

# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 July 2016

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

**Venue** Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre

### Membership

**Chair** Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

**Vice-chair**

#### Labour

Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss  
Cllr Hazel Malcolm  
Cllr Lynne Moran  
Cllr Peter O'Neill  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Martin Waite

#### Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

### Information for the Public

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

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**Tel/Email** Tel: 01902 5551251 or [earl.piggott-smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:earl.piggott-smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk)  
**Address** Democratic Support, Civic Centre, 1st 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.

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# 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 meeting held on 26 May 2016</b> (Pages 3 - 10)<br>[For approval]   |
| 4               | <b>Matters arising</b><br>[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2016]  |
| 5               | <b>Schedule of outstanding matters</b><br>[To consider and comment on the summary of outstanding matters]  |
| 6               | <b>Schools Engagement with Looked after Children</b> (Pages 11 - 28)<br>[Darren Martindale, Virtual School Head for Looked After Children, to present report]                      |
| 7               | <b>Children and Young People's Participation Strategy</b> (Pages 29 - 42)<br>[Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children, to present report]                                      |
| 8               | <b>Performance Monitoring - Looked After Children (LAC)</b> (Pages 43 - 54)<br>[To receive a monitoring report on Performance Monitoring data in respect of Looked After Children] |
| 9               | <b>Children in Care Council/Care Leavers Forum Workshop - Participation - what works well?</b><br>[Alison Vickers, Puja Taloy, Andrew Scragg to present]                           |
| 10              | <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

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 11 | <b>Councillor Visits to Children's Homes</b><br>[To receive details of any visits to establishments undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting.] |
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# Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Item No: 3

Minutes - 26 May 2016

## Attendance

**Chair** Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

## Labour

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss  
Cllr Hazel Malcolm

Cllr Lynne Moran  
Cllr Peter O'Neill

Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Martin Waite

## Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

## Employees

Carl Craney  
Alison Hinds  
Alice Vickers

Democratic Support Officer  
Head of Looked After Children  
Corporate Parenting Officer

*Item No. Title*

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Paula Brookfield, Rita Potter and Martin Waite together with Emma Bennett, Service Director, Children and Young People and Fiona Brennan, Designated Nurse, Looked After Children, Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group.

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

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

**3 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4 Matters arising**

With reference to Minute No. 6, "New Belongings", the Chair, Cllr Val Gibson queried whether the breakdown of the Care Leavers' who were available for work and who were engaged in Education, Employment or Training had yet been circulated. Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children, advised that the breakdown of this information had yet to be circulated.

Cllr Mrs Christine Mills referred to Minute No. 7 (To meet with representatives of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum to consider the "New Belongings" priorities and other matters of mutual interest) and commented that the exercise carried out with the young people had been a most useful event.

Resolved:

That the breakdown of the information referred to above be added to the Schedule of outstanding matters.

**5 Schedule of outstanding matters**

Carl Craney, Democratic Support Officer, presented a report which appraised the Board of the current position with matters considered previously by the Board.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

**6 Corporate Parenting Board - Work Programme - 2016/17 Municipal Year**

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer, presented the Work Programme for the Board for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. She explained that all reports to be

considered at the Board were presented first to the Children in Care Council (CiCC) with an opportunity for the CiCC to comment on such reports.

Resolved:

1. That the Work Programme for the 2016/17 Municipal Year be approved;
2. That any further matters be identified for consideration as necessary or raised during consideration of the Performance Monitoring Data report.

## **7 Introduction to the work of the Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Officer gave a PowerPoint presentation on an introduction to the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Chair referred to the slide which included a reference to “poor education attainment and attendance pre-care” of Looked After Children and advised the Board that the educational attainment of Wolverhampton’s LAC population was good and above the national average with 20% of the LAC obtaining 5 GCSE A\* - C grades as opposed to 14% nationally.

Cllr Peter O’Neill queried whether the issue of “Spare Bedroom Tax” for Foster Carers’ had been addressed. The Head of Looked After Children reported that this issue had been resolved locally. Cllr Hazel Malcolm questioned whether there were close links between the Looked After Children’s service and the Special Educational Needs and Disability service. The Corporate Parenting Officer confirmed that such links were in place via the Virtual School Head and the COPE Team. Cllr Hazel Malcolm enquired as to the arrangements for health assessments. The Head of Looked After Children explained that initial health assessments were undertaken by the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and then were linked to Healthcare Plans of individual children.

Resolved:

That the presentation be received and noted.

## **8 Corporate Parenting Strategy - Update**

The Corporate Parenting Officer presented a report on the developments over the past year of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan.

Cllr Mrs Christine Mills enquired as to the work undertaken to increase aspirations of Looked After Children to attend university. The Corporate Parenting Officer reported on the work with the Black Country Authorities, Wolverhampton University and a local charity, “Creative Chances” where at Year 6, those Looked After Children who had attained level 4 or above were encouraged to aspire to attend university. The programme provided a mentor who was attending university to support the aspiration. Additional homework was set and social activities arranged.

Cllr Peter O’Neill referred to the proposal to produce a guide for foster carers such as at what age to have a mobile phone and expressed concern that this could cause an issue with foster carers if the guidance was at odds with their views. The Head of Looked After Children advised that the guide would be produced in consultation with foster carers and would only be a guide where exceptions were acceptable. The

intention was to address safeguarding issues. Cllr Peter O'Neill acknowledged the response and explained that he was keen to ensure that Looked After Children were not stigmatised by having or not having a mobile phone at the same age as their peers. The Corporate Parenting Officer commented that it was hoped to provide reassurance to foster carers and to identify a suitably balanced position. In response to a further question from Cllr Peter O'Neill she reported that the guide would be developed in consultation with all relevant partner agencies including schools.

Cllr Peter O'Neill questioned whether the views of the Transport Authority or Bus Operators would be sought in relation to the age at which a child could catch a bus by themselves. The Corporate Parenting Officer advised that a number of courses were available which provided information on such issues including acceptable behaviour, courtesy, safe places to sit etc. She reported that the guide would be produced during 2016/17.

The Chair suggested that the guide be produced in chapters rather than as a single document thus enabling some information to be readily available sooner than other parts. Cllr Hazel Malcolm suggested that the guide be made available on the website as well as in hard copy format. The Corporate Parenting Officer advised that it would be included in the Foster Carers' Handbook.

Cllr Hazel Malcolm offered to work with the Corporate Parenting Officer on guidance on finance matters in light of her work with a Credit Union.

The Chair questioned the appropriateness of "drop in" sessions being held on Friday afternoons given that the Looked After Children should be at school or college or work at that time. The Corporate Parenting Officer undertook to consider this issue further but explained that this was a popular time for Looked After Children to collect money etc.

The Chair referred to a number of errors and omissions in Section 3.5 of the report and suggested that the following amendments be made (amendments in italics): "11 Councillors attended a special Total Respect training session. It is now part of the induction for new Councillors joining the *Council*" and "An E-Learning module on the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parenting for all *Councillors and* colleagues has been designed with the young people and will be ready to launch early May. The young people on the CiCC have completed exercises and video content for this."

The Chair enquired if there were now two representatives from the CiCC serving on the Youth Council. The Corporate Parenting Officer confirmed this to be the case and reported on a planned joint event with the "Be Safe Team". She also informed the Board that two representatives from the Looked After Children population attended meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel as representatives of the Youth Council.

Cllr Peter O'Neill commented that during their year of service on the Scrutiny Panel their confidence had grown and had been involved actively in consultations which had been undertaken. This news was welcomed by Cllr Zee Russell. The Corporate Parenting Officer commented on the involvement of the Looked After Children population in the Participation Strategy. Cllr Zee Russell enquired if any of this work

was accredited. The Corporate Parenting Officer advised that it was and cited the example of the iAwards.

Resolved:

1. That the developments of the Corporate Parenting Strategy since April 2015 and the progress of the Action Plan be noted;
2. That the thanks of the Board be extended to the Corporate Parenting Officer, the Participation Officers and all Officers involved in the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

## 9 **Performance Monitoring Data**

The Head of Looked After Children presented the Performance report for April 2016 (data as at March 2016) and responded to questions.

With reference to the section on “Demographics” Cllr Julie Hodgkiss requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the breakdown of the Looked After Children population, why the children were taken into care and when they were first known to the Authority. Cllr Julie Hodgkiss also questioned whether the information pertaining to Social Worker caseload included Specialist Social Workers. The Head of Looked After Children explained that the information was influenced by changes in Social Workers but that the average caseload was 21 with no other social work cases undertaken.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss referred to the recent Queen’s speech at the state opening of Parliament insofar as it referred to proposed changes in legislation on adoption and enquired if the timetable for the proposed changes were yet known. The Head of Looked After Children advised that details were still awaited but assured the Board that the Regional Adoption Agency would be involved in lobbying in respect of any changes. The Chair reminded the Board that it had always taken the view that obtaining the most appropriate placement was paramount rather than the speed of placement and that this stance was accepted by the Department for Education. The Head of Looked After Children commented that Wolverhampton had a very positive approach to adoption and had a good record in placing family groups and hard to place children.

The Chair referred to the Regional Adoption Agency which was comprised of the four Black Country Authorities together with Telford and Wrekin Council and Shropshire County Council which enabled best practice to be shared. A report on this matter was to be presented to Cabinet in September 2016 and that she would be attending a meeting of fellow Cabinet Members for Children and Young People with Directors of Children’s Services on 22 June 2016. She suggested that a report or Briefing Note be presented to the next meeting on the work of the Regional Adoption Agency.

Cllr Lynne Moran commented that she was particularly interested in children who had left care and commented that changes in Social Workers should be avoided wherever possible. She enquired as to the current retention rates of Social Work staff. She also questioned the literacy and numeracy levels of the Looked After Children population given that they were often under achievers despite the support provided. The Head of Looked After Children confirmed the importance of recruitment and retention and advised that a major recruitment campaign had been

completed recently. With regard to literacy and numeracy she reported that the current levels of educational attainment of 20% obtaining 5+ GCSE A\* - C including English and Maths was well above the national average.

Cllr Peter O'Neill expressed concern that some 118 children had not communicated their views in relation to their reviews. The Head of Looked After Children reported that work was underway in order to understand the reason for the drop in participation. The Chair reminded the Board that 118 was the number of reviews and not the number of children. Cllr Peter O'Neill enquired as to how the reviews were organised. The Head of Looked After Children explained the reviews were not held in school time (at the request of the CiCC) and were normally held in the foster home or residential home with the dates being set in advance. She advised that the Council did attempt to communicate in other ways and did not just rely on verbal communication. Furthermore, children were encouraged to chair their own reviews.

Cllr Peter O'Neill asked if alternative venues were ever considered. The Head of Looked After Children confirmed that on some occasions neutral venues were used especially if one or both birth parents were intending to be present.

Cllr Peter enquired as to the reasons why children would not wish to express their views. The Corporate Parenting Officer suggested that this could be because they did not feel listened to and outlined proposals to introduce an app to assist participation. Cllr Peter O'Neill commented that the CiCC now had a stronger profile and enquired whether it could be requested to promote the use of the app. The Head of Looked After Children confirmed that this could be pursued. She also undertook to provide members of the Board with a link to the LAC Newsletter.

