

## **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

<b>Date and Time :-</b>	<b>Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 4.00 p.m.</b>
<b>Venue:-</b>	<b>Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.</b>
<b>Membership:-</b>	<b>Councillors Browne, C. Carter, Z. Collingham, Cusworth (Chair), and Pitchley (Vice-Chair)</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b>Natasha Aucott, Governance Advisor Natasha.aucott@rotherham.gov.uk</b>

The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. Apologies For Absence**

To receive the apologies of any Panel Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

#### **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 6)**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 12 December 2023 and approve them as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

#### **4. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

#### **5. Virtual School Annual Report 2021-2022 (Pages 7 - 35)**

To receive an update on the Virtual School Annual Report.

#### **6. Quality Assurance Update**

To receive an update on quality assurance, in the absence of a Performance on a Page Report.

**7. Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027**

To receive an update on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027.

**8. The Proposed Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Panel (Pages 37 - 46)**

To receive an update on the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel.

**9. Looked After Children's Council Update**

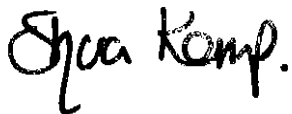
To receive an update from the Looked After Children's Council, including a group presentation.

**10. Urgent Business**

To determine any item which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

**11. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be held on 19 March 2024, commencing at 4.00 p.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.



Sharon Kemp,  
Chief Executive.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**  
**Tuesday 12 December 2023**

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Browne, Z. Collingham and C Carter.

**116. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2023**

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2023, were agreed as a correct record.

**117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no personal interests declared.

**118. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Minutes 121 (The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2024-2027) were exempt from the press and public. The Chair moved the following resolution:- That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information).

**Resolved:** - That members of the press and public be excluded for this items.

**119. PERFORMANCE ON A PAGE- QUARTER 2**

Cathryn Woodward, Performance and Business Intelligence Manager, presented the submitted report which provided a summary of performance for key indicators across the Looked After Children Services for Quarter 2 2023 to 2024. It also included a summary of Service performance in comparison to the same period in 2022 to 2023, trend data, graphical analysis and the latest benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages (where possible). The following was outlined: -

- The number of children entering care was lower in comparison to the same period last year. 78 children entered this year, which was a reduction of 13.
- 79% of care plans were up to date in this quarter. The service had re-aligned the way in which plans were monitored, to ensure they were completed closer to looked after reviews to ensure a better-

quality care plan. As a result of this change, the performance measure had reduced this quarter.

- 76% of children were in a family-based placement, this was similar to last year.
- 64% of children looked after for two years or more were in a stable long-term placement. This was 1.5% higher than last year. The aim was to be at 70%.
- 7.7% of children looked after were in a stable short-term placement, this was 3.7% higher than last year.
- There were 108 fostering families, this was 12 lower than the previous year. There had been 8 approvals in this quarter and 11 de-registrations.
- There were 10 children in care that were known to the Youth Justice Service.
- There were 11 children adopted in this quarter.
- 57% of initial health assessments were completed on time, with the target being 20 days. 71% of children and young people in this cohort had up to date dental assessments.
- 91% of reviews were completed on time, with 93.4% of visits up to date. These performance measures had been impacted by staffing levels which caused instability in the service. Reassurance was provided that the service was now fully staffed.
- 98.9% of education plans were up to date, this was 3.9% better than the last quarter.
- There had been an increase in care leavers, with 322 young people leaving care. 96% of those young people were in suitable accommodation. 12 young people were in un-suitable accommodation, with 6 in custody.
- There was 101 children and young people discharged from care. 22% were moved into permanence.

Discussion ensued with the following discussed: -

- In relation to care plans, the service had changed the way in which the plans were monitored, to align this with the care plan being updated within 10 days of the looked after child (LAC) review. Before the change, this was updated within six months of a LAC review.
- Children in care often had several concurrent plans. When reviewing the IRO's, the service wanted to ensure all other plans were up to date.
- There was an older cohort of looked after children entering the service, who were near the age of leaving care.
- In relation to the 6 out of 12 children in custody, all children and young people in custody had allocated personal assistants working with them in anticipation of leaving custody. It was more challenging to maintain contact with children and young people in custody. Some of these children and young people had no history of care and were remanded into the care of the Local Authority.

- Any child or young person under the age of 18 would have the support of the virtual school in custody to ensure there was an appropriate education offer. There was a working group for education for serving headteachers, which ensured headteachers were part of the safeguarding of exploitation. This group fed into the Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group.
- There was on-site health provision at all custody sites, with a Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool (CHAT) completed within one hour of arriving in a secure estate, to establish if there could be any immediate risk of harm. This was also reviewed regularly.

## **120. A LOOK BACK OVER THE YEAR- JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023**

The Chair provided an update on the achievements of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the last year, between the period of January 2023 to December 2023. This provided the following high-level overview of the following activities: -

- A looked After Childrens Council Update was presented in January 2023 which provided the following update:
  - VIP Big Brother Project 2023, which was free gym memberships for 50 boys aged 11 to 15 years old.
  - VIP Sister Project 2023, which was free gym memberships for girls aged 9 to 15 years old.
  - VIP Swimming Project 2023, which was free swimming for children and young people who were looked after and leaving care, across four leisure centres aged 0 to 25 years old.
- The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report.
- The Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 2021-2022.
- The Review of the Fostering Panel.
- The Performance and Business Intelligence Manager Report.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2022-2023.
- Annual LADO report was presented which covered the period 2022- 2023.
- The One Adoption South Yorkshire Annual Report.
- The Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 2022-2023.

## **121. THE CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2024-2027**

The Chair advised that as the item contained restricted information and as resolved in Minute 118, the Panel would go into private session for the

consideration of this item.

The Head of Service for Looked After Children provided a high-level update on the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Draft 2024-2027, which outlined the following:

- The Strategy sat alongside the Care Leavers Action Plan and the Children in Care Action Plan.
- The Corporate Parenting Principles had been revised.
- The Strategic Priorities.

**122. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to consider.

**123. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** - That the next meeting be held on 23 January 2024, commencing at 4.00 p.m. to be held in the Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.



# Virtual School Annual Report 2021-2022



**Tina Hohn**

**Virtual School Headteacher  
Early Years & Primary**

**Peter Douglas**

**Virtual School Headteacher  
Secondary & Post 16**



Virtual School Rotherham  
Belong, believe, achieve

## Our Vision

Rotherham Virtual School will work together, with all partners, to ensure we are the team of champions our young people deserve. Providing support and encouragement to all our young people so that they:

- experience stability and feel safe, cared for, valued, supported, and trusted as part of our wider Rotherham Family
- are confident, have a strong sense of identity and are empowered to be independent to enjoy learning and have fun
- achieve well both academically and socially and reach their full potential
- above all, we want our young people to be proud of who they are, who they are becoming and to own their story.



## Rotherham's Promises to Children in Care & Care Leavers

We will...

- help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm
- help you to explore and be ready for the world of work
- help you to be happy and healthy
- help you to be proud of yourself and celebrate your individual beliefs
- help you take part in activities that you enjoy or that you are interested in
- help you to learn new skills as you grow up and become an adult
- fully involve you in plans and decisions about you and your future
- help you to learn and do your best in your early years setting, school and college
- listen to what you have to say and make sure it makes a difference





# Virtual School Head Summary

Rotherham's looked after children have shown resilience and capacity to adapt and change. Schools and education settings returned to the 'new normal' and to standard statutory assessments. Despite the challenges of navigating this landscape, our children continue to inspire and fill us with pride as they meet and exceed expectations.

Our children's success is built on their dedication and hard work, and the support and commitment of a wide team of adults who work with and for them. Virtual School provides high level support to all stakeholders, rigorous tracking and monitoring of our children and ensure good quality, termly PEP meetings for all. Building on the support, training, and development opportunities from our team of Education Advisers, Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists, Rotherham Virtual School has continued to adapt, develop, and strengthen the offer available to our children. New interventions provide our children the opportunity to fulfil their potential, despite the barriers they face throughout their learning journey:

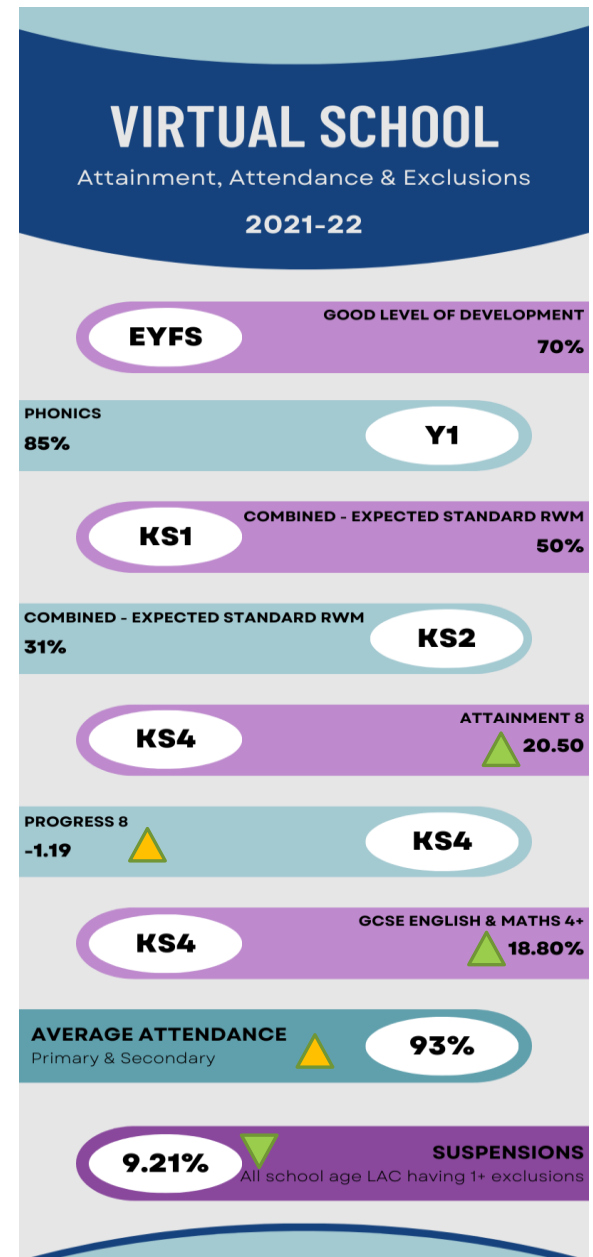
- Letterbox club for our key stage 3 children to support reading.
- New into care packages providing a range of books and materials to enhance literacy and encourage a love of reading.

- Sensory support and toolkit to support advice and training to primary schools, parents/carers and children and other agencies including the LAC nursing service.
- EMOSI - a transcultural therapeutic service for primary aged children, which supports children to recognise and have a sense of personal identity.
- Emotional Based School Avoidance training to schools and care providers to improve understanding and support children back into education.
- Careers guidance support to children who are NEET.
- Consultations for Designated teachers were provided by the Virtual School Education Psychologists.

The team are adapting to life after Covid. They have been returning to schools to support PEP and other meetings. The opportunity to meet some of our children for the first time in person has been a pleasure.

This is the first year of validated Early Years and Primary data since the COVID 19 pandemic.

National attainment at GCSE grade 4 and above in English and Maths, dropped by 4%. For the same measure, Our children's GCSE outcome data improved from last year by 5%



# Contents

Our Vision.....	2
Rotherham’s Promises to Children in Care & Care Leavers ....	2
Virtual School Head Summary .....	3
Purpose and role of the virtual school .....	5
Supporting Rotherham’s Council Plan .....	6
Wider Responsibilities .....	7
Challenges for the Virtual School .....	8
Rotherham Virtual School Demographics .....	10
Demographics continued.....	11
Early Years .....	12
Early Years (Reception) .....	13
Y1 Phonics Screening Check .....	13
Key Stage 1.....	14
Key Stage 2.....	15
Early Years and Primary - Promoting Reading Projects.....	16



Secondary - Promoting Reading Projects .....	17
Key Stage 3.....	18
Key Stage 4.....	19
Post 16 .....	20
Virtual School Attendance.....	21
Virtual School Suspensions and Exclusions .....	22
Sensory Support .....	23
Education Psychology Support .....	25
Speech and Language Support.....	27
Virtual School Celebrating Success .....	28

# Purpose and role of the virtual school

Rotherham Virtual School is determined to raise educational achievement for all Looked After Children and provide them with the best start in life. We have the highest aspirations for our children and support their emotional health and wellbeing to ensure they can reach their full potential. We work with an increasing number of agencies to guarantee our children are able to access the right support, at the right time and provide wider opportunities to increase their cultural capital and enhance their world of experiences.

