



# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 January 2015

**Time** 5.30 pm      **Public Meeting?** YES      **Type of meeting** Oversight  
**Venue** Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

### Membership

**Chair** Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)  
**Vice-chair**

#### Labour

Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Susan Constable  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Martin Waite

#### Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills  
Cllr Patricia Patten

#### Liberal Democrat

Quorum for this meeting is four Councillors.

### Information for the Public

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

**Contact** Carl Craney  
**Tel/Email** Tel: 01902 555046 or [carl.craney@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:carl.craney@wolverhampton.gov.uk)  
**Address** Democratic Support, Civic Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, St Peter's Square,  
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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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               | <b>Apologies for absence (if any)</b>  |
| 2               | <b>Declarations of interests (if any)</b>  |
| 3               | <b>Minutes of the previous meeting (19 November 2015)</b> (Pages 3 - 8)<br>[For approval]  |
| 4               | <b>Matters arising</b><br>[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2014]   |
| 5               | <b>Virtual School Headteacher report 2013/14</b> (Pages 9 - 46)<br>[To receive a report on the work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) over the 2013/14 academic year and to note the successes, learning points and areas for further development] |
| 6               | <b>Adoption Agency interim report</b> (Pages 47 - 54)<br>[To consider a report on the work of the Council's Adoption Service from April 2014 to January 2015]  |
| 7               | <b>Performance Monitoring - Looked After Children (LAC)</b> (Pages 55 - 64)<br>[To receive a report on Performance Monitoring data in respect of Looked After Children]  |
| 8               | <b>Exclusion of the public and press</b><br>[To pass the following resolution:   |

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 on the grounds shown below]

## Part 2 – items not open to the public and press

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 9 | <b>Councillors visits to establishments</b><br>[To receive details of any visits to establishments undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting] |
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# Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes - 19 November 2014

## Attendance

**Chair** Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

### Labour

Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss  
Cllr Rita Potter

Cllr Martin Waite

### Conservative

Cllr Patricia Patten

## Employees

Emma Bennett  
Carl Craney  
Dr Roberta Fry

Alison Hinds  
Lorraine Millard

Dr Chitra Ramalingam

Assistant Director - Children, Young People and Families  
Democratic Support Officer  
Consultant Clinical Psychologist - Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust  
Head of Looked After Children  
Designated Senior Nurse Safeguarding Children, Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group  
Designated Doctor Looked After Children Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group

*Item No. Title*

**1 Apologies for absence (if any)**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Jasbinder Dehar and Mrs Christine Mills.

**2 Declarations of interests (if any)**

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre declared personal interests in any matters pertaining to Woodthorne School [Chair of Governors], Central Learning Partnership (Heath Park, Moseley Park and Woden Primary Schools) [Director], Base 25 [Director], City of Wolverhampton College (Governor) and Graiseley Primary (Governor).

**3 Chair's announcement**

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson, invited those present to introduce themselves. Introductions were duly made.

**4 Minutes of the previous meeting (23 October 2014)**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the deletion of "Catch 22" in Minute No. 2 and the substitution therefor of "Base 25".

**5 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2014.

**6 Looked After Children - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Annual Report**

Dr Roberta Fry presented the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Looked After Children (LAC) Annual Report for the period April 2013 to March 2014. She drew to the attention of the Panel that the graph in respect of "referral Rate 2013/14" did not include data on ethnicity/gender etc. due to a change in the data recording system but offered to respond to any individual questions on that element of the report outside the meeting.

Cllr Paula Brookfield referred to the number of teenagers referred to the service and enquired as to whether earlier referrals would lead to a reduction in the number of on-going cases. Dr Fry explained that dealing with the LAC population was not as straightforward as dealing with mainstream cases inasmuch as the CAMHS was required to work within the care system. She reminded the Board that the majority of the LAC population were not subject to referral to CAMHS. The timeliness of a referral was a key issue but was also dependent on when the young person was ready to participate in the referral process. Cllr Paula Brookfield commended the concept of the "Agony Aunt" type column being made available on the website which

the young people were likely to find a more accessible format for initial contact with CAMHS.

With regard to the Referral Rate, Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre enquired as to whether any comparisons on either a regional, national or family group basis were available in order to assist the Board in understanding the scale of the issue and the Council's performance. Dr Fry advised that such information was not available and reminded the Board that not all authorities with Social Service responsibilities commissioned a dedicated service through CAMHS for LAC. He also referred to the "advantage of consultations to Social Work Team" section of the report and commented that it did not include any reference to consultations being undertaken with young people. He suggested that comparisons with other authorities on the approaches adopted would be helpful.

Cllr Martin Waite enquired as to the position with Care Leavers and whether they would be transferred into the mainstream service once they had left local authority care. He also enquired as to whether the Service engaged with the Children in Care Council (CCC). Dr Fry reported that the service worked with young people up to the age of 18 when they would be eligible to transfer to the mainstream mental service for support. In the majority of cases, however, the individual declined to continue to receive support. With regard to the CCC, she informed the Board that she attended meetings and intended to consult on the proposed "Agony Aunt" type column. Cllr Martin Waite enquired as to whether the CCC ever put forward ideas for consideration by CAMHS. Dr Fry advised that she was not aware of any suggestions having been made and this was such great reliance was placed on testimonials received. Cllr Martin Waite suggested that the period of transition between adolescent and adult services was likely to be difficult for the young person especially if the adult service practitioners were unaccustomed to dealing with LAC cases. Dr Fry responded that there was a need for a Group to be established in order that key mental health issues including the breakdown of family relationships could be addressed in transitional care planning.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss reminded the Board that this particular service was not a statutory requirement but that the Council endeavoured to provide a service to those young people in its care. She suggested that there was a demonstrable need for performance management measures to ensure that the aims of service provision were achieved. Emma Bennett reported that the Council commissioned the service and that the service as a whole was being reviewed with a new specification being developed. Dr Fry advised that LAC were also able to access the mainstream CAMHS at the point of leaving care.

Cllr Paula Brookfield referred to a comment made during the presentation of the report inasmuch as there was likely to be an element of a reduced workload following the closure of residential units and enquired as to how this would arise given that the young people would still be in the care of the local authority. Dr Fry explained that in the event of any Out of City placements, the young people would fall under the care of the Host Authority and that it would no longer be necessary to conduct consultation exercises with the residential establishments. The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson, informed the Board that the intention was to recruit a number of specialist Foster Carers' to look after those young people currently residing in residential accommodation. Dr Michael Hardacre suggested that the proposed position would

be an improvement on the existing with the incidence of issues reduced. Emma Bennett reported that discussions were ongoing with CAMHS in relation to the support to be provided to the specialist Foster Carers'. Dr Fry concluded by reminding the Board that to some young people, residing in a residential unit was preferable to living with a family purely because of past experiences of family living.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and the best thanks of the Board be extended to Dr Roberta Fry and the CAMHS Team.

## 7 **Health Care Service for Looked After Children - Annual Report**

Lorraine Millard and Dr Chitra Ramalingam presented the Health Care Service for Looked After Children Annual Report for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014. They explained in detail the changes in the provision of the service following the re-organisation of the National Health Service from 1 April 2013 with the responsibility for delivery of the service transferring to the Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCCG), the various statutory requirements and steps which had been or were being taken to fulfil these duties.

Cllr Paula Brookfield welcomed the information provided and the progress which had been made over the years. Cllr Rita Potter acknowledged the comments made and enquired as to the age at which sexual health issues were addressed with young people with Mental Health and/or Learning Disability issues. Emma Bennett responded that this particular issue was addressed through schools rather than the NHS. Dr Ramalingam explained that support was provided by both the Sexual Health Service of the WCCCG and School Nurses albeit that for LAC it would be via the NHS LAC Team. Alison Hinds advised that there was also a "Drop In Centre" where advice was available to LAC by the LAC Nurse. Cllr Paula Brookfield opined that for those children with moderate or severe learning disabilities early support was required. Emma Bennett suggested that this was not a specific issue relating only to LAC but also to the wider young people population.

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre welcomed the report but expressed an element of concern inasmuch as the WCCCG was comprised of General Practitioners and questioned whether the particular needs with children's mental health and sexual health issues were understood fully. He suggested that there was a possibility of non-compliance with the provisions of the Children's Act 2004. Specifically he enquired as to whether the following questions on the report could be responded to:

- Para 4.2 – was the contractual agreement in place to secure the expertise of designated professionals i.e. designated doctors and nurses for safeguarding children and Looked After Children;
- Para 5.2 – was a Designated Doctor LAC, Named Nurse LAC and a LAC Administration Officer in place and had consideration been given to increasing staffing numbers in the light of the increase in the LAC population;
- Para 5.4 – whether comparisons on a local / regional or family group basis were available in respect of the performance regarding Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments;
- Table 4 - the full title of the acronyms "IHA" and "RHA".

Lorraine Millard reported on the changes at both the WCCCG and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS trust in relation to the Care Service for LAC and on the further steps proposed. She advised on the actions of the Commissioner for Mental Health (including young people) where a multi-service management group had been established to address the new services to be provided. With regard to the question in relation to Para 4.2 – this was currently being addressed. Dr Ramalingam advised that with regard to Para 5.4 that this issue was also being addressed and issues including the number of clinics provided and the number of referrals received on time or late were included within the deliberations. She explained that whilst the number of clinics provided was considered to be sufficient, the staffing resources available did not include provision for annual leave / sickness absence etc. Junior Doctors were now being trained to undertake the necessary assessments and the majority of assessments were now conducted on time. With regard to assessments, work was underway with partners to improve the rate and timeliness. “IHA” referred to “Initial Health Assessment” and “RHA” referred to “Review Health Assessment”.

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre requested that comparator figures be provided in respect of referral statistics. Emma Bennett explained that national statistics were only available on an annual basis. Lorraine Millard advised that the situation, as she understood it, was replicated across the country with very similar issues being experienced.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss commented that the quality of information provided to the Board on these issues had been improved but questioned as to whether this was, once again, due to the dedication and passion of the individuals involved. Lorraine Millard assured the Board that progress in this particular area would continue. Emma Bennett emphasised that the WCCCG had embraced the Children’s Agenda as a whole and that improvements in this area were not just concentrated on the LAC area.

Cllr Mrs Patricia Patten welcomed the report and thanked those responsible for the work they were undertaking.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and the thanks of the Board be extended to Lorraine Millard and Dr Chitra Chamalingham and their colleagues for the work undertaken.

## 8 **Performance Monitoring - Looked After Children (LAC)**

Emma Bennett presented Performance Monitoring Information as at 30 September 2014. She advised that the report had been refreshed since the iteration which had been presented to the Board on 23 October 2014 but that variations were minimal.

She drew to the attention of the Board that the percentage of LAC who had had a dental check in the last 12 months (only those who had been LAC for over 12 months) was higher than that for non LAC. With regard to “Average School Attendance” comparisons with the 2012/13 data had also now been provided.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

9 **Exclusion of the public and press**

Resolved:

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 contained in paragraph 1 of the Act, namely information relating to any individual.

10 **Councillors visits to establishments**

No visits to establishments had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board. Cllr Martin Waite reported that he would be undertaking a visit to Merridale Street in the near future.

Resolved:

That the dates of proposed visits be re-circulated to members of the Board.





# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 January 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Virtual School Headteacher Report 2013/14
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Accountable director</b>	Linda Sanders, Community
<b>Originating service</b>	Looked after Children's Service
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Darren Martindale: COPE Team manager / Virtual School Head 01902 551039
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Emma Bennet & Cllr Gibson

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the enclosed report outlining outcomes for the Virtual School for LAC in 2013/14

#### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To report on the work of the Virtual School for Looked after Children (LAC) over the 2013/14 academic year and to highlight successes, learning points and areas for further development

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The role of the Virtual School Head (VSH) for LAC is to be the lead officer responsible for improving educational outcomes for this vulnerable group, ensuring that the local authority effectively discharges its statutory duty to close the attainment gap between

LAC and their peers.<sup>1</sup> The VSH role itself became statutory in 2014. The Annual Report of the VSH is now a document required by Ofsted during their inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. As such this report summarises the Local Authority's progress in its key responsibility to promote improved outcomes for the children in its care, and its care leavers.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

## **Virtual School Headteacher Report 2013/14**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report summarises the educational outcomes of children in the care of Wolverhampton for the 2013/14 academic year.
- 1.2 The report outlines the various ways in which the COPE (Corporate Parenting & Education) Team and VSH have worked to raise the achievement of LAC in 2014, and gives an indication of the plans for further development by focussing on incremental improvements in the following key areas, as outlined in the attached LAC attainment Improvement Plan:
- Virtual School Data Management
  - Quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
  - School Admissions
  - School Attendance
  - Inclusion
  - Transition & Further / Higher Education
  - Participation & Consultation
  - Training & Partnerships with Key Partners
- 1.3 This report also seeks to inform knowledge and understanding in a number of key areas pertinent to the achievement of LAC.

### **2.0 The Virtual School Team**

- 2.1 Following service restructure in 2013 the multi-disciplinary COPE Team was formed, combining the former Looked after Children's Education (LACE) Team with lead officers

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

<sup>2</sup> Children Act 1989, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Every Child Matters 2003 & Children Act 2004, Care Matters 2007, Children & Families Act 2014

for Corporate Parenting, Participation and the Volunteer Service for LAC. Virtual School Head Darren Martindale has managed the COPE Team since 1 January 2014. The Education team consist of one full-time Teacher Advisor, 2.5 full time equivalent (FTE) Education Support Officers, one 0.5 FTE Data Officer and a full-time clerical officer together with the VSH. COPE also benefit from one FTE senior Education Psychology support and one 0.6 FTE Counselling Psychologist, as well as strong links with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other key partners.

