

TORBAY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT (2022-23) OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

NOVEMBER 2023



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Foreword by the Chair of the VSGB

I am delighted, as Chair of the VSGB, to write this introduction to the thirteenth annual report of the VSGB. The purpose of the VSGB is to take the lead in ensuring that schools fulfil their responsibilities to Cared For Children and Young People and maximise their attainment and achievement and narrow the gap between our Cared For Children and their peers.

This is going to be the final Annual Report written by the current Headteacher as the VSGB and LA were notified in January 2023 of her intention to retire at Christmas 2023. Although this is the end of an era it also gives us the opportunities to reflect on our work and build on the solid foundations laid over the last thirteen years. This is particularly so in the attachment and trauma informed practice but also in that relentless focus on championing the educational outcomes of our Cared For Children and Young People.

I hope you get from the Annual Report how determined we are to ensure our Cared For Children get the very best experience from their early years providers, schools and post 16 providers to ensure the best outcomes they can achieve. The members of the VSGB are very clear that schools need to ensure that our most vulnerable learners are given every opportunity to succeed. This isn't about equality of opportunity but equality of outcome.

The Virtual School works in a very inclusive way. It also looks at the empirical evidence from research about where pupils learn and achieve best. It has a determination to have our children in the very best schools and to keep them in those schools no matter what.

Fortunately, we have not experienced disruption such as seen since the pandemic, but we are seeing a rise in children being anxious to attend school. This is being seen more in the children and young people with the Extended Duties area of work than our Cared For Children.

In terms of our pupils' achievement this year it is pleasing that we have access to national data through the NCER data base. This gives us a base to compare our outcomes with the national data for Cared For Children at EYFS, KS1, 2 and 4. The report gives further detail in the relevant sections. It is really pleasing to note that we have improved on last year's KS2 results where our Cared For Children's outcomes in Reading were the 12th best out of all Local Authorities. I suspect this year we may be the best.

The Virtual School in Torbay provides a tremendous amount of support to our schools both in and out of area and as a result receives a tremendous amount of support from the schools and very positive regard. We can never underestimate the power of relationships and partnership working. This is fundamental to the work, and ultimately, the success and effectiveness of the Virtual School's work.

I trust that the Annual Report will demonstrate our commitment and passion to our children.

Stuart Heron

Chair - TVSGB

The Virtual School

This is the thirteenth annual report of the Virtual School Governing Body as the VSGB was formed during the academic year 2010/11. The Annual Report details the work of the Virtual School during the academic year and will highlight the educational performance of all of our Cared For Children and Young People and the wider work of the Virtual School.

The Virtual School (VS) was set up in 2010 and at that point consisted of a Head teacher (0.5 FTE) and a full time Advisory Teacher. Over the years through support of the Schools Forum and the Local Authority the staffing in the Virtual School has grown which has contributed to the relentless focus of ensuring our Cared For Children achieve their potential. Through a teacher leaving and one teacher reducing their hours a decision was made to change the range of skills the staff have. This was primarily as a result of our schools ensuring that they provide 1:1 interventions in Maths and English particularly in the secondary age group. As a result, two full time Inclusion and Achievement Officers were created in order to give greater opportunities for all the children. The staffing now comprises of the Head teacher (0.6 FTE), 1 Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer, 1 Secondary Inclusion and Achievement Officer, 1 SENCO with a Maths specialism, 1 Part-Time (0.4FTE) Secondary English Teacher, an Inclusion Officer, a KS4 Transitions Officer, a PEP Co-ordinator, 2 Extended Duties Officers and a 0.6 Admin Officer. At the end of the academic year a consultation was undertaken which saw the Extended Duties Officers move into the Vulnerable Pupils Team. The VSH still had the responsibility for being the strategic lead for this work.

From the 23 March 2020 the team worked from home, and this is continued into the current academic year however during the summer term we saw staff members work in a hybrid way which saw some home and office-based work as well as the regular school visits. The working arrangement of the team is aligned to the best outcome for the children and young people.

The five key responsibilities of the Virtual School are:

1. To make sure there is a system to track and monitor the attainment and progress of Cared For Children.
2. To ensure that all Cared For Children have a robust and effective personal education plan and access to 1:1 support, including personal tuition.
3. To champion the educational needs of Cared For Children across the authority and those placed out of authority.
4. To provide advice and guidance to schools and parents/guardians of post Cared For Children and Young People.
5. To provide strategic leadership through the VSHT to ensure children with a social worker achieve better educational outcomes.

The purpose of the Virtual School Governing Body sees it taking a lead in ensuring that schools fulfil their responsibilities to Cared For Children and maximise their attainment and achievement. The VSGB mirrors the role of school governing bodies in that it provides a strategic view, acts as a critical friend and ensures accountability. It also expects that all its members will be actively committed to the success of the Virtual School.

All of the data about the Virtual School contained in this report will be from the academic year 2022/23 and is solely for Torbay's own Cared For Children.