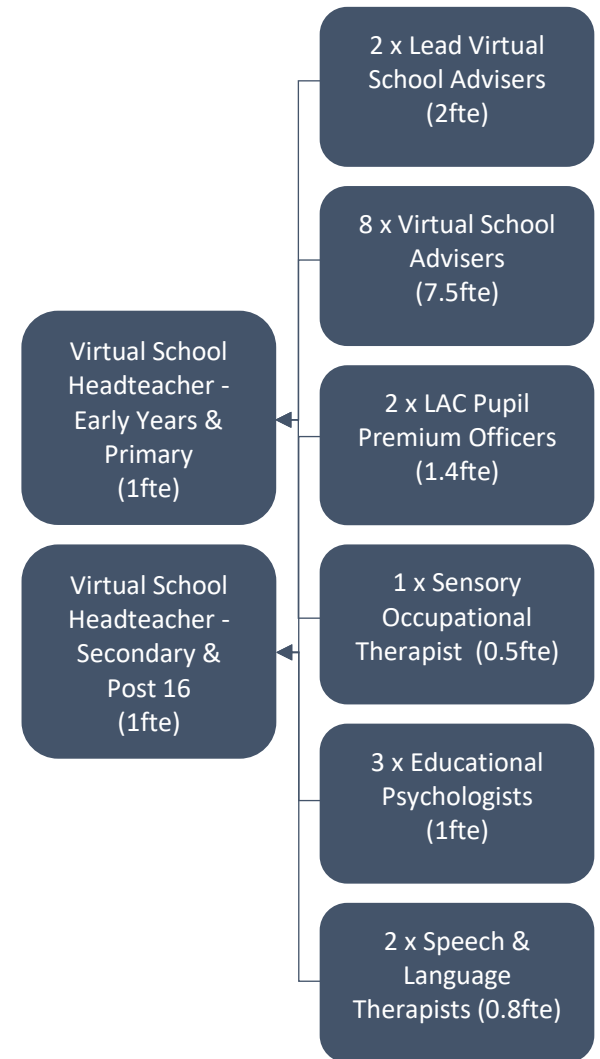
The Virtual School will support and empower children and young people in our care by:

- Ensuring all our children’s needs, both in and out of borough, are thoroughly understood and that each child has a detailed, up to date, termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) that clearly outlines the plans in place to meet these needs.
- Tracking and monitoring the progress, attainment and attendance of Looked After Children and provide support and challenge where needed.
- Ensuring Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are identified and appropriately supported in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that the emotional, mental and physical health needs of our children are understood and appropriate support

from a wide range of specialist agencies is made available.

- Training the team who support our children, equipping them to fully understand their needs and develop appropriate strategies to remove barriers.
- Working with schools, SEND teams and admissions authorities to ensure our children are placed in the right school within timescales.
- Ensuring any child on a part-time timetable is receiving an appropriate offer and that all parties are working together to support a swift return to full time education.
- Providing bespoke support, from the wider Virtual School team (EPS/SALT/Sensory) to schools and other settings to reduce and prevent exclusions.
- Virtual School commissioning a number of wider activities and support to raise aspirations and increase the breadth of experience for our children.

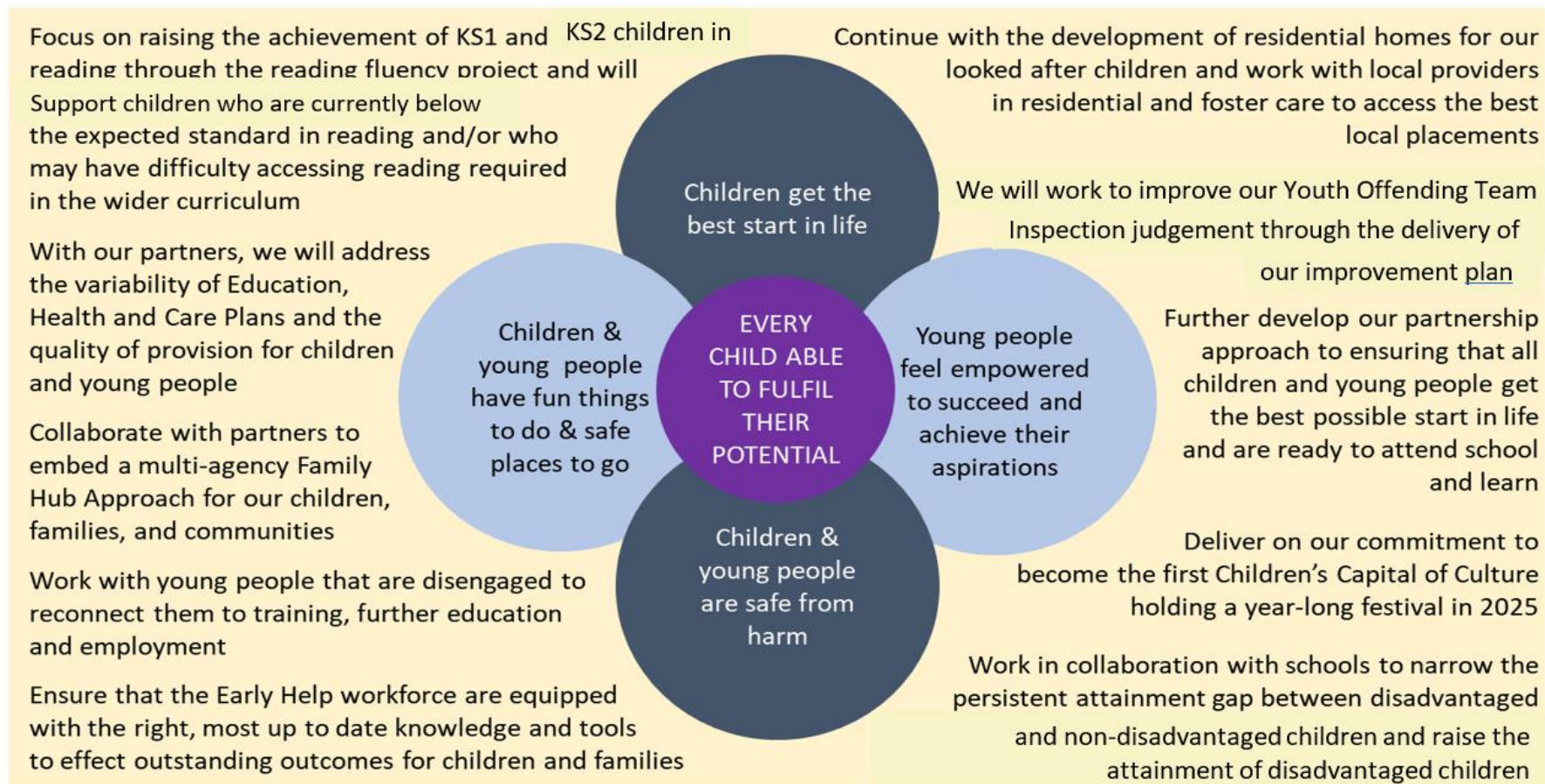
Virtual School works closely with schools, Social Care and other agencies, providing high support and high challenge to ensure that all our children are resilient, successful and safe.



# Supporting Rotherham's Council Plan

Part of the Virtual School's role is to support the wider Children & Young Peoples service in delivering against the outcomes laid out in the Rotherham's Council Plan. This plan outlines themes for each directorate with 'Every child able to fulfil their potential' being the theme for Children and young people services (CYPS). Within this theme there are four key outcomes which are: Children get the best start in life; Children and young people are safe from harm; Young people feel empowered to succeed and achieve their aspirations; Children and young people have fun things to do and safe places to go. The Virtual School has a key role to play across each of these outcomes.

The diagram below shows the Rotherham Council theme, with each of the four outcomes and the outlined strategic objectives showing how we will fulfil the outcomes.



# Wider Responsibilities

## Previously Looked After Children

The Virtual School headteachers continue to support Previously Looked After Children (PLAC).

### Virtual School headteachers have:

- Provided advice and guidance to schools, social workers and parents/carers around education concerns and challenges for previously looked after children (PLAC).
- Provided access to all Virtual School training including education, attachment and trauma and speech and language to all parents/carers of PLAC.
- Worked alongside the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) to develop a regional understanding of the challenges and offer available to parents/carers of PLAC.
- Planned together with the RAA to ensure that a consistent support, advice and guidance offer is available, and any local variations are understood and effectively communicated to parents/carers of PLAC.

### Next steps:

- Support the RAA to launch and embed the 'one plan' education planning tool for PLAC.
- Support networking between RAA and school leaders to facilitate information sharing.
- Work alongside the RAA to create and maintain an education frequently asked questions document to support parents and carers of PLAC.
- Provide bespoke education specific training to parents and carers of PLAC.

## Extension of the Virtual School Headteachers role

The Virtual School headteachers have continued to develop their role as education champions for all children with a social worker.

### Virtual School headteachers have focused on:

- Developing a detailed understanding of the needs of this group through discussions with school leaders, Social Care colleagues and other agencies.
- Raising the profile of this group of children in strategic meetings within the authority and across the education sector.
- Close working with strategic leads within Social Care and Early Help to ensure this group are considered in strategic planning.
- Creating data sets with the performance team to support analysis of the cohort and development of strategic planning and intervention.
- Implementing recommendations, through Child Protection Chairs, for all EYFS children within this cohort to be signed up to Children's Centres.
- Supporting closer links between school leaders and senior managers within the authority.
- Providing education advice and guidance to Early Help and Edge of Care Teams.

### Next steps:

- Form a safeguarding and designated safeguarding best practice working party to improve attainment, progress and attendance.
- Organise a safeguarding network meeting to share good practice across the borough and provide networking training
- Provide joint training opportunities with social care and education safeguarding leads to support shared understanding of roles and responsibilities and promote effective collaborative working.
- Finalise a performance scorecard to support monitoring impact.
- Develop a toolkit for schools around supporting this group of children.

# Challenges for the Virtual School

## Challenges

Increasing emotional health needs and higher levels of anxiety due to the impact and trauma experienced through COVID 19.

Attendance impacted by increase in children presenting with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

Opportunities for monitoring and assessing learning were minimised, this caused disruption and barriers to learning.

Reduction in the number of settings offering post 16 provision.

Readiness for key transition points.

## Action

Further developed the support offer available to schools, carers and our children by incorporating Sensory support and training.  
Bespoke provision to support reducing anxiety.

VS EPS delivering training and bespoke support to schools, care placements and carers around EBSA.  
Using part time timetables to support reintegration back into school.

PEP meeting challenging questions to unpick where we are now and how to accelerate progress supporting SEN graduated response.

Working with local providers to ensure places for our young people.  
Using Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus pilot funding to support emotional health keywork in our largest college and developing innovative work to support children with SEMH.

Focus on SEND graduated response as well as appointing a sensory and OT specialist to work with children, schools and professionals.

## Impact

Attendance improvements.  
Faster return to full time education for those on alternative pathways.  
Percentage of children excluded has fallen again this year.

Increased level of skill for care home staff and schools to support children with EBSA.  
Improved attendance and time in school for those children who were not attending due to EBSA.

Developing sensory awareness within all primary schools – delivered by sensory/OT specialist.  
VS Speech and Language specialist plans for identified/targeted LAC.

Improvement in Education, Employment and Training (EET) figures.  
New provisions offered to children through direct work with local partners.

Robust inclusive transition plans for all phases and supporting school moves.

## Challenges

Widening the reach of the work we do to further embed attachment aware and trauma informed practice in schools and education settings. Truly changing culture.

Nursery/school closures and staff absence.

Return to terminal examinations at GCSE, following positive impact of teacher assessment on student outcomes.

Impact of delayed graduated response provided by external agencies especially speech language and communication.

## Action

Schools offered access to the level 5 Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools course, to support strategic change and operational understanding in schools.

A percentage of PEP meetings have moved back to in person, providing greater levels of support to schools and allowing Virtual School staff the opportunity to visit and experience schools first hand.

Strategic use of Pupil Premium Plus.

Focus on reading to support better access to examination papers and improve quality of written answers.  
Focus on providing tuition through the school led tuition budget focus on core subjects.

Relevant interventions to accelerate progress including a deep dive into reading, pupil voice, speech and language support, tuition, training, effective use of Pupil Premium Plus.

## Impact

Higher levels of support have been made available to schools and where there have been challenges these have been identified sooner and support packages and training have been provided.

Implemented 0-2 plan ensuring children access early education funding (EEF) in a timely manner and early identification from birth and support graduated support.

KS4 GCSE English and Maths at Grade 4+ outcomes were in line with the two previous years of teacher assessment and significantly improved on previous terminal assessment.

Children have benefited from high quality reading resources through the reading project as well as skilling up carers to support reading in the home and to promote a love of reading and reflect their experiences.

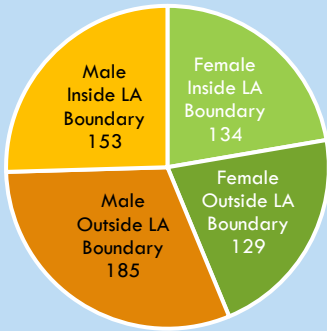
# Rotherham Virtual School Demographics

Virtual School serve a wonderfully diverse group of children from 0-18 years of age, with a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Over 75% of our children live in family-based placements. As an authority, it is important to maintain our children's close links with Rotherham, just over 50% live outside of Rotherham and most of these live in the South Yorkshire region. Over a year, the number of children in the Virtual School changes as children enter care and others leave to a permanent home and/or adulthood. It is important for Virtual School to ensure that our children attend the best school in their local area and obtain the best possible outcomes, currently over 4 in 5 children attend a good or outstanding Ofsted rated school. Stability is vital for our children, Virtual School strongly advocate children do not move school. For consistency, some children remain in Requires Improvement schools to maintain positive, supportive relationships and continuity with additional support.