- 2.2 COPE are committed to improving educational outcomes for Wolverhampton's LAC through a combination of direct, advisory and strategic work with Looked after Children, schools, social workers, carers and other partners.
- 2.3 In 2014 the Wolverhampton School Improvement Partnership (WSIP) withdrew its funding for the 2 FTE Education Support posts that it had been funding within the old LACE team. The funding for these posts has now been mainstreamed within the COPE budget.
- 2.4 As result it was no longer necessary to retain LACE's existing "Core Offer" to schools in precisely the same form, as it was created to support the bid for WSIP funding. COPE now have a new framework in place, outlining how COPE works with LAC, schools and other key stakeholders (attached). This new working model is broader in its approach to partnership working and sharply focussed on narrowing the attainment gap between LAC and their peers.
- 2.5 Strong partnerships with schools are paramount and the emphasis throughout the new framework is on *challenge* as well as support. To this end a 'record of visit' form is now completed each time a COPE member has one of their termly meetings with Designated Teachers in Wolverhampton. This provides a snapshot of progress and levels of support for LAC in each school, and identifies actions for improvement or intervention. A new referral / consultation form has also been introduced to help COPE team members to plan and record the outcomes of all learning interventions.
- 2.6 While there are undoubtedly still areas for development, COPE have made a considerable amount of progress in the Virtual School's identified priorities in 2013/14, as outlined in the sections below.

### **3.0 Cohort Information**

3.1 As at December 2014, there are:

- 507 pupils in the Virtual School; reception to year 11
- 274 (54.04%) are placed in Wolverhampton & 233 (45.96%) out-of-city
- 287 (56.61%) attend primary schools and 220 (43.39%) attend secondary
- 55 (10.85%) attend Special Schools
- 14 (2.76%) attend Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

- There are 16 different ethnic groups – 3.16% are of other than white British origin
- 390 (76.93%) are recorded as having English as their first language, although there are 90 with no language recorded (17.75%)
- 151 (29.78%) are eligible for free school meals
- 64 (12.62%) have Statements of Special Educational Need

#### 4.0 School Ofsted ratings

- 4.1 Statutory guidance states that LAC should attend schools that are rated as either or good or outstanding by Ofsted.<sup>3</sup>
- 4.2 At the same time, placement stability is a key factor for LAC, arguably even more so than for their peers. Also, a school’s support for LAC and vulnerable learners (plus other important factors such as the strength of its partnership with the local authority) is not always entirely reflected by an Ofsted rating. For these reasons a Looked after Child may continue to attend or be placed in a school which is rated as requiring improvement by Ofsted if the Corporate Parent feels that this is the best option for the child.
- 4.3 We would not normally expect LAC to attend a school rated as inadequate. However there are a minority of cases where this can be justified for reasons such as those outlined above.
- 4.3 Our intention is, however, to place our LAC in the best schools that are available and appropriate for them. The table below summarises the ratings of all schools that have LAC on roll, both in and out of city:<sup>4</sup>

	Number	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	No rating
Incity Primary	145	6	82	41	15	1
In City Sec	75	3	35	22	4	11
InCity Special	30	1	22	0	7	
Out of City Prim	116	13	77	12	2	12
Out of City Sec	88	4	49	24	4	7
Out of City Special	26	4	20	2	0	0

- 4.4 The proportion of schools rated as Inadequate or Requiring Improvement by Ofsted is noticeably higher for Wolverhampton schools than for out-of-city. However this is likely to change in the near future due to major recent improvements in the performance of

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

<sup>4</sup> The ‘no rating’ column is because some schools have recently converted to academies and therefore do not have a current Ofsted rating

Wolverhampton's primary schools. COPE also provide considerable support to primary-aged LAC in Wolverhampton. Therefore outcomes at Key Stages 1 & 2 are very good, despite these ratings.

- 4.5 It is positive that only 19% of LAC are placed in schools outside Wolverhampton that are rated as Inadequate or Requiring Improvement, as it can be more difficult to maintain close working relationships with schools in other areas and so the initial choice of school is perhaps even more vitally important in those cases.

## 5.0 Academic Outcomes

5.1 This report considers the academic outcomes for pupils at Key Stage 1, 2 and 4 who had been in care continuously for 12 months at the time they were tested / assessed. The report focusses on this cohort because these are the performance measures recorded in the Department for Education's Statistical First Release (SFR), a range of outcome measures at national and Local Authority level for LAC in England. As such these outcomes constitute the official data set on outcomes for Looked after Children.

5.2 Key Stage 1 (KS1) - % of LAC achieving at least the expected level (National Curriculum Level 2):

Assessment Year	Number eligible to sit Key Stage 1 tasks and tests	Maths	Reading	Writing
2014	25	73	73	62

- There is no historical data for LAC at KS1 available in the SFR. However the 2014 outcomes are recorded here to provide a benchmark for performance in subsequent years.

5.3 Key Stage 2 (KS2) - % of LAC achieving at least the expected level (National Curriculum Level 4):

Assessment Year	Number eligible to sit Key Stage 2 tasks and tests	Maths	Reading	Writing	Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling
2011	15	73	67	x	N/A
2012	20	56	50	39	N/A
2013	20	67	44	50	44 <sup>5</sup>
2014	25	74	78	81	63

- These figures highlight an overall improvement in outcomes in all core subjects in 2014, despite rising numbers of LAC. Although English / literacy has historically been a weaker area than mathematics, this trend has been reversed in 2014.

<sup>5</sup> The Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling assessment was introduced in 2013

- These improvements would seem to reflect both improvements in teaching & learning in primary schools and the local authority's continuing focus on support for LAC and improving partnerships with schools. It is possible that the increase in Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) funding for LAC has contributed to this improvement, but a proper analysis of this will only become possible in subsequent years due to this being a relatively recent development.

- 5.4 For the first time, Key Stage 4 (KS4) outcomes for 2014 have been differentiated between LAC placed in Wolverhampton (19 pupils) and those placed outside of the city (17 pupils), to enable a comparison between the outcomes for these two groups.
- 5.5 Percentage of LAC achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English & mathematics<sup>6</sup>

Assessment Year	LAC placed in-city	LAC placed out-of-city	All LAC combined
2011			12
2012			13
2013			24
2014	21	12	17

- Although there has been a drop in performance since 2013, GCSE performance dropped nationally in 2014 due to changes to curriculum and assessment arrangements. Also, there will always be fluctuations in performance due to the relatively small size of cohorts
  - GCSE performance shows a general upward trajectory over the last 4 years and has been above national average for the last two years. At the same time there is clearly much more work to be done to improve the attainment of LAC at KS4.
  - 2014 results are noticeably better for in-city LAC than for those placed outside Wolverhampton, however. While this is also not necessarily a consistent trend, it does highlight an apparent need to strengthen the support around academic progress for LAC placed externally, as well as the importance of careful placement planning.
  - The attainment of LAC placed externally will be addressed through a sharper focus on PEPs and Pupil Premium, supported by better scrutiny of attainment and progress data. The increased focus on KS4 will be supported by additional Educational Psychology input in 2015-16, funded by Pupil Premium and focussed on increasing attainment at secondary school level.
- 5.6 **Additional Analysis – LAC in Wolverhampton schools:** the VSH has worked closely with School Improvement in 2014 to increase scrutiny of the progress of LAC in Wolverhampton schools, particularly at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stages 1 and 2. This has enabled us to make revealing comparisons between the performance of LAC and their peers in Wolverhampton.

<sup>6</sup> For KS4 the SFE data has not been used, due to there being several gaps in the data and slight discrepancies with the data that we have collected here in the local authority (these issues are being addressed with Business Intelligence and Data teams). This KS4 data was compiled by the COPE Team.

## 5.7 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Pre-school & reception)

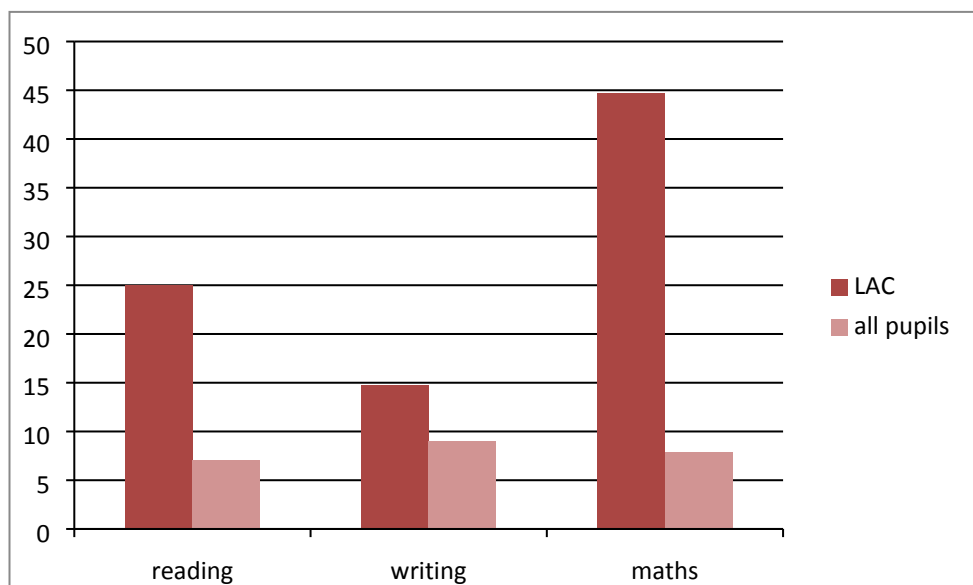
<b>EYFSP - LAC</b>		<b>% of LAC assessed at a "good level of development" in reading, writing and numbers</b>	
11 Pupils		<b>2013</b>	13
26 Pupils		<b>2014</b>	42
<b>EYFSP – all pupils</b>		<b>% of all pupils assessed at a "good level of development" in reading, writing and numbers</b>	
3165 Pupils		<b>2013</b>	52
3169 Pupils		<b>2014</b>	60

- The 2013 performance of LAC in Wolverhampton schools, at Early Years Foundation Stage, was 39% lower than for all pupils in Wolverhampton schools. In 2014 the difference was 18%, highlighting the considerable improvement in the performance of LAC and a substantial narrowing of the achievement gap.

5.8 Progress of Pupils across Key Stage 2: there is an increasing focus on pupil's *progress* in schools, for example the difference between their attainment at the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2. This, one of the key progress measures, is outlined below for LAC in Wolverhampton schools:

<b>Key Stage 1 to Key stage 2 – LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress Reading</b>		
	<b>2011</b>	<b>75.0</b>
	<b>2012</b>	<b>81.3</b>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>63.2</b>
	<b>2014</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Key Stage 1 to Key stage 2 LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress Writing</b>		
	<b>2011</b>	<b>80.0</b>
	<b>2012</b>	<b>87.5</b>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>63.2</b>
	<b>2014</b>	<b>94.7</b>
<b>Key Stage 1 to Key stage 2 LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress in maths</b>		
	<b>2011</b>	<b>50.0</b>
	<b>2012</b>	<b>62.5</b>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>68.4</b>
	<b>2014</b>	<b>94.7</b>

5.9 Percentage Improvement in core subjects at Key Stage 2: comparison between LAC and all pupils in Wolverhampton schools



5.10 For LAC in Wolverhampton schools, the numbers progressing by 2 or more levels (the expected amount) across KS2 improved by 25% in reading, 14.7% in writing and 44.7% in maths since 2011.

5.11 The progress measures for all Wolverhampton pupils improved by 7% (84%-91%) in reading, 9% (84%-93%) in writing and 7.8% (82.2%-90%) in maths in the same period. Therefore LAC have progressed at a significantly faster rate than their peers in all core subjects in Wolverhampton schools, including a very substantial improvement in maths.

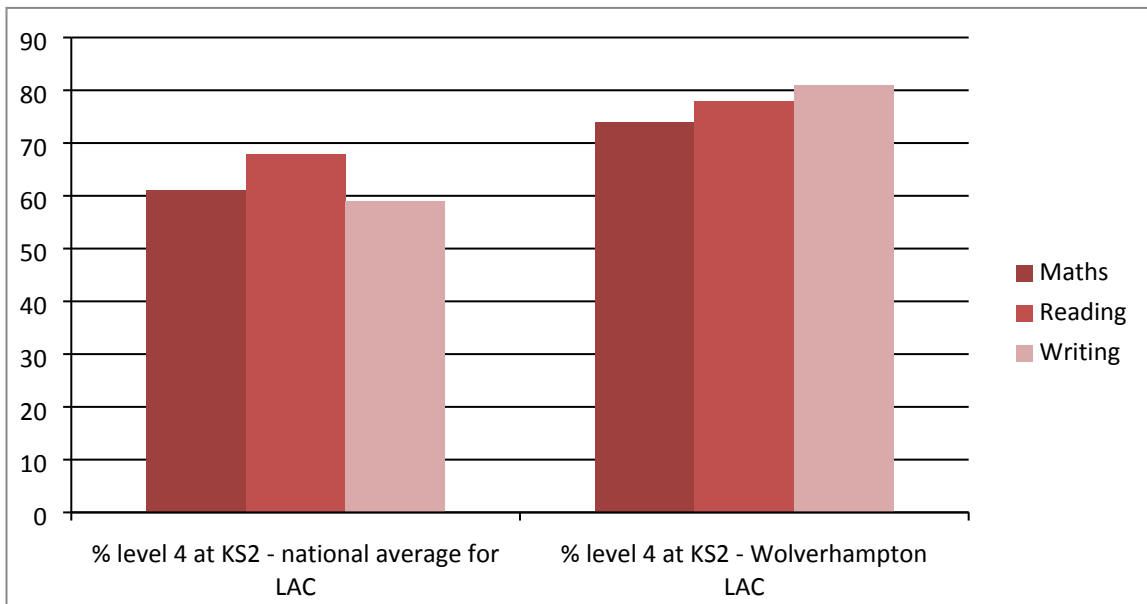
5.12 This is particularly pleasing given the recent news that Wolverhampton primary schools are among the most improved in the country in 2014.

