

# CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE



**Wednesday, 17 November 2021**

**Democratic and Members' Services**  
Fiona McMillan  
Monitoring Officer

**16:00**

New Shire Hall  
Alconbury Weald  
Huntingdon  
PE28 4YE

**Multi Function Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald,  
Huntingdon PE28 4YE  
[Venue Address]**

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press by appointment only**

**Meeting Theme: Education**

- 1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**  
*Guidance on declaring interests is available at <http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>*
- 2. Minutes - 14 July 2021 and Action Log** **1 - 12**
- 3. Petitions and Public Questions**
- 4. Participation Report** **13 - 16**
- 5. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carer's Association** **17 - 24**

6.	<b>Virtual School Head Teacher's Annual Report</b>	<b>25 - 66</b>
7.	<b>Health Data Update November 2021</b>	<b>67 - 72</b>
8.	<b>Children in Care not in Education, Employment or Training - Action Plan Update</b>	<b>73 - 84</b>
9.	<b>Corporate Parenting Performance Report September 2021</b>	<b>85 - 92</b>
10.	<b>Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020-21</b>	<b>93 - 114</b>
11.	<b>Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Training Plan 2021-22</b>	<b>115 - 116</b>
12.	<b>Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Agenda Plan</b>	<b>117 - 120</b>

#### **Attending meetings and COVID-19**

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The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Anna Bradnam (Chair) Councillor Philippa Slatter (Vice-Chair) Councillor Alex Bulat Councillor Anne Hay Councillor Mac McGuire

Clerk Name:	Richenda Greenhill
Clerk Telephone:	01223 699171
Clerk Email:	Richenda.Greenhill@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Minutes

Date: Thursday 14 July 2021

Time: 16:00pm – 18:35.

Venue: Bluntisham Village Hall, Mill Lane, Bluntisham PE28 3LR

Present: Councillors A Bradnam (Chair), A Bulat, A Hay, P Slatter (Vice-Chair)

Kevin Arrowsmith – Chair, Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association  
(non-voting observer)

### 1. Notification of the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair

Councillor Bradnam was appointed as Chair, and Councillor Slatter appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2021/22 by the Executive Director of People and Communities in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee and the Children and Young People Committee Spokes on 18 June 2021.

### 2. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor M McGuire, Councillor D Ambrose Smith substituted.

### 3. Minutes – 13 January 2021 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record following the amendment of Kevin Arrowsmith's title to 'Chair'.

The action log was noted and an oral update was given. The officer reported that:

- Minute 161 – The reintroduction of holiday activities for children in care following eases in lockdown were advertised to carers through monthly newsletters and automatic updates.

District bodies could be made more aware of care leavers housing needs, but that there was a housing committee with a designated public advisor whose role was to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

- Minute 174 - Feedback on the positive difference interaction with social workers had on children in care would be reported upon in the Participation Report and training.

### 4. Petitions and Public Questions

There were no petitions or public questions.

## 5. Participation Report

The Sub-Committee was briefed on the activity of the Participation Service for children in care. Virtual adaptations were made in response to the pandemic and client feedback. This increased participation by those further afield. Following the easing of restrictions, there had been an increase of in-person activities on offer to children in care and care leavers.

The service also amplified the voices of service users through a Children in Care Council (currently with eight core members), and a Young Recruiters Panel which allowed young people to influence staff hiring.

In response to Members' questions, the officer also noted that the Children in Care Council summer programme included the development of a leaflet for those entering care, inspired by those distributed through Peterborough County Council.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 6. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association

The Sub-Committee was provided with an overview of the role of the Foster Carers' Association and the work they have undertaken alongside the Fostering Service. It was noted that the service had recently been restructured and that a Statement of Purpose would soon be launched. Included as an appendix to the report was a survey which took place to consolidate and benchmark changes occurring to the fostering service as a result of restructuring. The survey was distributed to current foster carers and received 113 responses. Findings included: foster carers desiring greater involvement in all aspects of the foster service; a desire for more information about the children prior to their entry into a household; and a general weariness in response to lockdown, home-schooling and reduced in-person support.

In response to the report, Members:

- Raised concerns that the 21% who responded that they would not recommend the service may leave. Members suggested asking 'why' following negative responses to questions in future surveys, to ensure these problems can be resolved and foster carer retention increased.
- Suggested looking at the geographical distribution of survey respondents to enable targeted action.

Officers' responded to Members' questions:

- Appendix 1, Question 1: Do you feel fully supported by the Fostering Service/ Local Authority?

Explained that foster carers may receive less information about a child entering their care if the move was unplanned; or if the child came directly from an unsuitable residence for which their experiences were not documented. Further changes in environment may cause children and young people to exhibit previously unseen and therefore undocumented behaviour.

Officers explained that previous foster carers provided information in planned moves, and that Placement Planning meetings (which occurred after the child or young person entered the home) were an opportunity for foster parents to receive more information. Going forward, work with corporate parenting and family safeguarding would occur to increase information distributed to foster parents prior to the child or young person entering the home.

- Appendix 1, Question 2: What improvements or changes within the Fostering Service Department would assist you to reach your full potential in your role as a carer?

That in response to requests for further training, the virtual training offer had been increased and a training brochure created. While there was a diploma in foster care, officers noted the benefit that an additional recognised route for foster caring training could have on increasing foster carers' feeling of professionalism.

- Appendix 1, Question 3: As a foster carer do you feel your thoughts, opinions and experiences are valued and taken into consideration when decisions/plans are being made for the child/ young person in your care?

Explained that the 'Skills to Foster' training course used foster carers as speakers, and that applying this to Q&A sessions was being explored.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 7. Fostering Service Annual Report 2020/21

The Sub-Committee was provided with an overview of key activities within the fostering services for the year 2020/21. The officer reported an overall increase of children provided with foster care: twenty-five new households, an additional ten being assessed, and nineteen fostering households resigning.

In response to the report, Members celebrated district councils offering traveller cultural awareness training.

In response to Members' questions, officers responded:

- With regard to concerns for the seven safeguarding allegations made against foster carers:

Explained that, following an allegation, a Standards of Care investigation took place with additional scrutiny and recommendations from a foster panel. The continuation of the placement following the allegation was dependent upon the situation and severity of the allegation, but that a support network existed for foster parents against whom allegations were made.

- In response to questions regarding how the Fostering Service ensured strong cultural awareness:

Stated that, prior to placement, placement matching included culture matching and a requirement for foster parents to prove a level of cultural awareness, despite the county not having a largely diverse foster carer population. Following placement, placement planning meetings ensured a foster household could meet the child's cultural needs. Foster carers could also ask staff for advice. Managers attended equality, diversity and inclusion training which it was hoped would be rolled out to staff and foster carers.

- Explained that, especially for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, trauma as well as cultural differences could influence a placement and that trauma training and anti-extremism training were offered to carers.
- Recognised that unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people often had different needs which meant they were often better suited to independent living with contact from colleges, the Red Cross, and support from the local community including mosques and churches.. A buddy system was also in place to connect young people with similar experiences. Officers noted the successes of this cohort, who had gone into engineering and university.
- Offered foster care training for Members. **Action.**

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 8. Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2020-21

The Sub-Committee were given details of the service performance of Independent Reviewing Officers [IROs]. The service currently has 9.8 IROs, who each monitor 62 children in care, review Care Plans, and escalate concerns. Areas of concern for the service included accountability and record keeping. Positive statistics included an increase of children in 'permanent' arrangements, a reduction of children in care by 75, and a stable number of placement breakdowns throughout the pandemic.

In particular, the reporting officer highlighted:

- That throughout the pandemic, service levels had remained the same, with many social workers continuing in-person meetings. Other work, such as monitoring or Care Plan reviews with Independent Reviewing Officers, occurred online.

Following the ease in lockdown, the service had moved to a person-centred hybrid approach for meetings. This catered for children who felt less exposed online or preferred not having professionals within their home.

- That children were given the opportunity to chair their care reviews, control non-standing items on the agenda, and ask people to attend (such as advocates).

Officer's responded to Members' questions /concerns by explaining that:

- The IRO role was one of oversight, rather than operational, making the caseload manageable.
- Tutoring services were procured through the Virtual Education team.
- National Youth Advocacy Services was a voluntary service that all young people in care could access, should they feel dissatisfied with the service they received or desire an advocate at a meeting. The officer reported a reduction in children using them, perhaps because of the increasing virtual offer.
- That the delay for children awaiting long-term foster care was an area of concern for IROs. To improve this the Corporate Parenting service is revisiting the existing processes by which long-term foster placements are sought and matched with children who need them.
- Recording arears were another area of concern.

Members' thanked officers for the qualitative feedback gained from anonymised reviews.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 9. Clinical Services

The Sub-Committee were briefed on the new clinical service on offer in Cambridgeshire, previously delivered by a combination of staff from the Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust.

Expected benefits of the new service included: an operating service developed in collaboration with foster carers; quicker responses to service changes; a focus on supporting children in care by supporting their foster carers; a multidisciplinary team which catered for the individual by providing a variety of evidence based offers.

Changes to the service had resulted in staffing vacancies, but services continued to be provided with support from interim clinicians for referrals.

Members' praised the training session on the psychology of children in care they had received. Officers would provide Members with links to further their training.

In response to Members asking about the role of the specialist clinician and assistant psychologist, officers clarified that specialist clinicians (such as occupational therapists) were allocated to the child at a formulation meeting and assisted by psychologists.

It was resolved to review and comment on the report.

## 10. Corporate Parenting Performance Report May 2021

The Sub-Committee received a standing report which broke down the placement types of the 664 children in care throughout Cambridgeshire.

- In-house foster carers: 242 young people
- Independent Fostering Agencies: 212 young people
- Living with parents on care orders: 9 young people
- Residential care: 54 young people
- Semi-independent living with a dedicated care worker and care provision: 86 young people

(This occurs post-16, dependent on whether the young person was assessed as ready)

The officer explained that the Stepping Out document was an evidence-based tool used to assess whether a child was ready for independent living. If they were not, post-18 provision could be sought from organisations such as the YMCA.

Members requested the number of children housed outside the county was added to the report. **Action.** In response to this concern, officers explained that children might be housed outside the county for a multitude of reasons including: improved culture matching, foster carers relocating but remaining in the service, and the location of necessary specialist care outside of Cambridgeshire.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 11. Health Data Update Report July 2021

The Sub-Committee received a report which detailed the continued work of health services throughout the pandemic. It noted the Clinical Commissioning Group's monitoring and quality assurance systems for children in care, and the performance of statutory requirements including Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments, and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The pandemic had resulted in these assessments taking place virtually, with a movement back to in-person assessment following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessment: These are assessments completed for children in care that provide a holistic overview of the child or young person's health. Issues in data reporting had caused this to be raised as an area of concern in the previous Sub-Committee meeting which resulted in the development of a different reporting service capable of registering health declinations. The officer reported that now, when a decline was recognised, a pathways conversation on health would occur with the young person.

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire: A behavioural screening questionnaire completed by the foster carer. Typically, this was completed in the Health Assessment, but the move to virtual assessments had resulted in the questionnaire being sent via email, causing a reduction to 27% in questionnaire returns. As a result, a sub-group of the Health of Children in Care Partnership Group had been formed and developed a Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire Pathway. Members requested a copy of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

The Designated Nurse for Children in Care responded to Members' questions, stating that:

- The CCG commissions health services across Cambridgeshire including physical and mental health in both community and hospital settings; whilst NHS England provides in-patient mental healthcare for young people.
- That an audit of thirty review health assessments and ten initial health assessments had concluded the quality of service was good.
- Her concerns included access to dental checks reducing over the pandemic, however outstanding checks were captured in the Health Action Plan for foster carers and social workers to pick up and action when services are available.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 12. Regional Adoption Agency Update

The Sub-Committee received an outline of the structure of the Regional Adoption Agency, progress around staffing issues, and information on the work undertaken in the first six months since the agency started on 1 December 2020.

While consultation and restructuring had taken place, the officer explained that the service remained similar, with three distinct teams: Recruitment, Family Finding, and Special Guardianship.

Staffing had been impacted by the restructuring of the service, but the officer reported a solid staffing structure and no managerial vacancies.

In response to the report, Members expressed a desire to reduce adoption waiting times.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

## 13. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Training Plan

The Sub-Committee resolved unanimously to note its training plan and complete the following actions:

- Circulate training dates for fostering and mental health awareness. **Action.**
- Circulate a list of potential training session topics from which Members would select four to undergo. **Action.**
- Noted that other corporate parenting events could be found on the Cambridgeshire County Council website.

## 14. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Agenda Plan

The Sub-Committee resolved unanimously to note its agenda plan.

Chair

## Action Log

### Summary

The Action Log is a list of all of the things that people have been asked to do at earlier meetings. It is included at each meeting so that members can check that everything is being done. It was last updated on 5 January 2021.

### Minutes - 9 September 2020

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
161.	Young People's Participation	Sika Smith	It would be helpful if the Participation Service could signpost carers to appropriate holiday events and activities around the county, such as swimming sessions or soft play areas.		
		Nicola Curley	The Chair stated that she would want to look at how District bodies such as Community Safety Partnership Boards and Housing Departments could be made aware of the needs of children in care and care leavers.		

### Minutes - 13 January 2021

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
174.	University experience for	Sika Smith	The Assistant Director for Children and Safeguarding stated that information about the positive impacts of social worker		

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
	care leavers and the Local Offer		interactions was being collected to inform a pre and post Covid comparison. Lots of feedback had been obtained which was being collated by officers and she would arrange for some examples to be included in the next Participation Report.		
175.	Health Update January 2021	Catherine York, Designated Nurse, CCS	The Service Director for Children and Young People's Health Services (CCS) stated that CCS was committed to addressing the timeliness of IHAs and that the planned audit would also be looking at the quality of assessments. This was an important piece of work and it would be brought back to the Sub-Committee.	09.07.21: The outcome of the audit will be reported in a future Health Data Update report.	Completed
177.	Committee Workshop and Training Plan	Myra O'Farrell	To arrange an introductory meeting between Sub-Committee members and the new Head of the Corporate Parenting Service.		

## Minutes – 14 July 2021

7.	Fostering Service Annual Report 2020/21	Fiona van den Hout	Officers offered foster care training for Members.	22.10.21: Members' Seminar on the role of corporate parents and the work of the Fostering Service. All county councillors encouraged to attend.	Completed
10.	Corporate Parenting Performance Report May 2021	Myra O'Farrell	Members requested the number of children housed outside the county was added to the report.		

13.	Sub-Committee Training Plan	Myra O'Farrell/ Emma Nederpel	Circulate training dates for fostering and mental health awareness.	03.11.21: It is hoped to hold this training in March or April 2022, exact date to be confirmed.	On-going
		Myra O'Farrell/ Emma Nederpel	Circulate a list of potential training session topics from which Members would select four to undergo.		



## Participation Report

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Participation Team, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Key decision: No

Outcome: An update on the activity of the Participation Service in relation to Children in Care

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

Officer contact:

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Post: Quality Assurance Lead - Participation and Independent Visiting

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Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam

Post: Vice Chair

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Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Participation Team continues to adapt its face to face and virtual offer in line with changes in government restrictions and feedback from children and young people.
- 1.2 Face to face events and meetings are taking place and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leaver Forum (CLF) have continued work on their projects and being consulted by teams and services throughout the pandemic.
- 1.3 A face to face activity, virtual session and the virtual Art Exhibition were held during the October half term.
- 1.4 We successfully recruited to the vacant Participation Officer role and the new team member joined us in mid-October 2021.
- 1.5 The Young Recruiters initiative has been successful with young people continuing to be actively involved in the recruitment of staff.
- 1.6 Young people were involved in Foster Carer training and were supported by the Participation Team to design and delivery an activity and scenarios for group discussion.
- 1.7 Care Leavers successfully project managed and delivered an adventure and team building day for Children in Care over the summer and are looking forward to their next project.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee has requested an update on the work of the Participation Service in relation to Children in Care at each meeting.
- 2.2 This report sets out the activities of the Participation Service over the last quarter and an update on the work of the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum.

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The Participation Team continues to promote opportunities for children and young people through regular newsletters, as well as creating event-specific publications to encourage engagement. Recent newsletters have encouraged young people to get involved in the new Young Inspectors group.
- 3.2 The Participation Team welcomed their newest member on 18 October 2021. The new Participation Officer was interviewed and recruited with the help of our Young Recruiters Group, with one Young Recruiter sitting on the interview panel with the interviewing managers, and a group of Young Recruiters also forming a panel to interview the candidates separately.

- 3.3 The Participation Team worked with Peterborough City Council colleagues to organise two activities in the October half term for Children in Care. The first event was a day at Burwell House TV Studio, where young people were able to learn some of the skills required to create their own videos. The theme chosen by the Children in Care Councils for the activity was an ideal Foster Carer, and young people took the opportunity to share experiences of where a Foster Carer supported them, encouraged them to try something new, and the activities they enjoyed with their Foster Carers. These reflections will be used to create training materials for Foster Carers, alongside similar resources being created by the CiCC for Social Workers, IROs and Designated Teachers.
- 3.4 A virtual activity for Children in Care who live at a distance or who prefer online activities was also arranged in the October half term. This was a Halloween themed online 'Spooktacular' party involving an escape room activity, with goody bags sent to participants in advance with craft items and treats. Attendees also spoke about what made an ideal Foster Carer, ensuring that all children and young people were able to contribute their feedback, whether they attended a face to face or virtual session.
- 3.5 Following the success of last year's Virtual Art Exhibition, the Participation Team invited young people from across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to send in artwork for this year's exhibition. The exhibition premiered on [YouTube](#) on Friday 29 October, showcasing the latest masterpieces from our creative and talented young people. The Children in Care Council will be using the artwork to create cards for Social Workers to send to young people to celebrate successes, to say goodbye when they are leaving or to mark other occasions.
- 3.6 The Children in Care Council have been finalising the contents for their Coming into Care packs. These packs will be sent out to all young people coming in to care for the first time, to assist the transition and support positive relationship building with their new Foster Carers. The CiCC have also been busy reviewing consultation requests from the IRO service and have given feedback on PEP meetings to the Virtual School.
- 3.7 The Young Recruiters Group continue to be actively involved in recruitment and have recently taken part in interview panels for the appointment of a new Senior Social Work Practitioner and have been asked to be part of upcoming IRO interviews.
- 3.8 The Young Inspectors met face to face as a group in October to start their project on inspecting Supervised Contact Centres across Cambridgeshire. The group used a video tour of the first location to complete their review, while other inspections will be in person. The Young Inspectors came up with creative ideas on how the centre could be improved, to ensure young people get the most out of their family time at the centres. Once all visits have been completed, the Young Inspectors will write their report for the Supervised Contact Team, detailing their recommendations on how to ensure the supervised contact centres are meeting the needs of the children and young people that use them.
- 3.9 In October young people delivered training to prospective Foster Carers as part of the Fostering Team's training course for prospective carers. The young people were supported by the Participation Team to facilitate an activity looking at Foster Carer skills and attributes and went through scenarios with the group on how to help young people settle into new placements. The young people's input ensured the training was meaningful and relevant, and they received glowing feedback from attendees and the Training Lead.

- 3.10 The Care Leaver Forum continues to work on reviewing the information on the Local Offer, in collaboration with the Specialist PA. Throughout the summer a group of Care Leavers had planned and delivered a successful adventure and team building day for Children in Care. To celebrate the success of the project, the group recently enjoyed an activity day where they tried out virtual reality games, indoor rock climbing and indoor sky diving. The group were also able to reflect on the impact of the project on the Children in Care who attended the adventure day as well as the impact on themselves, the skills they developed through the project (and associated training) and their future aspirations. The group worked exceptionally well together to deliver the project and members have already put their names forward for the next project, due to start towards the end of this year.

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
The report above sets out the implications for this priority in section 3.
- 4.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 5. Significant Implications

- 5.1 None.

## 6. Source documents

- 6.1 None.

## Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report has been submitted on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association and Fostering Service.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries they have with the lead officers

Officer contact:  
Name: Fiona Van Den Hout  
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Member contact:  
Names: Cllr Anna Bradnam  
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# Summary

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fostering Service is making headway on achieving the strategic priorities set by Assistant Director, Ricky Cooper. The service is invested and committed to continual improvement and has developed the necessary culture of learning and challenge that will support this journey.

The Head of Service met with the Chair of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association (CFCA), Kevin Arrowsmith, on the 1st November 2021 to review and discuss the contents of the CFCA report and was pleased to note that the CFCA also recognised 'a collaborative drive to improve and implement measured changes that will benefit our children and young people, Foster Carers and others surrounding them'.

The service has reviewed and collated the themes from the Foster Carer Survey conducted in June and monthly meetings are taking place between the service leads and Chairs of the CFCA and Peterborough Foster Carer Committee where the themes will be discussed alongside other key initiatives and service developments.

## 1. Main Issues

### 1. Education

- 1.1. The Sub-Committee is reminded that the Virtual School conducted a survey of carers in November 2020 which was supported by the CFCA. Since the survey was completed, the CFCA has reported the following:
  - The CFCA has been invited to attend the Virtual School Management Board
  - The Chair of the CFCA has participated in Virtual School Personal Education Plan (PEP) audits, supporting the Virtual School's PEP improvement drive
  - The Virtual School has led a Foster Carer workshop where developments within 'Welfare Call' (the Virtual School recording system) have been made. The software company have reconfigured the reporting system to enable direct access for Foster Carers to current and historical PEP's, which be tested shortly.
  - The CFCA participated in a Pupil Voice working group with the Virtual School looking at how the pupil's voice can be better heard.
- 1.2. The Service released a refreshed Foster Carer Training Brochure in July which builds on the training courses offered by the Virtual School. The CFCA report confirms that the Virtual School is asking Foster Carers to be involved in the training it offers, so that the voice of the care experienced child and carer is brought into training delivered to schools.
- 1.3. The 2022 – 2023 Foster Carer Training Programme is in development and Foster Carers as well as other departments within children's services are working with the service to ensure our training offer meets the needs of all our Foster Carers.
- 1.4. The Virtual School has invited Supervising Social Workers and one of their fostering households to a conference in March 2022 which will focus on 'Pupil Voice'. The Chair of the CFCA will also be attending.

- 1.5. Foster Carers have raised their experiences of challenges with the transport to school arrangements in September for Children and Young People. The Head of the Fostering Service acknowledged that staffing pressures within the Children in Care teams did result in some children's request for transport being delayed and the Corporate Parenting Service will ensure that arrangements in September 2022 are organised well in advance.

## 2. Support to Foster Carers

- 2.1. The CFCA has raised that there is a need for a responsive out of hours support package for Foster Carers. In discussion with the CFCA Chair, the service confirmed that a review of the out of hours support line arrangements for Foster Carers, which is predominantly provided by Supervising Social Workers, is underway. The service has received feedback from Foster Carers as to how valuable they have found this resource which is in addition to the Council's Emergency Duty Team (also available to Foster Carers) which operates after office hours, seven days a week. The service's strategic direction is to have a combined support line offer across both Councils which is responsive and also sustainable for the service. The service aims to have this in place by December.
- 2.2. The CFCA raised that Foster Carers need more support in crisis situations. The service is focussing on the support offer to Foster Carers alongside the Children's Social Work Teams. The Stability Meeting process to support care arrangements when they are fragile has been reviewed by colleagues in Corporate Parenting so that the right support approach across the wider system is offered at the right time to carers. The service is also routinely exploring the circumstances behind care arrangements that end in an unplanned and often distressing way for children, to ensure that learning feeds into supervisions with staff and with fostering households.
- 2.3. The CFCA raised that Foster Carers need more support when subject to allegations. All Foster Carers who are subject to allegations are offered independent advocacy and advice through Foster Talk. However, in acknowledging that this process can be isolating and distressing, the service is also exploring with the CFCA and Peterborough Committee Chairs how the emotional health and well-being of Foster Carers can be better supported. Whilst ensuring the timely conclusion of the allegation process is a priority for the service, the service also considers that during this time Foster Carers would benefit from a more formal support offer from Foster Carer Mentors, and this will be included within the revised Mentorship Framework which the service will launch in November.
- 2.4. The CFCA would like more Foster Carers to share their experiences of looking after children with complex needs and behaviours at Support Groups. The service is reviewing all Support Group arrangements held in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough over the coming months and this will be considered as part of that review. A number of Foster Carers have said that they would be willing to share their experiences at Support Groups to provide advice but also to improve the confidence of carers. Progress in regard to this review will be discussed at the monthly meetings with service leads and Chairs.
- 2.5. The CFCA requested the service consider the therapeutic support for Foster Carers, particularly when care arrangements are fragile. Supervising Social Workers are trained in therapeutic parenting interventions and the service is piloting membership of the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting, which includes an offer of individual consultation

sessions to Foster Carers providing strategies, techniques, and advice. The service is also providing a six weekly Therapeutic Parenting course as part of its core training offer.

- 2.6. The CFCA raised that the matching of children to carers needs to be improved with more accurate information about a child contained within the information Foster Carers receive. In recognising this this is as an area for continual improvement, a working group is in progress to action improvements which includes attendance from the Independent Reviewing Service, Commissioning, children's teams and includes Foster Carer representation.
- 2.7. The CFCA has asked the service to review how risks associated with behaviours are identified and mitigated against in placement planning meetings and placement plans for children. The service in collaboration with Foster Carer Mentors and children's Social Workers will take this action forward.

### 3. Payments to Foster Carers

- 3.1 A new fostering fee payment structure was launched across both Councils in September 2020. The CFCA raised that Foster Carers have waited since then for consultation on other payments made to Foster Carers, such as mileage payments, and clarification around expectations of pocket money and savings for Children in Care. The service launched this consultation in November which will conclude in December.
- 3.2 A revised Foster Carer Handbook will be launched following the conclusion of the consultation, which will provide Foster Carers with full payment information, a fostering structure chart, clear information about the role of each part of the service and what to do if Foster Carers are concerned about any issue which needs to be addressed by the service, beyond the discussions they have with their Supervising Social Worker.
- 3.3. The CFCA noted that a growing number of older children with more complex needs are requiring family-based care and often in an emergency. Ensuring that the service has the right offer to Foster Carers willing to provide care to this cohort of children is a strategic priority, so that children are not moving to live with carers who are not supported by our skilled and experienced Social Workers or move as a result to fostering households at a distance from their support networks. Alongside this, the service has also reviewed the Accreditation Level Standards (skills level matrix), providing clear expectations linked to each Accreditation Level and how Foster Carers can evidence that they have met the standards.
- 3.4 The service is working to resolve carer dissatisfaction as soon as it arises and has introduced a clear process for Supervising Social Worker's to support escalation of any concerns that Foster Carers may have with their line manager and, if necessary, the Service Manager for the Support and Supervision function will also provide support to resolve. This is an important element in the service's retention strategy. In addition, the Household Review and Practice Standards Team monitors all feedback, positive and negative, and has introduced an exit interview process (as discussed at the last Sub Committee) for when Foster Carers notify the service of their decision to resign. This will ensure lessons are learned within the service and a quarterly service newsletter has also been introduced which will highlight learning from service audit activity as part of the Fostering Audit Programme introduced in September.

## 4. Staffing

- 4.1 The service is pleased to report that it has had success with social work recruitment and crucially the function that supervises and supports Foster Carers is now fully staffed. Recruitment to the remaining vacant posts elsewhere in the service is a priority however, the service is experiencing the same challenges in Social Worker recruitment as the wider system is experiencing and is slower than hoped.

## 5. Recruitment

- 5.1 The CFCA raised that recruitment campaigns need to be more specific and reflective of the professional role Foster Carers undertake. The service has reviewed the messaging used in recruitment campaigns as well as revising the entire fostering website. In addition, the service has introduced a Foster Carer Recruitment Ambassador role and at this early stage is looking to engage six Foster Carers across both Councils with an interest in working alongside the service to engage local communities, partners, and businesses to raise the awareness of fostering as a career and advance our marketing strategies and recruitment campaigns. Ambassadors will also meet with prospective applicants to share their experience of fostering and help the service to dispel some of the myths that can prevent enquirers taking the next step and submitting their applications to foster.

