assessment should take place in time to inform the child's first CYPiC review within 20 working days of entering care.
 - Review Health Assessments (RHA) - The review of the child's health plan must take place once every six months before a child's fifth birthday and once every 12 months after the child's fifth birthday.
- 3.2 NHS service providers have a duty to comply with requests from local authorities in support of their statutory requirements, and a local partnership agreement was made in 2017 to assist compliance as follows:
- IHAs – The local authority to send the request to the Royal Wolverhampton Trust (RWT) within five days of a child entering care, and health colleagues to complete and return within 13 days. The RWT Key Performance Indicators (KIP) measures the 13-day turnaround. This enables RWT to monitor a swift assessment timescale. However, if the local authority sends the request to health later than five working days of the child entering care the statutory timescales will not be met.
 - RHAs - Requests should be sent to RWT three months in advance and local authority should ensure that, as a minimum, the child's main carer completes the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for the child in time to inform their assessment.

New CYPiC Initial Health Assessments (Within 20 Working days of CYPiC Start)

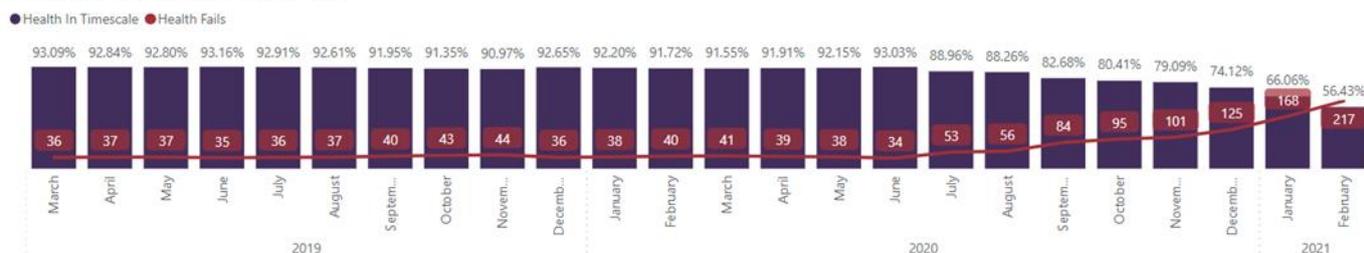
● Fail ● Pass ● Still within 20 working days ● Initial Health Assessments Pass (Rolling 12 Months)



- 3.3 The proportion of new CYPiC with IHA's remains low at 28% for the rolling year (see above table). Only two out of four IHA's were recorded as being completed within timescales in December, and of the new CYPiC coming in during January, none had been completed at the time of running the report. Although this would not affect the other health percentages this remains an area of concern and continues to be flagged as an area of concern in internal performance management meetings. Furthermore, as performance over the last 12 months has remained consistently poor it does not appear to be associated with the new electronic recording system.
- 3.4 Between the months of September 2020 and January 2021, 30 new requests were received by the RWT, of which 21 (70%) were returned within 13 days. Of the nine that were not, three were due to health clinician capacity, one child had complex needs who awaited same clinician for continuity of care (exceptional circumstance), there were three carer cancellations, and two were due to incorrect paperwork from the local authority. Therefore, only 44% of those not completed were within RWT's control. The local authority has reported back to administrators the need to quality assure requests to ensure the correct information is provided and social workers will ensure the importance of attending IHAs is expressed to carers during placement planning meetings which are held within five working days of a child entering care.
- 3.5 In the UK, from March 2020 in person consultations were limited to reduce COVID-19 transmission, including IHAs for CYPiC. A dual clinic model of virtual consultations followed by short face to face appointments (focusing on growth, physical and developmental examination) was developed to minimise contact whilst ensuring quality of consultations.
- 3.6 An audit of virtual IHA clinics between April and July 2020 was undertaken by the Named Doctor for CYPiC at RWT, the aim being to review documentation for compliance with regulations, and to seek service users' feedback in order to make the required service improvement. Response rate to the feedback forms was 70%, with more than 80% of service users saying they were satisfied, or very satisfied, with the service provided both through the virtual and face to face follow up clinics.

3.7 Despite limitations in delivering services during the pandemic, this dual model of clinic delivery ensured a continued high quality service. Feedback was positive as was user engagement with this model which emphasised child-centric care. Learning from this has been applied to RHAs which now run predominantly as virtual clinics after appropriate clinical risk rating. Holistic assessments through efficient use of virtual technology, in combination with outcome focused face to face reviews may indeed become more common place in the future.