5.13 Comparisons with national statistics

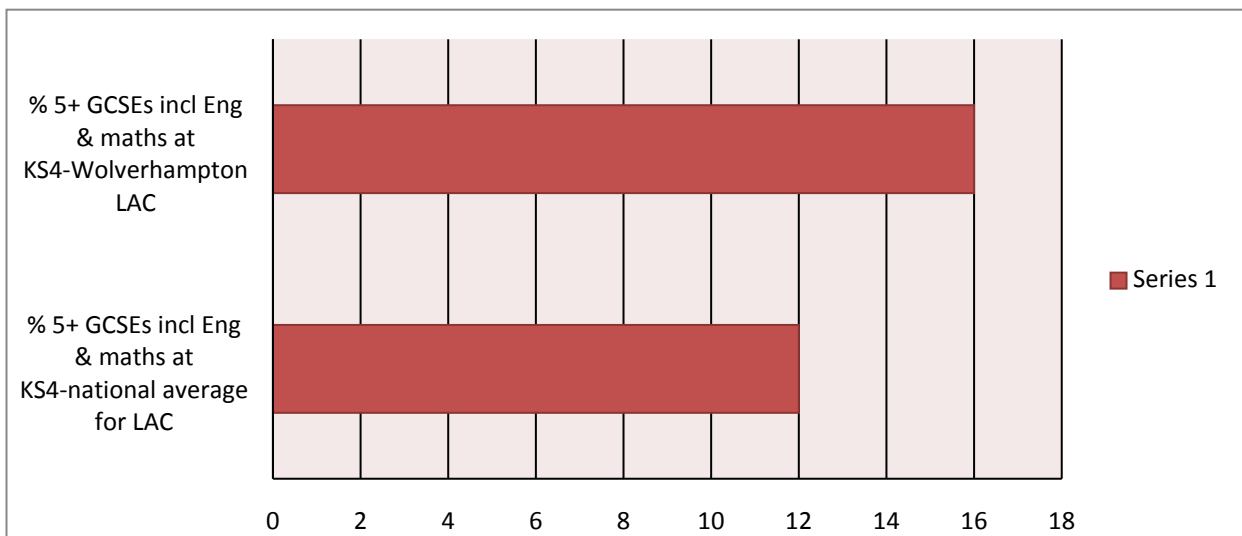
Key Stage 1	LAC National average	Wolverhampton LAC
Maths	72	73
Reading	71	73
Writing	61	62
Key Stage 2		
Maths	61	74
Reading	68	78
Writing	59	81
Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation	49	63
Key Stage 4		
5+ GCSEs including maths & English	12	16



5.14 Attainment for LAC at Key Stage 2 – comparison between national averages and outcomes for Wolverhampton in 2014



5.15 Attainment at Key Stage 4 – comparison between national averages and outcomes for Wolverhampton in 2014



5.16 The performance of Wolverhampton’s Looked after Children is above the national average for LAC in all core subjects and in all assessment years. The progress levels outlined above are also above national averages for LAC in 2014.

5.17 However KS1 is less strong than the other key stages, in terms of comparisons with national averages. Clearly this is an area of priority for 2014/15, particularly with regard to writing.

5.18 Currently 18 LAC in Wolverhampton primary schools receive 1:1 reading help from a volunteer via the “Beanstalk” Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) programme, which is organised by COPE and funded via Pupil Premium. Additional work will be done in 2014/15 to build on the success of this project and to extend the pupils’ increased confidence in reading into improvements in writing.

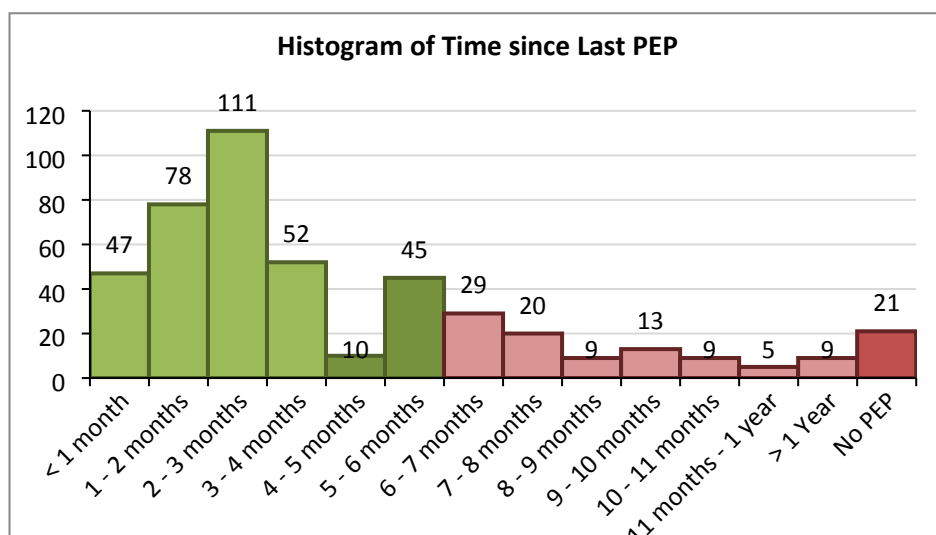
**6.0 Improvements in Virtual School Data Management**

6.1 We now have a much more comprehensive set of attainment and attendance data for all Virtual School Pupils, particularly for those placed out-of-city. The COPE Team collect this data on a termly basis from all schools, and record previous end of year and key stage levels so that we can track pupils’ progress accurately. This data is being used to plan and prioritise learning interventions - targeting all pupils at risk of not achieving the expected attainment levels for extra tuition or other study support.

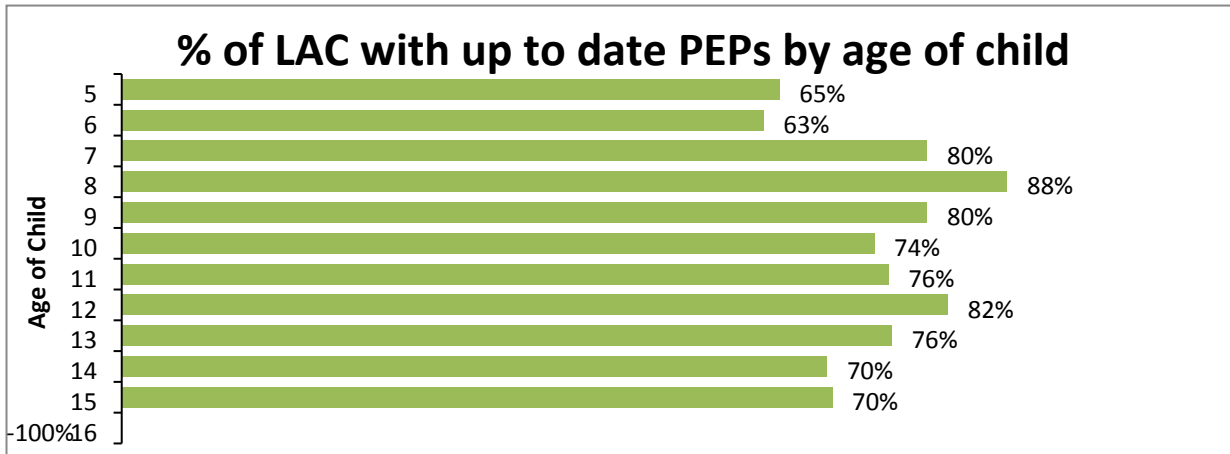
**7.0 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

7.1 As at 29 December 2014 75% of LAC in school years 1 – 11 had a PEP completed within statutory timescales (6 months).

7.2 The % of up-to-date PEPs does tend to fluctuate, particularly around school holiday times. It can also be seen in the table below that most out-of-date PEPs are only out of date by a relatively short period of time (those with no PEP at all tend to be new into care):



7.3 However performance in this area clearly needs to improve and will be addressed regularly with schools and social care teams in the spring term 2015. It is evident from the table below that problems lie particularly at transitional stages – in the first and last year of school, and at the primary-secondary transition age. COPE have started to focus on this area already in 2014 and the VSH will address this with social care managers and IROs as a matter of urgency



- 7.4 The PEP policy and form have been revised and updated to reflect recent changes to the curriculum and pupil premium, to ensure a sharper focus on outcomes and accountability and to facilitate improvements in PEP quality.
- 7.5 In support of this, it is now recommended that the Designated teacher for LAC chairs the PEP meeting, rather than the social worker.
- 7.6 The new PEP also reflects higher aspirations for LAC, which is why the attendance benchmark has been raised from 85% to 95%, bringing expectations in line with other pupils
- 7.7 COPE are routinely invited to all PEP meetings at important and transitional stages to support educational planning.
- 7.8 An Early Years PEP and new 16+ PEP form will be introduced in early 2015. Improvement in the use of the 16+ PEP is a priority for 2015.
- 7.9 The overall quality of PEPs still requires improvement. A new PEP auditing system will begin in January 2015, involving COPE, social workers and senior managers. This will ensure that at least 1 PEP for every LAC is audited for quality in the calendar year, and a termly report will be provided for senior managers and elected members with actions for improvement.
- 7.10 Training and regular advice are provided to all key partners in improving PEP quality, as outlined in the attached Attainment Improvement Action Plan.
- 8.0 **School Admissions**
- 8.1 Social workers are now expected to consult the Virtual Head prior to any change of school for a Looked after Child (now a statutory requirement). This requirement is now embedded in the placement request process on Carefirst, helping to ensure that education is given a suitably high priority in all placement decisions.

- 8.2 COPE are helping to ensure that appropriate education is provided for all LAC without drift or delay. We have challenged and avoided several school exclusions, working with schools to create packages of support and finding suitable alternatives to exclusion. We have also successfully represented LAC at admissions appeals panels, resulting in the school's decision to refuse a place to a Looked after Child being overturned.
- 8.3 The COPE Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provides priority access to consultations and assessments for LAC being placed out outside Wolverhampton and in particularly urgent circumstances. EPS also sit on External Placements Panel (EPP), ensuring that external placements meet the educational needs of LAC. This prioritisation of resources avoids, as far as possible, any drift or delay in the provision of suitable education provision for LAC with high levels of need.
- 8.4 Wolverhampton City Council have not had to direct any schools to admit a LAC in 2013/14, appropriate packages of support for hard-to-place LAC being arranged so that schools are able to meet the needs of complex students, without having recourse to our powers of direction.

## 9.0 School Attendance

- 9.1 COPE monitor the school attendance of LAC though-out the school year. Attendance is generally good – the total attendance for LAC in Wolverhampton schools in 2013/14 was as follows:

Autumn Term 2013	94.25%
Spring Term 2014	92.11%
Summer Term 2014	93.99%
<b>Total for 2013/2014</b>	<b>93.28%</b>

- 9.2 The total attendance figures for all LAC placed outside the city are currently being collected. It has proven difficult to get complete data from all out-of-city schools, but this is steadily improving.
- 9.3 Persistent low attendance (below 85%) is monitored and carefully analysed for all LAC on a termly basis, as outlined in the table below. This points to an issue with persistent low attendance, in a minority of cases (without which the overall attendance % is likely to be over 95%). This is clearly an area for urgent action in 2014/15.
- 9.4 Persistent low attendance: LAC with less than 85% attendance (total figures for each school year):

	No with < 85% attendance	Total no of students	percentage with < 85% attendance	No with < 85% attendance	Total no of students	percentage with < 85% attendance	No with < 85% attendance	Total no of students	percentage with < 85% attendance
2010-11	21	200	8.54%	4	90	3.94%	25	290	6.94%
2011-12	35	231	12.31%	4	139	4.03%	39	370	9.16%
2012-13	27	252	10.76%	3	165	2.45%	30	417	7.38%
2013-14	35	309	11.34%	5	205	2.48%	40	514	7.59%
	<b>In City</b>			<b>Out of City</b>			<b>Combined</b>		

9.5 The table above highlights some interesting learning points:

- The overall number of LAC with less than 85% attendance is unacceptably high, particularly for LAC placed inside Wolverhampton. Clearly there needs to be a significantly increased focus on persistent none-attendees in Wolverhampton schools in 2015.
- The % for LAC placed outside Wolverhampton is significantly better than for in-city, and is generally improving, despite the fact that the number of LAC in out-of-city placements has risen more sharply than in-city since 2010/11. This is another reflection of improved planning and support for placements outside the city.
- There does not, therefore, appear to be a direct correlation between the increase in LAC numbers and persistently low school attendance

9.6 The figures above reflect a disturbing national trend around school attendance however: 85% of absences come from 15% of children. Of those 15%, 35% of them are on care

orders.<sup>7</sup> Clearly there is much work to be done to tackle persistent none-attendance, but also need for earlier intervention to prevent problems from growing and becoming ingrained – for children before they come into care as well for LAC.

