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 To: Corporate Parenting Select Committee  
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 Subject: Service Overview Report  
 Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report provides Members with an overview of the impact and priorities for the Virtual School Head Teacher

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## 1. Introduction

(1) This report intends to provide the committee with an overview of VSK's areas of responsibility and the impact that has been made.

## 2. Validated Outcomes 2013-14

### 5 Yr KS2 Trend Breakdown

	2009-10*	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Level 4+ Reading (New indicator from 2012-13)			54%	61%	65% *↑11%
Level 4+ Writing (New indicator from 2012-13)			44%	46%	59% *↑15%
NI99 (Level 4+ Reading and Writing)	38%	44%	50%	50%	56% *↑18%
NI 100 Level 4+ Maths	43%	44%	40%	49%	57% *↑14%
NI99 + 100 combined	36%	36%	36%	39%	44% *↑18%

## Key Stage 2 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months 2013-2014

The National trend shows Reading down by 1% (63%), Writing up 4% (55%) and Maths static (56%). Kent shows an improvement in all three tests ~ Reading up 4% (65%), Writing up 13% (59%) and Maths up 8% (57%), which is now in line the latest validated NA for all three. Only Warwickshire is above the NA with all other counties below average in at least one test. It is also important to note that since the development of the Virtual School in 2010, the percentage of eligible Kent children in care achieving Level 4+ in English(NI99) has improved by 18%pts; Level 4+ Mathematics (NI100) has improved by 14%pts and those achieving both English and Mathematics has improved by 8%. This is a very encouraging trend that indicates the potential of achieving 5 GCSE's A\*-C including English and Mathematics.

### 5Yr Yr 11 GCSE Trend Breakdown

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
NI101	6%	11%	15%	15%	13% ↓2% pts
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>					
Total SEN	56%	52%	67%	72%	↑29%
SA	10%	6%	13%	11%	↑10%
SA+	12%	18%	31%	23%	↑92%
SSEN	33%	28%	23%	38%	↑15%
<b>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)</b>					
National Average	3%				
South East Average	5%				
London	8%				
Kent	10% (↑233% on National Average)				

## Key Stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months 2013-2014

Due to the significant changes this year to assessment and examination processes there will be no national comparison data. These changes include include (i) early GCSE entries dis-incentivised; (ii) English GCSE final examination weighting has been increased to 60%; (iii) shift to end of course examination approach. 2013-14 academic year saw nearly a 20% increase in the number of eligible children, this means that each young person has a smaller impact on the overall percentage achieved. Kent has showed a downturn on last year's performance which is lower than the Kent all learners downturn of 4%, however it is important to note that the changes outlined above impact vulnerable learners who may have had gaps in their learning through no fault of their own. Based on SFR January 2014 based on last year's Key Stage 4 results Kent was one of only three counties nationally that showed an improvement in all three tests ((a) 5+GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent (b) 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent including E&M and (c)A\*-C GCSEs in E&M)

### 5Yr Attendance And Exclusion Trend Breakdown

Ac. Year	'09/10	'10/11	'11/12	'12/13	'13/14
<b>Performance Assessment Framework</b> CF/C24 25+days Absence * Indicator changed to <b>Persistent Absence (PA)</b> from 2011/12	16.3%	12%	*10.5%	*9.5%	*9.5%
<b>% Permanent Exclusion (PEX)</b>	1%	0.9%	0.54%	0.39%	0.39%

2013-14 was another positive year for our young people in terms of attendance and permanent exclusions levels. These two indicators which are in line with national averages for CiC have remained stable over the past two years. It is important to note however that since the development of the Virtual School persistent absenteeism has reduced by 42% and Permanent Exclusion has reduced by 61%.