Review Health Assessment Timescales



3.8 Review health assessment timescales, which were previously an area of strength, have seen a continued month on month reduction since July 2020 with a steep decline from September 2020. The current percentage of RHA's completed is 56.4%. This suggested system issues as a result of the migration to the new social care system which has impacted on recording of health assessments. There have been added challenges across the system including data accuracy (both RWT and Local Authority), and timeliness of requests by the local authority. RWT have provided assurance that a review of processes, data collection and reporting is currently being undertaken.

3.9 As presented within the Health Annual Report in November 2020, there has been a decrease in compliance around timescales over the last 12 months, with January 2021 figure standing at 66%. Of the percentage not completed in timescales, 62.5% were due to RWT admin capacity, and 37.5% to late requests from the local authority. Exception reports show that non-compliance (within health control) is due to staffing levels within the CYPiC health team at RWT, further impacted by COVID-19 revised models of working.

3.10 In November 2020, the management of the CYPiC service transferred from the Royal Wolverhampton Trust (RWT) Community Paediatric Division to the Safeguarding Service in the Health Corporate Directorate. This has enabled a more coordinated, streamlined oversight of the service. RWT have now recruited additional staff to work within the CYPiC team, in accordance with the Intercollegiate Document, to include two additional Band 6 nurses, who commenced in post February 2021, and an additional Band 3 administration post (0.5fte). Since September 2020, the team have also had two new Named Nurses for CYPiC commence in post following 1 Named Nurse leaving the Trust in February 2021 and another being successful in securing a secondment within the Safeguarding Team (which further impacted capacity).

- 3.11 The Head of Children and Young People in Care met with operational, health, and administrator colleagues in February 2020 to discuss how we can work together to understand the declining performance. A manual trawl of Power Bi (the local authority reporting system reporting data from the new electronic case management system), health reports, and local authority administrator data has enabled us to identify a more accurate performance picture and identified a number of issues with the Power Bi performance reports (which are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board) as well as solutions to improve the overall performance and reporting.
- 3.12 There are 573 children within the CYPiC cohort, of those 75 have been open for less than 12 months, therefore 498 of these young people should have a RHA. Power Bi current reports 281 (56%) children have had a RHA in the last 12 months. At the time of writing this report (25 February 2021), a manual trawl of local authority administrator's data and health data confirmed there are 388 (67%) children with an in date RHA.
- 3.13 The reason Power Bi has not picked up this information is because the form used within Eclipse is also used for recording dental and Personal Education Plan dates and the system does not know which date related to which activity. An urgent request to the Eclipse User Group Forum was made and changes to the recording system were agreed. It is anticipated this will immediately begin to improve the performance reporting and reflect a more accurate picture of performance. The difficulties with the Power Bi performance reports has also affected managers ability to have oversight of when RHAs are due and therefore impacted upon timely referrals for a RHA. Therefore, managers oversight and timely referrals to the Health Provider will also improve with the proposed changes to Eclipse.
- 3.14 Health assessments, and other performance data, are discussed at weekly team manager meetings chaired by the CYPiC Service Manager and monthly Performance Meetings chaired by the Head of Children and Young people in Care. This is to ensure the above actions are resulting in the anticipated improvements in performance.
- 3.15 The CCG monitor Provider performance and quality issues through quarterly and monthly contractual reporting and key performance indicators. Exceptions are presented at the CCG Combined Clinical Quality Review Meeting.
- 3.16 Whilst there is a decline in compliance in RHAs, assurance is offered through reporting arrangements that 100% of children and young people are offered an appointment and seen following receipt of request (unless they refuse to attend). A robust quality assurance process remains in place both within the Provider and the CCG, where issues, including timeliness are addressed. Regular meetings are held with CCG Designated professionals and Provider leads and weekly Provider team meetings include monitoring of statutory activity.
- 3.17 There is also a monthly joint Children and Young People in Care and Health operational group in place between operational and administrator colleagues. This meeting will be attended by the Head of Children and Young People in Care and Designated Nurse for

Children and Young People in Care until the actions in this report are evidencing an improvement in health assessment timeliness.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that a further update on health assessment performance is presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in six months' time for review.
- 4.2 It is also recommended that Corporate Parenting Board note the challenges and actions identified to improve the completion and timeliness of initial and review health assessment for all children and young people in care.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

[JG/09032021/Q]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children (March 2015), is the statutory guidance that outlines that local authorities' responsibilities in making sure health assessments for our CYPiC take place. This guidance is issued to local authorities, CCGs and NHS England under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 and they must have regard to it when exercising their functions. It is also issued under section seven of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Local authorities must comply with this guidance unless there are exceptional reasons that justify a departure.

