Virtual School Kent

Annual Report 2015/2016

Updated: 7 December 2016

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Executive Summary

The vision for the Virtual School is that all our children in care achieve expected or better than expected levels of progress. We further aspire for their outcomes to be equal to that of their non-care peers despite their journey into care. This will be achieved through working at a strategic and operational level within the local authority and with the many partners of schools, health, voluntary sector, members, carers and young people.

The work of the Virtual School falls into three categories:
- Operational Support for children and young people – ensuring they all have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and receive appropriate support from our team of VSK Support Officers.
- Training for multi-agency professionals, elected members and carers.
- Tracking, monitoring and evaluating outcomes and practice, identifying and securing service improvements.

The Virtual School has grown considerably to areas beyond the statutory schooling age of 5-16 of children in care. We aspire to be a birth to 25 years' service. We have grown the scope to include early years and 16-18 year olds and have extended the Care Council to 21 year olds.

The Virtual School has significantly developed participation and engagement this academic year which has seen the development of our Young Adults Council (YAC), the strengthening of the OCYPC with local councils being piloted across the county and the introduction of our junior council known as the "Super Council". We have increased the number of activity days that we host from 14 activity days in 2013-14 to 19 days 2015-2016, this has increased the number of our young people who have been able to attend these participation days. The feedback from our young people on the activity days remains extremely positive.

Our young people have reviewed and developed a range of information for CiC and have made them more reader friendly and these can all be accessed via the Kent Cares Town website.

Other significant developments have included the introduction of the Challenge Cards a system where our young people can challenge their Corporate Parents and responsible officers and these are discussed at the Kent Corporate Parenting Group (KCPG) and the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP). The responses are formalised and fed back to our young people.

Ensuring our young people play a part in recruitment and training has also been a priority this year with the development of the Recruitment Crew and the development of a series of training events created with our young people.

There were 18 children in care in Early Years Foundation Stage 2 (Reception Class) this year. Overall 14 (78%) made good or better than expected progress from low starting points this academic year 2015-16. Out of the 4 that did not make expected

progress, all 4 (100%) had been in care less than 12 months and 5 of the total cohort had statements of special educational needs or Education Health and Care Plans.

There were 80 children in care in Key Stage 1, of which 57 (71%) made good or better than expected progress. Of the 23 young people that did not make expected progress 13 had been in care less than 12 months and 25 had statements of special educational needs or Education Health and Care Plans. Children with SSEN and EHCPs are a priority focus group for academic year 2016-17.

There were 314 children in care in Key Stage 2, of which 206 (66%) made good or better than expected progress. Of the 107 that did not make expected progress 76 had been in care less than 12 months and 51 had statements of special educational needs or Education Health and Care Plans.

There were 459 children in care in Key Stage 4 of which 193 (42%) made good or better than expected progress. Of the 266 that did not make expected progress 99 were in care less than 12 months and 72 had statements of special educational needs or Education Health and Care Plans. This year has seen a real improvement in our young people attaining 5 A*- C inclusive of English and mathematics of 3% and has further seen a reduction in the gap with all Kent learners of 2%. This is down to effective collaboration between all key stakeholders and use of additional support from the Virtual School, such as Support Officers and Pupil Premium Plus.

There were 1089 children in care and care leavers in our 2015-2016 Year 12 and Year 13 cohort. At academic year end 2015/16, 280 young people were classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or Not Known (NK). This evidences a significant reduction from our December baseline data which showed that we had 577 NEET or their status was NK (53%).

In addition to the reduction of NEET last year, there were 7 young people in Year 13 who successfully secured a place at University.

Informed by research we have used Pupil Premium Plus funding to focus on aspects that have the biggest impact on progress and attainment:
- Learning – Narrowing the gap e.g. falling behind in literacy and numeracy
- Behavioural e.g. risk of exclusion
- Emotional e.g. difficulty in engaging in education
- Attendance e.g. poor attendance or school refuser
- Social relationships e.g. with peers
- Transition e.g. end of key stage or in year change of school

As a result, the amount spent on each child varies, led by need. During 2015-2016 all Pupil Premium Plus funding was spent effectively, with no money returned to national government.