- 5.2 The service has introduced a first year of fostering programme, 'Next Steps', which will continue to be developed. The 'Next Steps' programme includes:
- An individualised training and support programme tailored to meet the needs of new carers.
  - Linking carers in assessment with an experienced Foster Carers who will continue to act as their Mentor.
  - Training to enhance therapeutic parenting awareness and skills
  - Providing new Foster Carers with practical evidenced based techniques and strategies

### 5.3 Update on Foster Carer Survey

In line with the subcommittee theme on education, the below table details the thematic responses received in the Foster Carer Survey relating to training and how the service has used the feedback to develop the training offer to Foster Carers:

<b>Foster Carers told us:</b>	<b>The Fostering Service responded:</b>
<b>We need to improve and provide a more in-depth skills to foster training</b>	The Skills to Foster training programme has been refreshed to include additional content relating to therapeutic parenting and also updated concepts and terminology to reflect society today. E-learning modules (for example Internet Safety and Health and Nutrition) have been introduced as well as Discussion Forums with experienced carers. Pre-approval training will continue to be reviewed by the training focus group which includes Foster Carer representation and attendance from workforce development. The aim is to improve the preparation and confidence of carers, so they are able to care for the children we need them to when approved.

**New carers need a better training programme when newly approved**

The service has developed a first year of fostering framework called 'Next Steps' which as well as carers being able to attend generic training also includes practical information Foster Carers need when their first child comes to live with them and a bespoke series of workshops which include child development, managing behaviours toolbox, Diversity & Identify-inclusive fostering and Looking after Yourself & Building Resilience.

**Experienced carers want more in depth therapeutic training**

The Mentoring Scheme has been revised to provide a combined Mentorship Framework and will be launched in November. All new Foster Carers will be matched with a Mentor during their pre-approval journey. The service will also be offering Mentors Mentorship training through Cambridgeshire Skills and training on allegations as the service recognises that some Foster Carers would benefit from a Mentor when subject to investigations.

**Foster Carers would like more specialised training for carers looking after children with disabilities and complex health needs**

The service is piloting membership for 15 households to the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting. Members can access resources, forums, peer support, 1:1 consultation and much more. The pilot will be evaluated alongside Foster Carers in January 2022 and if the outcome is favourable, the service hopes to build on the offer of membership.

**Foster Carers would like specific training to support them with managing challenging behaviours and more in-depth training that focuses on practices and tools to change carers parenting approach. Foster Carers would also like more training targeted at looking after older children and teenagers which is co delivered alongside carers who already care for this age range and training that focusses more on practical skills and theory-based practices**

The service has also commissioned a 6 week Parenting Therapeutically course. So far 10 fostering households have attended the training with a further 20 households booked to attend.

**Foster Carers want us to provide more training that is face to face rather than e learning/virtual and a mixture of courses that are run during the week when children are at school, in the evenings and at weekends**

The service is developing this offer with colleagues in the 0-25 service and a Foster Carer from Peterborough has offered to co facilitate training. This year the service has also commissioned 'Think Autism' training which is a combination of training and discussion groups. Where needed, specialist training is arranged with the relevant health professionals for a specific child.

The service is working alongside commissioning and Early Help colleagues to develop a bid to the Youth Endowment Fund aiming to provide an evidenced based Triple P Parenting Programme suited to Foster Carers with the goal of increasing knowledge, skills and confidence and reducing the prevalence of mental health, emotional and behavioural difficulties in children and adolescents. A Positive Behaviour Support training course has run twice so far this year.

The service has just delivered its first hybrid Skills to Foster training, which was a mixture of face-to-face training on a Saturday and virtual training in the evenings. The service does recognise the importance of new carers meeting other carers but finding suitably large training venues remains a challenge due to Covid restrictions.

<p><b>Foster Carers value experienced foster carers attending training to share their experiences and positive examples so others can learn</b></p> <p><b>Foster carers would like care experienced young people to be involved in training sessions with new and existing carers</b></p> <p><b>Foster carers told us that the TSDS document is too onerous and asked us to explore whether there are better ways of supporting carers to complete it</b></p>	<p>The service is hoping to invite experienced carers to co-facilitate the Next Steps workshops, experienced carers already support training courses such as 'Moving Children on to Adoption' and Skills to Foster attendees value learning and talking with the approved foster carers who attend.</p> <p>The Skills to Foster training includes care experienced young people joining for some of the course. The service will continue to explore opportunities with colleagues in the participation team to build on this.</p> <p>TSDS are a required set of Standards defined by the Department of Education which mainstream Foster Carers are expected to evidence completion of within a year of being approved. The TSDS workbook is understandably thorough but the service will undertake a review in early 2022 to explore how the workbook can be made more accessible.</p>
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### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The entire report is aligned with this priority as the Fostering Service is responsible for delivering safe, secure and local foster homes for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care

- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 None.

### 5. Source documents

- 5.1 None.

### 6. Accessibility

- 6.1: An accessible version of this report is available on request from [Fiona van den Hout](#)



## Virtual School Head Teacher's Annual Report

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2020

From: Virtual School Head Teacher

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: Promote the education outcomes of care experienced children.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

a) note and comment on the report

### Officer contact:

Name: Claire Hiorns  
Post: Virtual School Head Teacher  
Email: [virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Role: Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee  
Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to detail and evaluate the work undertaken by the Virtual School from September 2020 to August 2021 and to set out the key priorities for the academic year 2021-2022. It is also to share the outcomes for children in care. This includes where children are placed in the country, the OFSTED ratings of the schools, attendance, exclusions, destination data for post 16 and information on personal education plans. This year information on attainment and progress is not reported. This is inline with government recommendations. This is because of the changes to assessments and exams owing to COVID.

There is also information in the report on the work of the Virtual School for children previously in care. For these children and young people the Virtual School is a source of advice and information.

## 2. Background

Every local authority in England must appoint at least one person to fulfil the local authority's statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of its children in care, wherever they live or are educated. This person is called the Head of the Virtual School. Within Cambridgeshire we have a team of education professionals that supports the Virtual School Head in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School support children and young people between the ages of 2 and 18. The Virtual School brings together information about children and young people who are in the care of Cambridgeshire as if they attend a single school.

Additionally, Cambridgeshire Virtual School provide information and advice for children previously in care including those who have been adopted from care and those under special guardianship and child arrangement orders. Cambridgeshire Virtual School are responsible for children previously in care attending a Cambridgeshire school or education setting.

The Virtual School has a non-statutory strategic leadership role for children who have or have had a social worker. This was introduced in September 2021.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School sits within the Education Directorate. The Virtual School Head is line managed by the Director of Education. The Virtual School has a 'management board' which offers both challenge and support to the work and direction of the Virtual School.

The Virtual School Headteacher's report is a statutory requirement.

## 3. Main Issues

3.1 Please find the full report attached

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

4.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 4.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The report above sets out the implications for this

#### 4.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

The report above sets out the implications for this

#### 4.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 4.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

The report above sets out the implications for this

### 5. Significant Implications

#### 5.1 Resource Implications

- Resources are provided through the Virtual School core budget, dedicated schools grant funding, pupil premium plus and previously in care funding.

#### 5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

- There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- The role of the Virtual School Head Teacher is statutory
- The Virtual School Head Teacher's report is a statutory requirement. All requirements for reporting have been met within the content of the report.

#### 5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

- The report above sets out the implications for this

#### 5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

- The report above sets out the implications for this

#### 5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5.7 Public Health Implications

- There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

- There are no significant implications within this category.

## 6. Source documents

### 6.1 None

## 7. Accessibility

- 7.1 An accessible version of the appendices to this report are available on request from [virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

# Cambridgeshire Virtual School



## The Annual Report of the Virtual School Head Academic Year 2020/2021

### Annual Statement from Chair of Virtual School Management Board:

Amongst many, three things stand out from this annual report, which reflects the positive assessment of performance concluded by board members through their professional challenge in meetings this year. First, even with the constraining effect of a global pandemic, the trajectory of travel of continued improvement in the operational delivery of the Virtual School is of great credit to the head, her committed team, the learners concerned and the valued resource commitment afforded by the local authority under the oversight of the two service directors. Second, the Virtual School's work is increasingly much better aligned to an evidence-led approach to meeting the needs of learners, and whilst this assimilation highlights the continued need to address significant opportunity gaps, it justifies the high expectations, hard conversations and focus leveraged by a designated service team that is being well led. Finally, it demonstrates the importance and effect of good relational as well as structural approaches, not least in focusing on giving greater professional challenge, advice and support to the hard working practitioners in our schools and communities in the face of the often very challenging individual circumstances of learners. The board looks forward to continuing to support this committed and able team, not least given the strong base now in evidence following the changes in approach and aspiration introduced by the headteacher since her appointment.

Andrew Read

### Annual Statement from Director of Education:

This report outlines the ongoing improvement journey for the Virtual School. Impact is critical and the strategic planning and operational delivery have changed life chances for the children of the Cambridgeshire Virtual School. Partnership and shared understanding of the important of children in care educational outcomes have flourished. Covid-19 has not been a barrier for effective support and challenge but there remains work to be done as we emerge from the pandemic. This report outlines the plans and targets we have in place to continue to improve. We have the highest aspirations for our young people and this is mirrored in the Virtual School. The effective and often understated leadership and dedication of the staff have been transformational for the benefit of those children and young people in our care. I am grateful to the members of the Virtual School Management Board for their support and leadership during the year.

Jon Lewis

### Annual Statement from the Director of Children's Services:

It goes without saying that our children and young people in care have experienced a year like no other in the 2020/21 academic year. Schools have played an incredible role in continuing to support children in care throughout lockdown periods with the exceptional support provided by them, in turn, by our Virtual School.

Many children and young people in care have already experienced disruption to their learning, making the potential impact of periods of lockdown even greater. Indications that this may be the case can be found within this report in, for example, analysis of some increased suspensions in the autumn term, particularly among year 7 pupils who missed out on the careful transitional arrangements that are available in other years.

But despite these challenges, the real stars of this report are our children and young people themselves; with the dedicated support from schools and the virtual school, they continue to make incredible progress, as available progress and destination data and their individual stories continue to evidence. A great achievement in any context, let alone one framed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lou Williams

# Report Index

## Background and Educational Context of the Children in Care of Cambridgeshire Virtual School

- 1 Context and Role of the Virtual School
- 2 Children in Care Characteristics
- 3 Virtual School Cohort Characteristics
- 4 Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
- 5 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)
- 6 Cambridgeshire Schools and Out of County Schools
- 7 Educational Provision Ofsted Judgments (Statutory School Age)

## Engagement in Education

- 8 Attendance, Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions
- 9 Children Missing Education (CME)

## Learning Outcomes

Sections **10, 11, 12, 13, and 14** of this report which would have addressed progress and attainment of Children in Care are omitted this year. This is because of the Covid-19 pandemic, see explanation below.

Formal examinations and assessments did not take place and grades were based on a range of information including centre assessed grades for KS4 and KS5. The Virtual School has collected results as in previous years.

The Department for Education have been clear that outcomes and other related data should only be used to ensure young people transition successfully to the next stage of their education, employment or training and aggregated data should not be used for comparisons or performance benchmarking. All those working with schools and colleges, such as Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams and local authorities, will use data from previous years when assessing school and college performance, and not the 2021 data. Therefore, in line with these recommendations, there is not any aggregated data or comparisons included within this report.

The current situation is unprecedented; the Virtual School is committed to working with schools/settings, carers, social workers, and young people to ensure that any additional support is facilitated.

- 15 Destinations: KS4 and KS5
- 16 Destinations for June 2021
- 17 Aspirations

## PEPs and Pupil Premium

- 18 Personal Education Plans
- 19 Quality of PEPs
- 20 Pupil Premium Allocation

## Additional Responsibilities

- 21 Children Previously in Care

## Definitions

Group or Key Terms	Number of Students	Definition
<b>Pupils on Roll (May 2021) Academic Year 2020-2021</b>	671	Total number of Children in Care (CiC) that the Cambridgeshire Virtual School were responsible for. The Cambridgeshire Virtual School works with children and young people from when they begin early years education (aged 2) to 18. Where a young person is accessing education at 18, the virtual school continues to be actively involved until they finish year 13.  The actual Virtual School cohort is fluid, with children entering and exiting care by way of reunification, adoption, special guardianship orders or child arrangement orders, or reaching adulthood throughout the year.
<b>School Age 5-16</b>	429	Total number of children and young people aged 5 – 16 that Cambridgeshire Virtual School were responsible for during the Academic Year.  The statutory school ages are reception to year 11. Data for the Early Years cohort sometimes includes the Reception (Year 0) data.
<b>DfE Eligible Cohort</b>	369	Total number of Children in Care currently who have been in care for the full period April 1st – March 31st that Cambridgeshire Virtual School were responsible for this year.  In this report the end of year results (Summer 2021) refers to the students in care for 12 months from April 2020-March 2021.
<b>Cambridgeshire Schools</b>	146 (282 Pupils)	Cambridgeshire Children in Care in Cambridgeshire schools, Early Years Settings and Further Education Providers. The figure does not include any children where the adoption has been finalised (awaiting Liquid Logic closure), those with no recorded school or Post 16 who are NEET.
<b>Out of Area Schools</b>	198 (327 pupils)	Cambridgeshire CiC in Other Local Authority (OLA) Schools, Early Years Settings and Further Education Providers. The figure does not include any children where the adoption has been finalised (awaiting Liquid Logic closure), those with No recorded School or Post 16 who are NEET.  Many children are placed in settings outside of our authority – however they remain the responsibility of Cambridgeshire Virtual School for their entire time in care.
<b>Children in Care from other local authorities (OLA) educated in Cambridgeshire</b>	91	Total number of OLA children in care aged 2 to 18 registered in Liquid Logic during the academic year.  Cambridgeshire schools have Children in Care from many other local authority virtual schools.  We give advice and support where appropriate/requested, to other Virtual Schools but they remain the responsibility of the home Local Authority who are their Corporate Parent.  All Cambridgeshire schools can attend Cambridgeshire Virtual School training at no cost, regardless of whether they have Cambridgeshire Children in Care on roll.
<b>SEND</b>	271	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. (All ages)  This is the figure for all pupils on roll with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a need for Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.
<b>EHCP</b>	164 (Plus 10 under assessment)	Education Health and Care Plan (All ages)  Children with significant special needs (meeting the threshold within the SEND Code of Practice) must be provided with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) this obliges schools and those working with the young person to work to an agreed plan of support to manage their individual needs. An EHCP is issued to a child after an assessment of their needs is carried out by the SEND team from the Local Authority in which they live. The plan is reviewed regularly and is statutory. An EHCP can be for cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social, emotional, and mental health, or physical and sensory needs.
<b>SEN Support</b>	97	School Support Students (All ages)  Students with SEN needs that are not as significant will still need SEN support, this is organised at a school level.
<b>No SEN/Not captured</b>	400	Number of pupils on roll who do not have an SEN requirement or where the data has not been captured (at the time of the reporting period (May 2021))

Cohorts of students

## Glossary

Group or Key Terms	Definition	Comments
<b>Progress 8</b>	Progress 8 shows the students' progress across 8 subjects. This is calculated by subtracting the students estimated attainment (calculated from KS2 scores at the end of Primary school) from their actual attainment. This will be shown as a + or -. For example, 0.5 would represent a student being on average half a grade above expectation.	<p>This measure was introduced and replaces previous measures based around the former A*-C grading system for GCSEs.</p> <p>This change was made because the data from the previous examination system did not reflect the progress that a child made over time, from the end of Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.</p> <p>The average expected progress score is 0.</p> <p>If fewer than 8 subjects are taken, the score will be reduced further; for example, dropping a subject, will affect the overall score by approximately -0.5.</p>
<b>Attainment 8</b>	The Attainment 8 score is a measure that enables all students are compared rather than those on the cusp of grade boundaries	<p>This measure was introduced to the KS4 examination system in England because previous measures were not demonstrating attainment from a wide range of subjects.</p> <p>However, the attainment 8 measure can give a negative score to a child who does not sit 8 or more GCSE examinations.</p>
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages	ESOL courses can include areas such as survival English, functional language, specific speaking and listening skills, and sociocultural information. They often have an element of citizenship training.
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language	There were 17 children in Care of statutory school age and 17 in year groups 12 & 13 who entered care in 2020-21 who did not speak English. 13 of these children were recorded as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (USAC).
<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers. While their claim is processed, they are cared for by a local authority.
<b>CiC</b>	Children in Care	The statutory guidance refers to looked after children; Cambridgeshire children have rejected this term in favour of Children in Care (CiC). The terms looked after child and children in care have the same meaning.
<b>CPiC</b>	Children Previously in Care	CPiC refers to a child who left care on an order, typically a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order or Adoption order. The virtual school has a duty to provide information and advice to the parents / guardians, education professionals, and other associated professionals, where the child attends a Cambridgeshire education setting. This was added to the Virtual School remit in September 2018.
<b>PEP</b>	Personal Education Plan	The PEP is the education plan. It forms part of the wider care planning for the child. This plan is statutory, it is reviewed each term. PEPS begin when a child enrolls in early years education (from aged 2) and continues until the child turns 18. When a young person turns 18 and is in education, PEPs continue until the end of the academic year.
<b>PP+</b>	Pupil Premium Plus	PP+ is additional funding for children in early years provision (the year before they start school) and for children in reception to the end of year 11. The funding is managed by the Virtual School and is used to promote education outcomes.
<b>NEET EET</b>	Not in Employment Education or Training Education, Employment or Training	NEET refers to young people that have finished year 11 and are not in education, employment, or training. EET refers to young people that have finished year 11 and are in education, employment, or training.
<b>Key Stage (KS)</b>	<p>Early Years Foundation Stage = Age 0-5, Pre-school, Nursery and Reception</p> <p>Key Stage 1 = Age 5-7, Years 1 and 2.</p> <p>Key Stage 2 = Age 7-11, Years 3-6</p> <p>Key Stage 3 = Age 11 – 14, Years 7-9</p> <p>Key Stage 4 = Age 14 – 16, Years 10 and 11</p> <p>Key Stage 5 = Age 16+ following the completion of year 11.</p>	The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages' (KS). At the end of each key stage, there is a formal assessment.
<b>DT</b>	Designated Teacher	It is statutory for all schools to have a designated teacher, whether they currently have children in care on roll or not.
<b>DP</b>	Designated Person	In Early years settings and for Post 16 providers the role is termed DP as the member of staff does not have to be a qualified teacher
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	<b>For Cambridgeshire our Statistical Neighbours are</b> Hertfordshire, Wiltshire, West Berkshire, West, Sussex, Bath & North East Somerset, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire	Many sections of this report refer to similar Local Authorities that would be expected to have similar statistical data. This provides a more contextual comparison than purely national data alone.

## Context and Role of the Virtual School

### 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail and evaluate the work undertaken by the Virtual School from September 2020 to August 2021 and to set out the key priorities for the academic year 2021-2022. Furthermore, it is to share the outcomes of the qualifying cohort (children in the care of Cambridgeshire County council for a year or more as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021). This year the report also details outcomes (as relevant) to all children in care.

### 1.1 Context

Every local authority in England must appoint at least one person to fulfil the local authority's statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of its children in care, wherever they live or are educated. This person is called the Head of the Virtual School. Within Cambridgeshire we have a team of education professionals that supports the Virtual School Head in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School support children and young people between the ages of 2 and 18. The Virtual School brings together information about children and young people who are in the care of Cambridgeshire as if they attend a single school.

Additionally, Cambridgeshire Virtual School provide information and advice for children previously in care including those who have been adopted from care and those under special guardianship and child arrangement orders. Cambridgeshire Virtual School are responsible for children previously in care attending a Cambridgeshire school or education setting.

The Virtual School has a non-statutory strategic leadership role for children who have or have had a social worker. This commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School sits within the Education Directorate. The Virtual School Head is line managed by the Director of Education. The Virtual School has a 'management board' which offers both challenge and support to the work and direction of the Virtual School.

### 1.2 Role of the Virtual School

#### Vision

All care-experienced children and young people (CYP) will have the opportunities, experience, and support to enable them to learn, aspire, thrive, and achieve their maximum potential.

#### Guiding Principles

- The voice of the CYP is of paramount importance
- All care experienced CYP will receive high quality education which is inspiring and challenging, resulting in the best possible outcomes, thus closing the educational gap between these CYP and those who are not care experienced
- Every care experienced CYP will have a positive educational experience which promotes social and emotional learning and wellbeing alongside academic success to ensure readiness for adulthood
- Every school and setting will be empowered to enable our children to thrive
- The Virtual School will meet the needs of care experienced CYP through effective liaison and integrated work with all key partners

#### Offer

To ensure all Children in Care have a high-quality PEP and that the Pupil Premium Plus grant is used to maximise educational outcomes

To promote the aspirations and educational achievement of care-experienced children and young people

To deliver training which addresses the needs of care experienced children and young people to education providers, social workers, carers, and other key partners

#### Achievement through Schools

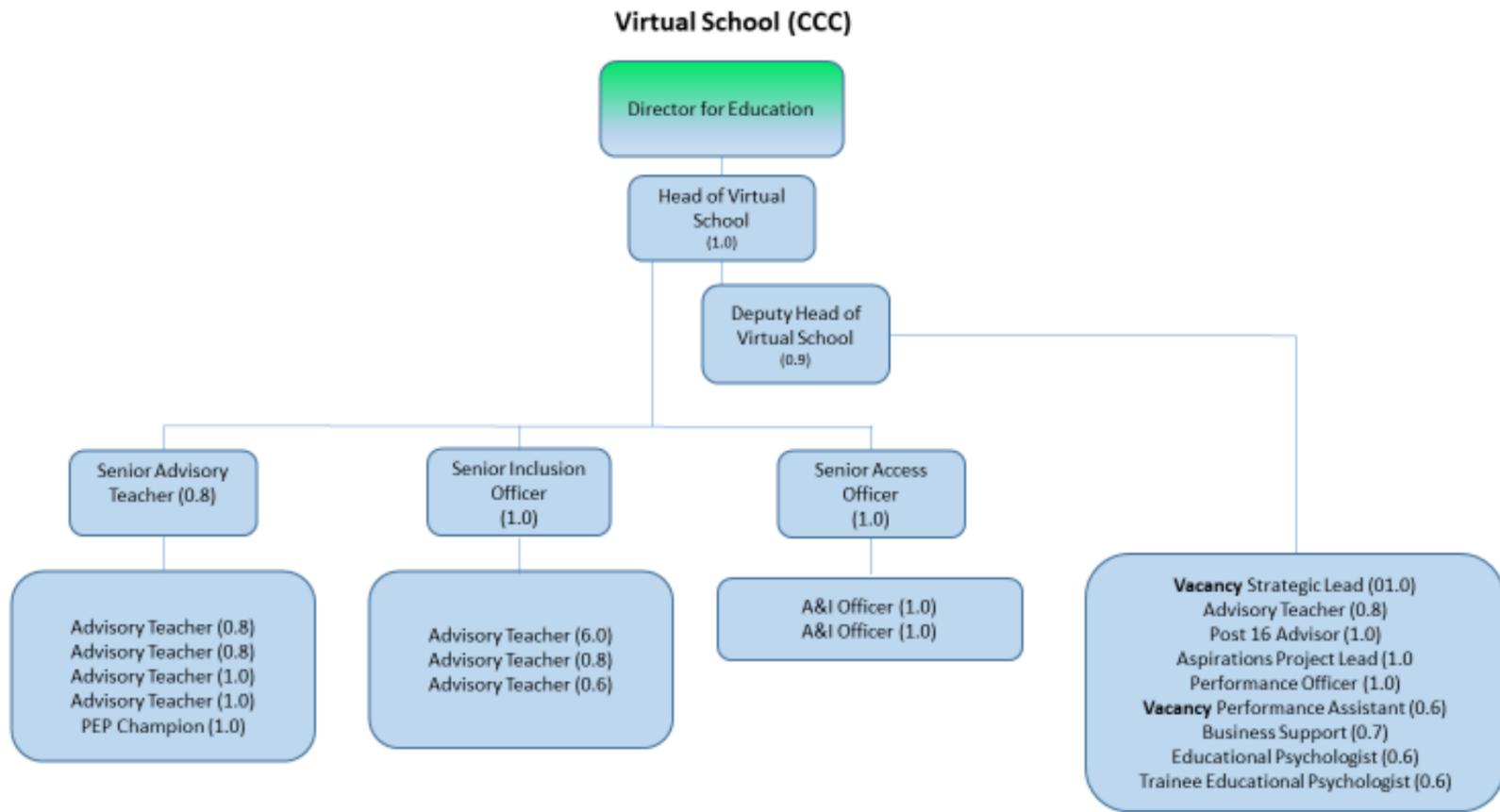
- To support and challenge settings, schools, and providers to understand and meet the statutory requirements for the education of care-experienced children and young people
- To promote culture, policy and practice within schools which take account of the specific vulnerabilities of care experienced children and young people
- To effectively analyse and use data to maximise attainment and progress

#### Achievement through Inclusion

- To challenge and support barriers to inclusion to improve outcomes
- To improve inclusion through early intervention and preventative practice
- To work in partnership with services within and beyond the LA to challenge and support

#### Achievement through Access

- To hold a detailed knowledge of individual schools and settings to secure the best provision
- To support the admissions process to avoid drift
- To improve access to education through close partnership working with key partners within and beyond the LA

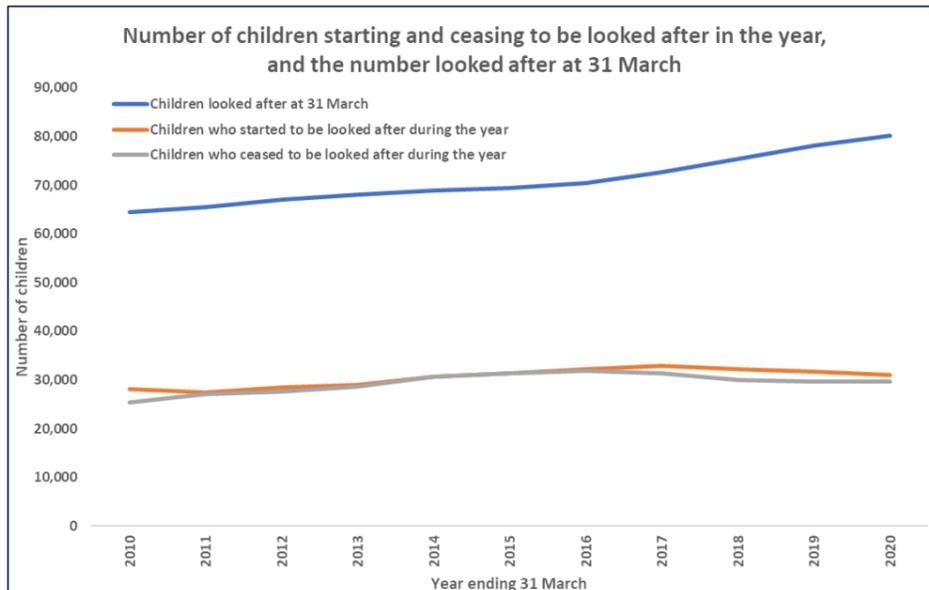


September 2021

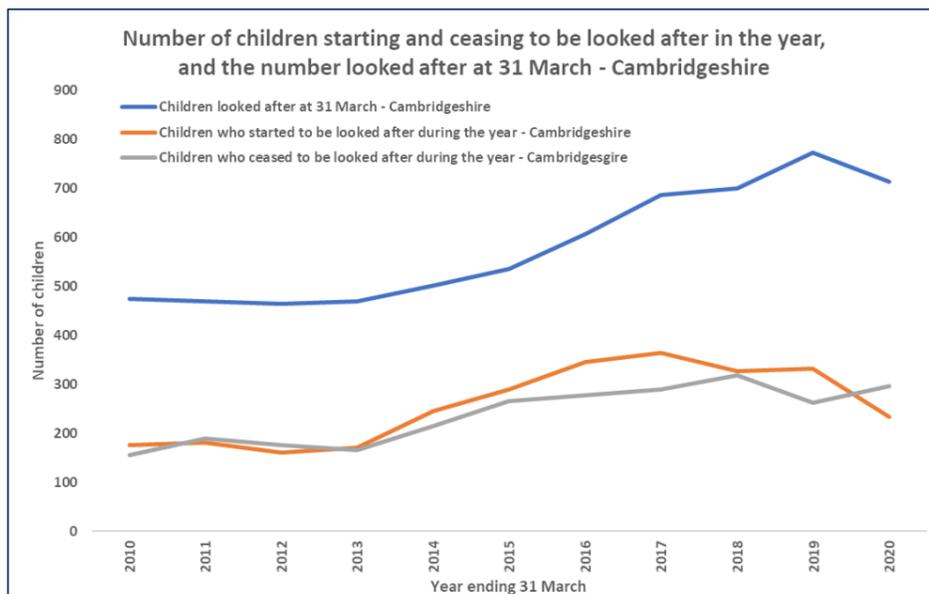
## 2.0 Children in Care Characteristics

### National & Cambridgeshire Figures for All Children in Care (0-18)

#### 2.1 National Figures for Children in Care



#### Cambridgeshire Figures for Children in Care



- The graphs refer to children aged 0-18. Data source: [Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics/looked-after-children)
- It is important to note that children come in and out of care every week.

