

# Virtual School for Cared for Children

## Head teacher's Annual Report 2018



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**Cheshire East Council**  
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## Executive Summary

During 2017/18 the Virtual School has continued to support all cared for children and to continually review its operation to ensure it is meeting its statutory duties while providing effective support.

The overall number of children has continued to rise; this increase has been significantly above that experienced elsewhere. There are also a higher number of children with high level of Special Educational Needs (SEN), which means that the overall population is more complex as well as larger in number.

The make-up, operation and funding of the Virtual School has been reviewed. There has been no increase in core staffing but temporary tutors are currently employed to work directly with young people; these positions were created to increase flexibility and reduce reliance on agencies, some core staffing is now funded through the Pupil Premium. The impact of these changes is currently being monitored to measure the impact.

All children have access to additional Pupil Premium funding to put in place actions and interventions which are additional to the normal school support and which will help them achieve targets. In April 2017 a new system was introduced whereby schools request funding to carry out specific interventions. This will increase accountability and allow the impact to be monitored through individual PEP meetings each term.

The completion rate of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) has risen to over 90% as has the percentage completed to a good or better standard this is due to the quality assurance process that is in place within the Virtual School team and training offered to schools through the Designated Lead teachers network events which allowed staff in all schools to access practical working sessions to look at outstanding PEPs to allow self-evaluation and development of their own systems. The Virtual School developed and trailed an ePEP during last academic year with 7 schools across Cheshire East which will reduce the paperwork and time needed for the PEP process without any loss of quality. Following a trial period this has deemed to be successful by schools and we will be rolling this out to all Secondary Schools by June 2019. We have continued to develop the ePEP following feedback from trial schools to further enhance the quality and content of the PEP.

Attendance at both primary and secondary has improved this year with the average primary attendance rising from 95% to 97% and the average secondary attendance rising from 93% to 94%. The number of children with attendance less than 90% in secondary schools has fallen from thirty four in 2017 to twenty two in 2018.

There has been a very slight increase in the number of children with one or more exclusion and therefore the total number of days lost increased from 264 (2016/17) to 270 (2017/18), but as there has been an increase in the number of Children from July 2017 (462) – July 2018 (493) therefore the percentage has actually decreased from 57% to 54%. The Virtual School has a duty to work with Head teachers to try and avoid excluding a cared for child and to make sure that they have the support in place to thrive and make progress. In the case of repeat exclusions, additional PEPs will be held to check that all necessary support is being given. There has been one case of a permanent exclusion in 2017/18, a primary child at a school outside Cheshire East. This was a single serious incident for a case which had received lots of support from the Virtual School. This included staff

training and funding for additional support. The Virtual School responded immediately to the event and tried to persuade the school to rescind the exclusion but despite appeals and letters from the Director of Children's Services and the legal Department this was refused.

During last academic year the Virtual School has led on an Attachment Awareness Project with primary schools and funded twelve schools to take part in action research. The feedback at the end of this project has shown a tangible and positive impact on the behaviour and achievements of cared for children. During reviews schools commented on the some of the main areas of impact being: accelerated progress and increased attainment, improved integration and settling into new schools, more effective communication between staff and pupils, reducing in frequency and severity of emotional outburst and increased emotional regulation in previously volatile children.

The Virtual School has commissioned places at the Fermain Academy Alternative Provision in Macclesfield and this has contributed to the reduction in repeat exclusions and total number of session lost the use of good quality alternative provision (AP) has increased and has had good outcomes for children who have previously been unable to sustain or access full time mainstream school. The Virtual School contributed to the recent inspection of the Fermain Academy which was found to be outstanding.

The Virtual School works closely with other teams in Social Care, SEN, School Admissions and Youth Support. In some cases this is through panels and meeting groups such as the 16+ Multi-Agency Group or Children Causing Concern meeting but is often through joint working and collaboration of individual staff. As a result of these collaborations policies and procedures have been revised to become more efficient.

There has been a decrease in the number of reception children achieving a Good Level of Development. The number in this group has risen from 5 five in 2016 to 8 in 2017 to 12 in 2018. Only 2 of these children have been in care for over 12 months with eight entering care since the start of the last school year.

The number of children ending KS1 after being in care for 12 months or more has increased to 14, the highest level for the past 4 years. Of these 6 have SEN, including 3 who attend special schools and were not entered as they are operating below the level of the tests. The number gaining the expected level in reading, writing and maths has increased from 25% in last academic year to 36% this academic year. Despite the high level of SEN in this group the level of success in writing and maths has increased to above last year's national result.

At Key Stage 2 the achievement in reading has remained unchanged there has been an increase in the level of achievement in maths and writing. The percentage of children achieving the expected standard in all three areas has increased from 13% in 2017 to 24% in 2018. Two children were expected to reach the expected level in all subjects but failed to reach the maths score needed. Of these one scored 99 while 100 were needed; Due to the small cohort size such cases have a marked impact – had these 2 pupils achieved in all subject the overall level would have increased to 33%.

At Key Stage 4 there was again an increase in the number of students within this cohort. The percentage of pupils who gained Level 4 and above in Maths and English was 19%, which is the same as last year and above the National figure for 2017. 54% of the cohort achieved 5+ grades 9-1. The

overall level of SEN within the cohort was 48.6%. A significant number of students within this group had changes of school (43%) and or home placement in KS4, which increases the vulnerability and would therefore make it harder for students to achieve their potential and target grades. All pupils have been supported to find positive destinations for post 16 and almost all started these programmes in Sept 2018. Progress was greatest in pupils with good levels of attendance and so this will be continually monitored and challenged. Progress and outcomes were highest for children with only one or two placements compared to those with more placements.

Post-16 engagement is supported and monitored monthly and the percentage Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) in July 2018 was 21%. The number of young people currently in Higher Education (HE) is 12.

Cared for children involved with youth offending have significantly higher levels of SEN. An advisor also works part time for the Youth Justice Service and oversees these cases. She is currently reviewing the support mechanisms to increase attendance at the end of the orders.

### **Priorities for 2018- 2019**

1. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium.
2. Adapt ePEP to ensure schools are measuring the impact of Pupil Premium for individual children.
3. ePEP to be used by all secondary Schools by June 2019.
4. Identify and implement changes resulting from the Social Care Bill which includes Virtual School Head teacher to have responsibilities for previously looked after children as well as looked after children and to promote mental health and attachment awareness in schools.
5. Monitor the impact of commissioned and front line services through engagement, progress and outcomes.
6. Implement a self- assessment tool for use with and by schools to improve their practice and support for cared for children.
7. Introduce an SEN lead within Virtual School team who will track and monitor the progress of assessments and sit on SEN panel to ensure swift communication of information between teams.

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## 1. Self Evaluation

Area	Self Evaluation		Priority actions for 18-19
Foundation Stage		Yellow	Early intense intervention for children below targets
Key Stage 1	Green		Enhance progress monitoring and early intervention
Key Stage 2		Yellow	Identify and have support for underperforming pupils
Key Stage 4		Yellow	Challenge schools where pupils under-perform
Post-16	Green		Reduce NEET Cygnet and tutor and targeted support
Higher Education	Green		Improve access to tasters and promote HE to Y10+
Outcomes for cfc engaged with YOT		Yellow	Align PEPs with YOT documents. Confirm long term plan for YOT education support
SEN		Yellow	Introduce an SEN lead with VS team to develop a tracking document to monitor assessments and support and attend panel meetings
Admissions		Yellow	Agreed policy to support admissions, especially SEN
Attendance		Yellow	Rapid response to falling attendance, including SEN, students below 90% and those on Part time timetables
Exclusions		Yellow	Sustain the reduced number of repeat exclusions, especially SEN
Leadership and Management		Yellow	Monitor staff capacity/wellbeing as numbers increase. Review working in line with new DfE stat. guidance
Staff Training		Yellow	Increase attachment awareness in high schools. Increase number of good+ PEPs
Finance		Yellow	Monitor new funding plan and impact of support
PEPs		Yellow	Continue to see increase in quality of returned PEPs 95% of CE secondary schools on ePEP by June 2019
Changes in school placement and AP		Yellow	Increase challenge and monitoring of pupils in AP – attendance, attainment, progress and exclusions
Partnership Working	Green		Establish agreed protocols for SEN and admissions. Work with S Care to increase engagement of F Carers
Monitoring and Evaluation		Yellow	Increase detail and quality of data of monitoring data and use to priorities actions, to review termly

			assessment data from schools
Participation by children and young people			Revise My Voice to allow children to comment on VS support and review practice accordingly. Work with YSS to increase feedback from children Develop ePEP to include My Voice in line with Signs of Safety
Safeguarding and promotion of wellbeing			Work with Vyson to develop understanding in schools of mental health and wellbeing (Tools 4 Schools programme)

**Green = Area doing well**      **Amber = further work needed**      **Red = High priority for action**

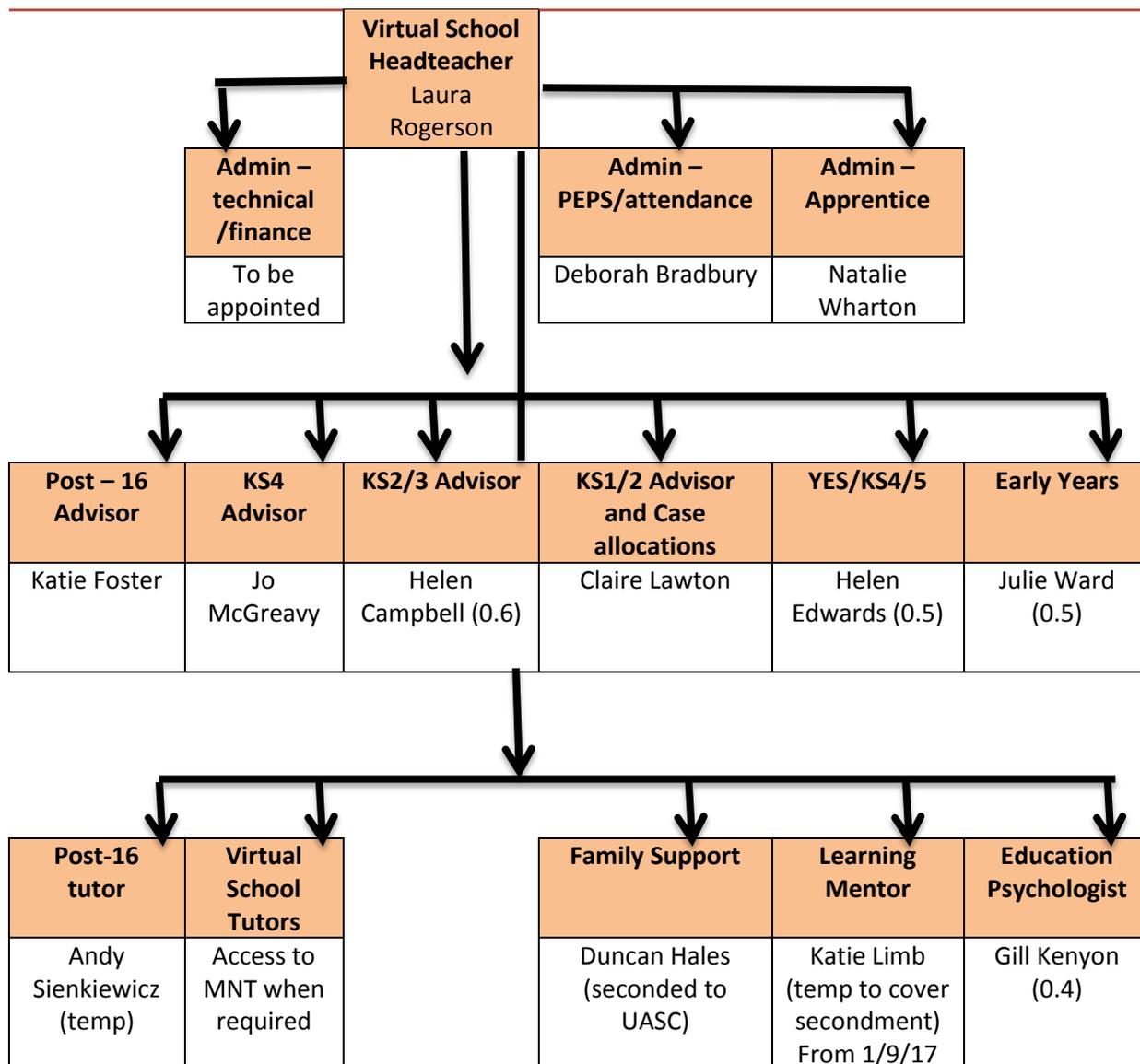
## 2. Introduction

This report presents an overview of the operation and impact of the Virtual School during 2017-2018. The Virtual School (VS) supports all children in care and relevant care leavers regardless of their length of time in care but the educational attainment data in the report relates to those who have been in continuous care from March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018. This is the cohort reported in national data which is supplied to external agencies such as Ofsted. National comparative data, where quoted, is that published in the Statistical First Release of the Outcomes of looked after children which was last published in March 2017.

## 3. Remit and operation of the Virtual School in Cheshire East

Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a particular duty to promote the child's education achievement, wherever they live or are educated. The authority must therefore give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children. The local authority is required to appoint a Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, wherever they live or are educated.

