

Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 08/02/2019
Subject: Annual Report Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2017/18	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Andrew Russell, Virtual School Headteacher Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

This report, which is for information, provides a summary of the achievement of the Virtual School for the academic year 2017/18.

The majority of our looked-after children are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). They are making good progress and benefit from the additional support provided by the City of London (CoL). Our care leavers are mainly at college studying English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, and a few are in employment.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

Purpose of the Annual Report

1. This report summarises the education outcomes of looked-after children and care leavers for the 2017/18 academic year. The report outlines the ways that the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) and the Children and Families Team have worked to raise the achievements of the young people. It also identifies the priorities for 2018/19.

Role of the Virtual School

2. The Virtual School has the overall responsibility for monitoring, supporting and providing interventions to ensure that looked-after children and care leavers achieve the best possible educational outcomes. The Virtual School strives to achieve this by:
 - co-ordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
 - monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of pupil premium in line

- with Department for Education guidance
 - tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of looked-after children
 - ensuring that special educational needs and disability (SEND) requirements are identified and supported appropriately, including applications for statutory assessment
 - ensuring effective transition between schools, colleges, higher education or specialist providers
 - leading training for foster carers, social workers and other professionals
 - encouraging looked-after children and care leavers to have high aspirations about their futures
 - helping to remove barriers to further education.
3. The VSH is 0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) in term time only. Julia Hodson retired at the end of August 2018 and was replaced by the author of this report (Andrew Russell). I have worked in Virtual Schools in different authorities for several years and was also a former secondary school headteacher.
 4. The Virtual School team comprises the VSH, four social workers and the team manager. Several other colleagues contribute as required:
 - Child psychotherapist, City and Hackney Children’s Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
 - Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor, Prospects
 - Children in Care Council (CICC) Co-ordinator
 - Head of Adult Learning, City of London Corporation
 5. The attainment in the Virtual School meeting now forms a part of the Children and Social Care team meeting. The meeting occurs each half term to provide training for the social workers, to review processes, develop policies and discuss cases.

Cohort

6. There were eight looked-after children educated in either schools or colleges, depending on their age or course studied.
7. The following table indicates the number of looked-after children in schools (up to age 16 years)

Phase	Total in Virtual School	Number of schools	UASC
Nursery	1	1	0
KS1			
KS2			
KS3			
KS4	6	4	6
KS5			
Total	7		

There have been four new UASC this year – all in Year 11. They attended schools/colleges where they have studied mainly English and Maths, with limited access to the National Curriculum. This has allowed them to develop their language skills.

8. Two of the secondary schools have been judged as good; one requires improvement; and the other institute was an alternative provision which does not have an Ofsted judgement. Alternative provision was necessary as the young person had moved foster carers, so a place in mainstream school would not have been suitable so close to the end of the

academic year.

9. The following table indicates the number of looked-after children in college.

Year	Number	UASC
12	3	3
13	6	6
Total	9	

10. All but one of the colleges has been judged as good. However, the colleges that require improvement have been challenged to ensure that they provide a good education for our young people.

11. The following table indicates the number of care leavers by age.

Age	UASC	Education/Employment or Training			
		Higher education (university)	Further education (college)	Employment	Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
19	2		2		
20	2		1		1
21	2		2		
22	1		1		
24	2			2	
Total	9				

Attainment

12. The results this summer were pleasing. We had two young people gain entry to university: one to study Accounting at the Southbank University and one to study Mechanical Engineering at the University of East London. Most of our young people took entry level courses in ESOL, although a few also took vocational qualifications. One passed eight GCSEs including two Grade 5s (= a high 'C' Grade – all GCSE grades are now numbers).

13. The following table indicates the progress of looked-after children in schools and colleges.

Progress	Number
Significantly below	0
Below	6
Expected	14
Above	2
Significantly above	0
Total	22

14. The following table indicates the outcomes of the care leavers of 2017/18 in the autumn term of 2018/19.

Type		Number	Qualifications studied

1. Higher education (i.e. studies beyond A level)	Full time ¹	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree in accounting Degree in Mechanical Engineering
2. In education other than higher education	Full time	14	Mainly ESOL courses, plus vocational courses in a variety of skills and trades. One is doing a Level 3 jewellery qualification.
	Part time	2	ESOL courses
3. In training or employment	Full time		
	Part time	1	
4. NEET	Illness/disability	0	
	Other	2	
	Pregnancy or parenting	0	

Attendance and behaviour

15. The following table indicates the behaviour and attendance of looked-after children.

	City of London %
Attendance of cohort	90.11
Permanently excluded	0
At least one fixed-term exclusion	15.4

16. Attendance is just on 90%. The slightly lower average figure compared to last year is a result of one of our looked-after children who has had an unsettled year after going missing and experiencing placement changes. His attendance was a concern at the start of the year, but improved during the year.