[SB/07032021/Z]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report. The guidance ensures all CYPiC receive an assessment of their health needs and a health plan that will ensure the local authority and its partners meets children and young people's individual health needs as a good parent would.

8.0 All other Implications

COVID-19 Implications

- 8.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to some delays in health assessments being undertaken within timescales.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

**Data as at:
28 February 2021**

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Agenda Item No: 42

City of Wolverhampton Council - Corporate Parenting Report

Current CYPiC Profile

Current CYPiC per 10,000 population

92

Wolverhampton CYPiC per 10,000 Year End 2019/20

94

West Mids CYPiC per 10,000 pop 2019/20

82

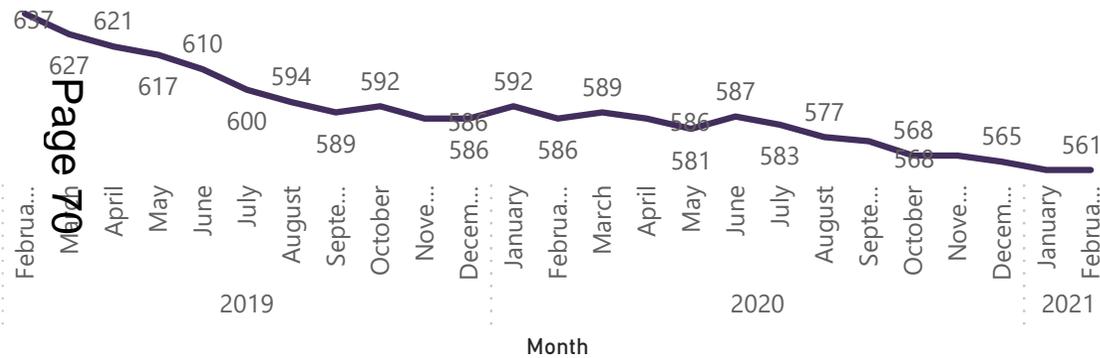
Stat Neighbours CYPiC per 10,000 pop 2019/20

