

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – MARCH 2018**

|   |   |                        |                                     |
|---|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>  | Educational Attainment of Children in Care  |                        |                                     |
| <b>Director(s)/<br/>Corporate Director(s):</b>  | Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services   | <b>Wards affected:</b> | All                                 |
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| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>  |   |                        |                                     |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>   |   |                        |                                     |
| Strategic Regeneration and Development  |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Schools   |   |                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Planning and Housing  |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Community Services  |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Energy, Sustainability and Customer   |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Jobs, Growth and Transport  |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Adults, Health and Community Sector   |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Children, Early Intervention and Early Years  |   |                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure and Culture   |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration  |   |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>  |   |                        |                                     |
| This report provides an update of the work of the Nottingham City Virtual School and provides details of attainment in the 2016-17 academic year. |   |                        |                                     |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>   |   |                        |                                     |
| <b>1</b>  | Note and discuss the recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City’s Children in Care (CiC) in comparison to the performance of all children and CIC nationally. |                        |                                     |
| <b>2</b>  | Note the current work and interventions of the Virtual School to promote and support the educational achievement of Nottingham City looked after children.  |                        |                                     |
| <b>3</b>  | Approve the actions identified and developments necessary to improve and enhance the work of the Nottingham City Virtual School.  |                        |                                     |

### **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 To ensure the Nottingham City Virtual School is discharging the Local Authority statutory duties to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, through monitoring and tracking the educational outcomes of its children in care; identifying any emerging trends and advising and recommending interventions to

improve attainment and narrow the achievement gap between the performance of CiC and that of other pupils.

## **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1. This report will consider the attainment of looked after children in Key Stage 1, 2 and 4 during the academic year 2016-17.
- 2.2. The Virtual School has a responsibility to monitor, track, promote and support the educational achievement and experience of all school age Children in Care; currently there are approximately 388 pupils on the Virtual School roll.
- 2.3. The Nottingham City Virtual School are currently experiencing significant capacity issue within the Team; we have two vacant Education Support Officer Posts and one member of staff currently off work long-term due to sickness, leaving two team members to monitor, track and support cases. The reduced staffing capacity has had a significant impact on the work the Virtual School can undertake, details of this impact has been described where relevant within each section of this report.

### **The Virtual School Roll**

- 2.4. Currently the Virtual School has on its roll 388 children of statutory school age, 155 of these children are receiving education within Nottingham City, 220 are receiving education outside the Nottingham City boundaries and 13 of these are without a school place. It is important to note this number fluctuates as a result of the number of admissions and discharges of children in care.
- 2.5. Of the 388 looked after children currently on roll at the Nottingham City Virtual School, 73 are on roll at schools judged by Ofsted as 'outstanding', 213 in schools judged 'Good', 43 in schools judged as 'requiring improvement' and 19 in schools judged 'inadequate', the remaining children (40) are either without a school place (13) or are on roll at a school that has not yet been subject to an inspection (27).
- 2.6. The Virtual School prioritises schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' for children in care in need of a new school place, for the majority of the cases where our CiC are attending a school judged 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate', this judgment was made subsequently, after the child was placed.
- 2.7. Due to staffing capacity issues within the Virtual School we have had to prioritise monitoring, tracking and case working statutory school age children in care (not early years or post-16 children) and of those, cases where there are causes for concern. We are continuing with the development of our systems and processes to enable us to monitor and track the destination and experience of early years and post 16 children in care, however, actual casework of these two cohorts will not commence until the staffing issues are remedied.