### Comments

Nationally, 30,000 students (approx. 600 per week) come into care each year. Some stay in care for just a few days, others until they reach adulthood.

The figures shown are for all children in care from 0-18.

The national to Cambridgeshire 10-year trend charts (see opposite) show that nationally there has been a relatively stable number of children starting or ceasing to be in care.

Since 2016, the national figures show that number of children in care are increasing.

When looking at the much smaller Cambridgeshire cohort, at less than 1% of the national figure, it is worth noting that any trends will be magnified by the smaller numbers.

Between 2013 and 2017 the number of Children in Care (in Cambridgeshire) began increasing, this number has started to decrease since 2019.

The trend for children ceasing to be in care during the year (ending 31 March 2020) is beginning to increase - following a drop in numbers between 2018 and 2019. This will also have a positive impact on the overall number of children in care. The decrease in numbers of children in care co-insides with the introduction of the family safeguarding model in Cambridgeshire.

### National Figures by Gender and Age Groups (for All Children in Care (0-18))

#### 2.2

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>All children looked after 31st March</b>	<b>70,410</b>	<b>72,610</b>	<b>75,370</b>	<b>78,140</b>	<b>80,080</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>70,410</b>	<b>72,610</b>	<b>75,370</b>	<b>78,140</b>	<b>80,080</b>
Male	39,660	40,930	42,290	44,020	44,990
Female	30,750	31,680	33,080	34,120	35,090
<b>Age at 31 March (years)</b>	<b>70,410</b>	<b>72,610</b>	<b>75,370</b>	<b>78,140</b>	<b>80,080</b>
Under 1 year	3,540	3,820	4,260	4,110	4,130
1 to 4 years	9,090	9,110	9,790	10,460	10,850
5 to 9 years	14,070	14,090	14,300	14,420	14,700
10 to 15 years	27,250	28,570	29,740	30,770	31,370
16 years and over	16,460	17,020	17,280	18,390	19,030

Source: [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

Cambridgeshire uses the phrase 'Children in Care' rather than national phrase 'Looked After Children'.

### Comments

#### The National figures comparison

Note this is the "fixed point number" rather than the "during the year numbers" as shown in Section 2.1.

Headline Facts and Figures 2020 – Published 10 December 2020.

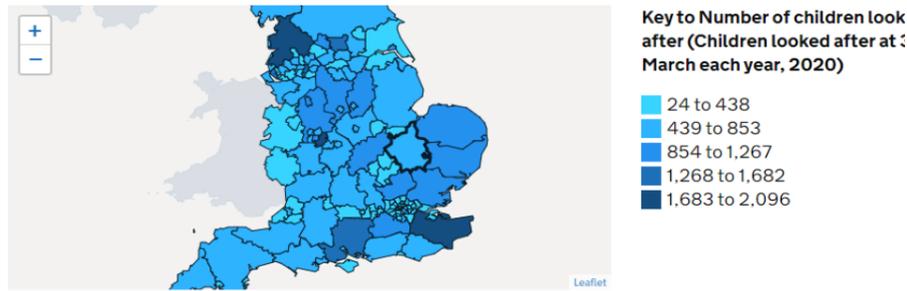
2020 One-year comparison		
Children in Care	↑	2% increase on last year. Rate is 67 per 10,000 children
Children starting to be in care	↓	3% decrease on last year
Children in care who were adopted	↓	4% decrease on last year. This continues the fall seen since a peak of 5,360 adoptions in 2015

2020 Five-year comparison		
Secondary school aged children (10 to 15)	↑	risen by 15.1%. over 5 years
Pre-school (1 to 4)	↑	highest percentage increase over 5 years at 19.4%
Students in care	↑	risen 13.7% over five years

## National & Cambridgeshire Children in Care Placements

## Comments

### 2.3 Children looked after on 31 March 2020, by local authority, numbers, and rates per 10,000 children



#### Cambridgeshire

Number of children looked after (Children looked after at 31 March each year, 2020)

**714**

Rate per 10 000 children aged under 18 years (Children looked after at 31 March each year, 2020)

**52**

Source: [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The map shows the number Children in Care on 31 March 2020, by local authority, numbers, and rates per 10,000 children. Cambridgeshire fall into the second category for rates between 439 to 853. Five of the neighbouring local authorities have higher numbers of children in care.

#### National Headlines

The majority of the 80,080 CiC are placed in a foster placement, where an approved carer looks after the child - 72%.

Placement stability is important - most CiC (68%) had one placement in the year but 11% had three or more.

The majority of CiC were placed within 20 miles of home - 73% - but 20% were not. Information for the remaining 7% was not known or not reported.

#### Cambridgeshire Comparison As at 09/03/2021

The majority of the 637 children in care are placed in a foster placement, where an approved carer looks after the child - 73%.

30 children (on roll at the virtual school) had 3 or more placements – 5% of the total number of children in care.

The number of children in care placed within 20 miles of home - 43%, 48% - over 20 miles from home and 8% - unknown or not reported

Source: Liquid Logic April 2020 – March 2021

## 3.0 Virtual School Cohort Characteristics

### Cohort Numbers for All Pupils on Roll (May 2021)

### Comments

#### 3.1

2020	Category	Total	Boys	Girls	Gender Other
	Number of All Children on Roll	716	414	302	0
% of full Cohort	100%	58%	42%	0%	
Total Number (Reception) 0 - Y11 (School Age)	470	264	206	0	
% of School Age Cohort	100%	56%	44%	0%	
Early Years	92	45	47	0	
% of Early Years Cohort	100%	49%	51%	0%	
Total Number of Post 16	154	105	49	0	
% of Post 16 Cohort	100%	68%	32%	0%	

2021	Category	Total	Boys	Girls	Gender Other
	Number of All Children on Roll	671	385	280	6
% of full Cohort	100%	54%	39%	1%	
Total Number (Reception) 0 - Y11 (School Age)	429	234	194	1	
% of School Age Cohort	100%	55%	45%	0%	
Total Number of Early Years	44	23	21	0	
% of Early Years Cohort	100%	52%	48%	0%	
Total Number of Post 16	198	128	65	5	
% of Post 16 Cohort	100%	65%	33%	2%	

The number of Children in Care on roll with the Virtual School has remained constant for this reporting period (May 2021) and the previous reporting period (May 2020).

In the last reporting period, there were 716 pupils on roll (57 pupils aged 2 or under were included in the statistics), bringing the comparable number to 659 for May 2020.

In this reporting period, 11 early years pupils were in the adoption process, adjusting the figures brings the number of pupils on roll in May 2021 to 660.

There has been a drop in the number of statutory school age pupils and an increase in the number of post 16 pupils.

May 2020 and May 2021 Comparison		
All Children on Roll	↓	Decrease of 45 pupils
School Age	↓	Decrease of 41 Pupils
Early Years	↓	Decrease of 48, however 57, 2-year old's or under were included in the figures for last year
Post 16	↑	Increase of 44 pupils

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

### Cohort Numbers by Year Group for Pupils on Roll

### Comments

3.2

Age at End of Year	Year Group	Gender			Grand Total
		Male	Female	Other	
2	-3	5	5		10
3	-2	6	6		12
4	-1	7	4		11
5	0	5	6		11
Grand Total		23	21		44

Age at End of Year	Year Group	Gender			Grand Total	Phase
		Male	Female	Other		
5	0	5	6		11	Primary
6	1	4	8		12	
7	2	11	7		18	
8	3	13	12		25	
9	4	10	24		34	
10	5	12	18		30	
11	6	20	13		33	
12	7	36	15		51	Secondary
13	8	24	20		44	
14	9	30	27		57	
15	10	35	18	1	54	
16	11	31	21		52	
NA	Other	3	5		8	
Grand Total		234	194	1	429	

Age at End of Year	Year Group	Gender			Grand Total
		Male	Female	Other	
17	12	70	32		102
18	13	57	33	5	95
NA	Ceased CLA	1			1
Grand Total		128	65	5	198

#### Early Years

- Children are often in care for shorter periods compared to those of statutory school age (Year 1 – 11).
- Even at this age over 52% are boys – this is slightly lower than the national figures.

#### Statutory School Age Children

- The numbers of children in care rises by year group.
- 55% of the children in care are boys and this is in-line with national figures.
- From Year 6 to Year 11 the number of male children in care are greater than the number of female children in care.
- Year 4 has the largest number of female children in care compared to males; while Year 7 has the largest number of male children in care compared to female children in care.

#### Post 16

- The numbers of students who are in care at Post 16 is higher than at KS4 (198 compared to 106).
- The number of males is almost twice the number of females, which is greater than national figures.
- These figures are in line with previous years
- Post 16 students account for almost 30% of the Virtual School overall cohort.

#### Notes

Figures are from Welfare Call (May 2021)

There are slight differences in the numbers on Welfare Call and Liquid Logic as processes for closure vary between Liquid Logic and Welfare Call.

Other - 8 Pupils are not included in the statutory school age year group analysis – 7 are in the adoption process & 1 is outside the UK.

Ceased CiC – 1 Post 16 pupil ceased to be a child in care

11 children in the early years cohort are in the adoption process and will cease to be children in care.

## 4.0 Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

### SEND Comparison (All Children in Care)

4.1	% of CLA students with an EHCP / Statement	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Cambridgeshire	36.3	33.0	31.0	29.4	33.6
	East of England	29.4	29.3	28.6	28.5	30.3
	Statistical Neighbours	30.4	30.7	31.6	33.5	34.2
	England	27.0	26.4	26.1	26.8	27.7

	% of CLA students with SEND Support (K)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Cambridgeshire	24.6	26.2	22.5	24.3	27.7
	East of England	28.4	28.4	27.7	27.9	27.0
	Statistical Neighbours	29.5	30.5	29.1	29.3	26.0
	England	30.4	29.4	28.9	28.5	28.1

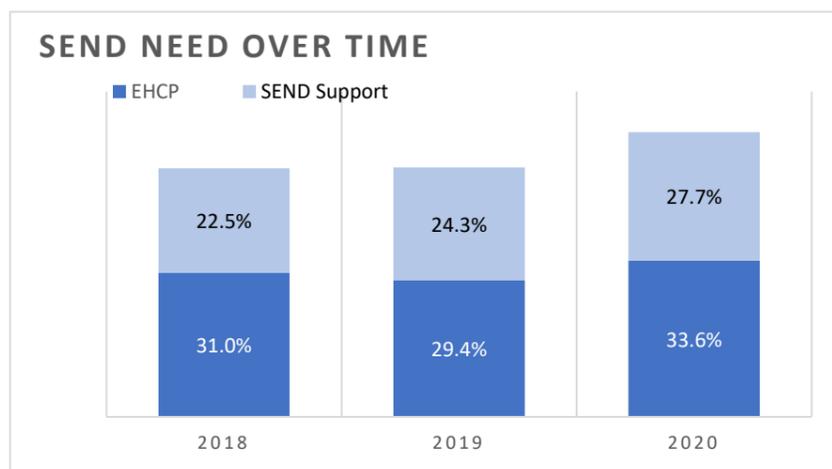
### Comments

33.6% of children in care have an EHCP which is higher than the 2019 figure of 29.4% but broadly in-line with previous years. The national CiC cohort figure is 27.7% & statistical neighbour average is 34.2%. The national percentage for EHCPs for all children is only 3.7%. (DfE 2021).

The percentage of Cambridgeshire CiC who require special or additional support without an EHCP is currently 27.7%. The national percentage for all children is 12.2%. (DfE 2021).

The total percentage of students with SEND is 49% compared to 15.9% for the population as a whole (DfE 2021).

Data source: [Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait)



### SEND Virtual School Characteristics

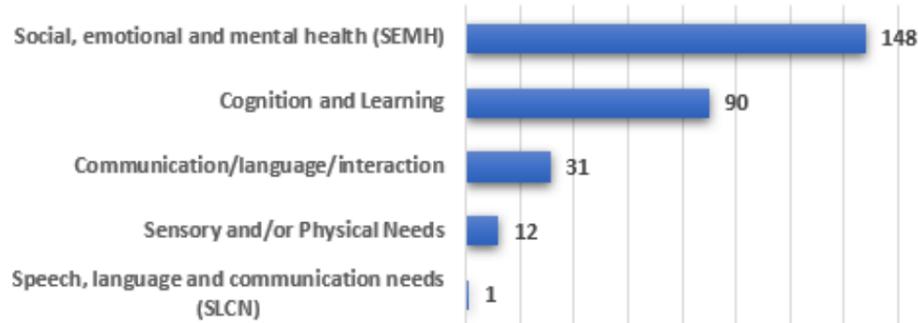
4.2	Category	Total	Boys	Girls	Gender Other	EHCP	SEND Sup	SEND Total	Disability
2021	Total Number of Pupils on Roll	671	385	280	6	174	97	271	56
	Percentage of Total Pupils Cohort	100%	54%	39%	1%	24%	14%	38%	8%
	Total Number Eligible YR0 - Y11 (School Age)	369	207	162	0	134	70	204	42
	Percentage of Eligible School Age Cohort	100%	56%	44%	0%	36%	19%	55%	11%

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

2021	Legal Status	Total
	CLA - C2 - Full Care Order	171
	CLA - C1 - Interim Care Order	16
	CLA - V2 - Single period of accommodation under Section 20	10
	CLA - E1 - Placement order granted	3
	CLA - C2 - Full Care Order & E1 - Placement order granted	2
	CLA - V4 - Short-Term break	1
	Not Recorded	1

Source: Welfare Call May 2021 – DfE Eligible Cohort

### SEND Need



### Comments for SEND Characteristics

- 4.3
- The number of pupils with SEND requirements is higher in the DfE eligible cohort compared to the statutory school age cohort and the total number of pupils on roll at the Virtual School
  - There is a continued rise in the percentage of the DfE cohort that have EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) at 36% this is now above national figures
  - There is still a significant difference between those in care with SEND and all pupils (both nationally and within Cambridgeshire). This reflects the complexities of the cohort of Children in Care.
  - The largest SEN need for children in the DfE eligible cohort is social, emotional, and mental health (some children have a primary and secondary need)
  - Most children in the DfE Eligible cohort with SEND have a Full Care Order (source Liquid Logic)

## SEND Developments to Date

- 4.4**
- The Virtual School employs a qualified SENCo who leads works with specialist provisions with Cambridgeshire CiC on roll.
  - A SEND protocol was created by the Virtual School, Statutory Assessment Team, Social Care and Access to Resourcing Team. Training was developed and delivered to ensure all teams understood the purpose of the protocol and how they could use it to support the education of Cambridgeshire children in care. See appendix 1 for further details.
  - The PEP has been amended highlighting the need for assess, plan, do, review and EHCP related documentation to be uploaded.
  - The PEP has been adapted to enable tracking of progress against EHCP outcomes for children who have complex needs and not following a mainstream attainment pathway.

## Actions / Next Steps

- Appointment of a dedicated Statutory Assessment Team Case Work Officer to lead on Cambridgeshire CiC with an EHCP or in need of a needs assessment.
- Add to VS SENCo capacity to strengthen holistic SEND developments across the Virtual School. Details in the SEND development plan.
- Further develop data dashboards to include a specific SEND dashboard strengthening tracking, analysis, action, and accountability.
- Strengthen systems for tracking attainment and progress of students with SEND.
- Tracking of level of need signified within the PEP alongside tracking SEND documentation attached to PEPS, leading to probing conversations about the level of need, stage of SEND and professionals involved as appropriate.
- Development of specific audit of SEND PEPs and associated documentation.

## 5.0 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

### Support of CiC which are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

**5.1**

Key Stage	All Pupils on Roll		
	May 2020-21		
	Girls	Boys	Other
3 (YR7-9)	1	2	0
4 (YR10-11)	1	2	0
5 (YR12-13)	9	44	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>

Source Welfare Call (May 2021) – includes 1 P16 no longer CiC

Year	Number of UASC	
	In County	Out of County
2020-21	21%	79%

Source Welfare Call (May 2021) – figure excluding 1 P16 no longer CiC as no setting is recorded

### Comments for all UASC this Academic Year (2020-2021)

To understand the individual journey of the young person to the UK and their previous education experience, there are specific questions in the initial PEP for UASC. Additionally, social workers are expected to source translation support if needed so that the young person can fully participate in their meeting.

For young people of statutory school age, interim provision is set up upon arrival and this is delivered in different ways depending upon the needs of the young person. These include individual or group tuition either in person or via videoconferencing. The Access and Inclusion Officer responsible then seeks a school place in consultation with the residential key worker or foster carer and the social worker.

The link advisory teacher then monitors the educational arrangements until the end of Year 11 through the PEP, analysis of key performance data and individualised support where required.

There is 1 UASC on roll with the Virtual School who is part of the DfE eligible cohort.

## UASC Developments to Date

- 5.2**
- Individual schools have provided bespoke curriculum offers for UASC arriving midway through Year 11 which have included additional EAL provision, tuition, gardening, guitar lessons and additional pathway support into post-16. This was supported with additional PP+ grant by the Virtual School.

There is currently good provision for post-16 arrivals placed in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; this has ensured that education has been put in place for all UASCs moving into these areas no matter the point in the academic year at which they have arrived. The provider also extended the offer to a 'virtual' platform for those placed out of county. This has significantly reduced NEET figures caused by limited education options for new arrivals arriving later than November in the academic year.

Via the PP+ grant and DfE laptop scheme, all UASC have been provided with a laptop which has enabled them to transition smoothly between virtual, hybrid and face-to-face learning in line with covid guidance.

Despite covid restrictions, summer holiday provision continued to be offered in Cambridge City and was extended to include sessions in Peterborough for the first time; these were delivered in collaboration with Peterborough Virtual School. Close collaboration with the Fitzwilliam Museum enabled a young person to achieve a discovery arts award.

## Next Steps

- To maintain the quality and accuracy of the data.
- To ensure designated teachers and social workers facilitate the participation of UASC in their PEP meetings.
- To build relationships with social workers in access teams to meet the specific needs of UASC including how to support the PEP, pathway planning and how to raise aspirations.
- To build relationships with care home providers and foster carers to meet the specific needs of UASC including how to support the PEP, pathway planning and how to raise aspirations.

## 6.0 Cambridgeshire Schools and Out of County Schools

Setting Category	In County Schools	Out of County Schools	Total Per Category
Early Years Settings	15	12	27
School-Age YR0-11 Settings	88	142	230
Post 16 Settings	43	44	87
<b>Total Schools &amp; Settings</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>344</b>

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

In or Out of Cambridgeshire Schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Other	EHCP	Disability
All Pupils on Roll in Cambridgeshire Schools	282 46%	144 42%	137 53%	1 17%	79 50%	27 51%
All Pupils on Roll Out of County Schools	327 54%	201 58%	121 47%	5 83%	78 50%	26 49%
DfE Eligible Cohort in Cambridgeshire Schools	181 51%	93 48%	88 54%	0 0%	67 54%	22 59%
DfE Eligible Cohort on Out of County Schools	176 49%	102 52%	74 46%	0 0%	56 46%	15 41%
School Aged Pupils YR 0-11 in Cambridgeshire Schools	224 55%	113 52%	110 59%	1 100%	73 56%	25 62.5%
School Aged Pupils YR 0-11 in Out of County Schools	181 45%	105 48%	76 41%	0 0%	58 44%	15 37.5%

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

### Comments

<b>6.1 Overall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In total there were 609 pupils in 344 schools and settings (May 2021).</li> <li>224 School-aged pupils (YR0-11) were in 88 Cambridgeshire schools and 181 school-aged pupils (YR0-11) were in 142 out of county schools.</li> <li>46% of all pupils on roll in the Virtual School are taught in 146 different Cambridgeshire Schools.</li> <li>54% of all pupils on roll were in 198 out of county schools across 51 different educating authorities. This illustrates the complexity of the role of a virtual school particularly when considering the distance and variation in services, procedure, and provision across local authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>6.2 SEN / Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A child in the DfE eligible cohort or of statutory school age (YR0-11) is more likely to be placed in an out of county school at a distance with an EHCP or a disability. This is due to complexity of need.</li> <li>36% of statutory school age (YR 0-11) pupils in the virtual school children have an EHCP – of these 56% (73) attend a Cambridgeshire school and 44% (58) attend an out of county school this is in line with last year.</li> </ul>
<b>6.3 Specialist Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those children educated out of county with an EHCP, the predominant need is for social, emotional, or mental health support.</li> <li>There are additional complexities in securing appropriate education for children placed outside of Cambridgeshire where a needs assessment is required, it is in process or the EHCP requires specialist provision. This may mean that the child will have a period with no school whilst arrangements are made to meet their needs by local authority SEND teams. This is an issue nationally not just in Cambridgeshire.</li> <li>For children with complex needs including cognitive needs such as Severe Learning difficulty (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD), time out of school may impact on their access to therapy provided by the NHS and delivered through their school placement. Tuition is also rarely a suitable option.</li> </ul>

### Developments to Date

- The Virtual School have an Achievement Through Access Team who lead on access to education for all CiC. Where a child is placed out of county, they routinely consult with the relevant virtual school and where appropriate other local authority teams. Guidance is offered to social workers on the admission process.
- Each EY setting, school and Post 16 provider has a linked advisor from the Virtual School. Since COVID all meetings have taken place virtually.
- PEP Champion support is offered according to need not distance.
- The training offer has been extended to include a range of pre-recorded and live virtual training sessions, making use of the Virtual School YouTube account. Appendix 2 provides a case study on the impact of training.
- Strengthened partnership working between Access to Resources and the Virtual School has increased Virtual School involvement in planning for placement moves at the earliest opportunity.
- Where a child with an EHCP moves out of county, requiring a change in education, developments in the SEND protocol mean the Cambridgeshire take responsibility for ensuring interim provision is in place. Regular operational meetings track the progress of provision.

### Actions / Next Steps

- Strengthen links and working practice with strategic leads in multi-academy trusts. Pilot this work with Suffolk Virtual School for a multi-academy trust with schools across both local authorities.
- Strengthen links with independent fostering agencies and residential placements, extending the training offer beyond Cambridgeshire carers.
- Further develop and embed SEND protocol.
- Develop a protocol with RAPSS to ensure the Virtual School is involved in planning for reunification at the earliest opportunity so that education is central in planning.

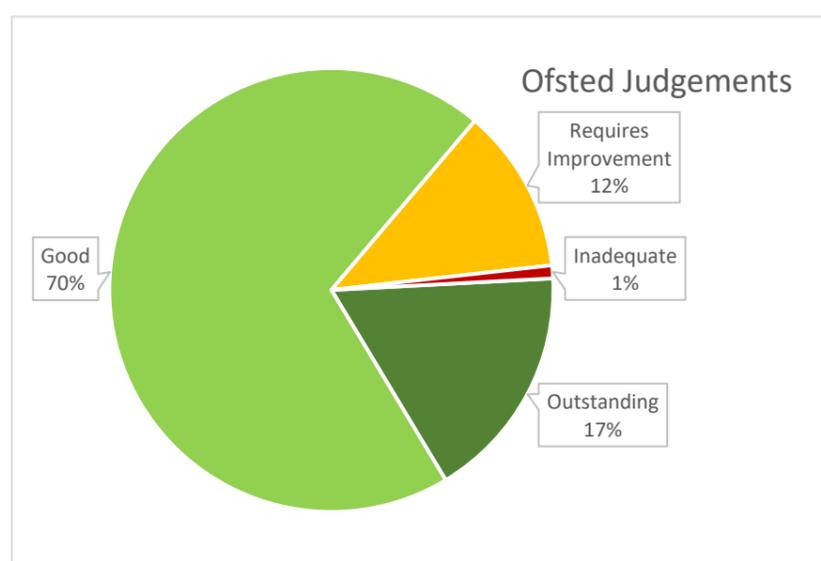
## 7.0 Educational Provision Ofsted Judgments (Statutory School Age)

In or Out of Cambridgeshire Schools	Total Numbers of Students	Total in Ofsted inspected Provision	Outstanding		Good		Requires Improvement		Inadequate/Special Measures		Not Applicable Other*
			Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Total School-Aged Pupils (YR0 – Y11)	609	424	73	17%	296	70%	51	12%	4	1%	185
Total School-Aged YR0-11 Pupils In Cambridgeshire Schools	282	217	39	18%	146	67%	31	14%	1	0%	65
Total School-Aged YR0-11 Pupils In Other LA Schools	327	207	34	16%	150	72%	20	10%	3	1%	120

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

<b>* Not applicable Other - Notes</b>	<p>Several providers do not have an official Ofsted Grading – this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private schools (in particular, special school provision). These centres are inspected by the independent Schools Inspectorate and are not in the official figures.</li> <li>Newly formed (converter) academies do not retain any Ofsted grade issued prior to the school’s conversion into an academy.</li> </ul>
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### Comments for Educational Provision Ofsted Judgements



- The proportion of CiC students attending good or better schools has remained in line with the last two years, 87% (86%).
- The percentage in inadequate schools is significantly below that of national rates.
- A small proportion of CiC (13%) attend schools judged requires improvement or inadequate and their progress is monitored closely (lower than national figures currently 14% of primary and 25% in secondary schools).

### Development to Date

- At point of school admission, the Virtual School promote admission to a school that is good or better.
- The Virtual School has an 'Achievement through Access' team whose focus is to ensure children are placed in the right provision, in a timely manner. Beyond the OFSTED rating the team also consult with the relevant VS and where appropriate other key professionals to understand the school’s knowledge and expertise in supporting the needs of CiC.
- Some children enter care whilst on roll at a requires improvement or inadequate rated school and an assessment is made to judge the quality of provision rather than move the child, however this step would be taken if necessary.

### Actions / Next Steps

- Changes to OFSTED ratings to be built into Achievement Through Schools tracker. Robust process to be developed and embedded to assess the suitability of schools where an OFSTED rating changes to requires improvement or inadequate and the child is already in attendance.
- Embed processes for supporting standard transitions (e.g., primary to secondary).

## 8.0 Engagement in Education

### Attendance

#### 8.1 Attendance Monitoring

	SEND Need			Avg Attendance
	EHCP	SEND Support	No SEND	
DfE Eligible Cohort	75%	84%	84%	81%
School-Aged Pupils YR0-11	75%	83%	82%	80%

Key Stage	SEND Need			Avg Attendance
	EHCP	SEND Support	No SEND	
KS1 (YR1-2)	93%	90%	86%	90%
KS2 (YR3-6)	77%	90%	94%	87%
KS3 (YR7-9)	79%	81%	78%	79%
KS4 (YR 10-11)	64%	72%	73%	70%

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

No national CiC data has been published for 2020-2021 and any internal attendance records will be significantly lower than in previous years, not truly reflecting the students' engagement.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made attendance data impossible to measure in a meaningful or accurate manner. It is not possible to look at trends.