There have been a multitude of success stories this year, evidenced at our Annual Awards Ceremony held and Kent County Cricket Ground in Canterbury. Our young people who attended had been nominated by their schools, social worker, foster carer or the Virtual School for their academic successes or their wider contribution to

the school, home or community. The Virtual School received well over 300 nominations in 2015-2016 making it our most successful year ever.

In line with the Rees Centre research, data on our young people indicates there are key 'risk factors' which have an impact on their attainment and progress in school:

- Their mental health and well-being, the Virtual School has developed specialisms within the Support Officer Team to help support this as well as investment of Pupil Premium Plus to offer support in this area.
- The number of placement moves in particular at key educational points such as Year 6 but particularly in Key Stage 4 Year 10 and 11, Kent avoids non-phased transfer school moves wherever possible to avoid school disruption.
- Time in care and age into care, the younger a child enters into care the more likelihood that attainment is greater. The Virtual School is also part of a national pilot working with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), the National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) and the DfE to establish a national system to measure performance and progress of young people whilst in care taking into consideration the above and many other salient factors.

All aspects of the Virtual School Improvement Plan 2015-16 were met. The only notable exception is the change to the national assessment methodology at all Key Stages has made evidencing previous trend impossible for 2015-2016.

Although 2015-2016 was a positive year for our Children in Care, we want all our young people within the Virtual School to continue this journey of improvement and our support in 2016-17 will reflect this ambition.

The ambition and aspirations of the Virtual School are closely linked within our Service Improvement Plan 2016-18.

- The Virtual School will continually monitor its structure ensuring high quality support and value for money within the national context of austerity.
- The Virtual School will sustain its relentless drive on raising the progress and achievement of our young people.
- The Virtual School will continue its drive to reduce the number of young people not engaged in Education, Employment or Training (EET).
- The Virtual School is looking to increase its digital footprint with involving our young people in the development of Kent Cares Town and other digital media projects.

Demographics

At academic year 2015-2016 end, the Virtual School had responsibility for 2281 Children in care and care leavers. There were 93 children at Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-school to Reception), 1099 Year 1-Year 11 young people, with 1089, Year 12 and Year 13 (16-18 year olds) young people. The demographic profile has changed compared to previous years with 64% of compulsory school age children in care being of secondary school age and 45% being 14 years old and over. Most

significantly the profile of our Year 12 and 13's now contains 64% Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

Ethnically the profile of our children in care are predominantly White British (64.5%) in relation to the compulsory school age cohort. The other significant cohorts are African at 8.1% and a cohort classified as other ethnic group at 15.6%.

Geographical dispersal of our children in care of compulsory school age remains disproportionally in East Kent with 37.8%, South Kent 22.9%, West Kent 13.3%, North Kent 12.4% and 10% placed out of county of which 2.3% in Medway.

We currently have 253 children in care who have a statutory statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

79.8% of our children in care of compulsory school age are in schools rated by Ofsted as Good or outstanding (13.7%-Outstanding). 14.9% are in schools rated as Requires Improvement (RI) and 0.9% are in category, these young people are closely scrutinised and are receiving good education. There are a further 4% who are currently not on a school role for a multitude of reasons such as currently being assessed at a reception centre, missing, awaiting specialist SEN provision and complex needs.

Attainment

Latest Validated Outcomes (Summer 2015)

The DfE publish their statistical first release in relation to outcomes for Looked After Children in December each year so at the time of writing this report the only validated information available regarding children who have been in care for 12 months or more is that relating to 2014-15.

Key Stage 1 Outcomes

Indicator	2014 Actual	2015 Number of Eligible Children	2015 Target	RAG (Actual vs. Target)	Direction of Travel (2014 vs. 2015)	2015 all learners	All Learners direction from 2014	CiC v All Learners Gap narrowed	SFR NA	SFR Kent Actual
KS1 % Level 2+ Reading	70%	41	71%		↑5%	84	90 ↓6%	11%	71	**75**
KS1 % Level 2+ Writing	56%	41	61%		↑2%	74	86 ↓12%	14%	63	58
KS1 % Level 2+ Maths	70%	41	72%		↑3%	84	93 ↓9%	12%	73	73

2014-15 has been a successful year for our 41 young people at Key Stage 1. All three indicators have seen an achievement improvement of between 2 and 5% on 2013-14, with Reading 4% above the latest national average for children in care, Mathematics at the national average and writing considered just below (two additional students would have made Kent children in care above the national average).