The Virtual School consists of three groups of Cared For Children (CFC)

- All Torbay CFC who are educated in Torbay schools
- Torbay CFC who are educated in other local authority or independent schools.
- CFC from other authorities and educated in Torbay schools

The main focus of the work of the Virtual School relates to CFC who are of statutory school age but also includes those who are in Early Years settings and those who are post 16.

The school roll at the end of the academic year is shown in the following table:

Age group	Total in Torbay Virtual School (A+B - C)	All CFC in Torbay schools (A)	Torbay CFC in out of area schools (B)	Out of area CFC in Torbay educational provision (C)
Early Years	19	-	-	-
Reception	12	9	5	2
Year 1	15	11	6	2
Year 2	10	4	6	-
Year 3	10	5	5	-
Year 4	15	12	5	2
Year 5	16	10	6	-
Year 6	11	9	2	-
Year 7	15	11	6	2
Year 8	19	11	9	1
Year 9	27	18	11	2
Year 10	31	19	13	1
Year 11	24	10	14	-
Post 16	70	-	-	-
Total of statutory school age	205	129	88	12
GRAND TOTAL	294			

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The number of CFC of statutory school age in the VS at the end of the academic year saw an decrease of eleven from the previous academic year with 205 being in Reception - Y11. Overall, there were twenty fewer young people in the grand total from the previous year.

OFSTED ratings for schools may change within an academic year. Where a school slips into Requires Improvement or Inadequate the VS looks at each individual case and decides whether it is in the child's best interests to maintain their place at that school.

The VS continues to monitor the OFSTED ratings of the schools. At the end of the academic year there were 86% of our CFC in schools which were rated Good or Outstanding. This is an increase of

5.2% on the previous year. There was one child in an Inadequate school in another local authority area. This child has an EHCP and is making progress. Our SENCO attends this child's PEP each term to ensure there is good oversight of the child's educational experiences.

When a school goes into either an Requires Improvement or Inadequate category the VSHT gives a great deal of focus on determining whether the child should stay in the school or move. Many aspects are considered such as the evidence on impact of school moves, the regard the child has for the school and the school has for the child, the progress made, and targets set and a decision is made which does not have a detrimental impact their progress or outcomes. The oversight of the team ensures if the child remains in school or moves to another school careful consideration is made to use PP+ wisely to enhance their educational journey and eventual outcomes.

The VS staff ensure that social workers and the SEN Caseworkers are fully aware that applications for all children but especially Reception and Y7 should only be made to Good or Outstanding schools. Obviously the same is for mid-term transfers but these are discouraged due to the adverse effect on educational attainment.

It should be noted that a two of our local secondary schools have moved from Good to RI in their most recent inspection. As we only have a small number of secondary schools we have continued, if appropriate, to apply for a Y7 place if this is the child's local school and we believe it is in the child's best interests to be at that school. Again, the VS Team will monitor these children closely.

Outcomes for Cared For Children (CFC)

The Department for Education measures the educational outcomes of the children who have been cared for continuously for 12 months. For the performance measures for the academic year ending July 2023 the children whose outcomes are measured are those children who were cared for on 1 April 2022 and remained cared for until 31 March 2023. The progress and attainment of all the children in the Virtual School is important and therefore the data will be captured for the Continuous Care CFC and those who have been cared for outside of 12 months criteria.

The Virtual School measures educational attainment and progress for all Cared for Children. This is beyond the national expectation and allows accurate tracking and intervention. We do not believe the statutory focus on 12 months continuous care CFC is sufficient.

Data is captured termly in the Virtual School. The detail on national Cared For Children outcomes is available but for 2023 but data on absence is from 2022 and exclusions is based on 2021. When the LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) is updated in January more recent data on exclusions and attendance will be available.

Headlines:

1. In Reception there is a downward trend on last year's result, which was a downward trend on the previous two years. Only one child achieved a Good Level of Development - 11.1%. The concern around outcomes for our Early Children has seen the partnership strengthened with the Early Years Team and the reasoning behind the VS's School Readiness Project for those moving into school in September 2023.

2. At Key Stage 1 there was a downward trend again this year. In a small cohort only two of the children Expected Standard in all three areas - Reading, writing and maths. It should be noted that one child achieved Greater Depth in Reading.
3. At Key Stage 2 the outcomes have been exceptionally positive and will be among the best in the country certainly for Reading. There has been an upward trend in all areas. The increase on the previous year in Reading is 36%; the increase in Writing is 31%; there has been a modest rise in Maths of 6% and a 21% rise in all children get at least the Expected Standard in R, W and M.
4. At KS4 there was an upward trend on the previous year. This was expected. There was an increase of 8% on the previous year of those achieving a Grade 5+ in E & M; and rises between 7 and 8% in those achieving a Grade 5+ in either E or M as well as those achieving a Grade 4 in E & M.
5. At KS5 there was an increase in those achieving L2 qualifications. Only a small number took L3 qualifications and this relates to their Y11 achievements.
6. Suspensions - this year's percentage matched the previous year. This is against a back drop of rising suspensions in the school system nationally. There were no permanent exclusions.
7. Attendance - there was an upward trend of 1.5% which built on the previous year's increase of 5.5%.