Cllr Hazel Malcolm requested that a report of the breakdown of the Looked After Children population including details of the number of migrants etc. be submitted to a future meeting together with data on waiting times for appointments with the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Head of Looked After Children explained that the latter data was included in the Annual Report to the Board from the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Cllr Zee Russell enquired whether the Council employed trainee Social Workers recruited from the Looked After Children population. The Head of Looked After Children reported that the development of Social Work programmes was being investigated.

Resolved:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting on the breakdown of the Looked After Children population, why they were taken into care and when they became known to the Authority;
3. That a report or Briefing Note be submitted to the next meeting on the work of the Regional Adoption Agency;
4. That the Children in Care Council be requested to promote the use of the app (if developed) with a view to encouraging Looked After Children to make their views known on their reviews;
5. That a link to the LAC Newsletter be provided to all Members of the Board;
6. That a report be submitted to a future meeting on the breakdown of the Looked After Children population including the number of migrants etc.

10 **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.

**Part 2 items not open to the public and press**

11 **Councillors visits to establishments**

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

The Chair enquired if there was any obligation on the Council to visit privately operated Children's Homes in the City. The Head of Looked After Children confirmed that there was no such obligation.

Resolved:

That an annual report be submitted to the Board on the number of children living in privately operated Children's Homes in the City together with the Ofsted ratings of such establishments.

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# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 July 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Schools' Engagement with Looked after Children
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Accountable director</b>	Linda Sanders, Children and Young People
<b>Originating service</b>	Looked after Children
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Darren Martindale    Virtual School Head for LAC Tel                        01902 551039 Email                     darren.martindale@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Children in care Council meeting 29.6.16

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

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the enclosed report outlining school engagement with Looked after Children and the Virtual School for Looked after Children (LAC).

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To report on engagement and working arrangements between Virtual School for Looked after Children (LAC) over the 2015/16 academic year and to highlight successes, areas for development and future plans.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Virtual School Head (VSH) for LAC is responsible for ensuring that the local authority effectively discharges its statutory duty to promote the education of Looked after Children. Statutory guidance states that “to implement effectively their duty to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after local authorities should work closely with schools”.<sup>1</sup> This report outlines recent developments in strengthening the working partnerships between schools, the Corporate Parenting & Education (COPE) team and other local authority teams and stakeholders.

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

- 3.1 The Virtual Head has a statutory duty related to the training of all key partners and the development of strong working partnerships to promote the education of Looked after Children.
- 3.2 The COPE (Corporate Parenting & Education) Team have an Education Support Worker attached to each Wolverhampton school (covering two localities each). The worker contacts every school on a termly basis and in most cases meets with the Designated Teacher for LAC face-to-face, to discuss the progress of looked-after pupils in their school. Any issues or actions are followed up by that worker without delay, following the termly meeting.
- 3.3 COPE audit Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for quality on a monthly basis - at least one PEP for every looked-after child every year. The results of these audits are communicated to Designated Teachers as well as social workers. The Virtual Head produces a termly report, summarising the outcomes of these audits. The outcome of audits contributes to the Quality Assurance framework within the Children and Young People Service. In addition to this, COPE frequently attend PEP meetings to provide support and challenge to schools; particularly PEP meetings for LAC who are in assessment years (2, 6, 11) or where there are issues with attendance or progress. COPE also attend school-based meetings concerning admissions, exclusions, primary-secondary transition etc on a regular basis.

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335964/Promoting\\_the\\_educational\\_achievement\\_of\\_looked\\_after\\_children\\_Final\\_23-....pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335964/Promoting_the_educational_achievement_of_looked_after_children_Final_23-....pdf)

- 3.4 A training conference on Attachment & Trauma for Designated teachers was held in February 2016. This was a precursor to a series of Emotion Coaching workshops for schools in the spring and summer term 2016. Feedback from the conference was very positive.
- 3.5 In addition to the above, COPE and the Virtual Head deliver:
- A termly Designated Teachers' Forum
  - Contribution to Head teachers' briefings at least twice a year- the next one is in July 2016
  - Education training sessions for foster carers at least once every term
  - Two yearly training sessions for Chairs of Governors in schools
  - An e-learning module on improving the quality of PEPs is ready to go live in the summer 2016. This is primarily for social workers however the VSH is exploring ways of making this available to schools
  - Various education briefings to social care teams and IROs
- 3.6 The Designated Teachers' Forum attracts between 30 and 40 attendees on average. This highlights the increasingly strong partnership between COPE and schools.
- 3.7 Policies and procedures have continued to be updated and strengthened to support the educational progress of LAC. The Virtual School Head is promoting a new Model School Policy with Wolverhampton schools (attached) with the expectation that all Wolverhampton schools will sign up to the policy in autumn 2016. The Virtual Head is presenting this to head teachers at the Head Teacher's briefing in July 2016.
- 3.8 The VSH is also promoting Post-16 Learner Support Agreement for LAC / Care Leavers, a regional initiative developed by the West Midlands Virtual School Heads Network (attached). Wolverhampton College have already signed up to this agreement, the VSH expects that all local Further Education (FE) / training providers will sign up to it and positive indications have been given to that effect. The VSH's intention is to widen this to include young people in the youth justice also, in 2016/17.
- 3.9 The Virtual School Head has continued his on-going work with Ofsted in 2015/16, alongside other members of the regional and national Virtual School Heads Network. Termly meetings have been held with leading inspectors to increase their knowledge and understanding of the LAC cohort. Partly as a result of this, the West Midlands Ofsted team identified LAC as one of their key priority areas for 2015/16, which is leading to an increased focus on LAC in school inspections. Ofsted are now starting to focus on the commitment of schools to supporting their looked-after and pupils, including attendance at relevant training such as that delivered by virtual school teams. There is clear evidence that these factors are influencing their judgements on schools related to safeguarding. Schools are therefore seeking the advice of virtual heads around Ofsted / safeguarding requirements.

3.10 Improved partnership working with Standards and the School Improvement team in particular is enabling the VSH to provide closer scrutiny and stronger support for schools in Wolverhampton. Strong links with other management teams across services for children and young people are enabling COPE and the VSH to function effectively as a 'bridge' between education and social care and to provide good quality training and advice where it is most needed.

3.11 The VSH distributes the Pupil Premium Grant for LAC aged three & four in early years settings (£300 per child) and has introduced an Early Years PEP. To further strengthen support for LAC in early years settings a new framework has been agreed between the VSH / COPE, Early Years Team and School Improvement. The framework, which is in draft form at the moment, will be discussed at the Designated Teachers Forum on 6 July 2016. The framework and accompanying action plan outlines how COPE, Early Years and School Improvement will work in partnership to:

- Offer advice, guidance and support in all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Work closely with the virtual school head (VSH) ensuring our most disadvantaged children's learning needs are met
- Offer support in tracking a child's progress and development in all aspects of learning
- Address issues with maintained nursery classes around narrowing the gap in educational attainment and offering further educational opportunities to disadvantaged children
- Contribute to personal education plans (PEP) ensuring the correct approach is in place which is tailored to the child's individual needs
- Offer quality assurance around the PEP by supporting settings where LAC children are in attendance

3.12 In April 2016 the VSH conducted a survey with all of the schools that have Wolverhampton LAC on roll (both in and out of city) on their use and impact of the pupil premium plus. The VSH allocated a total of £1,800 per child to each school in the 2015/16 academic year. 70 schools responded to this survey, which was intended to complement the knowledge that the VSH and COPE have gained through PEP audits and on-going work with schools on the use of the pupil premium. Some of the results of the survey are summarised below:

**1. Question: How much impact has Pupil Premium had on the attainment of LAC pupils?**

Large impact –	23.53%
Noticeable impact –	50%
Slight impact –	25%
No impact –	0%
Negative impact -	1.47%

**2. Which have been the most effective interventions that have been funded through pupil premium plus, in rank order?**

1. 1:1 tuition
2. Small Group tuition
3. Teaching Assistant
4. Learning Mentor
5. ICT equipment
6. None-ICT equipment
7. Out-of-school learning
8. Staff Training
9. Therapeutic
10. Off-site / alternative provision
11. Literacy and/ numeracy intervention
12. Specialist assessments
13. Other

**3. What impact has pupil premium plus had in the attainment of Looked-after Pupils?**

Before intervention; pupil's attainment compared to age-related expectations

- Above expected level – 13%
- Below expected level – 72%

After intervention; pupil's attainment compared to age-related expectations

- Above expected level – 27%
- Below expected level – 41%

3.12 The results in the above survey (which will be discussed at the Designated Teachers' Forum on 6 July 2016) are broadly in line with the Virtual Head's expectations and indicate that most schools are using the pupil premium effectively and that it is having a positive impact on the attainment of LAC. The percentage of pupils who were performing at above the expected level more than doubled following pupil premium intervention, while the percentage of pupils performing below level was reduced by 31% following intervention.

3.13 To conclude, the majority of schools work well with COPE and with other local authority teams as appropriate, to support the achievement of our looked-after and vulnerable pupils. There are a small minority of schools which do not work in partnership as effectively. However it is intended that these partnerships will be improved through developments in 2016/17 such as:

- on-going work to improve Personal Education Plans (including the introduction of the e-PEP which will give schools greater input and ownership)
- the introduction of new staff to the COPE team (funded by pupil premium) to focus on strategic priorities such as KS4 attainment, PEP improvement and PNIFTED (pupils not in full-time education)

- an improved approach to training for schools which focusses on continued coaching and support of the school staff in schools, rather than the provision of one-off training courses for the Designated Teacher only. The Educational Psychology Service is committed to this approach and are working together with COPE to achieve a greater consistency of approach across our schools.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 Any costs associated with the implementation of the Strategy will be funded from existing budgets within the Looked after Children's Service  
[NM/12072016/K]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications.  
[TS/06072016/H]

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

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

#### **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications.

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

- 8.1 There are no human resources

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

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

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

- Model School Policy on LAC / YOT
- Post-16 Learner Support Agreement

**WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL**  
**MODEL SCHOOL POLICY ON SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED**  
**AFTER CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**  
**June 2016**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

(INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL OR ACADEMY) believes that, as educators and Corporate Parents and in partnership with key stakeholders, we have a legal, moral and professional duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked after Children (LAC) and young people in the criminal justice system.

*The terms 'looked-after children' and 'children in care' include children placed by a local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential care home. They also include those placed in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act.*

*1989 or by a voluntary agreement with the child's parents under section 20 of the Act. The terms can also be used to refer to children entered into police protection and those involved in the youth justice system.*

We know that a secure and successful education is a major factor in improving the life chances of vulnerable young people and in supporting young offenders to desist from crime. However we recognise that, nationally, pupils in care have significantly underachieved compared with their peers. It is also true that many of the most vulnerable young offenders are, or have previously been, in care. Both cohorts are also characterised by very high levels of Special Education Need (SEN). Therefore, given the overlap and commonality between the two cohorts, it is appropriate and pertinent to have a joint school policy.