Positively, Kent children in care have narrowed the gap with all Kent learners by 11% in Reading, 12% in mathematics and 14% in writing. **Key Stage 2 Outcomes**

Indicator	2014 Actual	2015 Number of Eligible Children	2015 Target	RAG (Actual vs. Target)	Direction of Travel (2014 vs. 2015)	2015 all learners	All Learners direction from 2014	CiC v All Learners Gap narrowed	SFR NA	SFR Kent Actual
KS2 % Level 4+ Reading	65%	77	68%		↑9%	89	89 ↔ 0%	9.00%	71	**74**
KS2 % Level 4+ Writing	58%	77	59%		↑7%	87	86 ↑ 1%	6%	61	**65**
KS2 % Level 4+ Maths	57%	77	61%		↑10%	86	86 ↔ 0%	10.00%	64	**67**
KS2 % Level 4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	44%	77	48%		↑12%	80.2	79 ↑1.4	10.60%	52	**56**

2014-15 has been a successful year for our 77 young people at Key Stage 2. All four indicators have seen an achievement improvement of between 7 and 12% on 2013-14, with all indicators being between 3 and 4% above the latest national average for children in care. Positively Kent children in care has narrowed the gap with all Kent learners by 10.6% in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

Key Stage 4 Outcomes

Indicator	2014 Actual	2015 Number of Eligible Children	2015 Target	RAG (Actual vs. Target)	Direction of Travel (2014 vs. 2015)	2015 all learners	All Learners direction from 2014	CiC v All Learners Gap narrowed	SFR NA	SFR Kent Actual
KS4 % 5+ A*-C inc. English & Maths (best result)	8% (13%)	138	12%		↑2.3%	57.4	58 ↓0.6%	3.00%	13.8	***10.3***

2014-15 has been a successful year for our 138 young people at Key Stage 4. 2013-14 saw the introduction of the first entry only methodology which led to only 8% of our young people achieving 5A*-C inclusive of English and Mathematics. This summer we have seen a 2.3% improvement on the previous year's outcome placing us in line with the latest national average for children in care. Kent children in care have also narrowed the achievement gap with all Kent learners by 3%.

Attendance and Exclusion Trend Breakdown

Ac. Year	'09/10	'10/11	'11/12	'12/13	'13/14	'14/15
Performance Assessment Framework CF/C24 25+days Absence * Indicator changed to **Persistent Absence (PA)** from 2011/12	16.3%	12%	*10.5%	*9.5%	*9.5%	*9.5

% Permanent Exclusion (PEx)	1%	0.9%	0.54%	0.39%	0.39%	0.36%

2014-15 was another positive year for our young people in terms of attendance and permanent exclusions levels. These two indicators 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 64%.

2016 Un-validated Data

Key stage 1 and 2 data in this report has been internally validated from the summer DfE data drop.

Key Stage 1				
Subject	EXS+	CiC	All	Gap
Reading		41.5%	78.3%	36.8%
Writing		32.1%	71.4%	39.7%
Mathematics		34.0%	77.7%	43.7%

Key Stage 2				
Subject	AS	CiC	All	Gap
Reading		41.9%	69.5%	27.6%
Writing		48.5%	65.6%	17.1%
Mathematics		41.9%	71.6%	29.7%
Combined		20%	57%	37%
Key Stage 4				
Subject		CiC	Number 5A*-C	Total Cohort

		inc E&M	
5A*-C (inc E&M)	14%	20	144

It is important to note that Key Stage 1 and 2 outcomes are not comparable to previous years as methodology and benchmarking have been changed by the DfE. To fully understand this data the comparison is with the 2016 Statistical First Release SFR which will be published in late December 2016.

At Key Stage 4 Kent's internally validated data currently evidences a 3.1% improvement on summer 2015. Furthermore, there is a 1% improvement in 5A*-C including English and Mathematics for all Kent learners, this evidences a 2% narrowing of the gap between children in care and all learners. This is good progress and we would wish to continue and improve on this trend.

Key Stage 5 – NEET to EET

During the period between September 2015 and December 2015 there was a focus on data cleansing. The issues of data within the IYSS educational data system was compounded by the significant increases in new UASC arrivals. In December 2015, the true level of the NEET was known and being managed within the Virtual School.