End of Year Results:

This is the first year since the pandemic normality has resumed with national results for those in Reception, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

As stated earlier the following list detail for those who have been cared for continuously between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 as well as those who have become cared for during that period.

Reception: At the end of the year there were 12 children in this year group. There were nine children in the continuous care cohort with one achieving a Good Level of Development (11.1%). In the group of 3 children who had been cared for, for less than 12 months, all three achieved a Good Level of Development (100%).

Key Stage 1 - Year 1: There were 8 continuous care children in this year group with 15 Torbay CFC in total. The children should be at ARE (age related expectations) at the end of Year 1. The table below shows the number of children on track to achieve at least ARE in Reading, Writing and Maths.

In the continuous care cohort there was one child with an EHCP with Cognition and Learning as the primary need who attends a special school.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
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Less than 12 months CFC	0	0	0
Continuous care CFC	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)

Year 2: There were 6 continuous cared for (CFC) children in this year group but with 10 Torbay CFC in total. The children are expected to be at the Expected Standard by the end of this year. The table below shows the number of children who were on track to achieve the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths.

There were 2 (33%) of the continuous care cohort who reached ARE in all three measures.

There are two children in the continuous care cohort who have an EHCP both with Social, Emotional and Mental Health as the primary need. One child attends a mainstream school the other child is in a special school.

One child in the less than twelve-month cohort was on a part-time programme when the child became cared for. This had been in place for quite a long time. This young person is now in school full-time and is a case study which can be found later in this report.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1	1
Continuous care CFC	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)

Key Stage 2 - Year 3: There were 7 continuous cared for children in this year group but with 10 Torbay CFC in total. The children are expected to be at ARE by the end of this year.

The table shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of the year in Reading, Writing and Maths.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1	0
Continuous care CFC	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	2 (28.5%)

There were 3 children with EHCPs. One with the primary need being a Severe Learning Difficulty who attends a specialist school and two with SEMH as their primary need. Both of these children attend mainstream schools.

Year 4: There were 12 continuous cared for children in this year group but with 15 Torbay CFC in total. A child is expected to achieve at least ARE by the end of this year.

The following table shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of year in Reading, Writing and Maths.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	2	2	2
Continuous care CFC	5 (42%) 1 child @ GD	2 (16.6%)	3 (25%)

In the continuous cared for cohort there are 5 children with an EHCP. One is for Cognition and Learning and the child attends a special school and four for SEMH with three attending a mainstream school and the other a specialist school.

Year 5: There were 14 continuous cared for children in this year group with 16 overall. A child is expected to achieve ARE at the end of this year.

The table below shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of this year.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0	0
Continuous care CFC	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)

There are eight children with EHCPs in this year group. One has the primary need of a Severe Learning Difficulty with the others all having SEMH as their primary need. Of these seven there are three who attend specialist schools the others all attend mainstream school.

One child received extra tuition to prepare for the 11+ examinations in the summer.

Year 6: There were 10 continuous cared for children but with 11 children in total. This is the end of KS2 and the children undertook their SATS in May. A child is expected to achieve Expected Standard in Reading; Writing; Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling; and Maths.

The following table shows those who achieved Expected Standard in their SATS:

	Reading	Writing	Maths	ES in Reading, Writing and Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1 (GD)	1 (GD)	1 (GD)	1 (GD)
Continuous care CFC	9 (90%) 2 @ GD	7 (70%) 1 @ GD	6 (60%) 1 @ GD	6 (60%)

Whilst there is a focus through the PEP on ensuring there are interventions for each child to achieve ARE during Y6 the PRIM (performance review and intervention meeting) process commences. This sees a greater focus on individual children and will see the Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer work with schools to determine who may need an intervention to achieve their potential. This may be undertaken by a school member of staff or the VS Inclusion and Achievement Officer. When the child is placed out of area this will see the Primary CFC Teacher making individual contact with the DT to ensure that interventions are put in place and that the focus is one which meets need.

In the continuous cared for cohort there are four children with EHCPs. All four attend mainstream settings and all four have their primary need as SEMH. Two of these children gained Greater Depth in Reading and one also got Greater Depth in Writing.

Two of the children with EHCP passed the 11+ one gained entry to Churston Ferrers Grammar School the other gained a place in the Selective Stream at The Spires.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

Year 7: There were 13 continuous cared for children but with 15 children in total. Again children need to achieve Age Related Expectations.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0
Continuous care CFC	9 (69.2%)	7 (53.8%)

There are 5 children with EHCPs in the continuous care cohort with 4 of the children in a specialist setting. Of the 5 there one child with a Severe Learning as the primary need. The remaining four have SEMH as their primary need with only one attending a mainstream school.

Year 8: There were 16 continuous cared for children and 19 CFC in total in this year group. The minimum expectation would be ARE. The table below shows the children who have achieved at least ARE.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0
Continuous care CFC	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)

There are 8 children with EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort with seven having SEMH as their primary need. Four of these children are educated in special school settings. The eight child with an EHCP has Cognition and Learning as their primary need and also attends a specialist school.

One child in the less than 12 months group had not been in school for a great deal of time when the child became Cared For. The child had been registered as being Electively Home Educated. This child needed intensive work and it was quickly apparent that a Request for Statutory Assessment was needed.