9.7 **Placement stability** is also crucial to consistent school attendance, and the increased focus on prior educational planning is supporting significant improvements in this area. There is now less movement between schools and social workers are required to consult the VSH prior to any school change for a LAC. The number of children who have experienced an education placement change as a result of a fostering placement move has improved from 21.2% in 12/13 to just 7% in 13/14. It is expected that this increased stability will also contribute to improved attendance from 2015 onward.

## 10.0 Inclusion

10.1 There were 68 accurately recorded school exclusions for LAC in the 2013/14 school year. While this is an unacceptably high number, there are two clear trends:

- The vast majority were from Wolverhampton Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and special schools. Very few exclusions were from mainstream school
- Most exclusions were for threatening or abusive behaviour toward adults (staff), followed by persistent disruption

10.2 The Virtual Head and Teacher Advisor have been working closely with the PRU and residential managers to significantly reduce the number of 'grey' or unofficial exclusions that had been occurring for persistently disruptive LAC pupils at PRUs and alternative provision. It is possible that more exclusions from these establishments are being properly recorded as a result, meaning that these figures can be seen somewhat perversely as an initial sign of *success*; a case of things getting 'worse' before they can get better.

10.3 There are 12 LAC recorded as not accessing full-time education or on modified timetables, in Wolverhampton schools, as a 10 December 2014. All LAC in this position are carefully monitored by COPE and the VSH with the aim of achieving appropriate, full-time education for all LAC

10.4 The COPE Team's Counselling Psychologist provides counselling, mentoring and supervision to LAC, and the staff responsible for their care, in Wolverhampton's residential homes. This has helped to enable some of the most vulnerable and disengaged learners to re-engage with education.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://welfarecall.com/lac>

10.5 COPE are working with establishments to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the issues facing these very vulnerable learners, and helping staff to develop appropriate strategies. This is the basis of the 'Attachment Aware Schools' project outlined in section 9.

## 11.0 School Transition

- 11.1 The transition from primary to secondary school can be extremely difficult for many Looked after Children. COPE ensure that all LAC are supported with a successful transition through 1:1 meetings with year 6 LAC and their teachers, before & after secondary induction sessions. This is followed up with additional meetings in the new Secondary school. Out-of city LAC are given additional information and support where required.
- 11.2 COPE now aim to attend (and, where necessary, arrange) PEP meetings for all LAC at transitional stages to ensure careful planning and firm support.
- 11.4. COPE have supported numerous LAC who have moved schools due to a change of care placement or other reasons, ensuring a successful transition through in-class support, mentoring and close partnership working with all key agencies.
- 11.5 The Virtual Head works with VSHs in other local authorities to ensure that quality transition arrangements are in place, both for Wolverhampton LAC placed out-of-city and LAC placed in Wolverhampton by other authorities (see 15.7).
- 11.6 COPE Educational Psychologists provide priority access to consultations and advice for LAC moving placement, particularly those out-of-city or moving out. This helps to ensure that LAC are afforded the most timely support possible at particularly vulnerable stages.

## 12.0 Pupil Premium

- 12.1 In April 2014 the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for LAC was subject to 3 key changes:
- An increase to approximately £1,900 per year
  - It is payable from the first day of care, rather than after 6 months as previously
  - It is now under the management of the VSH. There is an expectation that it will be used in partnership with schools, but the LAC PPG is now the part of the *Virtual School budget*, rather than going directly to schools as before
- 12.2 The 2014 Conditions of Grant for PPG<sup>8</sup> state that its use should be clearly linked to each child's individual learning targets as contained in their PEP.
- 12.3 The new PEP form therefore now contains a detailed breakdown of pupil premium spend, and the COPE 'record of visit' (see 2.4) provides further scrutiny.

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<sup>8</sup> See Pupil Grant 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant, DfE 2014

- 12.4 The VSH has provided an automatic allocation of £300 per term to schools (though this is still expected to be used to directly support the child's learning) while schools are invited to apply for further funding via an application form that is now part of the new PEP. The VSH and Teacher Advisor review applications and agree or reject them accordingly.
- 12.5 The VSH has strongly encouraged applications for 1:1 and small group tuition, as research has shown that tuition, as well being among the most effective learning interventions, has an even greater impact on attainment for LAC than for their peers<sup>9</sup>
- 12.6 There has been a slow but steady increase in applications for additional funding throughout the year. The successful applications have been for, in order of frequency, 1:1 tuition & learning support, ICT equipment / software, educational trips and therapeutic activities to support engagement with learning
- 12.7 PPG has also been top-sliced to fund the "Beanstalk" volunteer reading help project, additional Education Psychology support and the planned training programme for Designated Teachers.
- 12.8 From January 2015 PPG will also fund additional support from the Education Psychology Service (EPS) - 0.8 FTE. This will be used to focus specifically and proactively on raising attainment, rather than to provide advice related to SEN as is more common for EPS. Two new Assistant EPs have already been identified to provide this support – both are qualified teachers.
- 12.9 It is too early to properly analyse the impact of the above changes to PPG. However the early signs are that PPG is now being much better used, in line with the new Conditions of Grant and Wolverhampton's Pupil Premium Policy. As a result it is anticipated that more of the funding can be allocated directly to schools in 2015/16, and the effectiveness of its use monitored and supported through the PEP with the overview of COPE and the VSH.

### **13.0 Further / Higher Education**

- 13.1 Monthly meetings between COPE, LAC Transitions and Connexions were maintained through much of 2014 to identify those at risk of becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) and identify actions to address any gaps or issues.
- 13.2 It has not been possible to continue with these meetings in the same way due to the restructuring of council services. Therefore the VSH, Transitions Team Manager and EET Co-ordinator have worked together to review partnership & transition arrangements
- 13.3 A strategic education meeting has been established on a quarterly basis to share information and drive forward the EET action plan. Membership includes representatives from the education and business partnership (EBP), Wolverhampton College, Fostering

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<sup>9</sup> See attached chart: *2010 KS2 attainment of pupils who were below L2 at KS1 (Looked after Children)*, also the EFF Teaching & Learning Toolkit, available online at [www.educatioendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit](http://www.educatioendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit)



Team, Local Provider Services, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Connexions, as well as the VSH

- 13.4 At 1 December 2014 the local authority were supporting 220 LAC and Care Leavers over the age of 16. Of these:
- 128 were in education, employment or training (EET)
  - 49 were not in education, employment or training (NEET)
  - 43 were exempted due to illness, disability, pregnancy/young mother or custody
- 13.5 Therefore 78% were either in EET or exempted. The figures for September 2014 were very similar so there has been little development or drop-out since September
- 13.6 There is a 16+ PEP in place but this has not particularly effective or well used to date. The VSH will be reviewing, updating and re-launching the 16+ PEP form in early 2015, with a view to ensuring that PEPs are completed to a high standard for post-16 LAC in further education, and also used to support care leavers where appropriate.
- 13.7 In 2015 the Virtual School data set will be extended to include the attainment and progress of LAC in years 12 and 13. The Transitions team will input this data in the same way that COPE do for school-aged LAC. It has been necessary for the VSH to provide training and guidance to the Transitions team in this area, hence the delay in this process getting underway.
- 13.8 The VSH is involved in a new partnership project with Wolverhampton University and other Virtual Heads in the Black Country to increase the numbers of LAC and care leavers in higher education. This will involve university visits and events, a mentoring scheme for potential LAC university students and extra training and support for carers, beginning in early 2015.

#### **14.0 Participation**

- 14.1 Wolverhampton has a robust Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Participation programme, led by the COPE Team's Participation Officer for LAC. The VSH manages the Participation Officer and ensures that education is given priority and consideration as part of the CiCC and Participation programme.
- 14.2 Education is prioritised at a strategic level in the council's Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge to LAC and Care Leavers, which were based on consultation with LAC and Care Leavers (strategic priority 3: *Help us to make achievements*).
- 14.3 The 2014 refresh of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, based on further consultation with the CiCC and a representative sample of LAC and Care Leavers, highlighted two additional priorities for young people, related to education:

1. the timing & venue of PEP meetings; young people often do not like to be removed from lessons to attend meetings, as this makes them feel different or 'singled out'
  2. A need for increased access to apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for LAC and Care Leavers
- 14.4 These issues were discussed with Elected Members at the September 2014 meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, where a commitment was made to improving these areas in 2015. These will form part of the new Corporate Parenting Action Plan, which will be completed in early 2015 following the appointment of a new Corporate Parenting Officer and Assistant Corporate Parenting Officer (a post which is ring-fenced for appointment of a Care Leaver) to complete the COPE Team.
- 14.5 The 2013/14 Virtual School Headteacher Report will be discussed with the CiCC in the spring term 2015, and a written response from the CiCC will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel to inform further strategic decision making and scrutiny.
- 14.6 COPE and the VSH regularly address these issues at an operational level, and accepted two young people on work placements in 2014.
- 14.7 The LAC Awards Ceremony in February 2014 saw well over 300 young people receive recognition for their successes throughout the year. Educational success was a key award category alongside other achievements. COPE led in the organisation of this very successful evening, the biggest event in the Corporate Parenting calendar.

## **15.0 Training**

- 15.1 The Virtual Head now has statutory duties related to the training of all key partners and the development of strong working partnerships. The following have been delivered in 2013/14, in relation to partnership working in Wolverhampton:
- 3 termly Designated Teachers Forum meetings. Attendance has been good (up to 35)
  - 5 2-hour 'skills gyms' for social workers in quality Personal Education Planning – these will continue every 2 months. Social workers' attendance requires improvement – VSH is working with managers and Workforce Development on this
  - Termly educational training sessions for foster carers, together with a compulsory education component on Skills-to-Foster training
  - Briefings for IROs and all social work management teams in improving PEP quality, good practice, current policy and statutory guidance on the education of LAC
- 15.2 An extensive programme of training is planned for Designated Teachers in 2015-16. This will begin with an 'Ignition Conference', a training conference on Attachment, Trauma & Resilience, followed by 4 half-day training sessions throughout the year (in addition to the termly DT's Forum meetings). A 'train-the-trainer' day in 'Emotion Coaching' has also been organised which will enable the attendees to deliver training on emotional regulation in schools. This training is all linked to the "Attachment-aware Schools"

programme which is being developed nationally between Virtual Heads and the National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).

- 15.3 The aim is to achieve a consistency of vision and approach across the services supporting LAC in schools. Therefore colleagues from School Improvement, AEL (English as an Additional Language) and the Speech & Language Therapy team will also be included in the Ignition Conference and 'train-the-trainer' day on Emotion Coaching.
- 15.4 The VSH has a responsibility to raise awareness among school governing bodies of the needs of LAC, and related statutory responsibilities. This has been something of a gap in the past however an initial briefing for school governors has been arranged for early 2015
- 16.0 Partnership working**
- 16.1 A number of initiatives have contributed to improved partnership working between key agencies in 2014
- 16.2 COPE Education Support Workers continue to meet with Designated Teachers in all Wolverhampton schools every term to review the progress of LAC and offer support
- 16.2 The VSH has held meetings between the Head Teachers of Wolverhampton's Pupil Referral Units / alternative provision and Wolverhampton's residential homes to facilitate better joint working and promote inclusion
- 16.3 Half-termly meetings are held with School Improvement, (1) to increase the focus on LAC in the local authority's scrutiny of schools and (2) to enable School Improvement to provide similar support and challenge to the Virtual School
- 16.4 Student reviews are held between the COPE Teacher Advisor and YOT every half-term, to focus on the attendance and progress of LAC who have offended or are at risk of offending
- 16.5 The VSH has written to all Wolverhampton schools, visited several schools, and attended the Wolverhampton Head Teachers' conference & briefings. The VSH is delivering a presentation on LAC at the first Head Teachers' briefing of 2015
- 16.6 As Chairperson of the West Midlands Network of Virtual School Heads, The VSH meets termly with other VSHs in the region and, as the regional lead, represents the West Midlands at the termly National VSH Steering Group
- 16.7 The 2013/14 achievements of the West Midlands VSH network include:
- Clear, agreed cross-boundary arrangements between all West Midlands Virtual Heads, to promote better educational planning for children educated outside their home local authority. This is being now considered as a nationwide model by the National Steering Group

- A post-16 learning agreement to promote improved educational provision for LAC and Care Leavers in FE / HE (partly to replace the now defunct Buttle Trust Quality Mark, ensuring quality )
- Close links with a new lead HMI for LAC in West Midlands Schools. This HMI role was established following a presentation that the VSH delivered in July 2014 to the West Midlands Ofsted Inspectors team on the educational needs of LAC. It is also part of a national drive by Virtual Heads to raise the status of LAC in Ofsted's inspections of schools. The VSH meets with the link HMI at least once a term
- Improving links with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS). The VSH has met with the Chairperson of ADCS to discuss ways of working together more closely to promote improved outcomes for LAC