#### 8.2 Cambridgeshire Historic Figures for Children in Care Average % Absence

Average % Absence	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cambridgeshire	4.2	4.2	4.4	5.0	n/a
East of England	3.8	4.8	5.1	5.4	n/a
Statistical Neighbours	4.5	5.0	5.1	5.5	n/a
England	3.9	4.7	5.0	5.1	n/a

[Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

#### 8.3 Persistent Absence Rates

Persistent Absence Rate	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cambridgeshire	11.4	10.2	9.2	10.6	n/a
East of England	8.5	10.6	12.0	12.6	n/a
Statistical Neighbours	11.1	12.1	12.2	13.6	n/a
England	9.1	11.1	11.7	12.0	n/a

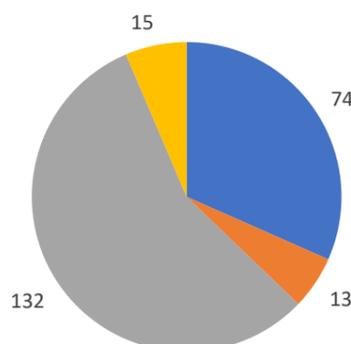
[Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### Covid Engagement – Secondary Pupils

Comparison of 04/01/2021 to 08/02/2021

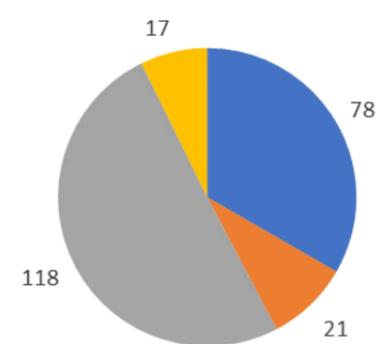
Engagement	04/01/2021	08/02/2021
Full	157	174
Partial	46	39
None	14	4
Unknown	17	17
	234	234

Type of Provision



■ On Site ■ Blended ■ Remote ■ Unknown

Type of Provision



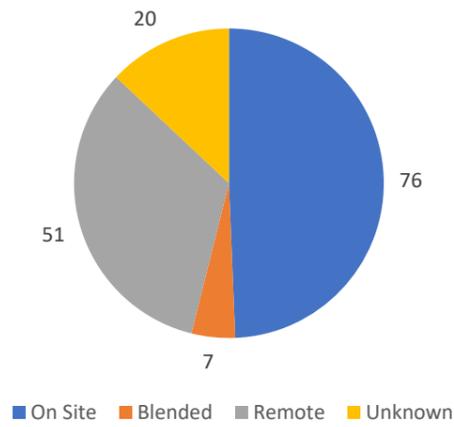
■ On Site ■ Blended ■ Remote ■ Unknown

## Covid Engagement – Primary Pupils

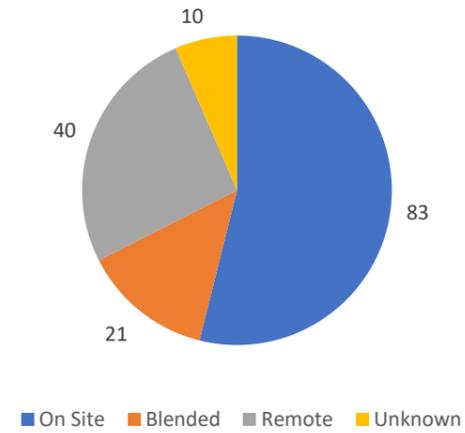
Comparison of 04/01/2021 to 08/02/2021

Engagement	04/01/2021	08/02/2021
Full	120	125
Partial	20	17
None	4	1
Unknown	10	11
	154	154

Type of Provision



Type of Provision



### Developments to date

- As standard attendance information was commissioned through partner agency Welfare Call for statutory school aged children.
- Processes and systems have been developed to extract weekly, monthly, and termly attendance data.
- Internal monitoring of school attendance and engagement was pivotal in Virtual School work last year.
- During the period when schools were open only to critical workers and for vulnerable children, requests were made for designated teachers to provide weekly attendance and engagement returns. Approximately 93% of schools provided information. Where schools did not supply the information, the Virtual School contacted schools. The Virtual School worked alongside schools, carers, and social care where there was no or partial engagement in education.

### Actions/Next Steps

- Introduction of Achievement through Inclusion Team within the Virtual School. An aspect of this role will be to analyse the weekly / monthly and termly attendance data, providing initial triage and where appropriate intervention.
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring post 16 attendance data, outside of the PEP process.
- Development of internal pupil progress meetings, leading to exploration with schools around additional targeted intervention to support accelerated progress (COVID recovery).

# Suspensions

## Suspensions for Pupils in the DfE Eligible Cohort

	2017	2018	2019
Cambridgeshire CiC	10.4%	12.1%	11.2%
East of England	12.2%	12.3%	13.1%
England	11.5%	11.3%	11.4%

Source [Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)  
Statutory School Aged Pupils (Year refers to Academic Years)

In 2019-2020 the suspension rate for Cambridgeshire Children in Care (who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months) - with at least one suspension from school - shows a slight decrease.

Nationally for 2019-20 academic year the suspension rate is 3.76% a decrease from 5.3% in the previous year (2018-19). The school year was interrupted by with the first national lockdown on 23 March 2020, during the spring term. Schools remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers.

Source:

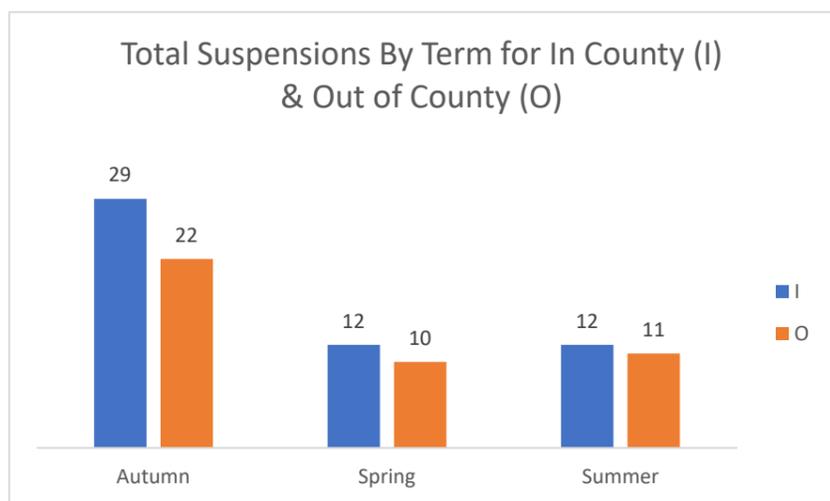
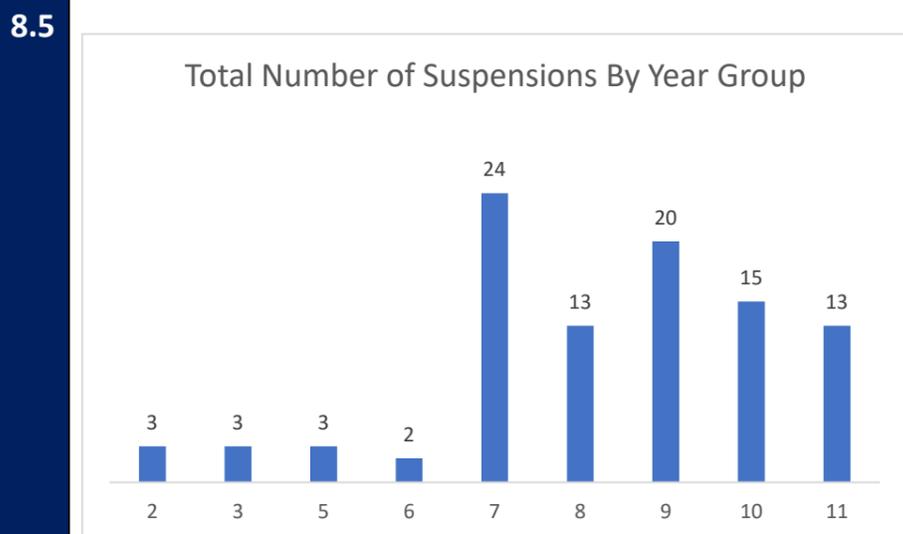
[Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England, Academic Year 2019/20 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

While expulsions and suspensions were still possible throughout the academic year, school closures have had a substantial effect on the number of permanent exclusions and suspension and therefore caution should be taken when comparing figures across years.

The Virtual School challenges exclusions and seeks to support schools to find alternative solutions.

The regional and national suspension figures are published a year behind by the DfE. Detail has therefore also been provided of the Virtual School real-time data (2020-2021) below.

## Suspensions for Pupils All Pupils on Roll (Statutory School Age)



Source Welfare Call All Pupils on Roll - May (2021)

For the most part, Cambridgeshire suspensions rate for Children in Care is lower than that of the eastern region and the national rate for Children in Care.

The suspension rate for Children in Care is around 8% higher than the national rate.

Overall, suspensions for Cambridgeshire Children in Care in 2020-2021 has dropped slightly when compared to the figure for the Virtual School in the previous academic year.

The number of suspensions was highest in the Autumn Term 2020, when pupils returned to school following the closure of schools due to the pandemic. Many pupils returned to a very different teaching environment, with bubbles.

Suspensions were highest among Year 7 pupils; the hypothesis for this is that year 6s were not able to have the enhanced transition which would have been available pre-COVID.

## Suspensions for All Pupils on Roll (Statutory School Age)

8.6

Category	Total	Gender		Area of Need			
		Boys	Girls	EHCP	SEND Support	SEND (SEMH)	Disability
Total Number YR0 - Y11 (School Age)	49	32	17	22	10	23	2
Percentage of all exclusions	100%	65%	35%	45%	20%	47%	4%
Total DfE Eligible Cohort	43	30	13	20	9	20	2
Percentage of all exclusions	100%	70%	30%	47%	21%	47%	5%

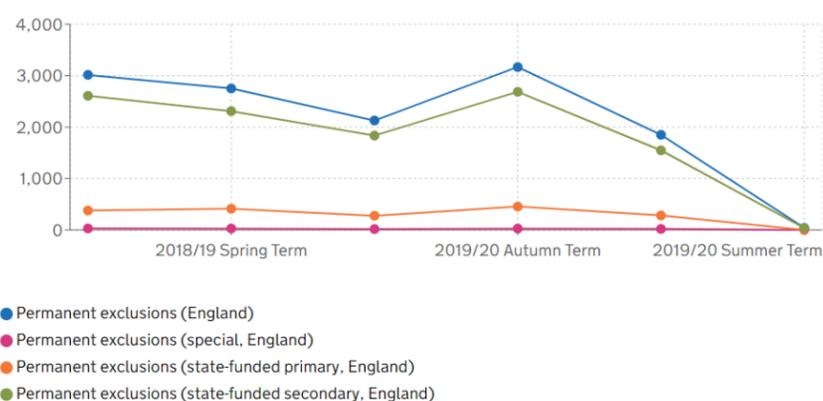
Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

### Comment

<b>Gender</b>	Nationally, the rate of suspensions has decreased for boys, from 7.55 to 5.30, and for girls from 3.08 to 2.16. At the Virtual School the number of boys excluded is a ratio of almost 2:1.
<b>SEN</b>	<p>Almost half of the pupils at the Virtual School who were suspended had an EHCP. Nationally (for all children), the suspension rate is also higher: 11.70 for EHC pupils and 10.98 for SEN support pupils, compared to 2.43 for those without SEN. The rate for Cambridgeshire Children in Care with an EHCP is four times higher, whilst the figure for those with SEN support is almost double the national rate.</p> <p>Nationally, for all children the highest rates are amongst those with a primary type of need recorded as social, emotional, and mental health, at 33.04 for suspensions. However, the rate for the Virtual School is higher at 47%.</p>

## 8.7 Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusions by term, 2018-19 to 2019-20



Data source: [Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics/looked-after-children)

The first national lockdown occurred on 23 March 2020, during the 2019/20 Spring term. The number of permanent exclusions in this term is down from 2,700 in 2018/19 to 1,850.

There were only 40 permanent exclusions in the 2019/20 Summer term. Following the lockdown, schools were only open to pupils of key workers and vulnerable children and all other children were learning remotely.

In the context of rising national trends in exclusions (increase of 1,925 for all children: equivalent to over 40 permanent exclusions per day), within Cambridgeshire Virtual School there was 1 permanent exclusion in the academic year 2020-21.

### Developments to Date

The Virtual School recognises the need for a relational approach to supporting the inclusion of care experienced children.

The full Virtual School team have completed the Beacon House developmental trauma training. The Virtual School has a STEPs trainer within the team and all staff have received one day training.

The Virtual School have invested in virtual reality headsets and incorporated these into the designated teacher training, attachment aware and trauma informed schools training. Training is available to all schools at no additional cost. The impact and legacy of attachment aware and trauma informed training offered to one school is evidenced in the case study (appendix 3).

During the year the range of virtual training was extended (see case study appendix 2).

The Virtual School has continued to develop links with key partners including Education Inclusion Officers and the SEND Access and Inclusion Team.

The Virtual School team received training on exclusions.

### Actions / Next Steps

- All Virtual School staff to receive Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) training.
- Further development of FASD training offer to schools and key partners.
- Further development of trauma informed schools training, in conjunction with SEND Services.
- Enhanced transition arrangements for current year 6s.
- Introduction of Achievement through Inclusion Team within the Virtual School. An aspect of this role will be to analyse the weekly, monthly, and termly exclusion data, providing initial triage and where appropriate intervention.
- Addition of risk indicators for exclusion incorporated into the PEP, allowing for proactive and preventative work of Achievement Through Inclusion team.
- The Virtual School have divided the work of the Advisory Teachers into 'Achievement Through Schools' and 'Achievement Through Inclusion'.
- The Virtual School recognise that influence is greatest where whole school policy, practice and culture takes account of the needs of care experienced children and young people. The Virtual School recognises the strategic influence of MATs. A key development is to pilot collaboration between senior leaders in MATs and the Virtual School to influence outcomes for care experienced children.

## 9.0 Children Missing Education (CME)

### Children Missing Education (CME) – Alternative Provision

CME		Pupils in K/S	Part time timetables Not Receiving 25 Hours Education	
			2020-21	
			Number	%
Key Stage	EYFS	44	0	-
	KS1 (YR1-2)	30	1	3%
	KS2 (YR3-6)	122	10	8%
	KS3 (YR7-9)	152	12	8%
	KS4 (10-11)	106	11	10%
Grand Total		454	34	7%

CME DfE Eligible Cohort		Pupils in K/S	Part time timetables Not Receiving 25 Hours Education	
			2020-21	
			Number	%
Key Stage	EYFS	7	0	-
	KS1 (YR1-2)	26	1	4%
	KS2 (YR3-6)	103	8	8%
	KS3 (YR7-9)	139	9	6%
	KS4 (10-11)	94	10	11%
Grand Total		369	28	8%

Source Welfare Call (May 2021)

Where it meets the needs of individual pupils, alternative provision (including tuition) has supplemented the education offer for Cambridgeshire Children in Care. This provision was offered in a variety of circumstances including new to care, unplanned placement moves and children who were not managing the 'typical' education offer currently on offer to them.

The number of children missing education was 34 children (7% of the total cohort) with significantly more in KS3.

- 7 pupils were female and 27 were male
- 5 children have disabilities

### Development to Date

- Any reduction in hours is recorded on the PEP.
- The provision that CYP have access to is quality assured and reviewed.
- Initiated working relationships with Education Inclusion Officers and SEND Access and Inclusion Officers.
- Advisory Teachers have worked with schools to promote inclusion for children on a school roll.
- Achievement Through Access have ensured where a child cannot attend school owing to a placement move that interim provision is in place. Where appropriate this has extended beyond tuition and included provision such as Equine Assisted Learning, Farm Club and Noise Solutions.

### Actions / Next Steps:

- Introduction of Achievement through Inclusion Team within the Virtual School. An aspect of this role will be to monitor those CYP accessing Alternative Provision, working alongside LA professionals ensuring provision meets the needs of the CYP, enables holistic progress and has regular review points.
- Introduction of baseline measures to monitor progress CYP make whilst accessing tuition.
- Further develop partnership working with Education Inclusion Officers and SEND Access and Inclusion Officers.

### Learning Outcomes

Sections 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of this report which would have addressed progress and attainment of Children in Care are omitted this year. This is because of the Covid-19 pandemic, see explanation below.

Formal examinations and assessments did not take place for a second year and grades were based on a range of information including centre assessed grades for KS4 and KS5. The Virtual School has collected results as in previous years.

The Department for Education have been clear that outcomes and other related data should only be used to ensure young people transition successfully to the next stage of their education, employment or training and aggregated data should not be used for comparisons or performance benchmarking. All those working with schools and colleges, such as Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams and local authorities, will use data from previous years when assessing school and college performance, and not the 2020 or 2021 data. Therefore, in line with these recommendations, there is not any aggregated data or comparisons included within this report.

The current situation is unprecedented; the Virtual School is committed to working with schools/settings, carers, social workers, and young people to ensure that any additional support is facilitated.

## 15.0 Destinations: KS4 and KS5

### Comment

15.1	Post 16 numbers of children in care	<p>In total Cambridgeshire Virtual School supported 246 young people within the post-16 cohort across the academic year.</p> <p>There are typically lower numbers coming into care in Years 12 and 13; the significant majority of these are new arrival UASCs. 39 young people came into care within this cohort during the academic year. 35 were new arrival UASCs, the remaining young people included reasons such as family breakdown, remand, and tier 4.</p> <p>Once a young person reaches their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, their legal status changes to that of a care leaver. This accounts for most young people who cease to be looked after within this cohort (55 young people across the year). There are 2 possible pathways at this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cambridgeshire Virtual School will continue to support all young people following their 18th birthday for the remainder of their year 13 education. This ensures continuity of education support and pathway planning into higher education or employment.</li> <li>For young people who are NEET at the point of their 18th birthday, the Virtual School ceases involvement and support is picked up by the personal advisors within the care leaving teams.</li> </ul>
15.2	Note about Raising Participation Age	<p>Young people must remain in education or training beyond the age of 16 which could be through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider</li> <li>full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with regulated part-time education / training (about 1 day per week)</li> <li>an apprenticeship or traineeship</li> </ul>

### Post 16 Engagement

15.3	EET Engagement	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Current Engagement</th> <th colspan="2">Year Group</th> <th colspan="2">Totals 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>12</th> <th>13</th> <th>No.</th> <th>≈%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>APPRENTICESHIP</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EMPLOYMENT</td> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>1.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FURTHER EDUCATION</td> <td>52</td> <td>54</td> <td>106</td> <td>53.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SCHOOL / SIXTH FORM</td> <td>4</td> <td>7</td> <td>11</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SPECIALIST</td> <td>7</td> <td>10</td> <td>17</td> <td>8.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TRAINING PROVIDER</td> <td>14</td> <td>9</td> <td>23</td> <td>11.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ARMED FORCES</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>YOUTH OFFENDING</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NEET</td> <td>19</td> <td>10</td> <td>29</td> <td>14.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GRAND TOTAL</td> <td>101</td> <td>96</td> <td>197</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Data Source: Welfare Call (April 2020)</p>	Current Engagement	Year Group		Totals 2021		12	13	No.	≈%	APPRENTICESHIP	1	3	4	2%	EMPLOYMENT		3	3	1.5%	FURTHER EDUCATION	52	54	106	53.8%	SCHOOL / SIXTH FORM	4	7	11	5.6%	SPECIALIST	7	10	17	8.6%	TRAINING PROVIDER	14	9	23	11.7%	ARMED FORCES		1	1	0.5%	YOUTH OFFENDING	1		1	0.5%	NEET	19	10	29	14.7%	GRAND TOTAL	101	96	197		<p>Most of the post 16 young people on the roll of the Virtual School continue in education or training after the end of their statutory schooling.</p> <p>During the academic year Cambridgeshire Virtual School worked with 35 different schools and colleges as well as 5 training providers.</p> <p>31 young people within the post-16 cohort had an EHCP.</p>
Current Engagement	Year Group			Totals 2021																																																										
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	NEET reporting	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Neet Category</th> <th>Number of NEET</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Awaiting start date of employment, education or training</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Custody - not actively engaged in employment, education or training</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Illness - mental health</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Illness – physical</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>NASS</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not engaging at present</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not yet ready for employment, education or training</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parent</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnant</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seeking employment, education or training</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Working not for reward</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>29</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Data Source: Welfare Call (April 2021)</p>	Neet Category	Number of NEET	Awaiting start date of employment, education or training	2	Custody - not actively engaged in employment, education or training	1	Illness - mental health	3	Illness – physical		NASS		Not engaging at present	4	Not yet ready for employment, education or training	8	Parent		Pregnant		Seeking employment, education or training	11	Working not for reward		Grand Total	29	<p>The cohort of NEET young people fluctuates across the academic year. Specific trigger points include the end of October which is the point at which colleges review engagement and officially enrolls the young person, and a second trigger point is Christmas.</p>
Neet Category	Number of NEET																												
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Grand Total	29																												

## 16.0 Destinations for June 2021

Virtual School 2021 post-13 destinations include progression into universities across the country including Oxbridge, Russell Group and post-1992 institutions.

Final Destinations	Totals 2021	
	NCY 13	%
Apprenticeship	4	4.5%
Employment	11	12.4%
Further Education	60	67.4%
Higher Education	5	5.6%
Undecided	3	3.4%
NEET	6	6.7%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Data Source: Internal data (June 2021)

Care leavers who were in higher education (%)				
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cambridgeshire-% CiC in HE	5	6	5	3
East of England-% CiC in HE	6	6	5	5
England-% CiC in HE	6	6	6	6

### Development to Date

- Post-16 advisors maintain contact with designated persons, social workers, and carers as frequently as necessary and possible. Links with further education providers both in and out of county are strong; the Virtual School works closely with colleges to improve knowledge and skills which specifically support young people in care. This includes direct work at a provider level to minimise incidences of disengagement through:
  - attendance and advocacy at disciplinary meetings
  - provision of training to ensure provider level understanding of specific barriers faced by children in care
  - promotion of the effective use of the vulnerable bursary
  - development of further education protocols which permit flexibility for CiC within attendance policies and practices, including altered thresholds
- Interventions and escalations on behalf of specific young people have ensured consistency of education placement which has led to smooth entry into higher education.
- Cambridgeshire Virtual School play an active role within the local authority to reduce NEET numbers. This includes participation in NEET strategic and NEET partnership meetings. A key priority for Cambridgeshire is apprenticeships as this is much lower than its statistical neighbours and the East of England, specifically there are limited level 2 or below apprenticeships as most employers are looking for level 3 or higher. Additionally, there is limited 'roll-on roll-off provision' within Cambridgeshire and this impacts on young people who have to wait until the following academic year for the opportunity to start a course if they haven't managed to start or maintain course enrolment from September.
- This academic year a Virtual School fund has been set up to support young people who are NEET with the intent of promoting re-engagement. DFE laptop funding (due to Covid) meant that IT equipment was able to be purchased outside of this fund; the fund therefore supported short courses including CSCS cards and body art.
- Ace-The-Race is a programme developed by Cambridgeshire Virtual School during the academic year 2020-21; it is designed to empower, motivate, and re-engage young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The programme has been developed during the past academic year. Intent includes championing the needs of young people, raising the profile and impact of being NEET, reducing the risk of NEET and developing closer partnership with local training providers and businesses. A link to the promotional video can be viewed on our YouTube channel: Ace the Race Promo video - YouTube
- Cambridgeshire Virtual School's training offer includes post-16. Typically, course content is adapted to ensure the specific needs of this group are addressed and where appropriate bespoke post-16 training is offered; there is currently no charge for training from Cambridgeshire Virtual School.

A quote from an FE provider (May 2021):

*"The Virtual School has been key to the development of our improved offer for students in care. From specialist training and practical support with complex cases to acting as critical friend, a truly collaborative relationship has developed. Students have benefitted from improved transitions, admissions, progress reviews, disciplinary procedures, and progressions. As a direct result, retention and progression to higher education has improved."*

- Cambridgeshire Virtual school actively participate in the post-16 regional forum. The influence of Cambridgeshire Virtual School in the sector continues with other Virtual Schools across the region. This has included:
  - PEP Design support (Hertfordshire)
  - NEET reduction (Norfolk)
  - UASC Summer Projects (Peterborough)

## Actions/Next Steps

Work closely with colleagues in social care, including leaving care teams and personal advisers to ensure that the pathway plan and PEP documents effectively support progression and transition.

Roll out Ace-The-Race project as a key intervention to reduce the number of NEET children in care and care leavers. Carers, residential staff, and housing providers understand the importance of supporting study skills, attendance, and impact of NEET; they are empowered to support holistically. Ace-The-Race will add value to our current offer by:

- Promoting the specific needs of CiC and the impact of being NEET
- Developing the knowledge and skills of key partners through training and supervision
- Building on existing relationships
- Promoting effective policy and practice at provider level
- Engaging unified and systemic support by strengthening the network around the young person and promoting partnership working

Link closely with colleagues supporting statutory school age to identify risk of NEET and enable early intervention.

Promote the use of the vulnerable bursary.

Work with partners to encourage more employers to offer apprenticeship opportunities for CiC and care leavers, including apprenticeships at lower levels.

Establish a post-16 data dashboard to hold all key performance and tracking data, including attendance and progress and attainment to enable timely interventions at young person and provider level and ensure that data informs the work of the post-16 team.

Raise awareness of Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware practice by delivering training to key staff at colleges.

Promote an '18-aware' agenda which supports pathways to independence, minimises 18<sup>th</sup> birthday placement moves and doesn't impact on education

## 17.0 Aspirations

### Comments

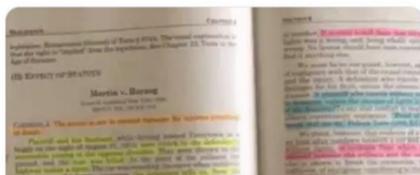
The Virtual School recognise the importance of promoting aspirations for our children and young people, as any good parent does. To increase the focus on aspirations, within the Virtual School there is a dedicated Aspirations Project Lead. This post was created in 2020. The aim being to support to all Cambridgeshire Children in Care of statutory education age through to leaving care as the offer develops it will be based upon a three-tier model offering graduated levels of support in response to individual need. All children in care will receive the universal offer, the targeted offer will be aimed at small groups of a common age or with a common need and the intensive offer will be proposed for children in care on an individual basis, again in response to need.

### Development to Date

- Reviewed and amended questions in PEP linked aspirations, careers information, advice, and guidance (live from September 2021).
- Information gathered on offer currently accessed by children in care.
- Initial foster carer training (post 16) completed summer 21.
- Agreement from 3 housing providers to participate in a career's information, advice, and guidance network.
- Virtual School representation on steering group of MyCambridge LCEP (Arts and creative industries), this led to project work with Fitzwilliam Museum.
- Created an 'aspire' twitter feed. Care leaver Interns from Anglia Ruskin University took over the twitter feed following A level results week providing top tips on university from their lived experience. A selection of these tweets is provided below. To see all the tweets and to follow the development of this project, please follow:



'She believed she could & she did' - this quote means so much to me as I think that 99% of motivation comes from personal self-belief! I had this quote at the front of every notebook and folder that I had work in to remind myself that I have a goal that I want to achieve!' Chloe



'My worry was that I won't get support being a care leaver as I'd not heard of support for care leavers before. However, it was completely different when I arrived to university as there as a whole team to support me financially, emotionally and with whatever needs I had.' Priya



'Choose to study what you are passionate about, and not necessarily what someone wants you to study, and believe in yourself. You are the expert of you, and no one can change that.' Hannah



Hannah's route to Anglia Ruskin University shows that you can change career and start Higher Education after the age of 18 - there are still lots of options even if you have already started work!