The maxim of the Cheshire East Virtual School is to "Engage, Achieve and Progress". The Virtual School operates in such a way as to follow the Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities in the document "Promoting the education of looked after children" (DfE, Feb 2018). This requires the local authority to ensure that there are systems in place which promote good education provision for cared for children and to monitor that these are in place. In Cheshire East this duty is taken further by ensuring that every young person in care has a named Virtual School Advisor linked to their case can provide challenge support to schools, carers and social workers. This in turn helps to ensure that there is suitable education in place, champion the needs of the child and challenge and support education providers to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to allow the child to reach their full potential. This is carried out through termly PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings with additional meetings and activities put into place for those with the highest level of need. The service is provided to all children in care up to the end of the school year in which they become 18 and is available to older young people on request.



(Staffing structure 2017/18)

### 3.1 Staffing and Organisation

The make-up and nature of the Virtual School Team is kept under review to ensure that the skills available match the needs of the cohort.

The team has evolved to provide more direct contact with children and young people so that the support can be more closely tailored to needs and monitored. Tuition is made available to young people to provide additional after session to help prepare for exams or when pupils are between schools by use of agency staff if schools cannot provide the tutor. Tutors are employed through the Medical Needs Team as and when the need arises to support all young people. The Family Support Worker was already working to support the unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) into education and has now been seconded into Social Care to provide intensive support for these young people until 20/21. The Learning Mentor has been employed on a temporary basis to work with children in school who are not progressing or are at risk of exclusion and who require support in addition to that which the school can provide.

The amount of support available from the Education Psychology Service has increased from 2016 and will be reviewed further to see if this is sufficient to give advice and support to schools around children with challenging or complex behaviour.

Monthly staff supervisions are arranged for all staff to discuss their own wellbeing and workload and also to raise any cases that need input from the Virtual School Head teacher (VSH). In addition there are regular team meetings, often conducted via web-links to avoid unnecessary travel where the team can receive updates from Senior Managers and the performance of the team can be discussed. All staff is invited to identify training needs which will allow them to be more effective in their role or any specific are of interest. In addition to this the Virtual School Head teacher meets with advisors every 2 weeks to review Attendance, Attainment, Exclusions and Children causing concern to allow for swift intervention at all stages.

During 17/18 all staff have been offered courses on attachment and all attended development days which included corporate parenting training, new SEN code and Signs of Safety

The VSH is a member of the NW VSH group and also of the National Association of VSH, (NAVSH) and through this network the Virtual School is able to keep abreast of current developments such as new guides for previously looked after, adopted and special guardianship children.

The VSH has regular supervision with the Head of Service for Pupil Participation and completes a monthly scorecard for the Director of Education and Skills as a means to monitor progress. This gives a detailed breakdown of the performance of the VS and key indicators are extracted to be included on the Corporate Parent Scorecard.

The team are a very highly motivated and committed group of professionals who always act in the best interests of the child. During 2017/18 there has been a very low level of absence amongst the team with no long term sickness or stress.

## Actions 2018-2019

- **Monitor impact of additional staffing and caseload/wellbeing of staff**
- **Staffing restructure to support professional development and increase leadership skills within the team to allow for progression.**

### 3.2 Funding

The Virtual School's main budget is the Pupil Premium Plus which is devolved to the Local Authority and is to be used as seen appropriate by the VSH as to best promote achievement and progress. The amount which is made available to the LA is £1900 per child in care as reported on the March return but the guidance makes clear that while it is expected that the majority of this is used for direct support of children, it does not need to be allocated equally as some children will need less than £1900 and some will need considerably more. The funding criteria also states that the Pupil Premium can be used to fund staff or central services such as training as long as they have a direct impact on improving the experience and outcomes for children.

The main use of Pupil Premium was to fund 1:1 or small group teaching, support to enhance social and emotional skills and purchase of specific resources. The remaining funds have been used to provide high cost support for children with particular needs. These include; attending high cost alternative provision for children without SEN who cannot manage mainstream school, providing a series of off-site support such as animal therapy or forest schools, having a weekly work placement to add variety and help prepare for the world or work or funding specialist support such as bereavement counselling. Significant funds were also allocated to schools and children to prepare for exams or to prepare for transition. In almost all cases this helped children to increase their skills and knowledge before the exams but always improved their preparation and confidence. In 2017/18 the total amount received was £691, 000 there were 340 school age children, 116 Early Years and 94 Years 12 and 13.

All school age children in care were allocated Pupil Premium (PP) once the PEP was returned to describe how this would be spent and in some cases funding was allocated to children outside this age range if the need was evident. For example a nursery child with the need for additional speech and language support or a post-16 young person not in education who wished to take up a work placement to gain skills and confidence. Some school age children did not have a basic allocation if the school felt it had all the resources needed, such as an independent special school which already receives a high level of funding or if the Virtual school was arranging and funding provision such as tuition or off-site learning.

The Virtual School also has an additional budget to fund the Cygnet programme for post 16 to support to reduce NEET figures.

In April 2017, a system was introduced which moved away from a standard allocation but asks schools to give a spending plan for each child. All requests are then considered by the advisor and the Virtual School Head teacher and funding allocated accordingly. This has allowed closer

monitoring of the use of the money and allows the impact to be more easily seen. Pupil Premium is now used to fund some staffing. Three existing posts are funded in this way, PEPs administration, Post-16 support and Educational Psychologist support. The way that this affects the overall spending pattern and the impact on pupils will be analysed next year. Analysis of the previous spending suggest that these changes can be made while retaining the efficiency of the service the additional staffing has provided a quick response to children in difficulty and therefore has enhanced the service.

### Actions 2018/19

- **Monitor the requests received and compare with pupil outcomes and progress, develop ePEP to ensure impact of funding is measured and recorded.**
- **Introduce a Pupil Premium Panel each term to include a range of staff from CE schools (established DLT, Head teachers)**

### 3.3 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

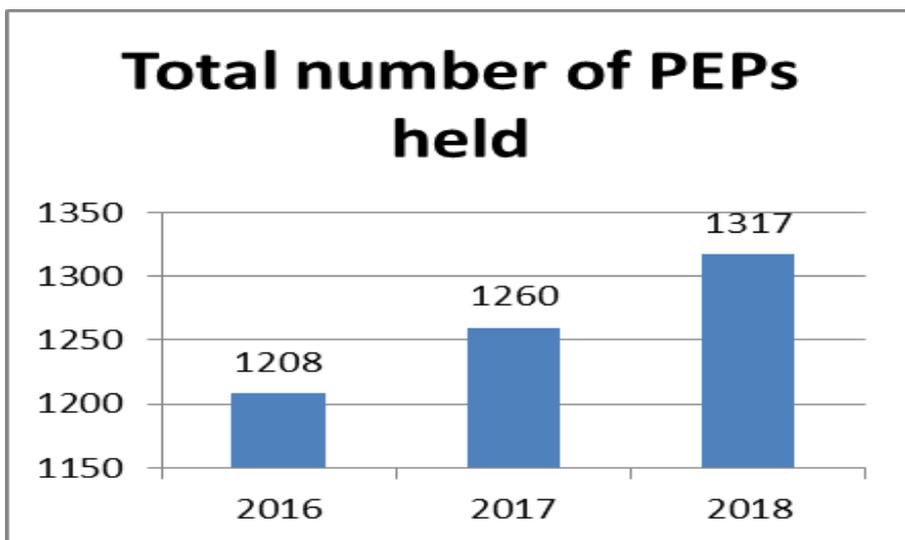
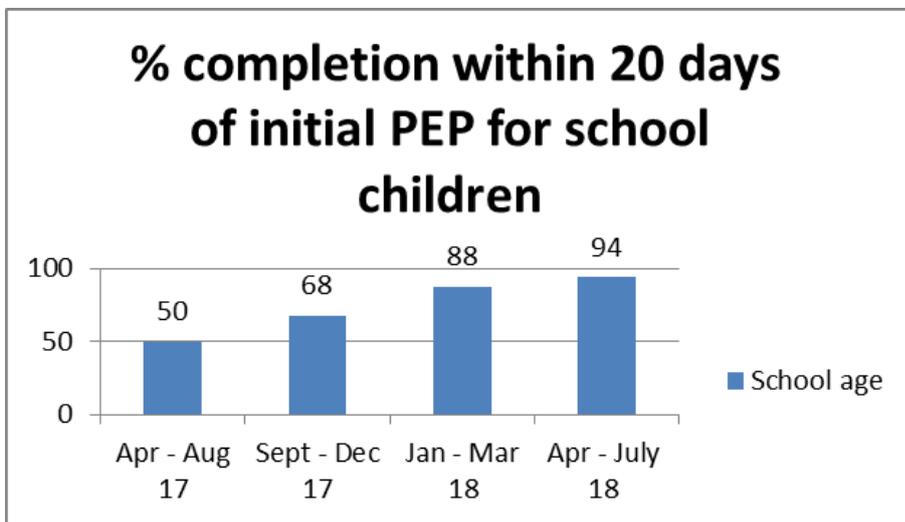
The PEP is the document which records the children's education provision, achievements and how the school or other provider will help to improve their outcomes. It the joint responsibility of the local authority and school to ensure that there are PEPs in place and the Virtual School has the duty to monitor these and provide advice and support as necessary. The PEP should be reviewed each term at a meeting between school, carers and social workers. The Virtual School attends all initial PEPs for children and young people between the ages of two and eighteen years old.

While the PEP document is mainly to support children of school age, Cheshire East also provides a similar service to children of pre-school age and those between 16-18 who are included in the Raising of the Participation Age cohort, (school years 12 and 13) although advice and support is available in request to children under 2 and young people in care or care leavers over 18

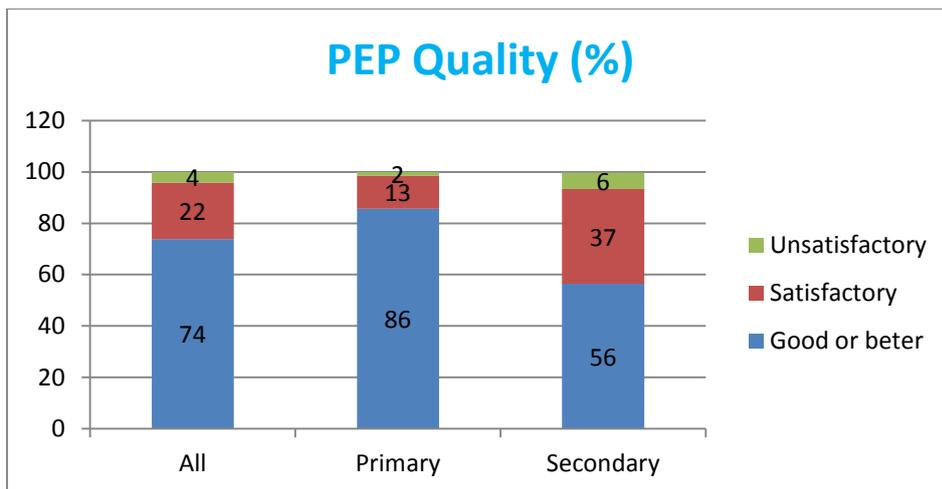
Within Cheshire East the Virtual School takes an active role in the PEP process and the cases of all the children which means that prompt action can be taken when issues arise that require specialist education input. Since 2017 the system for checking and loading of PEPs have been simplified using Liquid Logic, as a result of this there has been a significant improvement in the number of cases where the initial PEP is fully completed and loaded within 20 days.

Virtual schools attend all initial PEP meetings and complete the first PEP which will provide a template and standard for future PEPs. This includes ensuring actions and targets are specific and measurable. These PEPs should be held within 20 working days and be available for the first cared for review meeting. The Virtual School also takes responsibility for ensuring that PEP is provided to the Social Worker in readiness for the initial review. PEPs are reviewed each term with the education provider taking a lead in these by reviewing the impact of the previous actions, update the PEP and return to the Virtual School. Support and training is available to assist schools, settings or colleges with the PEP process. There is a robust Quality Assurance process in place within the Virtual School team where each case is reviewed to establish its support needs. Those with the highest support needs are rated as RED, in which case the advisor will attend all PEPs and probably have more

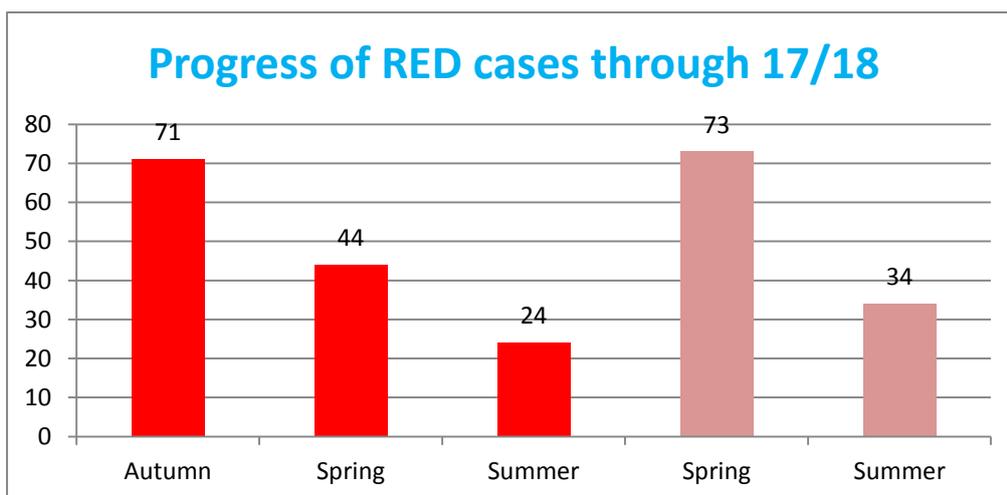
frequent contact with the child, carer, school and Social Worker. Cases rated as AMBER have slightly less contact with the advisor whilst those rated as GREEN are monitored with attendance at one PEP per year. The chart below shows the ratings over the year. The number of PEPs has risen to follow the growing number of children in care and the chart below shows the number of PEPs completed each term and the number attended by the VS staff.