93

England CYPiC per 10,000 pop 2019/20

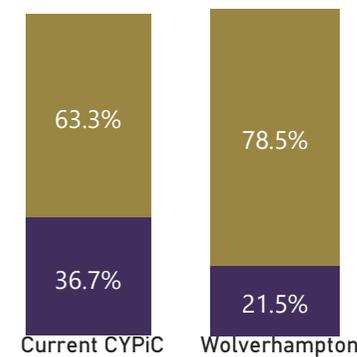
67

Number of Children and Young People in Care in Wolverhampton



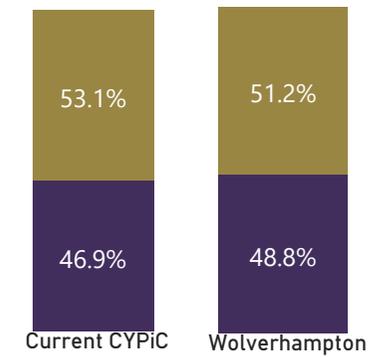
Ethnicity Comparison

● BME
● White



Gender Comparison

● Female
● Male



Age Breakdown

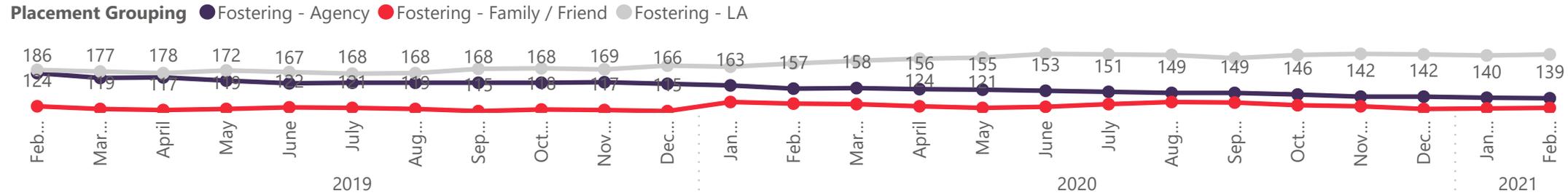


The numbers of children and young people in care have decreased further in the year to date from 589 in March to 561. There continues to be an increase in the number of children leaving care and the rate of children entering care has decreased. Just over 60% of Wolverhampton's children and young people in care are aged 10 and above with 28% aged 15 or above. There is an over representation of BAME children in the current children and young people in care cohort compared to the overall city population of 0-18 year olds. Over representation is also apparent with males when compared to the overall Wolverhampton population of 0-18 year olds.

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CYPiC Placement Analysis

Number of placements for current CYPiC in past 12 months



There continues to be more children placed with internal foster carers than agency carers



% CYPiC placed more than 20 mile + from home
11%

2019/20 = 12%
2018/19 = 13%
2017/18 = X
2016/17 = 11%

% CYPiC with less than 3 placements in last 12 months
93.0%

2019/20 = 91%
2018/19 = 86%
2017/18 = 84%
2016/17 = 87%

% CYPiC in same placement for 2 years or more
75.4%

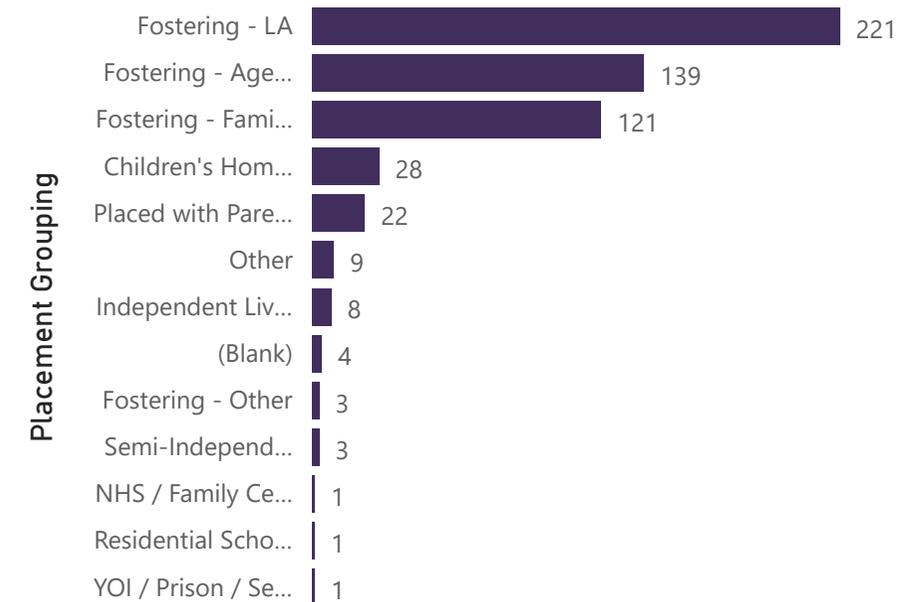
2019/20 = 74%
2018/19 = 73%
2017/18 = 70%
2016/17 = 65%

Number of placements for current CYPiC in past 12 months

Placements in last 12 months ● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● 6 ● 7 ● 8



Current CYPiC by Placement Type



Through the performance of the Family Values Project, the number of mainstream placements continue to stay higher than those with agency foster carers. Both the long and short term placement stability continue to stay strong at 93% for the percentage of CYPiC with fewer than 3 placements during the last 12 months from 86% during 2018/19.

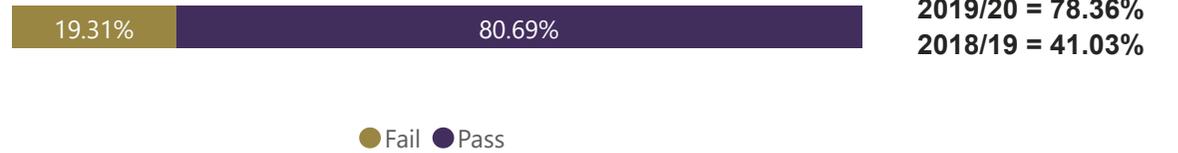
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Assessments, Reviews, Visits



