

From: Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services
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To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee -
8 July 2015

Subject: Virtual School Kent Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway: None

Future Pathway: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: To update the Cabinet Committee on the work of the Virtual School Kent in raising and supporting the educational attainment of children and young people in care.

Recommendations: The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- Note the validated position on 2014 performance outcomes for Kent's children in care
- Note the work of the Virtual School Kent (VSK) with particular reference to post 16 developments

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper responds to the points raised at the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee on the 16th December 2014, specifically Section 13 of Paper D1 on School Performance 2014 – National Curriculum Tests and Public Examinations.

1.2 Virtual School Kent (VSK) is a multi-agency service which champions the educational and health needs of Children in Care. It works in close partnership with universal services, such as schools, colleges and the health services to bring about improvements in the educational and health outcomes for Kent's Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers (CL). The service includes professionals from education, social care, health and youth work arenas, some of who have themselves experienced being in care. The service also acts an expert resource for the council to assist members and senior officers in fulfilling their responsibilities as Corporate Parents for these children and young people.

1.3 VSK promotes the individual achievement, health and wellbeing of the young people we support through close working relationships with the young person themselves, schools, foster carers and other professionals who work around the setting or young person. We provide direct support, additional funding, advice, guidance and training to key professionals including education and training providers. As a service we are responsible within our directorate for multiple national returns on the educational, social care, health and emotional health and well-being of our young people.

2. Response to data discussed in Paper D1 Section 13

2.1 Extract from 13.1 *“In 2014, outcomes for children in care (CiC) at Key Stage 2 remain a concern. 42.4% of CiC who were looked after for more than 12 months achieved Level 4+ or above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2014 compared to 42% in 2013. This is the same as in 2013.”* and 13.4 *“The CiC gap at Key Stage 2 has widened in 2014 from 31.9% in 2013 to 35.6% in 2014. This is very disappointing and will be a significant focus for improvement in 2014 – 2015.”*

2.1 This data was taken before national validation. The data in Table 1 below identifies an upward trend where attainment has consistently improved and the gap with the national average has reduced year on year. Furthermore the gap between Kent CiC and all Kent learners between 2013 attainment (74% all learners against 39% Kent CiC) and 2014 attainment (79% all learners against 44% Kent CiC) has remained static at 35% despite a 5% improvement by all learners last year.

Table 1.

L4+ M,R & W	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
England Average	42	45	48
Kent	35	39	44

2.2 In M, R and W combined attainment over the past three years has increased by 9%pts. During this period the Gap with the national average has also reduced by 3%

2.3 In addition to the combined Key Stage 2 results highlighted in Table 1, positive impact was also made in the individual performance indicators with attainment in mathematics increasing by 14% since 2012 and the gap with the national average reducing by 8%. Similarly the attainment over the same period in reading and writing increased by 11% and 15% points respectively, whilst the gap with the national average reduced by 7% as highlighted in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

L4+ Mathematics	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
England Average	56	59	61
Kent	42	52	57
L4+ Reading	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
England Average	64	63	68
Kent	54	61	65
L4+ Writing	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14

England Average	51	55	59
Kent	44	46	59

2.4 Extract from 13.3 *“At GCSE 8.2% of CIC achieved 5 or more A* to C grades including English and Maths compared to 15.2% in 2013. This is a cause for concern.”*

2.5 This data was also taken before national validation. The data in Table 3 below identifies a generally upward trend where attainment has improved to be roughly in line with the national average since 2012 with the exception of last year’s results.

2.6 Between the years of 2010-13 the attainment of Kent CIC in respect of NI101 (five GCSE’s grades A-C including English and Mathematics) has increased by 8.6%pts.

2.7 The previous year 2014 saw a down turn in this indicator broadly in line with national performance due to a number of changes, most specifically the down grading of vocational qualifications and their GCSE equivalence and the shift in weighting of examinations over coursework especially English GCSE. Ofqual wrote to all Head teachers in 2014 stating that the 2014 Summer GCSE results were not comparable to previous results due to these changes. The most concerning aspect is the first entry only application of the examination result methodology. This approach has a disproportionate impact on CIC as multiple attempts within Key Stage 4 have proven an effective vehicle to manage our young people’s anxieties during public examinations.

2.8 It is also important to highlight the Kent specific context of its CIC population. The national average percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) within the CIC cohort is 3%. The percentage of UASC within the 2014 year 11 cohort was nearly seven times this at 20%. These young people who had been in the country just over a year at the time of these examinations were not able to meet this academic benchmark at this time due to language acquisition difficulties. When UASC data is excluded from last year’s results Kent CIC data is above the national average.

Table 3.

