



Peterborough Virtual School



Peterborough Virtual School

Virtual School Head Teacher Report

Peterborough Children in Care Academic Year September 2020-July 2021

PVS (Peterborough Virtual School) Vision

We will champion the individual needs of all our children, enabling them to learn, aspire, thrive, and achieve their potential.

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1 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the activity of the Peterborough Virtual School for the academic year 2020-2021. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group.

1.1 Context

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on the Local Authority (LA) to promote the educational achievement of children looked after by them, wherever they live or are educated.

- Discharge the LA's duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care wherever they live or are educated.
- To work in partnership with all agencies to ensure appropriate education provision.
- Ensure quality Personal Education Planning (PEP).
- Manage the Pupil Premium Plus funding for children in care.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 added the duty to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. These duties are set out in the February 2018 statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'

In June 2021 we were given the additional task of promoting the education of children with a social worker. (See link to document below) A new role will be created to lead on this.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994028/Promoting_the_education_of_children_with_a_social_worker.pdf

Peterborough Virtual School sits within the Schools Standards and Effectiveness Team and is accountable to the Service Director of Education Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The Virtual School Head teacher (VSH) is line-managed and supported by the Service Director of Education for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and reports to Corporate Parenting Panel and Corporate Parenting Board. The VSH is Dee Glover who has been in post since November 2013.

2 Role of the Virtual School

Our role is to:

- promote high aspirations and raise achievement through challenge, support, and targeted interventions for children in care
- ensure that children in care access high quality teaching and learning
- work closely with all those involved in the care and education of children in care; providing training and support to help understand the issues and challenges they face
- co-ordinate and quality assure all Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- monitor and challenge schools to make the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPPG)
- ensure effective transition is provided between schools or specialist providers
- ensure Special Education Needs or Disability needs are identified and supported appropriately with an integrated plan
- celebrate the achievements of our children in care
- lead training for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, school governors and bespoke training for educational settings and staff in schools

In addition:

- provide advice and guidance to schools, parents and others for children previously in care
- promote the education of children with a social worker

The Virtual School is an additional resource, which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children in care. It is involved in, or promotes nationally and locally, various initiatives to enhance the educational achievement of children in care. The Virtual School does not replace the school or educational provision of children in care. All children in care, from the age of 2 to 18 are monitored by Peterborough Virtual School. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is reviewed termly for each child and includes their progress and attainment information as well as a record of interventions, often funded through the Pupil Premium Plus Grant, to ensure every child is given the opportunity to make accelerated progress.

Guiding Principles

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

2.1 Structure of the Virtual School September 2020

LA Funded Posts	
<i>Post Name</i>	<i>FTE</i>
Virtual School Headteacher	FTE
Primary Education Coordinator	FTE
Post 16 Education Coordinator	FTE
Education Advisor for Children Previously in Care	P/T

Pupil Premium Funded Posts	
<i>Post Name</i>	<i>FTE</i>
Secondary Education Coordinator	FTE
Specialist Teacher of Maths Primary and Forest School Lead <i>(in partnership with Ravensthorpe Primary)</i>	P/T
Specialist Teacher of Literacy Primary <i>(in partnership with Nene Valley Primary)</i>	P/T
Early Years Advisor <i>(commissioned from Early Years Team)</i>	P/T
Educational Psychologist	FTE
Primary Higher Level Teaching Assistant <i>(in partnership with Nene Valley Primary)</i>	FTE
Business Support Officer	P/T

The Peterborough Virtual School aims to achieve improvements to the educational outcomes of CIC through a school improvement model. This allows for a small team, with sufficient influence and expertise, to improve outcomes through support and challenge to all education settings. Additional expert staff provide interventions for individual children who are identified as requiring support with learning or self-regulation.

Covid-19 Support

The cohort of academic year September 2020 to July 2021 continued to face challenges due to Covid-19 with further school closures and disruption to examinations. Schools closed again in January 2021 but children and young people in care were again able to request a school or college place as part of the vulnerable group. Foster carers and social workers determined whether a child or young person would attend. There was increased pressure on school places due to the widening of the categories able to access a place. Most of our children and young people who wished to go to school were offered a place but there were some for whom only two or three days a week were offered.

Full PEP meetings held virtually took place during this closure to ensure transition plans for those children and young people moving to primary, secondary or Post 16 provision were in place.

There was a greater emphasis on academic progress during the January 2021 lockdown. The DfE set out the minimum amount of remote education which must be provided for each Key Stage – increasing the hours expected.

For Key Stage 1, three hours of remote education must be provided to include “both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently”.

Key stage 2 pupils should be provided with four hours remote education a day while this increases to five hours for both Key Stage 3 and 4.

Previous guidance stated that primary schools should set work totalling around three hours a day, and four hours at secondary.

This has put significant pressure on all parents and carers – PVS offered support to both carers and children and young people.

PVS support for children and stakeholders during school closures, in addition to business as usual.

- provided guidance for foster carers and social workers to support accessing school places for those children requiring the service and eligible within the 'vulnerable' group.
- Continues to provide a consultation phone line for all stakeholders with our PVS Specialist Education Psychologist, acknowledging heightened anxiety for some carers, children and colleagues
- continued to provide work and support to those children and young people already identified by the PVS Intervention team to sustain learning momentum
- continued to fund online tuition sessions from an external provider for children and young people living out of city
- held weekly virtual KIT meetings with designated school staff to monitor well-being of those children attending school
- collected and analysed school attendance data
- provided IT equipment to facilitate home working
- offered advice to carers to support learning at home and provided a resource guide to supplement work provided by schools
- challenged schools where their learning offer was not of an acceptable standard
- attended virtual transition PEP meetings for Early Years, Year 6 and 11 pupils and facilitated additional transition opportunities for the more vulnerable learners.
- January – February half term PVS set primary children a series of lockdown challenges with the incentive of a voucher, amount dependent on the number of challenges completed.