The development of the Corporate Parenting Transitions Policy "Education, Training and Employment – Key Stage 4 and Beyond" has unquestionably supported the delivery in improved NEET to EET outcomes. The policy co-ordinates the roles, responsibilities of all departments into a clear procedural framework. The policy was developed by the Virtual School 16+ team in conjunction with multi agency partners, especially Skills and Employability. The policy has also been supported at the NEET interdependency meetings where its impact has been evident with live data for the 16 to 18 year old cohort and the 18+ cohort shared and wider services having increasing awareness of the need to prioritise of Children in Care and Care Leavers.

In December 2015, the cohort of Year 12 and 13 students that VSK had responsibility for supporting was 989. Of this cohort 653 were UASC (66%), 263 were classified as NEET (26.6%) and Not Knowns (NK) were 261(26.4%) giving a total NEET/NK of 53%. The current data shows that the total cohort is 1087 of which 678 (62.4%) are UASC. Of the 1087, 279 (25.7%) are currently classified as NEET and 0 (0%) Not Knowns.

Percentage NEET/ NK

	Sep-15	Jan-16	May-16
Percentage NEET/ NK	48		
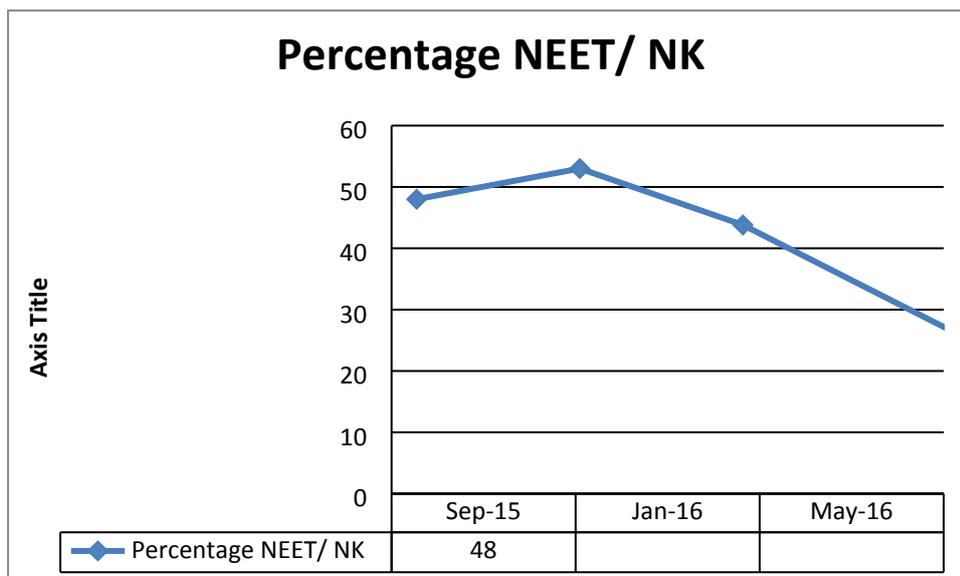
Attendance and Exclusion

Persistent Absence (PA) for academic year 2015-16 was set nationally by government at attendance of less than 85%. The total eligible cohort is the number of children in care throughout the academic year; this includes new arrivals and also those that leave care during the academic year. Therefore, the total number of children in care counted is 1452 of which 119 were classified as PA (8.2%). This evidences a 1.3% reduction in PA since 2014-15 academic year as evidenced in the Attendance Trend Breakdown Chart above.

Boys were over represented making up 69% of children in care with PA. There is an obvious increase in PA between Yr 9-11 with Yr 9 showing 10% of PA pupils, growing to 21% in Yr 10 and peaking at 45% in Yr 11. Thanet was the poorest performing district with PA with 15% of the total PA students within the local authority. 142 pupils experienced a Fixed Term Exclusion (FTExcl.) during academic year 2015-16 which is 9.8% of the total cohort. The average loss of days to FTExcl. per pupil is five and a half days. The districts with the poorest performance around FTExcl are Thanet, Swale and Ashford making up 59 (41.5%) of the excluded students. It is important to note however the complexity of the children in care placed within the district, especially those placed within Thanet and Swale. Attendance and exclusion are a priority within East Kent Locality Team multi agency meetings. Resources are also proportionately deployed and as such East Kent get a higher level of resources than other areas within Kent. All our young people's needs are closely tracked and monitored via the electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) and additional support identified and funded via the Pupil Premium Plus Grant.