### Actions / Next Steps

- Production of careers information, advice, and guidance good practice guide for DT's and Careers leads (including specific considerations for UASCs).
- Promotion of carers and key worker's role in raising aspirations.
- Responses in PEPs leads to targeted provision.
- Work with Regions of Learning to develop app enabling care experienced children to gain an enhanced experience via bespoke content / push notifications
- There will be an increase in the breadth and depth of aspirational activities on offer including access to youth organisation, arts, sports, and cultural activities and these will be promoted.
- Information on work experience will be promoted within Virtual School and with external professionals.
- Bespoke high aspirational careers information, advice, and guidance will be consistently accessed from year 9.
- Scope SEND careers information, advice, and guidance offer and begin to develop some careers content with post-16 pupils

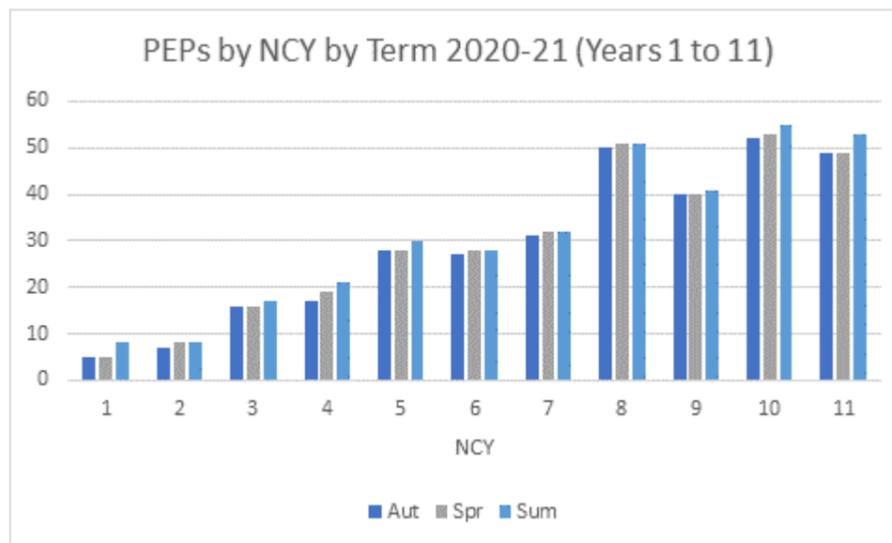
18.0 Personal Education Plans

PEP Compliance

18.1

Indicators	Bedford (B)	Cambridgeshire County	Central Bedfordshire	Essex County	Hertfordshire County	Luton (B)	Norfolk County	Peterborough (B)	Southend-on-Sea (B)	Suffolk County	Thurrock (B)
% of school age LAC with a PEP in the last 6 months	98.1%	98.5%	96.3%	91.2%	96.1%	96.5%	94.8%	100.0%	100.0%	91.6%	95.7%

Source: Tartan Rug



PEPs according to national curriculum year groups  
Source: Welfare Call

Comments

Figures for children having a PEP are consistently high. The table above shows how Cambridgeshire compares to other local authorities across the Eastern Region. Cambridgeshire is ranked second, with Peterborough and Southend joint first. Cambridgeshire consistently has above 97% of children with a PEP. Where there is non-compliance there is a process in place to escalate.

## 19.0 Quality of PEPs

### PEP Quality by Year

### Comments

Autumn Term						
	Quality: My Details					
	Red		Amber		Green	
Early Years	8	24.2%	9	27.3%	16	48.5%
Years 1-11	103	26.5%	103	26.5%	183	47.0%
Post-16	59	29.8%	28	14.1%	111	56.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

Spring Term						
	Quality: My Details					
	Red		Amber		Green	
Early Years	13	38.2%	5	14.7%	16	47.1%
Years 1-11	137	35.1%	55	14.1%	198	50.8%
Post-16	87	47.0%	41	22.2%	57	30.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>43.6%</b>

Summer Term						
	Quality: My Details					
	Red		Amber		Green	
Early Years	12	35.3%	5	14.7%	18	52.9%
Years 1-11	118	29.6%	57	14.3%	223	56.0%
Post-16	84	44.4%	27	14.3%	78	41.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>51.4%</b>

Each section of the PEP has a separate rating (red, amber, or green). The criteria used for rating the PEPs is provided for social workers and designated teachers.

My Details is the social workers contribution to the PEP. It contains key information such as key contacts, contact arrangements and sensitive issues. Social workers are asked to ensure the information is up to date for each PEP.

There is strong partnership working between the Virtual School and Corporate Parenting to improve the quality of the My Details section of PEPs. Actions taken for implementation in 2021-2022 include:

- PEP webinar built into induction for social workers
- Access to PEP Champion support
- Practice sessions with each team to look at a selection of PEPs and collaboratively quality assure
- Access to PEP reports for Team Managers
- PEP attendance and completion built into each supervision between Social Worker and Team Manager
- PEP overview built into supervision between Team Manager and Service Manager

Once a working model of improvement has been established, it will be rolled out to Family Safeguarding and Access Teams.

It is expected that by the next period of reporting the data will reflect the ongoing work.

The data provided opposite relates to the desirable outcomes. The school have responsibility for completing this section. This section of the PEP reviews the progress made towards outcomes over the last term, draws together the strengths and needs identified in the rest of the document and sets out what it is hoped the child will achieve over the next term, with a clear plan as to how this will be achieved. It is in this section that the school apply for pupil premium plus funding (for statutory school aged children).

For statutory school aged PEPs green ratings have increased from 24% in autumn 2019 to 51% in summer 2021. There has been a decrease in red ratings from 30% in autumn 2019 to 6% in summer 2021.

For early years during 2019-2020 the Early Years Virtual School Teacher heavily supported the completion of the PEPs. It is perhaps therefore fairer to review the data over 2020-2021.

The data for early years and post 16 does not evidence the same levels of progress, however the starting point for both was higher meaning that in summer 2021 approximately 50% of desirable outcomes across the cohorts were rated green. Targeted work on desirable outcomes continues to be a focus for the Virtual School PEP Champion. 50% of the designated teachers that attended the PEP clinics in the Spring term increased the ratings for their desirable outcomes in the summer term.

		Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term		
		GREEN	AMBER	RED	GREEN	AMBER	RED	GREEN	AMBER	RED
2020-21	Desirable Outcomes (Early Years)	59%	41%	0%	67%	15%	18%	51%	40%	9%
	Desirable Outcomes (Year 1-11)	50%	44%	6%	43%	48%	9%	49%	45%	6%
	Desirable Outcomes (Post 16)	45%	67%	18%	32%	51%	16%	49%	24%	27%
2019-20	Desirable Outcomes (Early Years)	EY moved to the revised model in the Spring term			70%	24%	6%	Covid PEP Only - Data not collected		
	Desirable Outcomes (Year 1-11)	24%	46%	30%	42%	44%	9%			
	Desirable Outcomes (Post 16)	55%	29%	16%	66%	22%	12%			

Source Welfare Call (PEP QA Internal Data)

## Development to Date 2018-2021

When children's services were inspected in 2019 it was identified that:

'At present, there is too little strategic oversight of the progress that pupils make or of the impact of personal education plans. While some of these plans are effective, a significant minority do not meet the needs of children in care well. The quality assurance by the virtual school of these plans is inconsistent, and so weak practice is not always identified or challenged.'

HMI January 2019, p.8

In response to this and using insights into the working practice of other virtual schools within the Eastern Region, the Virtual School has made significant changes to all aspects of the PEP and quality assurance process. This can best be broken down into three key areas:

- The PEP design and related processes
- The use of data from the PEP to inform action and intervention
- The quality assurance of the PEP

### The PEP design and related processes

- Reviewed and amended the content of the PEP (following consultation with children and young people, designated teachers, social workers and IROs), leading to a streamlined PEP. Each year the PEP is reviewed, and revisions made, ensuring its effectiveness.
- Provided a series face to face and virtual training alongside literature to early years settings, schools, and post 16 providers on setting SMART desirable outcomes. These have been viewed 457 times. Further endorsement of the materials came from the Head Teacher of Lincolnshire Virtual School who has reviewed the materials and requested permission to use them with his designated teachers.
- Introduced advisory meetings with designated teachers, for the first year these focused on the completion and quality of the PEP. Since then, a PEP Champion role has been created.
- Developed a PEP Champion role, to provide ongoing targeted support to designated teachers and social workers on their role within PEPs.
- Strengthened procedures for collecting termly attainment and progress data and produced webinars to support designated teachers to complete the section accurately. This means the data points are now consistent, enabling data to be extracted at a child and cohort level.
- Reviewed and revised the process for allocating pupil premium plus, so that schools apply for the amount required to support the child to achieve specific outcomes.

### The use of data from the PEP to inform action and intervention

- Appointed a Performance Officer who has created a range of dashboards which are beginning to underpin the work of the Virtual School.
- Tracked the pupil premium plus spend according to areas of need.
- Greater scrutiny of the pupil premium plus has enabled retained funding to be used to appoint an Education Psychologist, Aspirations Project Lead and Performance Officer.
- Tracked the attainment and progress data both at a child level and cohort level termly.
- Introduced 'pupil progress meetings' leading to individual conversations with DTs to increase targeted intervention, allocating additional pupil premium plus where relevant.

### The quality assurance of the PEP

- Amended the quality assurance of PEPs, so that each section is RAG rated enabling analysis of areas of strength and weakness within the PEP. This has led to targeted work with designated teachers and social workers on specific areas of the PEP.
- Moved to a PEP submission date, and a collective Virtual School responsibility for the quality assurance of PEPs.
- Introduced internal moderation of PEPs.
- Introduced a termly audit of PEPs involving key partners, including social workers, IROs, DTs, foster carers and Peterborough Virtual School. This has supported the development of the PEP and internal quality assurance process. Key partners have also commented on how it has supported them in their role within the PEP. As illustrate by the quotes below.

*'I have welcomed the opportunity to be part of the PEP Audits to develop the PEP report writing by Social Workers. This has provided me examples of good practice but also areas where improvements can be made regarding quality. The service has begun to implement practice sessions to provide Social Workers the skills and knowledge in how to complete a good quality PEP and to also drive performance around this matter.'*

*Social Care Service Manager*

*'Having worked closely with the virtual school over the past year in the capacity of CFCA Chair and Foster Carer, it has been really insightful, and I believe useful for all involved. The PEP audits have proven very worthwhile, ensuring that services are held to account on behalf of our children and young people, providing positive/constructive feedback. The audits have also given plenty of food for thought within other services, I believe enhancing a joined-up approach between departments of the Local Authority.'*

*During one of the audit sessions, I remember that a particular PEP looked quite positive, however when drilling down we noticed that there was significant information missing. This may have continued to be overlooked, however with many eyes from different backgrounds reviewing, this came to light and has been fed back, which will only benefit outcomes for the young person. Another situation where a social worker had completed their part of a PEP to an outstanding level, really gave us the insight of how important this information is as without it, the rest of the PEP cannot be completed to maximum effect. What was really clear from these two examples is the triangulation that takes place during this process, between: Children's Social Worker, School/Virtual School and Foster Carer/Parents.'*

*The CFCA have taken this model back to the Fostering Service and suggested that a similar approach is implemented to review our children and Young people's care plans between services with a view to enhancing outcomes.'*

*Foster Carer and Chair of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carers Association*

## Actions / Next Steps

- Development of meaningful pupil voice within the PEP
- Direct access to the PEP for carers
- Targeted support for social workers and designated teachers to continue to improve compliance and quality of the PEP
- Continued use of internal moderation and partnership PEP audits.
- Development of SEND PEP audit.
- Further development of data systems to analyse the impact of pupil premium plus spend.
- Use of inclusion data from PEPs to underpin the work of the 'Achievement Through Inclusion' colleagues within the Virtual School.

## 20.0 Pupil Premium Plus Allocation

### Allocation Requests for School-Aged Pupils (Year 1-11)

Area (All Pupils on Roll YR1-11)	Autumn	%	Spring	%	Summer	%
Cognition and Learning	109,990.00	59%	101,672.00	58%	112,396.00	57%
Communication and Interaction	8,952.00	5%	5,966.00	3%	4,950.00	2%
Sensory & Physical	4,272.00	2%	2,404.00	1%	3,762.00	2%
SEMH	49,289.00	27%	56,791.00	32%	56,095.00	28%
Attendance	140.00	0%	1,000.00	1%	1,511.00	1%
Transitions	1,030.00	1%	2,189.00	1%	5,212.00	3%
Wider Achievement	7,629.00	4%	3,919.00	2%	6,153.00	3%
Other	2,525.00	1%	1,664.00	1%	3,121.00	2%
Additional Payments (e.g school moves)	1,830.00	1%	109.00	0%	4,985.00	3%
<b>Total PP+ requested</b>	<b>185,657.00</b>		<b>175,714.00</b>		<b>198,185.00</b>	

Area (All Pupils on Roll Early Years)	Autumn	%	Spring	%	Summer	%
Academic Achievement and Progress	£ 1,377.00	22%	£ 1,440.00	29%	£ 1,016.00	23%
Speech and Language	£ 646.00	10%	£ 294.00	6%	£ 1,309.00	30%
Managing Feelings and Behaviours	£ 1,285.00	21%	£ 938.00	19%	£ 1,178.00	27%
Making Relationships	£ 1,993.00	32%	£ 490.00	10%	£ 78.00	2%
Self-Awareness and Self-control	£ 230.00	4%	£ 100.00	2%	£ 100.00	2%
Physical Development	£ 343.00	5%	£ 133.00	3%	£ 15.00	0%
Moving On Transitions	£ -	0%	£ -	0%	£ 725.00	16%
Other	£ 280.00	4%	£ -	0%	£ -	0%
Additional Payments (e.g school moves)	£ 100.00	2%	£ 1,626.00	32%	£ -	0%
<b>Total PP+ requested</b>	<b>£ 6,254.00</b>		<b>£ 5,021.00</b>		<b>£ 4,421.00</b>	

Source: Welfare Call

### Comments

Each term schools request the funding required in readiness for the next term. This is completed as part of the PEP process. Where a child moves school, the school receives an automatic payment of £600 (if the child moves before half term) or £300 (if the child moves after half term).

Requests for pupil premium plus should support the child to progress towards the desirable outcomes written within the PEP. Schools should clearly set out the actions and interventions which the funding will be used for. Pupil premium plus should not be used for activity that is available universally within school. It is equally important that requests are not made for interventions which are funded through other sources e.g., where a child has SEND funding for a teaching assistant to support them in literacy, they should not apply for pupil premium plus for this same purpose. All requests are considered as part of the PEP quality assurance process.

For both the statutory school aged cohort and the early years cohort, cognition and learning accounts for the largest percentage of pupil premium plus requests. This percentage is consistent with last year.

### Developments to Date

- Development of data dashboards.
- Introduced internal pupil progress meetings. Identified where children and young people may benefit from additional intervention. Met with designated teachers to discuss the use of additional pupil premium plus funding to support this.
- Supported access to laptops to support learning during lockdowns.
- Issued £350 per statutory school aged child to support COVID recovery. Ensured schools documented to use and impact of the funding within the PEP.

### Actions / Next Steps

- Strengthen analysis of the impact of funding at both a child and cohort level.
- Development of project level work with schools and multi academy trusts.
- Bring together key partners including designated teachers, social workers, IROs, participation team and carers with a focus on the team around the child 'hear my voice'.
- Further development of the Virtual School training offer.

## Enquiries

CPiC Enquiries		
Type of Order	Amount	Percentage
Special Guardianship Order	25	20%
Adoption	89	73%
Child Arrangement Order	3	2%
Not disclosed	5	4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>122</b>	

CPiC Enquiries		
Contact by Whom	Amount	Percentage
Parent / Guardian	50	41%
School / Education Setting	37	30%
Local Authority Partners	35	29%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>122</b>	

CPiC Enquiries		
Nature of Enquiry	Amount	Percentage
General / Role of DP	43	33.6%
Early Years Provision / Funding	4	3.1%
Pupil Premium Plus	24	18.8%
Care Status	5	3.9%
SEND	29	22.7%
Education Crisis	8	6.3%
Attendance	1	0.8%
Exclusions	3	2.3%
Admissions / Transitions	6	4.7%
Training	3	2.3%
EAL funding	2	1.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>128</b>	

## Comments

For children previously in care (CPiC), the virtual school is not acting as the corporate parent but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to all relevant parties. There has been a light increase in the number of enquiries over 2020-2021 (102 enquires in 2019-2020). There continues to be a higher number relating to adoption than SGOs and CAOs, although there has been a minimal increase (from 18% to 22% for SGOs and CAOs combined).

The proportion of enquires from schools, families and Local Authority partners is similar in 2019-2020 to 2020-2021.

Advice and information pertaining to the role of the designated person, alongside pupil premium plus continue to be common. There has been a rise in enquiries relating to SEND. This includes social, emotional, and mental health. It captures advice and information around behaviours and the use of a trauma informed response.

## Development to Date

- Development of a pre-recorded webinar for designated person on their role, the role of the virtual school and processes and uses of pupil premium plus (see case study appendix 2). This has been shared as part of the National Association of Virtual School Heads new to role programme, followed by a Q and A session with Cambridgeshire Virtual School Head.

*'Claire shared a presentation she had prepared for her partners in Cambridgeshire which supports the care of previously looked after children. It is an excellent resource which inspired others to follow suit and she answered questions with in depth knowledge and credibility. We thank Claire for her contribution and hope she will join us again.'*

Penny Todd

GNT Virtual School Associates (sponsored by NAVSH)

- Representation on the Regional Adoption Agency Board.
- Development and pilot of an education support plan for children previously in care in conjunction 5 schools (ongoing).
- Extension of the Education Support Line to include families and education settings supporting children previously in care. This offers parents and schools the opportunity to think through a response to education related issues with the Virtual School Education Psychologist through a trauma informed lens.

## Actions / Next Steps

- Development of face-to-face training to include virtual reality headsets and contributions from both designated persons and a parent or guardian of a child previously in care.
- Enhance the Education Support Line offer, to include support from an experienced teacher and trainee education psychologist
- Increase virtual school presence at adoption and SGO support groups.
- Complete education support plan pilot, evaluate and promote as appropriate.
- Incorporating considerations for the education of children previously in care into the 'good practice indicator' tool which is to be rolled out with multi-academy trusts and schools.
- Work with other virtual schools within the Eastern Region to offer virtual networking / training opportunities.
- Development of advice and information relating to social emotional and mental health tools.
- Begin to explore case studies where children have re-entered care following pre-adoption, adoption or SGO breakdowns, with the aim of influencing future practice.

## Protocol for CiC with SEND Training 2021

### Needs identified

#### Needs identified:

Delays in securing appropriate education provision can impact on outcomes for CYP, affect wider life changes and create care placement instability / breakdown.

Given the level of complexity for children in care with SEND relating to:

- Applications for needs assessments
- Funding
- Admissions
- Transferring EHCPs when a child moves between counties

it is essential that there is a clear protocol detailing each professional's responsibilities and training is delivered to empower all parties in their role, in order to minimise drift

### Virtual School Actions

A Protocol document was drafted by the Cambridgeshire Virtual School in collaboration with SEND, ART and social care. It was agreed at Assistant Director / Director level.

The focus was to prioritise the education provision for Cambridgeshire Children in Care during the consultation process within Cambridgeshire.

The document made the following commitments for the Cambridgeshire Local Authority:

- Virtual School and Statutory Assessment Team will be notified as early as possible about a potential placement move for any of our Cambridgeshire Children in Care
- Priority will be given for consideration of an EHCP application at the next panel
- Where the EHCP assessment process has started and the child moves out of county, Cambridgeshire will complete the process
- The Statutory Assessment Team will consult for tuition within 2 days, wherever the child lives
- If the CYP is placed in Cambridgeshire, SAT will consult with all possible education placements within 2 days
- Cambridgeshire are responsible for all funding linked to the child's EHCP, whether the CYP is placed in Cambridgeshire or not.

The Virtual School agreed to deliver a training programme to all the service areas involved as well as Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). These training events were delivered virtually from February to June 2021.

We asked those who attended the training to rate their knowledge of SEND at the beginning and end of the sessions using a scale of 0-10, 0 being low 10 being high.

The training covered the processes involved in applying for an Education Health Care plan, information around processes that should take place when a child has an EHCP, Post 16 EHCP processes and the Protocol document.

### Outcomes

- The training was delivered to 20 teams across the service areas:
  - Social Care Children in Care Teams
  - Social Care Disability Teams
  - Social Care Safeguarding Teams
  - IRO's
  - Statutory Assessment Team
  - Virtual School
  - Access to Resources and ISEPS team
- On average the score for improved knowledge of SEND moved from 3 – 8.
- Comments and feedback indicated that:
  - information around EHCPs was highly valuable in empowering colleagues to have more purposeful conversations with school settings.
  - Currently, the Virtual School and Statutory Assessment Teams are being notified of potential placement moves early on, enabling these areas to offer support and advice on provisions in a local area around appropriate school provisions.
  - Work has become more co-ordinated with other professionals and this increased level of information sharing is benefitting children and young people.
  - Social workers recognise the importance of involving other service areas when new education settings are being sought.

### Next Steps

- A Steering group meets termly to review any specific issues identified by any team and consider two questions
  - Was the protocol followed? if not what was the barrier – to be picked up by relevant team leader / Head of Service
  - Is there is gap in the protocol? If so what changes / additions are required
- The Protocol document is formally reviewed annually to address any gaps or updates required.
- Webinars of approximately 10 minutes long are being created for new starters across these areas and will include:
  1. Applying for an EHCP
  2. Processes for when a child has an EHCP
  3. Post 16 and the EHCP
  4. The Protocol document

## THE IMPACT OF TRAINING DURING COVID

### Context

The Virtual School (VS) holds a statutory duty to:

‘ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.’

DfE 2018, p.29

The VS has always had a wide training offer.

#### Education Training Offer:

From September 2019 until March 2020, the Virtual School had delivered the following training sessions:

Training	Number of settings attended	Number of participants
Designated Teacher Training	39	45
Attachment Awareness and Trauma Informed Schools	10	19
FASD	28	47
Designated Person for Children Previously in Care	12	12
Towards a new way of working	16	16
Towards a new way of working – Early Years	22	22
Network Meeting (Virtual)	12	12
Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Minors	6	21

And the following bespoke sessions at the request of schools:

Training	Number of settings attended	Number of participants
Attachment, Trauma and Executive Functioning	1	20
Trauma and Attachment Awareness	6	120

Whilst the full offer has always been available to all Designated Teachers, in 2019 the VS recognised that there was a need for ‘virtual training’ as 50% of Cambridgeshire children in care were placed outside of Cambridgeshire, and whilst all training was available to DTs, it was not viable for all DTs to attend in person. A zoom account was purchased and a you tube channel set up with a first wave of live webinars followed up by pre-recorded webinars with a focus on creating SMART desirable outcomes.

COVID has prevented face to face training being delivered by the Virtual School (VS) or any organisation / key partner since March 2020. Having already begun to explore virtual training, this put us in a strong position to build on this offer. A piece of action research was undertaken to consider effective attributes of ‘virtual training’. This led to the webinars being pre-recorded and chunked into themes typically lasting approximately 15 minutes each. The virtual training offer now includes:

Designated Teacher / Designated Person:

- The Role of the DT for children in care (2 webinars)
- The Role of the DP in Early Years settings
- The Role of the DP in Post 16
- The Role of the DP for children previously in care
- A series of webinars on creating SMART outcomes
- Completion of the attainment and progress section of the PEP
- Completion of the Covid attendance and engagement section of the PEP
- Empowerment of the DT (3 webinars)

In addition, a longer live virtual session has been developed on attachment aware and trauma informed practice in

education. So far there have been 3 sessions reaching 60 participants across early years (EY), primary and secondary. There are a further 3 sessions planned to include, EY, primary, secondary, post 16 and special schools. Bespoke staff meetings have also taken place virtually at the request of schools.

To supplement this the Virtual School has purchased credits via outside providers for training on:

- The Boxall Profile
- FASD
- UASC

Governors (launching April 2021):

- Education outcomes for children in care
- Knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by children in care
- Statutory duties of the designated teacher
- Duties and responsibilities of the governing body

These webinars have an accompanying workbook

### Training Offer for other key partners:

From September 2019-March 2020. The following sessions were delivered:

Training delivered	Number of participants
<b>1. Foster Carers</b>	
Trauma	18
FASD	13
Role of the VS	9
<b>2. LA Partners</b>	
SC, PEP training	134
SC, Admissions and exclusions guidance	86
IRO training team	7
SEND 0-25, VS role and PLAC update	31
<b>3. New Adopters</b>	
Supporting Education	7

Since March 2020, the offer has been as follows.

Social Care and IROs Training Offer:

- The role of the social worker in education (pre-recorded webinar)
- Children in Care with SEND and the SEND Protocol (offered to all social care teams and the Statutory Assessment Team)
- Bespoke 1:1 support for social workers with the PEP upon request (virtual)
- Bespoke live education session for IROs (virtual)

Carers Training Offer:

- SEND
- Education (Early Years) – due to take place May 2021
- Education (Secondary School)
- Transitions – due to take place May 2021
- Q and A sessions on education, pre-recorded
- Education (Post 16) – due to take place May 2021
- Empowerment within the PEP (currently under development)

### Evidence of Impact

Designated Teachers / Designated Person:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
Series on creating SMART Desirable Outcomes	December 2019	457
Designated Person (EY)	September 2020	21
The role of the Designated Teacher (SSA)	September 2020	145
PEPS and PPP	September 2020	84
Post 16 PEPs	August 2020	133
Designated Person (Post 16)	August 2020	38
Designated Person for children previously in care	February 2021	56
Attainment & Progress within the PEP (EY, primary, secondary, post 16 & SEND)	November 2020	94
Completion of the COVID attendance and engagement	January 2021	

### SMART Desirable Outcomes Training

As a result of this training and a key focus on developing SMART outcomes in the wider work of the Virtual School, the RAG rating of outcomes has demonstrated a reduction of red ratings by 21.4% and an 12.6% increase in green ratings of the desirable outcomes sections of PEPs.

	Red	Amber	Green
Autumn 2019	30%	46%	24%
Spring 2021	8.6%	43.2%	36.6%

In response to the webinars on desirable outcomes, another VSH has commented 'I really love this' and has requested permission to use these with DTs they are working with in their local authority.

### Previously in Care Training

In relation to this training one participant commented that as a result of viewing the webinar they have worked with 'teachers, [to support them to understand] who is post-LAC, what that means and the funding available.'

Another participant commented 'it was so well considered and clear' and 'I could share it with colleagues and they could hear it directly from the VS'.

### Live Virtual Trauma and Attachment Training

In response to the question 'what do you think were the key benefits of this session', comments from participants include:

'to be able to take this training back to my practice'

'reflecting on the impact early trauma has on a young person and the ways they may respond, and what that may look like in a school setting'

'videos from the child's perspective were very powerful'

'a good selection of resources and further reading'

With reference to how effectively did the training meet the objectives on a scale of 1(low)-10 (high).

All ratings were 8 or above.

In response to the questions 'what do you think could be done better', comments from participants include:

'not to be virtual but this is out of everyone's control'

'virtual wasn't ideal but unavoidable'

'personally I found it hard to be online for so long'

The response to this can be seen in the legacy section.

## In response to the tweet



A school who had previously attended the training responded:



Following on from one bespoke whole staff meeting, the DT was contacted to understand the impact of the training four months on. The DT commented there had been 'a change in approach to behaviour. Teachers see the importance of building relationships with the children.' Staff have 'referred to the training throughout the year when discussing individual children and how they manage their behaviours and emotions.'

Five months on another DT commented that as a result of the training staff are now routinely 'using ABC forms throughout school and using scripts'.

### Boxall Training

25 DT have completed the Boxall training. For further evidence on the impact of the Boxall, please refer to the specific Boxall case study.

### FASD and UASC

These courses are being publicised from May 2021; it is therefore not possible to report on impact at this time.

### Governors:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
Education outcomes for children in care	April 2021	17
Knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by children in care	April 2021	8
Statutory duties of the designated teacher	April 2021	14
Duties and responsibilities of the governing body	April 2021	6

A governor who trialled the training commented 'it has further developed my knowledge and understanding of the role of the CiC link governor. The suggested questions at the end of each module will help to frame and focus meetings with the Designated CiC Teacher.' 'The Webinars were a very good, time effective way of accessing the training and apart from the lack of opportunity for discussion/clarification it provided quality resources with excellent links for additional reading.'

Owing to the recent launch of these webinars further evidence of impact is not yet available.

### Social Workers:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
The Role of Social Workers in Education	October 2020	97

Having viewed the webinar, one Social Worker commented 'The training supported my team with ensuring we are meeting the standards of quality assurance when completing PEPs for our children / young people. I felt it helped me with understanding what is required to be put in each section and also what work the areas of development for our team. I asked for follow up support to clarify what forms needed to be completed for the PEPs as we were following a different format due to Covid19. The training and support has been useful for knowing what is expected when completing future PEPs and I have been able to see improvements with the quality of my PEPs since receiving the training.'

The RAG ratings of the social care section of the PEPs for this social worker improved from 70% green and 30% amber in the autumn term to 100% green in the spring term.

The impact of training around SEND and the SEND protocol will be evidenced by the application of the protocol into practice. For initial evidence, see the case study relating to the SEND protocol.