3 Cohort Characteristics - 31st March 2021

Peterborough Virtual School (<i>March 31st, 2021</i>)	Pupils	% of Total
Total number on school roll (pre-school to Year 13)	314	100%

Peterborough CiC - in Peterborough schools or education settings	201	64.0%
Peterborough CiC - in Out of Peterborough Schools or Education Settings	109	34.7%
Peterborough CiC - Pre-school or Post-16 with setting unmatched	4	1.3%

Academic Year Groups	Pupils	% of Total
Pre-school	20	6.4%
Reception	4	1.3%
Year 1	11	3.5%
Year 2	6	1.9%
Year 3	14	4.5%
Year 4	12	3.8%
Year 5	18	5.7%
Year 6	21	6.7%
Year 7	21	6.7%
Year 8	35	11.1%
Year 9	34	10.8%
Year 10	23	7.3%
Year 11	26	8.3%
Year 12	46	14.6%
Year 13	23	7.3%

Male	183	58.3%
Female	131	41.7%

Ethnicity - White British	207	65.9%
Ethnicity - Not White British	107	34.1%

*Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	18	5.7%
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**There is 1 in Year 11, 8 are in Year 12 and 9 are in Year 13*

Number of Schools/education Settings attended	167	
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Special Educational Needs	Pupils	% of Total Cohort
EHCP or Statement of SEN (Special Education Needs) 36 of the children attend mainstream settings, 7 attend residential school, 41 attend special schools and 1 is in a Young Offenders Institution	85	27.1%
Academic Year Groups of SEND Cohort	Pupils	% of SEN Cohort
Reception	1	1.2%
Year 1	1	1.2%
Year 2	3	3.5%
Year 4	7	8.2%
Year 5	4	4.7%
Year 6	3	3.5%
Year 7	10	11.8%
Year 8	7	8.2%
Year 9	13	15.3%
Year 10	13	15.3%
Year 11	9	10.6%
Year 12	8	9.4%
Year 13	6	7.1%

4 Training and Development

The Virtual School is committed to developing the practice of professionals working with CIC so that they have the relevant knowledge, information, and skills to enable them to fulfil their role in contributing to educational outcomes and raising aspirations. This has contributed to an improvement in the quality of PEPs and a greater understanding of the importance of advocacy on the part of carers. Social workers and carers are actively involved in the PEP process and more confident in challenging around Pupil Premium as an example. Our website and You Tube channel house all our training materials and are publicised through our email broadcast facility within our electronic PEP provider, foster carer newsletters and our Twitter page.

Our method of delivering training has, of course, been impacted by Covid-19 and there has been much more on a 1-1 basis using a virtual platform. This has been advantageous in that individual training rather than generic needs have been met. We will continue to offer bespoke training but will look to include 'live' events when possible.

4.1 Designated Teacher Training

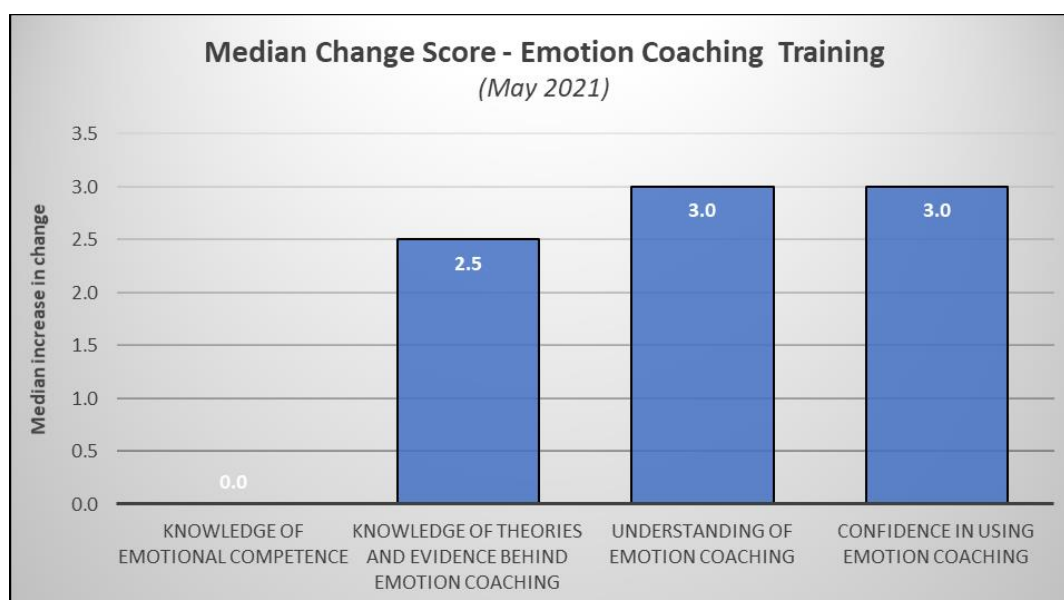
Training sessions for new to the role Designated Teachers, both in and out of city, addressing PEP completion specifically but also the wider role required are provided regularly. The sessions aim to equip school professionals with the necessary skills to maximise the achievement of children in care

through excellent education planning. Much of our training provision is now online with training videos for PEP completion, the role of the Designated Teacher and the setting of SMART targets available. We did not have Designated Teacher conference during academic year 2020-2021 due to the restrictions on public gatherings and the challenges of hosting a virtual conference. However, PVS staff-maintained contact with Designated Teachers in both a supportive and challenging role. Plans are in place for a virtual conference in the Autumn Term 2021. In addition, PVS Specialist Educational Psychologist offered virtual training.

Emotion Coaching Training Report

Emotion Coaching training (1 full day) was delivered to 50 school professionals in May and June 2021. All attendees will be offered follow up workshops in the academic year 2021-2022.

Quantitative Data – Emotion Coaching May 2021



The information above indicates that on average, attendees increased their knowledge and understanding of Emotion Coaching by 2.5/3 points and their confidence in using Emotion Coaching by 3 points from their initial baseline (median average used).

Qualitative Data – Emotion Coaching May 2021

The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

‘I now understand more about emotion coaching, and I can now embed this with our learners to help build a better relationship and to understand them and help them understand why they are feeling the way they are and how to manage themselves.’