The Virtual School has been collaborating with the Fostering Service in their development of strategies to improve placement stability. One such strategy is "Sense of Stability", working closely with the Fostering Service we have identified our young people who are displaying single or multiple risk factors, such as poor attendance, fixed term exclusions, on a reduced timetable, attending alternative

provision, multiple placement changes in the past 12 months or flagged at risk of CSE. This highlights our most vulnerable cohorts and the programme looks to engage these young people with Outdoor Adventurous Activities (OAA) at some of Kent's own Outdoor Centres at weekends also including residential opportunities. The aim is to provide a programme that re-engages the young people whilst developing their resilience and wider skills and also provides respite for the foster carers.

Participation and Engagement 2015-16

The team sits within the Virtual School Kent (VSK) and is led by the Specialist Children's Services Participation Co-ordinator. It comprises of Care Leaver Apprentices whose apprenticeships and work streams are supported by the Virtual School Business Manager, and a Participation Support Officer, who is a graduate care leaver.

Since the team's conception in 2012, the Virtual School has supported ten Kent Care Leavers in undertaking Level 2 Apprenticeships in Business & Administration and also studied Functional Skills Level 1 or 2, five of whom received financial support from the Assisted Apprenticeship Scheme and five of whom were funded from the Virtual School's core budget. During their time with the Virtual School all of our apprentices are required to work towards their NVQ qualification in Business and Administration at level 2 or 3. Each week one day is set aside to allow the apprentices to study and complete coursework in a supportive environment. This programme allows us to ensure that the apprentices leaving have a good qualification and a better chance at finding employment in the future. Also as care leavers themselves, they often have gaps in their education and the qualification enables them to gain the necessary qualifications in Maths, English and ICT that they may not have achieved when they were at school or college.

Overview, 'Lead' Areas for the team include developing and supporting forums for children and young people in care and care leavers Children in Care Councils. The Virtual School has responsibility for developing and supporting Kent's **Children in Care Councils**. The councils comprise of 3 groups of children and young people:

- **YAC** (Young Adult Council) for young people aged 16-21
- **OCYPC** (Our Children & Young People's Council) for those aged 11-16
- **Super Council** a new group established in early 2016 for younger children aged 7-11

These councils provide an essential forum for children in care to speak up and affect change in the care system. The younger councils meet on a regular basis in the school holidays and YAC meets in the evening on a monthly basis.

Membership of YAC is growing, and the young people combine social activities, life skills sessions (like cooking on a budget and basic first aid) with more formal meetings. They have contributed this year to the 18+ Service new Pathway Plans, been involved in fund raising activities for children in care charities and have taken a lead role in supporting the 'Recruit Crew' to enable more young people to sit on interview panels for key job roles.

The OCYPC is well established and have met 5 times so far this year in different districts of the County; it has a strong core membership and includes several asylum-seeking young people. It has a constitution written by the council members, with a recent addition to the constitution being a Pledge agreed by the Corporate Parents to support the Councils. It recognises that there is work to be done to ensure the views of our Out of County Children are also represented.

The Super Council for younger members was set up as a 'feeder' group for the OCYPC, meetings are activity based, with the emphasis on fun. Children have however expressed their views on feelings on matters such as – what they think a good social worker and foster carer should do.

The apprentices within VSK, (who are care leavers) facilitate these groups with the assistance of Participation Team and others within the service. Meetings have been attended by Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, Director of Specialist Children's Services, Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting and other lead officers.

No of Young People who have attended the Children in Care Councils since October 2015	
Super Council (7 to 11 years)	15
OCYPC (11 to 16 years)	42
YAC (16 to 21 years)	19

Participation Activity Days April 2015 – April 2016

The Virtual School run Participation Activity days during every school holiday. Between October 2015 and September 2016 19 events were held, attended by 452 children and young people. These days give young people the opportunity to meet other children in care and establish friendships. They often have a focus on a particular theme such as working as a team or their feelings on a particular topic.

The Participation Team has also supported Foster Carer Family Summer Fun Days organised by the District Social Care Teams. There have been 3 events this Summer in different parts of the county that have been extremely well supported, with further events planned for Christmas time.

