

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY REVIEW BOARD
14 February 2022

Minute Extract

43/21 Work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) 2020/21

The Board considered a presentation from the Virtual School Head on Work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) 2020/21.

It was noted that during summer term 2019-20 (lockdown 1) the attendance was 49%; and during lockdown 3 in Spring 2020-21 the attendance was 74% as more “vulnerable children” took the opportunity to attend school.

It was noted that the lack of national validated data meant that GCSE outcomes need to be treated with caution. Key factors which needed to be considered were the cohort size, the SEND profile of the cohort and the prior attainment from KS2 SATs which helped to measure the progress that has been made.

It was reported that there was a 27.5% increase in the cohort size from 2019 to 2021 (29 to 40 pupils). It was reported that in 2021 70% of the cohort had a SEND diagnosis (28 out of the 40 pupils) and that 50% of the cohort had an EHCP (20 out of 40 pupils). It was noted that in 2019, 52% of the cohort had a SEND diagnosis (15 out of 29 pupils) and that 34% of the cohort had an EHCP (10 out of 29 pupils).

The Board noted that the Virtual School was allocated £2345 Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding per pupil to support with improving educational outcomes. The targets set in the Personal Education Plan informed the financial allocations to schools. It was noted that in the academic year 2020-21 £475,927 was allocated to schools.

It was reported that the Personal Education Plan or PEP was a record of how professionals around the looked after child would support their educational outcomes and achievement. It was noted that every PEP was quality assured by the Virtual School and feedback given. The number of PEPs completed in 2020-21 was 1100; 132 in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 968 at statutory school age.

It was reported that the Cromarty Model was a which had been developed to measure the progress of young people across a range of indicators. This had been rolled out in the Enhanced Care Planning Meetings and looked at measuring progress across education, social, emotional and health indicators.

It was reported that BKSb was an online diagnostic tool for maths and English. Pupils did an initial assessment and follow up work was provided at the appropriate level. The Board noted that this was particularly important when an older pupil came into care and the Virtual School needed to determine what level the pupil was working at.

It was reported that the Virtual School's duties would be extended and that the Virtual School Head would:

- make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children.
- promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.
- level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential. This will include helping to make sure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The Board noted that the Virtual School's developments moving forward included:

- Launch the project activity with partners looking at trialing work in a specific Locality first
- Rolling out the eLearning, self-evaluation tool and governor report to get feedback
- Completing SWOT analysis to identify any system wide improvements
- RAG rating all children with a social worker to identify need – against agreed criteria
- Looking at creating baselines for attendance, exclusions and academic outcomes to measure impact of the project

A councillor questioned whether a system was now in place to ensure that data was regularly being collected and analysed. It was noted that the Virtual School were working with colleagues to analyse data on attendance and attainment for young people in schools. It was noted that by summer 2022 this data would have been analysed. It was noted that exclusion data was not available for young people on CHIN and CP.

The Board agreed to recommend that Cabinet ensures that appropriate systems are in place to track and monitor children and young people within the Virtual Schools remit, to help identify arising issues and inform future planning.

The Board resolved:

- 1. to note the report and presentation**
- 2. to recommend that Cabinet ensures that appropriate systems are in place to track and monitor children and young people within the Virtual Schools remit, to help identify arising issues and inform future planning.**