This year there has been a drive to ensure that all PEPs are completed and loaded onto the child’s case with a particular focus on those of school age where it is important to monitor progress. The chart below shows the % of Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory within each school. PEPs are deemed unsatisfactory if key information is not provided or if a previous PEP has been amended and it is unclear if information refers to the current or previous PEP. Most PEPs rated as satisfactory are giving this grade because interventions are not specific or because the intended outcomes are not expressed in ways which can be evaluated.



Although the number of RED cases remains fairly constant, the support given means that individual cases are able to become more settled and reduce their support needs. 71 cases were RED in Sept but by July only 24 of these were still rated as such while only 34 of the 73 RED cases in spring remained so by the end of July.



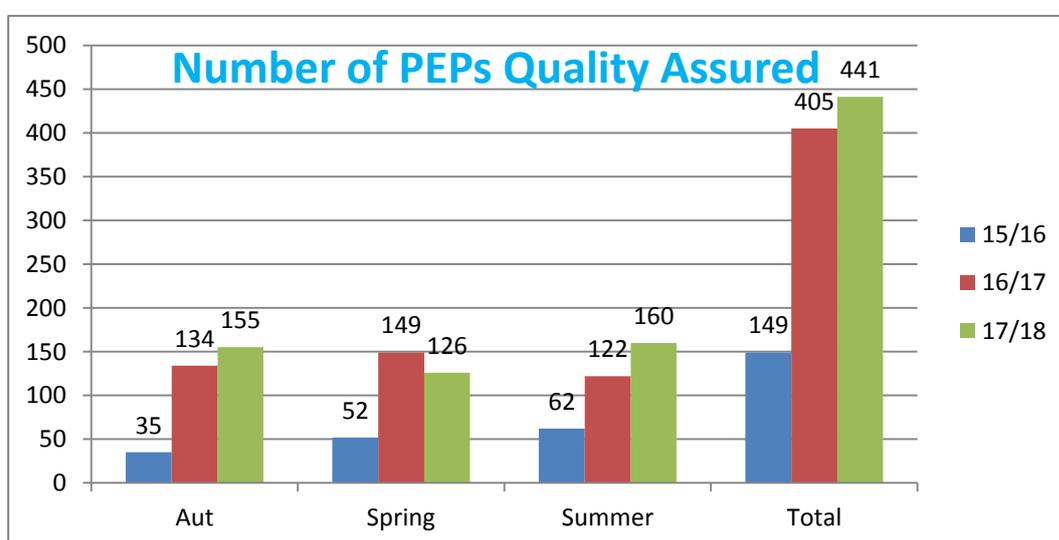
Although the Virtual School Advisor does not attend all PEP meetings, they often do so for the more complex cases and in these situations can be a crucial and consistent link for the child. For example when a child is awaiting a new school or cannot attend school due to mental health issues the advisor will visit the child at home and make sure they have access to some tuition and learning and that this, where possible, includes a chance to include some social interaction.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looked after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, Designated Teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. Social Workers have been asked to prioritise attendance at PEP meetings so that they gain essential information about their child. As well as updates on their attainment and progress this should include discussion of their attitude, emotional state, friendships etc. If a child has a statement or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) then one

of PEP meetings is run alongside the annual SEN review. This will ensure targets in the EHCP can be addressed through the PEP and that Social Workers and carers have the chance to review the impact of the SEN support for the child. In September 2018 an SEN lead within the Virtual School team has been identified, an SEN tracking document developed and meetings take place every two weeks with SEN team to review all Cared for Children who either have a current SEN status or are under assessment, this information can then be shared through all advisors and be included in all PEPs.

There is a rigorous Quality Assurance (QA) process which has been developed jointly by the Virtual School and the Designated Teachers, this has ensured that the quality of PEPs have increased and continues to support schools to develop their own practise, this is reviewed each year to ensure process is robust.

The overall number of PEPs which have need quality assured has increased from 405 in 2017 to 411 in 2018, which mainly comprise those sent in by schools which the VS advisor did not attend.



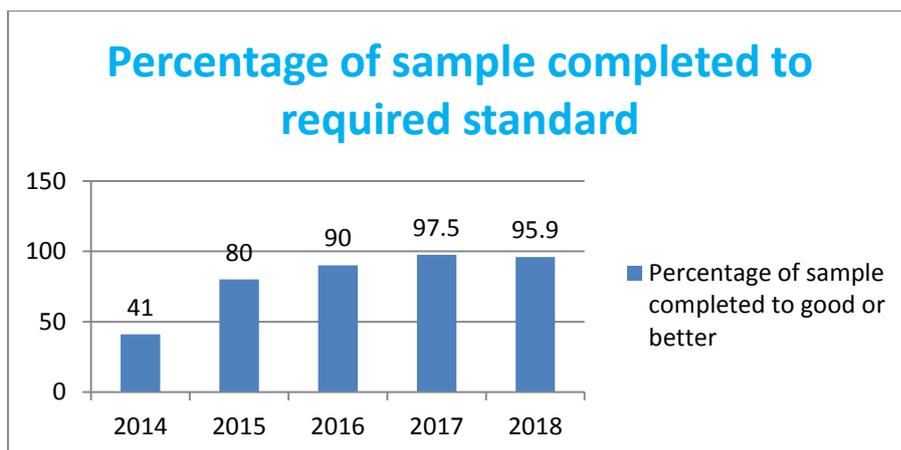
PEPs for all ages are subject to QA and the table below shows the number of each stage that were analysed through the year.

### Number of PEPs Quality Assured

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16	
Autumn	48	101	6	155
Spring	35	73	18	126
Summer	53	95	12	160

### Changes over time

Even with the increased level of demand this shows that the number of PEPs completed on or above standard is above 95% which shows there is consistent high standards across all schools which shows a deeper understanding of quality of PEP targets this is due to ongoing training and support in schools and through regular feedback.



### Development of an ePEP

The Virtual School has worked with the Cheshire East Project Development group to develop an ePEP on Liquid Logic. The initial trials started in September 2017 with a pilot group of 7 schools. There were some technical problems identified, such as access issues with particular browsers but these were resolved. Due to the sensitive nature of the information being transferred there is a need for several data sharing agreements to be in place before access to the ePEP is granted. This delayed the roll-out process and so was reviewed and a new system developed which does not compromise security but make the process easier to navigate. Schools using the ePEP are now finding it easier and all initial PEPs are done as ePEPs. 21% of summer PEPs were ePEP and it is the intention that all secondary schools **will** be using ePEP system by June 2019.

### Actions 2018/19

- **Hold additional PEP workshops in autumn term specifically for secondary schools and new Designated Teachers**
- **Provide additional support for schools where PEPs are below 'good'**
- **Share cases register with Social Workers so they can check PEP dates and improve attendance at PEP meetings – work with Social Care Managers to monitor this**
- **Oversee roll-out of ePEP to all Cheshire East secondary schools**
- **Align PEP and SEN reviews**
- **Adapt ePEP to include My Voice in line with SOS – Set up a working party of Cared for students and care leavers to help create a new format.**
- **Adapt ePEP following feedback from schools**
- **Adapt ePEP to ensure PP funding is being measured at each stage**

### 3.4 School Admissions

The Virtual School are responsible for ensuring that every child has access to suitable education. Where possible and appropriate school moves will be avoided as it has been recognised that school can be a consistent and stabilising feature of a child's life. If a move is essential then the following principles apply:

- Educational provision should mean a full-time place.
- Schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised for looked after children in need of a new school.
- The choice of education setting should be based on what any good parent would want for their child. It should be based on evidence that the setting can meet the educational needs of the child and help them make the maximum progress.
- The child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account and the suitability of the education setting tested by arranging an informal visit with the child.

Children move schools for a number of reasons which include

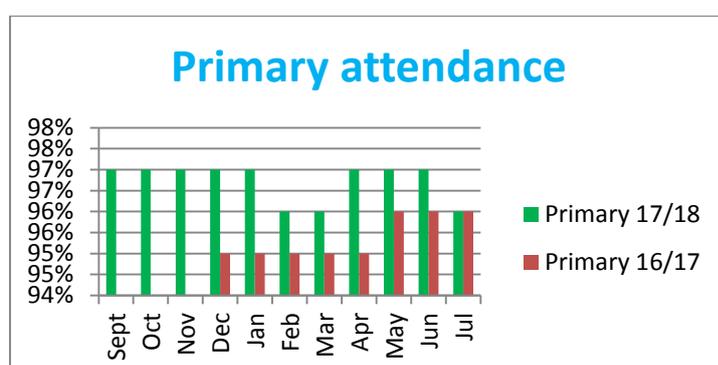
- Change of foster placement which means that continuing at current school is unrealistic
- Carers move house which means that continuing at current school is unrealistic
- Change to live with adopters
- Change of school if proximity to social contacts/family are having a strong negative impact on the child's progress and learning
- Change when school can longer meet needs (SEN or non-SEN)

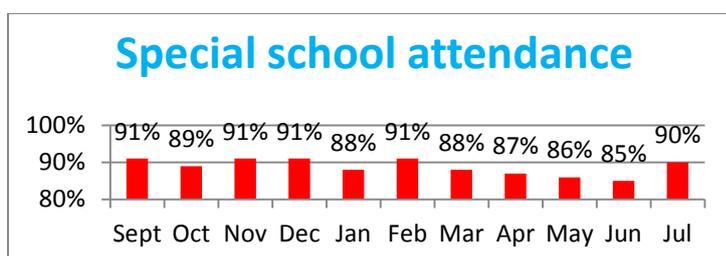
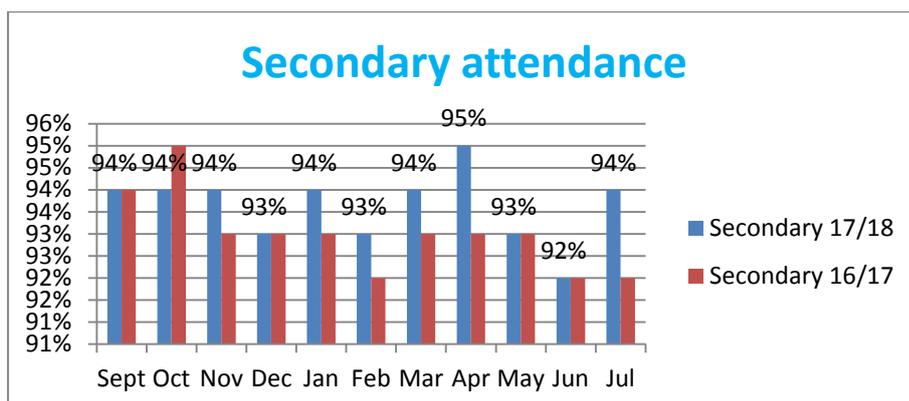
Cared for children are given the highest priority under school admission arrangements and the usual fair access protocols do not apply. The Virtual School works with Head teachers to make sure that any admission is made as swiftly as possible. Where schools are reluctant to offer places the Virtual School will consider making appeals or directing schools to admit. In 2017-18 there were no appeals made and no directions needed. All children for whom a place in primary school was requested were allocated a place swiftly. Secondary applications to mainstream are usually slower to process with schools requesting additional information and meetings. The Virtual School works with all schools who are admitting a child to offer support, with funding if needed to ensure a smooth integration.

### 3.5 Attendance

The Virtual School monitors attendance of all cared for children by commissioning an independent company, Welfare Call, to contact schools to collect a record of attendance.

Despite variations during the year, attendance at both primary and secondary has improved this year with the average primary attendance rising from 95% to 97% and the average secondary attendance rising from 93% to 94%.





Attendance in secondary school shows an inevitable decrease in May/June while Y11 pupils are taking exams and then an increase in July when Y11 are no longer included on roll, this occurs in all schools.

The number of children with attendance less than 90% in secondary schools has fallen from thirty four in 2017 to twenty two in 2018, while the number of primary children in this group was seven, which included children new into care who had previously not attended and so needed a gradual introduction and others with serious illnesses.

The attendance at Special Schools is below that desired. Twenty one children have a cumulative attendance below 90%, not including those whose attendance dropped due to exams. All cases were reviewed and monitored through the year. While these cases are complex, the main reason for the poor attendance of each child is shown in the table below.