CYPiC with an up to date assessment

Where a new assessment has been completed within 12 months



CYPiC with an up to date review

Where the First Review is within 20 working days. Second review within 3 months. Third and subsequent reviews every 6 months



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CYPiC who participated in the review

The proportion of CYPiC reviews where the child was present or contributed by other means in their review



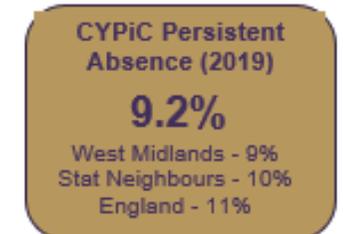
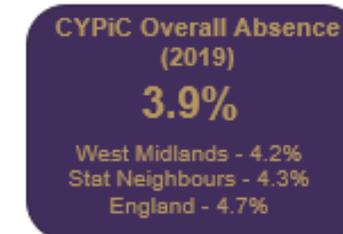
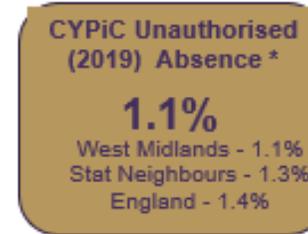
Assessments are 80.69% which is a slight improvement from 78.36% in the previous year, while reviews continue to improve throughout the year with 98% of children recorded as having an up to date review.

CYPiC Review Participation has improved after the data issues regarding the system migration and are now at 97% in the month

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Education

| KS2 Expected Standard | Maths | Reading | Writing | Reading, Writing and Maths |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|
| CYPiC Wolverhampton 2019 | 47% | 50% | 58% | 42% |
| Wolverhampton 2019 | 74% | 70% | 77% | 64% |
| CYPiC West Midlands 2019 | 50% | 51% | 52% | 38% |
| CYPiC Stat Neighbours 2019 | 54% | 49% | 52% | 38% |
| CYPiC England 2019 | 51% | 49% | 50% | 37% |
| KS4 | 9-4 Pass in English and Maths | Attainment 8 | Progress 8 | |
| CYPiC Wolverhampton 2019 | 15% | 20% | -1% | |
| Wolverhampton 2019 | 58% | 45% | 0% | |
| CYPiC West Midlands 2019 | 18% | 20% | -1% | |
| CYPiC Stat Neighbours 2019 | 18% | 20% | -1% | |
| CYPiC England 2019 | 18% | 19% | -1% | |



CYPiC with an up to date PEP

The proportion eligible CYPiC with an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)

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The 2019 KS2 and KS4 results show that Wolverhampton CYPiC has improved in line with comparator performance. There remains a significant gap between the performance of CYPiC and all Wolverhampton children however small numbers in the cohort can make these measurements volatile. For further information about the education attainment of CYPiC in Wolverhampton please refer to the Virtual School Head teacher annual report.

Attendance data has been updated for 2019. This is taken from published data that was released in April 2020, and shows that performance is in line with or better than comparator groups. Wolverhampton are in the upper quartile nationally (best performance) for children and young people in care overall absence.

CYPiC with an up to date PEP performance has improved in February. There are some issues with the accuracy of the recording of PEP data within the new Eclipse system. This continues to be addressed by the Social Care Systems team to develop forms for more accurate reporting.

PEP's - All Ages



2019/20 = 93%
2018/19 = 89%

PEP's - Early Year's



2019/20 = 72%
2018/19 = 63%

PEP's - Year 12 & 13



2019/20 = 81%
2018/19 = 75%

● Fail ● Pass

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Health & Dental - This data is internal CWC data and reflects different timescales to the data provided by health



CYPiC with an up to date review health check

Where a review health check has been completed within 12 months



CYPiC with an initial health check

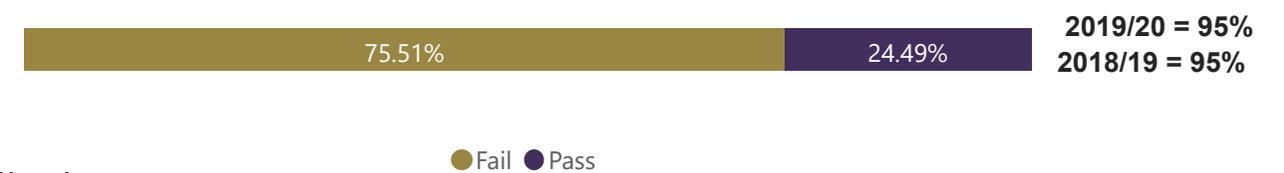
Where a health check has been completed within 20 working days of entering care (rolling 12 months)