Year 9: There were 25 continuous cared for children and 27 Torbay CFC in total in this year group. Again the minimum national expectation is ARE by the end of Y9. The table shows the children who achieved at least ARE by the end of the year.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1
Continuous care CFC	6 (24%)	7 (28%)

There are 10 children with an EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort and 1 in the less than 12 months cohort. Six are in specialist schools with three in mainstream schools. All of the children have as their primary need.

It should be noted that some schools are now choosing to commence GCSE courses in Y9. This now means that school will report attainment either as above, on or below ARE or as a GCSE grade. When commencing the GCSE course it is essential that the VS also receives the end of KS4 target to ensure the child is on track.

Key Stage 4 - Year 10:

There were 26 continuous cared for children and 31 Torbay CFC in total in this year group. At the start of the year targets for the end of KS4 were set from each school's Fisher Family Trust (D) data set. This data set uses prior attainment data and contextual factors to predict outcomes that a young person should achieve in line with the top 25% of students in similar contexts. Using this data 12 children should achieve at least a Grade 4 in English and 11 children a Grade 4 in Maths.

The table below shows the attainment at the end of Y10:

	English Grade 4+	Maths Grade 4+
Less than 12 months CFC	1	0
Continuous care CFC	5 (16%)	4 (13%)

Through the PEP process for these children not on track to achieve their predicted grade interventions will be put into place.

There are 14 continuous cared for children with an EHCP. Of these children 5 have an EHCP with Moderate Learning Difficulty as the primary need with 1 have a Severe Learning Difficulty and 8 with SEMH as their primary need. All but four of the fourteen are in specialist settings are in specialist settings.

Year 11/ End of Key Stage 4: There were 23 continuous cared for young people and 24 Torbay young people in total in this year group. In terms of the GCSE results it should be noted that one child who was not cared for at the end of Y11 did count in the GCSE results as they were continuously cared for during the required period and therefore will be counted in the national data. The following table gives details of the end of KS4 results for the continuous care young people.

	5A*-C or Grade 4+ including E&M	5A* - C	EBACC	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in E & M	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in English (Lit or Lang)	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in Maths
Torbay CFC 2023	25% (6)	25% (6)	1 (4.2%)	25% (6)	33.2% (8)	25% (6)
Torbay CFC 2022	13.1% (3)	18.1% (4)	0	13.6% (3)	31.8% (7)	18.1% (4)
Torbay CFC 2021	24.2% (8)	27.2% (9)	3.03% (1)	27.2% (9)	42.4% (14)	30.3% (10)
Torbay CFC 2020	25% (5)	30% (6)	5% (1)	20% (4)	40% (8)	25% (5)
Torbay CFC 2019	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	7.1% (2)	14.3% (4)	32.1% (9)	21.4% (6)
Torbay CFC 2018	33.3% (7)	33.3% (7)	0	38.1% (8)	42.8% (9)	38.1% (8)

Torbay CFC 2017	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	4.5% (1)	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	27% (6)
Torbay CFC 2016	13.3%	13.3%	0%	20%	27%	27%
Torbay CFC 2015	14%	14%	0%	14%	18%	18%
Torbay CFC 2014	0	8%	0%	8%	20%	8%

Based on KS2 SATS results 11 (44%) young people in this cohort should have achieved at least a Grade 4 in English and 11 (44%) in Maths. It is, therefore, disappointing that they didn't achieve in line with the predictions from KS2. This underachievement, however, also needs to be seen in the context of the impact of Stability which looks at placement moves and types of accommodation or school and numbers of social workers which may adversely affect outcomes for our young people. This is a large piece of work which was undertaken two years ago and may need to be revisited.

One child who was predicted at KS2 to gain Grade 6s in English and Maths and was a pupil at a selective school was so poorly that it was decided to be in the child's best interests not to sit the GCSEs. This was not a decision taken lightly but the child's emotional health and future safety had to take priority over taking GCSEs. Another child with high anxiety was well supported by the child's school and through the school's resources and PP+ this young person was provided with 1:1 tuition through Y11 to ameliorate the impact of poor attendance through anxiety. The 1:1 was undertaken in school but ensured that with a bespoke teaching timetable the young person achieved the grades predicted from KS2.

Comparing the data over the previous nine years the outcomes this year are not in our lowest outcomes neither are they the best for the cohort. It is pleasing though to see the upward trend. The impact of two years of disrupted education whilst a factor cannot be used as an excuse but may have impacted on eventual grades. The young people will have been offered the opportunity for intervention on a 1:1 basis and those in mainstream schools the additionality of 'period 6'. This is something the majority of mainstream schools put in place to help accelerate or consolidate learning.

There are 12 children with EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort only three attending a mainstream school.

The main points are that the results were disappointing this year as not all achieved in line with their predicted grades from KS2 but there were no major surprises as the underperformance was being predicted from Y10 and despite interventions, this was not able to be overcome.

All of this year group had Y12 plans in place by the end of their academic year in June and our KS4 Transitions Officer or our SENCO if they had an EHCP attended PEPS in the Spring and Summer Terms in order to support the transition into post 16 provisions.