### 3. Participation and Engagement 2013-14

#### Apprentices

(1) During the last academic year VSK has supported 7 Apprentice Participation Workers. Four Care Leavers have successfully completed a Level 2 qualification, one has been retained by VSK and is carrying out an Advanced Apprenticeship and is now the Senior Apprentice. This young person also sits on the Corporate Parenting Panel and advocates as the voice of the child/young person in care/care leaver. Two former apprentices have been successful in finding full time employment and one has returned to further education. A further three young people have gained a place on the programme and are currently working and studying for a Level 2 or 3 qualification. Whilst studying for a qualification in Business and Administration the Apprentices also study and take recognised functional skills qualification in Maths, English and ICT if they have not been successful previously in attaining a C grade at GCSE. A further two young people are due to commence their apprenticeship in the next couple of months.

(2) The apprentices are involved in several work streams:

### **Our Children in Care Council – OCYPC**

(3) Virtual School Kent continues to support the OCYPC. Currently there are 20 members, which include the VSK Care Leaver apprentices. The Council have met 4 times during the last academic year and have been attended by the Lead Member and the Director for Specialist Children’s Services several times. The membership of the OCYPC has increased over the past 4 years:

<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
8 members	7 members	16 members	20 members

(4) Work is underway with the social care teams in the districts to develop the OCYPC further and a ‘Taster day’ is arranged to take place on 30th October. The aim of the day is to encourage more children in care to sign up to being on the council in order that it fully reflects the cohort of children in care in Kent. (See Appendix 1)

#### **(5) Recent feedback from current OCYPC members:**

*“I am a member of the OCYPC because I am able to express my views on different circumstances in a young person’s life. I am able to show my emotions well and show that I can help people if needed.”*

*“I am part of OCYPC because it makes children know that being in care is not that bad and that the future gets better. I enjoy going to the meetings, going to activity days.”*

*“I am a member of the OCYPC because I believe that the views of children in care are the vital key to a happier life in care. In addition to going to the OCYPC meetings I enjoy acting and swimming: I would not be accessible to these clubs if I didn’t live with my wonderful carers- Nett and Neil. I have two sisters and I am certain that by continuing to participate I am making both their life and mine a lot better and happier.”*

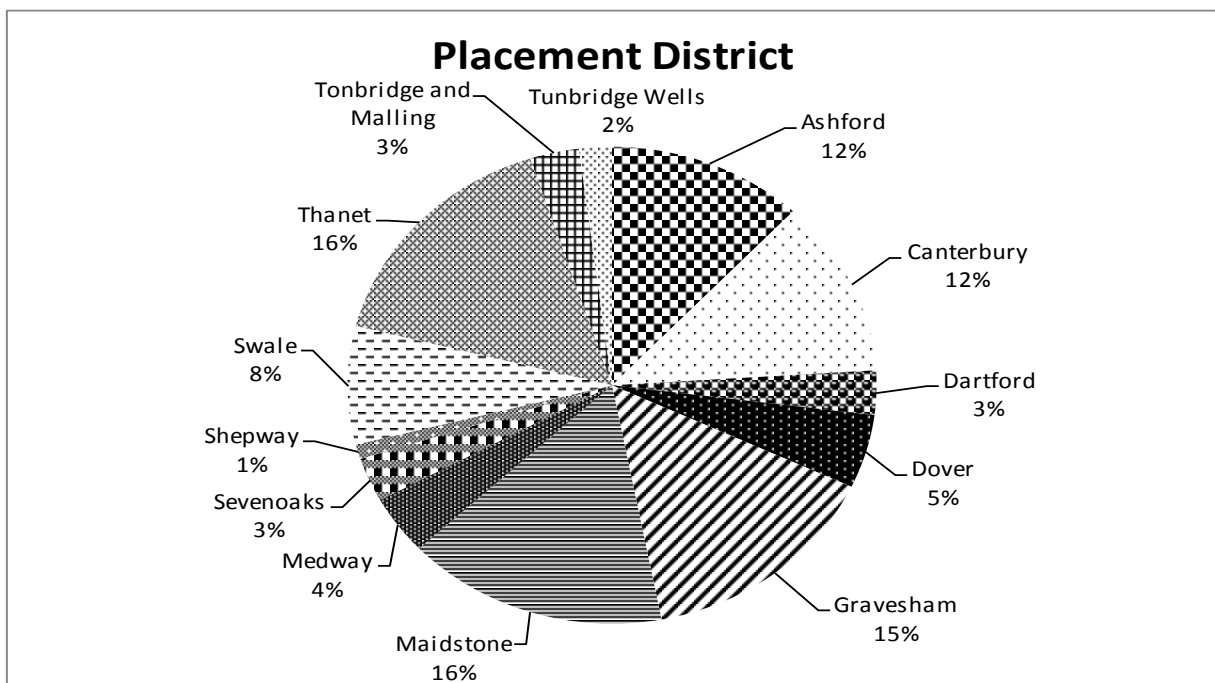
*“I am a member of the OCYPC because I like to help other people with their problems and make ‘being in care’ not that bad.”*