### Reasons for impact on Attendance of children in Special Schools

Reason	Number of children
Time out of school while awaiting school move	11
Repeated exclusions/reduced timetable	4
Illness/bereavement	3
School refuser	2
Frequent absence	1

#### Actions taken to improve attendance at Special Schools

- Set up regular tracking meetings with SEN to monitor progress and avoid delays with EHCP and schools changes

- Work proactively with SEN team when attendance falls to review place and make changes
- Hold emergency PEPs in cases of repeat exclusions, involving Education Psychologist if appropriate
- Inform Supervising Social Workers so that carers can be encouraged and supported to help improve attendance

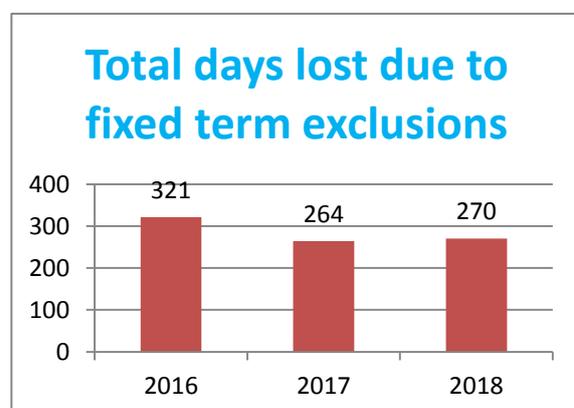
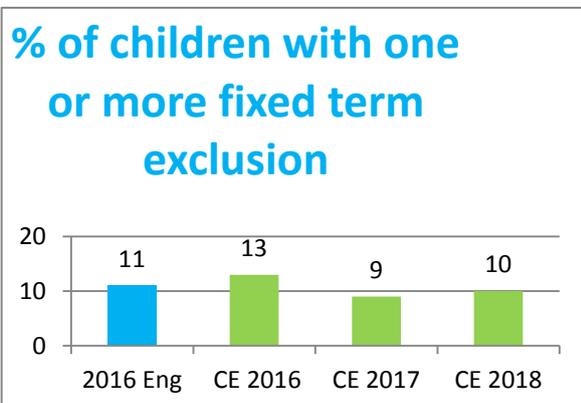
### Actions 2018/19

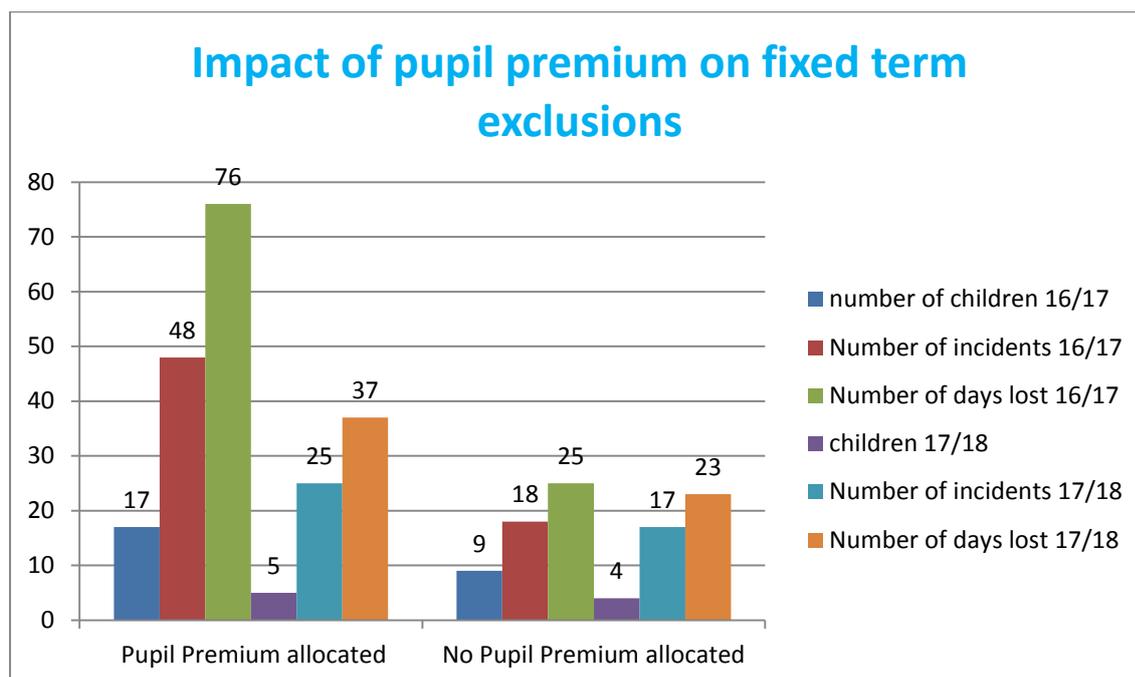
- **Monitor attendance by school type to allow greater targeting of support**
- **Monitor and track attendance of students below 90% through regular attendance meetings within the VS team to track attendance of all children to ensure swift interventions are in place**
- **Produce a guide in conjunction with Social Workers to support carers to increase attendance and understand the impact of attendance on attainment**
- **Continue to monitor attendance at Special Schools**

### 3.6 Reducing exclusions

The Virtual School has a duty to work with Head teachers to try and avoid excluding a cared for child and to make sure that he have the support in place to thrive and make progress. During 2017/8 the Virtual School has been quick in its response to exclusion or threat of exclusions so that a joint plan for the child can be implemented which identifies any key triggers and also instances when the inappropriate behaviour does not occur and these strengths can be built on. If an exclusion was unavoidable then there were similar meeting held afterwards to try and avoid any further instances. Schools or carers are asked to inform the Virtual School whenever an exclusion takes place and usually the advisor will call the school to find out more. In the case of repeat exclusions, additional PEPs will be held to check that all necessary support is being given. Despite this there has been a very slight increase in the number of children with one or more exclusion and therefore the total number of days lost.

The Virtual School has commissioned places at the Fermain Alternativie Provision in Macclesfield and this has contributed to the reduction in repeat exclusions and total number of session lost. The Fermain staff have been trained in how to support children with insecure attachment and Pupil premium funding has been used to help provide a mentor/key worker to support our children.





As a result of the work of the Virtual School, most children with a record of fixed term exclusions were supported not to have further instances. Of the 25 children who had fixed term exclusions in 2016/17 who continued in school and in care through 2017/18 only 7 had further instances. The majority were cases where children were new into care, had single events which warranted exclusion or where there had been a change of circumstances in home or care arrangements.

### Actions 2018/19

- **Work with schools to identify pupils at risk of exclusion and put in support as preventative measure**
- **Involve SEN in cases of repeat exclusions for SEN children**
- **Track exclusions weekly to identify any repeat exclusions to allow swift interventions**

### 3.7 Participation of young people

The Virtual School recognises that young people are at the heart of all its work and that to be effective in helping young people to succeed in education, their wishes and feelings must be listened to.

All young people are invited to contribute to their PEPs, either by attending the meeting or by sharing their thoughts on the 'My Voice' form which can be presented at the meeting on their behalf. Action plans are influenced by this input in a variety of ways such as:

- Deciding what subjects to have tutoring in and when/where this takes place,
- Determining the order in which topics are addressed in revision,
- Agreeing targets for improvement in attendance or behaviour,

- Identifying any particular issues in school which show a staff training need
- Deciding whether additional adult support, eg mentor is required.

The Children's Society set up a network of participation champions and the Virtual School has been consistently included in this although the focus this year has been on transferring this work into the Youth Support Service. This network has looked at how participation should be practical and add value to the young people. In July Cheshire East ran a local offer event that was run by a selection of our care leavers the main aim of this was to enable us to put together pledges from the range of services/companies that can be offered to our care leavers. This event was deemed very successful in ensuring the voice of the Care leaver was heard and allowing them to question services/companies on what support they can expect, this event will run each year which will allow pledges to be reviewed and developments to be ongoing.

The voice of young people is included in staff appointments and two students have participated on interview panels this year once of which was for the appointment of the New VSH. In both cases they were involved in planning the questions and identifying the desirable qualities and had an equal say with other panel members when the decisions were made.

### **Actions 2018/19**

- **Encourage young people to chair their own PEP meetings**
- **Develop ePEP for Secondary schools to include My Voice directly on the PEP and change the format to be in line with Signs of Safety – set up a childrens working party to design and create these documents**

### **3.8 Partnership working**

Partnership working is crucial to the effectiveness of the Virtual School and we recognise our role in part of a team with a child at the heart. The Virtual School is one part of the corporate parent body that works to look after children in care and we recognise that in order to be effective we need to have close working relationships with our partners. Teams with the council with whom the Virtual School works are:

Social Care – social workers, care leavers, fostering and cared for support therapeutic teams  
 Special Education Needs and Disabilities Team  
 Youth Justice Service  
 Youth Support Service  
 Early Years Team  
 Educational Psychology Service

A SPEED (Sixteen plus education and employment destinations) working group was set up in 2015 and is now well established as a forum for issue raising and action planning for post-16 cared for and care leavers. This group uses the latest data to identify young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or likely to be so and what can be done to address this. Through

good collaboration of managerial and operational staff much work has been done and the level of NEET amongst care leavers has reduced from 32% in May 2017 to 15% in May 2018.

A parallel group for school age children has now been established called RAIC, (Raising achievement in care). The aim of this group is to ensure that all parties share the responsibility for promoting aspirations and achievements and are active in their efforts. Areas to be addressed by this group have been identified as; improving attendance in persistent absentees or school refusers, minimising the time between school moves, particularly for children with SEN and ensuring that foster carers and residential home staff are involved with exam preparation.

The Virtual School also attends or arranges other regular meetings which result in improved support for children. These include

- SEN tracking meetings to maintain momentum on cases
- Children causing concern to plan with social care about joint care planning
- Preparing for adulthood to ensure smooth transition to adult care

The Virtual School also works with the Independent Reviewing Officers and foster carers, providing training and support as needed. Through membership of Education, Headteacher and Virtual School Head groups the Virtual School is able to remain in touch with all current events relating to cared for children and also to make sure that other teams are aware of matters which influence their area.

The other team who are closely linked to Virtual School are Special Education and Disabilities Team (SEND). Both teams are located in Macclesfield Town Hall and this means that regular conversations can take place on cases which helps to avoid delay and build good relationships. The VSH is a member of the SEN Assessment and Moderation Panel and the Head of Service/Service Manager have agreements in place which ensure that the Virtual School is involved in any cared for children cases who also have special educational needs and also offer advice for any SEN issues which arise for children placed outside of Cheshire East.

The Virtual School also works with the Independent Reviewing Officers and foster carers, providing training and support as needed. Through membership of Education, Complex Needs, Headteacher and Virtual School Head groups the Virtual School is able to remain in touch with all current events relating to cared for children and also to make sure that other teams are aware of matters which influence their area.

### **Actions 2018/19**

- **Monitor SEN tracking and impact on school moves**
- **Monitor actions from RAIC – foster carer attendance at training and attendance of persistent absentees**

### **3.9 Training Provision**

The statutory duties of the Virtual School include providing training on education issues relating to children in care and Head teachers and Governing Bodies are required to appoint a Designated

Teacher to champion the cause of cared for children and also to ensure that this teacher has access to training. In CE this is provided in a variety of ways

- a) Update/network meetings open to all schools and led by the Virtual school
- b) Bespoke training in one school which can be around a particular child or for all staff
- c) Arranging outside speakers to provide 'expert' input.

### The universal training programme offered by the Virtual School

Date	Title	Objectives	Attendees
Nov 17	Emotion Explosion	Understanding how attachment issues are displayed and supported through adolescence	80
Mar 18	Regional Conference	Update on changes to roles and responsibilities of school	20
May/June 18	Designated Teacher Network	Post adoption support, mental health, Pupil Premium and PEPs	60

The network event was held in June 18 and was attended by almost 80 staff. This provided information and updates on development of the ePEP, allocation of Pupil Premium and developing a self assessment tool for schools to assess their provision for cared for children and the progress they make. Feedback was positive with delegates stating that the sessions were useful and would help them to better support children in school.

Bespoke training has been arranged for more than fifteen schools where additional help was requested. In some cases this was for new Designated Teachers who wanted to become familiar with the PEP process while for others it was when pupils were exhibiting behaviours which put them at risk of exclusions or was impacting on them settling to work and make progress. All Virtual School staff are able to lead this training which also includes working with colleges and training providers.

### Attachment Awareness Project

The Conference in 2016 was focussed on Attachment Awareness and was led by Kate Cairns Associates who are recognised leading experts in this area. As well as a focus for the Virtual School the Cheshire East Primary Heads recognised that increased knowledge in this area would be beneficial and so the programme was planned in partnership. Two 'ignition' meetings were held in Autumn 2016 to which all schools were invited and then schools were invited to take this further in their schools by attending further training and by designing and implementing a piece of action research based around attachment. The training was on emotion coaching and resilience building. Twelve schools took up this challenge and have made changes in their schools based on their new understanding. In autumn 2017 schools are feeding back on their projects and will present at the 2017 Conference but early indications are that this is having a positive impact.

The Virtual School also contributes to the Foster Carer training programme. Sessions have been planned on curriculum changes, preparing for tests, SEN and post-16 progression but uptake, like many foster carer training sessions attendance has been poor. This includes events planned for carers and children such as careers fairs and revision session. Training is not mandatory for carers

and there is a concern that the lack of engagement could indicate that carers do not demonstrate high educational aspirations and commitment for their children.