## 17.0 Conclusion

- 17.1 Despite rising LAC numbers and other challenges, there have been numerous improvements made to Virtual School arrangements and processes in 2013/14, contributing to improving outcomes in several areas.
- 17.2 LAC are clearly doing better at school. Academic outcomes are above national averages and the progress of LAC in Wolverhampton schools is significantly better than that of their peers, especially at KS2. COPE and the VSH are ensuring that appropriate education placements and support are arranged in a timely manner, while challenging exclusions and strengthening transition arrangements. As a result, LAC are spending less time out of school and placement stability is much-improved.
- 17.3 At the same time there is much work to be done in 2015 and beyond, building on these successes and tackling areas in need of improvement. There is still an unacceptable attainment gap for LAC at KS4 in particular, compared to their peers, and Writing at KS1 (along with Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar at KS2) are areas in need of additional focus. Persistently low school attendance is still an issue for a minority of pupils and while the Virtual School data set has improved significantly, there are still some gaps in attainment and attendance data for out-of-city LAC. Educational data and support for post-16 LAC and care Leavers are also areas for improvement, as is the monitoring of LAC placed in Wolverhampton by other authorities. Actions to address these issues are outlined in the LAC Attainment Improvement Action Plan.
- 17.4 The Virtual School Head is also contributing, through the West Midlands Virtual Schools Network and National VSH Steering Group, to improved provision for LAC on a regional and national level. VSHs are working with Ofsted to increase the focus on LAC in school inspections and closer links are being made with ADCS to ensure joined-up thinking at a strategic level.
- 17.5 2013/14 was a very busy and productive year for the Corporate Parenting & Education Team and foundations have been laid for further improvements and exciting

developments in 2015 and beyond, as the Virtual School continues to promote better outcomes Looked after Children.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report [NM/08012015/Q]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 The relevant legislation is set out in the body of this report. There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. RB/09012015/X

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 An initial Equalities Impact Analysis has been completed for this report. Based on this it was decided that a full impact analysis should be undertaken but that further data is required in order for this to be completed. The VSH is working with colleagues in Business Intelligence on this and a full assessment will be completed as soon as the necessary data has been collected.

#### **7.0 Environmental implications**

7.1 There are no environmental implications

#### **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 All of the proposed developments can be made within existing resources

#### **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

#### **10.0 Schedule of background papers**


- 10.1 Children & Family Support Action Plan: LAC ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN – April 2014-April 2015: attached
- COPE (Corporate Parenting & Education Team) Framework 2014 – Offer to Schools & Key Partners

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## Children & Family Support Action Plan: LAC ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN – April 2014-April 2015

In line with statutory guidance & local priorities, this action plan focusses on the following issues & objectives:



1. Data
2. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
3. Admissions
4. Attendance
5. Learning Support
6. Inclusion
7. Transition & Further / Higher Education
8. Participation
9. Training & Partnerships


Issue & Objective	Action Agreed	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress as at 1/10/2014	RAG Rating
<p><b>DATA:</b> Maintain complete &amp; up-to-date attainment data for all LAC</p>	<p>COPE to collect attainment data for core subjects from all schools termly, including out-of-city (ooc), and historical levels.</p> <p>School Improvement to assist with primary schools and KS1/2 outcomes analysis</p> <p>All 2014 GCSE results to be recorded, analysis completed to inform priority areas</p>	<p>Database to be complete by September 2014</p> <p>October 2014</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>Majority of levels collected; outstanding levels being requested urgently (linked to pupil premium allocation). LAC Data Officer now concentrating on ooc schools</p> <p>Very positive improvement in KS1-2 attainment and progress for LAC in Wolverhampton schools. Reading is slightly weaker than maths/writing</p> <p>More analysis needs to be done for ooc - Information Team are assisting with further data analysis</p> <p>All GCSEs collected, analysis being completed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p>

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	Schools to be recorded correctly by s/w teams on Carefirst	December 2014	LAC & CIN/CP HOS	This is weak currently – discussed in LAC managers meeting Oct & Dec 2014 – all SCSWs to instruct teams to record school correctly. DM requested the same from CIN/CP HOS. DM held meeting with Information Team Manager in Oct 2014; they have agreed to assist with this and ensure that all schools are up to date	
	VSH to analyse RAISEonline data	July 2014	Darren Martindale	VSH has access to RAISE, School Improvement assisting with data analysis. Good data now available for in-city LAC	
	Improve educational data for 16+ LAC / Care-leavers	Data completed autumn term 2014		Transitions Team are currently collecting data, to be monitored by the VSH and Transitions Team as part of the Virtual School database. 16+ PEP still to be revised & updated	
<b>PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS:</b> Improve quality & quantity of PEPs	Revise and update PEP form, update PEP policy and procedure - clarify roles & responsibility	October 2014	Darren Martindale	Completed and live on the Carefirst system	
	Training in quality personal education planning to be delivered to all key partners	All trained by April 2015	Darren Martindale	4 sessions delivered for social workers 4 meetings held for designated teachers. Briefings delivered for IROs and managers	
	All PEPs to be audited for quality – process triangulated between COPE, key stakeholders & whole-LAC audit. 10% of PEPs audited	Implemented by October 2014, 1 PEP for every LAC audited by	Darren Martindale	Planning meeting held with Safeguarding Review & Policy/Procedures Officers. Audit forms completed	





	every month. Termly report from VSH to social care managers / schools / elected members. Overall progress to be captured in VSH annual report 16+ & Early Years PEPs to be established, key partners trained in its	August 2015	Darren Martindale	16+ PEP form currently being revised & updated	
<b>ADMISSIONS:</b> Ensure that LAC are prioritised in school admissions, avoiding drift & delay	VSH to be consulted prior to any school change for a LAC, Carefirst modified to ensure this is part of the placement process.	Implemented by October 2014	Darren Martindale	Carefirst changes now made – new placement request form includes notification and space for input for VSH	
	New Wolverhampton placement stability policy to be introduced, outlining the above changes	October 2014	Darren Martindale / Rachel Warrender	Policy in place	
	Termly meetings and improved links with School Improvement Team	Ongoing	Darren Martindale	Meetings being held, links clearly improving	
	COPE to ensure urgent priority access to temporary & alternative provision for all LAC	Ongoing	Darren Martindale / Anne Foster	Barriers still exist due to service restructures and numbers of LAC placed out-of-city. However places are being arranged far more quickly than they would without COPE intervention. LAC are spending less time out of school	
<b>ATTENDANCE:</b> Closely monitor school attendance & achieve benchmark of 95% +	Attendance monitored more rigorously via the PEP – benchmark raised from 85%	New PEP in place October 2014	Darren Martindale	New PEP proforma completed and added to Carefirst	


	<p>to 95%</p> <p>COPE to monitor attendance of all LAC - VSH/COPE to address attendance issues with school/EWO/social worker without delay</p> <p>VSH to ensure that school attendance for children entering care is regularly addressed at Admission to Care Panel</p> <p>Weekly monitoring of LAC in residential settings</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Weekly attendance – ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>David King / Darren Martindale</p>	<p>School attendance, attainment &amp; stability now routinely addressed at an earlier stage in (and prior to) care process. However <u>data for out-of-city LAC still needs to improve</u></p> <p>Closer monitoring of attendance is enabling more prompt interventions where appropriate. Attendance generally improved. However VSH now only attends panel where necessary, rather than weekly.</p>	
<p><b>LEARNING SUPPORT:</b> Ensure access to high quality, focussed learning support for all LAC with a particular focus on LAC approaching assessment &amp; transition. Ensure timely intervention where appropriate</p>	<p>VSH &amp; COPE to promote increased use of 1:1 tuition through training, PEPs and school visits, funded by PPG. All LAC in assessment years and at risk of underachieving to access 1:1 tuition, particular focus on KS4, also KS2 pupils not on target for level 4</p> <p>Increase focus on progress and attainment at KS4 through 1:1 tuition, regular progress monitoring/PEPs and increased Educational Psychology support</p>	<p>Tuition delivered by April 2015</p> <p>Ongoing through 2014-15 academic year</p>	<p>Darren Martindale / Anne Foster</p> <p>Darren Martindale / Anne Foster</p> <p>Anne Foster</p>	<p>1:1 tuition is increasing, 3 tuition providers identified locally – all centres visited &amp; quality assured.</p> <p>Additional EP support identified and funded through pupil premium – 2 Assistant EPs (.8 FTE) to start January 2015 – to focus on accelerated learning interventions at secondary school level &amp; KS4 in particular. Huw</p>	

	<p>COPE to ensure targeted support through attendance at key PEP meetings as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Every initial PEP meeting for LAC in Wolverhampton schools / PRUs</li> <li>b) At least 1 PEP meeting for LAC in assessment years and transitional stages in Wolverhampton schools / PRUs</li> <li>c) Any PEP meetings where there are concerns about a child's progress in a Wolverhampton school / PRU, or where support has been requested</li> <li>d) High-priority PEPs in schools outside Wolverhampton, where capacity allows</li> </ul> <p>Increase focus on English / literacy at KS1 &amp; 2 – continue year 3 book project / Volunteer Reading Help, 1:1 tuition and close monitoring</p>	<p>All PEPs attended by summer term 2015</p> <p>All initiatives in place September 2014</p>	<p>Anne Foster</p>	<p>Williams will provide clinical supervision</p> <p>PEP attendance is increasing now that COPE team are fully staffed and new framework in place</p> <p>Books and linked materials provided for all year 3 LAC in spring 2013, feedback was sought from carers but little was received. Closer joint working with Fostering Team required to ensure effectiveness. Further action; consider Letterbox Club as an alternative.</p>	
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	Provide ASDAN short course accreditation for LAC in residential settings not currently accessing full-time education	In place - ongoing	Will Piercy	Volunteer Reading help continued through PPG funding – 15 LAC accessing on average. Reading levels show positive outcomes, feedback & case studies very positive, however more detailed reports are needed in future ASDAN established in all residential settings, overseen and managed by COPE. 8 LAC completed short course in 2013-14	
	Teacher Advisor to work closely with YOT, PRUs and special schools in Wolverhampton to promote inclusion and progress of LAC	Mechanisms in place by summer term 2014	Anne Foster	YOT: Teacher Advisor attending half-termly attendance monitoring meetings, regular LAC case monitoring meetings; social workers more involved - urgent PEP called when a LAC receives an order. Teacher Advisor holding termly monitoring meetings with PRUs and special schools - detailed progress reports provided on all LAC pupils and actions identified to tackle underachievement	
	Ensure priority access to EP advice & support for LAC, particularly those educated outside, or returning to, Wolverhampton.	Ongoing, new post in place by November 2014	Huw Williams	COPE EPs providing focussed, on-going support, consultations and advice provided as a priority	
	Increase EPS input for LAC at risk of underachieving, funded by pupil premium, to focus on strategies to raise attainment		Darren Martindale	2 New Assistant EPs for LAC identified and started Jan 2015– remit is access to, and training around, accelerated learning	

	with KS3/4 LAC			techniques for LAC pupils, prioritising KS4. Huw Williams to provide clinical supervision, DM/AF to set the work programme.	
	Manage & distribute the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for LAC, ensuring correct use in line with DfE Conditions of Grant and analysis of impact	New PPG policy & procedure in place April 2014		New PPG policy in place. PPG top-sliced for reading help, ICT equipment, 1:1 tuition, OSHL opportunities etc. A steady flow of applications are now being received, approx. 90% approved, resulting in increased access to tuition and other learning support. It is likely that more PPG can be allocated directly to school in 2015/16, then monitored through the PEP, as there is clear evidence of better PPG use by schools	
<b>INCLUSION:</b> Ensure that no LAC are excluded from school	VSH to tackle reported 'grey' or unofficial exclusions of LAC from PRUs & alternative provision  Early intervention of LAC at risk of exclusion via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COPE designated teacher meetings</li> <li>• strengthening links between schools and VSH</li> <li>• VSH to attend Admission to Care Panel</li> <li>• Support for the PEP</li> </ul>	Reduction in exclusions by July 2014  In place April 2014 & ongoing	Darren Martindale  Darren Martindale	VSH visited alternative provision & held a meeting between PRUs and residential managers - 'grey' exclusions have reduced, far fewer concerns raised by residential managers and better communication All meetings held & attended as planned. Interventions being made more promptly	

	<p>process and focus on quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative &amp; proactive use of PPG funding</li> </ul> <p>Increased monitoring of out-of-city LAC in PEPs &amp; by COPE. Any LAC not accessing 25 hours appropriate education to be addressed without delay</p>	Ongoing	Darren Martindale / Anne Foster	COPE Data Officer & School Improvement providing more data on out-of-city LAC, although this remains an area for development. VSH/Teacher Advisor helping to address OOC issues in a timely manner, PPG utilised where appropriate. OLA (outside-local-authority) Principles document agreed between VSHs in the West Midlands to facilitate improved educational planning & access	
<p><b>TRANSITION &amp; FE / HE:</b> Support successful primary-secondary transition for all LAC and ensure that all 16+ LAC have EET destination prior to leaving school</p>	<p>1:1 meetings with year 6 LAC before &amp; after secondary induction sessions. Follow up with meeting in new Secondary school. Out of City: information booklet provided and additional support where required Greater emphasis on post-16 transition support on new PEP, COPE to attend at least 1 year 11 PEP for all LAC in Wolverhampton schools and OOC where possible. VSH to meet regularly with Transitions team to improve monitoring arrangements &amp; joined-up support</p>	<p>Summer term – September 2014</p> <p>Arrangements in place September 2014</p>	<p>Anne Foster</p> <p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>LAC EET figures good &amp; improving. Transition Team contributing 16+ data onto Virtual School database. Still progress to be made in this area however – VSH to hold a joint meeting between COPE &amp; Transitions in autumn term to agree an action plan to improve joint working</p>	