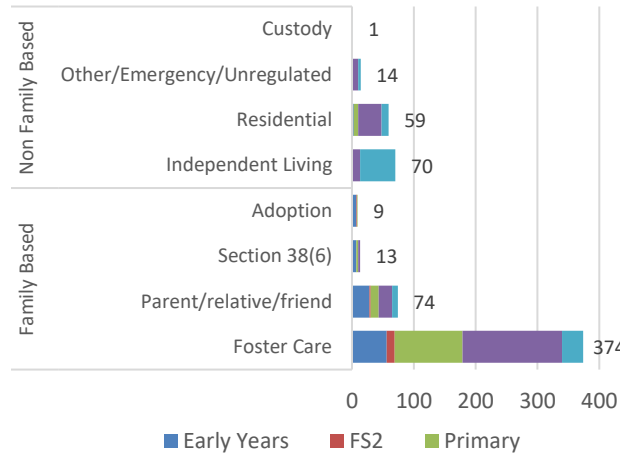
## Rotherham LAC (In/OOA)

601 LAC (inc Year 13 care leavers) in Rotherham at the end of the academic year.

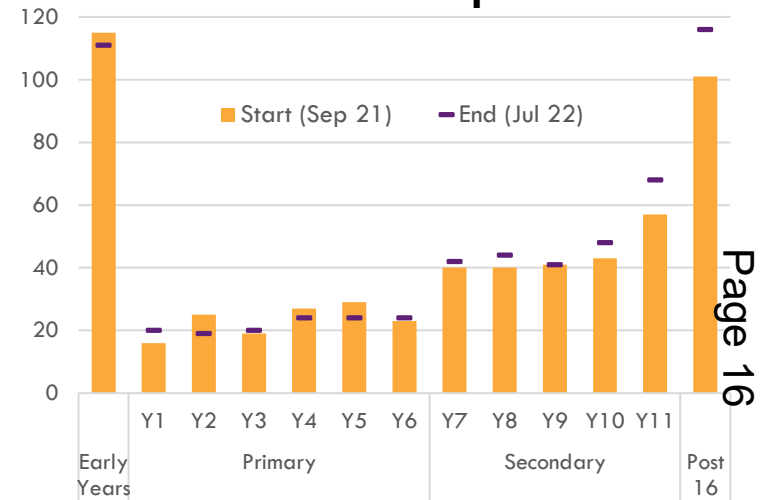
Male 338  
Female 263



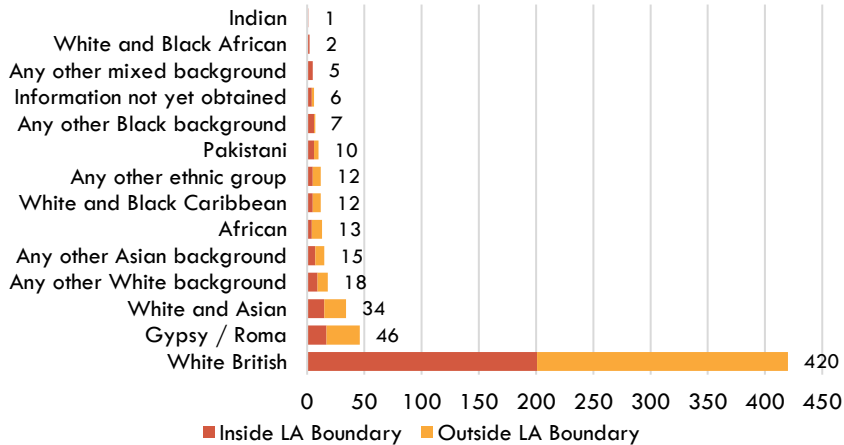
## Care placements



## Year Groups

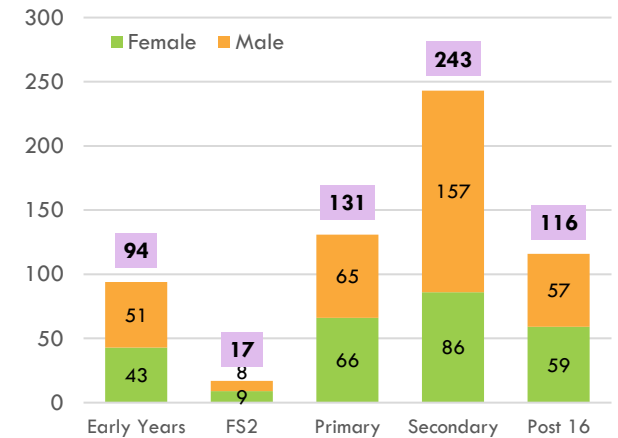


## Ethnicity



**84.64%**  
of pupils were in a good or outstanding school (where school has a rating)

## Phase & Gender





# Demographics continued...

## Challenges:

- More of our children have EHCPs than local and national comparators.
- Continued growth in the proportion of our children with primary needs of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and communication, interaction and autism spectrum disorder.
- The majority of children with EHCPs are in the secondary and post 16 cohort.
- We have seen a growth in the number of UASC.

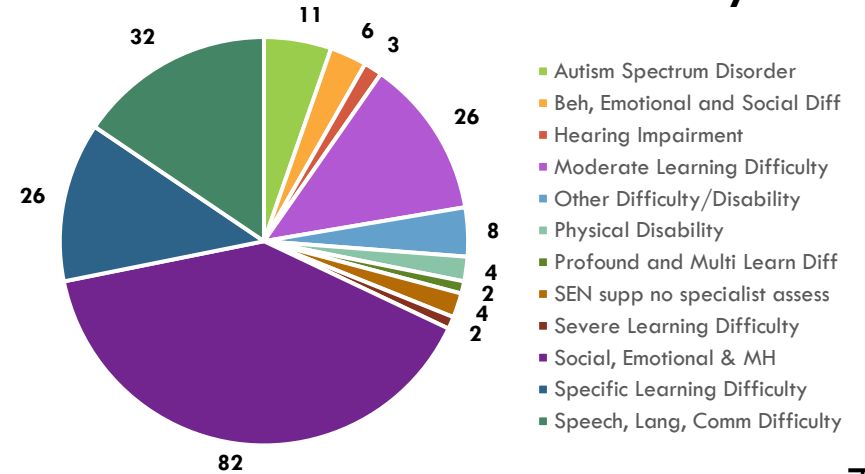
## Action:

- Provide wider services, including sensory, to school and carers to increase capacity to meet need in mainstream settings.
- Focus on understanding SEMH needs in terms of communication of need to promote schools understanding and meeting needs.
- Utilise Pupil Premium plus to support schools to meet need without EHCP

## Impact:

- Our Children's needs understood and met by those who know them best.
- Reduction in percentage of our children with EHCP
- Increased number of our children maintained in mainstream settings.

## SEND Primary Need



**35.7% of LAC with SEN but with an EHCP (DFE Cohort)**

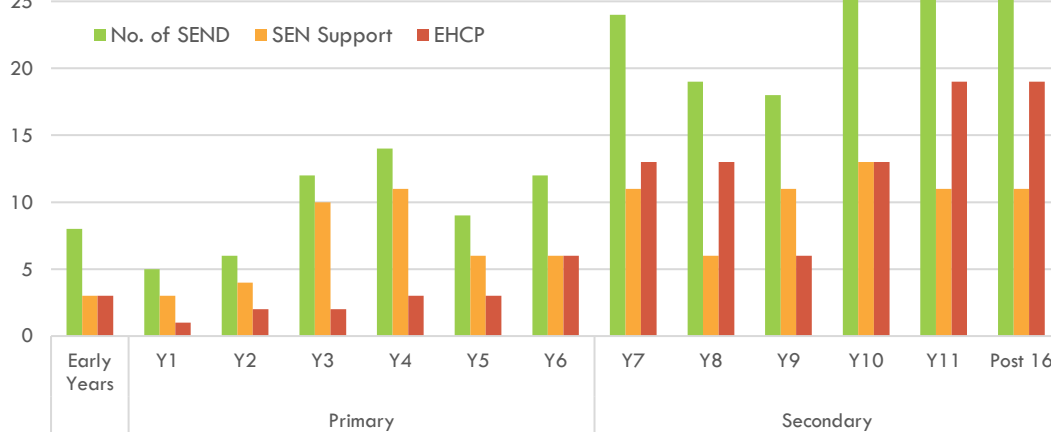
Stat Neighbour Avg - 27.66%  
Regional Avg - 28.50%  
National Avg - 28.90%  
*(Latest Benchmarking data is from 2021)*

**25.2% of LAC with SEN but without EHCP (DFE Cohort)**

Stat Neighbour Avg - 26.81%  
Regional Avg - 28.50%  
National Avg - 27.40%  
*(Latest Benchmarking data is from 2021)*

## SEND breakdown

(as at end July 22)



**95.0%**  
of pupils had an up to date Personal Education Plan

**29**  
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

**17**  
Care Leavers who are former UASC

# Early Years

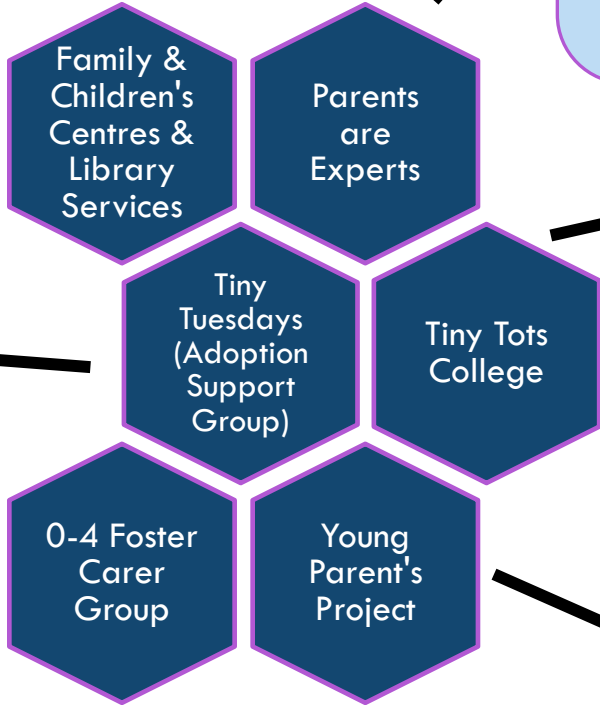
Virtual School strives for all Rotherham Looked After Children to be resilient, successful, and safe to achieve their full potential, as any good parent would want for their children.

From birth, children's early development is rigorously tracked and monitored through regular EDP (Early Developmental Plan) meeting. **Virtual School Early Years Specialist Advisers** work together with all professionals and services (IRO, Social Care, parents/carers) who are involved with the individual child to offer advice, guidance and identify any early gaps and barriers. Parents/carers are provided with bespoke activities and ideas to support the child's individual needs that are age and stage appropriate to close the gaps in development.



This training package shares the most current research into brain development and explains the importance of '1001 days: From Conception to Two'. Training has been delivered to Designated Teachers and to a small group of foster carers. Foster carer's feedback confirmed that the training was "very informative to know how important brain development is for our young people", "the training should be compulsory for all foster carers prior to them receiving a child in their care".

Virtual School support and signpost parents/carers to find local community group/services to attend and access providing further support network and providing opportunities for children to develop their social skills.




A series of workshops providing parents/carers with the knowledge and skills they need to provide high quality learning experiences within their home. A bespoke package has been designed to close the gaps in children's development prior to them starting Early Years provision.

A bespoke package for young parents to develop their understanding of their children's learning and development. The package signposts to multi services available to develop their knowledge of safer sleep, weaning and finding local groups and sourcing appropriate equipment and resources to support learning.

## Impact

 All children from birth have a bespoke EDP plan in place to identify and support barriers to learning

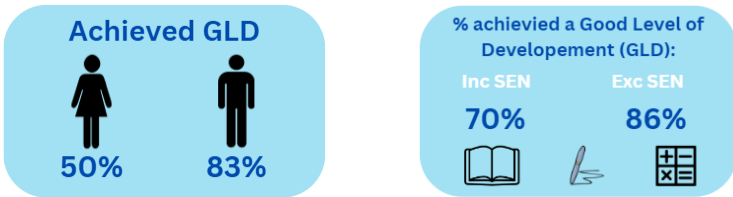
 Number of children accessing 2 year old funding (Early years provision): **100%**

 Number of children accessing 3 and 4 year old funding (Early years provision): **100%**

# Early Years (Reception)

A 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) is defined as a child reaching the 'expected' level of development by the end of their reception year. It is an outcome of a summative assessment based on the children achieving the Early Learning Goals outlined within the Early Years Framework.

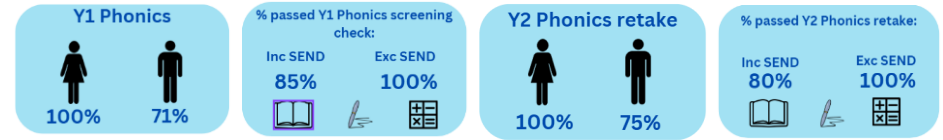
There is a significant improvement in the performance of Rotherham's looked after children in Early Years achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) within the academic year 2021/2022. Within the DfE cohort, 70% of Rotherham LAC achieved a GLD in comparison to 40% of National LAC and 41% of Yorkshire and Humber region's LAC achieving GLD.