17. Behaviour is generally good. Two of our young people had fixed-term exclusions for fighting. They were not the instigator of the fights but retaliated, which led to the exclusions. In future the social workers will emphasise that anyone involved in a fight will be subject to exclusion.

¹ Full-time education means undergoing more than 16 hours of guided learning per week,

Personalised Education Plans (PEPs) and Pathway Plans

18. PEPs are completed termly for all looked-after children at a meeting attended by the young person, social worker, designated teacher from the school and, in most cases, the VSH. The purpose of the meeting is to review progress, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. All parties attending the meeting are expected to contribute to the discussion. Targets and interventions are agreed for the term, with a focus on English and Maths.
19. The CoL continues to have formal PEPs up until the age of 18 years old. This has helped the Virtual School to continue to support the young people and work more closely with the colleges.
20. Young people do not have PEPs after the age of 18. Their targets and progress are recorded in the Pathway Plan. The VSH reviewed the quality of Pathway Plans. It has now been agreed that the following will appear in the education section of Pathway Plans:
 - long-term goals
 - details of courses studied
 - reference to actions from previous Pathway Plan
 - attainment and progress
 - achievements and attributes
 - attendance and punctuality
 - behaviour and attitude to learning.

Pupil Premium

21. A pupil premium grant of £1,900 per looked-after child is allocated to the local authority. The fund aims to “raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities to reach their potential”.² The grant for the looked-after child is allocated to the local authority based on the March return to the Department for Education for the previous year. Any children who are taken into care after this time will not receive a grant until the following year. The grant from April 2017 to April 2018 was for three young people. However, the grant is only allocated to looked-after children up until Year 11. This means that our young people in Years 12 and 13 receive no additional funding (though see Additional Funding below).
22. The pupil premium grant is generally released to the schools and used to provide additional support for the young people to ensure progress. This could include one-to-one support, small group work, teaching assistance in lessons, tuition or resources. The allocation is not automatic – it depends on the discussion at the PEP meeting.

Additional Funding

23. The Virtual School receives additional funding from CoL This is used to fund:
 - holiday programmes
 - training for the VSH
 - tuition for newly arrived UASC while waiting for a school/college placement
 - tuition for looked-after children who do not receive the pupil premium

² Pupil Premium 2017 to 2018: Conditions of grant

- funding for the UASC Toolkit.

24. All UASC and the foster carers are provided with a toolkit to support language development. The toolkit contains:

- a booklet describing strategies to develop language
- picture dictionary
- story boards
- whiteboards and pens
- exemplars of ESOL exam papers
- cards of 100 key words used when speaking English
- list of useful websites.

Celebration Event

25. The first celebration event was held at the City Centre for our looked-after children and care leavers. Attendees included 12 young people, one foster carer, the Director and Assistant Director and five members. This was an excellent opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our young people. The members appreciated the opportunity to meet the young people over lunch to discuss their success and challenges.

26. The new VSH hopes to build on the success of the event for this year.

Virtual School Priorities

27. The priorities for this academic year are to:

- ensure that new arrivals are quickly placed into appropriate, high-quality education
- ensure that all young people in education are making good progress
- have a NEET target of zero
- develop relationships with tuition agencies to ensure that our young people have access to timely, high-quality tuition whenever required
- ensure that our young people are studying the most appropriate courses.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

28. The work of the VSH is focused on raising attainment and closing the educational gap of vulnerable CoL looked-after children and care leavers.

Conclusion

29. The Virtual School continues to support and challenge the network of professionals around the looked-after children and care leavers to ensure that they make good progress and achieve their goals.

Andrew Russell

Virtual School Headteacher
Department of Community and Children's
Services

T: 020 7332 3047

E: andrew.russell@cityoflondon.gov.uk