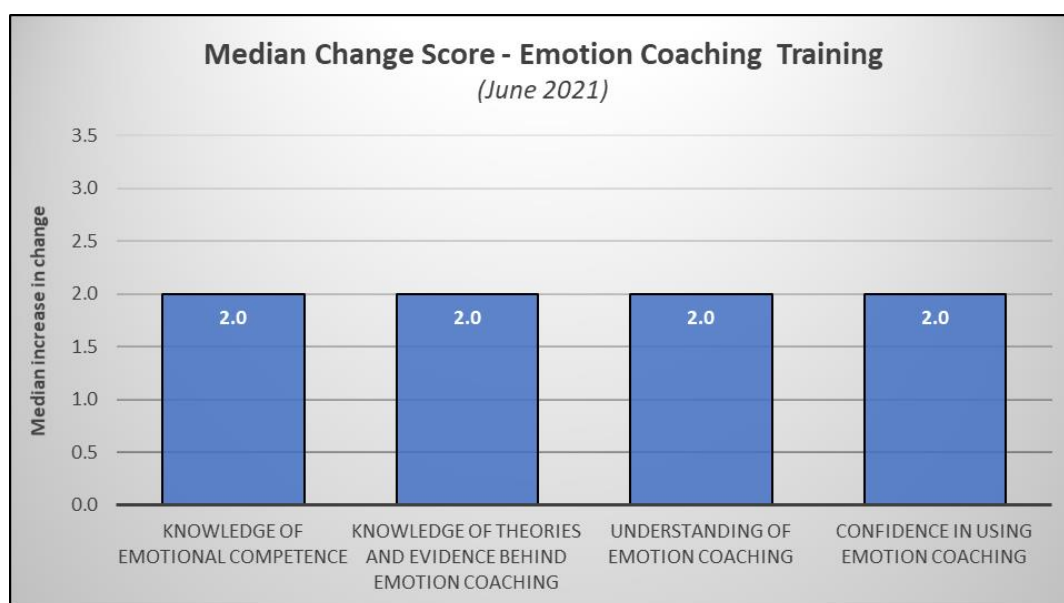
‘The training has provided me with a new skill that I can take with me to my workplace and to be able to help the young people that i work with giving them a better experience at school.’

‘Absolutely fantastic! I’m soooooo enthused to “get going” at introducing this approach in the autumn term.’

'This training will really help to support some specific children with complex needs. We have some of these strategies in place but really looking forward to sharing with the class teachers in order to better support them in the classroom. I will also share this with the Head teacher and ask them to consider a whole school approach.'

'Fantastic link to the Behaviour Steps approach - really supportive for staff, especially through the use of scripts which give that scaffold. I can see instantly how this could be applied to children across the school.'

Quantitative Data – Emotion Coaching June 2021



The information above indicates that on average, attendees increased their knowledge and understanding of Emotion Coaching by 2 points and their confidence in using Emotion Coaching by 2 points from their initial baseline (median average used).

Qualitative Data – Emotion Coaching June 2021

The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

'Knowing the strategies and scripts to use when dealing with children who are struggling is useful.'

'Thank you, the training was very informative and even if we may struggle to implement it as a "whole school approach" currently we are certainly hopeful we can improve our practice ourselves and helping / sharing with some of our colleagues.'

'It has made me think about the language to be used when supporting children and gave me a deeper insight to theory behind emotion coaching.'

'I have gained a greater understanding which has improved my confidence in this area.'

4.1 Social Worker Training

New social workers are referred to the VS for training in the completion of PEPs and other matters relating to education. To improve the offer, and maintain high levels of compliance and quality, fortnightly PEP clinics are held with VS staff available for training support and advice. Training has been provided by the Statutory Assessment and Monitoring Service to share the processes of requesting and securing an EHCP when required. This is particularly pertinent when children with an EHCP move to out of city schools following a care placement change. There are also training modules developed by the PVS team on our electronic PEP provider.

4.2 Foster Carer Training

We offer a range of training opportunities for foster carers, both in house and agency.

- Vocabulary Development
- Training Transition Training (general)
- KS2 to KS3 Transition Training
- Preparing for School Readiness
- Children Previously in Care
- PEP completion and PEP meetings.

We are increasing our offer for next academic year to include subject specific training and emotion coaching. Our Educational Psychologist is also available for consultation.

4.3 Connected Communities Project (Trauma Responsive)

The Connected Communities Project has developed over the last four years and this year, the cohort of schools in the project almost doubled to 21. The Connected Communities is a trauma-responsive project which aims to support schools to embed trauma-responsivity in their school environment, policy, culture, and practice. Each phase of schools undertakes a two-year programme supported by Peterborough Virtual School. The first year is a training phase and the second year takes the form of network meetings.

The Covid-19 pandemic delayed the training for both Phase 2 and Phase 3 cohorts by a term. The Phase 2 cohort finished the training phase (six full days) by December 2020 and progressed to the Network Phase, characterised by reflective practice, further embedding, and sharing of practice for the Local Authority.

Impact and outcomes

Despite disruption by the pandemic, the following impact and outcomes have been reported by the Phase 2 cohort:

- An increase in attainment results at G.C.S.E from the secure unit.
- A revised behaviour regulation policy in a village primary school.
- The development of safe spaces for children's regulation of emotions in a majority of the schools – some schools have reported better self-regulation skills in children.
- All schools are embedding Emotion Coaching which develops children's emotional self-awareness and regulation skills, reduces exclusions, develops nurturing relationships between

adults and children, increases attainment progress (Rose, McGuire-Snieckus and Gilbert 2015) and Gus, Rose and Gilbert 2017).

- All schools have delivered trauma-responsive training to their school communities and staff have increased knowledge which has translated to their daily practice.
- All schools have begun trauma-responsive action research projects with results to be published next academic year.

Evaluation Data Day 5 and 6

Pre and post evaluation data from respondents in Phase 2 for Day 5 and 6 is missing due to adapting to the pandemic by using virtual tools. Microsoft forms was used to capture this data but due unfamiliarity with the tool and how the information is recorded, an error occurred where the data could not be matched.

Qualitative Data Day 5 – The Importance of Relationships

The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

‘Very useful and interesting as usual. Help with the literature review is appreciated. More practical elements to take into school and we will plan in our next update for staff especially around PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy).’