70% of Rotherham Looked After Children achieved a Good Level of Development in 2021/2022

# Y1 Phonics Screening Check

Across England, all children completed the Y1 Phonics Screening Check in June 2022. The purpose of the phonics screening check is to confirm that children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. Virtual School Rotherham provide additional pupil premium to all children sitting the phonics screen to provide tuition within school.



The DfE Looked After Children cohort for Y1 pupils is based on 13 children, showing that 85% achieved working at the standard level needed for Phonics. This is an increase of 11% from the previous academic year's results (2020/2021) and is above national and regional comparators.

There were 5 Y2 children who completed the Phonics Screening Check in Y2. 80% of these children achieved a pass score of 32 or above.



In RMBC's most recent Local Authority Ofsted inspection the inspector commented **"Rotherham Virtual School have a sharp focus on literacy in personal education plans, this is supporting more children in care to achieve well in primary school"**.

July 2022

Bespoke training was delivered to carers to enable them to support and develop children's phonics skills within the home environment.

"It helped to know and understand what the taught specific phonics vocabulary is, until this training I wasn't sure what a 'diagraph' was when my child was talking about this when reading, it gave me a deeper understanding"



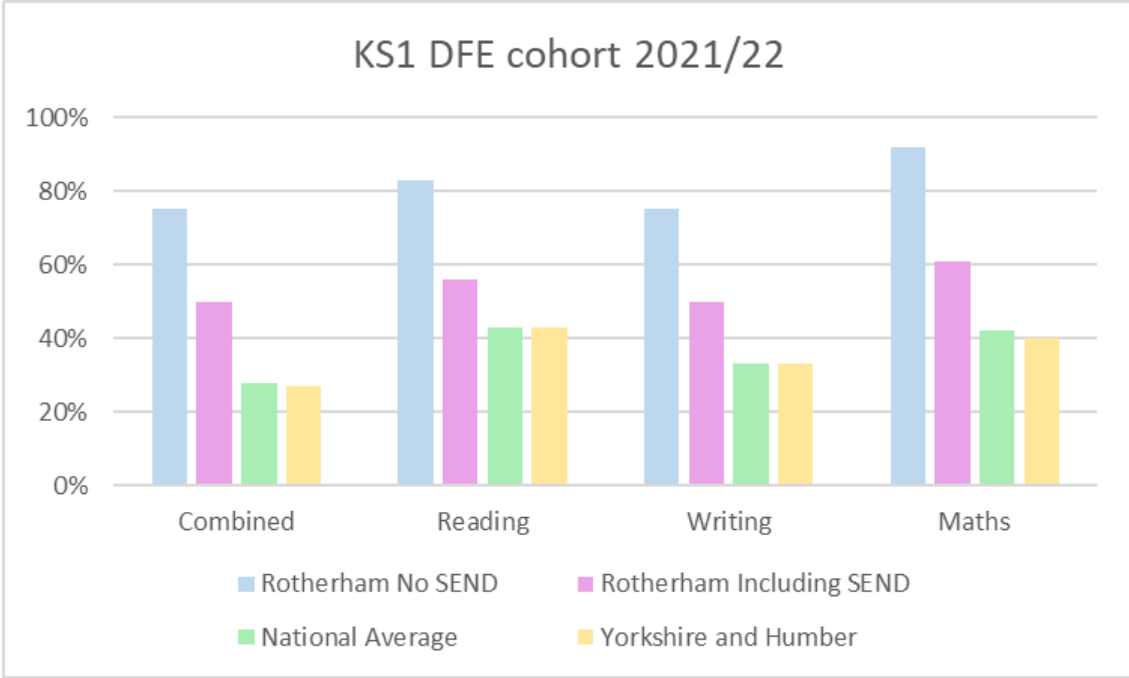
# Key Stage 1

There are two elements to the statutory assessment process in Key Stage 1: tests and teacher assessment. The tests are used to support teacher's judgement; it is the teacher assessment recorded as the statutory outcome. Statutory assessment takes place in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, from these assessments children are recorded as working towards standards (WTS), working at expected standards (EXS) or working at greater depth within the standard (GDS).

As of 31st March 2022, 18 Y2 children who had been Looked After Children for at least 12 months (DfE cohort) completed the Key Stage 1 assessments. Of these, 50% achieved the combined expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. 1 child attended a specialist provision and was disapplied from completing SAT's assessments.



**Our KS1 DfE cohort has successfully exceeded National and Regional outcomes**



**KS1 Combined**

67% 43%

Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan  
2 - 16.6%

**% achieved expected standard in reading, writing and maths:**

Inc SEN **50%**

Exc SEN **75%**

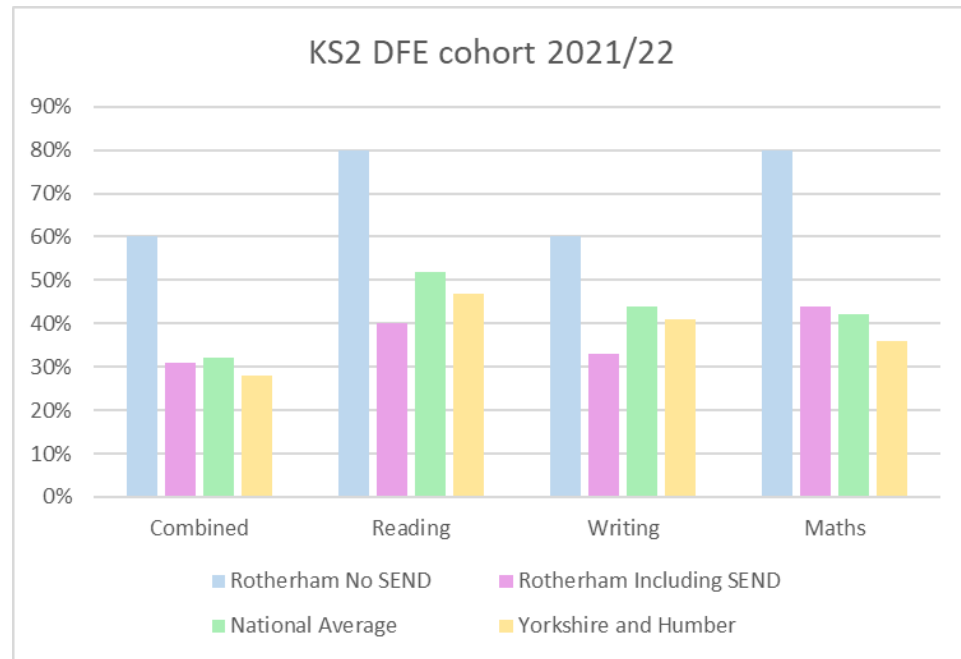
# Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 statutory assessment consist of a variety of formal assessments in Reading, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) and Mathematics. Writing judgements are based on teacher assessment. From these assessments children are recorded as working towards standards (WTS), working at expected standards (EXS) or working at greater depth within the standard (GDS).

As of 31st March 2022, 21 Y6 children who had been Looked After Children for at least 12 months (DfE cohort) completed the Key Stage 2 assessments. 5 of these children were disapplied from Reading, Writing and Mathematics KS2 statutory assessments. In addition, another child was disapplied from reading and writing.

16 (76%) children within the cohort had some form of Special Educational Need. If SEND pupils are removed from the cohort, the proportion achieving the expected standard increases to 60% achieving Reading Writing and Mathematics combined. 6/16 held an EHCP and one of these achieved combined R, W, M (17%). The 5 children identified as having no SEN achieved 80% EXP/GDS in Reading, 60% EXP/GDS in Writing and 80% EXP/GDS in Mathematics.

The CLA KS2 national average is currently at 32% and CLA Yorkshire and Humber region is 28%. We are 3% above CLA regional average for KS2.



**KS2 Combined**

**30%**      **33%**

**Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan**

**6 - 37.5%**

**% achieved expected standard reading, writing and maths:**

<b>Inc SEN</b>	<b>Exc SEN</b>
<b>31%</b>	<b>60%</b>

*I really enjoyed it. It was really interesting and there were some great new ideas to try.*  
**Foster carer**

*The training was really helpful, everything has changed so much since I was at school, so it was helpful to broaden my knowledge.* **Foster carer**

*It was really good, really relevant and I'd definitely recommend the training. The trainer was so knowledgeable and helpful.*  
**Foster carer**

# Early Years and Primary - Promoting Reading Projects

To improve reading outcomes in Early Years and Primary by raising awareness, interest, and enjoyment through provision of the 'books for a brighter future' initiative.

The Letterbox project has supported and driven the reading agenda for our KS1 and KS2 children since 2015. We completed a deep dive into reading and found that early years and primary children were significantly below their peers in reading attainment when entering care. It was identified these children had limited access to a range of high-quality reading materials within their home environment. In order to ensure children had opportunities to enhance their reading experiences Virtual Schools now provide a wide range of reading projects including a new into care package that was launched in 2021/2022. As part of the launch, a reading conference was held for LAC early years and primary aged children to promote reading within their home environment with a view to closing the gaps within reading and literacy.



## Impact

- ✓ 100% of new into care children are enjoying regularly reading books at home.
- ✓ Carers have a deeper knowledge of the importance of reading
- ✓ The number of children achieving the expected standard in reading has increased.
- ✓ Children enjoy receiving their personal book packages.

## New into Care Reading Package

When an Early Years/Primary aged child enters care, Virtual School Rotherham provide a resource package containing books and stationery posted directly to the children's placement address. The packages contain the following:



### Two books

1 fiction and 1 non-fiction selected to support the transition process i.e., themes around coping with change



### Communications

1. Welcome letter Rotherham Virtual School to each child
2. Introduction postcard from BookTrust explaining the contents of the pack
3. Feedback postcard from BookTrust to help inform future development



### Additional age-appropriate resources

To spark interaction between carer and child, helping to support building of new relationship:

1. Game (e.g. Duplo set, card game)
2. Stationery set
3. Exercise / sketch book



### Backpack

For storing books and resources and strengthening the feeling of ownership for a child receiving the pack

## Parent/Carer feedback...

The child was very excited to receive a large box full of treats just for him. it made him feel very special.

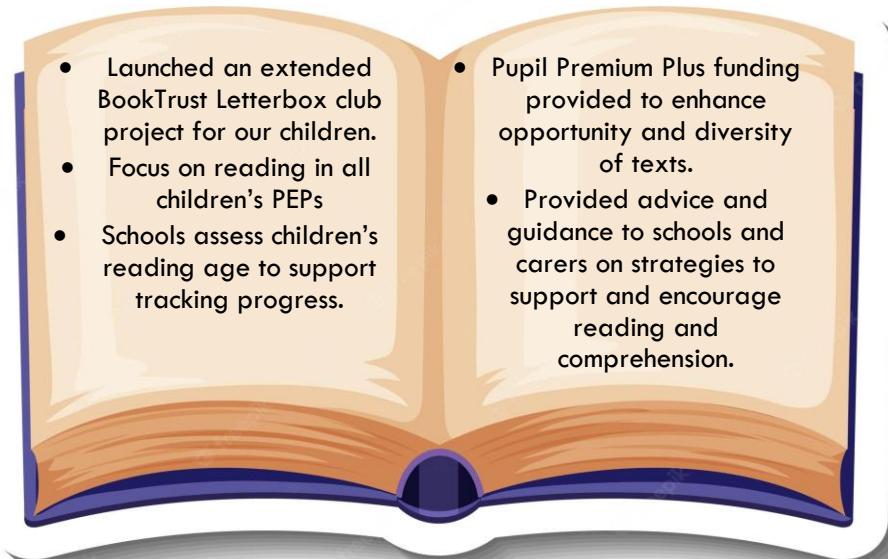
I was surprised as I wasn't expecting this, it was so lovely and well thought out. When I thought we had gotten everything out there was more underneath!

The pack was well put together, right down to the packaging which made it look like a gift for my foster child. The contents were great and as such, I have since gone on to purchase further items.

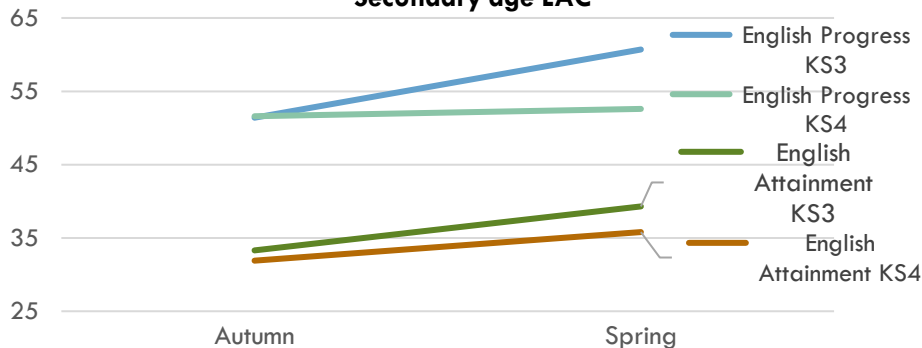
# Secondary - Promoting Reading Projects

To improve Looked After Children's reading ages by supporting our children to access reading for pleasure, to develop academic reading skills and to make accelerated progress across all subjects.