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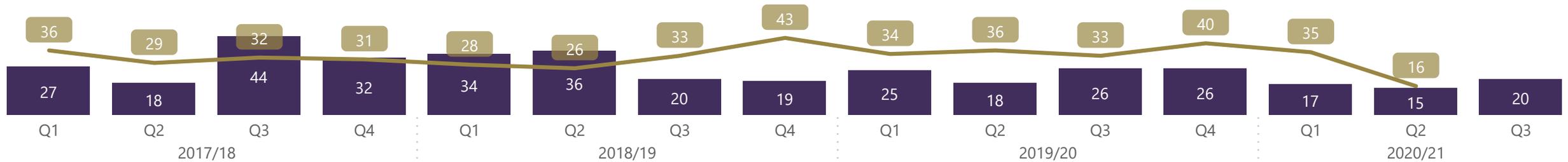
CYPiC with an up to date dental check

Where a dental check has been completed within 12 months



Care Applications

● Number of children subject of Care applications ● Timeliness of care applications (Avg. Duration)



The percentage of dental checks completed has been consistently declining as a result of the current situation regarding Covid-19 as dentists have been closed. Medical checks which were previously an area of strength have yet again seen a further decline to 58% in the month, there have been system issues as a result of the migration to the new social care system which has impacted on recording of health and dental checks. Of the new CYPiC in the past 12 months 24% had a health assessment within the first 20 working days, although this would not affect the other health percentages, however this remains an area of concern and continues to be flagged as an area of concern in internal performance management meetings. We will be expecting to see an increase in the length of care proceedings due to the impact of Covid-19. There has also been a delay in timeliness due to the court initially not being able to manage proceedings virtually.

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Adoption



CYPiC adopted within A1 indicator (428 days)

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family



2019/20 = 74%
2018/19 = 55%



CYPiC adopted within A2 indicator (122 Days)

Average time between receiving court authority to place and finding a match



2019/20 = 64%
2018/19 = 68%



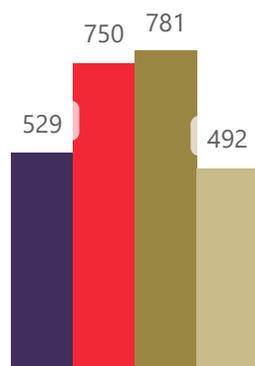
CYPiC adopted within A10 indicator (428 Days)

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (stopped at point of fostering for foster carers adoptions)

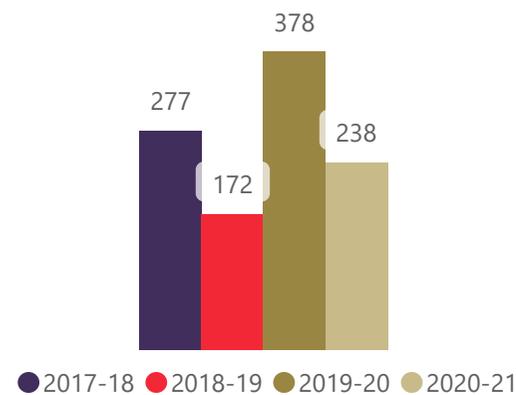


2019/20 = 89%
2018/19 = 73%

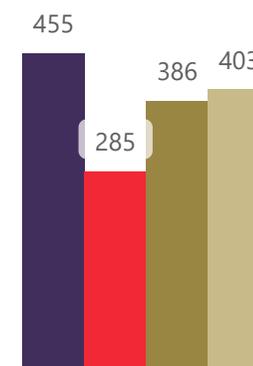
Adoptions - A1 (Avg. Days)



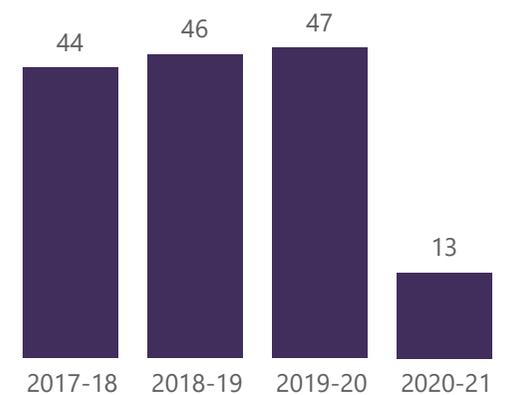
Adoptions - A2 (Avg. Days)