## Participation activity days

(6) Virtual School Kent have organised 13 participation activity days from September 2013 to July 2014 during the October, February, and Summer school holidays for Kent Children in Care (CiC).

297 CiC attended at least one activity day with 55 children attending two or more activities. The age range of young people attending has been aged between 3 – 17 years.

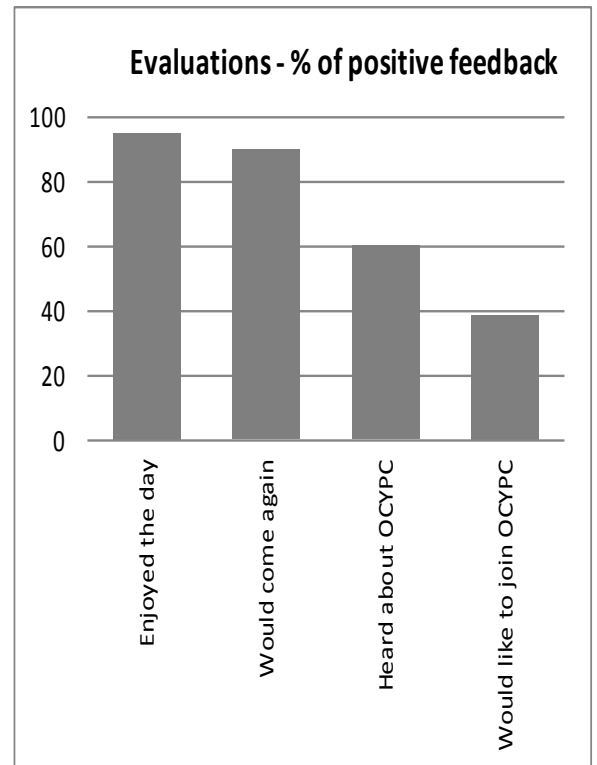
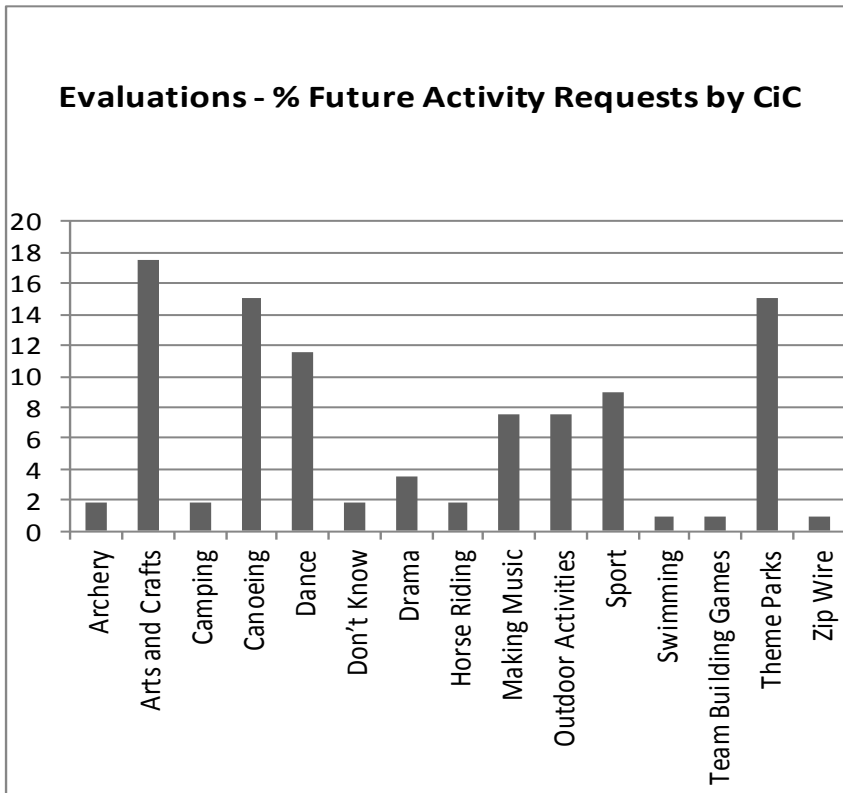
(7) The participation days have been organised and run with the assistance of VSK's Apprentice Participation Worker Team and have covered a wide range of activities including sports, outdoor pursuits, music & dance and arts & crafts. Six participation activity days were held during the Summer 2014 school holidays with 128 young people attending which evidences a 35% improvement over the previous summers attendance. In order to reach as many young people as possible, the days took place at various locations around the county – Folkestone, Maidstone, Margate, Rochester, Sheerness and West Farleigh.