‘Given us more tools to help train our staff and time to reflect on where we may and who we may need to focus more attention.’

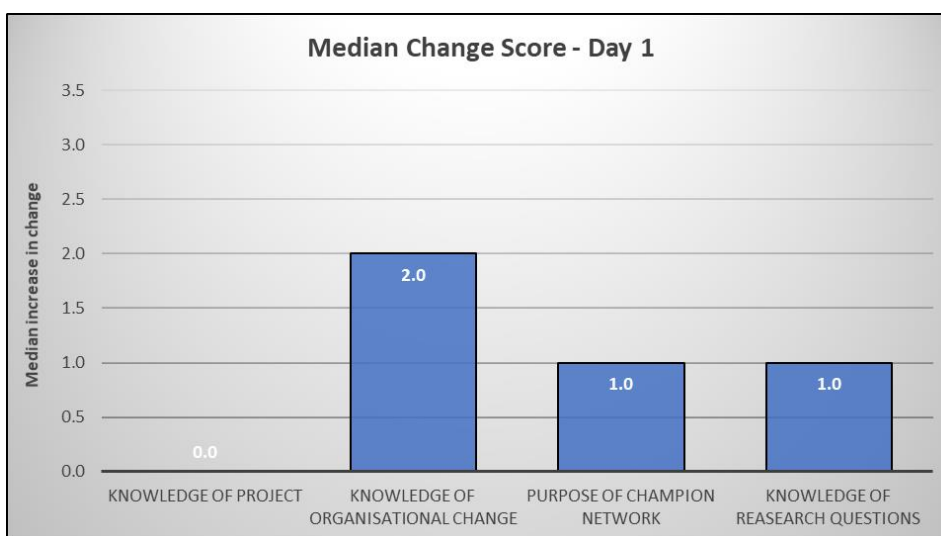
‘I have better understanding of how we can promote key adults and focused on our literature review.’

Qualitative Data Day 6 – The Thinking Brain

The qualitative data is missing from this day due to technology issues which caused the training to be abandoned and later completed virtually. Due to this and the demands of the pandemic on school staff, the response rate for evaluation forms was low.

Evaluation data Phase 3

Quantitative Data Day 1 - Introduction to Connected Communities and Organisational Change



Qualitative Data Day 1 – Introduction to Connected Communities and Organisational Change

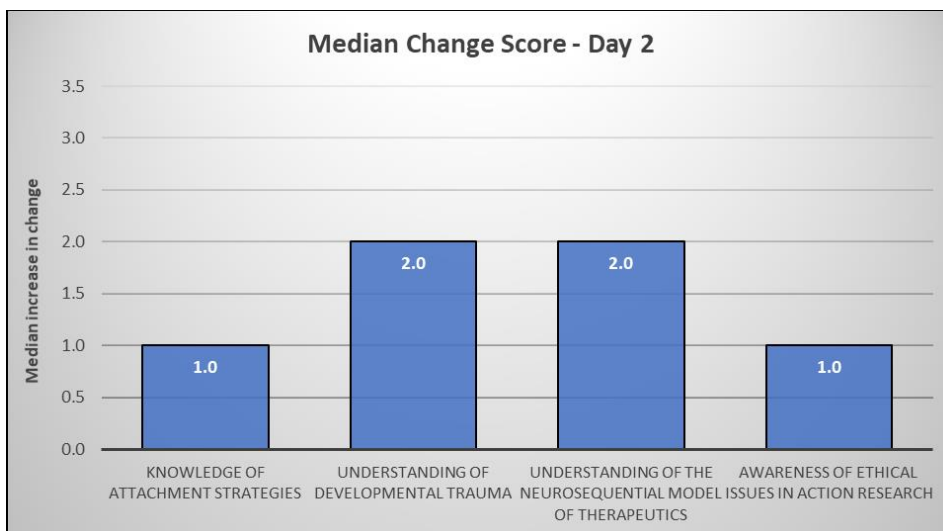
The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

‘Following the training I now have a clear vision of the project and the size of the impact that this will have on my setting. It has also provided some useful resources to support with implementing change within the setting, especially with those potential barriers that we might come up against.’

‘I have a better understanding of the vision and purpose of the project. Following the first day I feel more confident.’

‘Very informative and detailed.’

Quantitative Data Day 2 - Attachment and Developmental Trauma



Qualitative Data Day 2 – Attachment and Developmental Trauma

The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

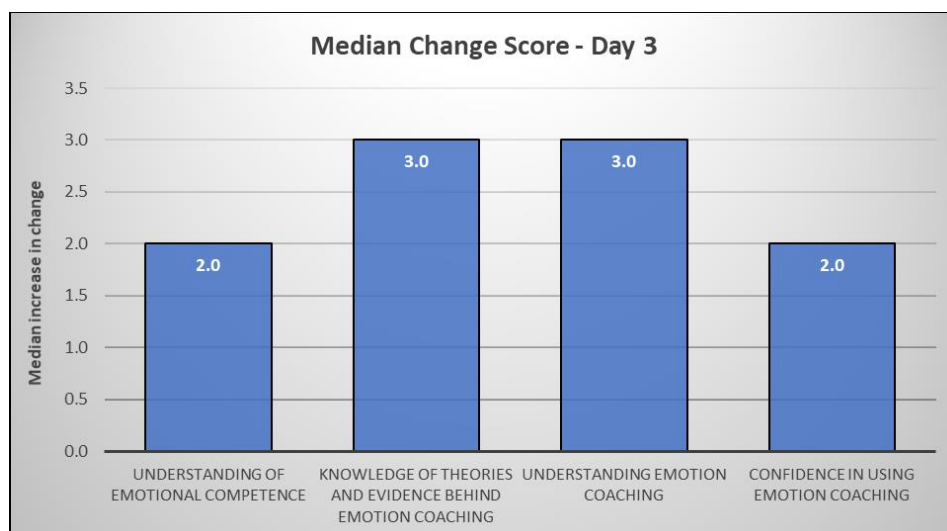
‘I have a deeper understanding of why the child is displaying difficult behaviour and reminding myself that the behaviour is communication.’