5 GCSE A*-C Inc E&M	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014* Any entry/1 st entry
England Average	12.4	13.6	14.9	15.5	14 / 12
Kent	6	11	15	15	13 / 8

3. Educational Support for 16-18 Year Old CiC and Care Leavers

3.1 With the extension of VSK responsibility commencing in January 2015, work was able to begin with additional staff being put in place to support the work stream. The focus initially has been on the arrangement for delivering Post 16 update training to the new Children in Care Social Work teams – to ensure they were informed of the most up-to-date options/support available for post 16 pupils.

Staffing:

- Assistant Headteacher with operational responsibility
- Four Post 16 Support Officers
- Data administrator
- Post 16 Participation Apprentice

3.2 The main progress has been with the development of the Post 16 Support Officers and their links with education/training providers. Now that they are in post they are developing their links to be able to better support young people – enabling them to make more informed choices as to their options, in turn leading to less withdrawal and more positive onward destinations.

3.3 Training has also been a strong developmental priority since February 2015. Training regarding the post 16 sector has been delivered to around 150 professionals to date across the county. Feedback has been extremely positive and already the team are seeing an improvement in communication and collaboration between services. The training has been delivered by the VSK headteacher and Simon Bounds (Employability and Skills), along with representatives from CXK and local Colleges.

3.4 Training has been delivered to:

- New College and University Designated Members of Staff on their role as the DMS
- The locality Virtual School Kent teams on understanding the post 16 sector
- Virtual School Kent Participation Apprentices on understanding the post 16 sector – with the plan to then link them with colleges to be an additional resources for young people at the college or considering joining
- New Children in Care teams on understanding the post 16 sector
- The Post 16 Team and Linda Young have been trained on IYSS – Access and editing rights permitted at the end of April 2015
- Post 16 training offer to the Independent Reviewing Officers, the VSK Nurses and the VSK Admin team completed
- Post 16 ePEP (electronic personal education plan) training delivered in March/April

3.5 Progress made to date:-

Collaboration has been effective between the KCC Employability and Skills team and VSK team through the delivery of training, meetings and shadowing for the Post 16 Support Officers, resulting in better information given to young people and key professionals.

3.6 The links with local colleges has also developed further, with the Post 16 Support Workers arranging to work from their local colleges on a regular basis to build links and raise awareness to the needs of the cohort, and to increase collaboration. The young person will be able to access the Post 16 Support Officer whilst at college, making it more convenient for them if they wish to access the support.

3.7 Work with CXK has also been an additional resource whilst waiting to have the VSK Post 16 team in place. They have been working with young people classed as NEET, and have now been linking in more closely with the VSK Post 16 team. The Post 16 Support Officers are also now able to build links with the alternative providers in their areas to identify options for the young person – for example Gillingham Football Charity Trust are looking to offer VSK opportunities for those post 16 to following a meeting with the VSK 16+team. The team has already identified three possible new opportunities for young people through their contacts.

3.8 The VSK Post 16 Participation Apprentice has been focusing on the promotion of Apprenticeships and has been working with the Assisted Apprenticeship Manager on developing resources to be able to promote the scheme. He has also started to look at alternative participation activities for those post-16 by linking in with the colleges to see if they are able to offer activities.

3.9 The Post 16 ePEP has only recently been launched designed and developed by VSK together with eGov and will be a huge advantage to tracking and monitoring the completion of PEPs for the post 16 cohort. Training has been arranged for the College and University Designated Members of Staff.

3.10 To support transition, the locality monthly meetings during February focused on the year 11 cohort and their onward post 16 destination. The relevant local colleges were invited to the meetings, along with CXK to support the discussion around options and to being the handover of young people if going to college. The VSK staff were able to provide the colleges with key information to support the transition. The meetings were very productive and informative. Ongoing monitoring of the cohort is continuing through the locality team meetings. The Post 16 Support Officers will be attending their area locality meetings.

4 Pupil Premium for CiC (Pupil Premium Plus)

4.1 The pupil premium grant for Children in Care more commonly known as Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is a need's based application grant system. The model of deploying this grant mirrors that of the Department for Education (DfE) pilot carried out by the Local Authority and virtual school in East Sussex. The deployment model also complies with the two key DfE documents regarding the use of this grant (Pupil Premium-Conditions of Grant and Pupil Premium and the Role of the Virtual Headteacher). Schools identify the additional needs of our children in care in terms of support, interventions, training or resources and apply for additional funding. It is the expectation within VSK that the primary deployment route of this grant is through the schools we support. Of the grant allocated 96% went directly to schools with the remainder allocated to successful countywide literacy development projects and pilots.

5. Recommendations:

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- Note the validated position on 2014 performance outcomes for Kent's children in care
- Note the work of the Virtual School Kent (VSK) with particular reference to post 16 developments

6. Background Documents

None

7. Contact details

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