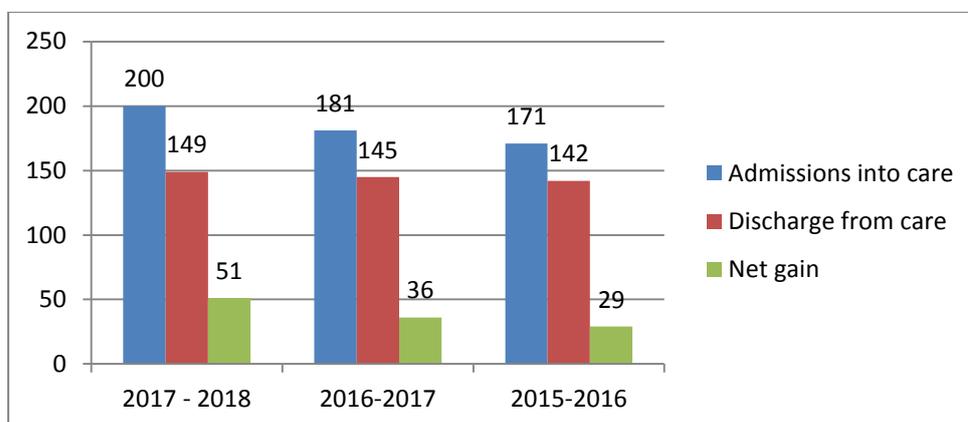
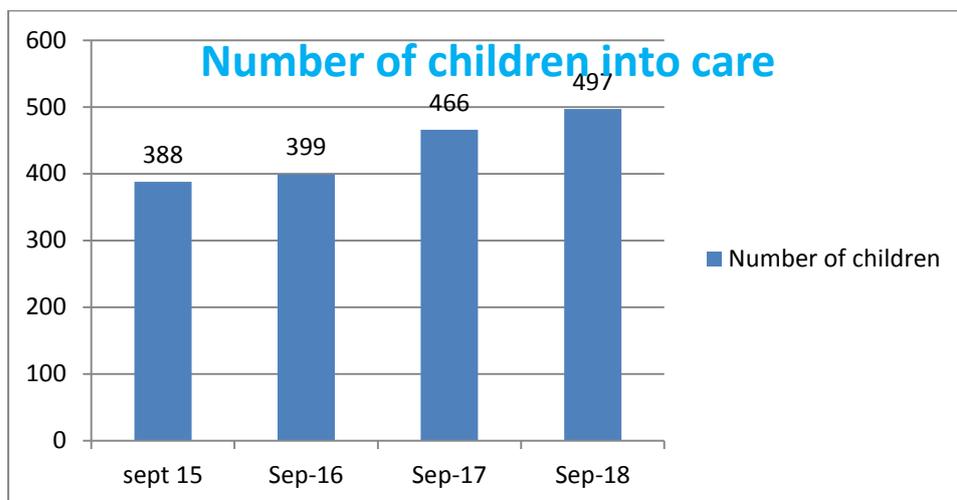
### Actions 2018/19

- Arrange regional as well as local training
- Improve attachment awareness in high schools and support action research projects
- Continue to offer training to all schools – develop network days to offer workshops from all services including SEN, Social Care, Educational Psychology.

## 4. Contextual breakdown of Virtual School cohort

### 4.1 Population breakdown

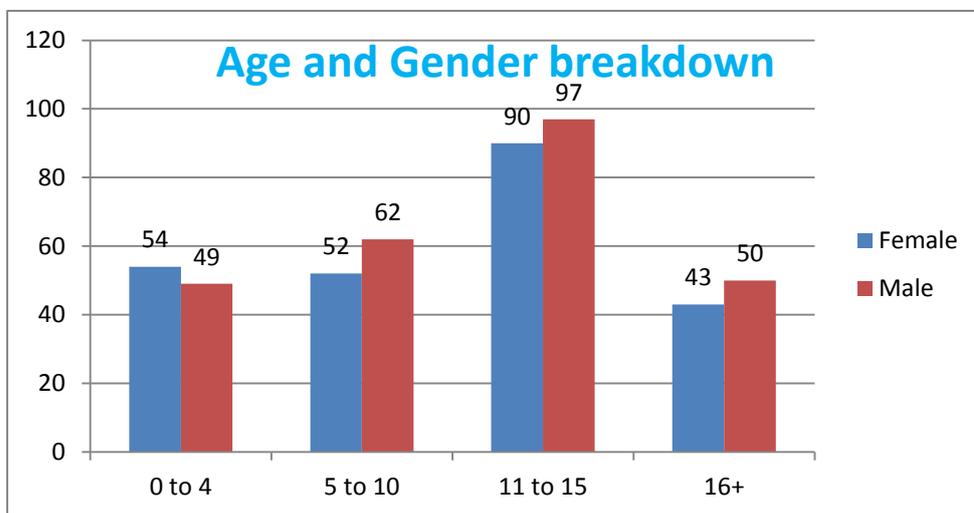
The Virtual School supports all children in care, including those who become cared for as a result of nights away from home due to disabilities. Over the last two years the number of children in care has risen across England but the rate of increase has been greater in Cheshire East than that nationally or in statistical neighbour areas. This is shown in the chart below along with the average change per month which has shown a significant increase.



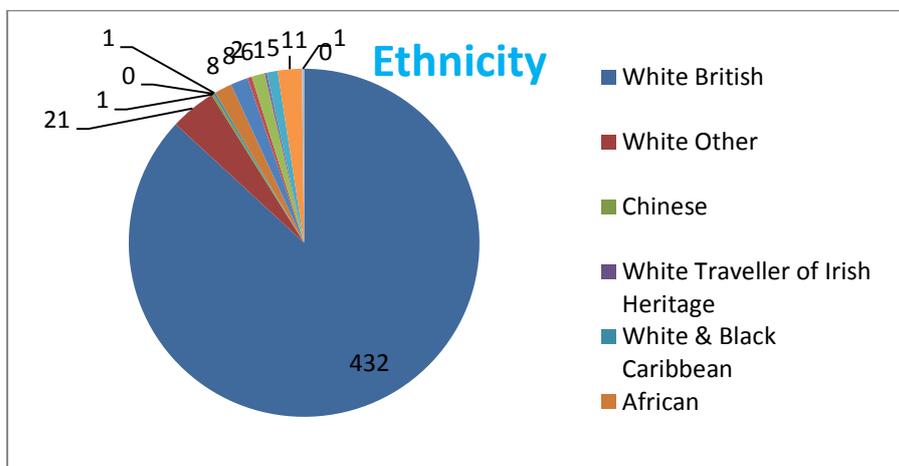
Although young people of any age can access support from the Virtual School the main focus is for those who are expected to be in education or training and so covers the time to the end of the school year when they become eighteen years old. This group also includes unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been accommodated by Cheshire East. Although only a small group, these young people require intensive support to help them to become familiar with their new life and to allow them to access education, in some cases for the first time and they are supported in this by the Virtual School support worker currently seconded to the Social Care Leaving Care team.

Overall the number of children and young people supported by the school rose from 466 in Sept 2017 to 497 in July 2018, an increase of 6%. All new cases have been supported by the Advisors with no additional staffing but the capacity to support all children effectively is being monitored.

The number of boys in care is slightly higher than girls overall, but the chart below shows how this varies with through the various age ranges.

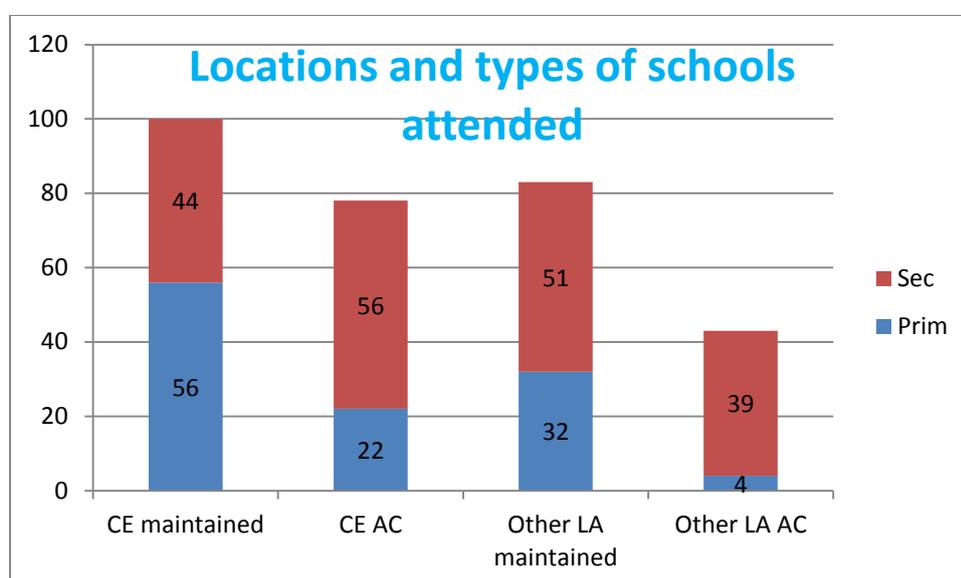


Although there are cared for children from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the vast majority of children in care are White British, as shown in the chart below.



## 4.2 Schools Location

Whenever possible children will continue to attend the same school when they enter care to provide stability and continuity. This means that the majority of children attend schools in Cheshire East. Where children are placed with long term carers who live outside Cheshire East and when the continuation of a daily journey to their previous school is unreasonable then another school will be found and the admissions process previously outlined instigated. Children with special educational needs are placed by the SEN department of the local authority who administer their plan. This is usually the borough in which the child lives and the child's needs will be assessed and suitable education found. For some SEN children living in Cheshire East there is no suitable or available provision within the borough and so these children travel to neighbouring boroughs to attend school. The charts below show the number of children educated in each type of school (either Maintained or Academy).



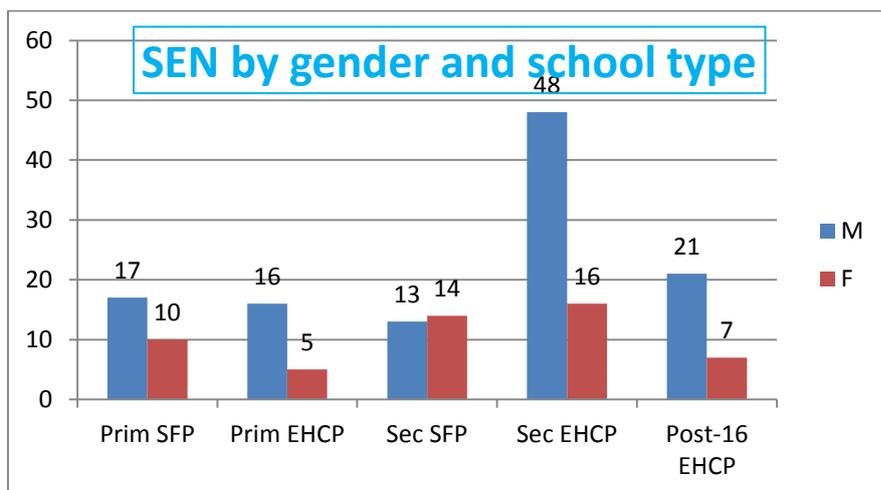
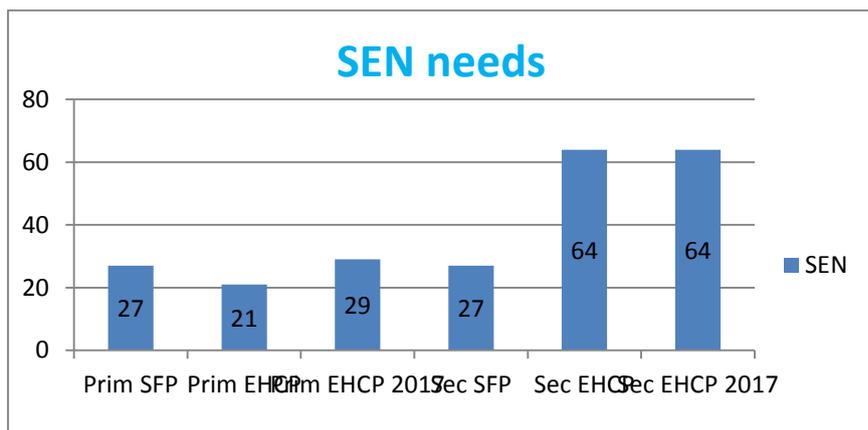
Wherever possible, the principles for placing children in schools rated by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding' are adhered to. Instances when this is not the case may be when a child is already at a school when its rating falls, and a subsequent risk assessment suggests that moving schools would have a greater negative impact than remaining or when a school rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' offers the best local and personal provision. Where a school has been graded lower than 'good' extra measures are put in place through Virtual School to visit the school in advance of the child being admitted and a full risk assessment put in place to identify positives and areas of need, this supports the VS to establish if the school can meet the student's needs. Regular review meetings are put in place to ensure that the progress of each child is constantly tracked and are rated as RED on PEP.

## 4.3 Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are those deemed to require support in school which is different from and/or additional to that available to all children through good quality teaching.

This can be to support cognition, learning, physical or social/emotional needs. Once a need has been identified the school will try to support 'in house' and will then gather evidence to request further support if necessary. Children will be issued with either a school focus plan (SFP) for in school support or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) when the LA has agreed to assess and has provided additional support either in school or by sourcing a place at a special school.

The overall level of SEN has fallen slightly this year compared to 2017. The charts below show the breakdown of SEN needs within this cohort.



The number of children supported through SFP and EHCP is broadly similar at primary school but through the secondary phase there is an increase in the number whose needs increase to require an EHCP, there is also a huge variance between genders in particular within secondary settings. Children identified as SEN with an EHCP are often very complex and require intensive support from their advisor, which is often compounded as they might be placed outside of area necessitating considerable time and resources spent on traveling to meetings. The number of cases of SFP and EHCP for all children supported in 2017/18 is shown above together with the comparative data for ECHP's in 2017/18.