We intend, through this policy, to work toward closing that achievement gap. We promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after children and young people in the criminal justice system in our school. In pursuance of this we will hold ourselves and our partners to account by asking the question, '*Would this be good enough for my child?*'

## **2. Background legislation**

This policy is based on the following legislation:

1. *Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the Act") and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.*
2. *The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children – see link below.*
3. *The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head.*

4. *The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act (ASCL) 2009, which places a duty on local authorities to promote a person's learning potential while in custody and on release.*<sup>1</sup>

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

### **3. How will the impact of the policy be evidenced?**

The impact of the policy will be seen through improvements in the following key outcomes for LAC and children & young people in the criminal justice system:

- ✓ Reduction or zero rate in school exclusions
- ✓ Improved school attendance
- ✓ Improved attainment at statutory assessment stages
- ✓ Improved and maintained rates of progress and attainment
- ✓ Improved quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- ✓ The views of children & young people (as recorded in PEPs and captured through the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and wider consultation)
- ✓ Ultimately, an increase in LAC, Care Leavers and young people in the criminal justice system aged 16+ who are in Education, Employment & Training (EET) and the numbers accessing higher education (HE)

### **4. Partnership working**

We will work together with key local authority departments including the Virtual School Head (VSH) and Corporate Parenting & Education (COPE) team, along with education providers and other relevant agencies, to enable the best possible outcomes for pupils looked after and in the criminal justice system through flexible and proactive partnership working.

### **5. The Governing Body**

The governing body will:

- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC and young offenders on the school roll and that (s)he is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in line with statutory guidance (see link below)
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the progress of LAC and young offenders is prioritised and supported in line with statutory responsibilities
- Nominate a governor for LAC and young people in the criminal justice system. The nominated governor will take a leading responsibility for the challenge and support of the school in raising the achievement of these pupils and attend relevant training. The Nominated Governor should have a termly meeting with the Designated Teacher, with a clear agenda, to address school improvement issues related to LAC and young offenders. They will also ensure that an annual report (as a minimum) is provided to the governing

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<sup>1</sup> YOT have extended this duty to all children & young people in the youth justice system in Wolverhampton. The Virtual School Head's role

body by the Designated Teacher - see Appendix for suggested report template. The nominated governor will present this report to the wider governing body in partnership with the designated teacher.

## **6. The Senior Leadership Team**

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that LAC and pupils in the criminal justice system are prioritised in school policy & procedure and in the allocation of resources, in line with Ofsted and DfE guidance, to ensure that LAC access the best of what the school has to offer
- Ensure that LAC and young offenders are given top priority in school admissions, in line with national statutory guidance and the Wolverhampton Admissions policy. However, we must ensure that the provision is right for the child and, if there are issues, school will meet with social care the Virtual School Head (VSH)/COPE/YOT and other key partners as appropriate, to resolve these issues
- Consider every possible alternative to a temporary or permanent exclusion, in line with national, local and school admissions policies, due to the disproportionate effect that exclusion can have on the most vulnerable pupils. Instead, we will work together proactively with all key partners including the local authority, using every resource in our control (including alternative provision where appropriate), to solve problems.
- Avoid resorting to unofficial exclusions to resolve behavioural or other issues
- In the event of a serious issue, which might otherwise lead to permanent exclusion, the child may be placed on a fixed-term exclusion and an emergency review of the PEP and other relevant plans / provision will be called and attended by key personnel, e.g. the child's carer, social worker and (where appropriate) representatives from COPE, 5-18 Early Help Service and/or Youth Offending Team, to resolve the issue
- If we feel that we are unable to meet the child's needs, we will work with external agencies to ensure that any special educational needs, including social emotional and mental health needs, are assessed in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015). This should include, where appropriate, referral for a statutory education, health and care needs assessment
- On occasion, by shared agreement and in the best interests of the child, a managed move to another provision may be considered in order to avoid a permanent exclusion.
- Where a modified timetable may be in the best interests of the child, this will firstly be discussed and (if the pupil is looked-after) agreed in a review of the Personal Education Plan, thereby taking into account the views of the child, carer and social worker. If the pupil is not looked-after but is in the criminal justice system then any timetable modifications will firstly be discussed with the YOT case manager and/or YOT Education Officer.
- Take a proactive approach to sourcing the DfE-recommended first day provision for fixed term exclusion for LAC, in view of the additional pressures that exclusion can put on care placements, and extend this principle to pupils in the criminal justice system.

- Be aware that looked after children and young offenders are more likely to have special educational needs than most, work proactively to identify any SEN affecting Looked after Children, and make appropriate provision in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015)
- Ensure that all vulnerable pupils have an appropriate, 25-hour offer of education, other than for a fixed period which has been agreed with parent and/or carer and social worker and/or YOT case manager as being in the child's best interests (such as part of a transition plan).
- Make our school "attachment aware" and fully able to meet each child's learning, health & wellbeing needs, by ensuring that key staff keep up-to-date with relevant policy and legislation and attend relevant training, such as that provided by the Virtual School Head (VSH) / COPE and Educational Psychology Service. We will ensure that key staff are aware of statutory guidance in this area (see link below).

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/413368/Promoting\\_the\\_health\\_and\\_well-being\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf)

## **7. The Designated Teacher**

We will have a Designated Teacher for LAC and pupils in the criminal justice system. This will be a member of the senior leadership team who is therefore able to affect changes in policy and procedure where appropriate. The Designated Teacher (DT) will:

- Be an advocate for all children in this school who are in care or in the criminal justice system, ensuring that their voice is heard and acted upon
- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis and in line with school safeguarding and information-sharing protocols.
- Maintain an up to date record of all LAC and pupils in the criminal justice system who are on the school roll
- Provide the Virtual School Head / COPE Team with termly data on the performance, attendance and attainment of Wolverhampton LAC
- Provide YOT with information on performance, attendance, attainment and other relevant information on pupils in the youth justice system as required and appropriate <sup>2</sup>
- Be a central point of contact, working with any previous educational settings to ensure a smooth induction and transition into school
- Liaise with the child, parent/carer & social worker and/or YOT case manager to ensure that, for LAC, a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and reviewed within statutory timescales (and more often if necessary) to support accelerated progress. For young offenders who are not looked-after the DT will support joined-up working with the YOT case manager, YOT Education Officer and, where relevant, CYP social worker.

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- <sup>2</sup> This is with particular reference to the ASCL form that YOT will send to DTs when a young person on their school roll enters the youth justice system. This form asks for essential educational information on the young person which will inform the young person's YOT intervention plan and, critically, be used to inform pre-sentence court reports. This will also assist the local authority to fulfil their statutory duty to provide educational information to the secure estate should a young person enter custody.

- Ensure that Pupil Premium and other allocated funding is used in the most appropriate way to support vulnerable pupils' individual learning targets, as agreed in their PEP meeting and/or on-going communication with the VSH/COPE/YOT - see the following links for further information.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>  
<https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-virtual-school-heads-responsibilities>
- Contribute to LAC reviews, YOT intervention plans, SEND reviews and other meetings and plans as required & appropriate.
- Fulfil school safeguarding protocols, be alert to any child protection issues, and know what action to take.
- Inform the child's carer and social worker when a child in care is absent from school without notification or excluded
- If a pupil on the school roll enters custody, maintain an interest in the young person and provide information and transition support with the secure institution in partnership with YOT. Where the young person remains on the school roll, ensure that appropriate education is provided in the new setting and that attendance, attainment and progress are monitored and supported appropriately.
- Attend relevant training on safeguarding and LAC/youth offending, keep up to date with relevant legislation & guidance and cascade to school staff as appropriate (see links in sections 2 & 6 of this policy)
- Provide in-school training for school staff around attachment, trauma and recovery and its implications for behaviour management
- Provide support and CPD to staff, with a knowledge of the emotional impact that who are looked after can have on trusted adults, including their class-based staff
- Meet with the Nominated Governor or Chair of Governors termly and report to the Governing Body annually, as a minimum, on the performance of their LAC and pupils in the criminal justice system, without naming individual children
- Ensure well planned and informed transitions when a child changes school, with timely information sharing.
- Ensure that the statutory guidance on the role of the Designated Teacher is embedded within practice

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/269764/role\\_and\\_responsibilities\\_of\\_the\\_designated\\_teacher\\_for\\_looked\\_after\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269764/role_and_responsibilities_of_the_designated_teacher_for_looked_after_children.pdf)

## **8. All School Staff**

All school staff will:

- Ensure a safe & secure environment in which vulnerable pupils are able to flourish and grow and high aspirations are encouraged
- Seek advice from designated teacher regarding induction, own CPD and any interventions, classroom environment adaptations etc.
- Be sensitive to the needs of LAC and young offenders, including confidentiality issues
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children and children and young people in the criminal justice system

## **9. Arrangements for Review**

This policy will be reviewed as to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

### **Signed**

Headteacher	
Chair of governors	
Virtual School Head	
YOT Head of Service	
Date	

**Appendix:**

**The Designated Teacher's Annual Report to the Governing Body**

## on the Progress and Support of Looked after Children (LAC) & Pupils in the Youth

### Justice System in School

#### Purpose of Report

This report fulfils the statutory duty for the Designated Teacher for LAC/YOT to provide an (at least) annual report to the governing body, outlining the progress of the school's Looked-after pupils and pupils in the youth justice system, and the support that is provided for them

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of areas for discussion and should be used to inform a termly discussion between the Designated Teacher and Nominated Governor for LAC/Youth offending, or Chair of Governors, as well as a template for the annual report.

This Report Covers (Term & Year):				
Name of School				
Name of Designated Teacher for LAC/YOT				
Name of Nominated Governor for LAC/Youth Offending (or Chair of Governors)				
Designated Teacher's position within the staffing structure				
What training has the designated Teacher and/or other school staff received relating to LAC/YOT and vulnerable pupils in the last year?				
How many LAC/pupils in the criminal justice system attend the school, and how many young offenders are Looked after by Wolverhampton City Council?				
How many have a statement of SEN or EHCP, and for what type of need? How many have identified SEN, but do not have a statement / EHCP?				
Do all LAC pupils have up to date, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs)?  If not, please provide reason / comment				
What is the current attainment of each of these pupils?  Please do not use names and add rows as needed	Child	English	Maths	Is this below, at or above expected levels?
	1			
	2			

	3		
Are these pupils making expected (or better) levels of progress, and if not, what actions are in place to address this?	Child	Expected Progress +?	Reason / Comment
	1		
	2		
	3		
Is attendance less than 95% for any of these pupils? If so, please give reason / comment and current actions to addresses this.			
Are any of these pupils following modified or part-time timetables? If so, please add reasons / comment and plans in place to extend their provision to full-time			
Have any of these pupils had fixed-term or permanent exclusions? If yes, what has been done to support reintegration and prevent further exclusion?			
Which other agencies has school worked with to support these children (including, but not limited to, local authority stakeholders)?			
How is the school using its Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocation to support LAC and vulnerable pupils?			
Any other information?			

## Post 16 Young People in Care and Care Leaver Learner Support Partnership Agreement – West Midlands

### Purpose of the agreement

- This agreement addresses the significant challenges Young People in Care and Care Leavers face as a result of the circumstances that brought them into care and the experiences they may have within the care system.
- No one partner can provide the full range of support that young people need.
- This agreement therefore expresses our commitment, as partners, to ensuring that Young People in Care and Care Leavers achieve the best possible outcomes in Post 16 education and training.