‘Such great training again. So informative I have pages of notes which I can use for the training in school. Thank you.’

‘It has given me a good insight on how trauma can be shown through behaviour as well as good understanding of how young traumas can effect brain development.’

‘I've gained a clearer understanding of attachment strategies, but more importantly, how to look at the strategies used at a particular moment and use this knowledge to support a child, or the adults supporting the children. Also, gained ideas in how to communicate this knowledge to adults in the school.’

Quantitative Data Day 3 – Emotion Coaching



Qualitative Data Day 3 – Emotion Coaching

The following is a sample from attendee feedback.

‘As ever such an interesting session and so thought provoking. So much to take in but all so relevant. Very much looking forward to delivering the training to staff.’

‘It was very useful to learn about the theories behind emotion coaching and I can see the benefits of emotion coaching as I use it regularly within the Nurture setting.’

‘I now understand more about how to help children regulate and how over time their thinking can change.’

‘Very informative. Practical advice and solutions.’

Further developments (Academic year 2020-2021)

The Phase 3 cohort have completed three full days of training and begun to plan trauma-responsive action research projects. Planning is in place for the advertisement of Phase 4 to recruit another cohort of schools beginning their training in April 2022. There will also be a Connected Communities Conference to take place virtually on 22nd November 2021. This will involve external speakers and schools from the project celebrating their successes and sharing best practice with other schools from the Local Authority.

5 Learning Outcomes

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 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.

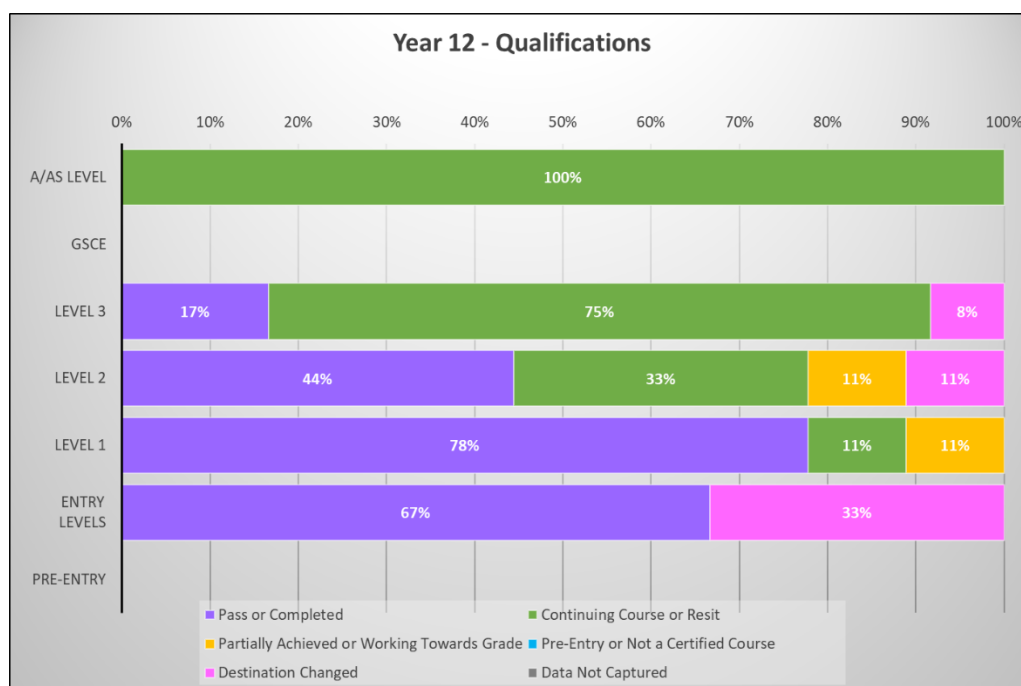
Grades were based on a range of information including centre assessed grades. A much-reduced data set is due to be published by DfE (Department for Education) in March/April 2022.

5.1 Post 16

Year 12

Of the fifty Year 12 students monitored and supported throughout the 2020-21 academic year over a fifth were unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC). They have primarily been doing the 'English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL)' course at various levels. Some have moving on to 'Functional Skills' and one is working towards a GCSE Maths qualification.

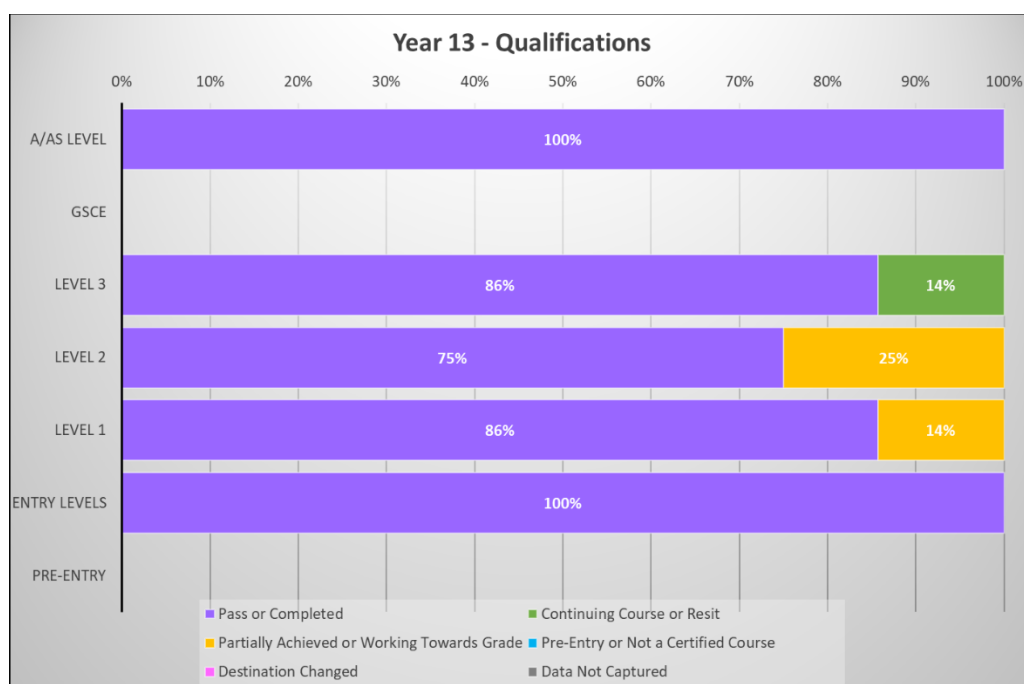
Of the remaining 38 young people, two refused any engagement with education/training and one was on an apprenticeship but had to leave due to health issues. Apprenticeships and employment accounted for another 4 young people. The rest are all on further education and training with providers ranging from Technical Colleges and Sixth Forms to various special school and providers such as NACRO. Some students are working on attaining the key English and Maths qualification with Functional Skills and GCSE courses.