(8) Higher numbers of children and young people attending Participation Days in the last year reside in the Maidstone, Gravesham and Thanet districts. Work has taken place to make contact children and young people in harder to reach areas.

## Evaluations

(9) Evaluations have been completed by the children after each event and their views have been sought with regard to the type of days they would like run in the future. These views have been taken into consideration in planning future events and this Summer the horse riding and canoeing events were very sought after. Youth Opportunities Fund and funding from Members has been successfully applied for in 2013 to help with the costs of providing extra days as they are proving to be extremely popular with the young people. Various funding streams are also being investigated in 2014 to help fund extra days as the demand is increasing.



(10) Participation days have also been used to facilitate completion of the 'Every Child Matters' Survey and to interview children and young people and listen to their views for the Never Stop Listening DVD that follows up on the issues raised in the Care to Listen DVD that was made in 2008.

**(11) Recent feedback from young people attending Summer 2014 Participation Activities:**

*"I loved the VSK art and crafts day and I loved making my wiggly worm!"*

*"Making my T-Shirt was my favourite part of the day of the Art Day"*

*"I would like to do a farming day in future"*

*"At the Horse-riding Day, my favourite part was brushing down the horses"*

*"ALL DAY was my favourite part of the day!!"*

*"The best thing I have done was horse- riding, it's a dream come true"*

*"The best part of the day was when we did the quad biking"*

*"Rock climbing was best as I went a lot higher than I did when I went with my school in 2013"*

*"I enjoyed meeting new friends"*

*"I love coming to the VSK activity days because I meet up with my brothers and sisters there"*

**Surveys**

(12) VSK Officers and the apprentices have supported young people completing various surveys during the last year, including the Your Voice Matters survey and the survey that accompanies the LILAC Assessment. They have also assisted with creating a 'You said, we did' response to the Your Voice Matters survey, to ensure appropriate feedback is given to children in care who took the time to complete it. (See Appendix 2)

## Communication

(13) VSK continues to work on improving the communication channels with children in care, which is a challenge. During the last academic year a quarterly newsletter has been established, with the 4<sup>th</sup> edition currently being written. This is created by the VSK apprentices on behalf of the OCYPC. The VSK apprentices have also engaged the OCYPC and other children in care through focus groups and participation activity days to work on developing a young person friendly version of the Kent Pledge, a coming in to care pack and a leaving care charter.