### Our Principles and shared practice:

- We are prepared to be challenged by the question: ‘Would this be good enough for my child?’
- Our young people will be safe and feel safe in education and training and we will ensure they are listened to.
- We will work together to solve problems
- We will develop and help shape education and training that meets the needs of all our young people.
- We will ensure young people receive: impartial, information, advice and guidance [IAG] that gets them into the right provision; the support to stay there; advice and support when they move on.
- We will ensure information is shared openly and with due regard for safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection and in line with the purposes and ethos of this agreement.

### Social Care will:

Before the end of Year 11 ensure each young person has a ‘key worker’ [social worker, personal adviser [cf Care Panning regulations], foster carer, residential worker or other appropriate adult] with the authority and commitment to take the role of ‘best parent’ in supporting this agreement.

NB social care must inform the provider promptly if the key worker changes.

### The social care key worker’s will:

Before the young person starts with a provider:

- Obtain the young person’s consent to share safeguarding information with providers wherever possible  
NB Safeguarding may require that information is shared without consent
- Ensure that the provider's designated person knows their name contact details and any other key contacts
- Complete an education plan [part of the Pathway Plan], which must cover safeguarding issues, with the young person and the provider before [preferably May-July] they start provision, or, if this is not possible, within thirty days of them starting.

Once the young person is in provision:

- Meet to review the education plan at the provision at least six monthly or more often if there are problems
- Listen to young people’s views and act on them appropriately
- Attend consultation events/ ‘parents’ evenings’
- Contact the provider and engage with other relevant professionals, if there are problems, or extra support is needed e.g. because accommodation arrangements are changing and call extra meetings as appropriate
- Respond rapidly to an emergency – within 24 hours as a maximum
- Provide the necessary support with accommodation, transport, finance and health so the young person can engage with their education, employment or training

### **Education or Training Provider will:**

- Have a 'designated person' who will be a first and direct phone, or email point of contact for young people in care and care leavers, carers, social care, careers, so they get individual and personal attention
- Notify partners if the designated person changes.
- Provide pre and post entry visits
- Advise and guide young people about all aspects of the provision and its services and ensure young people receive any financial or other support to which they are entitled
- Listen to young people's views act on them appropriately
- Identify young people in care and care leavers, via a tick box on application forms and other post application checks.
- Complete an education plan, which must cover safeguarding issues, with the young person and the key worker before [preferably May-July] they start provision, or, if this is not possible, within thirty days of them starting.
- Meet to review the education plan at the provision at least six monthly, or more often if there are problems
- Ensure each young person has a mentor or equivalent who is introduced to them and who:
  - Provides support and advocacy for the young person
  - Is able to meet with the key worker and others to support the young person's learning and education plan.
- If there is a risk that the young person may not be able to stay at the provision, including any temporary suspension or fixed term exclusion:
  - inform the key worker by phone and email on the day it occurs
  - call a professionals' meeting as appropriate to attempt to resolve issues
- Not permanently exclude or terminate the young person's course without meeting with the key worker.  
NB1 The young person may be suspended/fixed term excluded pending the outcome of this meeting.  
NB2 The meeting allows time to plan for alternatives, cover safeguarding issues etc.
- Ensure employers actively partnered with support this agreement.
- Ensure, impartial careers information, advice and guidance is provided.
- Track individual learner: attendance; retention; outcomes; achievement; progression and value added data and share with the young person's Virtual School and aggregated data for all young people in care and care leavers with partners to this agreement.

### **Virtual School**

The Virtual School for Children in Care and Care Leavers carries the local authority corporate parenting responsibility to promote the education of their children in care and care leavers wherever they are placed.

The Virtual School will:

- Provide the strategic support and challenge to ensure that the terms of the Learner Support Partnership Agreement are upheld by all signatories for their young people
- Promote and publicise the Learner Support Agreement with their Local Authority partners: social care, Director of Children's Services, elected members, other work based learning providers, commissioners etc.
- Work with other Virtual Schools to provide support and challenge as appropriate e.g. for a young person from another LA who is placed in local provision. The local Virtual School will not take over the responsibility of the 'home' local authority [local authority to which the young person is or was in care].
- Ensure young people have access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance
- Ensure young people have a high quality Personal Education Plan which contains plans for Post 16 education and which is maintained in an appropriate form Post 16 [e.g. via Pathway Plan or separate education plan]
- Track young people in Post 16 education, employment and training so issues are followed up promptly
- Ensure that there is Internet based information – e.g. through a Virtual School website – about the Learner Support Agreement

- A formal meeting is held between the Virtual School [who will have obtained the agreement of social care to support the agreement] and principal or vice principal or director of the provider, at which the agreement is signed.
- Each party is responsible for publicising and promoting the agreement within their own organisations.
- Each Virtual School is also responsible for tracking and supporting its own young people and challenging signatories and services in its Local Authority to ensure issues are resolved and support provided.

### Review of Learner Support Partnership Agreement

- The agreement will be reviewed annually:
  1. **With each provider by a Virtual Head** [by agreement, this may not be the Virtual Head from the local authority in which the provider is situated]

The data shared will be for the full academic year prior to the review

	Young people in care and care leavers at provider in Y12 and Y13 [from any LA]	Total or percentage for all learners at the provider
Total number of young people		
Average attendance %		
Retention %		
Achievement [completing] %		
Progress [to ETE] %		

2. **By Virtual Heads who support the agreement** through the West Midlands Virtual Heads Regional Association

The data shared will be for the full academic year prior to the review from each participating LA

	Young people in care and care leavers in Y12 and Y13 <u>LA1</u>	Young people in care and care leavers in Y12 and Y13 <u>LA2</u>	<u>LA3 etc</u>	West Midlands Average for all Y12 and 13
Total number of young people				
Average attendance %				
Retention %				
Achievement [completing] %				
Progress [to ETE] %				

- In addition the reviews will describe
  - Key positives [e.g. success of individuals]
  - Key challenges [e.g. issues with multi agency working, progression]

### Provider details and signature

Provider Name	
Name of signatory to this agreement	
Email address	
Role of signatory to this agreement	
Signature	
Name of designated tutor	
Designated tutor email	
Designated tutor phone	
Head of Virtual School - name*	
Head of Virtual School signature	
Head of Virtual School email	

\*The Head of Virtual School ensures that social care support this agreement

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# Corporate Parenting Board

## 21 July 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Children and Young People's Participation Strategy	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children and Young People	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Alice Vickers Tel Email	Corporate Parenting Officer 01902 553005 Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	People Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Corporate Parenting Board Cabinet	20 June 2016 28 June 2016 21 July 2016 14 September 2016

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

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2016-2019 in readiness for Cabinet in September 2016.
2. Endorse the Council's commitment to children and young people having influence over decisions and actions on services that affect them.

# Cabinet Meeting

14 September 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Children and Young People's Participation Strategy	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
<b>Key decision</b>	No	
<b>In forward plan</b>	No	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children and Young People	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Alice Vickers Tel Email	Corporate Parenting Officer 01902 553005 Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	People Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Corporate Parenting Board	20 June 2016 28 June 2016 21 July 2016

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

3. Approve the three year Participation Strategy
4. Endorse the Council's commitment to children and young people having influence over decisions and actions on services that affect them.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out the City of Wolverhampton Council commitment to the importance of effective participation of children and young people in the services that affect them.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contains 52 standards that set out the Rights of a Child. Most countries including the United Kingdom have signed up to the convention. Many countries use the standards wholly or in part to promote children and young people's involvement. The standards of most relevance to the participation of service users are:

Article 12: Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13: Children and young people have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.

Article 17: Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information.

Article 23: Disabled children and young people have the right to active participation in their community.

Article 2: Requires all of the rights in the convention on the Rights of the Child to be implemented for every child, without discrimination.

- 2.2 The City of Wolverhampton Council has a long and impressive history of effective participation of children and young people with the Youth Council (Youth Service) and Children in Care Council (Looked After Children). Both the forums and children and young people's participation is supported by 1.5 Participation Officers based in the COPE team.
- 2.3 The Participation Strategy was developed and designed using workshops with members of the Children in Care Council and the Youth Council during 2015/16. These workshops focused on what good participation means to young people and how they wanted to be engaged in service development and decisions.
- 2.4 The participation workshop group also explored the different forums for young people and how they could share the outcomes of consultation with young people ie: School Councils and vulnerable young peoples' groups. These links have now been strengthened with representation from school councils, Be Safe and voluntary groups sitting on the Youth Council from November 2015.

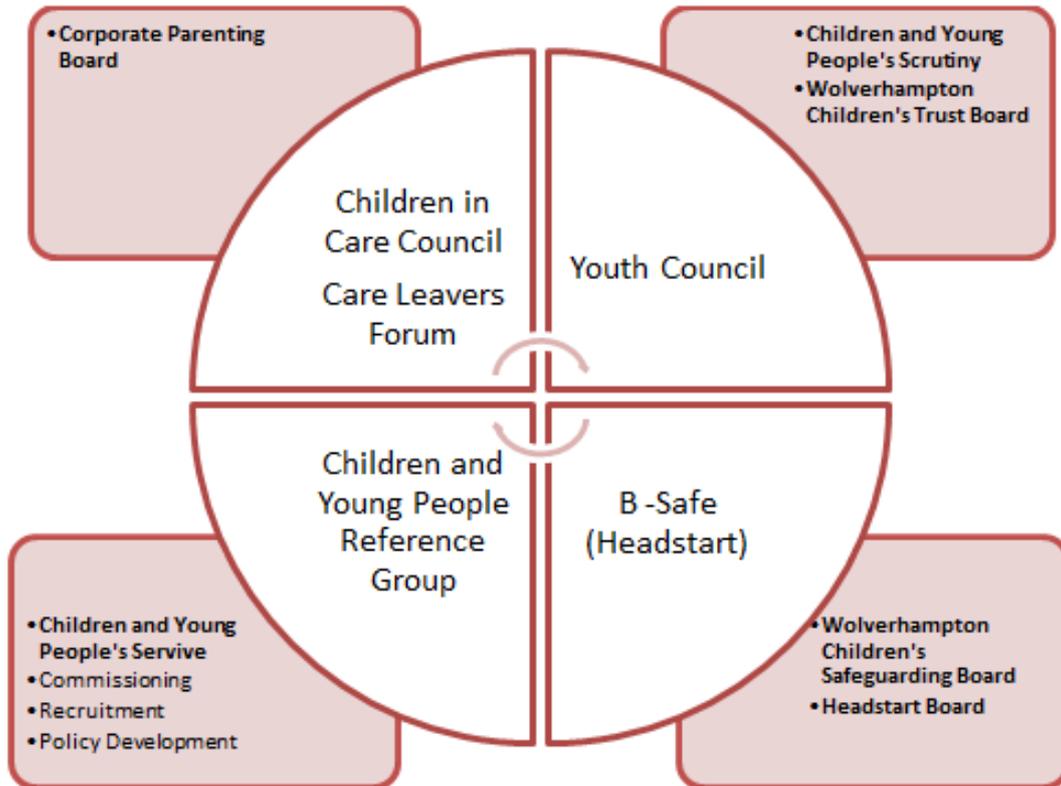
## **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 The Participation Strategy sets out clear standards of participation for children and young people to ensure that it is not tokenistic and remains relevant.