<p>Increase numbers of LAC / Care Leavers in Higher Education</p>	<p>VSH involved in project with Wolverhampton University to increase numbers of LAC/Care Leavers at university VSH to support in developing a learner support agreement with West Midlands VSH Network, replacing the Buttle Trust quality mark</p>			<p>Initial meeting held, second meeting arranged October 2014. VSH emphasising importance of carer's awareness &amp; engagement</p> <p>Initial meetings / consultation completed, on agenda for January 2015 network meeting to finalise</p>	
<p><b>PARTICIPATION</b> Enable views &amp; wishes of LAC to drive service improvement</p>	<p>CiCC to regularly address educational issues and raise issues with elected members. Work of the CiCC &amp; Corporate Parenting Panel to be aligned more closely</p> <p>Consultation with a representative sample of 120 LAC re 2014 refresh of the Corporate Parenting Strategy &amp; council's Pledge to LAC - to include increased focus on educational issues</p>	<p>Ongoing by June 2014</p> <p>Consultation by mid-October 2014. Refresh completed by December 2014</p>	<p>Darren Martindale / Puja Taloy</p>	<p>CiCC consulted re educational issues &amp; the Pledge, then met with Corporate Parenting panel in September 2014, identified two new priorities related to education &amp; training. VSH to attend CiCC again to discuss specific issues arising from consultation. Consultation completed, results currently being assessed with a view to updating the Pledge &amp; strategy. CiCC Facebook page in use for on-going consultation, LAC website to be updated &amp; launched</p>	
<p><b>TRAINING &amp; PARTNERSHIPS:</b> Ensure that all key partners are aware of the educational needs of LAC and fully supported to meet</p>	<p>Provide training for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. schools in attachment awareness, supporting vulnerable learners &amp; the care system</li> <li>2. school governing bodies in understanding &amp;</li> </ol>	<p>Termly D/T's forum Training conference for schools – Feb 2015, 4</p>	<p>Darren Martindale / Ama Bagri</p>	<p>3 D/T's forum meetings &amp; 4 social worker's training sessions held Feb conference booked and at planning stage</p> <p>3 briefings given to LAC/CIN/CP</p>	

<p>those needs</p> <p>Develop effective partnership working to raise the achievement of LAC between all key partners</p>	<p>prioritising the needs of LAC</p> <p>3. Social workers, IROs &amp; carers in educational issues (supporting learning at home, national curriculum/attainment, SEND, PEPs, PPG)</p> <p>4. Briefings for LAC &amp; CIN/CP management teams in relevant statutory guidance and related policies</p> <p>Partnership arrangements to be regularly reviewed with key partners</p> <p>VSH to attend WCC headteacher's conference and visit Wolverhampton secondary schools to meet with head teachers</p> <p>Teacher Advisor to provide educational advice and scrutiny on Fostering Panel</p> <p>VSH to develop strategic links &amp; deliver training to regional Ofsted inspectors to improve their understanding of LAC &amp; increase Ofsted's scrutiny of</p>	<p>locality-based half-day workshops March-July 2015</p> <p>Bi-monthly training for social workers</p> <p>Termly training for carers &amp; input into Skills-to-Foster</p> <p>Termly &amp; ongoing</p> <p>December 2014</p> <p>Ongoing – every 2 weeks</p> <p>Initial meeting</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>Anne Foster</p> <p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>managers, 1 to IROs, CYP&amp;F Management Team briefing on new statutory guidance booked October 2014</p> <p>Termly training being delivered, now considering separate sessions for KS1-2 &amp; KS3-4 issues.</p> <p>VSH attended conference &amp; spoke to head teachers re the Virtual School &amp; VSH role</p> <p>Partnership arrangements with schools reviewed in COPE designated teacher meetings and new revised PEP</p> <p>Disappointing response from schools - 4 secondary, 2 special &amp; 2 primary visited – resubmit meeting request to other schools</p> <p>Teacher Advisor attending every 2 weeks - greater emphasis on educational issues leading to improvement in school stability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VSH had held meeting between regional lead inspector and 4 VSHs December 2013</li> <li>2. VSH delivered training presentation to Ofsted WM inspection team July 2014</li> <li>3. Lead HMI for LAC in West Midlands established &amp;</li> </ol>	
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<p>As chair of the West Midlands Virtual Schools Network, VSH to lead in developing improvements in policy &amp; practice to raise achievement of LAC. To also align local &amp; regional work with national work of the national VSH Steering Group, as the regional representative</p>	<p>support for LAC in school inspections - linked to work between Ofsted &amp; the National VSH Steering Group</p>	<p>Cross-border agreement – summer 2014</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>meeting regularly with VSH</p> <p>4. VSH organised &amp; chaired a 1-day meeting between the LAC HMI &amp; WM VSH Network October 2014. <u>HMI agreed to propose that additional questions, re support &amp; progress of LAC, are put to schools in future inspections</u></p> <p>Outside Local Authority (OLA) principles agreed July 2014</p>
	<p>All VSHs in West Midlands region to agree coherent principles &amp; procedures in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-border placements</li> <li>• Data / tracking</li> <li>• PPG arrangements</li> <li>• Quality assurance of education provision</li> </ul>	<p>Other agreements in place by April 2015</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>Other items on agenda for February 2014 network meeting</p>
	<p>Strengthen links between VSHs &amp; ADCS to ensure a strategic lead in an increasing focus on education and school stability in care planning</p>	<p>Initial meeting by Feb 2014</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>Meeting with ADCS chair - Feb 2014 – followed by further discussions between ADCS &amp; VSH Steering Group. VSH flagged up educational stability; invited to work with ADCS as co-opted members of focus groups</p> <p>Initial meeting with rep from Reece Research Centre-Oct 2014</p>
	<p>VSH leading WM consultation on new national handbook for VSHs</p>	<p>Publish Feb 2015 approx</p>	<p>Darren Martindale</p>	<p>Consultation complete, VSH contributed content related to attachment, trauma and resilience</p>



Progress with recommendation shows no cause for concern – it has been or is likely to be delivered within the identified timescale



Progress with recommendation is of concern. Management action may be necessary to deliver it within the timescale.



Recommendation is very unlikely to be delivered within the timescale

# COPE

Corporate Parenting & Education Team

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## **The COPE Framework: Offer to Schools & Key Partners**

COPE provides education support to Wolverhampton LAC in the model of a 'Virtual School', viewing all of Wolverhampton's Looked after Children as if they attended one school, overseen by the 'Virtual School Head' (VSH). The service has a key role in the monitoring of attainment and attendance and promoting improvement in this to narrow the gap in attainment for this vulnerable group of young people. The Team ensures that all LAC have an appropriate education provision that will best suit their needs and enable them to reach their potential. COPE works closely with schools, social workers, foster carers and residential homes to promote and challenge on the education opportunities for this vulnerable group of young people from the ages of 0-18.

### **Team Structure**

Virtual School Head - Darren Martindale

Teacher/Advisor - Anne Foster

Education Support Officer - Atika Haq

Education Support Officer - Ama Bagri

Education Support Officer - Stacey Burton

Education Support Officer - Will Piercy

Data Officer - Maggie Evans

Educational Psychologist - Huw Williams

Educational Psychologist - Anne Daka

Counselling Psychologist - David King

Each Wolverhampton school has an identified COPE link worker, allocated via the MASTs. In addition, the COPE Teacher Advisor is the designated link with Pupil Referral Units, alternative providers and special schools in Wolverhampton. The Teacher Advisor and VSH address educational issues for LAC placed outside Wolverhampton. Our work focusses on 6 key priorities, with specific roles as outlined below.

Area of priority	What we do	Lead officer(s)
<b>1. Educational Data &amp; Progress Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain an up-to-date roll of children in the Virtual School, to include school placement and care status</li> <li>• monitor the school attendance, attainment &amp; progress of all Wolverhampton LAC</li> <li>• review the above data on a termly basis, enabling us to celebrate achievement, identify areas of underachievement and prioritise and plan interventions</li> </ul>	Data Officer  VSH, ESOs, TA, Data Officer ESOs, TA, VSH, EPs
<b>2. Personal Education Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend (where capacity allows):               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Every initial PEP meeting for LAC in Wolverhampton schools/PRUs</li> <li>b) At least 1 PEP meeting for all LAC in years 5, 7 &amp; 11 in Wolverhampton schools/PRUs</li> <li>c) Any PEP meetings where there are serious concerns about a child’s progress or school placement in a Wolverhampton school or PRU</li> <li>d) PEP meetings in Wolverhampton schools/PRUs where the school or social worker have requested support</li> <li>e) PEPs for LAC in schools outside Wolverhampton, where possible and where extra support is needed as above</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Audit a sample of PEPs for LAC in every school year 1-11</li> <li>• Report any quality issues to senior management as well as addressing them with schools (see section 3)</li> <li>• Provide training to improve PEP quality – see Priority 6</li> <li>• Ensure that the relevant policies and documents are updated and fit for purpose, and that all stakeholders are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	ESOs/TA ESOs/TA ESOs/TA/VSH  ESOs/TA  TA/VSH  ESOs, TA, VSH ESOs, TA, VSH  VSH/TA  VSH
<b>3. Pupil Premium +</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage, distribute &amp; monitor the pupil premium + for LAC in partnership with schools inside and outside Wolverhampton</li> <li>• Provide training &amp; advice to schools and other partners on the best use of PP+, via termly meetings for designated teachers and ongoing communication</li> </ul>	VSH/TA  VSH, TA, ESOs  VSH/TA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that PP+ is being properly used in line with the Conditions of Grant 2014-15, highlighting any concerns with schools &amp; social workers and ensuring that quality issues are addressed prior to grant allocation</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Targeted work with LAC – direct &amp; advisory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link workers will meet with the Designated Teacher in their schools/PRUs on a termly basis to review the progress of LAC</li> <li>Offer 1:1 support to LAC, which should be agreed in the PEP. Support can include behaviour, anger management, confidence / self-esteem, in-class support, homework / coursework, literacy, support in alternative provision</li> <li>provide a clear work plan, with intended outcomes, prior to any 1:1 support and provide regular updates and a report on outcomes &amp; recommendations at the end of each intervention</li> <li>provide a programme of transition support for year 6/7 and year 11 LAC, ensuring that all have a school / ETE destination arranged for years 7 &amp; 12</li> <li>offer direct access to EP advice &amp; support for priority LAC educated outside, or returning to, Wolverhampton</li> <li>Closely monitor the progress of LAC in residential / specialist care settings, and LAC involved with YOT, offering additional support and advice including access to alternative learning opportunities and accreditation</li> <li>Offer extra support &amp; continuity when LAC move school settings</li> <li>Ensure that modified timetables and alternative provision are appropriate to the child's needs and help to put together appropriate packages of support where required</li> </ul>	<p>ESOs/TA</p> <p>ESOs</p> <p>ESOs</p> <p>TA/ESOs</p> <p>EP</p> <p>TA/EP/VSH</p> <p>ESOs/TA/EP</p> <p>ESOs, TA, EP, VSH</p>
<b>5. School admissions &amp; inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice / signposting regarding general school admissions</li> <li>Where necessary (e.g. where the child's needs or the application process are complex) liaise with the provider or receiving local authority to identify and secure appropriate provision</li> <li>Help to arrange temporary or alternative provision in a timely manner where necessary</li> <li>Challenge school exclusions, attending exclusion and appeal meetings as required to ensure that all possible alternatives are explored to avoid exclusion and that due processes are followed in full</li> <li>Contribute to the development of council policy, and to agreements with commissioned services, to ensure that exclusion is avoided wherever possible and that alternative provision is appropriate to the child's needs</li> </ul>	<p>ESOs, TA, VSH</p> <p>ESOs, TA, VSH</p> <p>ESOs, TA, VSH</p> <p>TA, VSH, ESOs</p> <p>VSH</p>

<b>6. Training for key partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a termly network meeting for Designated Teachers, to include training &amp; updates</li> <li>• Deliver training on quality Personal Education Planning, mandatory for social workers &amp; IROs, every 2 months</li> <li>• Deliver educational training as part of Skills-to-Foster, and a longer session for existing for carers every term, as well as training where needed for residential care staff</li> <li>• Deliver training in attachment, trauma and recovery to designated teachers and other key school staff</li> <li>• Promote best practice and ensure that other CYP&amp;F services and key partners are kept up to date with key legislation and statutory guidance</li> </ul>	VSH VSH  ESO/TA/VSH
<b>Other areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate the achievements of LAC – support the annual award ceremony, termly awards for good school attendance</li> <li>• Attend EPP, PNIFTED, Admission-to-Care and other forums to proactively monitor the engagement of the most vulnerable LAC</li> <li>• Provide an annual report and interim briefings to key stakeholders as necessary</li> <li>• Promote joined-up working by ensuring strong partnerships with schools and other education providers, and with other local authority services and key partners</li> </ul>	ESO, VSH  TA/EP/VSH  VSH VSH/TA



# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 January 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Adoption agency interim report
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Accountable director</b>	Linda Sanders, People
<b>Originating service</b>	Children and Family Support
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Tel Louise Haughton 01902 553010 Email louise.haughton@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	List any meetings at which the report has been or will be considered.