Challenge Cards

Through consultation with Kent Corporate Parenting Group and children in care the Participation Team has developed the concept of 'challenge cards.' These cards allow children in care and care leavers to challenge their Corporate Parents around issues facing them in care.

Kent Cares Town Website

The 'Kent Cares Town' website is a resource for children in care to access a wealth of information around being in care. A large part of the content for this site has been written and designed by the participation apprentices. The website continues to be a work in progress and will be having a refresh of contents in the coming months. The link is www.kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk

Newsletters

The Virtual School apprentices create a junior and a senior newsletter 3 times a year which is distributed to children in care and colleagues and more recently has developed a newsletter for young people aged 16 and over. They are an opportunity to promote some of the positive work that young people are involved in around the county. These can be viewed at: http://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/our-news

Recruit Crew

The Virtual School P&E Team supports children in care and care leaver's involvement in recruitment panels or inclusion on a professional's panel. These are common occurrence within Specialist Children's Services for the Director/Assistant Director posts, Senior Officers, IROs and newly qualified social worker posts. 23 young people were involved supporting 44 interview panels and 18 Skills to Foster panels. A recent development has been developing a Service User Recruitment 1-day Training Programme that is accredited through Laser that Recruit Crew members can attend to ensure they have a sound understanding of the expectations on them when sitting on a panel. It also gives formal recognition to their contribution.

Kent Pledge Cards

Although the Kent Pledge is an important document a lot of young people found it difficult to understand. Based on this feedback, the Participation Team has been instrumental in working with the Communications Team to design a young person friendly version. This version takes the essence of the Kent Pledge and delivers it on a pack of eight cards which have been designed with children and young people in mind. Two sets of cards have been created to reflect the differing levels of understanding of children and young people. These cards are included in the 'coming in to care' pack.

Coming into Care Pack

The VSK participation team has led on the creation of a 'coming into care pack' so that essential information can be given by social workers both to children coming in to care and in some cases to those who are already in care. Consultations have also taken place with young people throughout the process. The information is also hosted on the Kent Cares Town website: http://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/information-about-being-in-care

Locality/District Commitments

The participation team engages with districts social work teams, the IRO Service and partners across Kent to promote participation and engagement.

Hearing the voice of children in care and care leavers

Surveys - the participation team work hard to ensure children and young people have their voices heard by ensuring they have the opportunity to complete surveys relating to being in care, or just being a young person.

Focus Groups – the participation team facilitate focus groups to ensure that Members, teams within KCC and partner agencies are hearing the views and opinions of children in in care and care leavers.

Supporting care planning – working in conjunction with the IRO service on the development of young people chairing own reviews and increasing meaningful participation.

Awards Ceremony

Each year the Virtual School holds awards ceremony to celebrate achievements throughout the year. The participation team support this event by arranging some of the entertainment and activities for the children and young people as well as encouraging them to give their feedback and ideas. The participation apprentices also give a presentation at this event which helps to keep their colleagues informed about what participation and engagement has been taking place throughout the year. They also feed into the 16+ Awards Ceremony by using the event to promote awareness around the Young Adult Council (YAC).

Buddying Support

Virtual School Apprentices have provided 'buddying' support when asked to do by social workers.

Training

In conjunction with the fostering service and a Practice Development Officer, Virtual School Participation & Engagement care leaver apprentices are involved in the design and delivery of workshops focusing on improving Participation & Engagement. These are presented at an audience of social workers, IRO's and

foster carers. A total of eighteen workshops will have been delivered by June 2016. Care leavers are also involved in the 'skills to foster' training that is organised and facilitated by the fostering services. They are actively involved and their views of prospective carers are taken in to consideration by the assessing fostering social worker.

Influencing the Commissioning of services

Formal and informal forums for children in care & care leavers to meet and inform service design and delivery which are going from strength to strength with increased membership and more consistent attendance. The groups have been consulted on a variety of topics including the 0-25 Accommodation Strategy and the review of Pathway Plans. Challenge cards have been established which allow these forums to 'Challenge' the corporate parent on issues and areas of policy or social work practice they feel needs changing.

Improving Communication

A web based App; MOMO (Mind of Your Own) is being piloted by SCS which provides a mechanism for children and young people to tell their social workers what they think about the services they receive and about their care plan. The VSK apprentices were part of the consultation process and will assist in the roll out of the project.