#### **IROs:**

Responses to the education session for IROs include 'very interesting and helpful' 'really helpful thank you'. IROs were asked to rate their confidence (1 low 10 high) in understanding SEND prior to the presentation and again at the end. There was an increase of between 2 and 3 points per person by the end of the training.

#### **Legacy**

The development of virtual training has proved to be a powerful tool. Beyond Covid the Virtual School will continue to use and further develop virtual training. For the following reasons:

- It provides immediacy of access
- It reduces the need for supply cover in schools
- It widens participation, particularly for those living a significant distance from Cambridgeshire
- It can be revisited by participants

However once face to face training can resume, there is a plan to offer a blended approach. Face to face sessions will supplement the virtual offer. This will enable:

- Networking / greater collaboration
- Longer and more in-depth sessions. This will include training for new DTS, trauma and attachment sessions and FASD. Virtual School have purchased virtual reality head-sets. These have been embedded within face to face training to support participants in understanding the lived experience of children and young people they are championing.



## The impact of the work of the Virtual School on a village primary school.

### Context

#### 2018-2019

The school is a small, friendly village Primary school in South Cambridgeshire with a strong staff team who support each other actively.

158 children on roll in 6 classes but in September 2020 reduced to five classes due to falling pupil numbers.

17% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium and 39% are from non-White backgrounds. 12% EAL across the school in some classes 30%. 16% of pupils have SEND currently (May 2021) 2 children have an EHCP.

The case study relates to a period of just over approximately 18 months when siblings joined the school in June 2018 living in their first, short-term placement as their care plan was for adoption. The school had limited experience of educating children in care when they joined the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The format is a semi-structured interview.

### Needs identified and outline support

#### What were the identified needs of the staff when the children joined?

Staff initially found **having the children sharing their feelings very upsetting**. As a staff **we recognised that we had little experience or understanding of the needs of children who had experienced trauma**. Initially both children were in our mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Staff found it hard to see such young children so distressed and were also concerned about the **impact on other children in the class**, especially when objects were thrown on occasions. SLT provided **opportunities to de-brief and discuss incidents** and we were very fortunate to have **fortnightly sessions from ME (NHS Well-Being Team)** who met with the staff working with the children to discuss approaches and listen to their concerns. This really helped staff as they **had time to discuss experiences and had lots of positive reinforcement**.

#### What did the school need to think about that was new to them?

Not all the learning about behaviour and approaches to learning was completely new to me (Head teacher) as **I had worked with highly dysregulated children before**. I found that what I had expected staff to be like did not transpire. They picked up that with XX and YY they were **making a difference to their lives**. Staff's successes kept them going. They are a **very reflective staff team**. Group sharing at lunchtime developed a **culture of reflection** and mutual support. We became aware of the need for a **constant changing of approaches** when they ceased to work and the need to be **constantly flexible**. Their overriding concern among all staff was for the child. This took over and the teamwork became more important. **All staff were involved**

#### What was the Virtual School role in supporting you and the staff?

The Virtual School was also **extremely supportive** in terms of **suggesting strategies**, explaining the PEP process and **contributing to meetings**. They **provided whole school INSET on Attachment and Trauma in April 2019** and were a **huge support when we had a parental concern** raised about possible sexualised behaviour by one of the children.

#### How did you meet the children's needs?

Both boys had **high levels of 1:1 support**, lots of praise, clear boundaries but **a very calm approach** and **a clear message that we would make a new start after incidents**. XX had a **lunchtime club** from November – March. Both children had **1:1 sessions to support emotional needs/self-esteem and access to calming activities**. This was a change from the usual social skills groups. These were timetabled and planned in regularly, they were story based and practical. We developed a **'team around the child'** but with specific people as first contact for the children. The Head Teacher had a regular lunch date with XX! **Adults never felt alone in their challenges**, and at the end of the day I would often find all the 4 TAs with teachers comparing notes usually in a positive way or **sharing issues with no judgement in it**, all about what could we do differently. **There were good and bad days**. All staff, even those who did not teach the boys, quickly grew fond of them and found it hard to see them so distressed but it was also lovely to **share their achievements and see the progress they made** e.g XX taking his part in the nativity play; progress in phonics. There were days when we had to **evacuate classrooms** and the learning of the other children was disrupted but **we did not get negative comments from children or parents**. The class TAs (in both cases) did amazing work with the children and gave them lots of time and emotional support. This **did have an impact on the intervention programmes for other children** in the class, as these did not always happen as planned. **We used PP+ funding for additional support**, and supplemented further support.

### Evidence of Impact

#### How was the impact of the Virtual School support expressed?

There was **practical advice that led to change** e.g visual timetables, reducing demands of tasks to build success—we have a very experienced SENCo who is extremely supportive who worked with us on this too.

Having two CiC children at the same time helped, as **staff could support each other and compare notes and share ideas**. It was the first time in a very long time since we had needed to write PEPs so **we needed the Virtual School guidance around the PEPs** being online, Pupil Premium Plus etc. I involved my SENCO in target setting which wasn't difficult in these cases as their behaviours were so extreme.

#### When did school staff report positive changes in their practice and in the children?

**Moving the children to separate classes** at the beginning of November 2018 had a positive impact

**Lunchtime club** allowed XX to **build relationships with peers in a safe way** and let him develop **genuine friendships**

**Spring term** was generally more positive for both boys and **they made progress in their learning**

Situations out of school made a difference e.g when the children knew they were possibly going to move this had a negative impact especially on XX. We needed to **revise expectations** ie going back to regulating activities.

#### How did the staff use the information from the trauma and attachment INSET morning that the Virtual School delivered?

**The trauma training delivered by the Virtual School had the biggest impact** as all staff understood the changes in the way the brain responded and the **underlying reasons for the behaviours that we were seeing**. We had discussions about the fact **that all behaviour is communication** and tried to learn how to **“read” the children’s needs** and behaviour so we could **intervene before we reached crisis point**. E.g. having a **“safe space”** for each child, giving XX an **“I need help card”** to share with an adult so he did not escalate behaviour to get attention (It didn't always work but there were occasions when he used it really well) **talked about the training afterwards and did follow up meetings** and talked about **other children with possible traumatic experiences**, generally raised awareness about **all children**.

#### Impact on Child XX

##### Progress and Attainment. Extract from Spring Term 2019 PEP

“The number of complex phonemes he recognises has **increased from 6 in October to 13 in December**. In October XX **could read 20** of the first 100 High Frequency words and **in December he could read 61**. Spring term - XX has made progress this term. He is now **in class for the majority of the day**, learning alongside his peers. He is able to access the whole class teaching sessions... His recognition of high frequency words continues to improve **and by Easter he could read 80 of the first 100 HFW and spell 52 of them**... He is **becoming more fluent** at counting in 2s, 5s and 10s and is beginning to double and halve small numbers.”

### Legacy

#### What is the legacy ie longer term impact on the school of working with XX and YY and the work of the Virtual School.

##### Quotes from staff

“It was eye-opening. I had never worked with CiC pupils before. It was challenging, draining, highly emotional but also very rewarding”

“Looked after children are not all the same- our current ones could not be more different!”

“They are children you will never forget. It was life changing and I still think about where they are and what they might be doing” (Reception TA)

“It (VS training and working with XX and YY) changed my approach to behaviour and I have used things I learnt with other children”

Staff talk about AA and BB and their situation and **the need to be mindful about what’s going on underneath**. They look out for the **small signs in the children** that things may not be as they seem.

There are no big changes in terms of rewriting policies but there has been **a bigger change in people’s mindsets and understanding reasons behind behaviour**. What is this behaviour showing me? What are the issues and what can we do as the adults to change that experience for the child when they are overwhelmed and can't cope?





## Health Data Update November 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Designated Nurse Children in Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To improve health and well-being, and health outcomes for children in care by ensuring adequate assessment of health and suitable health provision; addressing areas where there may be a lack of provision or improvements required.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers

Officer contact:  
Name: Catherine York  
Post: Designated Nurse Children in Care  
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Member contact:  
Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Role: Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee  
Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The report provides an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place to meet the health needs of Cambridgeshire's children in care.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group commission the Children in Care Health Team, Cambridgeshire Community Services to have oversight of the health needs of our children in care via Initial and Review Health Assessments; this means that the doctors and nurses within the team undertake the health assessments, or ensure provision by a health service in another part of the country for those children and young people placed outside of Cambridgeshire or the agreed 20 miles radius. The Designated Nurse and Doctor for Children in Care work with commissioners and providers across social care and health to ensure the provision, quality and timeliness of the required health services including statutory health assessments and completion of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

## 3. Main Issues

### 3.1 Initial and Review Health Assessments

Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for those aged 0-3 years returned to face-to-face appointments from the end of April 2021, and from the beginning of June 2021 all IHAs returned to face-to-face appointments. Virtual IHAs remain an option if the agreed criteria are met.

8 months ago, it was identified that the Initial Health Assessment performance rate required improvement, so partnership work commenced to achieve this. Partners are working collaboratively to make the necessary improvements which include improvement in timeliness of submission of the required referral and consent forms by social workers, and more timely and detailed reporting of data by the Children in Care Team Lead. To date, improvements in performance are starting to be seen as detailed in the table below:

### 3.1.1 Initial Health Assessment Performance Data

<b>Children and young people placed in Cambridgeshire</b>			
<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of children new to care</b>	<b>IHAs completed within 20 working days of coming into care</b>	<b>IHAs completed/booked for completion within 15 working days of receipt of referral and consent by the health team</b>
<b>July 2021</b>	5	4	5
<b>August 2021</b>	9	7	7
<b>September 2021</b>	4	4	4
<b>In area totals</b>			
<b>Number</b>	18	15	16
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Children and young people placed outside Cambridgeshire</b>			
<b>July 2021</b>	5	0	
<b>August 2021</b>	3	0	
<b>September 2021</b>	6	Not Known – data reported in arrears so will be captured in the next report.	
<b>Overall totals</b>			
<b>Number</b>	32	15	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47%</b>	

### 3.1.2 Review Health Assessment (RHA) Performance Data

RHA performance was maintained throughout the June, July, and August, with performance being between **83 - 94% each month**.

Current provision of RHAs is by a combination of face-to-face appointments and virtual appointments, with the majority being undertaken in person; virtual assessments can only be undertaken if the agreed criteria are met. For those who decline their consultation a questionnaire is provided which enables a Health Action Plan to be created (in line with the Pathway).

### 3.2 Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ)

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, commonly known as the SDQ, is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. There are three versions of the SDQ: the parent/carer, the teacher, and the self-report scale (completed by 11–16-year-olds), which provide the potential for triangulation of information about a child across the different versions. These questionnaires are used alongside health assessments to support the assessment of emotional health and wellbeing. Scoring categories are: Low need (0-13), Some need (14-16) and High need (17-40).

The health team in Cambridgeshire undertake the parent/carer SDQ process on behalf of Social Care; the performance of the parent/carer SDQ is what we report on. During the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, performance of SDQ completion was negatively impacted, as there was not the opportunity for carers to complete the SDQ at the time of the face-to-face health assessment; this option was used in cases where the questionnaire emailed to the carer around 3 weeks prior to the assessment with a request for the carer to complete the questionnaire and return to the health team before the health assessment, had not been returned. This process is the same for children/young people placed in and out of Cambridgeshire.

An SDQ Pathway was introduced at the end of May 2021, which includes health, social care and education colleagues in order to ensure a robust process is in place for all three types of questionnaires. Review of use and compliance of the pathway by the Health of Children in Care Partnership Group is scheduled for January 2022.

The table below, identifies the number and percentage of SDQs sent to carers as well as the number and percentage returned, as this helps show the gaps in foster carers completing and returning the questionnaire, an area that needs some improvement:

Month	Number of questionnaires sent to carers by the Health Team	Percentage of questionnaires sent to carers by the Health Team	Number of completed questionnaires returned by carers	Percentage of completed questionnaires returned by carers
June 2021	54	100%	25	46%
July 2021	50	100%	25	50%
August 2021	54	100%	29	54%
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>50%</b>
The percentage of questionnaires sent to carers is always 100% as questionnaires are sent for all children aged 4-16 years (inclusive) but excludes those for whom the questionnaire is not appropriate such as children/young people with disabilities.				
<b>April 2020 – March 2021</b> performance was <b>27%</b> for completed questionnaires returned by carers.				

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live
- 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

## 5. Source documents

- 5.1 Source documents

None

## 6. Accessibility

- 6.1 An accessible version of this report is available on request from [catherineyork@nhs.net](mailto:catherineyork@nhs.net)



## Children in Care/ Care Leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training: Action Plan

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Mark Cowdell  
Countywide NEET Manager

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key Decision: No

Purpose: To provide the Committee with an update on progress towards increasing the number of young people in Education Employment and Training (EET)

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

### Officer contact:

Name: Mark Cowdell  
Post: Countywide NEET Manager  
Email: [Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 507218

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Role: Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee  
Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## **Summary:**

Peterborough & Cambridgeshire councils aims to ensure that children in care and care leavers are supported to have high aspirations, are able to access a range of opportunities and have support to remain in education or enter into training, apprenticeships or employment.

In order to support this area of service delivery the council have developed a written strategy document and an action plan that sets out how the Council will support young people.

The NEET Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities has recently been developed, led by Matt Oliver, Head of Service for Think Communities. Sitting under this strategy is an action plan tracker for children in care and care leavers, tracking support to increase access to EET and reduce NEET figures

Staff in the council meet quarterly to review the strategy and the action plans. The senior responsible officer for the children in care and care leavers action plan tracker is Myra O'Farrell.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The numbers of young people in education, employment and training (EET) is a key positive outcome measure for children in care and care leavers so measurement of those in EET and those not in education, employment and training (NEET) is carefully monitored.
- 1.2 In 2018, an overall Cambridgeshire NEET Reduction Strategy was developed with action plans for the different vulnerable groups sitting within service delivery areas. An action plan was developed for Children in Care and Care Leavers and a previous version of this action plan has been brought to this committee in 2019.
- 1.3 In 2020, it was agreed that a NEET strategy would be developed across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, led by Matt Oliver, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated response from all service delivery areas to support this work and improve performance across our vulnerable groups.
- 1.4 This report is regarding the action plan tracker for children in care and care leavers, created in Summer of 2021 (attached at Appendix 1).

## **2. Main Issues**

- 2.1 The current published DfE EET figures for care leavers aged 19 to 21 for Cambridgeshire is 44.0%. This is in comparison to an EET figure 54.0% for East of England Average and an EET figure of 54.1% for Cambridgeshire Statistical neighbours. The DfE definition of this data is "former relevant

young people whose birthday falls between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> March in the given year. The data available is up to 2020.

The 2021 data will most likely be published by the DfE in December 2021.

Table1: Published DfE figures 2020:

Care Leavers	% in EET (DfE Annual Published Data)			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
EAST OF ENGLAND	50.0%	51.0%	52.0%	54.0%
Cambridgeshire	37.0%	47.0%	47.0%	44.0%
Cambridgeshire SN	49.1%	51.8%	53.9%	54.1%

Table 2: Predicted 2021 figures (aged 19 – 21):

CIC & Care Leavers aged 19-21 years old	% in EET
	Predicted Figures 2021
EAST OF ENGLAND	54%
Cambridgeshire	49.1%
Cambridgeshire SN	54%

Table 3: Predicted 2021 figures (aged 16/17)

CIC & Care Leavers aged 16/17	% in EET
	Predicted Figures 2021
EAST OF ENGLAND	62%
Cambridgeshire	61.3%
Cambridgeshire SN	67%

- 2.2 Table 1: shows the annual published figures for Cambridgeshire, East of England and Cambridgeshire Statistical neighbours. The Cambridgeshire result improved from 2017, however between 2019 and 2020 there has been a slight decrease of 3%. During that time, there was a change of recording systems within the council and this has impacted on the quality of the data available, the council are continuing to work on their data capture systems to increase the accuracy of the data. The impact of the pandemic has affected sectors of the employment market, availability of apprenticeships and opportunities for large parts of the year and this has impacted on EET figures for young people.

Tables 2 & 3 show the councils predicted figures from our recent data return which is expected to be published by the DfE in December 2021. The figures

show an increase which would be expected as we move out of the pandemic and confidence and opportunities for young people increase.

2.3 The strategy details four areas of focus as the strategic objectives:

- Shared understanding of data and information.
- Collaborative approach to tracking and early intervention.
- Collective focus on supporting vulnerable young people.
- Joint approach to increasing and developing appropriate opportunities.

2.4 The action plan tracker is split into the strategic objectives. Against each strategic objective, there are between 3 and 6 service objectives and information relating to what actions have been taken and what actions are still to be done. It also highlights whether it is an objective for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough or just one of the LA's.

2.5 This action plan tracker is reviewed quarterly and any relevant updates are shared at a Strategic Leads meeting chaired by Matt Oliver.

2.6 The document (appendix 1), highlights some of the actions that the service is working on and it has a wide breadth of development ideas and improving practice. One area that is a priority is the ensuring we can collate accurate monthly data that can be reviewed regularly by the service and ensuring the right resource is targeted to the right young people. We can then also identify trends around support needs and barriers to learning. It is the service belief that if we can get this right, it will help to improve the performance.

2.7 It should be noted that the current pandemic may have impacted on some of the EET outcomes for care leavers. The employment market has been especially hit hard. The evidence for the overall figures for young people in Cambridgeshire who are "in learning" have increased with more young people attending college or sixth forms. For care leavers in the slightly older age group, many are looking to progress into employment from further education and so this could have impact on the performance. We do not yet have the published data for 2021, however the council data submission suggests that our overall EET figures for 19- 21 years increases to 49.1%. and the figures for our 17/18 years in EET rises to 61.3%

### 3. Significant Implications

3.1 Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications from the strategy

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
None

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

NEET performance is a key indicator of care leaver performance and is considered by Ofsted in their inspection of services for care leavers.

- 3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
None
- 3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
None
- 3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
N/A.
- 3.7 Public Health Implications  
None
- 3.8 Environment and Climate Change  
None
- 4. Source documents
- 4.1 None.
- 5. Accessibility
- 5.1 An accessible version of this report and appendix is available on request from [Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)



# Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NEET Strategy – Strategic Objectives

Service Area:- CIC/Care Leavers

Senior Responsible Officer:- Myra O’Farrell (Kerry Seymour and Michaela Berry)

Strategic Objectives	Cambridgeshire / Peterborough or Both	Service Objective	What has happened so far	What needs to happen next
Shared Understanding of Data and Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both</li> <li>2. Both</li> <li>3. Both</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consistent monthly data performance reporting across Cambs and Peterborough.</li> <li>2. Links between Care leaver teams and SEND SAT team to understand who has an EHCP.</li> <li>3. To complete a Deep Dive audit to identify links between Placement stability and NEET status.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A form has been developed in LCS that is completed by SW/PA in teams every month following a young person’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. A Business Objects report has been developed in Cambridgeshire by BI team.</li> <li>2. Specialist EET PA is working with the SEND SAT team in Cambridgeshire to understand share information on young people who are known to both services.</li> <li>3. It has been identified anecdotally that young people in long term placements such as foster care have a better chance of Higher education and not being NEET.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BI team in Cambs to develop a report that can be available in Power BI. BI team in Peterborough to also develop the Business Objects report and Power BI reporting so that it can be used to assess and monitor performance</li> <li>2. Developing this work further and to also look at whether this can or needs to be developed in Peterborough.</li> <li>3. To scope out a deep dive audit project across both LA’s to look at young people who are long term NEET and cross reference with placements as well as those that attend HE or positive EET and cross reference with their placement information to identify any learning.</li> </ol>
Collaborative Approach to Tracking and Early Intervention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both</li> <li>2. Both</li> <li>3. Both</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviewing and developing NEET/EET meetings across Cambridgeshire to track young people and ensure right support.</li> <li>2. Review the need for tracking and monitoring type support (like client</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cambridgeshire have developed monthly meetings where they review NEET young people who are 16+ and ensure that a) the information is correct on system and b) have they got the right</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To review the process, utilising new data reports that will be developed (see action above) and evaluate effectiveness. Look to share best practice process with Peterborough and seeing how could be developed in Peterborough.</li> </ol>

		<p>researchers that support the overall NEET work).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAC Reviews provide a good opportunity for quality assurance oversight around EET/NEET situations and support.</li> </ol>	<p>support and is there any more support could be offered. Peterborough NEET team meet with Virtual School and CiC teams to discuss those NEET and risk of NEET and agree interventions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been identified that this type of work could be beneficial to understand the cohort better and make sure performance is correct.</li> <li>Part of the IRO job in LAC reviews is to ensure that young people have the right support around their EET status and challenge if more support is needed.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to scope out what this work could look like and whether there is capacity in current establishment to do this.</li> <li>Continue to encourage this kind of critical friend oversight and ensure that actions from LAC reviews regarding EET status are actioned.</li> </ol>
<p>Collective Focus on Supporting Vulnerable Young People</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peterborough</li> <li>Cambs</li> <li>Cambs</li> <li>Cambs</li> <li>Cambs</li> <li>Both</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transitions to College forum is run by Virtual school with partner agencies attending.</li> <li>Providing Business Mentors to a number of Care leavers to increase confidence and support around finding suitable employment opportunities.</li> <li>To develop aspirations in young people at an early stage and work out how best to support them to achieve their goals.</li> <li>Increase number of young people that go onto Higher Education.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The forum is running and helps to identify the support needed for young people.</li> <li>Pilot project has been run in Cambridgeshire with a number of young people in partnership with external partner. Anecdotally the project has been seen as successful.</li> <li>Virtual school in Cambs have appointed an Aspirations Project co-ordinator to look at this and develop ways to foster young people's aspirations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review the learning from this work and whether it can be developed further.</li> <li>There is a need to evaluate the pilot project to provide the evidence that worth running similar projects again or if there is more development work needed.</li> <li>Continue to develop the project and evaluating how it is working and what learning can be made from it.</li> <li>Continue to work on this and find ways to monitor the data on this to see if the numbers going onto HE are increasing.</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Completion of Pathway Plans and the work needed for supporting EET status continues to be at a high standard.</li> <li>6. Ensuring that young people do not suffer due to Digital Deprivation.</li> </ol>	<p>and find work experience opportunities etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Specialist EET PA in Cambs is working with a number of young people that may aspirations to go onto HE and working with HE providers to ensure the right kind of opportunities and support can be provided.</li> <li>5. Specialist EET PA in Cambridgeshire has done work with PA's within the Children in Care teams and produces newsletters and emails and monthly drop in meetings to discuss training opportunities that may be available. Peterborough NEET team receive info from training providers and shares this regularly with CiC and Care leaver teams.</li> <li>6. Local Offer specialist PA worked during the pandemic to ensure that he managed to get laptops and dongles that could be provided to any young person who could be disadvantaged by being deprived of digital equipment. Partnerships have been formed with businesses to get recommissioned laptops</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Review the support that has been provided by specialist EET PA and look at ways this could be extended. Potentially auditing the quality of Pathway Plans to ensure good quality information around EET.</li> <li>6. To further develop processes around this so that it has some sustainability and not just something for the pandemic.</li> </ol>
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			that can be provided to vulnerable young people. IT team in CCC have also started doing this.	
Joint Approach to Increasing and Developing Appropriate Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cambs</li> <li>2. Both</li> <li>3. Both</li> <li>4. Cambs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a Post 16 re-engagement programme for NEET CYP (ACE the RACE) and those at risk of becoming NEET, using a relational and systemic approach.</li> <li>2. Develop links with DWP around Kick Start programme to ensure that Care leavers are provided with opportunities.</li> <li>3. Complete a gaps in provision form and send to ESFA identifying where there are gaps in provision. Continue links with CPCA combined authority as commissioners for adult learning to look at developing more provision for young people.</li> <li>4. Develop a Construction Project working with the National Benchmarking forum to identify work placements for a number of care leavers in the construction labour market.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ACE the RACE has been developed and the pilot programme is running with a few young people supported by Cambridgeshire Virtual School.</li> <li>2. Working with departments within both LA's that have taken on supporting Kick Start programme and ensuring some processes around this. In Peterborough, through co-funded NEET advisor with Cross Keys Homes, they are actively promoting the 50 Kick start posts offered by CKH to young people in Peterborough especially CiC and care leavers.</li> <li>3. It has been agreed by NEET strategy group that there is a need for this. CPCA combined authority willing to support with this.</li> <li>4. Specialist EET PA and Specialist Local Offer PA are working together with the National Benchmarking Forum to develop a project which will match care leavers with construction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and evaluate the pilot programme and look at whether future projects can be done and how can be expanded further.</li> <li>2. Further work and development of this work is needed.</li> <li>3. Set up a working group to look at what should be included in the form and submit to ESFA. Discuss with CPCA on options for further providers coming to area, outside of need for new ESFA contract that will come from Gaps form.</li> <li>4. Further development of the project and then to evaluate the project for effectiveness so that it may be developed further as appropriate.</li> </ol>

			businesses and looking at Apprentceships.	
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## Corporate Parenting Performance Report September 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Early Help and Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub Committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the content of the report, and
- b. Raise any questions with the lead officer

Officer contact:

Name: Myra O'Farrell  
Post: Head of Service Corporate Parenting  
Email: [Myra.O'Farrell@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:Myra.O'Farrell@peterborough.gov.uk)  
Tel:

Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Post: Chair  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is presented to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub Committee to allow members to be updated on the numbers of children in care, care leavers and the placements in which they are placed,

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 30 September 2021 by providing a breakdown of the types of placements in which they are living. The report also provides information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 As of 30 September 2021, there were 645 children in care they were in the following placements:
- 244 children were placed with in house foster carers providing placements for the Local Authority.
  - 207 children were in foster care and placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs). The agencies work with the Local Authority on a contractual basis to provide foster placements.
  - 77 post 16 year olds were living on their own, with support (independent living) but still classed as Children in Care with an allocated social worker.
  - 12 children have a court order (Placement Order) that allows them to live with their prospective adoptive parents whilst they are awaiting a final adoption order.
  - 40 children were placed with family or friends' carers (connected person). These carers are formally assessed in the same way that our other in-house carers are assessed and are presented to the Fostering Panel for approval in the same way. They are paid the same level of allowances as other in house foster carers.
  - 4 children were living with their parents but considered as looked after children because they are subject to a full care orders, so the local authority still shares parental responsibility with the birth parent. Placements with parents are often made pending a plan for reunification with the parent and in some cases will result in an application for care orders to be discharged.
  - 53 children and young people (without disabilities) were placed in residential care which provides intensive support in a residential setting. These placements are most usually made when it is clear that foster care is not able to meet the child or young person's needs.

Residential care is nearly always accessed by adolescents and only very rarely used for younger children.

- 52% of all children in care were placed outside Cambridgeshire's boundaries.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 None.

### 5. Source documents

- 5.1 None



Last Updated: September 2021



# Corporate Parenting Performance Report

Business Intelligence  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
[business.intelligence@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:business.intelligence@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## HEADLINE FIGURES

Number of children in care (CiC) on the last day of the month

645



Target: below 546

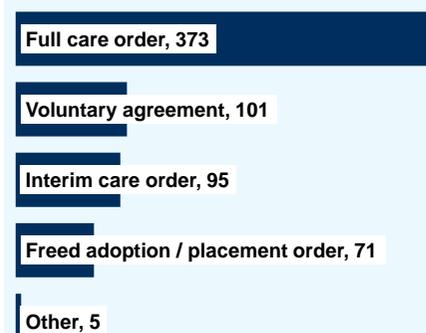


## Staffing

	Establishment	Average Caseload	Change*	Performance
Family Safeguarding Qualified social workers	40	21	▼	-
Children in Care Qualified social workers	17	24	▲	-
Leaving Care Personal Advisors	20	20	▲	-
Independent Reviewing Officers	13	54	▲	-

\*Change in average caseload is from January 2021 compared to November 2020.