These standards are:

- The right to participate or not. If they choose to participate, they have the right to understand their responsibilities.
- Participation should be delivered within Wolverhampton's equality and diversity duty.
- There should be clear evidence of commitment to participation from members of the Children and Young People's Trust Board, Safeguarding Children Board, Council Leaders, City of Wolverhampton Council staff and other relevant organisations.
- Services should agree to the Hear by Right quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people. For example: set out how confidentially and child protection issues will be handled.
- Participation should be embedded in strategic planning, delivery, commissioning, communication, business improvement activities, and recruitment.
- Opportunities and support should be provided so all staff and volunteers can develop the skills and attitudes to work effectively with children and young people.
- Children and young people's involvement should be valued. They should be treated honestly. This means that their expectations are managed and they are helped to understand any practical, legal or political boundaries of their involvement.
- Children and young people's contributions (appropriate to their age and maturity), should be taken seriously and acted upon. There should be regular feedback from children and young people to confirm that this happens.
- Feedback to children and young people on the impact of their involvement should be timely and clear.
- Children and young people should have equal opportunity to get involved. They should not be discriminated against, or prevented from participating effectively, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sexuality, disability, age, ethnic origin, language, where they live, or the location of services.
- Services should proactively target those facing the greatest barriers to getting involved. For example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, disabled and other children with special needs. Services should make sure that children are aware of opportunities to have their say, and encourage them to use them.
- Children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop skills that enable them to contribute effectively, and to realise the benefits of doing so.
- Relevant information should be made available to children and young people. It should be at the right time, in the right format, no jargon, culturally appropriate and accessible. Policies and standards for participation should be provided, evaluated and continuously improved.
- Services should say from the beginning how they will know if they are doing a good job of listening to children and young people.
- Children and young people should be involved in reviewing lessons learned.
- The participation strategy should be considered in partnership contracts and service level agreements with providers, whenever possible.

- 3.2 Each of the participation groups and forums has direct lines of governance as outlined in the diagram below. This ensures that members and officers are able to support children and young people in having their opinions heard at a corporate and strategic level.



- 3.3 Once agreement has been granted in adopting the principles laid down in the Participation Strategy, information leaflets will be disseminated to internal and external partners for colleagues to be clear of their role in ensuring the voice of children and young people is represented in their service developments.
- 3.4 In addition, there will be a programme of awareness raising for children and young people in the understanding of their role, and the opportunities available to them in engaging in formal participation and consultative groups; through schools, community groups, the voluntary sector and specialist service provisions.

#### 4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with the implementation of the Strategy will be funded from existing budgets.  
[AS/08062016/P]

#### 5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications.  
[Legal Code: TS/06072016/P]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

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

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

7.1 There are no environmental implications.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

## **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 Children and Young Peoples Participation Strategy 2016 -2019

# Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2016- 2019



# Our vision

In Wolverhampton we want children and young people to participate in the broadest sense of the word in issues, services and decisions that affect them.

The City of Wolverhampton Council wants to ensure young people are engaged, informed, consulted and initiated discussions about all aspects of the council.

We want the children and young people of Wolverhampton to:

- be involved in designing services of the future
- contribute to and benefit from involvement in their local communities
- feel that they are being heard and valued
- be able to make a difference
- Improve education and skills through participation opportunities

In Wolverhampton, this is what we mean when we talk about 'participation'.

## How we will achieve our vision

Using the above Vision as the action points, monitoring and SMART planning will be used to continuously monitor the effectiveness of participation of children and young people in the design and development of services. This will include the Youth Council and Children in Care Council and other Sub groups. School Councils and voluntary groups (who support the most vulnerable of our children and young people) will be actively encouraged to participate in the Youth Council as well as.

Children and Young People will be supported and educated in their roles and responsibilities in being effective and representative of the community they represent.

Children and Young People will be involved in the recruitment and selection processes of relevant staff and train and develop staff in areas of corporate interest in relation to the needs of Children and Young People.

The Children and Young People will develop ways of engaging other Children and Young People to have their voice heard in arenas where their knowledge and experience can influence decision makers.

The City of Wolverhampton Council will publicise the work of Youth Council and communicate with young people in Wolverhampton by utilising social media.

The Children and Young People will be consulted on Policy and Strategy developments from the Children and Young People's Service as standard practice.

The Children and Young people's Participation Action plan will accompany this strategy and reviewed annually.

## What does good participation look like?

Participation is not just "taking part" or "being present" but having influence over decisions and actions. Children and young people should be involved in the whole process of deciding the best services for all.

Children and young people having a say in decisions about their own lives.

Services are developed and improved, based on information we get from children and young people.

## Why is this important?

There is evidence that everyone benefits from involving children and young people in decision making

- Children and young people
- Organisations
- The wider community

There are also laws and policies which ensure children and young people are involved in decision making.

## Who will make sure all this is happening?

The Participation Team will be working with groups of children and young people and supporting them to have their voices heard.

Their work will be monitored and evaluated by the young people, The Children's Trust Board, Wolverhampton's Children and Young People Scrutiny Board and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

## Standards

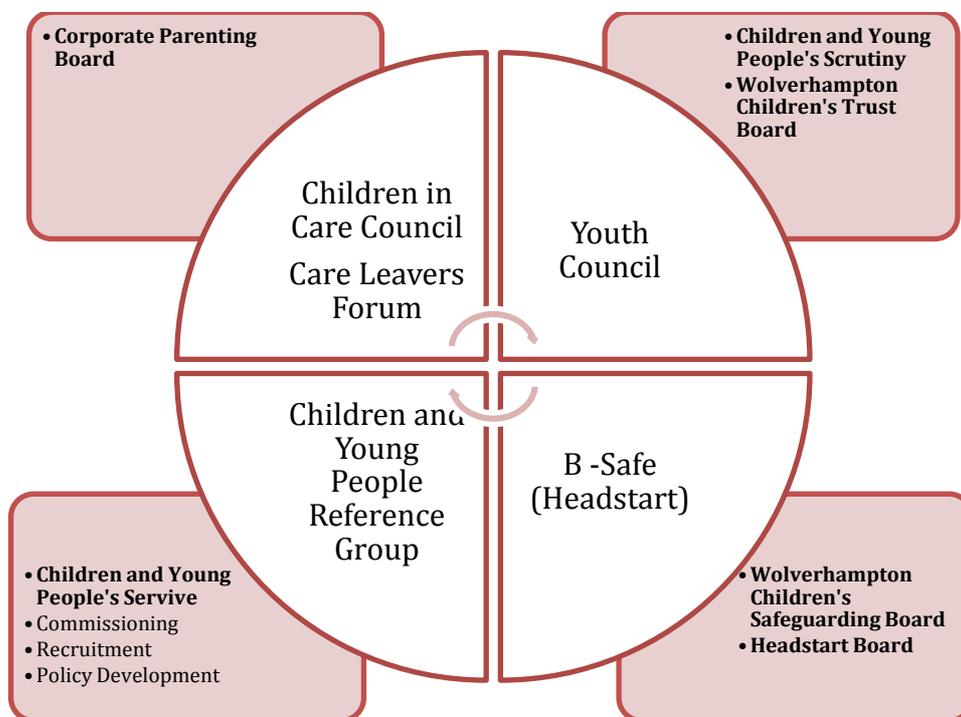
Children and young people have the right to participate or not. If they choose to participate, they have the right to understand their responsibilities.

- Participation should be delivered within Wolverhampton's equality and diversity policies or structures.

- There should be clear evidence of commitment to participation from members of the Children and Young People's Trust, Safeguarding Children Board, council leaders, City of Wolverhampton Council staff and other relevant organisations.
- Services should agree to the Hear by Right quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people.
- Participation should be embedded in strategic planning, delivery, commissioning, communication, business improvement activities, and recruitment.
- Opportunities and support should be provided so all staff and volunteers can develop the skills and attitudes to work effectively with children and young people.
- Children and young people's involvement should be valued. They should be treated honestly. This means that their expectations are managed and they are helped to understand any practical, legal or political boundaries of their involvement.
- Children and young people's contributions (appropriate to their age and maturity), should be taken seriously and acted upon. There should be regular feedback from children and young people to confirm that this happens.
- Feedback to children and young people on the impact of their involvement should be timely and clear.
- Children and young people should have equal opportunity to get involved. They should not be discriminated against, or prevented from participating effectively, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sexuality, disability, age, ethnic origin, language, where they live, or the location of services.
- Services should proactively target those facing the greatest barriers to getting involved. For example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, disabled and other children with special needs. Services should make sure that they are aware of opportunities to have their say, and encourage them to use them.
- Children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop skills that enable them to contribute effectively, and to realise the benefits of doing so.
- Relevant information should be made available to children and young people. It should be at the right time, in the right format, no jargon, culturally appropriate and accessible. Policies and standards for participation should be provided, evaluated and continuously improved.

- Services should say from the beginning how they will know if they are doing a good job of listening to children and young people.
- Children and young people should be involved in reviewing lessons learned.
- The participation strategy should be considered in partnership contracts and service level agreements with providers, whenever possible.

## Wolverhampton's Participation Network



### The Groups

- **Wolverhampton's Youth Council**

The Youth Council is made up of young people elected by their school, community group or specialist service to contribute to the City Council's development of services that effect young people for example community engagement, health and wellbeing, children and young people and city developments. This is achieved by the inclusion of the group in the Council's scrutiny away days, two seats on the children and young people's scrutiny panel and community cohesion board.

The group meets as a whole monthly, but also meets in task groups focusing on specific issues as highlighted by their agenda or that of the councils. Workshops and training is completed with the group to ensure that the young people are well supported and skilled in tasks required of them. This group also engages in the national youth forums – two youth MPs and two Youth

Crime Commissioners are elected through the group. The group holds an AGM and shares its annual reports with Council Leaders.

- **Wolverhampton's Children in Care Council**

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is made of young people aged 11-18 who are in care of the City Council, some living with foster carers, residential homes, friends and family carers and some living independently. These young people are nominated to become members by their social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), foster carers or other professionals who feel that young people would benefit from the skills acquired as part of the council. CiCC is a statutory requirement as laid down by the Care Matters white paper 2007.

This group meets monthly and is incentivised by 3 monthly group activities. The young people completed induction training; interview training and some will complete the Total Respect Training. In addition to the group meeting they meet twice a year with the Corporate parenting Board. The CiCC work plan includes all of the reports sent to this board. This process is to ensure the experiences and opinions of the young people are imbedded into service delivery and development. This group attends national forums through the National Children's Board (NCB) which advises on national policy.

- **Wolverhampton's Care Leavers Forum**

The Care Leavers Forum (CLF) is made up of young people who are supported by the council leaving care team known as the Transitions Team, these young people are 18 -25 (depending on their educational status) and are either living independently, living with a host or staying put with foster carers. They are recruited to the forum through advertisements on Facebook, through their Young Person's Advisors (YPA) or social worker.