## Virtual School Key Stage 3 actions 2021-22:



English teacher assessment of attainment and progress or Secondary age LAC



Analysis of PEP data illustrates the positive impact of focus on KS3 reading on KS3 attainment and progress in English. This was accelerated compared to KS4 and when compared with progress and attainment in Math's.

He has made accelerated progress with his reading age – it has increased by 3 years in just 1 academic year! This has been achieved with 1:1 tuition, lots of reading at home and lots of hard work

### Impact:

- Regular reading assessments being completed by schools
- Improved reading ages for all children
- Accelerated progress for some children following high level interventions
- Children are reading more and more regularly
- Increased awareness of the value of reading for pleasure having a positive impact on learning and understanding
- Discussion about reading is in every PEP meeting and recorded in the PEP document.

Loving his new books funded through Pupil Premium and being excited about reading them, couldn't wait to start reading them in the car on the way home

### Next steps...

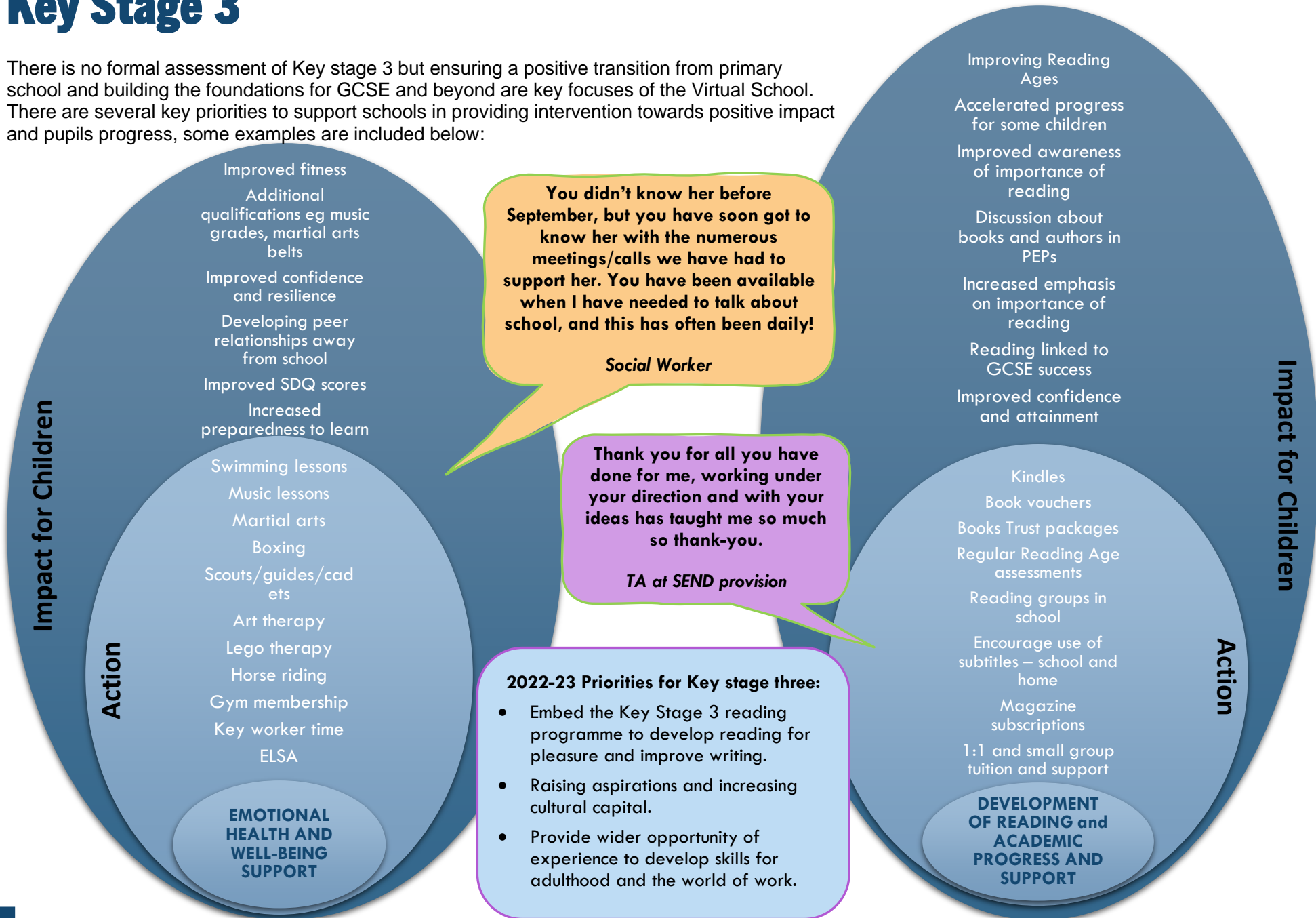
Training for schools and carers by LA literacy adviser focussing on practical support to continue to promote reading

Reading event at local bookshop to continue to promote the importance of reading, including training for carers and opportunities for children to read and be read to.

Continued emphasis on reading in PEP meetings, including regular reading age assessments, smart targets linked to reading, Pupil Premium Plus funding spent on reading and discussion about books with professionals

# Key Stage 3

There is no formal assessment of Key stage 3 but ensuring a positive transition from primary school and building the foundations for GCSE and beyond are key focuses of the Virtual School. There are several key priorities to support schools in providing intervention towards positive impact and pupils progress, some examples are included below:

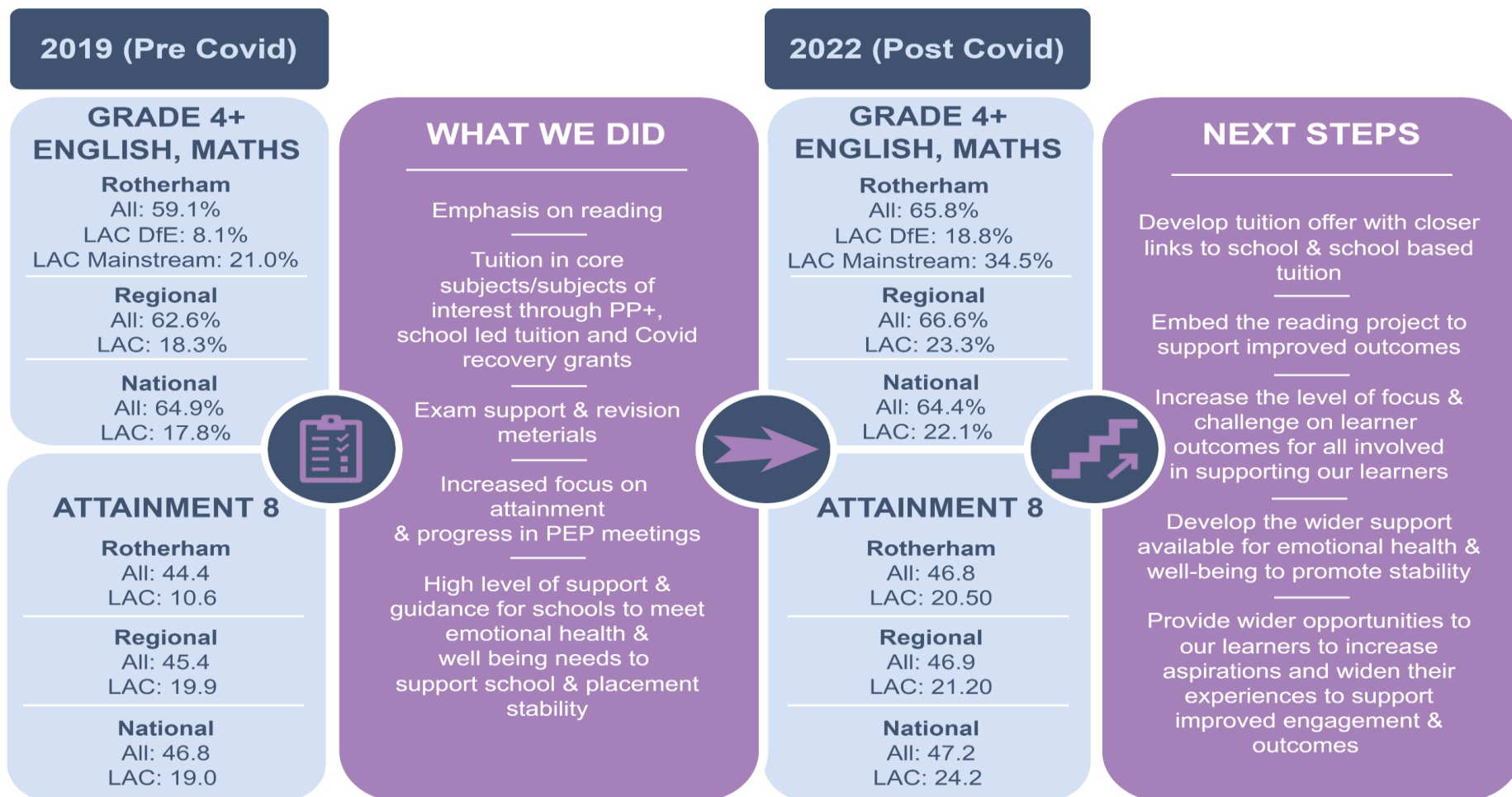




# Key Stage 4

The main priority for the secondary team remains helping our learners to achieve positive outcomes for their GCSEs. This year was the first-time formal GCSE examinations were sat since 2019. A GCSE Grade 4 is regarded as a standard pass, and the expectation is that children should pass English and Maths at this level or higher. Other measures, such as attainment and progress 8, are used to measure our childrens' success in their GCSEs, and progress against their start point.

This year's Year 11 achieved results that filled us with pride and were a source of celebration for the whole of Children's services.



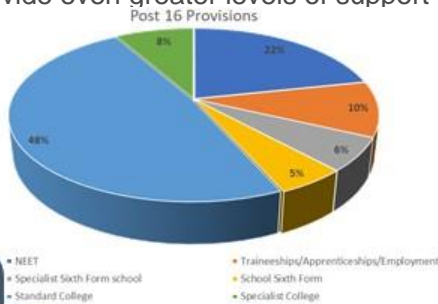
GCSE 2022 outcome data states 9 children achieved Level 4+ in English and Maths. There were two other children in the cohort who achieved the benchmark. These were not included in the DfE calculations. With these included, the percentage for the DfE cohort is 22.9%

# Post 16

Virtual school continue to support children throughout their education journey and our post 16 work ensures that all 16-17year old's have termly PEPs, access to appropriate education and are supported towards adulthood. Virtual School is part of the DfE Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus pilot. This has been an exciting opportunity and has allowed Virtual School to provide even greater levels of support to our children.

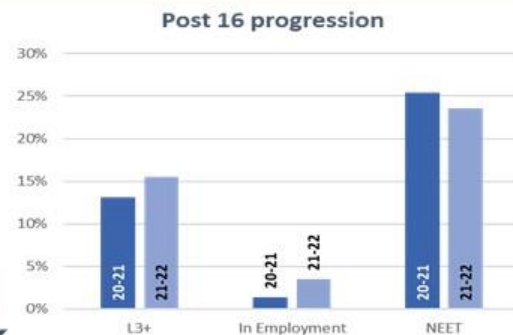
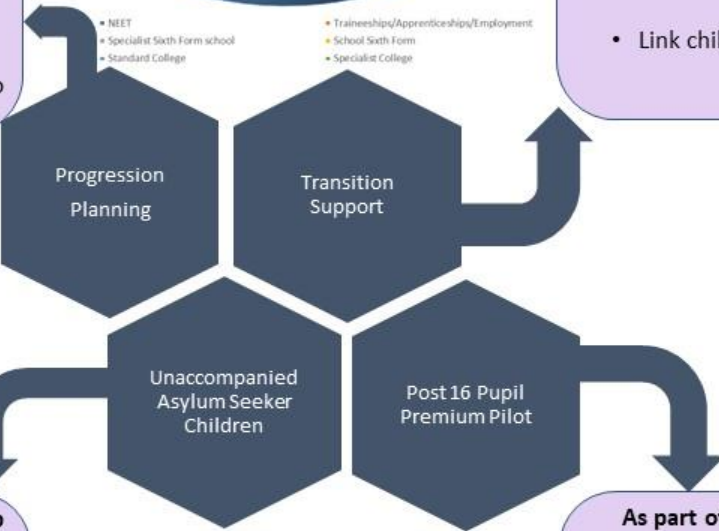
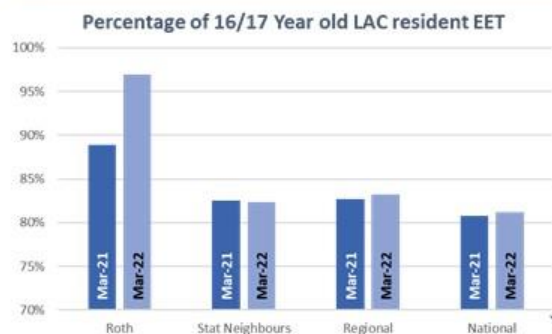
**Virtual School work with our post 16 providers, social workers and those at home to support our children through developing:**

- Independence skills needed for the next steps of their journey in life a and education.
- Support, advice and guidance around Further and Higher education.
  - Discussion and support around planning and managing finances
- Support structures with House project key workers to ensure engagement in EET



**Virtual school will:**

- Work with school and our children to ensure we have planned a clear transition pathway to Post 16.
- Consider a wide range of options including: appropriate post 16 setting, appropriate level and type of qualification and the appropriate course.
- Make sure children who are entitled to it, are supported to access Bursary
- Link children in with HEPP to support increased aspirations around Higher education opportunities.



