

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education.
Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education.

To: Corporate Parenting Panel – 29 January 2018

Subject: **VIRTUAL SCHOOL KENT (VSK) OVERVIEW REPORT 2015-16 (VALIDATED RESULTS) AND 2016-17 (UN-VALIDATED RESULTS)**

Classification: Unrestricted

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

Recommendation: The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to CONSIDER and COMMENT on the impact of the Virtual School in relation to its performance in 2015 – 17 and agree its priorities for 2018 - 19.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the achievements and impact of the Virtual School Kent (VSK) through the academic years 2015-16 and 2016-17 in relation to Children in Care and their education.
- 1.2 Data is presented on key issues and outcomes across Key stages and Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) figures.
- 1.3 Information on participation and engagement is evidenced as well as notable successes during this period.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The 2015-16 academic year was a successful one for VSK students. The year saw unprecedented national changes in educational assessment, yet the majority of our students made good or better progress throughout the academic year. It also saw the best Key Stage 4 outcomes for our young people since the DfE changed the assessment methodology to first entry only in 2013. Furthermore the Virtual School has evidenced a significant drop in 16-18 year olds that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and 7 young people successfully gained entry to their chosen universities.
- 2.2 The latest data evidences that academic year 2016-17 has been equally successful as the previous year for our young people. Despite significant national changes to Key Stage 4 assessment and curriculum which have made it impossible to do comparative analysis on previous years outcomes, there have been notable individual performances including one of our UASC attaining 5 good GCSE Grades (C and above) including English and Mathematics despite being in the country only two years. Key Stage 2 performance has seen a significant improvement over last year's and is the best Children in Care have ever achieved.

- 2.3 Our young people have outperformed the National and South East Average for Children in Care in every indicator at the end of KS2. In addition to this, their rate of progress in reducing the gap between Children in Care and National All Learners in the significant Combined Measure is outstanding, reducing it to just 23.7% which is a 62.2 percentage improvement for Children in Care on last year. At the other end of the spectrum we continue to see positive momentum in reducing our 16-18 year old NEETs whilst seeing a dramatic improvement in the number of university entrants with 21 successfully gaining entrance in September 2017.
- 2.4 There have been a multitude of success stories this year, evidenced at our Annual Awards Ceremony held at Kent County Cricket Ground in Canterbury. The 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. Over 300 nominations were received in 2016-2017 making it our most successful year ever.
- 2.5 The Virtual School has significantly developed participation and engagement this academic year which has seen the further development of our Young Adults Council (YAC), the strengthening of the Our Children and Young People's Council (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 in 2016-2017, with a resultant increase in the number of our young people who have been able to attend. The feedback from our young people on the activity days remains extremely positive.
- 2.6 Although 2016-2017 has been an extremely positive year for our Children in Care and young care leavers, we want all our young people within the Virtual School to continue this journey of improvement and our support in 2017-18 will reflect this ambition.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 VSK has made significant contribution to positive outcomes for Kent Children in Care during this period and this was evidenced in the Ofsted report as well as in the academic and NEET data. Based on analysis of the data in this report and changes in the educational climate, VSK's priorities for 2017-18 are as follows:-
- Continuing drive on improving academic outcomes. Particular focus on KS4, where the biggest gap exists.
 - Developing systems to respond to the assessment changes that came in 2017 around Achievement and Progress 8.
 - Relentless drive on securing opportunities to transition our Young People from NEET into education, employment or training
 - Particular focus on our young people with SEND, ensuring progression is maximised.
 - Focus on developing the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and practice development meetings to drive up standards and quality.
 - Development of an academic assessment tool to enable accurate profiling of need when a young person enters care.
 - Looking to develop Kent's own Participation & Engagement Quality Mark to replace the Lilac Award.

- Translating the positive work of Participation & Engagement into measurable impact outcomes i.e. “You said We did”, changes in Policy and changes in service delivery.

3.2 Children In Care Council developments will include:

- Developing local Children in Care groups - these groups are constantly developing and changing depending on the needs and views of our children and young people. We are aware that we need to ensure that we are being inclusive and aim to create more local groups that feed into 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 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’ with Surrey County Council. We are also working in partnership with our digital services team to look at ways of communication via social media.

4. **Background Documents:** none

5. **Recommendations:**

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to CONSIDER and COMMENT on the impact of the Virtual School in relation to its performance in 2015 – 17 and agree its priorities for 2018 - 19

6. **Contact Details**

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