## **Attainment and progress of looked after children**

- 2.8. The Virtual School commissions an external organisation, Welfare Call, to collect the teacher termly assessments results for all our children in care. Historically we have used the commissioned provider's template for teacher termly assessment data collection, however, this has been problematic in that these assessment templates have enabled different assessment terminology to be used by schools, making analysis, monitoring and tracking difficult for the Virtual School.
- 2.9. Since the start of this academic year, 2017-18, we have developed our own reporting template for teacher termly assessments for primary aged children. Teacher termly assessments for all our children in care must now be reported using age related expectations: 'emerging', 'developing', 'secure' and 'mastered'. The new reporting templates will enable the Virtual School to consistently and effectively analyse, monitor, track and report on the assessment and progress of our children in care so we can consider and identify actions and interventions necessary to improve outcomes and educational trajectories accordingly.
- 2.10. The revised reporting template for teacher termly assessments is now being used, outcomes for autumn 2017-18 assessments are currently being collected on these new templates and on receipt will be populated in the Virtual School SIMS system to enable us to start the analysis and tracking.
- 2.11. Further work is required to develop the reporting template for collection of teacher termly assessment for children in Key Stage 4, this work is being progressed.
- 2.12. Once teacher termly assessment data is collected systematically and held within the Virtual School SIMS system, termly review of our children in care cohort will be possible and can consider multiple factors of interest (e.g. school OFSTED category, PPP spend, PEP completion, attendance and exclusion history etc). This will help us to understand and evidence the effectiveness/impact of PEP targets and PPP intervention and will enable us to work proactively on areas of concern.

### **2.13. Key stage 1 attainment 2016-17:**

In the 2016-17 academic year, the eligible Key Stage 1 LAC cohort consisted of 13 pupils (who had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2017).

| <b>NCC LAC eligible cohort total<br/>(13)</b> | <b>ARE %<br/>15/16</b> | <b>ARE %<br/>16/17</b> |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Reading                                       | 47%                    | 46% (-1%)              |
| Writing                                       | 26%                    | 54% (+28%)             |
| Maths   | 32%                    | 54% (+22%)             |

Those attaining age related expectations at Key Stage 1, in reading has dropped slightly, but only by 1% point. Attainment in writing has more than doubled (an increase of 28% points) and Maths has increased by 22% points.

#### 2.14. Key stage 2 attainment 2016-17:

In the 2016-17 academic year, the Key Stage 2 eligible LAC cohort consisted of 37 pupils (who had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2017).

| <b>NCC LAC eligible cohort total<br/>(37)</b>      | <b>ARE%<br/>15/16</b> | <b>ARE %<br/>16/17</b> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Reading  | 36%                   | 35% (-1%)              |
| Writing  | 36%                   | 49% (+13%)             |
| Maths  | 48%                   | 44% (-4%)              |
| SPAG<br>*Spelling, Punctuation and<br>Grammar Test | 32%                   | 41% (+9%)              |

#### 2.15. Key stage 4 attainment 2016-17

In the 2016-17 academic year, the Key Stage 4 eligible LAC cohort consisted of 48 pupils (who had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2017).

| <b>NCC LAC eligible cohort<br/>total (48)</b> | <b>% 15/16</b> | <b>% 16/17</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Gaining any Qualification                     | 75%            | 83% (+8%)      |
| 5+ GCSEs A*- C                                | 7%             | 15% (+8%)      |
| 5+ GCSEs A*- G                                | 41%            | 48% (+7%)      |
| 5+ GCSEs A*- C including<br>Eng & Maths L4    | 7%             | 10% (+3%)      |
| Eng & Maths L4+                               | 11%            | 17% (+6%)      |
| No qualification                              | 9%             | 10% (+1)       |

### **Attendance and exclusion of looked after children**

2.16. In the 2016-17 academic year the attendance rate for compulsory school age children in care, on roll at the Virtual School, was 94.9%, slightly below government expectations of 96% but an improvement on the previous year by 5 percentage points.

2.17. There were no permanent exclusion of a Nottingham City child in care during the 2016-17 academic year.

2.18. There were 159 incidents of fixed term exclusion over the 2016/17 academic year, the most common reason for these were 'physical assault against an adult', 'verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult' and 'persistent disruptive behaviour'.

- 2.19. The 159 incidents of fixed term exclusions was experienced by 75 children and significantly more of those fixed term exclusions were for children at secondary phase; 132 fixed term exclusions for secondary-phase pupils and 27 for primary-phase pupils.
- 2.20. In order to promote and support the education of children in care the Nottingham City Virtual School seeks to prevent and reduce the number of fixed term exclusions they experienced. Our arrangements for reducing and preventing fixed term exclusions include: attendance at meetings with schools/ education providers to offer advice and alternative solutions to exclusion and training to designated teachers consisting of recognising the needs of children in care and the consideration of strategies to support and manage those needs. We have also moved to case-holding arrangements within the Virtual School team; members of the team are now allocated individual cases so they are able to monitor and track their cases and intervene where risks, such as exclusions, are identified.