Key Stage 5 (end of Y13)

The level of courses undertaken by those in Y13 is totally dependent upon outcomes from their Y11 courses. This year there was a rise in the numbers completing a L2 course but a decline in both Y1 and Y3. The Level 1 is a concern and this must be monitored closely and data checked each term.

Attendance

The Virtual School wants all children to have the best possible attendance at their individual schools to enable each and every child to reach their full potential.

There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Good school attendance also shows future employers that a young person is reliable, more likely to achieve well and play a positive role in their community.

Very often, prior to children becoming cared for their attendance at school has been poor although not in all cases.

As of September 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that any student whose attendance falls below 90% will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year they will be classed as Persistently Absent.

The DfE say 'If over 5 academic years a pupil has attendance of 90% the child will miss a half of a school year, that's a lot of lost education.'

The Virtual School promotes good attendance through ensuring fostering families have due diligence to good attendance as well as the children's social worker. Contact is made with children whose attendance has been a concern prior to coming into care to check what issues may have prevented good attendance. From the information received a plan will be written which will have action for all parties, the child, the school, the carer, the Social Worker and the VS. We all expect children to be at school unless the child is seriously unwell.

Each term the VS celebrates excellent attendance with the issuing of a certificate and for those with 100% attendance a book token. There are also attendance awards at our Annual Celebration of Achievement.

Attendance is now collected daily for all children but for those for whom there is a concern this is done on a twice-daily basis. The Virtual School commissioned a service through procurement processes called WelfareCall to obtain the daily attendance of all our children no matter where they go to school and that by commissioning this service it means that our children, no matter where they go to school, have a focus on excellent attendance.

The attendance monitoring is also in place for our KS5 cohort although this is not a daily telephone call but a weekly one as KS5 programmes of study consist of 16 hours across five days unlike those in R-Y11 who have a timetable 5 days a week. Our KS4 Transition Officer monitors the attendance and will act where necessary if attendance drops as we are keen to ensure the young people remain engaged and do not become NEET.

Attendance Key Points

1. After each data drop attendance was RAG rated. The RAG is as follows:

GREEN = 95% and above

AMBER = 91% - 94%

RED = 90% and below.

The Inclusion Officer collects the reasons for an absence in school and will know if it is due to illness or otherwise. Analysis of the absences looks for patterns. The VS has a policy of no holidays in school time for our CFC unless it is a school-based activity and part of the school curriculum.

If a child is rated as a RED the Inclusion Officer will contact all parties in order to formulate a plan around improving the attendance. When a child is rated as AMBER contact will be made with all parties to say the child's attendance rate is a concern and an expectation will be set for improvement.

2. Seven years ago, attendance was a focus area for improvement and since then attendance has improved incrementally until the onset of the pandemic. It then had an upward trend from the dip in 2021 and there is another small increase this year. For the academic year ending in 2023 the overall attendance figure was 91.2%.
3. One area the Virtual School staff need to consider is how to ensure children who are Cared For who are living with parents have good school attendance. This is something which we have encountered during the year and our usual support mechanisms have not had the desired impact. This is an area that needs a coordinated response from the child's school, the VS and the child's SW as well as involving the child in trying to raise their belief in themselves and the value of education.

4. Over the last three years the numbers of Persistent Absentees has increased. In the academic year 2020-21 there were 73 children classified as PA; the following year it was 58 in total of whom 47 were continuous care children. For this academic year there were 38 in total with 35 of those being continuous care children. We are moving in the right direction but slowly. Suspensions and those not on a school roll will impact on this figure.
5. Attendance will continue to be a focus not only for the VS but also foster carers and the child's social worker as children need to be in school to benefit from it.

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Attendance 2023	96%	87.5%	92%
Attendance 2022	94%	87%	90.54%
Attendance 2021	93%	82%	85%
Attendance 2020	95.3%	94%	94.8%
Attendance 2019	97%	90.15%	95%
Attendance 2018	97.5%	94%	95%
Attendance 2017	97.5%	95.1%	96%
Attendance 2016	96.8%	94.7%	95.7%
Attendance 2015	97.99%	93.33%	95.7%
Attendance 2014	92.34%	92.36%	92.35%

Children on Part-time Timetables

During the academic year there was one child on part-time timetables due to behaviour concerns which was already in place when the child became Cared For following being on a Child Protection Plan. The child had a very minimal timetable but our Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer undertook a piece of work to work alongside the child and the parent with whom the child was living with. Good working relationships were formed with the parent and child and the school and the programme increased until the child was back in school full time. This was an excellent piece of work and is a case study later in this report.

There were a small number who had a part-time programme during their transition into a new school. The time period would be no longer than four weeks and for many a two-week transition was more than appropriate. These transitions are closely monitored by the allocated team member and recorded through the PEP process.

All part-time programmes are closely monitored by the Inclusion Officer in order that a timely return to full time education is achieved. If a child has an EHCP the SENCO also has a monitoring duty to ensure the rigour of the programme and will attend all PEPS.