The group meets monthly and has its meeting combined with a peer support element as these young people can be very isolated. The formal part of the meeting is for an hour and half where they look at policy developments and service provision and give feedback to officers. This group also takes part in the national benchmarking forum which feeds into national policy development for Care Leavers.

- **Wolverhampton's B-safe Team**

The B-Safe Team is Wolverhampton's Junior Safeguarding Children Board, made up of local young people who get involved with safeguarding activities and decisions across the city.

The board enables the voice of Wolverhampton's young people to be heard and reflected in safeguarding business and activities, empowering young people to contribute to the processes and methods to keep them safe, and to increase awareness of safeguarding amongst parents and professionals.

- **Wolverhampton's Young People's reference Group**

This group is made up of young people from all of the above groups/forums. They complete interviews for new staff within the council and with its partners, attend focus groups for consultation, deliver training and other bespoke opportunities.

Depending on the commissioning, policy development or requirement of young people's view being consulted on, the young people are nominated through their group to participate. It may be that due to their availability, area of special interest, individual experience and skills required that they are nominated to participate.

## Principles of the Engagement Framework

- Young People should be the prime designers of the Participation Strategy.
- The City of Wolverhampton Council's Cabinet Boards and Scrutiny Panels may work directly with the Youth Council.
- Provide a way for all children, young people and families in Wolverhampton to have a voice, to be heard by key decision makers and get as involved as they want to in shaping what happens to them.
- Develop a way of making sure that children, young people and families can check whether their voice is being acted upon or not.
- Provide support to children, young people and families to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to participate.
- Ensure that practitioners working with children, young people and families have the skills and knowledge to involve them effectively.
- Evidence systematically that what children and young people tell us actually influences design and delivery, and improves outcomes
- Provide opportunities for ALL children, young people and families to contribute and challenge where there are gaps in provision.

## Benefits of participation

Consideration should be made in evaluating the need for:

- Rewards for involvement
- Accreditation of involvement
- Training for involvement
- Young people 'peer mentoring' children
- Partnership board members mentoring Young People's Council members

## Opportunities for children and young people include:

- Personal development
- Self confidence
- Influence decisions which affect their lives
- Develop social network
- Feel valued and empowered
- Better understanding of how organisations work and make decisions
- Involvement in commissioning services and recruiting staff
- Helping to monitor and evaluate services ('young inspectors')

## Opportunities for organisations

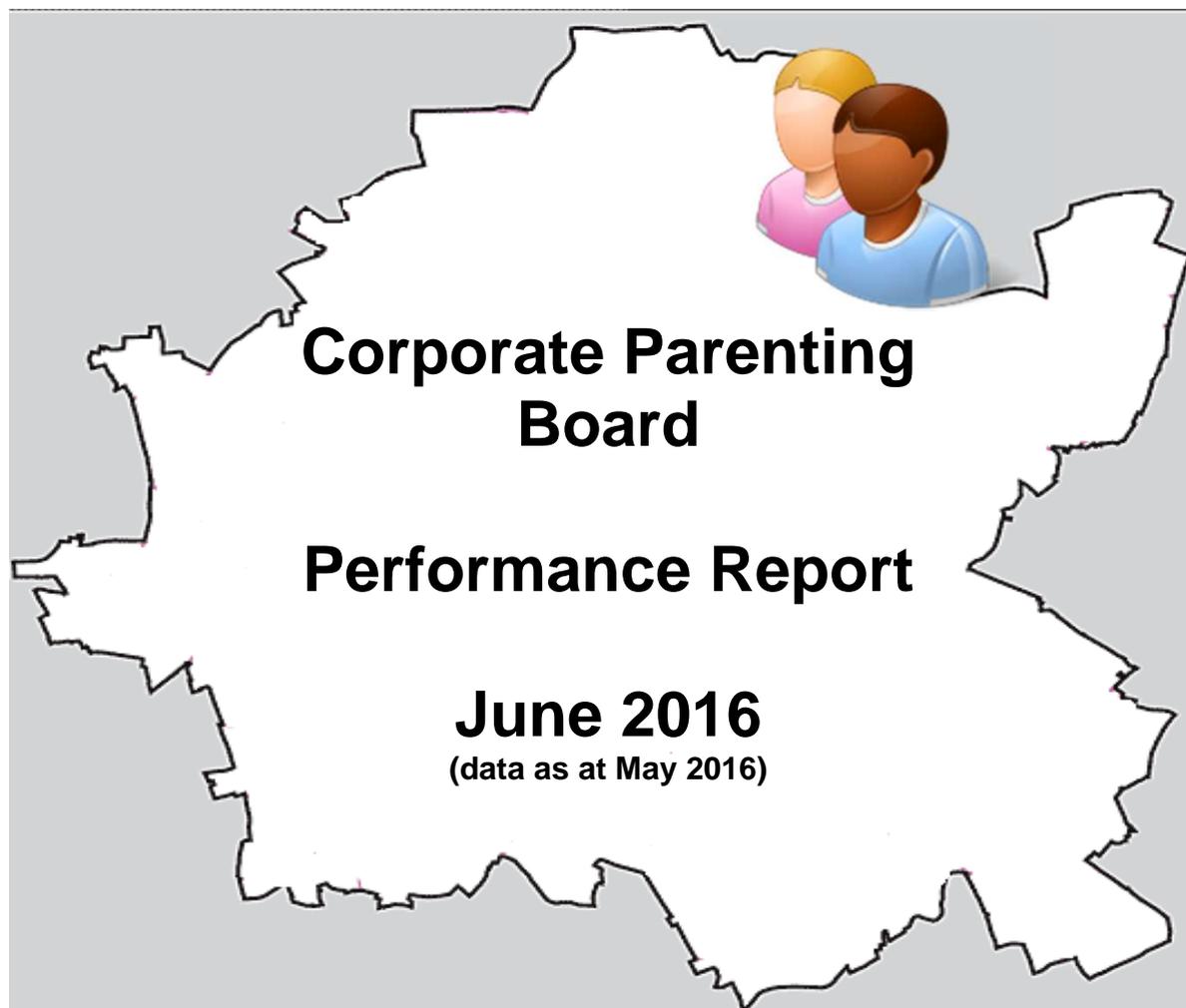
- Services increasingly responsive to children and young people's needs and concerns
- Fresh perspectives and new ideas on services, policies and democratic processes
- Services and policies designed for actual rather than presumed needs
- Become more accessible to children and young people
- Become more efficient, as they provide a more effective service for children and young people
- Decision making improves and becomes more accountable
- Raises aspirations for all

## Opportunities for the wider community

- More vibrant local democracy
- Community cohesion
- An empowering environment
- Opportunities for increased political awareness and fair representation
- More children and young people involved in the democratic process.
- Children and young people have a greater opportunity to influence decisions.
- Children and young people will be more able to scrutinise political decisions that affect their lives.

## Review

This is a 3 year strategy for the council, to ensure its relevance, to monitor progress and influence the participation action plan, an annual review will consult with all relevant staff, partners and young people.



## Key Points to Note

### Demographics

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

The number of Looked After Children continues to decrease although considerable further reduction is required to bring Wolverhampton in line with our comparators.

### Placements

In-house Foster Carers trend data shows that numbers of children placed with in-house foster carers continues to increase with the percentage now also increasing.

The proportion of LAC placed more than 20 miles from home, has remained at 17%.

The indicators that look at placement stability have fallen again in the month, this is likely to be due to reducing LAC numbers and increased adoptions. However, stability generally continues to show positive results and demonstrates that Looked After Children in Wolverhampton benefit from stable placements.

### Routes into Care and Ofsted Ratings

This is a new page that has been added to the report which shows which proportion of LAC were known to children's services in the 30 days prior to becoming looked after and the proportion of LAC that are asylum seekers and UASC (unaccompanied asylum seekers). Please note that children are classed as CiN if they are in the process of being assessed and may not have been CiN for very long or the subject of formal CiN plans. Ongoing work is being undertaken to identify how many children were also known to Early Help services and it is anticipated that this will be available by the end of the year.

The report now also shows the number of children placed in children's homes and the Ofsted ratings of those homes - of the 35 children currently placed in children's homes, 26 (80%) are in homes that are rated good or outstanding.

### Assessments and Reviews

Assessments and Reviews of Looked After Children in Wolverhampton remain generally up to date. The percentage of children that participated in their reviews remains lower at 93% compared to a 2014/15 result of 98%. This figure has increased slightly over recent months but remains lower than expected although this is likely be due to more accurate recording.

### Education

The 2015 KS2 results show that performance of Wolverhampton LAC has deteriorated compared with 2014 across reading, writing and maths. 2015 comparator data has now been updated and shows that Wolverhampton performed slightly worse in KS4 but better in GCSEs.

GCSE performance is more positive compared with last years out-turn - with 20% of LAC achieving 5 GCSEs grade A-C including English and Maths compared to 17% last year.

Please noted that small numbers can make these measurements volatile. For further information about the education attainment of LAC in Wolverhampton please refer to the Virtual School Head teacher annual report.

## Health

The percentage of children with up to date dental checks was 86% at the end of May. This result remains significantly higher than the 60% of children in the general Wolverhampton population that have seen a dentist in the past 2 years which is falling.

The percentage of health checks that are up to date has remained at 83% at the end of May, a slight improvement on the year end out-turn 2014/15 of 82% but lower than 2015/16 out-turn if 88%. The majority of children who do not have up to date health checks are placed outside of the city.

## Leaving Care

**Adoption** - Adoption timeliness in 2016/17 have shown a promising start with all 4 adoptions within A1 timescales.

The adoption pipeline shows that there are currently 74 children with a plan of adoption, 48 of which have placement orders or are currently placed for adoption. The placements and plans for some of the children are currently being reviewed and not all of the children will be adopted.

62 children were adopted in 15/16 compared to 51 in the previous year. This is extremely positive.

**Care Leavers** - The percentage of Care Leavers in Employment Education and Training cohort has changed to include all children and young adults who turn 17 to 21 in the year.

At the end of May 55% of 17-21 year olds were in Education, Employment or Training. NALM (not available for the labour market) data has now been included and shows that out of 153 care leavers in the cohort, 81% of care leavers are available for work with 19% (29 young people) not available due to pregnancy or young motherhood, illness or disability or because they are in custody.

Work continues in this area to ensure that education, employment and training information is recorded and updated.

The proportion of care leavers currently deemed to be in suitable accommodation is also included and shows that 83% of the cohort are currently in suitable accommodation.