### **Personal Education Plans**

- 2.21. As of week ending February 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 approximately 61% of our looked after children have a completed PEP that is in date, for the other 39% the PEP is either out of date (31%) or has never been completed/received (8%).
- 2.22. The vacancies and sickness absence in the Virtual School team has reduced our capacity to follow up non-completion of PEPS with schools and social workers, which is a risk for compliance rates falling further.
- 2.23. A drill down of PEP breaches was completed in October 2017 to ascertain whether there were any mitigating factors for each breach. Mitigating factors could include, a child being new into care, a recent move to a new school or a child being in custody. The table below details the outcome of this drill down:

#### **2.24. Drill down of PEP breaches October 2017**

| <b>Reason for Breach</b>  | <b>Total</b> |
|---|--------------|
| *New to care  | 3            |
| No PEP delay factor known   | 93           |
| *The child has recently moved school, in last 4 weeks                   | 4            |
| *The child is in custody  | 1            |
| *The child is without a school place                                    | 4            |
| *There has been a PEP meeting, but form not yet typed up/sent to the VS | 19           |
| Breach reason not analysed  | 27           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>151</b>   |

\*Considered mitigating factors for a PEP breach.

- 2.25. Based on the drill down of PEP breaches during October last year, if we were to discount those breaches for which there was reasonable mitigation, marked \* in the table, from the expected PEP figure the compliance rate would have been 6% higher.

To add 6% to any PEP compliancy rates going forward we would need to carry out a drill down at least quarterly to ensure the % is consistent to include as a mitigation.

- 2.26. Despite the Virtual Schools reduced capacity to follow up non-completion of PEPS with schools and social workers, we do continue to use other opportunities to reiterate the duty and importance of each child in care having an up to date and high quality PEP; through the training we deliver, Designated Teacher networks and attendance at weekly Placement Panel meetings.
- 2.27. Weekly PEP reports and details of breaches continue to be provided to the Children in Care Head of Service and Service Manager. Reports and breaches are also sent to Service Managers of fieldwork social care teams and more recently to Independent Reviewing Officers. Circulation of the weekly PEP reports provides senior managers with detail of exactly which children require a PEP so they can support in driving up compliance rates.
- 2.28. Capacity issues within the Virtual School team has made it difficult for us to systematically quality assure completed PEPs. Where capacity allows the two Virtual School caseworkers are reviewing PEPs for their cases as they are received but are not completing the QA review form.
- 2.29. The PEP form and process and the PEP quality assurance tool and procedure does require review, the timeframe for completion of this is by the end of this academic year; July 2018.

### **Pupil Premium Plus**

- 2.30. A new process for the administration and distribution of Pupil Premium Plus was implemented at the start of the 2017-18 academic year. These new arrangements create a more effective and efficient way for the Virtual School to monitor and distribute funding and is simpler and less onerous for schools to apply.
- 2.31. It is intended that the new PPP process will encourage more schools to apply for the funding, will minimise the potential for underspend, will ensure consistency in decisions to approve funding requests and will enable schools to apply for additional funds to support children in care who may require intervention and support over and above the agreed allocation of £1900.
- 2.32. Key changes to PPP include:
- Schools apply through an online application for the agreed allocation.
  - Schools select interventions for which funding is being requested from a drop down of pre-populated interventions.
  - Schools provide details of anticipated impact of funding on the education outcomes of the child at the point of applying.
  - Funding decisions are inputted into the Virtual School SIMS system against the child's individual record, contributing to the building of the child's educational 'profile'.
  - Schools can apply for additional funds using an Additional Funding Request form, for interventions and strategies that can't be met through the £1900 allocation.

- 2.33. A policy detailing the new Pupil Premium Plus arrangements effective from the 2017-18 academic year has been completed and circulated to key stakeholders accordingly.

**3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

**4. FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

- 4.1 None.

**5. LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 None.

**6. STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

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An EIA is not required because the report does not contain financial proposals or decisions.

Yes

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**8. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 8.1 None.

**9. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- 9.1 None.