There is continual development of the [Kent Cares Town](#) website with new articles, pictures, events being added on a regular basis. A large piece of work that the VSK Apprentice Team has supported this year is the development of the 'Never Stop Listening' DVD. This is a follow up to the 2008 'Care to Listen' DVD to find out what the lives of Kent Children in Care are like now. And what has changed in the past 6 years. The Apprentices presented the film along with a paper for Members to reaffirm their commitment to Kent Pledge and Care Leavers Charter at the July full council meeting.

The apprentices are also involved in the following work streams:

- Staff Recruitment – sitting on interview panels for Senior and Middle Managers within KCC
- 1:1 support work with children and young people in care (supported 37 young people in last academic year)
- Supporting children with the completion of their e-PEP questions
- Supporting focus groups arranged by other parts of the Council to ensure the voices of children in care are heard in various initiatives eg. KIASS and Co-production.



#### 4. Health 2013-14

(1) A specified member of staff (*Health Lead*) within VSK who has experience of social care and policy & performance takes a lead role for SCS in terms of developing policy & monitoring health assessment and strengths & difficulties (SDQ's) performance. This entails working with social care managers, social workers, NHS commissioners, provider managers and clinicians on a regular basis and has involved meeting with the Judiciary.

(2) The Care quality commission (CQC) undertook a review of health services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Kent (West Kent, Swale and DGS) in May 2014. An item tabled at the Corporate Parenting Panel on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014 outlines the finding of the CQC review and the actions that KCC has agreed to work on jointly with health colleagues to address issues raised. The *Health Lead* within VSK will be the identifiable person from within SCS to work with health colleagues on these actions.

(3) The LAC nursing team continue to sit within the two locality bases of VSK (Brook House & Worrall House) and are an integral part of the multi-agency service. The team has been actively recruiting and it has expanded during recent months in order to meet the demands placed on the service.

(4) The service is looking to respond to the issues raised in the Your Voice Matters survey and has committed to:

- *Working with the OCYPC to create a special invitation for children & young people to their health assessments*
- *Issuing a post card to young people aged 15 Plus with the name and phone number of their nurse and asking their social worker or personal adviser to talk with them about this.*
- *The nursing team want to be able to offer a more flexible service, so they can hopefully see you in a place and at a time that suits both you and them*
- *For young people planning on leaving care, the nurses wants to be able to see them and talk with young people about their health to make sure they know about their health history and know to access health services in their area.*

(5) VSK works with colleagues in KCC outside of SCS to support other work streams aimed at improving emotional health and well-being of children in care and care leavers.

### 3Yr Dental and Health Assessment Trend Breakdown

	Dental checks			Health Assessments		
	2012 Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	2013 Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	2014 Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	2012 Percentage of children who had their annual health assessment	2013 Percentage of children who had their annual health assessment	2014 Percentage of children who had their annual health assessment
ENGLAND	82.36	82.03		86.28	87.29	
<b>Kent</b>	<b>79.57</b>	<b>84.03</b>	<b>96.6</b> <b>↑15%</b>	<b>76.17</b>	<b>83.61</b>	<b>88.1</b> <b>↑5%</b>

VSK has seen three year on year improvements in both Dental and Review Health Assessments. This year has evidenced a 15% improvement in dental checks and a 5% improvement in our young peoples review health assessments against 2013 outcomes. Based on latest validated national averages our health outcomes are in line or exceeding the national average.

#### 5. Looked After Children Pupil Premium Grant(PP+)

(1) On the 20<sup>th</sup> February the Department for Education published the new Conditions of Grant for the Pupil Premium 2014-15. This marks the biggest shake up in the grant since its conception. There are numerous significant changes within the document, however the main changes include:-

- **The amount** - As of April will be £1900
- **Responsibility** - No longer goes directly to the school but is held by the Virtual School
- **Application** - Not £1900 per child but a lump sum for the VS to co-ordinate support to raise attainment accelerate progress and narrow the attainment gap for children in care.