Adoptions - A10 (Avg. Days)



Number of Adoptions



There have only been a small number of adoptions so far for the 2020/21 year as a result of the Covid-19 situation, this has led to only thirteen Adoption Orders being granted by the courts by the end of February 2021. Positively, the number of children placed with their adoptive families year to date is 34

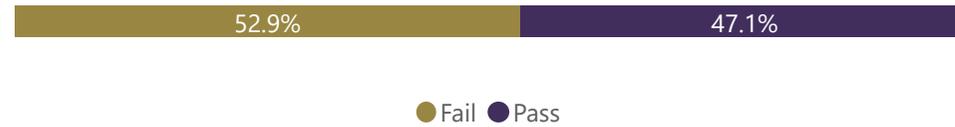
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Care Leavers



Care Leavers EET Status

Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers aged 19-21



2019/20 Year Out-turn = 57%
 2018/19 Year Out-turn = 61%
 2019/20 West Midlands = 50%
 2019/20 Stat Neighbours = 48%
 2019/20 England = 53%



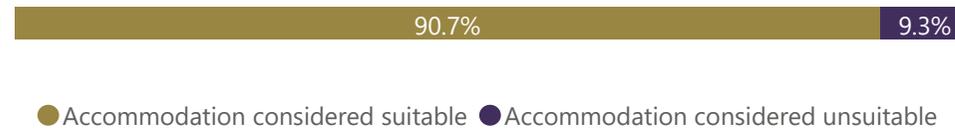
Care Leavers available to work

Care Leavers aged 17-21 who are available for education, training or employment



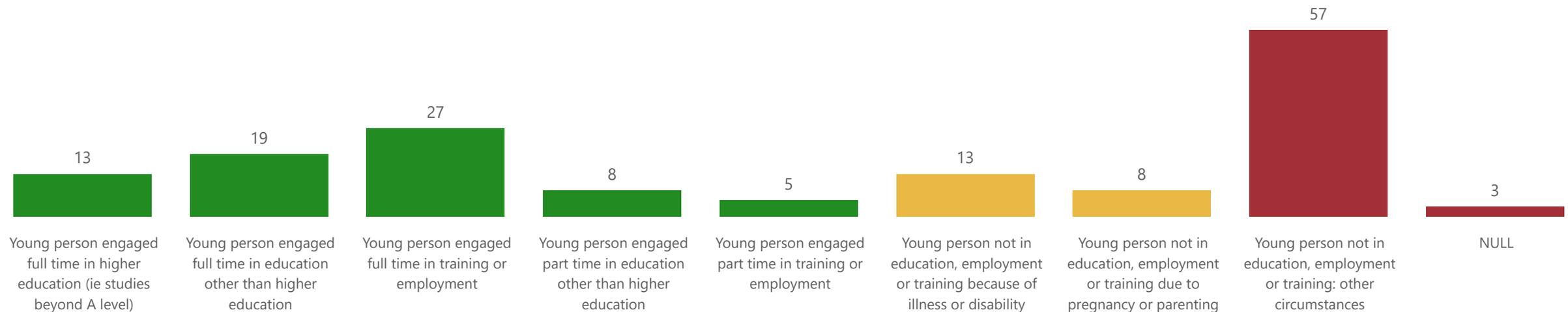
Care Leavers in suitable accommodation

Care Leavers aged 19-21 who live in suitable accommodation



2019/20 Year Out-turn = 91%
 2018/19 Year Out-turn = 88%
 2019/20 West Midlands = 85%
 2019/20 Stat Neighbours = 86%
 2019/20 England = 85%

Current Care Leaver EET Status (19-21)



Care Leaver outcomes continues to be an area of strength for the authority. At the end of February 2021 47% of 19-21 year olds were in Education, Employment or Training. This is a downturn when compared to the previous year's out turn and an additional paper is being presented to the board. 91% of care leavers aged 17-21 are available for work. Of the 19-21 cohort 14% (21 young people) were not available due to pregnancy or young motherhood, illness or disability or because they are in custody. The proportion of care leavers currently deemed to be in suitable accommodation is also included and shows that 91% of the cohort are currently in suitable accommodation.