## Legal status of children in care



## Length of time children have been in care



Key  
 Change since previous month ▲ Improved  
 Performance against target ✗ Strong

Key  
 Stayed the same — Deteriorated  
 Acceptable ! Poor

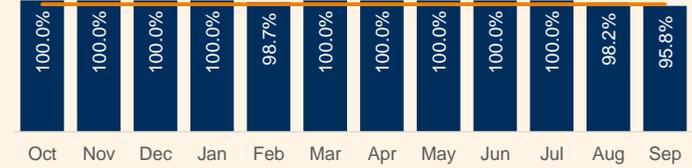
## SERVICE STANDARDS

% of CiC reviews which were held on time (year to date, and during each month)

99%



Target: above 97%

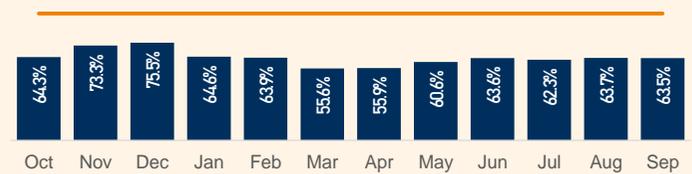


% of CiC statutory visits which were carried out on time (year to date, and during each month)

63.5%



Target: above 98%



## PLACEMENTS

Placement stability

3+ placements

10.1%



Target: below 10%

10.1% of children in Cambridgeshire's care had 3 or more different placements in the last 12 months.

Out of those children who have been in care for over 2.5 years, 62.9% have been in their current placement for two or more years.

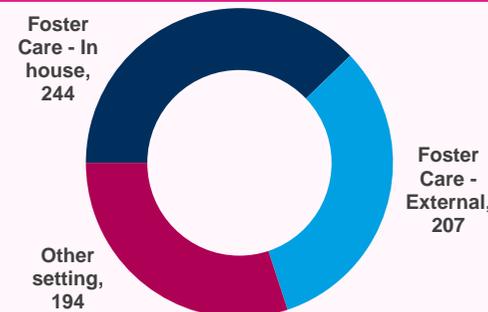
In placement 2+ yrs

62.9%

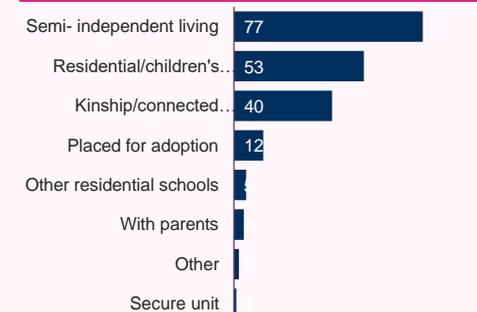


Target: above 68%

## Type of placement of children in care



## Other settings: breakdown



## EDUCATION

### Children in care by age group

16+; 188

10 to 15; 271

5 to 9; 105

1 to 4; 72

Under 1; 28

### % of school-aged children in care who have a PEP in place

98.5%

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) was in place for 393 children in Y1 - Y11, who were in the care of CCC and on the role of the virtual school at the end of the Autumn Term 2020.

### % of school-aged children in care in good or outstanding schools

72.9%

72.9% of Cambridgeshire's children in care are taught in good or outstanding schools, as at the end of December 2020.

As of December 2020

## HEALTH - SERVICE STANDARDS

### Children in care whose initial health assessment was completed on time (Year to date and by quarter)

21.6%



Target: above 95%

### Children in care whose annual health assessment was completed on time

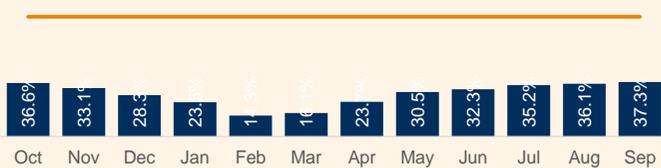
92.5%



Target: above 86%

### Children in care whose annual dental examination was completed on time

37.3%



Target: above 82%

## MISSING

### Children in care who go missing (with number of episodes)

17 Children

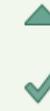
61 Episodes



## ADOPTION

### % of children leaving care who are adopted (Year to date and by quarter)

53.6%



Target: above 17%

### Timeliness of adoption process

Time to placement

431

Target: below 430

For children adopted during the past 12 months, an average of 431 days passed between the child entering care and them moving into their adoptive placement. An average of 202.3 days passed between their placement order being granted and approval of a match with their adopters.

Time to match

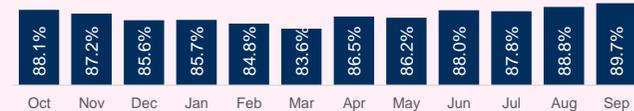
202

Target: below 185

## CARE LEAVERS

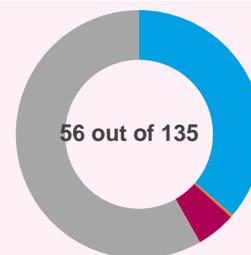
### Care Leavers who have a pathway plan in place

89.7%

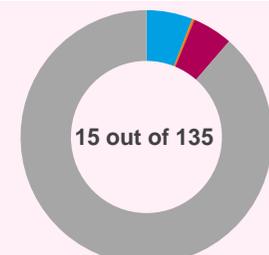


Target: above 95%

19 to 21 year old care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)



19 to 21 year old care leavers who live in unsuitable accommodation





## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020 - 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Nicola Curley Assistant Director Early Help and Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report, and
- b) Raise any questions with the lead officer

### Officer contact:

Name: Myra O'Farrell  
Post: Head of Service Corporate Parenting  
Email: [Myra.O'Farrell@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:Myra.O'Farrell@peterborough.gov.uk)

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Role: Chair  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is to provide an overview of the role of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2020/ 2021.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In April 2017, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee of the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee became active following a review of the long-established Corporate Parenting Board. The new arrangements reflected the drive to strengthen arrangements for oversight and decision making in respect of corporate parenting activity with clear accountability to the CYP Committee through adopting a scheme of delegated authority and a framework for decision making.
- 2.2 The Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Due to Covid restrictions the committee meetings were held remotely from July 2020 to May 2021. To date, informal meetings of Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members with young people have been held virtually and Members haven't yet met the young people face to face.

## 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 None.

## 5. Source documents

- 5.1 None

## 6. Accessibility

- 6.1 An accessible version of Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020/21 is available on request from [Myra.O'Farrel@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:Myra.O'Farrel@peterborough.gov.uk).



# Cambridgeshire County Council Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report



## **The role of the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee – how we do things in Cambridgeshire:**

### **What is corporate parenting?**

**Corporate parenting is founded on the principle that the Local Authority, collectively with other relevant services, should have the same aspirations and provide the same kind of care that any good parent would provide for their own children**

### **Background:**

In April 2017, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee of the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee became active following a review of the long-established Corporate Parenting Board. The new arrangements reflected the drive to strengthen arrangements for oversight and decision making in respect of corporate parenting activity with clear accountability to the CYP Committee through adopting a scheme of delegated authority and a framework for decision making.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of Sub-Committee is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in its care and provides a key role in ensuring accountability. The transformation of the Sub Committee has been led by the Chair, reinvigorating it into one which is proactive in challenging service delivery and advocating strongly for Children in Care and Care Leavers resulting in a more robust constitution with stronger governance principles.

The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to exercise all the Council's functions relating to the delivery, by or on behalf of the Council, of Corporate Parentings functions with the exception of policy decisions which remains with the CYP Committee.

Delegated authority includes:

- Working with the Virtual School to raise standards of attainment and developing education, employment and training opportunities for children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Ensuring mechanisms for consultation and participation are positively promoted and that the Council actively listens and responds to the views and experiences of children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Receiving regular reports on the provisions of services for children in care and care leavers as required by legislation and for the purpose of monitoring and offering advice.
- Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group and health providers to ensure delivery of services to meet health needs including health assessments and plans, emotional health, sexual health, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy.

**The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) reminds us that: 'corporate parenting should seek to ensure supportive relationships where young people feel cared for, not just looked after'. Being a Good Corporate Parent involves championing the rights of Children in Care and Care Leavers, ensuring they have access to good services and support from the local authority and from other partner agencies working with them**

## **Corporate Parenting Sub Committee meetings and focus:**

Over the last year and in response to feedback received from the Ofsted Inspection in early 2020, the Sub- Committee has reviewed how it conducts its business and a creative and innovative new format to Sub- Committee meetings has been introduced. The driver behind this review was to ensure that the voice of Children and Young People in Care as well as Care Experienced Young Adults are clearly heard by Sub- Committee Members.

There are now three themed priorities for the Sub- Committee: Health, Education and Placements. These are the areas that are most pertinent to the experiences of children and young people and are aligned with the Corporate Parenting priorities, which are to ensure the physical health, emotional health and well-being and educational attainment of children so that they have the best start in life and grow up to be proud of themselves and their achievements.

To achieve this, children and young people who cannot be cared for within their families must have the benefit of being cared for in supportive, secure and loving home environments.

Sub-Committee meetings continue to be held throughout the year and are now split into three formal and three informal meetings. The Formal Sub-Committee meetings continues to develop a tight focus and the ability to hold officers to account whilst informal meetings are led by children and young people through the Children in Care Council who invite Sub-Committee Members to attend.

Through introducing a forum for members of the Sub- Committee to interact with the Children in Care Council directly this ensures that the views and opinions of the children and young adults the Council supports runs as a golden thread throughout all Sub- Committee business. Whilst the introduction of this new format is in its infancy, in part due to the Covid restrictions and informal meetings being held virtually, Lead Officers and Sub-Committee have welcomed the focus that it brings and the increased ability to link the strategic priorities identified by the Sub- Committee to those shared by the Children and Young People's Committee.

At the Formal meeting in July 2021, Sub- Committee was notified of the appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair following Council elections. Sub- Committee welcomed a new Chair, Councillor Anna Bradnam and Vice Chair, Councillor Phillipa Slatter. Sub Committee was also notified that Councillor Mac McGuire replaced Councillor Simon Bywater as a member of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

## **Outcomes from Sub-Committee:**

- Informal meetings which members of the Children in Care Council attend now in place.
- Positive feedback for workers is now shared within the Participation report.
- A training programme has been developed for members to attend.
- Activities for Children in Care and Care Leavers are shared with carers as well as in the newsletter and at the Child In Care Council meetings.

## Children in Care Leaver Demographics - Who our children are:

<b>664</b> children in care who Cambridgeshire were responsible for	<b>63</b> Unaccompanied asylum seeking children in care in Cambridgeshire	
<b>488</b> young people in the leaving care population	<b>201</b> children and young people in a long-term fostering placement	
<b>60</b> children in care with a recorded disability	<b>273</b> female children in care	<b>363</b> male children in care

Children in Care	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Total CIC Population	730	702	708	695	699	695	681	687	676	670	663	664
Non-Unaccompanied Children	671	644	651	640	639	634	622	630	618	608	604	607
Unaccompanied Children (UC)	68	66	65	61	61	70	68	65	66	69	66	63
Unaccompanied Children %	8.1%	8.3%	8.1%	7.9%	8.6%	8.8%	8.7%	8.3%	8.6%	9.3%	8.9%	8.6%
Rate per 10,000	52.1	50.1	50.5	49.6	49.9	49.6	48.6	49.0	48.3	47.8	47.3	47.4

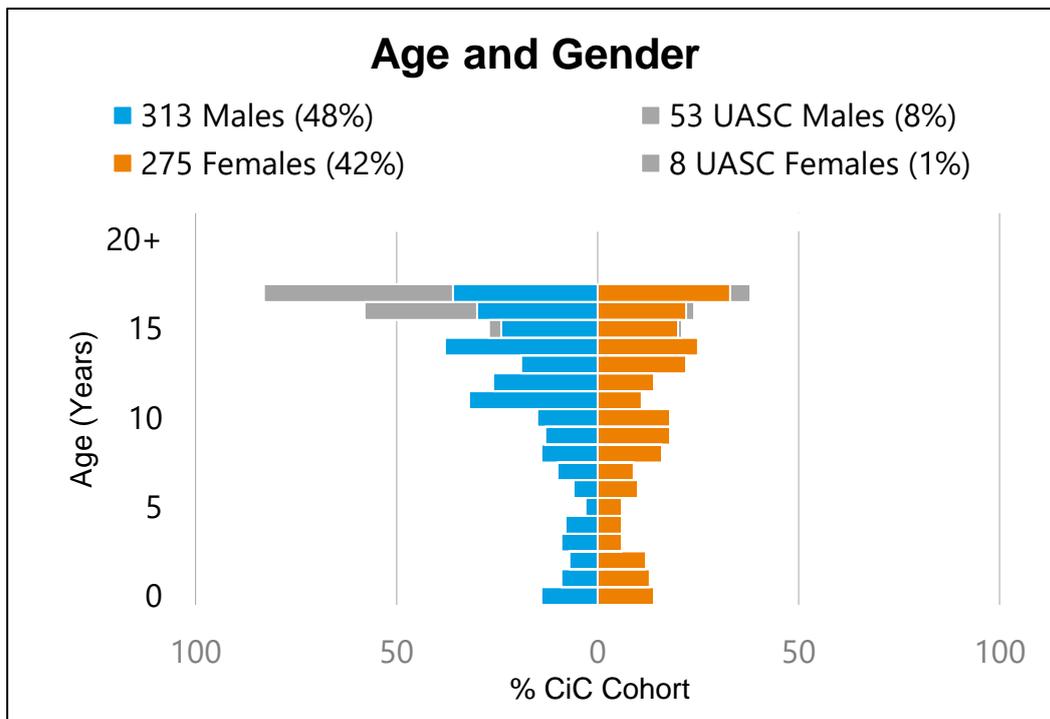
As of 31 March 2021, Cambridgeshire County Council was responsible for caring for and looking after 664 Children in Care (excluding children in respite care), a decrease when compared to the 730 children in Care at the end of March 2020.

This decreasing number of young people represents the continued focus across all services on preventing young people coming into care where appropriate. And also focusing on children in care exiting at the appropriate time for them.

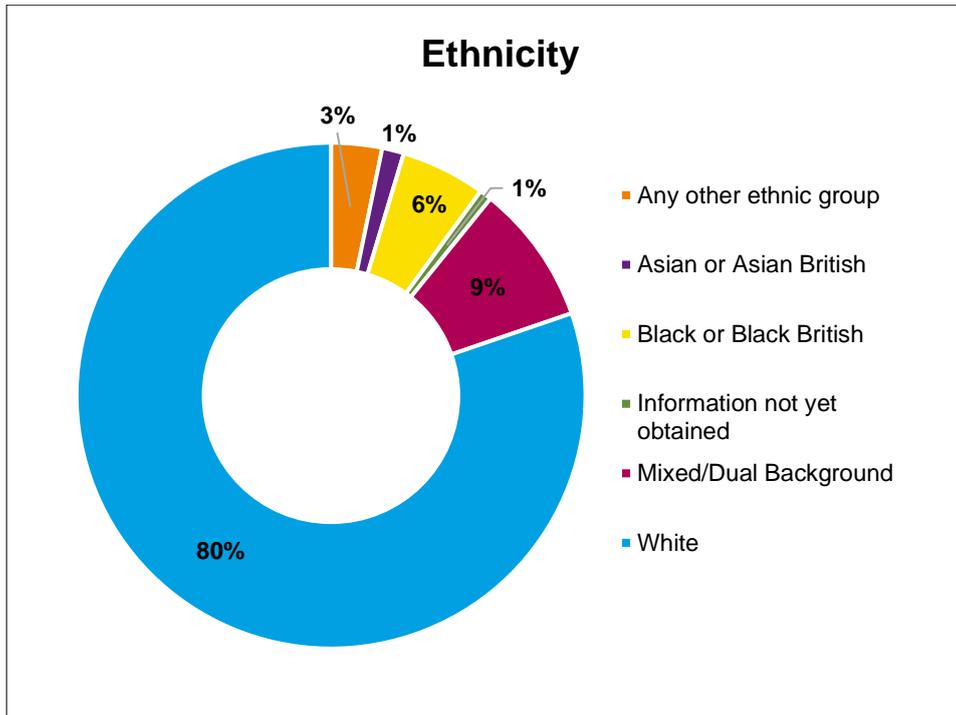
This is an extended piece of work that is ongoing and builds on the reduction of children and young people in care as per last year report where a reduction from 770 to 730 was reported.

At the end of the year there were 65 children in care with a recorded disability, representing 9% of the care population. Of these the most prominent disabilities recorded are Learning Difficulties and Autism and Asperger Syndrome.

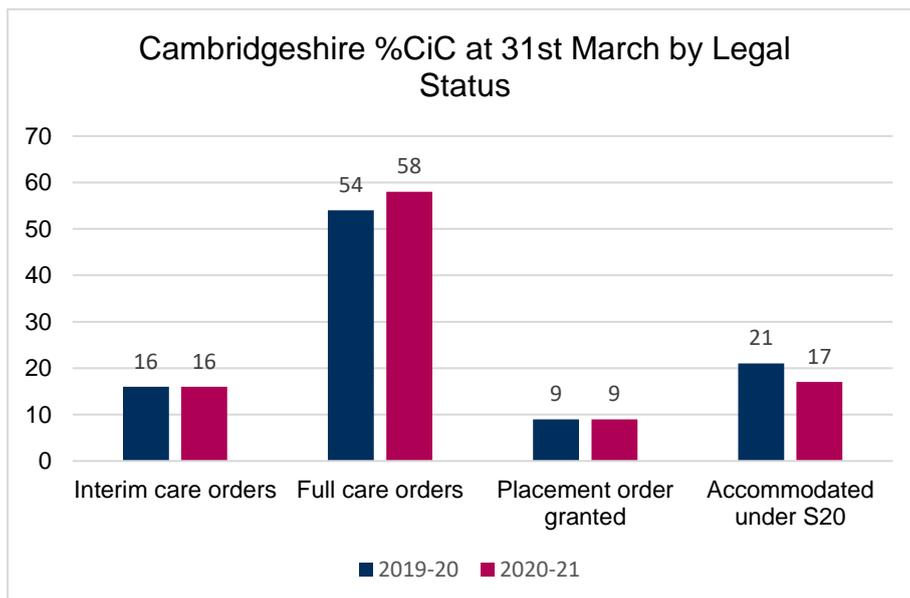
The chart below shows the age and gender of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care as of 31 March 2020. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children made up 9% of the care population and as can be seen they are represented in the older age groups.



The chart below shows the ethnicity of Children in Care as of the 31 March 2021.



The chart below provides a breakdown of the legal status of children as of the 31 March 2021. The numbers in brackets represent the numbers of children.



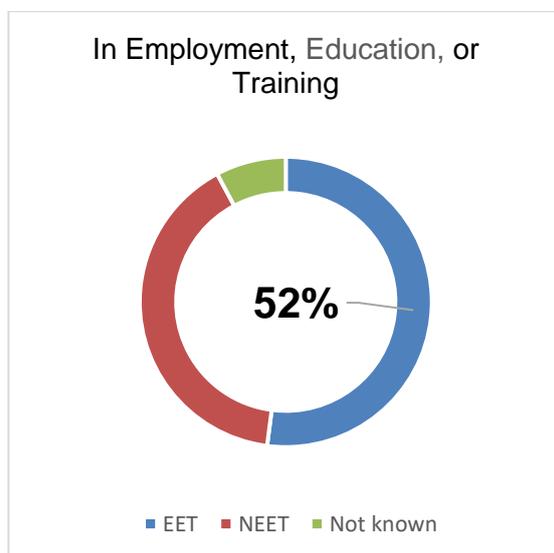
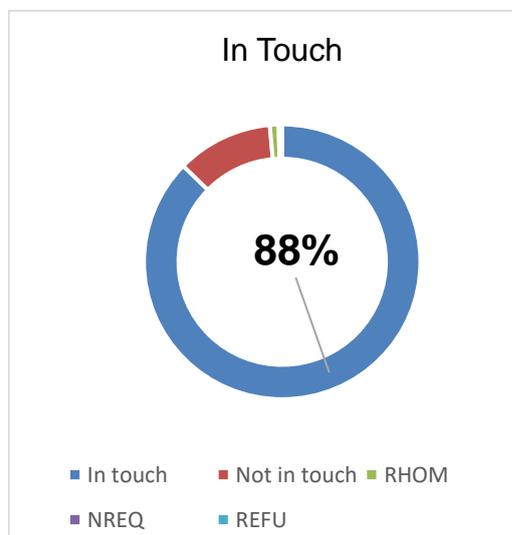
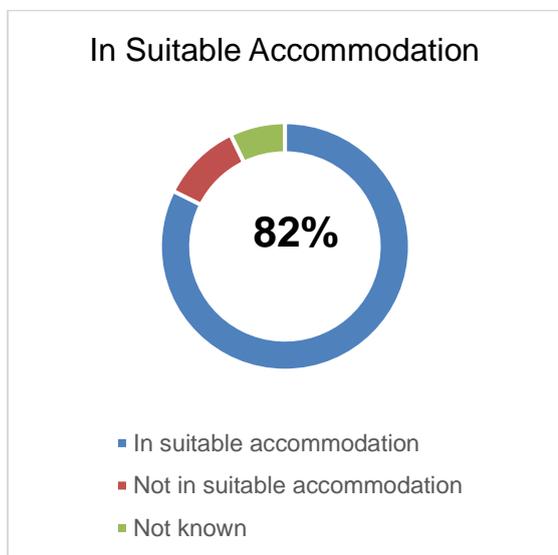
**Care Leavers:**

As of the 31 March 2021 the leaving care population consists of 488 young people, compared to 416 children at the end of 2020 and when compared to the 2019 figure of 360 which is an increase of 35% in two years.

We do recognise that the care leaving cohort will continue to rise in the coming years as a result of legislation extending the support of Personal Advisors to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years (Children and Social Work Act 2017) which is something the service is actively future planning for.

To support our care leavers, specialist posts have also been created: a Local Offer Personal Advisor, an Education, Employment and Training Coordinator and a Homelessness Reduction Personal Advisor.

26 Care Leavers (6.3%) have a recorded disability and of these the most common conditions recorded are Autism or Asperger Syndrome (46%), Behavioural Difficulties (23%), and Learning Difficulties (19%).



**Priorities – performance:**

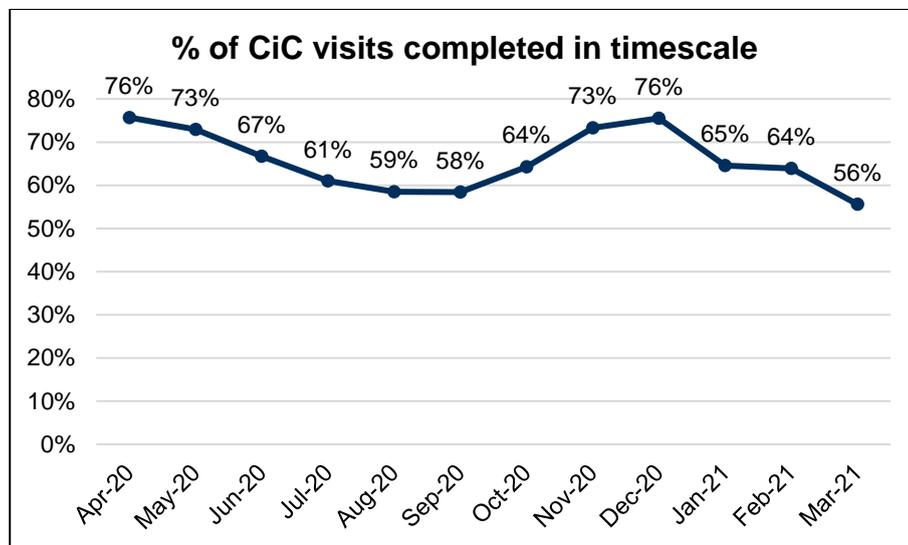
**Statutory visits**

One of the key indicators is the percentage of children in care receiving regular visits from their social worker.

In January 2020, Cambridgeshire Children's Services moved its case management system to a new system (Liquidlogic). As part of this move there were a number of changes to reporting which included a change in the definition of how visits were reported.

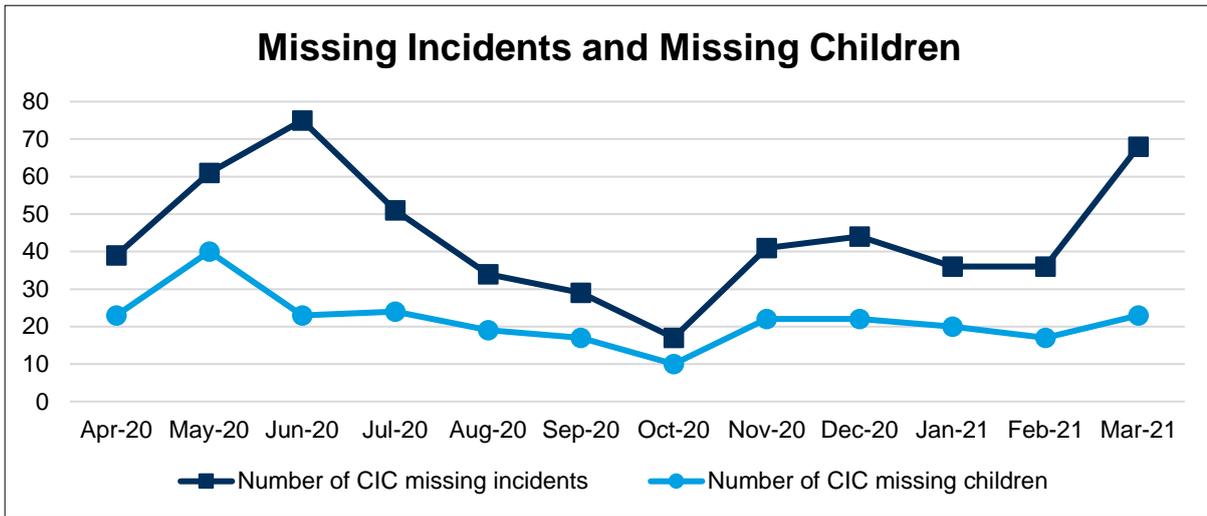
This graph shows the percentage of visits completed in each month that were in timescale. Unfortunately the recording system is unable to show virtual visits which were undertaken during the Covid19 Pandemic which is why the percentage show as low.

In March 2021 from the 570 visits due 322 were seen face to face with 209 virtually, this equates to 93% seen within timescale

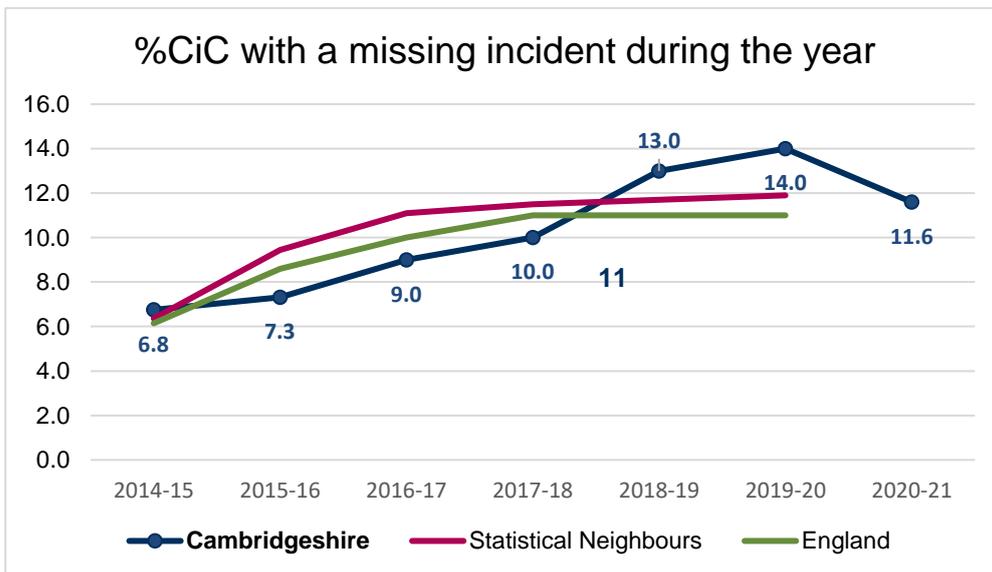


**Children in Care Missing:**

Another key indicator relating to this priority is the number of children who are reported missing and how many times they have been reported as missing. The graph below captures these figures and show that a small number of children will have been reported missing on a number of occasions. These children and their plans are monitored carefully with increased oversight from the social work teams alongside our partner agencies such as the police.