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive, observe and provide feedback on relation to the Adoption Team annual report.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to update Wolverhampton Corporate Parenting Board with regards to the work of Wolverhampton City Council Adoption Service from April 2014 to January 2015.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Please see the attached report.

## **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 Please see the attached report

## **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 The approved budget for 2014/15 for the Adoption Service is £2.7 million. ,
- 4.2 The Council has also been awarded an Adoption Reform grant allocation of £249,000 for 2014/15.
- 4.3 The Adoption Reform grant has enabled the Council to increase its staffing resources, marketing budget and capacity for inter-agency placements. Should the allocation not be awarded for 2015/16 this would pose a threat to the Adoption Service and its ability to continue to improve performance.

[NM/07012015/J]

## **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 The adoption service will update policies and procedures in line with new legislation and regulations. The local authority will be required to contribute to the adoption support fund.  
[RC/14012015/Q]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 Wolverhampton seeks to recruit and purchase adopters who are able to meet the needs of a diverse range of children. This includes children of different black and minority ethnic groups, both young and older children, male and female children. This is reflected within the recruitment strategy and all new policies have been subject to an equalities analysis.

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 There are not any environmental implications



## **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 At the end of March 2015 the service will lose 2.5 posts funded by the Adoption Reform Grant. These extra posts have enabled the service to deliver the targets set for the year.

## **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

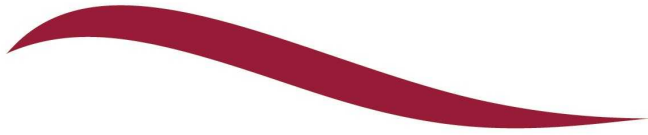
## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 There are no background papers attached.

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# Wolverhampton

## City Council



## **ADOPTION AGENCY INTERIM REPORT**

### **APRIL 2014 – JANUARY 2015**

**AUTHOR: LOUISE HAUGHTON – SENIOR CONSULTANT SOCIAL WORKER ADOPTION**

## Introduction

This is an interim report detailing the work of Wolverhampton City Council Adoption Service between April 2014 and January 2015.

## Panel Business

Approval of Prospective adopters	Links of children with prospective adopters
23 (30)	47 (49)

## Adopter approval

There have been 23 approvals of prospective adopters so far in this reporting period. It is expected that a further ten adopters will be approved by April 2015. This will represent a small increase in the approval of prospective adopters.

ABC (adoption in the Black Country) continues to experience a growth in numbers of enquiries and subsequent referrals. The implementation of the two stage process has however posed some threats with regards to progressing enquires in a timely manner. Statutory checks are now conducted in stage one. There have been lengthy delays in receiving some of the checks; DBS's have taken up to four months to be processed. The escalation procedures have been used but this has not resulted in DBS's being completed speedily. The delay in stage one has resulted in lower numbers of prospective adopters being approved than was anticipated.

There are currently 13 families waiting to be linked. Of the 13 families six links are being progressed with children from Wolverhampton who have plans of adoption.

One family is being linked with a child from another local authority.

There are four Asian families currently waiting. This year no children of Asian or Asian dual heritage background have become subject to a plan of adoption in Wolverhampton. This compares to eight in the previous year. As a result these families have waited longer than anticipated for a link. Family finding has been active on their behalf and they have been advised to attend national exchange days. They have also been featured on Adoption Links which is a national adoption data base. The National Adoption Register is not currently in use as the website is being updated to enable adopters to use the data base themselves.

Two families have asked to be placed on hold and active family finding is taking place on behalf of the other prospective adopter as we do not currently have any children who fit his matching criteria.

The continued increase in the assessment and approval of prospective adopters has been supported by the adoption reform grant.

## **Links of children with prospective adopters**

During the last reporting period April 2013 to March 2014, 49 children were linked with prospective adopters. This year panel have already recommended 47 links. Families have been identified for a further 23 children.

25 of the 47 children linked at panel were part of a sibling group.

When considering the ethnicity of the children Linked, 11 of the 47 children were of BME (black and minority ethnic) background. This equates to 23% of children linked. This is significantly above the England average of 8%.

Of the 47 children linked 19 were over three, with six of these being boys over the age of five.

22 of the 47 children were placed within four months of a placement order which equated to 46%. Nine others were placed within 12 months of a placement order. The majority of children who waited more than four months were part of a sibling group, in five cases the children had complex health needs and in one case the child had received therapeutic support from CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) for a significant period of time which prevented the case being progressed.

80% of children who have become subject to a placement order in this reporting year have been linked within four months.

This year the adoption service has experienced even more success with placing both sibling groups and older children. This may be a result of both the national media coverage of adoption and localised targeted recruitment for adopters of sibling groups and older children.

The adoption service has therefore been able to place almost all of the children for whom adoption was deemed to remain appropriate and had been waiting 12 months or more in this reporting period. Of the children currently waiting, only nine have been waiting for more than five months. Six are part of two sibling groups and have plans to be placed for adoption with their current foster carers. Placements have been identified for two others.

The A2 indicator measures the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family. The current target is five months but this will reduce to 4 months next year.

It is therefore anticipated that the adoption service will enter 2015-2016 in a good position to meet the national target for the A2 indicator.

This has partly been achieved through the extra resources provided to the family finding unit in the form of two social workers.

Of the children placed 14 children were placed with adopters approved by Wolverhampton, three children were placed with adopters approved by an ABC authority, the remainder were placed with adopters approved by other local authorities or voluntary agencies.

## **Children's decisions**

In the last reporting year 85 children were considered as children who should be placed for adoption. In 14 cases placement orders were not subsequently made by the courts. In this reporting period 46 children have had plans of adoption agreed; of these five have not been granted placement orders.

National statistics state that there has been just over a 50% decrease in the making of placement orders nationally. It is largely agreed that this is a result of a key adoption judgment Re B&S. Other judgements have since been made by Judge Munby (President of the Family Division of the High Court of England and Wales) in which the legal test for adoption is explained and the point made, that the threshold for a placement order has not changed.

Of the 46 children 38 children were White British. Three were Black British Caribbean. Two were dual heritage, White British Black Caribbean. Three were White British Other.

This equates to 17% of children with a plan of adoption being from BME backgrounds. The annual adoption report 2013-2014 reported a marked change with regards to the amount of BME children becoming subject to a plan of adoption in Wolverhampton. This figure had moved from 14% in 2011 to 32% in 2012 to 59% in 2013.

Of the 46 children 20 were female and 26 male.

33 children were 0-2

11 children were 3-5

2 were 6 plus years of age.

This equates to a 10% increase of 0-2 year olds when compared with 2013-2014. 23 of these children were under one.

The adoption service has placed more children for adoption and in this reporting year has significantly improved timeliness.

Louise Haughton

Senior Consultant Social Worker for Wolverhampton Adoption Service.



**Corporate Parenting  
Board**

**Performance Report**

**November 2014**

## Key Points to Note

### Redesign and further development

This report for the Corporate Parenting Board has been redeveloped in order to present the data in a more visual way, allowing key points to be better highlighted. Further information will be added to the report in the coming months, in particular further development and analysis is being undertaken around LAC education and Care Leavers.

### Demographics

A slightly higher percentage of LAC are female compared to the CYP population in Wolverhampton generally.

A considerably lower proportion of LAC of from BME backgrounds compared to the Wolverhampton CYP population.

The number of Looked After Children shows a small but positive decrease. Numbers have been stable at around the 800 mark now since May 2014 demonstrating the impact that the Families R First programme is beginning to have. **As at 14/01/2014 the number of LAC had fallen further to 781 or 137 per 10,000 population.**

### Placements

The three indicators that look at placement stability continue to show positive results and demonstrate that Looked After Children in Wolverhampton generally benefit from stable placements.

Work is being undertaken as part of the Families R First programme around understanding the proportion of LAC in different placement types compared with the proportion of total cost of those placement types - this will be included in the report in future months.

### Assessments and Reviews

Assessments and Reviews of Looked After Children in Wolverhampton remain generally up to date with 99% of children participating in their reviews. This is extremely positive and shows that the voice of the child is being heard in Wolverhampton.

### Education

The 2014 KS2 results show that Wolverhampton LAC are performing better in 2014 than in 2013. Performance is also considerably better than for LAC in statistical neighbouring authorities, the West Midlands and England overall across Maths, Reading and Writing.

There is just a 9% gap between the performance of LAC at KS2 and the wider Wolverhampton population. This is incredibly positive.

GCSE performance is less positive - however, it should be noted that there has been a change in how this statistic is calculated at a national level this year which has impacted negatively on results in general. There is also some discrepancy between nationally published figures and locally held results. This is being investigated.

**Please note** - small numbers can also adversely affect this indicator.



## Health

The percentage of children with up to date dental checks continues to fall from 90% at year end to 79% in November 2014. This result is still higher than the 65.2% of children in the general Wolverhampton population that have seen a dentist in the past 2 years.

The percentage of up to date health checks also continues to fall and is now at 77%. The pressure on health services and funding issues is contributing to the fall in performance in this area. The CCG and RWHT have indicated that they are committed to resolving the issue and work is on-going to identify if the issues are affecting a particular cohort of children.

## Leaving Care

**Adoption** - Performance against adoption timescales continues to improve however, overall performance remains below national expectations. The 'Adoption Scorecard' was published in mid-December and detailed analysis is currently being undertaken. Wolverhampton remains 'double red' in the two key indicators which focus on the timeliness of adoption, however, continue to perform better than national averages when it comes to adopting 'hard to place' children such as those over the age of 5 and those from BME backgrounds.

**Care Leavers** - The percentage of Care Leavers in Employment Education and Training was worse than statistical neighbours, West Midlands and England averages, although improvements have been made in 2014 and performance is now considerably better than at year end and higher than comparators.

## Demographics



56849 children aged 0-17 live in Wolverhampton  
22.6% of the total population

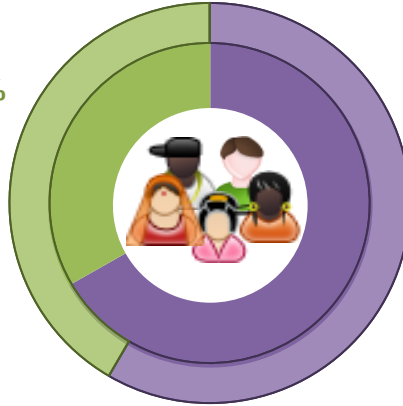


48.8% of the CYP population and 49.2% of LAC are



51.2% of the CYP population and 50.8% of LAC are

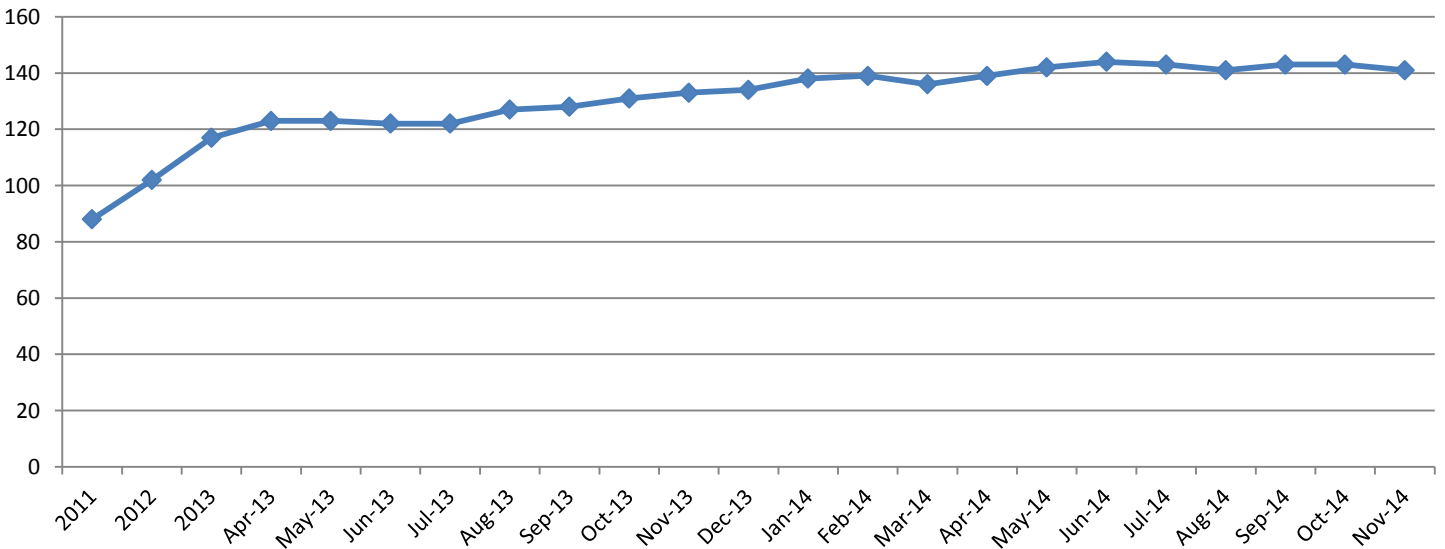
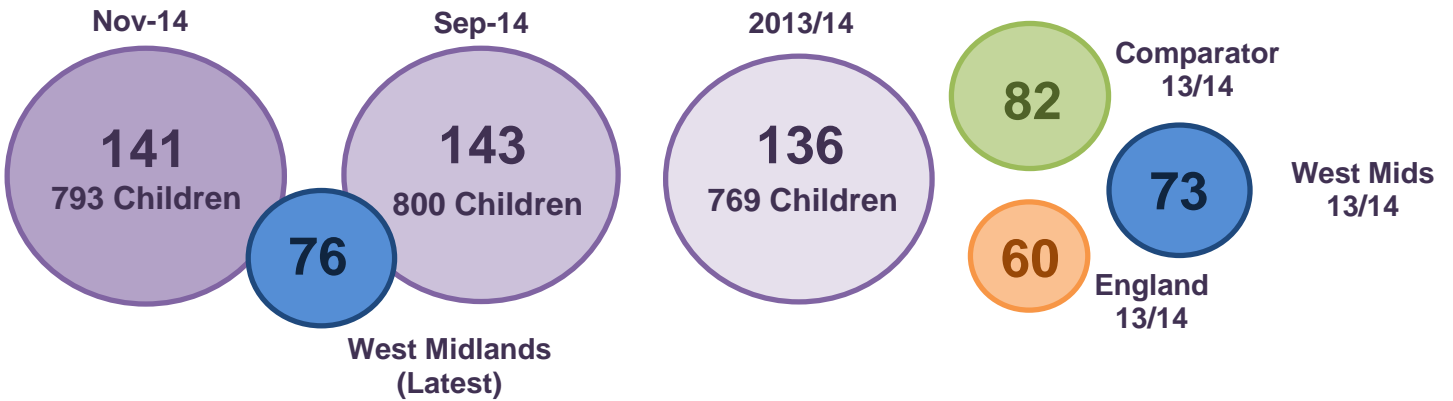
41.6% of the CYP population and 33.2% of LAC are BME