Year 13

Over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year seventy Year 13 pupils were supported and monitored by the virtual school. An even higher proportion than Year 12 were UASC. This group equated to 29% of the whole Year 13 cohort. As with Year 12 the focus were the ESOL and Functional Skills courses, although some were doing certificate and diploma courses in such things as IT and carpentry.

The remaining forty-nine young people included 25% with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These students are mostly doing non certificated courses, with some at special schools, some at Further Education Colleges and four who are NEET either due to illness or awaiting a suitable opportunity. The thirty- six remaining students were spread across a range of provider types and their courses were as diverse as A/AS Level Law to Level 2 Vehicle Maintenance. Five young people were intending to continue study at university with three aiming for an apprenticeship.



6 Inclusion

6.1 Absence

Indicator	Peterborough - CiC (2018-19 data)	England - CiC (2018-19 data)	Statistical Neighbour Average - CiC (2018-19 data)
Percentage of lessons missed due to authorised absence	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%
Percentage of lessons missed due to unauthorised absence	1.2%	1.7%	1.7%
Percentage of lessons missed due to overall absence	5.0%	5.1%	5.0%
Percentage of looked after children who were persistent absentees	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%

Attendance data always runs a year behind the other data releases, the 2019-20 data is not due for release until March/April 2022.

Local, National and Statistical Neighbour figures are all showing a slight upward trend with the overall absence rate up by 0.5 percentage points across the board and persistent absence increasing by 1.0 to 1.5 percentage points

6.2 Exclusions

Indicator	Peterborough - CiC (2018-19 data)	England - CiC (2018-19 data)	Statistical Neighbour Average - CiC (2018-19 data)
Percentage of looked after children with at least one fixed period of exclusion	12.12%	11.38%	11.48%

As part of the attendance data set the Exclusion data is also a year behind the other data sets with the 2019-20 figures due out in March/April 2022.

There has been a very small decrease in exclusion with National down by 0.29 percentage points and Local and Statistical Neighbours down by 0.8 percentage points.

The Virtual School has a duty to work with Head Teachers to try and avoid the permanent exclusion of a child in care and make sure that they have the support in place to thrive and make progress. The Virtual School has been quick in its response to any fixed term exclusions or threat of permanent exclusions so that a joint plan for the child can be implemented. No children in care were permanently excluded in the 2020 – 2021 academic year. For those children and young people who had fixed term exclusions PVS staff attended return to school meetings to support the child and carers and to ensure robust plans were in place to minimise the risk of further instances of exclusion. We receive information on fixed term exclusions from our external attendance service or are advised of these by Designated Teachers, social workers, or carers. In the case of any repeat exclusions, additional PEP meetings are held to check that all necessary support is being given.

6.3 Alternative Provision

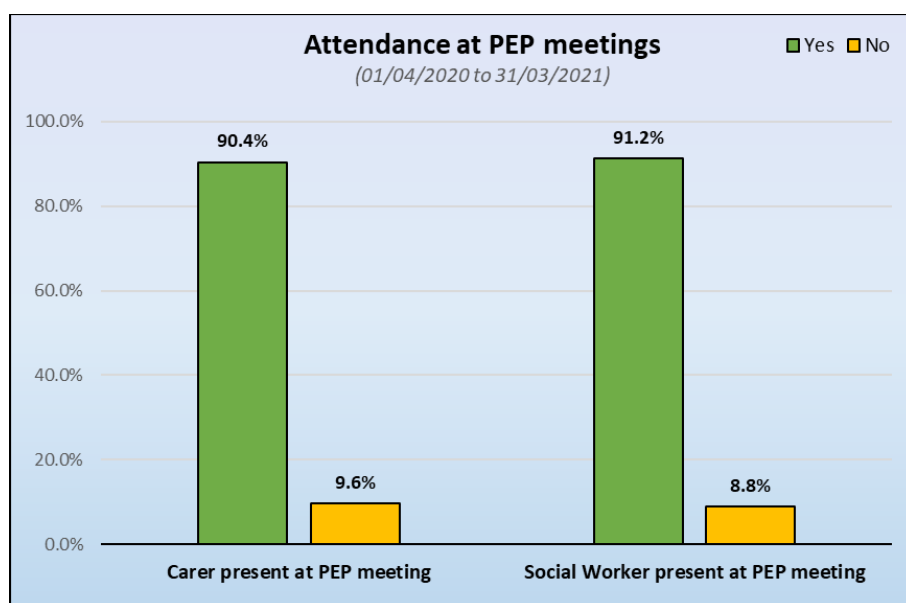
Establishment Type	Number
Number on school roll (<i>preschool to Year 11</i>)	267
Number in independent schools	11
Number in LA Special School in city	12
Number in LA special school out of city	22
Number in PRU / AP in city	2
Number in PRU / AP out of city	1
Number with EHCPs/Statements of SEN	85

6.4 Quality of Provision

% CIC attending school judged to be good or better	Peterborough (2020-21)	England (2019-20)
Year 2	85%	87%
Year 6	72%	82%
Year 11	65%	61%

The lower percentage of children attending a school judged to be good or better in Year 6 is due to those schools converting to academies not being inspected, therefore previous judgements remain. It is expected that conversion to an academy and membership of a multi academy trust will drive improvements. PVS monitors all children, but those in schools judged to be less than good, are subject to closer scrutiny.