Children not on a School Roll

The following table shows the number of children not on a school roll during this academic year. All of them had an EHCP and SEN were either unable to identify provision or there was a need for a bespoke programme. Unless otherwise stated their programmes were between 20 - 25 hours per week.

Year Group	Last on roll	Plans	Actions	EOTAS Provision
R	Not applicable	Not school ready and was a summer birthday.	It was agreed that it was in the child's best interests to be held back a year and attend nursery until the Summer Term when the child turned five. Child also a priority for the School Readiness Project.	Child continued to attend the nursery provision which had been in place since becoming Cared For.
Y1 EHCP			Was on roll at local primary school when became cared for; then moved out of area; now moved back into area. SEN identified two local schools but one was RI. First school now named on EHCP. Start date	

Y7 EHCP	June 2022	Placed sourced in mainstream school for September 2022. Unable to maintain this so package sources and became EOTAS.	Place sourced in independent school - went on roll January 2023.	Package of tuition incorporating English and Maths alongside social and emotional interventions.
Y8 EHCP	Previously EHE September 2022 in Torbay	<p>Very clear that child needed to be assessed as SEMH needs were very high. Child was Section 20 so Inclusion Officer worked with the family member with PR to submit the RSA.</p> <p>New school applied for and VS very impressed with their trauma informed understanding and approach. School undertook transition plan but it became apparent that specialist setting needed even with the school's TIP in place.</p>	<p>Became cared for in August. Was previously EHE but deemed unsuitable prior to BCF. Application was made for local school</p> <p>Child then moved to Powys in Wales.</p> <p>Child has had at least one more placement move.</p>	<p>Transition programme on engagement with YMCA.</p> <p>Welsh school visited the residential provision in order to form good relationships initially.</p> <p>Home supported with visits to school.</p> <p>Child unable to access school and alternative provision applied for.</p> <p>Residential staff provided informal education experiences as child unable to</p>

			The RSA process is delayed each time a child moves into another LA.	form trusting relationships with education staff.
Y9 EHCP	Not on roll when became Cared For	Number of placement moves and inability to source appropriate school placement.	Every time a child with an EHCP the 15 days of consultation commences which puts delay in the system for the child but clearly it is important to ensure the school setting is the right school setting. Eventually escalation process was followed as the home LA was not working to timescales. A school place was found. Now engaging well with very good attendance.	From placement received SEMH interventions as well as 14 hours of tuition per week. Went on roll of specialist school in October 2022.
Y9 EHCP	On roll of mainstream school in Y8 and then attended alternative provision.	Child was placed out of area and has had a placement move and now lives with a connected carer. There have been a number of moves around the country.	We have been successful in gaining a place at a mainstream school, then following an interim review at Torbay's SEMH provision. Since then there have been at least three placement moves to previous addresses.	Unable to put in tuition as regular moves of accommodation.

Y9 EHCP	Not on a school roll when became cared for	Residential placement plus school place found. Unfortunately a number of placement moves due to notice being served. Consultation period always followed but either school cannot meet need or placement serves notice.	Specialist, independent school is required.	Unable to access tuition despite it being set up.
Y8 EHCP	September 2022	Placement moves have seen delays due to consultation period.	Tuition in place while awaiting a school place	Place commenced in mainstream school in January 2023.
Y10 EHCP		Throughout Y10 placement moves have interrupted the consultation periods.	Mentoring was in place when in the SE of England but unable to source similar in new areas and yp refused any interventions as very unhappy about moving.	
Y11	Became cared for in Summer Term 2023.	Had not been in school for two years. Assessment made as not well enough to access any programme.	Consideration of a RSA.	

Y11	Placed in LA in SE England.	Schools applied for but LA not supporting access for schools of CFC from other LAs due to high demand by USAC	Tuition put in place for ENGLISH and Maths	Functional Skills to be followed in preparation for post 16 work.
Y11 EHCP	YP on an EOTAS package when became cared for in Y11	Package in place had been set up by SEN and was for 25 hours per week.	YP had programme which included English and Maths and vocational studies.	This was deemed an appropriate programme for this yp.

Suspensions

Please note that the Department of Education has changed the terminology to suspension rather than exclusion. There continues to be a focus on finding alternative sanctions rather than suspension. Again, the rigour the VS has with attendance monitoring means that suspension figures are accurate and timely.

The following table gives more detail about the exclusions:

Year Group	Cared for 12m+	In area/Out of area	Number of exclusions	Number of sessions (1 day = 2 sessions)	M/F	EHCP
R	Y	In	1	1	m	n
Y1	Y	In	3	11	m	Yes
Y4	Y	In	1	1	m	Yes
Y5	Y	Out	2	42	m	Yes
Y7a	Y	In	2	14	m	Yes
Y7b	Y	In	1	6	m	No