Representation at Regional and National Initiatives

The Virtual School P&E Team represent Kent County Council at a variety of regional and national initiatives such at the NCB: Taking it to the next Level workshop, Who Cares Trust groups, APPG meetings, and the Launch of the Children's Commissioners annual report. The Virtual School is also working with another local authority Participation Team to establish a regional group and this has met several times.

Children in Care Pupil Premium Grant (PP+)

The DfE made significant changes to the criteria and deployment of the children in care element of the Pupil Premium (PP) grant in the 2014-15 financial year. In 2015/16, the Virtual School retained responsibility for administering the Pupil Premium+ Grant for Kent CIC and continues to receive £1,900 for each CIC and this funding will initially be retained by the Virtual School Kent Headteacher as required by the Department for Education (DfE). The funding is ring-fenced for making improvements for the educational attainment of children in care.

The payment of this funding to schools continues to be based on individual agreements between the Virtual School and schools. These agreements initially covered the period from 1st April 2015 through to 31st August 2015 via a manual application process. In September 2015, the application process successfully moved online via the Target Section of the ePEP for the remainder of the financial year and continues to be used in 2016/17.

Virtual School Kent's Pupil Premium+ Policy and information on the condition of the Grant can be found on the VSK website at http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/vsk-resources/pupil-premium-plus

The final position for the 2015/16 budget allocation was £2,705,600. The budget allocation was based on the March 2015 CIC Data Return (SSDA903) as set out in paragraph 10 of the conditions of grant. There was also an additional £435,200 remaining in a reserve provision from the 2014/15 PP+ grant which was available for the Virtual School Kent's use.

£3,064,314 was spent in 2015/16 with £76,486 returned to the 16/17 reserves for use in Term 5 & 6.

536 paper applications were received in the first quarter, with a further 1585 online applications received in the remainder of the financial year. In addition to this, a number of initiatives for citizen and unaccompanied asylum seeking children were put into place by directly VSK as countywide or locality based commissions.

A total of £359,862 (13% of the 15/16 grant) was spent on a variety of interventions and support programmes for UASC including school ready projects, tuition and EAL.

An additional payment of £600 per Kent child in care was made in February 2016 in respect of 965 eligible children placed in Kent (a total of £579,000). 38 schools in other local authorities were paid £46,200 in respect of 77 Kent children who attend school in their authority.
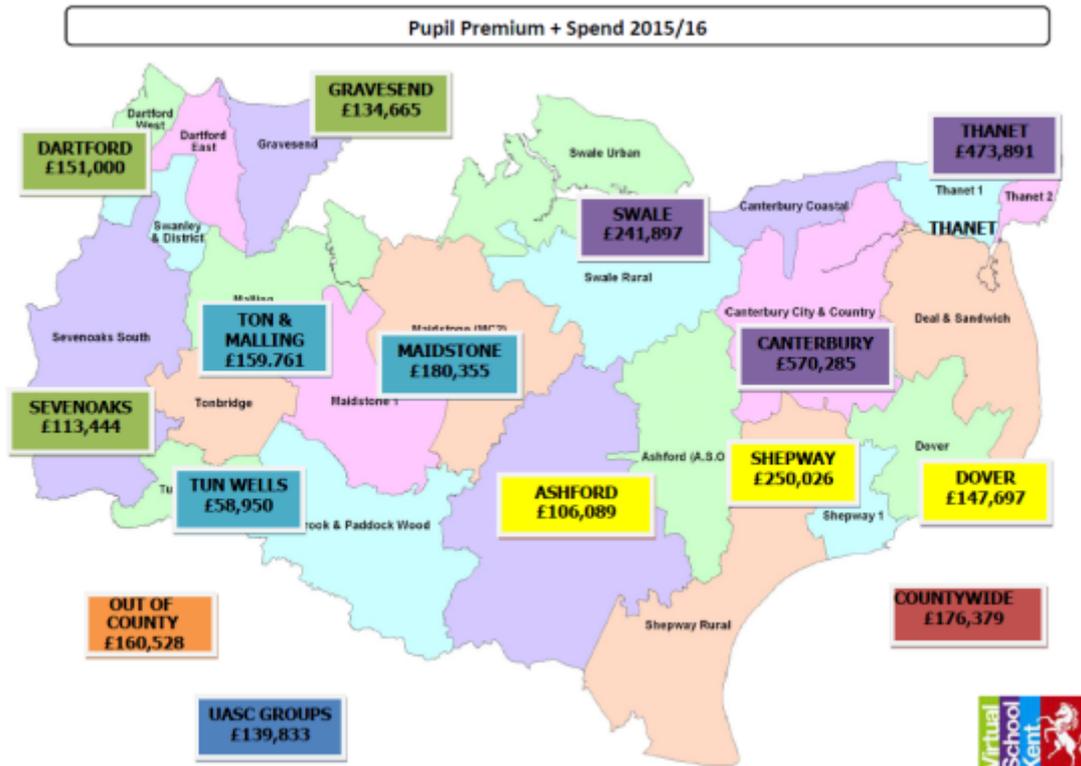
Intervention Types