7 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)



Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 there were 773 PEP meetings for 254 individual children. PEP compliance is consistently at 100%. PVS supports social workers and Designated Teachers in the management of the PEP process, offering training and a fortnightly PEP clinic. Every PEP is quality assured by PVS staff and those judged to be below an acceptable standard trigger additional support and challenge from the VS team. Our school improvement model does not require VS staff to attend every PEP meeting. VS staff meet at least once a term with the Designated Teachers in their allocated schools and track the progress of all the pupils in the setting. However, VS staff will attend the PEP meetings for all newly into care children or where a child is in crisis and attendance is requested by the school or social worker.

As illustrated above there are occasions when a social worker or care giver is unable to attend due to sickness or other unforeseen circumstances. It is at the discretion of the Designated Teacher and PVS staff whether the meeting takes place.

8 Pupil Premium Plus Grant (Financial Year 2020-2021)

The Pupil Premium plus Grant allocation for Financial Year 2020/2021 was £640,185

This was based on a £2345 per pupil allocation for children who had a period of 24 hours or more in the care of Peterborough City Council.

£411,884 was devolved directly to the educational settings. This amount includes the cost of partnership staff, Attachment Awareness/ Connected Communities training hub and additional Covid Recovery direct pupil support. Payments to schools are made termly upon submission and approval of SMART targets within a quality assured and time compliant PEP. These targets are reviewed at each PEP meeting to hold the school to account and to ensure appropriate interventions are in place to support progress. In exceptional cases, educational settings applied for additional funding to support children requiring intensive short-term interventions tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

The remaining £228, 301 was used to support the work and improvement of the VS.

Allocation	Cost £
Additional tuition	21,064
Letterbox Club (see report below)	9,950
External PEP and Attendance Services	33,641
Staffing – EP and Early Years	144,351
Data support	1,347
Additional BSO hours	6,245
Forest School (see report below)	11,703
TOTAL	228,301

8.1 Letterbox Club

Once again, the Letterbox initiative has been very well received by our Primary aged cohort of children in care, of whom 74 have received seven monthly packages during 2021. Each pack is posted out by our staff to the child's home address, ensuring they get to experience the excitement of a parcel arriving at home for them. This has the added benefit of the child realising that they have a proper place within this world.

We decided, following feedback, that the younger children had greater benefit from these packs, so prioritise those in FS, KS1 and KS2. The main reason behind this is that as children get older and more expert at reading, they also develop stronger preferences, and it becomes more important that they can select their own reading materials, if they are to get the best out of them. Younger children still need guidance in selecting texts and need to experience all the genres available and suitable for them whilst they are still finding out what they really enjoy or gain most from.

Each package includes at least two newly published books (which ensures no duplicate books are sent) items of stationary to inspire writing, puppets or small toys linked to the texts for the younger children and maths games suitable for home play for all ages. This year for the first time we have added a new pack for those children who are older but have lower than expected reading skills, including books of higher maturity but lower readability, which have proved extremely helpful and fun for some of our students with special educational needs. The aim of this initiative is to encourage reading at home and to further interaction with foster carers and wider family members. Developing a language rich home environment is a priority and many children within this cohort have not had experience of this. The project contributes to building that love of literature that we so want for all our children.

For our very youngest children in care, from new babies to pre-schoolers, we have signed up to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, and these children are sent a high-quality picture book each month direct to their home. This initiative is a little trickier as permissions are needed from all adults involved as home address details are kept on a secure system in the USA. Additionally, as new young children come into care, we need to identify them and get them signed up to make the most of this offer, which is completely free to us.

8.2 Forest School Report

At the start of the academic year 2020/21, following feedback from children, PVS Forest School was rebranded as 'Outdoor Learning Adventure' (OLA.) The Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected OLA: it was completely closed in the Spring term in line with Government guidance. During this time, we renovated the site (following a Child Voice exercise) to ensure the site is engaging and inviting for all who attend.

In the Autumn and Summer terms, we were unable to mix children from different 'bubbles' or to allow support staff from other settings to attend. This resulted in us offering OLA sessions on a 1:1 basis to the children who were, at the time, unable to attend their main school on a full-time timetable. OLA sessions were part of their integration programme back into the mainstream classroom by developing their key skills of resilience, problem solving, relationship building and improved self-esteem. The Covid closures also enabled improvements in our onboarding protocols by utilising technology to ensure that children fully understood what OLA was and what it looked like; we introduced a video showing children OLA and then followed this with a video call to the child in their setting so they could meet the staff and ask any questions before their first session. This enabled children to start OLA happily and confidently from the first session.

In the Autumn term 2020, in conjunction with the Primary school where OLA is based, we wrote and implemented rigorous Covid-19 Risk Assessments to ensure the safety of all who attended OLA. During this time, one child attended the setting for 1:1 sessions as part of his school timetable. Developing his prosocial skills to enable him to be school-ready was the focus and by the end of Autumn 2, the child was attending his mainstream school full-time. In the Summer term 2021, OLA provided four weekly 1:1 session for one KS2 child and three weekly 1:1 session for a KS1 child. Both children were unable to attend their main setting full-time and the focus was to develop their emotional regulation and sense of self-worth, along with building their resilience and perseverance skills. Both children demonstrated increased resilience, perseverance and emotional regulation when attending OLA and this enabled them to increase their time spent in education. Undoubtedly, the inability for the children at OLA to mix with each other prevented children developing their team-working and peer-relationship skills, however, for the children attending on a 1:1 basis, this enabled them to have dedicated adult/child time.