**Virtual School has worked with local colleges to set up a group to support and develop reading, language and provide peer support. The impact has been:**

- Children report increased confidence
- Children have received College awards
- Increased attainment in Speaking, listening and reading assessments
- Course progression – from pre-entry up to entry level 3.

**Impact:**

- Greater percentage of Children accessing higher level courses and in employment.
- Increase percentage of children accessing EET.
- Increased number of care leavers accessing university and HE

**As part of the DfE post 16 Pupil Premium Plus pilot Virtual School has been able to provide higher levels of support to our children. This has included:**

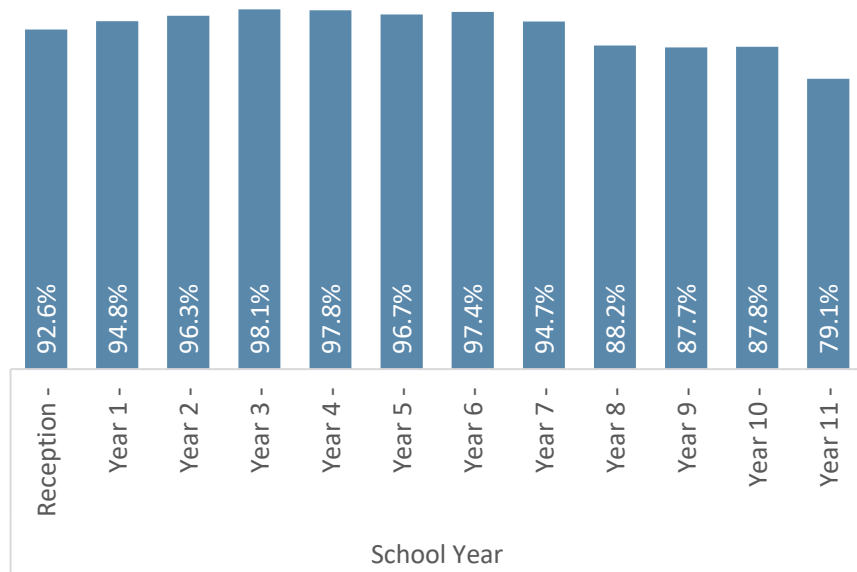
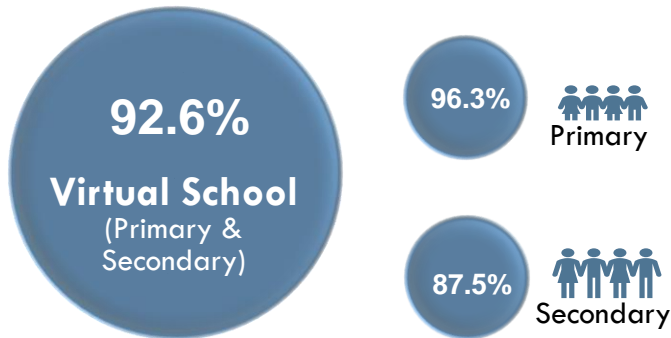
- Emotional health and well-being staff availability for our learners.
  - Increased access to support services
  - Enhanced transition support
- Emotional health champion in RNN college
- Innovative engagement programmes from Affinity 2020 CiC

**Next steps:**

Develop Virtual school Careers Information Advice and Guidance offer. Work closely with providers to improve the Post 16 offer. Expand the reading programme to include Post 16 children.

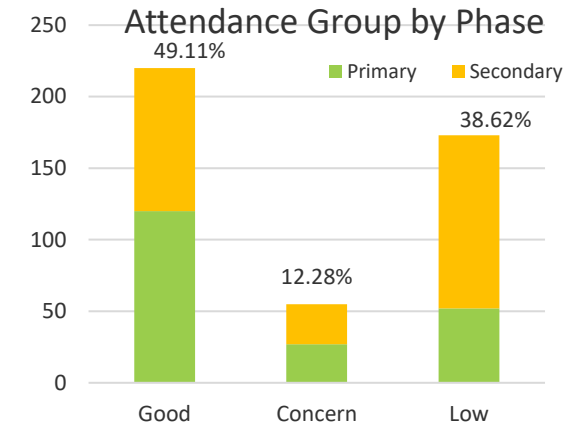
# Virtual School Attendance

In Rotherham, the average attendance in the academic year 2021/22 was 92.6% for primary and secondary children. The attendance of Rotherham's LAC pupils has seen a slight increase from 89% in 2020/21, although not back at pre-COVID levels.



**Action:**

- Develop Emotional Based School Avoidance support package.
- Greater focus on attendance in PEP meetings.
- Continued focus on reducing emotional health barriers to attendance and supporting school to provide outreach to vulnerable children.
- Bespoke timetables to promote engagement and attendance.



**63.2%**  
Of LAC children with good attendance or better (+95%)

**Impact:**

- Despite all the challenges out children face, attendance has improved since COVID and is almost back at pre-COVID levels.
- More than 3/5 children have good or better attendance.

**7.4%**  
absence from school for LAC pupils

**8.10% - Regional**  
**8.12% - Stat Neighbour**  
**9.10% - England**  
(Latest benchmarking data from 2021)

**110 (24.6%)**  
of LAC pupils were persistently absent from school (-90%)

**26.4% - Regional**  
**27.86% - Stat Neighbour**  
**30.40% - England**  
(Latest benchmarking data from 2021)

- 55% of good attenders are in the primary phase
- 45% of good attenders are in Secondary phase
- Our children's absence and persistent absence rates are both better than local and national comparators.

**Challenges:**

Increase in children experiencing Emotional Based School Avoidance.  
Increase in absence across the secondary phase.  
Ongoing impact on emotional health of COVID.

**Next steps:**

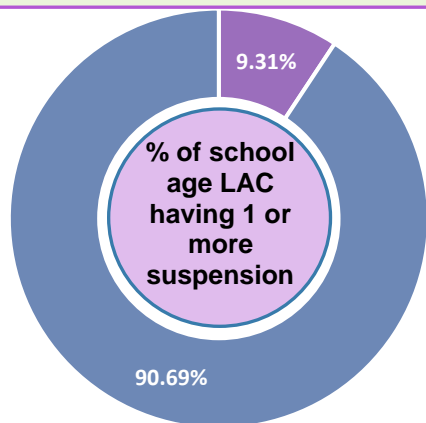
Continue to develop the EBSA and other emotional health support, advice and guidance offer to schools and carers to reduce persistent absence. Particularly in the secondary phase which has a significant impact on overall attendance.

# Virtual School Suspensions and Exclusions

Suspensions remained a focus of the virtual school throughout this academic year. Suspensions this year increased slightly from 2020/21 academic year. Data comparison is complex as the previous academic year was significantly different due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Impact:

This year, there were, fewer suspensions and fewer days lost to suspension than in previous years, when schools were fully operational, and figures are broadly in line with regional and national comparators.



**9.3%**

of school age LAC had 1 or more suspensions



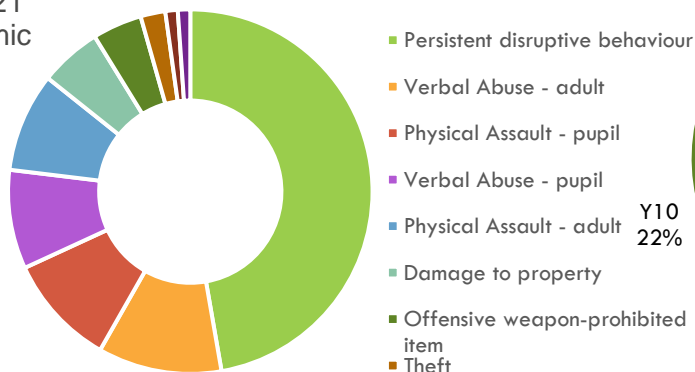
**9.27% - Regional**  
**8.47% - Stat Neighbour**  
**9.38% - England**

(Latest benchmarking data from 2020)

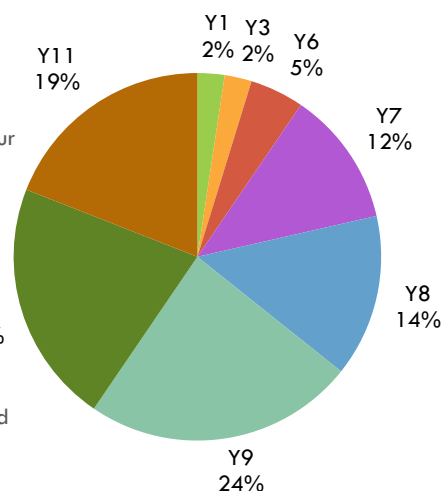
■ % of children - 1+ suspensions



## Reason for Suspension



## Suspensions by NCY



### Challenges:

- This year has seen an increase in suspension for persistent disruption and this and verbal and physical assaults of staff and pupils accounting for more than 3/4 of all suspensions.
- Unmet sensory needs leading to suspension in the primary phase.
- Suspensions continue to be far more likely in secondary school 9 out of ten suspensions were for children in the secondary phase.
- More than 50% of suspended children have an EHCP.

### Actions and next steps:

- Offer and embed Trauma Informed Schools UK level 5 diploma training to all secondary and special schools to inform practice and strategic planning and direction.
- Develop and launch sensory pilot in primary to support greater and wider understanding of the needs of children and reducing suspensions. Widen the sensory offer to the secondary phase
- Focus on understanding behaviour as communication, to reduce reactive response to persistent disruption.

### Exclusions 2014-19 (DfE Cohort)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Rotherham	10.6%	11.8%	13.1%	15.1%	11.3%	10.5%	
Yorkshire and The Humber Region	10.3%	10.4%	11.4%	11.8%	11.6%	11.3%	
Statistical Neighbours	9.4%	10.4%	11.7%	13.7%	12.9%	11.0%	
England	10.7%	10.5%	12.7%	11.5%	11.3%	11.4%	

# Sensory Support

The sensory needs of Looked After Children may often be dismissed as attachment difficulties or behavioural/SEMH needs. However, Virtual School recognise that children who experience early trauma often present as highly vigilant to potential danger. This leads to children becoming quickly 'flooded' by their sensory environment and are more susceptible to sensory difficulties. For these children, participating and engaging with the school environment can cause sensory overload.

## Virtual School Sensory key objectives:

- ✓ To develop sensory friendly schools who understand children's sensory needs.
- ✓ To work in partnership with Education, Health, and Social Care.
- ✓ To developing shared sensory language, early intervention and prevention for all of our looked after children in schools.

Six primary schools were selected to run a pilot project to enhance awareness of recognising sensory struggles and strategies to support children within the school environment. The pilot whole school approach has a number of benefits including upskilling and empowering school staff, developing a shared sensory language within the school, early intervention and prevention of escalating school difficulties; which may result in emotional wellbeing difficulties, troubles attaining academic achievement, school avoidance and/or exclusion.



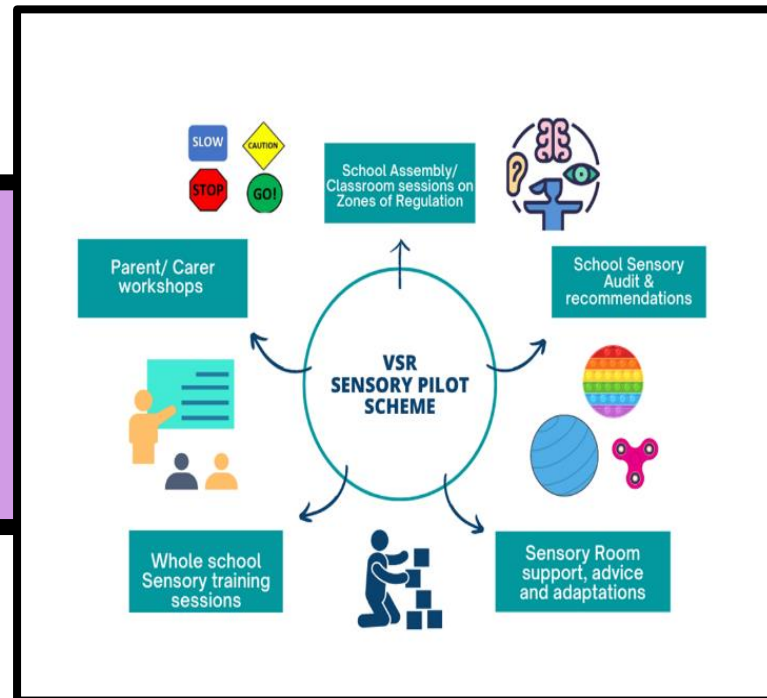
### Challenges:

School capacity – changes in staffing, periods of illness, staff retention.

Availability of sensory resources – restrictions with school funding (having to priorities budgets).

Embedding sensory practice needs to take place over a period time to obtain maximum impact.

All staff and senior leaders need to be committed to implement this consistently across school.