Y8a	Y	Out	2	12	m	No
Y8b	Y	Out	1	1	m	Yes
Y8c	Y	Out	2	8	m	Yes
Y8d	Y	In	2	4	f	Yes
Y9a	Y	In	1	6	m	No
Y9b	Y	In	5	25	m	Yes
Y9c	Y	Out	5	17	f	Yes
Y9d	Y	In	16	36	m	Yes
Y9e	Y	Out	14	36	m	No
Y9f	Y	Out	1	4	f	No
Y9g	Y	In	4	13	f	No
Y9h	Y	In	1	6	f	Yes
Y9i	Y	Out	2	12	f	No
Y9j	Y	In	5	16	f	Yes
Y9k	Y	In	9	22	m	No
Y10a	Y	In	10	41	f	Yes
Y10b	Y	In	7	23	m	Yes
Y10c	Y	In	1	2	f	No
Y10d	Y	Out	3	32	f	No
Y11a	Y	Out	7	11	m	Yes

Y11b	Y	Out	1	2	m	Yes
Y11c	Y	In	1	3	f	Yes
Y11d	Y	Out	3	8	m	No

There were 29 children and young people subject to suspensions in the continuous care group. It was very disappointing to see a suspension for a Reception child. This saw an immediate response and some trauma informed work carried out at the school. There was no repeat for that child.

Almost all of the suspensions were for persistent disruptive behaviour. There were twelve of the children with an EHCP and six of those children attend a specialist school. It is therefore disappointing to see one of those children be suspended on 16 occasions. There are two in area schools causing us concern. One is a specialist provision and the other a mainstream school both have recently joined a MAT. This is something we hope will settle down as have other schools following a change in leadership.

The year group which is concerning is Y9 as eleven young people had at least one suspension. It should be noted that this year group always tends to see young people testing boundaries and for this year group they experienced two years of disrupted education.

For Child Y9e an intensive piece of work was carried out in order to maintain the school place. The case study below describes the work in detail. This is currently a really successful intervention.

Again for Child Y10a another piece of intensive work has been carried out and we have ensured there was no permanent exclusion for this young person. There is also a case study of this at the end of this section.

The percentage of continuous cared for children suspended this year was 17% using only the CC . This is not comparable with last year's figure as all children were counted in.

It is clear that the training we are doing to support schools to create relational policies is very necessary raining. This of course will only impact on the in area schools.

Case Study - Yr 9e

- **What was the issue?**

- **Relational traumas and losses experienced:-**

- Came into care in 2016, following worries around intrafamilial sexual abuse, domestic abuse in parental relationship and neglect
- Currently has no contact with birth parents, 2 younger siblings who live elsewhere, or with a younger half-sibling who remains with mother
- Part of cohort for whom transition to secondary school was significantly impacted by Covid school shut downs

- Child A has been with the same long-term foster carers since coming into care, and is reported to be very settled at home. School, however, were raising increasing concerns throughout Year 9 that Child A was missing multiple lessons a week; using language which challenges (swearing at, using derogatory terms) towards staff; and found it particularly difficult to allow adults to take the lead, relying more on peer feedback to guide his behaviour. School were responding by issuing an increasing number of internal and external suspensions. There was a worrying narrative within school that Child A did not want relationships with adults in school.

• Our journey so far....

- I met weekly with Child A during the summer term of 2023 as part of my attachment lead work. The focus of our work together has been: allowing him to experience felt safety within the school environment; increase his emotional awareness through access to adult modelling/narration/labelling; building problem-solving skills; and expanding his tolerance of being close with, and at time led by, another adult. To achieve this, we have used a combination of restorative techniques, Theraplay-style activities and general relationships building activities, allowing me to gain insight into Child A's world, advocate for him as needed and carry out restorative work around key incidents.
- Alongside this, I have worked closely with the team within school to explore alternative ways of working with Child A. This has included:
 - Supporting school to access private SALT assessment via funded target. Child A has bilateral hearing loss and wears hearing aids, but it is known that these were not often in a working state or used prior to him coming into care. This, along with the pattern of Child A's behaviours, suggested he may have undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs. The SALT assessment indicated needs severe enough for Child A to fit the profile for a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder.
 - Supporting school to arrange for full EP assessment following outcome of SALT assessment.
 - Arranging additional follow-up meetings with Child A's team, pulling in SENCO and school's SEND liaison officer, to ensure both Child A's trauma and SEND needs are being addressed in the school context.
 - Challenging narrative around Child A's attachment needs by modelling approach and then bringing in key adults within the school into our relationship, so that Child A now has a key adult he can reach out to within school.
 - Providing 'on-call' support and advice to school, including visiting at times of 'crisis' to support Child A and staff.
 - Encouraging continued 1:1 academic support through use of private tutoring, to support Child A to make progress in core subjects in a less overwhelming learning environment.

• What difference has this made?

- Through our work together, Child A has had a positive experience of a relationship with an adult linked to education. At the beginning of our time together, drawing assessments carried out with Child A highlighted that he could not identify any trusted adult within the school context, and did not yet feel safe enough to share his experiences within school. Child A is now often very chatty in our sessions, sharing his thoughts and feelings, and school have fed back that Child A visibly "lightens up" when he see's me for sessions.
- As a result, Child A is beginning to develop trust and feel able to take relational risks in asking for support from others. Despite finding it trickiest to reach out at times of crisis, Child A has also asked for me to be called in on a particularly challenging day so he could share what was happening for him. He is also now exploring seeking support from his key adult.
- School have a more thorough understanding of Child A's trauma and SEND needs, and are working with him in a more informed way as a result. He now has an identified key adult and team around him in school; interventions in place around his speech and language needs; an identified safe space to use when overwhelmed; and a 'working together' plan that both he and staff have bought into.
- Overall, the above work contributed to a significant decline in missed lessons and a reduction in suspensions for Child A towards the end of the summer term of 2023.