## Demographics



57658 children aged 0-17 live in Wolverhampton  
22.8% of the total population

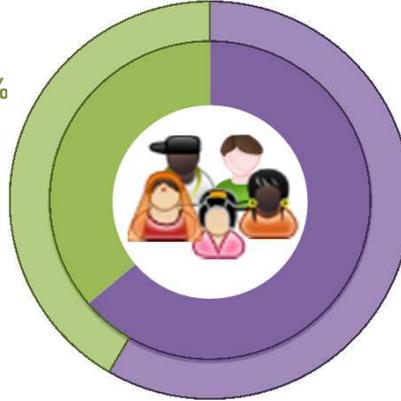
ONS 2014 mid-year estimate

48.8% of the CYP population and 42.2% of LAC are female



51.2% of the CYP population and 57.8% of LAC are male

41.6% of the CYP population and 36.1% of LAC are BME

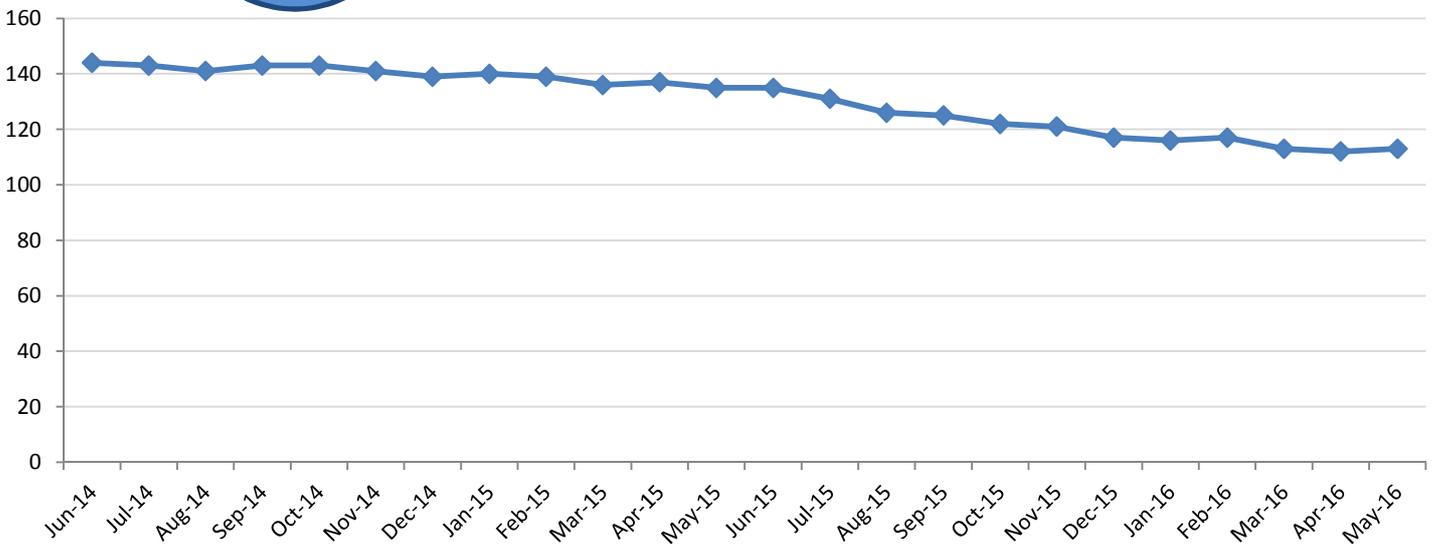
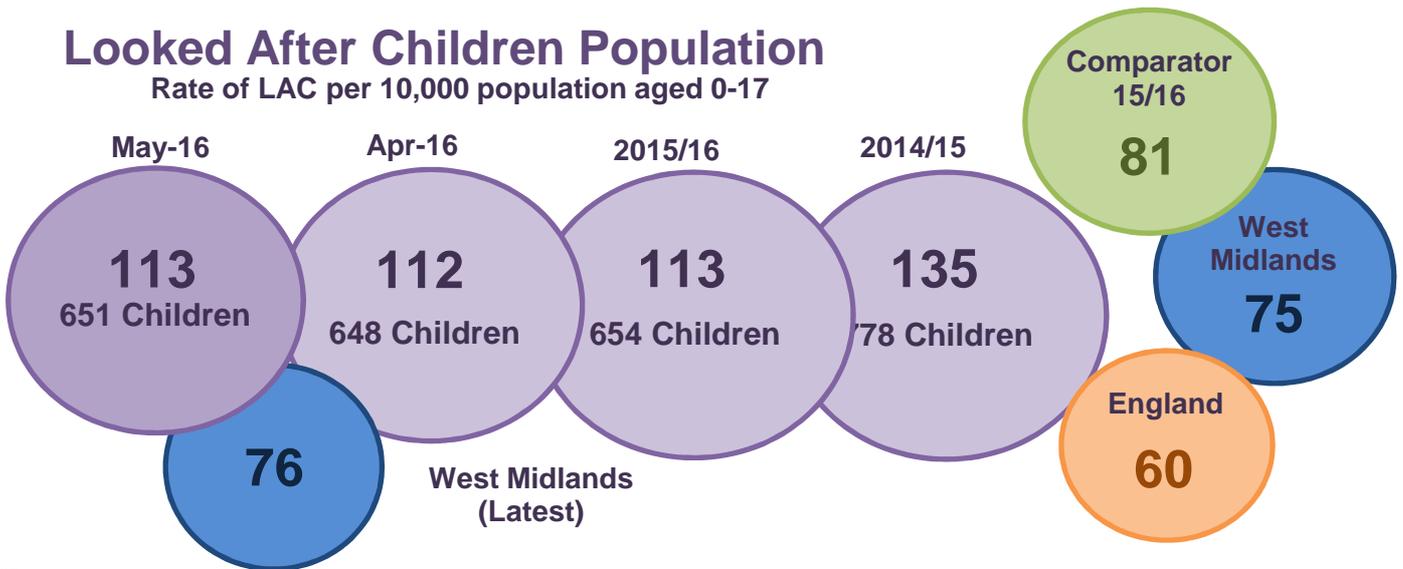


58.4% of the CYP population and 63.9% of LAC are white

Inner circle represents the LAC population, the outer circle is the CYP population

## Looked After Children Population

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



# Placements

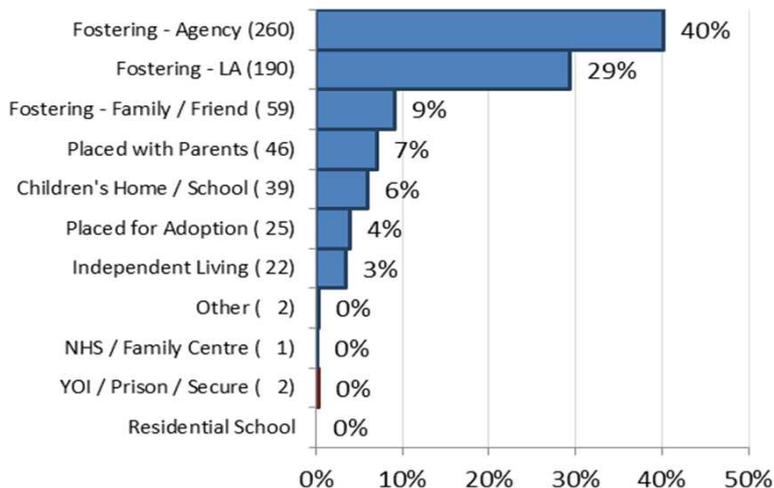


**% LAC Placed 20 miles + from home**

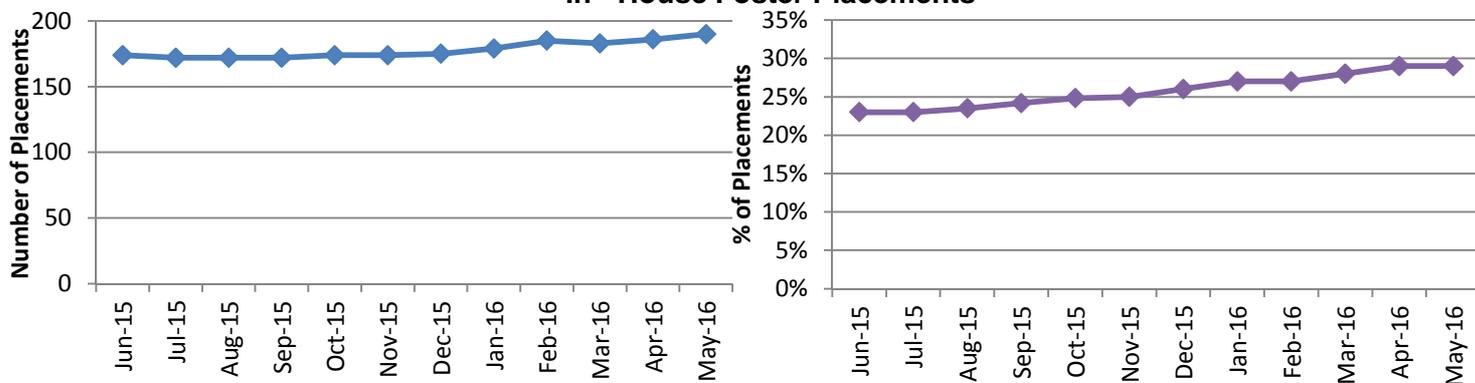


2014/15 Out-turn = 16%  
2013/14 Out-turn = 13%  
2013/14 Comparator = 15%  
2013/14 England = 13%

## LAC Placements



## In - House Foster Placements

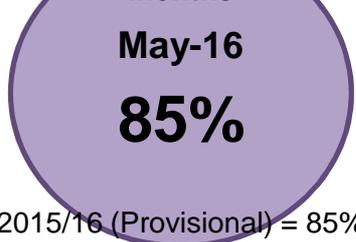


The proportion of LAC Placed with in-house foster carers remains high due to decreases in other placements. The number of in-house foster care placements has increased to 190 in the month.

## Placement Stability

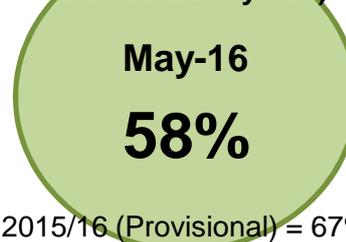


**LAC with fewer than 3 placements in the last 12 months**



2015/16 (Provisional) = 85%  
2014/15 Out-turn = 88%  
2014/15 Comparator = 89%  
2014/15 England = 89%

**% of children in same placement for 2 years or more or placed for adoption (when looked after for more than 2.5 years)**



2015/16 (Provisional) = 67%  
2014/15 = 67% 2013/14  
Comparator = 67% 2013/14  
England = 67%

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

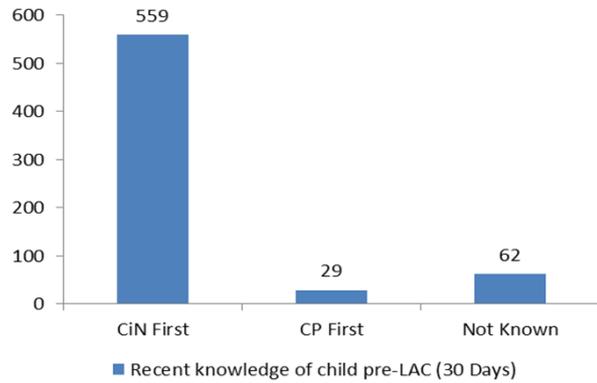
# Routes into Care and Ofsted Ratings



% of LAC know to LA 30 days prior to becoming LAC

**90%**

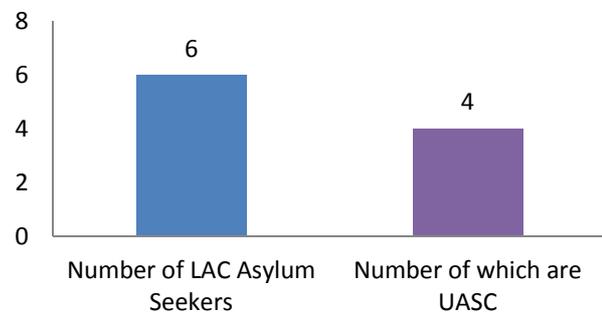
**Knowledge of child pre-LAC (30 Days)**