For SEN cases the following additional support mechanisms were agreed and implemented

- Virtual School to inform SEN of planned moves for cared for children

- Advisors to provide summary of history to be included in consultation documents
- Advisors to provide names of possible schools for consultation as well as those identified by SEN
- Child not to be placed in school without agreement of Virtual School
- Named SEN worker assigned to oversee cases of cared for children
- Guidelines for other councils produced to speed up process of finding schools for children living outside Cheshire East
- Liaison with SEN staff on how to record needs of children not attending or frequently changing schools
- Virtual School to put in place tuition while awaiting a new school place

## Impact of these systems

Forty-two of these cases have made successful moves where children have settled well. This includes KS4 pupils who had not engaged with formal education over a long period and who have now become good attenders and completed qualifications.

Only two children did not have a school at the end of the year, one of whom has SEN and who has moved between several local authorities and no school had accepted the consultation while he lived in the vicinity and the second for a Y11 who refused to return to placement and was allowed to live with mother. Despite a range of educational activities being offered this child engaged little and so has not completed any exams but is being supported to find a positive activity in Y12.

The Virtual School established links with SEN teams in all areas to ensure that children are in the correct school and making progress as quickly as possible. Advisors are involved if an application for a needs assessment is made and will be contacted by the SEN team to request any contextual data which may impact on the decision. If a child has a plan then school are asked to review the EHCP at a PEP meeting so that the EHCP targets can be reflected in the PEP although these are not the same as the PEP actions are usually quite short/medium term and specific while the EHCP outcomes are more generalised or long term.

If a school or carer feel that needs are not being met the Virtual School will work with school to ensure that due process is followed and all necessary documents are submitted to the relevant SEN team. There can be a delay when finding a new school for an SEN child, particularly if placed out of Cheshire East while consultations take place and funding agreements are made. Protocols and procedures are now in place to address this.

Forty three children with EHCP attend Special Schools or Independent Special Schools outside of Cheshire East and twelve attend mainstream schools outside the CE borough. In most cases the SEN team in the authority where the child lives administers this EHCP so that all local knowledge can be used regarding transition and school provision. These children are often the most complex and so incidents of school moves are higher than in the general population. This can lead to a delay in finding a new school while files are moved and agreement is made between the SEN teams involved regarding the nature of the education to be sought and the funding arrangements. Plans are in place to streamline this process so that transfers are made swiftly and children can resume learning. Tuition is in place from day 1 and no child is placed without Virtual School agreement.

We have an SEN lead within the VS team, this advisor meets with the SEN lead every 2 weeks to review all Cared for Children and a tracking document is now in place to allow actions and targets to be put in place to ensure swift clear communication and swift interventions in particularly if children are undergoing new assessments or are awaiting school changes due to SEN needs.

## Actions 2018/19

- **Increase detail requested from schools re. progress so that support can be better targeted**
- **Further align EHCP and PEPs to focus on actions, interventions and targets**

## 4.4 Alternative Provision (AP)

For some children, attendance at a mainstream or special school is not possible or appropriate and so they receive an alternative curriculum. In most cases this is arranged and monitored by the child's school and makes up part of their curriculum, perhaps 1 or 2 days per week for a fixed term. Examples of provision attended during include Forest Schools to develop self-confidence and following instructions, animal therapy to gain emotional regulation and extended work placements to increase employability skills and ability to succeed in an adult environment. Such placements are arranged at the PEP and are funded by the Virtual School but managed and overseen by school. In some cases children may be having more severe difficulties and full time alternative provision is required. These are cases when the child's anxiety and behaviour mean that permanent exclusion is likely or when there have been several cases of repeated exclusion. The Virtual School Advisor will be heavily involved in such cases, identifying suitable places and making referrals and visiting the provider to ensure they are regulated to provide a safe, supportive environment and are focussed on achievement and progress. Alternative Provision is also sometimes the best option for pupils moving into Cheshire East, particularly those in Y10 or Y11 who would have difficulty in finding and settling into a new school.

## Overview of Year 11 AP

8 Year 11 students were in Alternative provision, all students were accessing full time education with full curriculum offers, and without an AP all students would have not engaged with any education. 3 students moved to AP due to moves in year 11 and two of these being pregnant. 3 had repeated exclusions and non engagement at mainstream school, but engaged within the AP once settled. 2 students who struggled in mainstream then moved to AP and had excellent attendance at The Fermain.

All providers are either independent school registered in their own right or providers listed in the Cheshire East Alternative Providers Directory and have to meet the safety and safeguarding standards required to be in the directory. Providers are asked to give regular reports on the child's progress and to contribute to or attend meetings about the children.

Since 2016 The Virtual School have worked closely with the Fermain Alternative Provision Academy in Macclesfield, places are commissioned by Cheshire East with schools paying a 'top-up' when a child is placed there. The Virtual School purchased five places and provided training to staff in attachment issues and how to support children with traumatic backgrounds in their lessons. Pupil premium funding has been used to help provide a mentor/key worker to support our children, this has had a dramatic effect on the attendance and engagement of children at the Fermain and has allowed the most vulnerable to feel safe, welcome and listened to so that they can make progress in their learning. The Virtual School contributed to the recent inspection of the Fermain Academy which was found to be outstanding.

## 5. Educational Outcomes

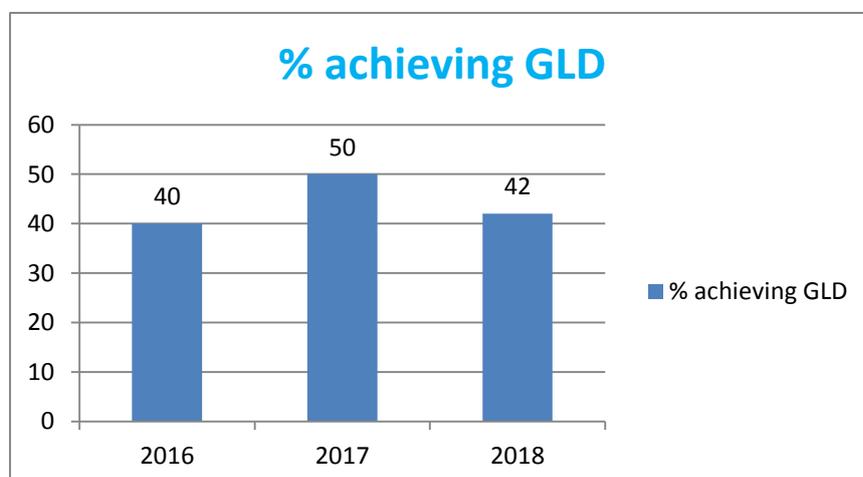
Children are supported in school from the time they enter care although for some this is only a transitory time and they may return home quite quickly. Therefore the data captured and reported at local and national level relates to those children who had been in care for at least twelve months.

### 5.1 End of Reception- age 5 years

Children are assessed in fifteen skill areas at the end of their Reception year. Those who are assessed as reaching the expected level in the key twelve areas are deemed to have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) These areas include speech and language, social and emotional development as well as basic literacy and numeracy. Cared for children of this age have often suffered neglect and language skills are frequently under-developed, which in turn inhibits speech and language, communication and literacy skills. All children are entitled to free nursery places in the term following their second birthday and the Virtual School Early Years Advisor will work with the carer and Social Worker from this time to encourage them to take up this offer.

The chart below shows the outcomes for this group over the past 3 years

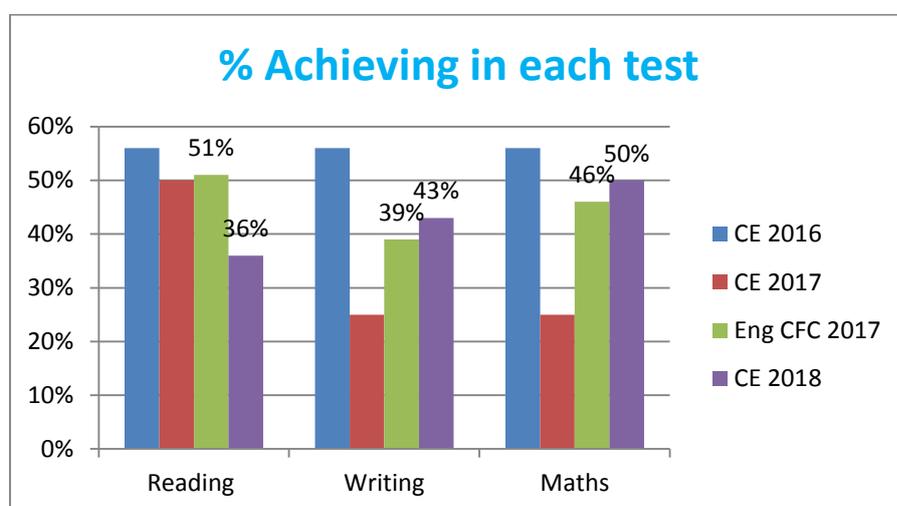
The number in this group has risen from 5 five in 2016 to 8 in 2017 to 12 in 2018. Only 2 of these children have been in care for over 12 months with eight entering care since the start of the last school year.



## 5.2 End of Key Stage 1 – age 7

The number of children ending KS1 after being in care for 12 months or more has increased to 14, the highest level for the past 4 years. Of these 6 have SEN, including 3 who attend special schools and were not entered as they are operating below the level of the tests.

The number gaining the expected level in reading, writing and maths has increased from 25% to 36%. The results for each test are shown below. Despite the high level of SEN in this group the level of success in writing and maths has increased top above last year's national result. The difference between the reading and writing results is due to one child for whom English is an additional language and who did not manage to achieve the expected level in reading.



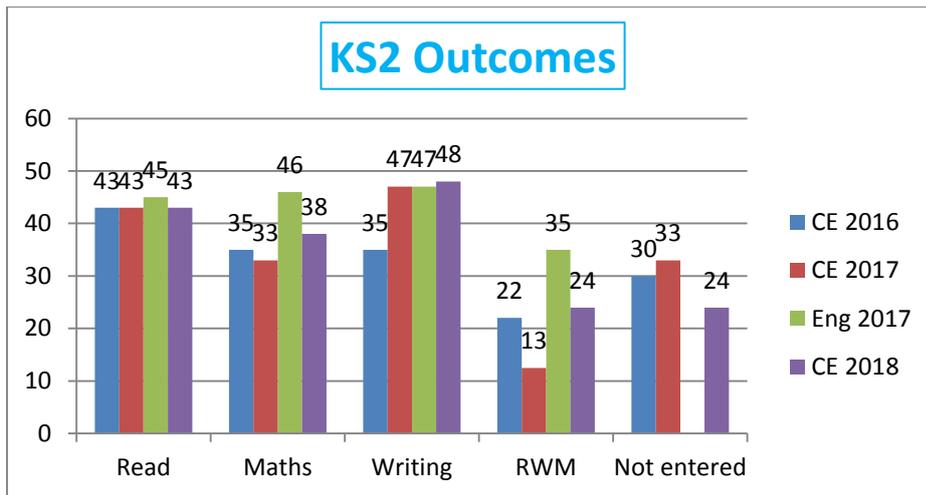
## 5.3 Key Stage 2 – age 11

The table below shows the outcomes of the 21 pupils who completed Y6 this year and who had been in care for at least 1 year as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

While the achievement in reading has remained unchanged there has been an increase in the level of achievement in maths, writing and the percentage of children achieving the expected standard in all three areas.

### Outcomes of Year 6 in care for at least 1 year as of 1st April 2018.

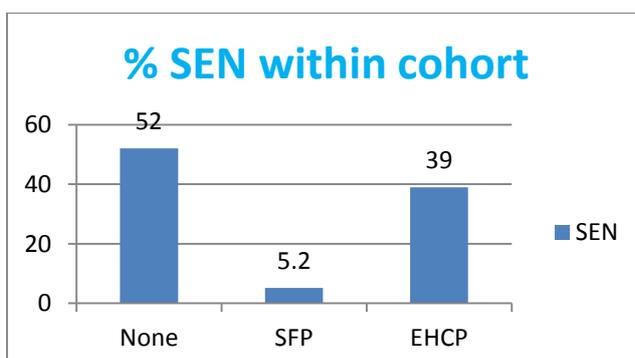
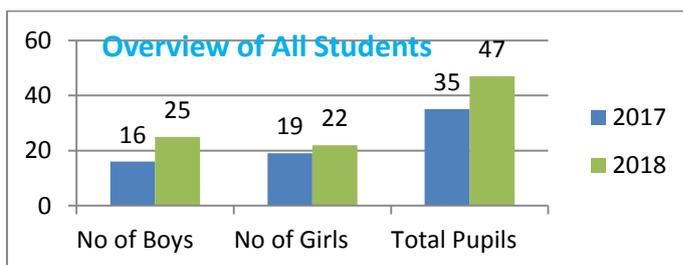
	Reading%	Writing%	Maths%	RWMA %
Met standard	43	48	38	24
Not yet met	38	33	38	52
Did not take	19	19	24	24



This is the third year of the new curriculum and assessment. There was an increase in the overall percentage gaining the expected standard in writing and maths, there is still further work to do to ensure that the level is equal to that for all cared for children. Two children were expected to reach the expected level in all subjects but failed to reach the maths score needed. Of these one child scored 99 while 100 were needed, school are checking this and asking for remarks if appropriate. The second child has shown high levels of anxiety over recent months and has required intense emotional support to manage in school. Due to the small cohort size such cases have a marked impact – had these 2 pupils achieved in all subject the overall level would have increased to 33%. Thirteen pupils were educated in Cheshire East schools and five at special schools.