8.3 Report of the Specialist Educational Psychologist

Type of involvement

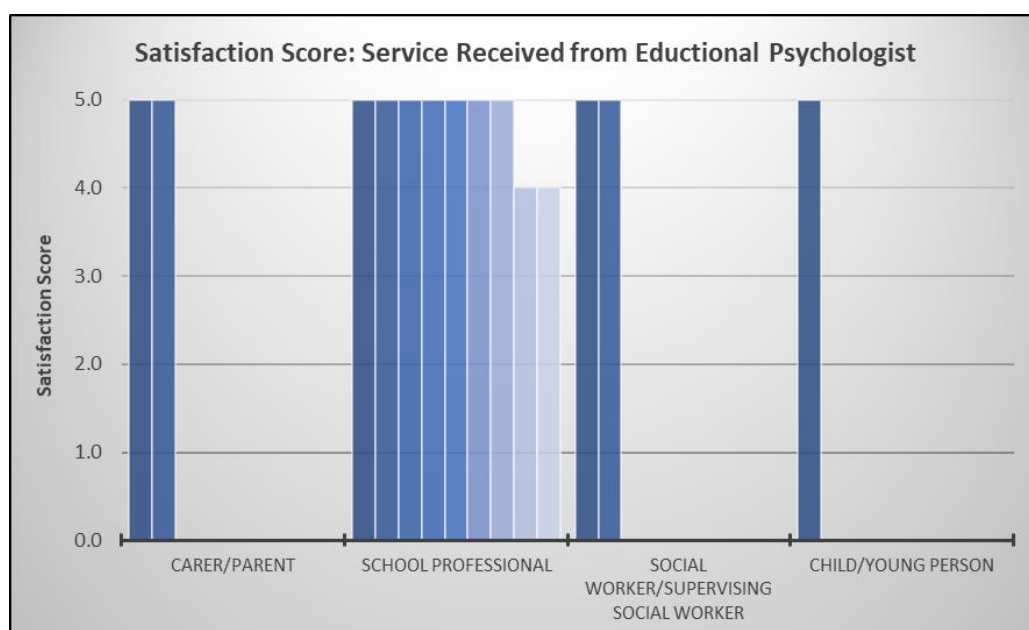
There has been Educational Psychology (EP) involvement for 39 children in care between September 2020 and August 2021.

The table below shows the breakdown of the types of involvement to support children in care between September 2020 and August 2021. Some of these involvements have overlaps (e.g., sustaining placement and consultation).

Type of involvement	Number of children
Assessment to identify needs	12
Consultation with school and foster carers (multiple times for some children)	27
Sustaining placement/risk of placement breakdown	10
Preparation for adulthood	5
Return to school during the pandemic	1
Consultation with social workers	6
Indirect involvement via consultation with Peterborough Virtual School team members	6
Multi-professional meetings (multiple times for some children)	7

Impact Data

The graph below demonstrates the satisfaction scores from children/young people parent/carers and professionals following EP involvement. Due to online working this year, there was a low response rate for evaluations as they were distributed online rather than face to face (n=14)



Of the 14 respondents, 12 rated their satisfaction at 5 (highest score) and 2 respondents rated their satisfaction as 4.

Further information was gathered from the question, 'what helped you?' Using thematic analysis, the following themes were formed from the data:

1. Thorough assessment
2. Understanding the needs of the child
3. Knowledge
4. Practical strategies and resources
5. Supportive relationship
6. Clear plan

The following examples demonstrate the themes above:

1.Thorough assessment

'Having a comprehensive assessment on X to identify whether she does have additional needs, if so, what they are and what level of support she will need to help her progress through her university years and adulthood.' (Social Worker)

2. Understanding the needs of the child

'A brilliant analysis of X's strengths and areas of support required for the future.' (Carer)

3. Knowledge

'Understanding around emotional literacy and how we can support X to support her understanding of showing and recognising emotions.' (SENDCo)

'Having an expert on hand to discuss both general and specific aspects of areas in which I am not trained. Having direct advice helps to both develop my knowledge and support X.' (Designated Teacher)

4. Practical strategies and resources

'Sensible advice given about reasons for behaviour, strategies to use. I always appreciate the advice given by the EP and find it useful.' (Assistant Head)

'Detailed report with substantial strategies to consider to support this student in school. Links to useful resources and ideas of how to deliver.' (Designated Teacher)

5.Supportive relationship

'The EP has been fantastic throughout, engaged with both X and myself well, in a way we both understood and with suggestions of strategies for the future. The EP has summed X up perfectly and we both enjoyed working with her.' (Carer)

'Supported the child but also provided feedback to support my own development in use of testing building my confidence in my own judgments. Prompt professional and effective service supporting named child and provision within school generally' (SENDCo)

'I felt I really got along with her.' (Young Person)

6. Clear plan

'To be able to discuss concerns for the young person and come up with a plan with a review date. I was able to discuss my concerns and together we formed an action plan. The EP also directed us to appropriate training and resources.' (Designated Teacher)

Impact of consultation (n=13)

Concerns before and after consultation are measured using a Likert Scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning least concerned and 5 meaning most concerned). The following table shows the reduction in concerns following an initial consultation:

Reduction	Number of respondents
No change	4
1 point	3
2 points	5
4 points	1

Following initial consultation, 69% (9 out of 13 respondents) noted a reduction in their concerns.

10 Priorities for 2021- 2022

Priority One

To enable children and young people in care to achieve developmental outcomes, readiness for learning and increasingly meet their learning and aspirational goals.

- 1. To ensure the effect of Covid-19 on children/YP's education is minimised.**
- 2. Virtual School will offer a wide range of training opportunities including bespoke packages according to need.**
- 3. Educational Psychology needs assessments will be available for our children on request**
- 4. The achievements of our children with an (Education Health and Care plan will be recorded to reflect progress**

Priority Two

To ensure the voice of the child/young person is heard and acted upon at every opportunity.

- 1. PVS working partnership with Children in Care Council will improve**
- 2. Stakeholders will have access to information regarding the support of CYP (Children and Young People) (Children and Young People) mental health.**
- 3. Post-16 written assessments will be young person centred and accessible.**

Priority Three

To ensure professionals are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support children and young people in care.

- 1. Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers will be empowered to complete a high quality and compliant PEP.**
- 2. Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers will be able to identify their responsibilities across all processes linked to CYP with an Education Health and Care plan.**
- 3. Schools will be attachment aware, and trauma informed in their practice.**

Priority Four

To ensure that children and young people in care have access to high quality and appropriate provision which meets their holistic needs.

- 1. CYP, where appropriate, will be offered an AV1 device to allow their education to continue whilst physical attendance in a school setting is not possible**
- 2. S/W, DT and F/C will know the expectations of PVS to ensure positive transitions between schools.**
- 3. Provision not provided by the CYP main setting results in progress**

Dee Glover, Virtual School Head.

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