### Impact:

- Sensory Friendly policies
- Increased sensory awareness
- Sensory audits and support
- Reduced suspensions
- Reduction in part time timetables
- Shift and change in culture of early identification of children's sensory needs and how to meet their needs

*This training is so relevant across school for all staff. It is what we have been needing in Rotherham for some time. Sadie's delivery is amazing and so useful.*

**Primary school feedback**

**Sensory Training – held virtually and in person within pilot schools**

- ✓ Training to parents/carers providing information and strategies to use within the home environment.
- ✓ Training delivered to all professionals working around the child to support through seasonal changes.
- ✓ Training delivered to schools to provide sensory information and strategies to use within the classroom environment.

*I loved this training! Very factual and informative. We could relate to the things being said and it was useful to see the different ways to either calm or stimulate a child.*

**Foster carer feedback**

**Sensory Newsletter**



*Good overview of different sensory needs for a beginner to this - absolutely amazing my child doesn't need intervention, this is definitely some of the best parenting support I've had in recent years to try and figure out how she is perceiving the world.*

**Parent feedback**



**Sensory Equipment explained**  
**Wobble Cushions**

The aim of the wobble cushion is to help the child's attention and focus. They can also help children that are constantly moving, fidgeting and maybe swinging on their chair (- Seeking Vestibular input!). The cushion can help a child to keep alert and focus on their learning by providing the movement that they are sensory seeking, whilst limiting distractions for other learners. Wobble cushions should not be used persistently throughout the school day, but more so as a 'boost' for when the child appears restless and requiring some extra sensory input. Careful consideration for the height of the classroom chair, the child's feet should still touch the floor.

For further information on wobble cushions:  
<https://www.griffnot.com/ten-tips-wobble-cushions-classroom/>

**THINK SENSORY  
THINK MOVE!**

Movement plays a significant role in the classroom. Movement supports the development of gross and fine motor skills, physical fitness, language and communication, self-esteem, confidence and learning (Erwin, et al., 2012; Macviver et al., 2019).

Using regular movement into the classroom can support students to:

- **Maintain concentration and attention** (Hoza et al., 2015).
- **Regulate energy levels** (Mac Cobb, Fitzgerald & O'Keefe, 2014).
- **Expand their toolkit of self-regulation strategies** (Shanker, 2013)

We can use 'Whole class' movement breaks to support the regulation and alertness of ALL children in the class. A typical class of children will present mixed with different movement needs. You may have children who appear lethargic, slumped or tired who would benefit from an ALERTING movement activity. Then you will have children who present lively, fidgety or restless and may benefit from a CALMING movement activity. A whole classroom approach to movement could meet all children's needs if a particular sequence of movements is used: Start with an ALERTING movement activity and follow with a CALMING/ORGANISING Activity.

There are YouTube videos available for those classrooms with smart boards. This website is particularly useful with lots of resources on using movement breaks within classrooms:  
[https://bodybraintech.com/sensory\\_reg/ready\\_for\\_work.ejs](https://bodybraintech.com/sensory_reg/ready_for_work.ejs)

*Thank-you Sadie, I have found your sessions so far really useful and staff across our Trust who have attended your workshops are feeding back how good they are. It is not often I get a SEND training session with such positive feedback so thank-you - they are having an impact on our practice across our schools.*

**White Woods Academy Trust Feedback**

Face to face training events  
Staff members attended

73

Parent/Carer workshops

Staff Training

15

In school sessions  
Parent/Carer's attended

105

Children attended

School Assemblies

Consultation & Advice sessions

7

For children at risk of exclusion

2 School based observations with recommendations  
5 C&A sessions with staff

# Education Psychology Support

Rotherham Virtual School commission one Full time equivalent Educational Psychologist (EP) from the Rotherham Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The focus of the work is developing knowledge and understanding within schools to equip staff to understand the complex needs of children in care or those who have experienced the care system.

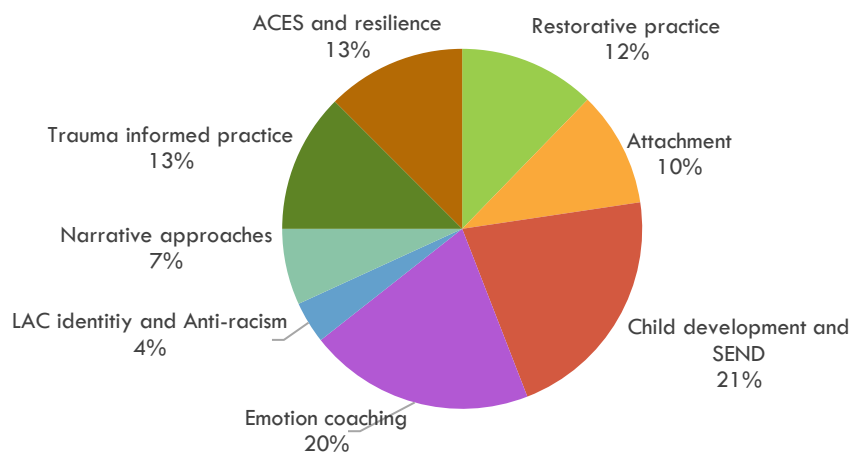
## The Virtual School Education Psychology key objectives:

1. *Develop and deliver training modules and practical strategies for educational settings, carers, and social workers to improve their understanding of how best to support learning and emotional wellbeing.*
2. *To provide consultation and assessment around individual children/young people or situations.*
3. *To liaise closely with settings, carers, and colleagues to facilitate joined-up approaches.*

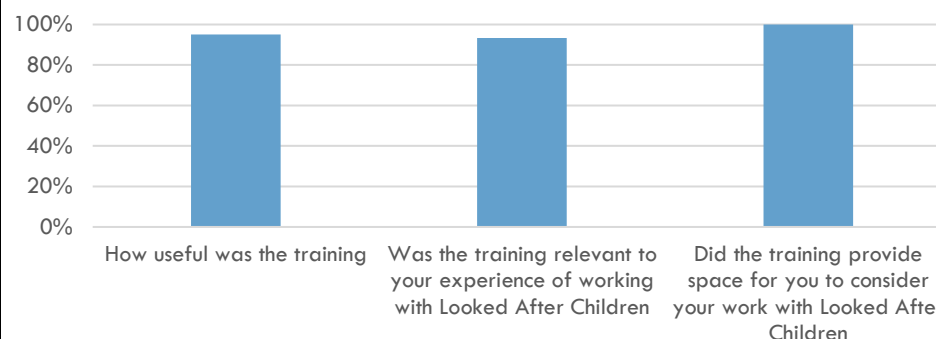
## Virtual School Core Training:

The 2021-22 Virtual School Core Training Model of free training, primarily available to Education staff (Early years -Post 16) was online, and this allowed us to open the training modules to a much wider audience drawing in services (i.e., social workers), foster carers/previously LAC parents.

### Core training offer 2021-22



Percentage of positive training evaluation responses



- **Solution Focused Staff Meeting (recommended for a transition to a new setting – two hours)** - *Multi-agency intervention - whole staff meeting designed to elicit empathy and understanding for the young person and then complete person-centered planning which will support the school placement*
- **Consultation Groups for Designated Teachers** - *A 'safe space' for discussing complex issues, often involving supporting the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) of children in care. This group is open to all DTs from a range of education and school settings; nurseries to post 16 providers.*
- **Solution Circle (one hour)** - *A quick and effective strategy which uses Solution Focused problem-solving techniques to generate strategies around managing a difficulty or challenge*
- **PATH (two - three hours)** - *Multi-agency and person-centered strategy designed to elicit a plan based on individual wishes, needs and strengths*
- **Multi-Element Plans (three hours – full day)** - *Focuses on understanding and planning for specific behaviors which are causing concern*
- **Consultation (face to face or via telephone)** - *1:1 contact with the VS EP to support problem solving as well as signposting to other services, interventions or support systems*
- **Provide additional literature, resources, and recommended reading** - *Resources can be sent to the school via e-mail which staff can refer to for support*

Schools could access these support services through referral from the Virtual School Education Advisers and discussion with the Virtual School Head Teachers.

**Virtual School Rotherham Conference:2021** Enhancing the communication of Looked after Children throughout their journey. A conference which explores the power of communication and strategies which enhance it. The guest speaker, Richard McCann, was a care experienced adult who spoke with passion and vigour about his experiences of the care system and the transformative experience of having significant adults in his life. The workshops covered a wide range of topics including: communication within Trauma Informed Practice; narrative approaches to listening to Young People and their stories; recognising common and unfamiliar communication difficulties and strategies to repair; supporting young people to navigate their future education journey these and emotion coaching.



Richard McCann, 'Wow' - I came away from his presentation with so many thoughts and ideas!! Such an inspiration to all

I thought the speakers and workshops were excellent and will definitely influence my practice

Creative Mentoring continues to be an important intervention for the Rotherham Virtual School. Educational Psychologist, on behalf of the Virtual School, liaise with a local Literacy Charity Grimm & Co to deliver programs of support. Creative Mentoring seeks to support LAC (between the ages of 5 – 18 years) by matching them with a Creative Mentor who can provide opportunities to engage in a range of motivating and engaging activities based on areas of interest to the young person. By listening to young people, recognising, and celebrating their areas of interest and providing for their creative needs, it is hoped that this will in turn develop their resilience and wellbeing. Creative Mentoring is not a short-term intervention, Creative Mentors work with young people for 1 year, although in exceptional cases it may be much longer. The Virtual School Educational Psychologists supporting the matching process and provide training and ongoing supervision to the Creative Mentors as well as supporting placements and evaluating the project.

She has improved immensely in confidence and motivation and has enjoyed these sessions thoroughly.

He has come on leaps and bounds... more able to work with others and speak about himself positively

This support has been fantastic for her and I am very hopeful that she is going to have a great final year at school year before moving to college.



**EP priorities for next year:**

- To evaluate the Trauma Informed School training, exploring how schools have developed or changed practice in response to this training.
- Further develop child-based bespoke support offer with schools and Rotherham Children's homes and carers, to support the return to Rotherham of our children in care.
- Plan and support the delivery of the Virtual School Conference as a space for schools to share good practice.
- Continue to develop and enhance the personalised child-based bespoke support offer to designated teachers, social workers, carers and education advisers.



# Speech and Language Support

- Two NHS Speech Therapists have been seconded to work with Virtual School to provide assessment and support for our Looked After Children.
- Referrals received from Virtual School Education Advisers and via initial health assessments when entering care.
- Some Looked After children have missed out on core NHS Speech Therapy support and this new service helps them access specialist support.



## Virtual School SALT key objectives:

- Provide early intervention and assessment to remove barriers to learning.
- Work in partnership with foster carers, schools and other professionals.
- Provide schools and settings with direct advice and guidance to support the SALT needs of our children.
- Provide equal opportunities for all our looked children both in and out authority, liaising with NHS core services.
- Provide training for foster carers, social workers and education staff
- Support settings in understanding differences between EAL and SALT needs for our children.

## Training:

All feedback from training was extremely positive:

I gained an insight into how to work with a child that has a speech and language barrier and I feel like this course has made me more confident in terms of what to do when I am faced with a barrier that has these barriers.

Foster carer

The trainer was really good and explained really well.

Foster carer



## Virtual School SALT Impact:

- 100% of children in or out of authority, who were new to care had access to speech and language support.
- Early identification of children who have a speech and language barrier.
- Over 82 referrals were received this academic year.
- Developed an assessment tool for carers and schools for our children.

## Virtual School SALT priorities for next year:

- In terms of Speech and Language consolidate links with the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (SY ICB) to ensure consistent support across the wider area.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Educational Psychology and Sensory Occupational Therapy to offer a fully holistic approach.

# Virtual School Celebrating Success

Our children never cease to amaze us. Every day we hear of the wonderful work they have done; progress they have made and barriers they have overcome. Our children are the reason we exist, and it is only right that we are able to share with you some of the successes they have achieved this year. During the academic year 2021-22, our children have:

Loved attending choir and were excited to perform at Young Voices.

Shared their views about moving school nearer to placement. They said 'Thank you so much for listening, we love our new school and we're learning lots'.

Moved from a special school to a mainstream school: "I like being back in mainstream. I like the routine. I want to catch up on my learning".

Enjoyed some emotional therapy: "I'm 'Drawing and Talking' therapy and now I understand my emotions better".

Settled well into nursery accessing her 15 hours free childcare, despite not accessing play groups due to the pandemic.

Overcome anxiety "I was anxious about going out with baby but Virtual School registered me with local Children's Centre and I am now going to baby massage groups".

52 children achieved a qualification in Year 11.

Had some 1:1 sports coaching for a gifted and talented runner. "I enjoy running. Look at my medal! I won this running 100 meters".

Developed some new baby routines and accessed local group.

Never been on public transport on his own before starting college but is now travelling by bus from Rotherham to



Doncaster. He has just had his first parents evening and has been described as a 'model student'.

Persevered, despite significant barriers to learning, and was able to proudly show his counting skills at his PEP and declare 'Look I can count'.

Overcome numerous adverse experiences during Y6 - 'She has done so well to achieve fabulous KS2 SATs results'.

Enjoyed receiving BookTrust packages "I loved my package, I loved the box with my name on and that it was mine, I loved opening it".