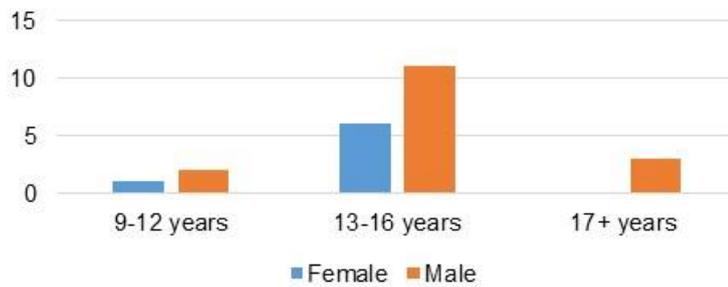
The graph below details the comparative data showed that Cambridgeshire has previously reported more children missing than other local authorities but this has now reduced to a similar percentage again.



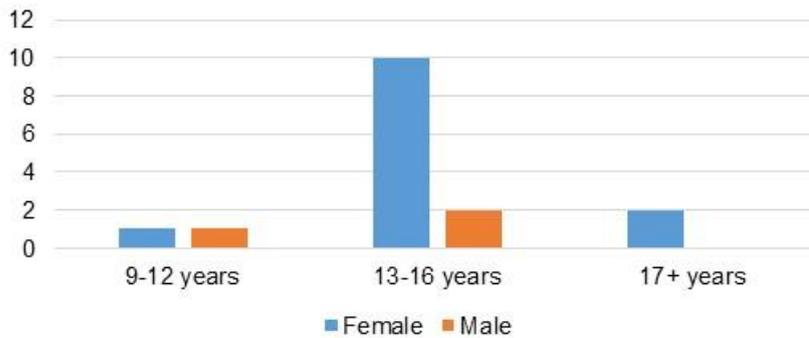
The number and timeliness of Return Home interviews (RHI's) with children and young people who have been reported missing is another key indicator relating to this priority. In Cambridgeshire the RHI's are conducted by specialist staff within the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked HUB (MET HUB). The MET HUB sits within the Integrated Front Door which enables timely access to key information about children and families from across partner agencies.

The following two graphs show the number of children assessed as at risk and under what category at the end of March 2021.

**CIC Criminal Exploitation by Age & Gender**

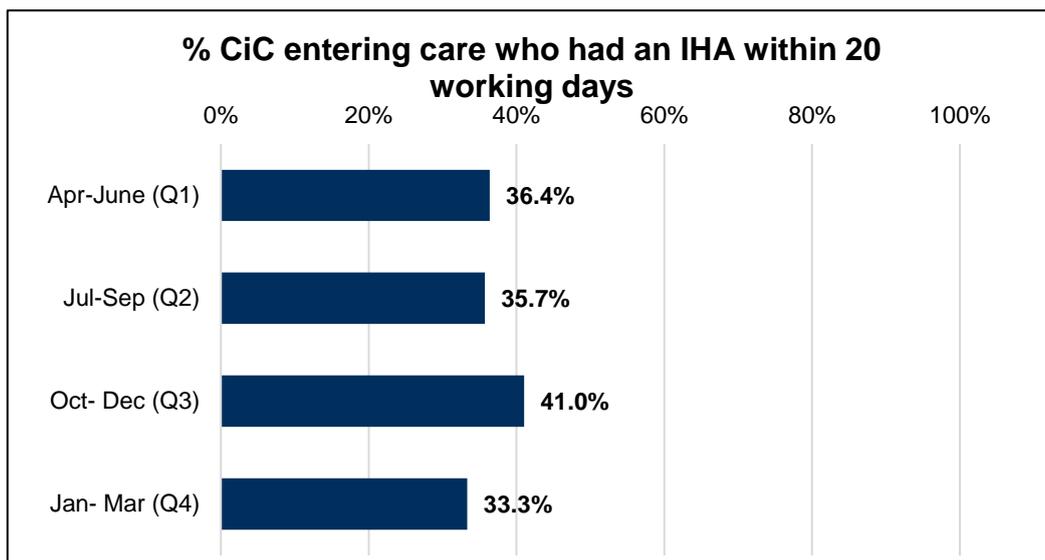


**CIC CSE by Age & Gender**



**Health of children in care:**

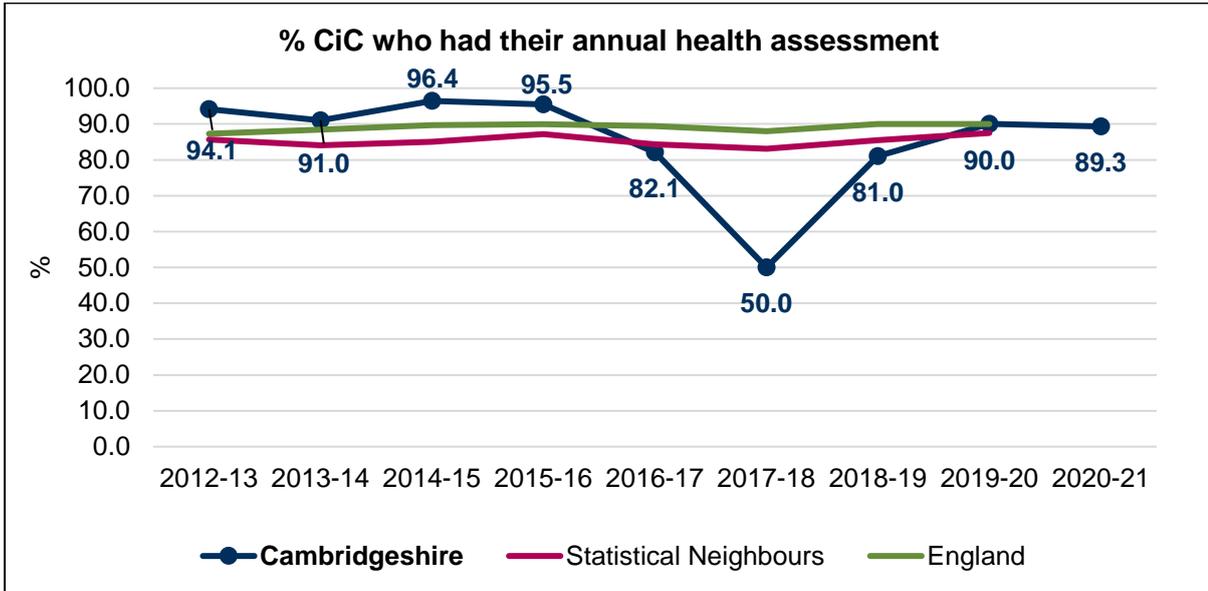
The graph below shows that whilst we have seen steady improvement throughout the year, we still need to significant improve on our performance to make sure that the initial health needs of children in care are responded to in a timely way. Initial Health Assessments can be delayed for a number of reasons such as obtaining consent which allows referrals to be made to health, delayed clinic appointments and non-attendance at clinic appointments. There are also different arrangements that apply to children who live in Cambridgeshire and those who live outside of Cambridgeshire that affect how other health authorities priorities Cambridgeshire children.



A joint working group completed a great deal of activity around health assessments during this reporting year and now that the new case management system is in place, requests for assessments are triggered automatically when children come into care and a health questionnaire within the system pre-populates information to ensure that health colleagues have all the information they need in order to be able to carry out effective medicals. Whilst there has been an understandable delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these new processes are now live within the Liquid Logic system. Ensuring improvement and scrutinising this activity will remain a priority for the Sub- Committee next year.

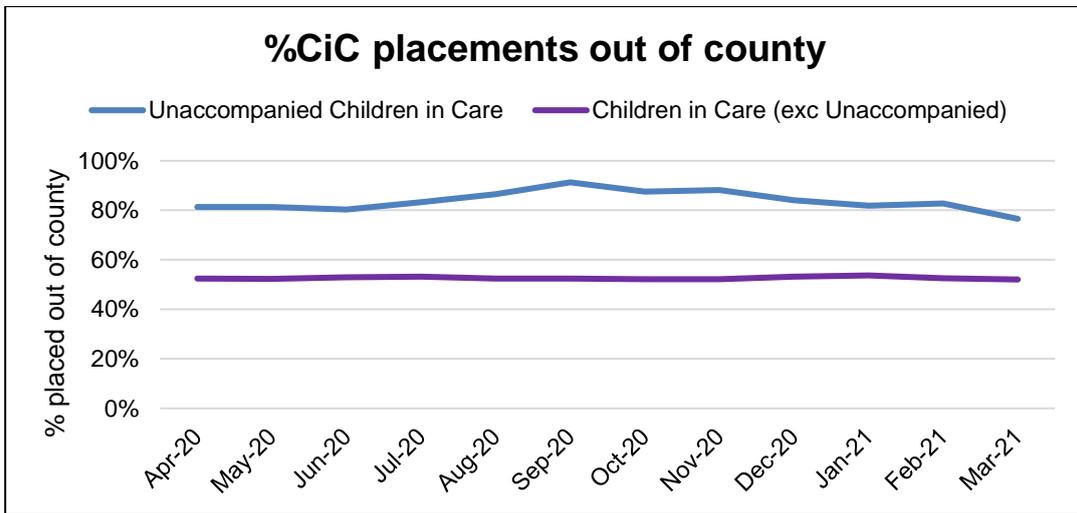
The chart below shows the percentage of children who received their annual health assessment, this is the cohort of children on the 31 March who have been in care continuously for over 12 months and received their health assessment within the last 12 months (or 6 months for under 5 year olds).

**% CiC who had their annual health assessment**

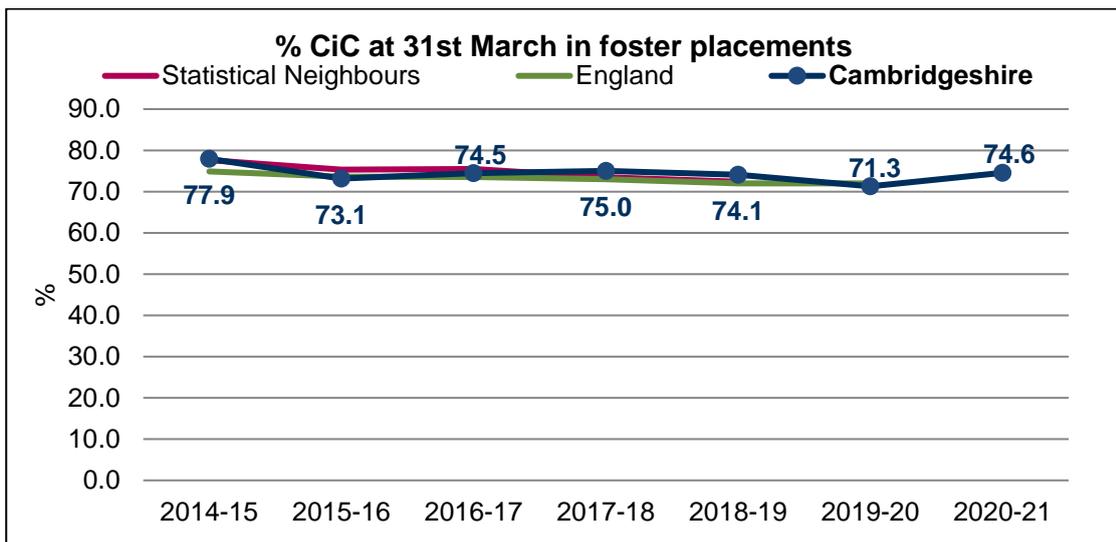


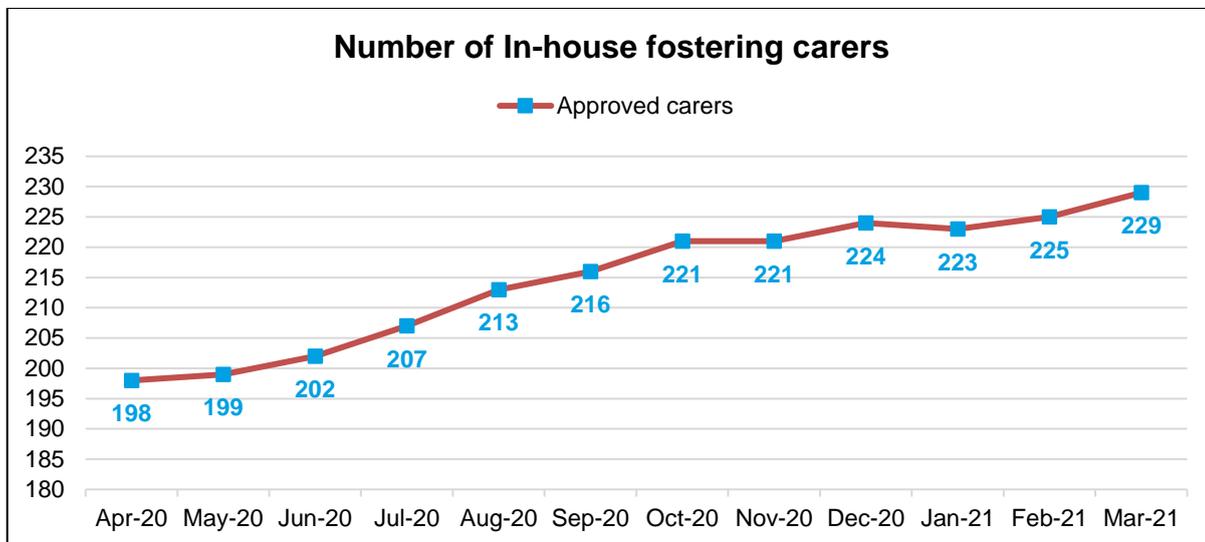
**Placements for children in care**

The graphs below show the percentage of children living out of county and those living out of county and over 20 miles from their home with 35% of the total children in care cohort living further than 20 miles outside of Cambridgeshire’s borders. The number of children living outside of Cambridgeshire (excluding unaccompanied children) rose by 9.0% by November 2019 before decreasing to 85% in March 2020, the same as at the start of the year. It must be noted that unaccompanied young people are often supported to live in communities outside of Cambridgeshire that better meet their religious and cultural needs.

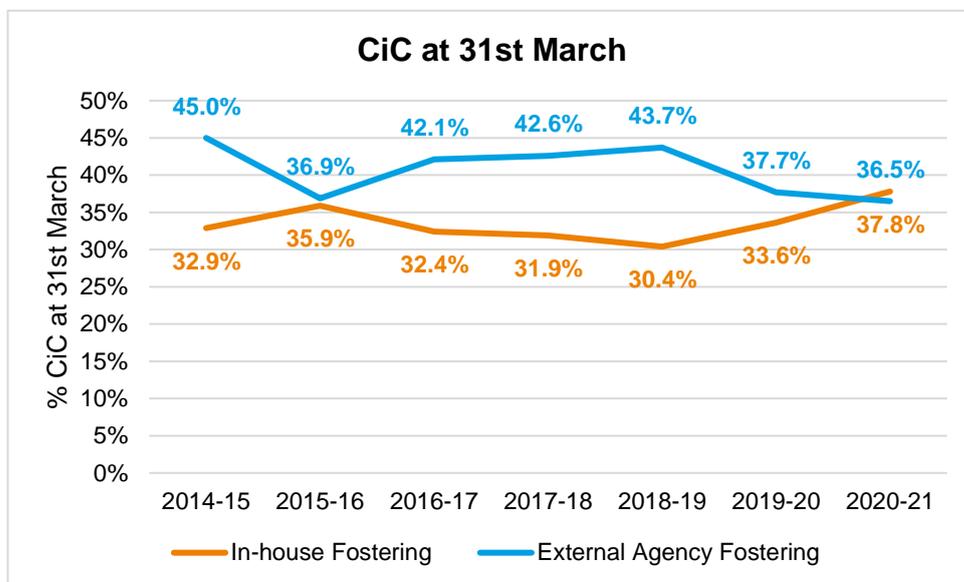


The graph below shows the % of CIC placed in foster placements compared to statistical neighbour's and nationally.



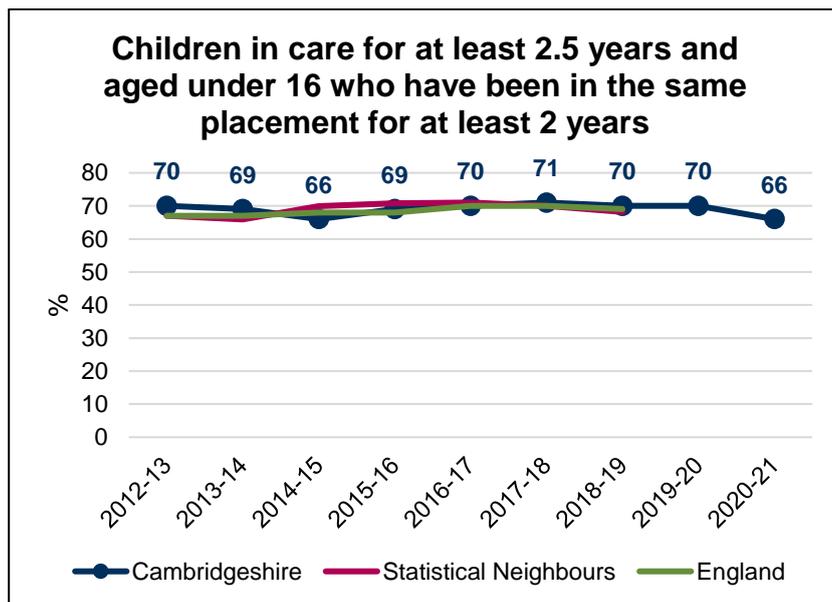
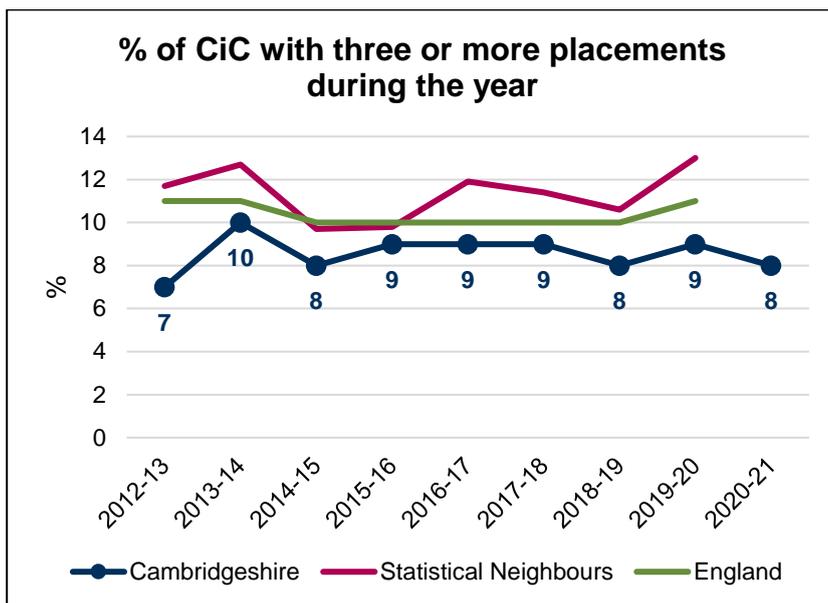


The chart below details the percentage of children living with Cambridgeshire County Council foster placement and those children living with carers from an independent fostering agency.



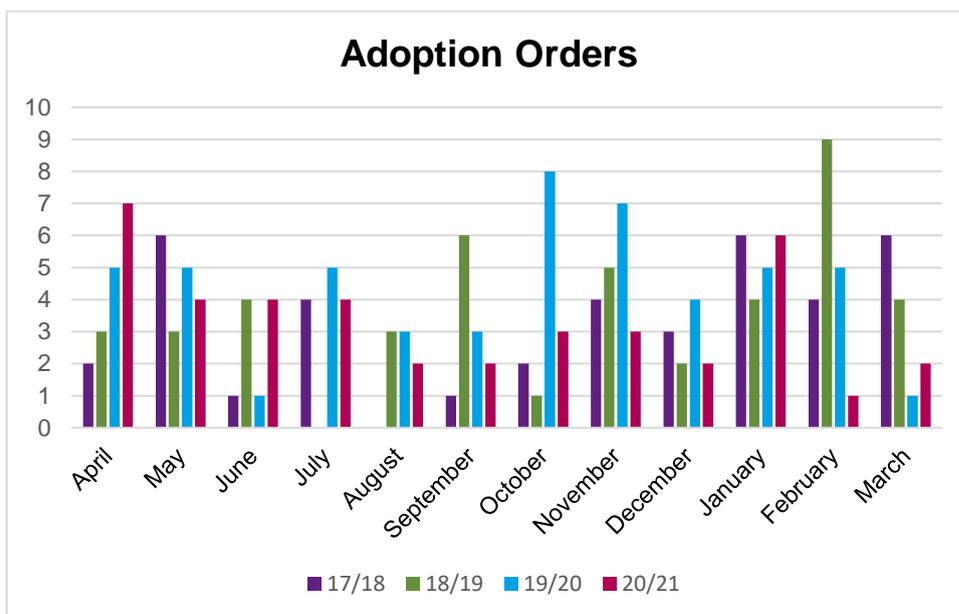
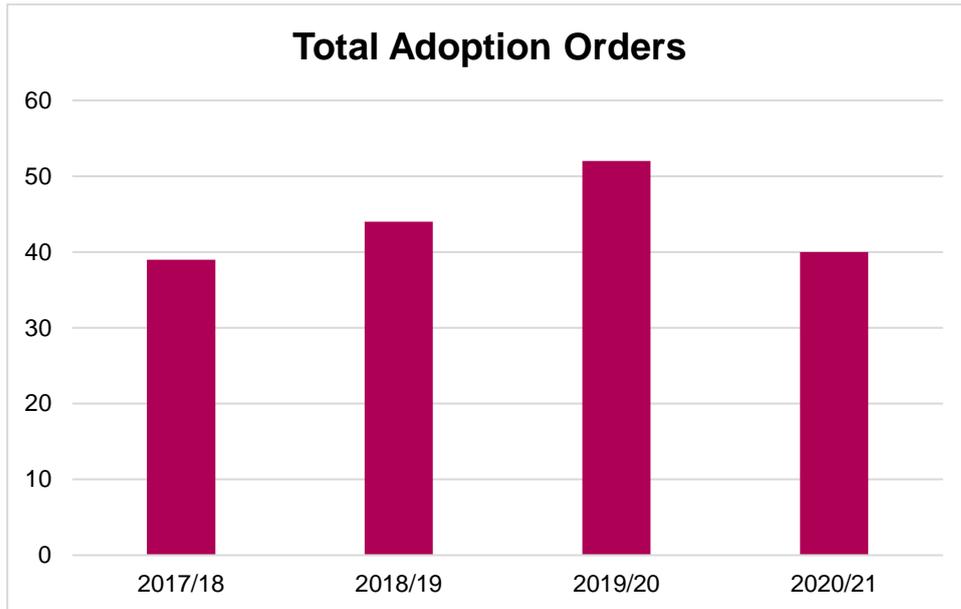
**Placement Stability:**

Performance in relation to the stability of care arrangements for Cambridgeshire’s children in care remains better than our statistical neighbors reported last year, with less children experiencing three or more moves during the year and more children being cared for by the same carers for at least 2 years.

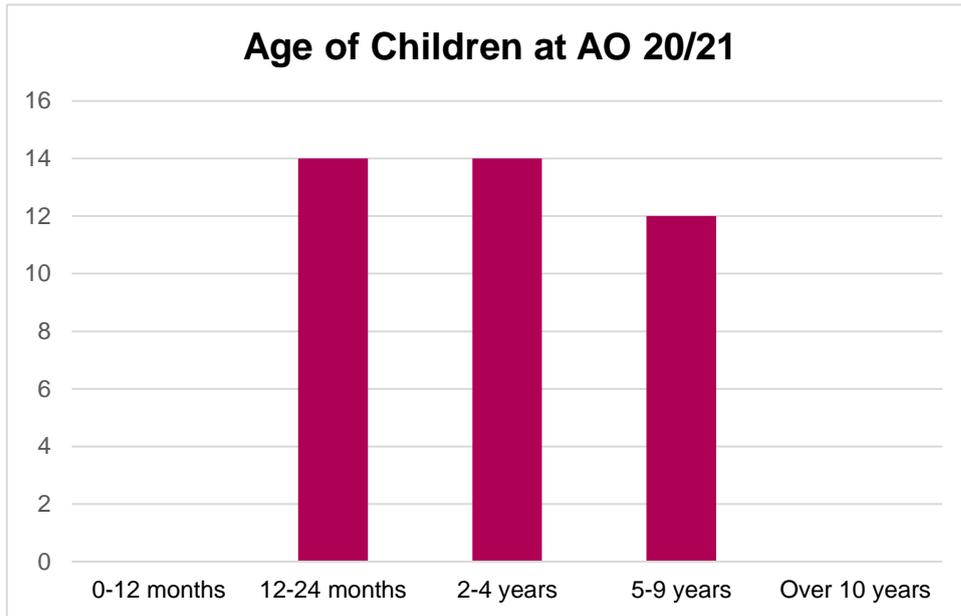


**Adoption:**

The graph below shows a steady increase in the number of Cambridgeshire children who have been adopted although this has dropped this year which would be expected given the Covid19 pandemic. 40 Adoption Orders were granted in Court during 2020/21 which is high as the court were prioritising other orders for large part of the year.



The graph below shows the age range of children at the point their Adoption Orders were granted, ages ranged from 10 months to over 12 years. The average age for children moving in with their pre adoptive families was 3 years and 3 months in 2019/20.





## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Workshop and Training Plan 2021

Each committee at the County Council has its own training plan to help its members learn more about the business that the Committee covers. Each training session is listed and a record is kept of which members of the committee attend.

Subject	Desired learning outcome	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Format	Audience	Attendance	% of elected members attending
Member Induction Programme: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee	To brief new and returning Members and Substitute Members on the responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee	High	Monday 12 July 12.00- 2.00pm	Nicola Curley/ Myra O'Farrell	Teams meeting	Members and Substitute Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee		
Member Induction Programme: Safeguarding	To brief on Members on safeguarding issues.	High	TBA	Charlotte Black/ Lou Williams		All Members		

Members are asked to review the training sessions below which were requested previously by the Sub-Committee, confirm whether these are required and prioritise them if so:

1. Care leavers: A Members' Seminar to brief Members on the Council's Local Offer for young people leaving care and the activity within the service ensuring young people leaving care are accessing education employment and training and appropriate accommodation.
2. Children in Care returning to live with their birth families: The Specialist Support Service to deliver training on the work they do to reunify children with their birth families where it is safe to do so. This training will include an overview of interim research findings on the Council's activity in this area which has been commissioned through Cambridge University. Open to members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and subs.

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Agenda Plan

### Notes

The definition of a key decision is set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 2, Article 12.

\* indicates items expected to be recommended for determination by full Council.

+ indicates items expected to be confidential, which would exclude the press and public.

The following are standing agenda items which are considered at every Committee meeting:

- Minutes of previous meeting and Action Log
- Workshop and Training Plan
- Agenda Plan

### Summary

The Agenda Plan shows the dates and times of future meetings and what reports are expected to be considered. Unless otherwise stated, all meetings will be held in the Multi-Function Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon PE28 4YE.

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Public Meeting

### Meeting Theme: Education

Date: 17.11.21	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	1. Participation Report	Shalina Chandoo		05.11.21	09.11.21
	2. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association	K Arrowsmith/ /F van den Hout			
	3. Virtual School Report	Claire Hiorns			

Date: 17.11.21	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	4. Annual Report to the Children and Young People Committee	Myra O'Farrell (Nicola Curley)			
	5. Children in Care Not in Education, Training or Employment: Action Plan Update	Kerry Seymour (Myra O'Farrell)			
	6. Sub-Committee Agenda Plan	Nicola Curley			
	7. Corporate Parenting Scorecard	Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell			
	8. Health data report	C York			

Informal Meeting (Not open to the public)

Meeting Theme: Health

Date: 12.01.22	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	1. Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC)	Shalina Chandoo/Participation			n/a
	2. You Asked We Did	Shalina Chandoo/Participation			
	3. Case Study – Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire	Catherine York			
	4. Members Issues	All Members			
	5. Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda	Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell			

Date: 12.01.22	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Public Meeting

### Meeting Theme: Health

Date: 23.03.22	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	1. Participation Report	S Chandoo		11.03.22	15.03.22
	2. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association	Foster Carers/F van den Hout			
	3. Annual Health Report	C York			
	4. Work Programme	Nicola Curley			
	5. Corporate Parenting Scorecard	Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell			