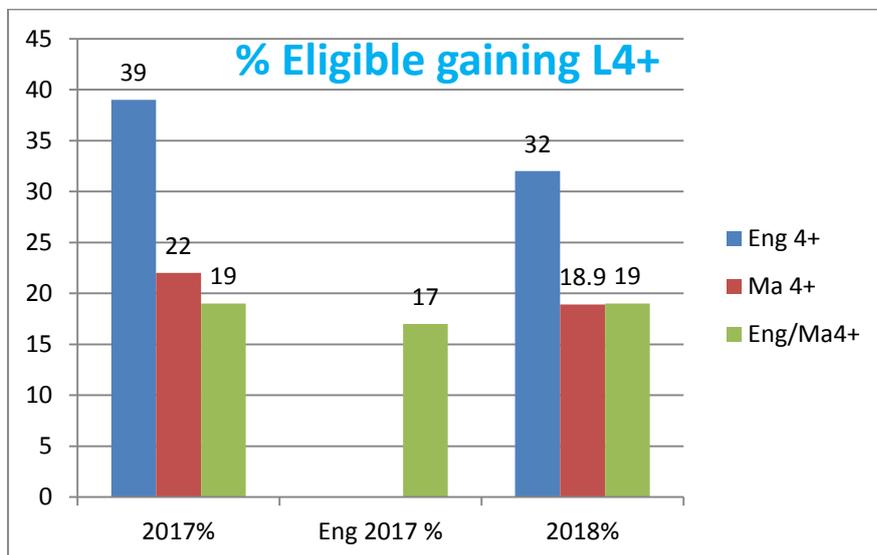
#### 5.4 Key Stage 4

Forty seven pupils ended Year 11 in 2018, of which 37 were eligible. 2017 data is included where appropriate.

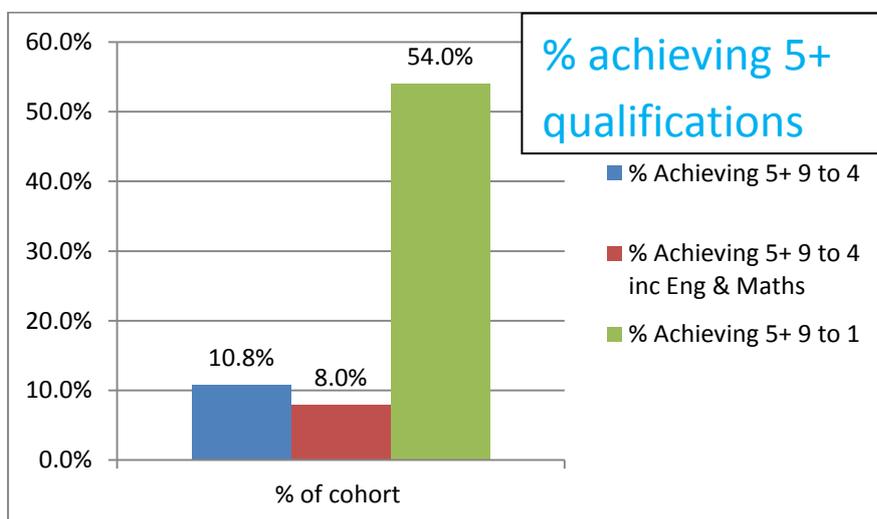


Overall performance measures for KS4 were changed in 2016, 5A\*-C were no longer the main indicator and this was replaced with the number gaining 9-4 in maths and English and also the calculated attainment and progress in 8 subjects.

The chart below shows the outcomes for individual and combined core subjects and also the number gaining 4+ higher passes including Maths and English.

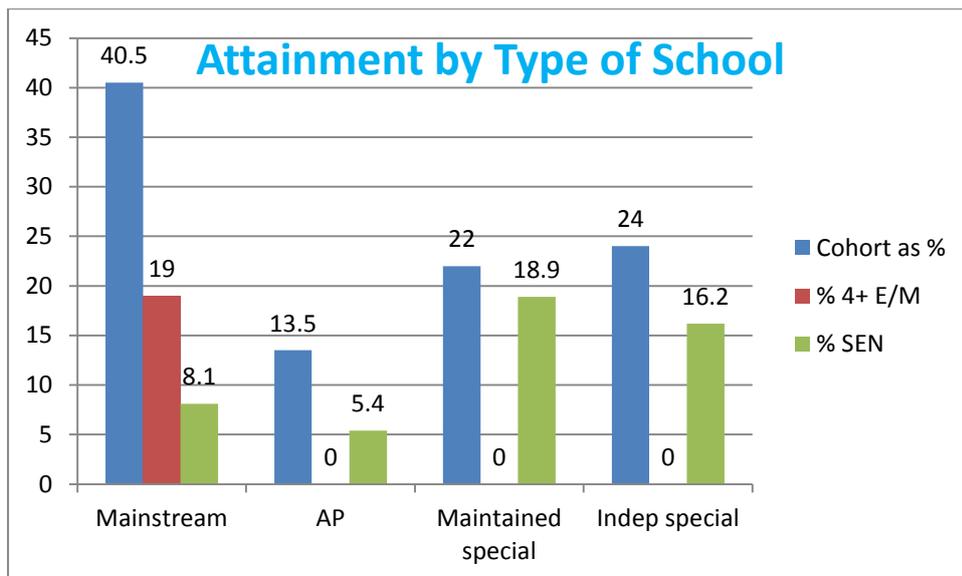


The percentage of pupils who gained Level 4 and above in Maths and English was 19%, which is the same as last year and above National for 2017.



Graph above shows the number % of the cohort that gained 5+ qualifications, over half of the cohort secured GCSE qualifications graded 9-1.

Pupils within the cohort ended Y11 in a range of educational provisions. These are shown in the chart below which also shows the number of SEN pupils in each type. The overall level of SEN within the cohort was 48.6%.

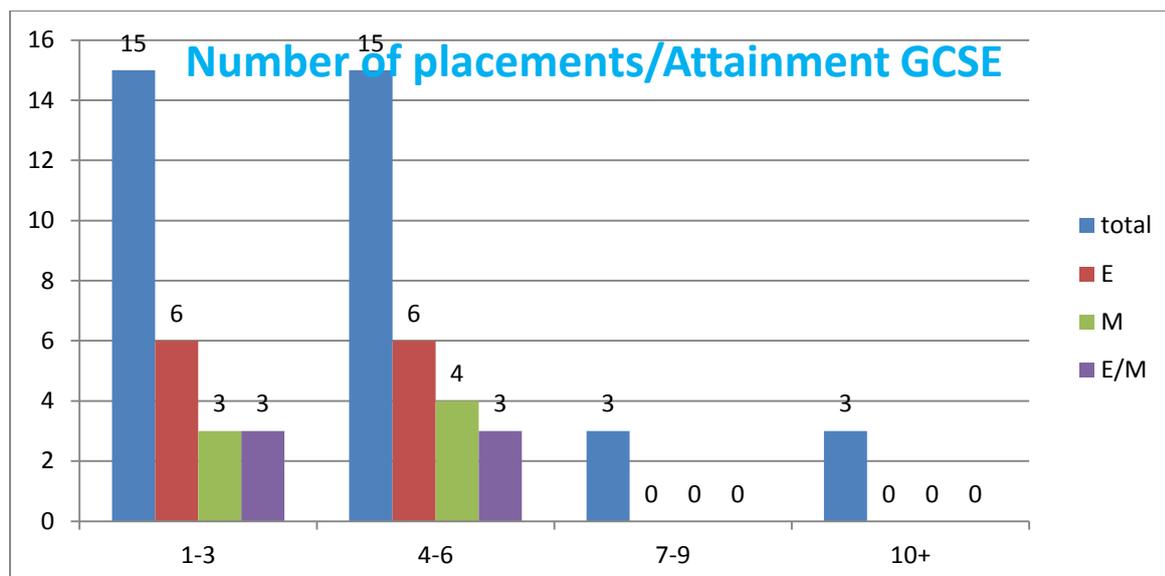


### Cohort background

A significant number of children within this group had changes of school and or home placement (43), which increases their vulnerability and makes it harder for them to achieve their potential and target grades. However, there was an improvement to previous attendance and engagement within mainstream settings. Examples included: 4 children who did not attend in year 10 who settled within new provisions in year 11 and made progress, 3 of these were placed new in care at the start of year 11 and moved out of area and 2 more who were refused 2 places at mainstream schools, and 3 for whom the provision was to avoid a permanent exclusion in year 11. Five YR11 pupils were placed in alternative provision.

### Care Experience and outcomes

It is recognised that a child's care experience will have a significant impact on how they perform at school. High levels of anxiety about where and with whom they will be living, contact or lack of contact with birth families or a low sense of self worth caused by years of abuse will lower resilience and tenacity needed to meet the demands of GCSE exams. Despite this, with consistent support and adults who understand them, some children manage and succeed. The charts below shows the outcomes and progress for KS4 children based on the number of placement moves which have been found significant although caution is needed before making any generalisations due to the small numbers involved.



Although not statistically significant, this data suggests that the greatest influence was the number of placements.

### Actions 2018/19

- **Utilise tutor to give additional sessions where needed, especially for pupils on alternative programmes**
- **Use forecast attainment data throughout the year to identify L3/4 border to ensure challenge within schools through PEP process**
- **Develop rigorous tracking for pupils not in mainstream, ensuring that this includes mock exams and entry for qualifications which will support progress post-16**

### Progression of Year 11 Summer 2018

All pupils were supported by their advisor to identify and plan for a suitable post-16 option, table below shows destinations of Year 11 Summer 2018:

Number of students	Post 16 pathway
8	Specialist Provision
2	Bespoke
5	Training provider
22	College
6	Apprenticeship
1	Post 16 Tutor
1	NEET (ESOL student waiting for placement move- will be supported to enrol once moved)

Bespoke programme: Designed to meet the needs of the individual students, they're working towards qualifications and gaining work experience.

Post 16 tutor and Cygnet are re-engagement (not EET). These programmes are provided to students who are unable or unwilling to access formal education (EET). We use these provisions as a 'stepping stone' into more formal pathways so that there is continuous progression for the young people.

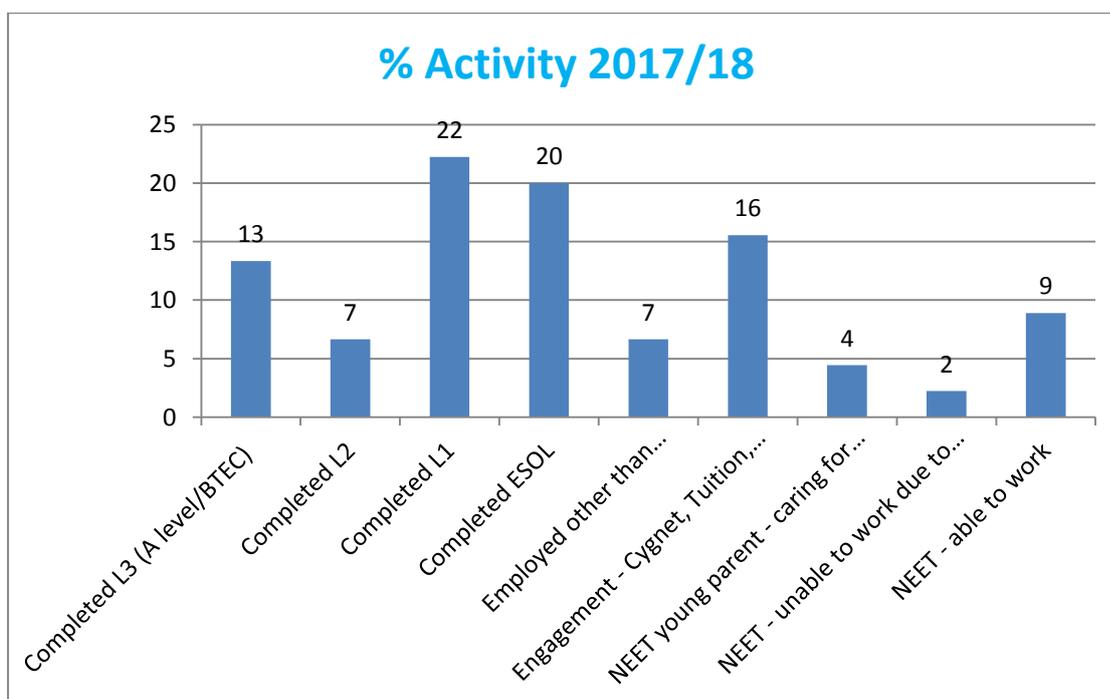
### Apprenticeships

We currently have 6 students on an apprenticeship in year 12, this has increased from 2 who are currently in year 13. This is the highest number of students in the past 3 years to successfully secure full time apprenticeship from September.