15 of our children achieved 5 or more GCSEs at Grade 4 or Higher.

Experienced new things: a foster carer and child attended a Tiny Tots College workshop. 'He loved to explore and try new things. I was given ideas we can do at home.

Learned to play a musical instrument: "I've been learning to play the guitar for two years and last term I played my guitar in assembly".

Learnt in new ways 'I like that the information Virtual School share is always linked to a YouTube video to watch because I don't like reading'.

Improved their self-confidence and self-belief: "I applied to be a school councillor, I stood up in front of the school and told everyone why I would make a good councillor. I had to apply.

Enrolled with Harrogate Army Foundation College on an apprenticeship and has successfully passed out a junior soldier.

Completed a 12 week Traineeship with The Source and has been successful in securing a level 2 Apprenticeship with Cobra Sports Exhausts.

Attended refugee week activities at her local community centre supported by carers learning about different cultures, meeting new people and hearing stories of different life experiences and being involved in fundraising.

Has secured a place on a HE course with Wakefield University centre studying Performing Arts.

Has studied karate for several years. This year she achieved her black belt and has started helping to tutor other young people at the dojo.

14 of our children achieved a Grade 4 or higher in English and Math's.

Successfully completed his BTEC Level 1 Cooking Skills course in Y9 and is well in the way to completing his Level 2.

Settled well into high school and made good academic progress during Year 7.

Been in the army cadets for a number of years and he took part in the annual Remembrance Day service with his unit and played in the marching band.

Been proactive in searching for work experience - contacted the local aquarium to ask about job opportunities – wrote and delivered a personal letter to them, and got a response from the aquarium manager saying how impressed they were that she had show the initiative to come in - gave her complimentary tickets and a shark feeding experience.



Gained 9 GCSEs at a grade 5 and above and is now studying 3 A-Levels at 6th Form College.

Started playing the violin last year and has already achieved a distinction at Grade 1

Attended a 4 day programme with Affinity despite nerves and 100% attendance throughout his whole school career!

Struggled with his college course, so found himself an apprenticeship in Leisure Services. When a full-time place opened up, he applied and was successful in gaining full time employment just before he turned 18!

Achieved well attending cadets and this has helped him feel confident enough to independently attend NCS over the summer.

Despite having anxieties around moving back to Rotherham and being unsure what he wanted to do in year 12, studied hard and achieved well at the end of year 11.

220 of our children had 95% attendance or better.

Written and directed her school play. For her incredible hard work on this project, she was nominated for an award at the Dumfries and Galloway Youth Awards.



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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Corporate Parenting Panel

**Report Title**

Corporate Parenting Partnership Board Terms of Reference

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Name of Strategic Director

Nicola Curley

**Report Author(s)**

Laura Gough, Head of Service

Laura.Gough@rotherham.gov.uk

**Ward(s) Affected**

All

**Report Summary**

This report introduces the proposed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The proposed Terms of Reference propose a small number of changes to the Corporate Parenting Panel, which will provide accountability and scrutiny to the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 – 2027, Local Offer (in production) and Leaving Care Action Plan 2023, which all underpin the care provided to children in care and care leavers in Rotherham.

The main changes are:

- It is proposed that the meeting moves from a public panel meeting to a closed Board meeting.
- The proposed Terms of Reference have replaced the name Corporate Parenting Panel to Corporate Parenting Partnership Board to reflect children's wider needs including health and education colleagues.
- It is proposed that the frequency of meetings, increase from four meetings to six meetings a year to ensure sufficient capacity for business to be completed.

The Terms of Reference are being presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel for noting and are subject to approval by Cabinet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

**Recommendations**

1. That the new Terms of Reference are noted.

**List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Corporate Parenting Partnership Board ToR 2023 - 2024
- Appendix 2 Corporate Parenting Panel April ToR 2019
- Appendix 3 Corporate Parenting Strategy

**Background Papers**

See Appendix

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Corporate Parenting Panel – 23 January 2024

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

**Error! Reference source not found.****1. Background**

- 1.1.1 The DfE Statutory guidance, applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers, for local authorities is about the role of local authorities and the application of corporate parenting principles as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Local authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers (relevant children and former relevant children). It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
- 1.1.2 All children in care and care leavers deserve to be provided with the highest quality service, which supports them to transform their life chances and have better futures. We expect all of our children in care and care leavers to experience safe, stable, and nurturing homes, with strong relationships and high levels of resilience. We intend to support all of our children to develop appropriate independence, to express their views and to make positive choices. In Rotherham we want to give every child and young person the best opportunities to be successful in their adulthood, and the Corporate Parenting Panel has an important role in ensuring that this happens.
- 1.1.3 To support our ambition for children in our care and care leavers and support the above Strategy, Local Offer and Action Plan the Corporate Parenting Panel has refreshed the Terms of Reference, and which is presented to the Panel on the 23 January 2023.

- 1.1.4 The proposed Terms of Reference set out how the Corporate Parenting Panel will fulfil its statutory functions with regards to children in care and care leavers in Rotherham.
- 1.1.5 The proposed Terms of Reference are in respect of children in care and care leavers. As of January 2024, there are 504 children in care and 344 care leavers. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Partnership panel are in regard to these children and young people and the care and parenting afforded to them.
- 1.1.6 The proposed Terms of Reference are being presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel for noting.
- 1.2 The Legal Context  
When a child comes into care, the council becomes the Corporate Parent. 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, become responsible for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are cared after by the council. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council hold the main legal duty of Corporate Parent for children in care and care leavers.
- 1.2.1 The DfE national Corporate Parenting Principles set out seven principles that local authorities will have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to children in care and care leavers and which can be found at [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/1000000.pdf). The Corporate parenting Partnership Board will have consideration of the principals when exercising their duties.

## 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council hold the main legal duty of care for Corporate Parenting for children in care and care leavers. They are required to produce a Corporate Parenting Strategy, and a Local Offer. Both these documents will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel agenda for review and approval.
- 2.1.2 The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel review of the Terms of Reference has paid attention to the legislation, strategies and local needs and requirements of children and young people. With that in mind there were key changes to the proposed Terms of Reference.

These are:

- 2.1.3
- The Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference were reviewed in 2023 and it is proposed to be retitled to Corporate Parenting Partnership Board. This change is to reflect that corporate parenting is more than the council, and the Board includes professionals to represent wider needs of children in care and care leavers and ambitions for their futures.

- 2.1.4 • The meeting is proposed to move from a public panel meeting to a closed Board meeting out of the public arena. It was recognised that by having the meeting as a public meeting, it added complications to how the business was undertaken, and information shared. This includes the possibility of members of the public requesting to attend and additional measures required to managing any confidential aspects, that some agenda items required additional authorisation and sign off prior to publication and holding a public meeting presented additional issues when inviting children and young people to the meeting.
- 2.1.5 • The frequency of meetings is proposed to increase. Meetings are held quarterly. However, it has been recognised that this frequency does not provide sufficient time and opportunity for the level of scrutiny and assurance required. An addition of two further meetings, taking the meeting frequency to six meetings a year, offers opportunity for comprehensive discussion and scrutiny on all areas. The additional meetings will add value to the governance arrangements, whilst ensuring that all reports will continue to have the same level of governance arrangements and sign off process.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Option one, to note the proposed Terms of Reference.  
The new proposed Terms of Reference provide a current reflection of the local needs and are aligned to the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The new proposed Terms of Reference are to be noted at the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting.

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The new proposed Terms of Reference will be implemented following approval at Cabinet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, subject to the call-in period.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

There are no financial implications

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

Approval of the proposed changes



**8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

There are no HR implications

**9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is a legal requirement, which aims to scrutinise and hold to account the council and relevant partners and with regards to children in care and care leavers in Rotherham. This has a significant impact for children, their safety, wellbeing, and welfare now and in the future. The proposed Terms of Reference sets out how the Panel will fulfil this role.

**10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 Equality and human rights are considered within the Corporate Parenting Strategy and proposed Terms of Reference.

**11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 There are no implications.

**12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 Implications for partners are reflected in the proposed Terms of Reference Document.

**13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Risks and mitigations have been referred to in this document recommendations.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.
Head of Human Resources (If appropriate)	Amy Leech	Click here to enter a date.
The Strategic Director with responsibility for this report	Please select the relevant Strategic Director	Click here to enter a date.
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Please select the relevant Cabinet Member	Click here to enter a date.

*Report Author: Laura Gough, Head of Service*

*Laura.Gough@rotherham.gov.uk*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

## Appendix

### Appendix 1 Terms of Reference 2019



Corporate Parenting  
Panel - Revised Terms

### Appendix 2 Terms of Reference 2024



ROTHERHAM  
CORPORATE PARENT

### Appendix 3 Corporate parenting Strategy 2024-27



Appendix 1 -  
Corporate Parenting S

## ROTHERHAM CORPORATE PARENTING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### Our Vision for Children in Our Care and Leaving Our Care

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and partners are ambitious for our children, and we aim to be a Child Centred Borough, ensuring the best for all children and young people in our Borough. Our vision for children in our care, leaving our care and children being adopted is simple, we are committed to ensuring that we provide the best care that we can, as good parents do. We want our children and young people to be happy and healthy, to be safe and feel safe, be resilient, be protected from harm and exploitation, and to be supported each step of the way as they transition into adult life. This includes ensuring that they have opportunity to do well in education and support to gain employment and access to good jobs and higher education, that they live in good housing and are financially secure and have support networks to help them along their way.

#### The Purpose and Responsibility of the Board

- It is important that the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board members ensure that the Council provides good care, education, and opportunities that the Board would expect any good parent to provide to their own children. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces corporate parenting principles, applying corporate parenting principles to children in care and care leavers; February 2018:
- [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) and which comprise seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to children in care and care leavers.
- The Board will raise awareness of the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and develop expertise and knowledge among elected Members and officers. To support this, we will have Children's Champions in our elected members cohort. The champions will have a specific area of focus that they will develop a level of expertise in and work with key stake holders to scrutinise, challenge and identify good practice.
- The Board will act as a forum for elected members to oversee the progress of all children in our care and leaving our care, through the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 -2024.

- The Board will ensure that children and young people in our care have a positive experience and that the strategy enhances their outcomes.
- The Board will provide strategic direction and oversight for outcomes for children in care and leaving our care. To support this, they will review performance data and quality assurance activity, identify areas of focus and areas for development and challenge us to deliver improvements where needed.
- They will promote working together arrangements and overview outcomes for children and young people across partner agencies as good corporate parents. Members of the Board will champion the needs of children and young people and promote their wellbeing and futures.
- The Board will strive to listen to the voice of the child and young person and provide challenge where we think we are not actively listening to children in our care and leaving our care.
- The Board will encourage all partners, whether they work for social care or health services or the voluntary sector, to work in an integrated manner in the best interests of all children in our care and leaving our care.
- They will maintain a strategic overview of new developments, initiatives, plans, policies, and strategies that impact on services for children in care and care leavers and to ensure as Corporate Parents that their best available life chances are secured.
- The Board will lead cultural and behavioural change to promote better and best outcomes for all children and care leavers.
- The Board will hold all partners to account for their role in the delivery of services to children in care and leaving our care.
- To have links with the Virtual School for children in care and care leavers.
- Promote and support Rotherham becoming a nationally recognised Child Centred Borough.

Specific responsibilities include:

To ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers, including:

- Children in foster care
- Children in connected care (kinship) arrangements
- Children placed in a residential home setting (internal and external placements)
- Children placed at home under Placement with Parents Regulations
- Care leavers in Staying Put arrangements
- Care leavers who are living in supported lodgings
- Children in care and care leavers in secure services
- Children in care and care leavers in custody
- Children placed for adoption

### **Reports to the Board**

Regulatory areas subject to inspection or guidance will provide reports either quarterly, annually, or post inspection:

- Adoption Annual Report
- Fostering Annual Report
- Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report
- Residential Children's Home Post Inspection Report (is this annual)
- Virtual Head Teacher's Annual Report
- Quarterly performance on a page
- Other reports in relation to children in care, care leavers and adoption as requested.
- At least annually to hear from the Chief Executive of the Council on the Council's role of Corporate Parent

### **Children in Care Council**

Representatives from the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum will contribute to the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board through methods agreed with them.

### **Membership of the Board and Frequency of meetings**

There will be standing membership of the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board to provide continuity and consistency.

Key membership will include:

- Elected member and portfolio holder for Children to act as Chair.
- The Council Assistant Director for Social Care to act as vice chair for the Board.
- Elected members with a role in relation to Children in Care
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Head of Service for Safeguarding / independent Reviewing Officer
- Skills and Employment lead from Regeneration and Environment
- Strategic Head of Housing
- Designated Health lead for Children in Care
- Representatives from the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum.

Democratic Services will provide the administrative arrangements and constitutional guidance to the Board.

The Board will meet six times a year. Should a member not be able to attend, they must send a representative, ideally the same deputy on each occasion.

### **Governance and Reporting Mechanisms**

The Corporate Parenting Partnership Board will report to:

- Cabinet with an annual report that will be referred to Council
- Improving Lives Select Commission with an annual report
- There will also be a link to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Health and Well Being Board and the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

Where there are specific issues or concern, or good practice these will be raised with the Strategic Director for Children, and Chief Executive as necessary.