58.4% of the CYP population and 66.8% of LAC are white

## Looked After Children Population

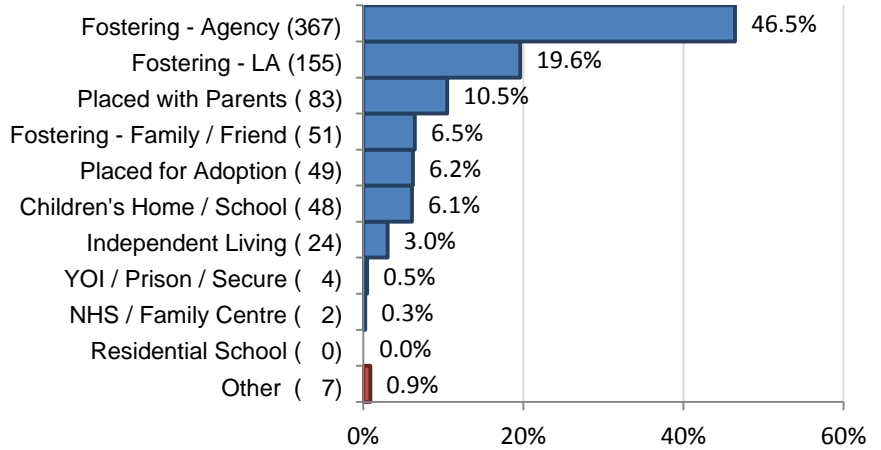
Rate of LAC per 10,000 population aged 0-17



## Placements



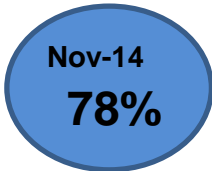
### LAC Placements at 31/11/2014



### Placement Stability

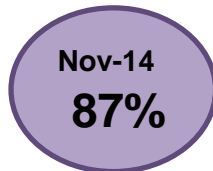


LAC in current placement for 6 months + (when looked after for more than 6 months)



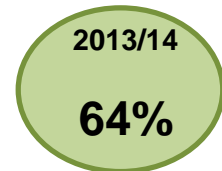
2013/14 Out-turn = 77%

LAC with fewer than 3 placements in the last 12 months



2013/14 Out-turn = 88%  
2013/14 Comparator = 89%  
2013/14 England = 89%

% of children in same placement for 2 years or more or placed for adoption (when)



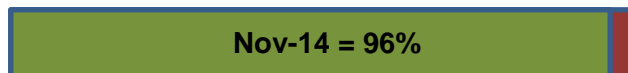
2013/14 Comparator = 67%  
2013/14 England = 67%

Performance shows that Looked After Children in Wolverhampton benefit from largely stable packages.

# Assessments & Reviews



**Looked After Children with up to date assessments**



2013/14 Out-turn = 95%

**Looked After Children with up to date reviews**



2013/14 Out-turn = 92%

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

94% of LAC have had all of their reviews completed on time since 01st April 2014. 1281 reviews have been completed in the year. Of these 96% were completed within timescales.

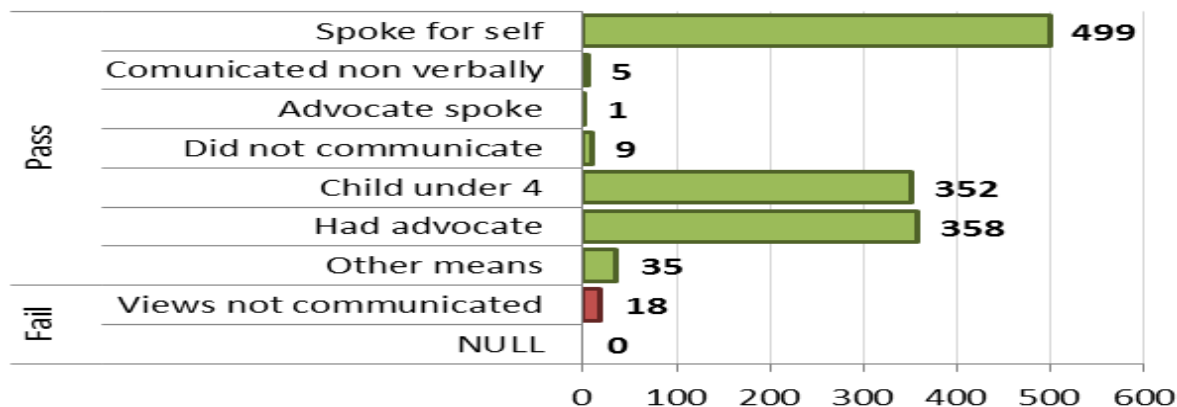
The proportion of LAC reviews where the child was present or contributed by other means since 1 April

# 99%

Nov-14

This is really positive and shows that the voice of the child is being heard.

## 1.4 Context: Full Answers for Participation



## Education



KS2 Level 4	Maths	Reading	Writing	Reading, Writing and Maths	GCSEs	5+ GCSE A* - C	5+ GCSE A* - C inc Eng & Maths
<b>Wolverhampton LAC 2014</b>	74%	78%	81%	70%		15.80%	-
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	86%	88%	84%	79%		57.60%	45.90%
<b>Wolves LAC 2013</b>	67%	44%	50%	39%		48.40%	25.80%
<b>West Midlands 2014</b>	60%	69%	61%	50%		18.10%	13.70%
<b>Statistical Neighbours 2014</b>	60%	68%	54%	45%		19.33%	17.65%
<b>England 2014</b>	61%	68%	59%	48%		16.30%	12.00%

**PLEASE NOTE:** Small numbers in the cohort reaching each key stage can cause results to be volatile making comparison difficult.

National results show that looked after children reaching KS2 in 2014 performed better than in 2013 and better than LAC in the West Midlands, statistical comparator authorities and England overall. However, performance in GCSE's was worse across the board.

This data is taken from nationally published information - there is some discrepancies when compared with locally held data. This is being investigated and detailed analysis around LAC education and attainment is being undertaken but could be due to change in definitions.

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



93%

Nov-14

**FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:** Absentee and exclusion data to be included. Local reporting around this is being developed and will be available for future reports. National comparator data for 2014 has not yet been published.

## LAC Health



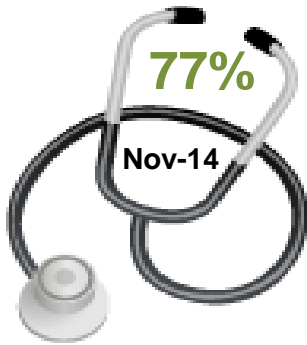
65.2% of children in the  
Wolverhampton Local Authority  
Area have seen a dentist in the last  
two years

### Dental Checks



2013/14 Out-turn  
= 90%

### Health Checks



2013/14 Out-turn  
= 86%

The pressure on health services and funding issues is contributing to the fall in performance in this area.

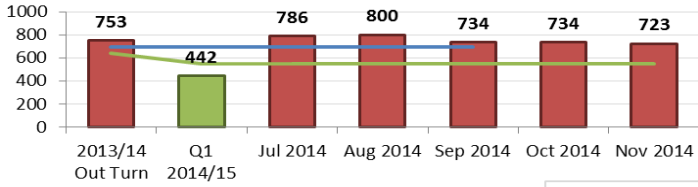
The CCG and RWHT have indicated that they are committed to resolving the issue and work is on-going.

# Leaving Care

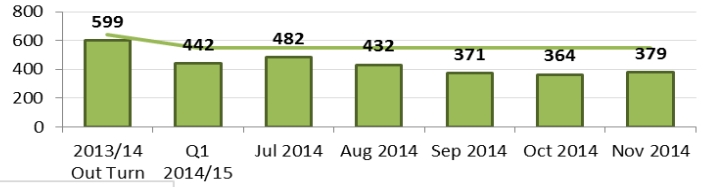


## Adoptions

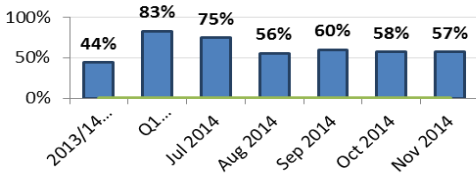
4.4 Average time to place from entering care(A1)



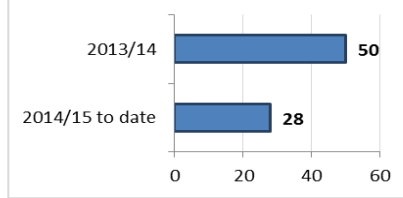
4.5 Average time to place from foster care(A10)



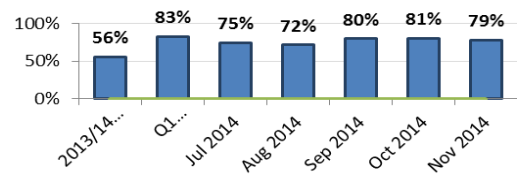
4.4 Context: A1



Context: Number of Adoptions



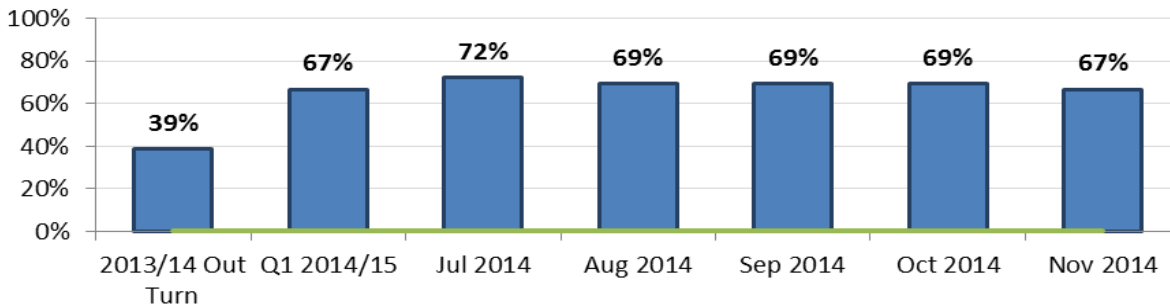
4.5 Context: A10



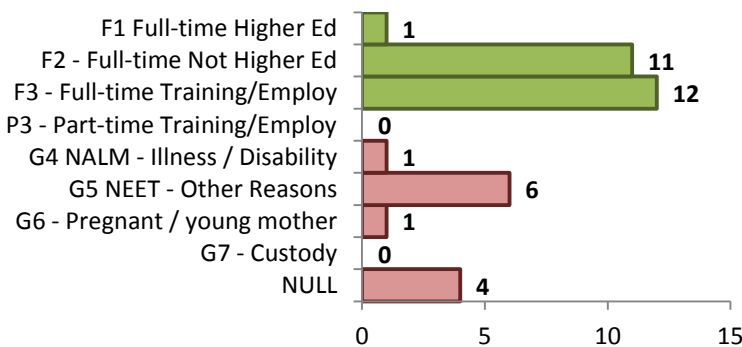
The adoption scorecards for 2013 were published just before Christmas. Wolverhampton were once again rated 'double red' in the two key indicators, however, performance around adopting hard to place children including those over the age of 5 and from BME backgrounds continues to be better than performance nationally. Detailed analysis of the results is currently being undertaken.

## Care Leavers

5.4: Education, employment & training of care leavers



5.4 Context: Number EET Statuses



National published figure for Wolverhampton is 31% not 39% - discrepancy is being investigated.

West Mids - 41%  
Statistical Neighbours - 40%  
England - 45%

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