- RSPCA – working towards L2 caring for animals, English and Maths
- Barlows electrical – traineeship progressing to apprenticeship Jan-March
- Motor mechanic apprenticeship through Stockport college
- Rossendale trust – care worker apprenticeship
- Pear Tree Nursery – Child care apprenticeship
- Leighton Hospital – Clerical apprenticeship

### 5.5 Post-16

Forty five young people ended Y13 in July 2018 having been supported by the Virtual School Post-16 for two years. All have been monitored and supported throughout this time with forty one accepting the invitation to hold regular PEPs. Whilst there is some fluctuation during the year, the tables below summarise the activity of this group at the end of the year and the likely activity in September.

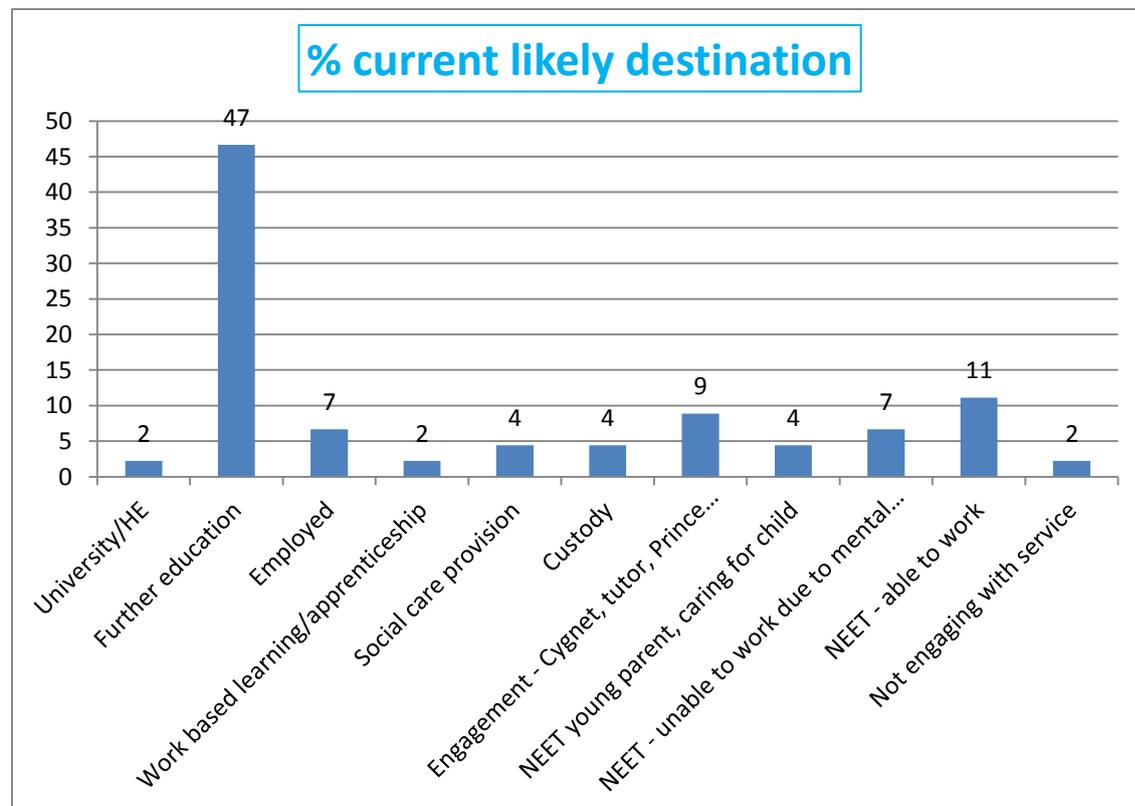


Young people are to be congratulated on their successes. The vast majority have benefited from additional support provided by the Virtual School. As well as an advocate who has been able to make sure their needs are recognised and met, many have had practical support such as additional tuition, purchase of resources or equipment or accompanying to college taster events.

The Virtual School works with Social Care to provide support for all post-16 cared for and care leavers and will help and advice on any case but the VS focus is primarily on young people in the two years after ending statutory school education. These would be in school years 12 and 13 and under the Raising of Participation Age are expected to be in education, employment, training, engagement or volunteering. A Personal Advisor from the permanence through care team leads on supporting and monitoring those above this age, i.e. young people who become 19, 20 and 21.

All young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET are supported by the Virtual School, their Personal Advisor and the Youth Support Service. Cases are also reviewed at the NEET panel (this panel has been introduced this year to allow for regular monitoring and interventions) so that a joint plan can be put into place.

Within the Virtual School team we have a post-16 tutor who has been employed to provide help with coursework, exam preparation and getting into college. The chart below shows the outcomes of the young people who were in education in 2017 - 2018.



As a result of the closer working through the multi-agency SPEED group, data collection and therefore monitoring has become more focussed. Since Jan 2018 data is collected separately for cared for and care leaver young people.

## ESOL Students

There are 20 students studying English for Speakers of Other Languages qualifications.

- i) 9 are on pre-entry individual learning plans
- ii) 9 are on E1 qualifications
- iii) 1 is on E2
- iv) 1 is on E3

All of these students will be supported to the next level of learning by their college provider. Some of these students have been supported to access work experience this year through external providers

## Overview of Year 12 and 13

Of the 92 young people in year 12 and 13 there are 18 NEET with no destination in place for September

- 2 are in Her Majesties Prison
- 2 are parents
- 9 are not engaging with services (services include Youth Support Service, personal advisers and social workers, virtual school, Youth Engagement Service workers)
- 4 are unable to work due to mental health
- 1 is currently in the process of moving counties and will be offered support once settled into supported accommodation

## Attainment overview

Of all the students entered for A2 Levels (1 student) 100% achieved

Of all students entered for AS Levels (3 students) 100% achieved

Of all students entered for L3 quals (7 students) 85.71 % achieved (could be 100%- waiting for info from school)

Of all students entered for L2 quals (7 students) 85.71% achieved

Of all students entered for L1 quals (17 students) 100% achieved

Of the 20 ESOL learners, 9 were on a pre-entry Individual Learning Plan and 11 achieved a qualification

14 students changed provision or did not complete their original options:

1 moved to an apprenticeship- ongoing

3 have moved into employment

2 moved to another course - one completed L1 course, 1 ongoing

2 moved to Cygnet

2 ESOL learners moved out of area mid term

4 became to NEET but continue to be supported by Virtual School team

### Actions 2018/19

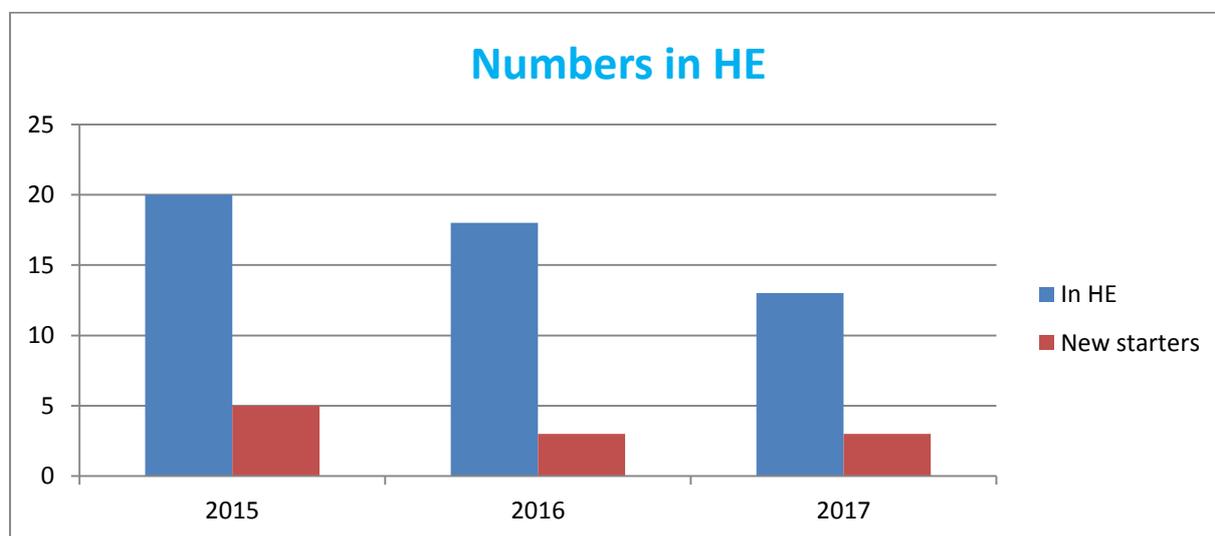
- **Monitor the impact of the post-16 tutor and revised Cygnet programme**
- **Establish targeted support programme for young people without good pass in English and Maths**
- **Continue to work with services to support apprenticeship programmes**

## 6. Higher Education

All young people are encouraged to consider university as an option and are invited to taster days and events. The uptake for these has been low those attended gave positive feedback regarding information received and contacts made.

The chart below shows the total number of young people in Higher Education. Although this has decreased over recent years the latest national data shows that Cheshire East has 10% of 19-21 year olds in HE compared with 6% in the North West and the whole of England.

The Virtual School will support young people with their applications and this year has provided funding where additional interview costs have been incurred.



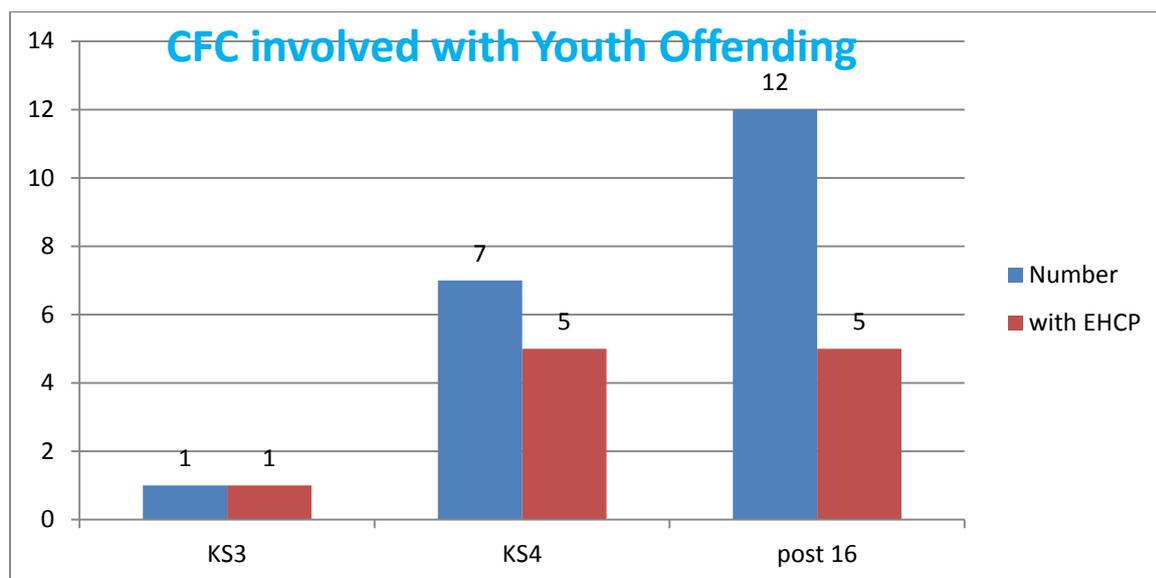
### Actions 2017/18

- **Work with local universities to arrange bespoke visits in specific subject areas – initially art/media and health/social care**

## 7. Cared for children involved with Youth Offending Team (YOT)

The Youth Offending Education Advisor works 50% of her time within the Virtual School. As well as a focus on cases which overlap with YOT she also has a small caseload of other cases.

The chart below shows the ages of these young people and the number of the young people in each group who have or had an EHCP, the proportions of which are much higher than those for the whole cared for population. For this reason the Advisor has made it a priority to build up links with the SEN team and to ensure that processes can be followed swiftly and effectively for any transitions for these young people.



The Virtual School and Youth Support work together for young people who are NEET to try and re-engage them with positive activities. Tuition and Cygnet have been offered but these young people are looking for paid employment although they may not have the skills needed by employers. It is hoped that the revised Cygnet with a greater focus on work experience will be something that these young people will wish to take part in. A post 16 advisor is now in place to continue to work with all young people to support ongoing reduction of NEET figure.

### Actions 2018/19

- Youth Justice Service to provide quarterly data on engagement of pre and post-16
- Joint supervision of shared advisor

## 8. Development Priorities for 2018-19

In addition to the specific actions included in the various sections of the report the Virtual School has identified the following priority areas and key actions to be addressed this year.

1. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium.  
**Monitor requests and impact of Pupil Premium and develop a system to ensure schools are made accountable for impact.**  
**Increase targeted support and interventions for pupils in Y6, 11 and post-16**
2. Identify and implement changes resulting from the Social Care Bill which includes Virtual School Head teacher to have responsibilities for previously looked after children as well as looked after and to promote mental health and attachment awareness in schools  
**Summarise changes in draft statutory guidance and produce models for implementation and impact**  
**Evaluate models and make changes to staffing structure and use of funding**
3. Monitor the impact of commissioned and front line services through engagement, progress and outcomes  
**Work with procurement and commissioning to develop monitoring process for commissioned services**  
**Increase direct supervision of commissioned service and clarify expectations to be achieved**
4. Implement the self- assessment tool for use with and by schools to improve their practice and support for cared for children  
**Identify schools where progress is below expected and use self-evaluation to plan for improvement**  
**Share best practice where pupils achieve above expectations**
5. Continue to develop the design of the ePEP and be in place in all secondary schools  
**Adapt ePEP following school feedback**  
**Create new My Voice in line with Signs of Safety**