Types of support and interventions have remained varied, 2015/16 has seen an increase in targeted individual support put in place for children; this has been offset against a reduction in applications for group/school based approaches. Collaborative approaches across schools have continued and this year has included school ready projects for UASC.

Percentage of grant spent on:

	2014/15	2015/16
Tuition	22.4%	25.1%
Targeted Individual Support	19.1%	30.3%
Group/School Based Intervention	35.8%	21.7%
Collaborative Intervention	18.0%	14.6%
Equipment/Resources	4.7%	8.3%

In addition to the direct payments and initiatives in the localities, the Virtual School directly commissioned activities which included literacy development programmes such as Beanstalk and Paired Reading.

Pupil Premium + Spend 2015/16

GRAVESEND £134,665
DARTFORD £151,000
THANET £473,891
SWALE £241,897
TON & MALLING £159.761
MAIDSTONE £180,355
CANTERBURY £570,285
SEVENOAKS £113,444
TUN WELLS £58,950
ASHFORD £106,089
SHEPWAY £250,026
DOVER £147,697
OUT OF COUNTY £160,528
COUNTYWIDE £176,379
UASC GROUPS £139,833

This map highlights the PP+ spend in each locality area plus the amount spent on countywide initiatives. 2015/16 PP+ spend was roughly in line with population distribution with the exception of Canterbury where they account for 11% of cohort and 21% of grant deployment. This again links with the PP+ policy around the Child Needs Model and the number of more complex children in care we have placed in East Kent due to location of specialist care settings.

Priorities for 2016-17

These currently are:

- Continuing drive on improving academic outcomes. Particular focus on Key Stage 4 which is where the gap remains a challenge.
- Preparing for the future assessment changes coming in 2017 in relation to Achievement and Progress 8.
- Relentless drive on securing opportunities to transition our young people from NEET to EET
- Particular focus on our young people with SEND ensuring progression is maximised
- Focus on developing the quality of PEPs (utilising the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) conditions of grant as a lever)
- Development of an academic assessment tool to enable accurate profiling of need when a young person enters care.

- Working with SEN colleagues to ensure appropriate provision at the right time for those children with special educational needs and those in need of assessment for EHCP.
- Translating the positive work of Participation and Engagement into measurable impact outcomes i.e. "You said We did", changes in Policy and changes in service deliver. These developments will include: -

  ➢ Developing local children in care groups - these groups are constantly developing and changing depending on the needs and views of our young people. We are aware that we need to ensure that we are being inclusive of all young people and aim to create more local groups that feed in to a central group during the coming year.

  ➢ Further development of the junior element of the children in care council with the aim of younger children becoming involved in the participation and engagement process. This will provide a forum for younger children to have their own say on issues around the care system but in a less structured and formal environment.

  ➢ Looking at ways to ensure that the views and opinions of Kent children in care who live in other local authorities are heard. We are keen to improve our links with other local authority Participation Teams and have a 'sharing of ideas and ways of working day' planned for October 2015 with Surrey County Council. We are also working in partnership with our digital services team to look at ways of communication via social media.

  ➢ Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and young people with disabilities - there is still an under representation of this cohort in the OCYPC/YAC and at participation days. In the coming months, the VSK Participation Team will be working hard towards engaging with these groups of young people, to enable them to have their voices heard. This will mean accommodating specific needs and addressing issues such as language barriers however a concerted effort will be made to engage these children and young people.

Tony Doran

Virtual Head Teacher Kent

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