% of LAC who are Asylum Seekers

**0.92%**

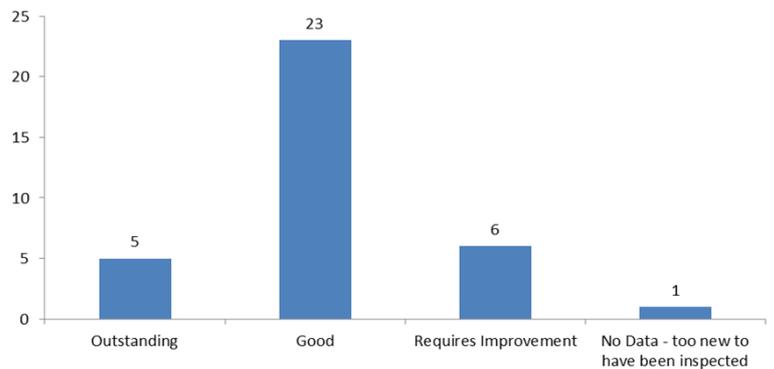
**How many LAC are Asylum Seekers**



% of LAC in Good or Outstanding Children's Homes

**80%**

**Number of Children in Residential Care Homes by Ofsted Rating**



## Assessments & Reviews



Average caseload of LAC children for LAC social workers

**19**

32% of young people who have been looked after for more than a year and 22% who have been looked after for less than a year have had 3 or more social workers in the past 12 months

This is an improving picture

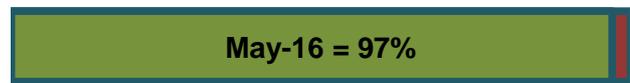
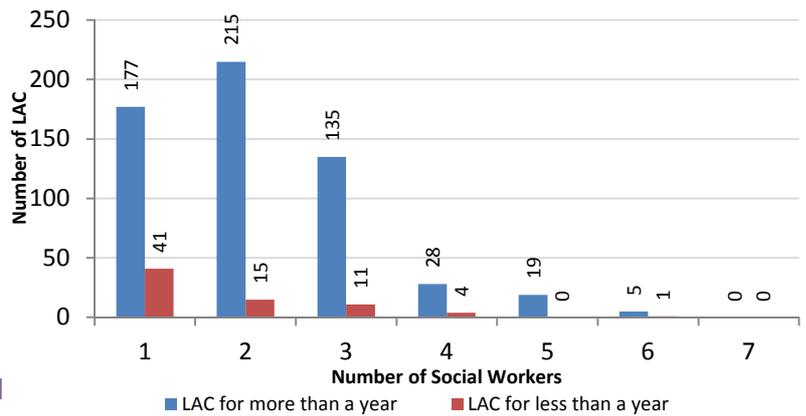
### Looked After Children with up to date assessments

An up to date assessments is one that has been authorised within the last 6 months.

### Looked After Children whose reviews have been completed on time

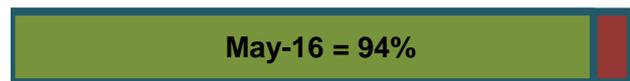
First Review is within 20 working days. Second review within 3 months. Third and subsequent reviews every 6 months

Number of Social Workers LAC have had in the past 12 months



2015/16 Out-turn = 97%

2014/15 Out-turn = 96%



2015/16 Out-turn = 90%

2014/15 Out-turn = 91%

97% of LAC assessments are currently up to date, a decrease in the month from 99% in April 2016

Since 1st April 2016, 271 reviews have been completed with only 17 not completed within timescales.

### The proportion of LAC reviews where the child was present or contributed by other means since 1st April 2015

**93%**

May-16

There has been a decline in LAC participation in reviews since year out turn 14/15. This is likely to be due to better recording

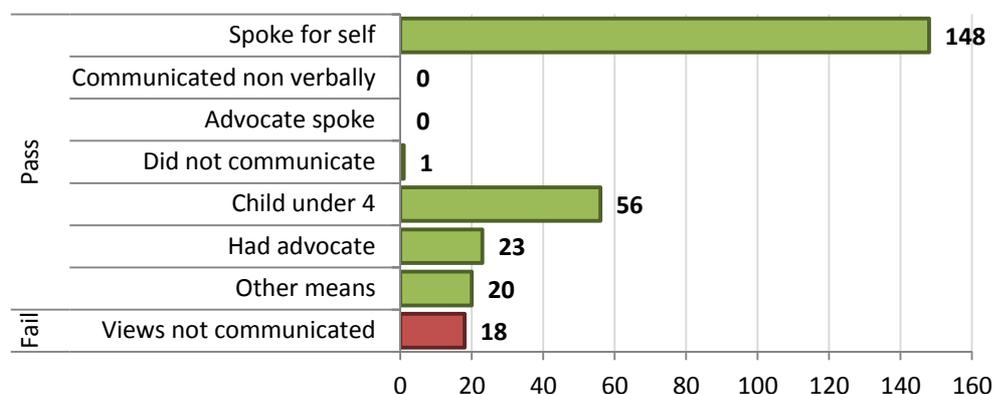
**93%**

2015/16 Out-turn

**98%**

2014/15 Out-turn

Participation in Reviews



## Education



KS2 Level 4	Maths	Reading	Writing	Reading, Writing and Maths	GCSEs	5+ GCSE A* - C inc Eng & Maths
Wolverhampton LAC 2015	60%	67%	53%	50%		20.0%
Wolverhampton 2015	86%	89%	86%	80%		51.6%
Wolves LAC 2014	74%	78%	81%	70%		17.0%
West Midlands 2015	63%	69%	58%	51%		14.3%
Statistical Neighbours 2015	61%	68%	55%	51%		16.7%
England 2015	64%	71%	61%	52%		13.8%

**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 level 4 in Maths, Reading and Writing in 2015 performed worse than in 2014. However, performance in GCSE's was better.

Detailed analysis of LAC educational performance was presented to the Panel via the Virtual School Head teacher report. Please note that there is some discrepancies when nationally published data is compared with locally held data - it is the national data that is presented here.

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



**90%**  
2015/16 Out-turn

**89%**  
2014/15 Out-turn

**84%**  
PEPS (Years 1 -11)  
- May-16

**81%**  
PEPS (Years 12 and 13)  
- May-16

LAC Absence from School - 2014  
(taken from nationally published data)

\* Children looked after for 12 months or more

Unauthorised Absence \*

**1.2%**

West Midlands - 0.90%  
Statistical Neighbours - 0.97%  
England - 1.00%

Overall Absence \*

**4.0%**

West Midlands - 3.70%  
Statistical Neighbours - 3.69%

LAC Persistent Absence

**5.0%**

West Midlands - 4.20%  
Statistical Neighbours - 4.58%  
England - 4.70%

There has been a strong improvement in the number of PEP's in the month in both indicators that see results slightly above year out turn 14/15.

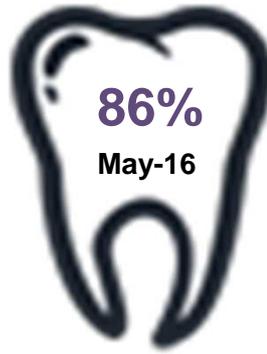
**FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:** Work is continuing to develop a detailed, local, virtual schools report. As that work progresses, further information will be reported here.

## LAC Health



60% of children in the  
Wolverhampton Local Authority  
Area have seen a dentist in the last  
two years

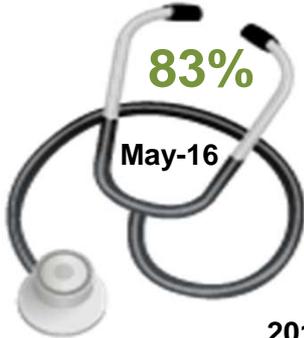
### Dental Checks



2015/16 Out-turn = 89%

2014/15 Out-turn = 81%

### Health Checks



2015/16 Out-turn = 88%

2014/15 Out-turn = 82%

There has been a slight decrease in  
performance since year out turn however  
results in this area remain strong as a  
result of improved working with the CCG  
and RWT

# Leaving Care



Children Adopted	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 (to date)
	50	51	61	4

## Adoptions

Number of children awaiting adoption 31/03/2016



### Adoption Scorecard Results

The adoption scorecard is calculated using results and performance over a three year period

**A1 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family**

**627 Days**

3 Year avg 2014-2017

(734 days 2012-2015)

Target - 428 days

**A2 - Average time between receiving court authority to place and finding a match**

**235 Days**

3 year avg 2014-2017

Target - 121 days

**A10 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (stopped at point of fostering for foster carers adoptions)**

**467 Days**

3 year avg 2014-2017

(488 days 2012-2015)

Target - 428 days

#### Single year performance (2015/16 - Provisional)

**A1** - 652 days with 64% of children adopted within timescales

**A2** - 238 days

**A10** - 518 days

#### Single year performance (2016/17 as at 31st May)

**A1** - 380 days with 100% of children adopted within timescales

**A2** - 134 days

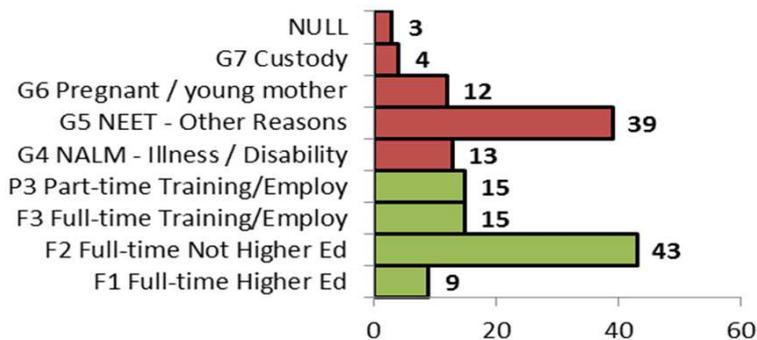
**A10** - 380 days

The adoption scorecards for 2012-15 were published in March 2016. 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 has been undertaken and is available.

Care Leavers

5.4 Context: Number EET Statuses



Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training 2015/16

**Wolverhampton - 60%**  
**West Mids (14/15) - 41%**  
**Statistical Neighbours (14/15) - 46%**  
**England (14/15)- 48%**

**May 2016:**  
**55%**

**% of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation**  
  
**83%**

**% of Care Leavers available to work**  
  
**81% Available**  
**19% NALM**

*(29 Care Leavers are NALM (not available for the labour market) due to illness / disability, pregnancy or young mothers or being in custody)*

The percentage of children and care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) has improved significantly due to a change in the cohort which now measures 17-21 year olds (previously 19-21 year olds).

**The current result is an improvement to 56% of 17 to 21 year olds in education, employment or training. No comparator data is currently available based on the new cohort.**

A large part of the improvement has been due to on-going work by the leaving care team in identifying and recording EET status for all children and young adults in the cohort. Work continues to ensure data quality is high.

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