(2) These changes are very exciting for our young people, as the grant has real potential to make a positive impact. This may however cause friction between the schools and the Virtual School as they have historically received this money which was not ring fenced to be spent of our young people. This issue is further compounded by the late release of the conditions of grant so close to the start of the next financial year. To mitigate these issues, VSK are worked closely with The Executive School Funding Forum, School Funding Forum, Area Headteacher Networks and with KCC Finance Team. It is vital that we maintain our fantastic relationship with the schools so that we can work closely to maximise support for our young people. VSK decided to fund 5/12ths of the PP+ £1900(£790) to each school multiplied by the number of CiC on Roll on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2014, with the understanding that September 2014 onward their would be a grant application approach based on need.

(3) VSK has implemented an initial PP+ policy which has been circulated to every school, social work team, educational teams and foster carers throughout June and July with a view to review this new approach in early 2015.

## **6. Youth Mental Health First Aid England – Youth Champions Award**

(1) Virtual School Kent were awarded second place in the Youth category for training staff in social services, schools, colleges and other professionals to recognise and respond to mental health issues among our children in care.

(2) We have run a series of Youth Mental Health First Aid courses as part of our work to promote and support the well-being of vulnerable children. We have commissioned ten courses so far and as a result have achieved the Mark of Excellence for Youth Mental Health First Aid which we're very proud to hold. We intend to continue our commitment to improving the emotional and mental health well-being of children and young people and view this training as an integral part of our strategy to achieve this.

(3) In the UK, one in four people will experience mental ill health and MHFA is a practical way that people can use to support those who are affected. It is the mental health equivalent to First Aid training and provides participants with the skills and confidence to give crisis first aid for suicide and self-harm.

(4) The MHFA England Awards were presented at a ceremony at the House of Lords in front of an audience of 150 people. This is the fourth year that the organisation has celebrated achievements in this field and the awards identify examples of excellent projects and individuals, acknowledging innovation and high performance in raising mental health literacy across England.

(5) Poppy Jaman, CEO for MHFA England spoke at the event and said: "I am extremely proud that our organisation has taken the national MHFA Awards ceremony into its fourth year and, in doing so, continued to celebrate the fantastic work of our MHFA Instructors, the positives changes they are making within our society and our growing influence on the mental health agenda. This year, and for the first time, we opened the nominations up for public voting and the engagement has been far greater than we anticipated. "The feedback that I've been receiving is that an MHFA Award is now considered a coveted distinction of excellence in the field of mental health, and something which I believe is made even more special by being presented by our MHFA patron, Lord Kamlesh Patel at the prestigious House of Lords."

## **7. Priorities for 2014-15**

(1) These currently are:

- Meeting the new requirements set down in July 2014 Statutory Guidance document “Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children – Statutory guidance for local authorities”. This includes mapping our young people’s educational progress termly (rather than bi-annually through PEP Review) and the age extension of Personal Education Planning (PEP’s) from Pre-school to 18 years of age (previous PEP’s were for Year R to Year 11 ages 4-16).
- Continuing Drive on improving academic and health outcomes. Particular focus on KS4 and overcoming impact of the national changes to examinations and assessment. These changes include (i) early GCSE entries dis-incentivised; (ii) English GCSE final examination weighting has been increased to 60%; (iii) shift to end of course examination approach
- Focus on developing the quality of PEPs (utilising the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) conditions of grant as a lever
- Translating the positive work of Participation and Engagement into measurable impact outcomes ie “You said We did”, changes in Policy and changes in service delivery

## **8. New Local, regional and national initiatives**

(1) These are:

- Paired Reading Scheme – This is an extremely effective programme which on average accelerates a young person’s reading age by 11+ months over the course of the 16 week programme
- Development of a school based Quality Mark for Trauma Aware / Attachment Friendly schools
- Developmental work with Brook Learning Trust to develop Trauma Aware and Attachment Friendly teaching approaches embedded within Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes in South East

## **9. Issues for 2015-16**

- **Further National changes regarding examination equivalency**
- **Further National changes regarding school assessment and recording processes**
- **Effective engagement with schools regarding Pupil Premium us (PP+)**
- **New work streams**
  - (i) 16-18 Educational support**
  - (ii) Participation and Engagement extension of services provided**

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