• Areas for further action

- Child A has had a tricky start to this academic year, but school continue to be more open to support options and are no longer using external suspensions as a consequence for missed learning. The Virtual School have been invited in to undertake training for his teachers, to extend the understanding of Child A's needs beyond his key team. This will be delivered in the second half of Autumn Term.
- I continue to work closely with Child A's team, including the SENCO, to ensure interventions are in place. A key next area of focus is ensuring Child A's social needs are also effectively met, as he continues to find building and maintaining healthy, reciprocal peer relationships more challenging. We are exploring how to use his interests (e.g. Dungeons and Dragons) to support him with this.
- Regular check-ins continue whilst Child A builds his relationships within school.

• Immediate next steps

- Awaiting outcome of EP assessment to inform of possible need for RSA

Case Study - Storyboard - Y10a (M)

What was the issue?

M experienced significant early trauma and was removed from their birth parents as an infant due to substance misuse and neglect. Concern that there was undiagnosed FASD.

March 22 M came into the care of the LA following a breakdown in relationship with adoptive parents.

M was experiencing heightened behaviours and these were challenging for the adults that were supporting them to manage.

M PEX from school but rescinded and attended an assessment placement at the alternative provision. They had suspended M several times although support had been put in place as well as being educated off site.

Hearing impairment - hearing impairment team working with M.
Struggles with mental health.

Our journey so far....

M had a good relationship with a key worker at their mainstream school, as well as the school counsellor Implementation of the following:

- Increased safety cues with 'meet and greet' as well as regular 'check-ins'
- Set up a team around the child within school - made a visual team template and timetable of which EAA will be available at certain times throughout the day
- Direct support to be continued with school counsellor and key adult
- Interventions put in place to provide education around peer relationships
- Visual timetable to give security and predictability as M may not respond to auditory input alone
- 1:1 supervision to ensure M can manage their learning and provide safety
- Effective communication, ensuring there is mutual respect; language used is simple and free from jargon, positive
- Provide sequential sensory experiences

School became more difficult for Child M and a real desire to return to their mainstream school

- Working with professionals involved / providing support with a transition plan back into mainstream
- Communication with key professionals /school staff provide reflective space and opportunities to share best practice and understanding of response of Child M
- Referral made for a SALT assessment and to gather further evidence for a request for statutory assessment for an EHCP
- Develop a further safety plan with the social worker
- Request school to have discussions, based on the voice of the child, to ensure the transition plan was completed at M's pace
- Provide the right support needed for the child and the carer

Additionally, we held regular meeting between sending school and receiving school as well as carer and adoptive mum.

It has been our aim from initiating the work to offer a transparent approach to development, and share information as progress is made to all involved.

What have we done?

- To support the child and ensure their needs are met through direct work by key adults and indirect work
- Work alongside EP and Speech and Language Therapist
- Work closely with the pastoral practitioner of the school in the provision of a team around M •
Meet and greet
- Regular check-ins from team
- Visual timetables created to provide felt safety
- Safe space created
- Engage outreach worker to provide continued education around peer relationships • Art Therapy
- Ongoing support of foster carer, school staff with strategies. Home/school partnership agreement for consistency of strategies
- Key adult

What difference has this made?

- The child has built trust in their key adults and been on a journey from dependency to interdependency; increasing felt safety by having a bespoke timetable to meet need
- Able to follow direction from school staff
- Increased awareness of feelings and emotions alongside strategies to help them settle to learn and to keep self safe within the community
- School attendance has improved significantly and suspensions have decreased.

Areas for further action

- Develop positive relationships within friendship groups
- Build resilience
- RSA for an EHCP as a matter of urgency
- A small nurturing environment/ small group work to access learning
- M needs to be taught a visual system to help her to understand and regulate her emotions, such as Zones of Regulation <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.htm>
- The findings of the SALT assessment support a referral for an assessment for FASD

Immediate next steps

- There have been inconsistencies with social workers. Ensure that there is a consistent social worker for Child M and develop a positive relationship
- Review PEP targets

Other work:

Key adult recommendation - training in Emotional Logic.

Special Educational Needs

Torbay has a higher percentage of all pupils with SEN in particular those with Education Health Care Plans. This is also reflected in the number of CFC with special educational needs in the Virtual School.

At the end of the academic year there were 77 children, of statutory school age, with EHCP's in the Virtual School. This sees 37.7% of the VS's school population being subject to an EHCP. Of these 77 children and young people 44 of them are in specialist provisions. This immediately raises concerns as the evidence from the Rees Report sees children not in mainstream schools doing less well than their peers in mainstream in terms of reaching age related expectations. This however does not mean they do not make good progress it means they do not reach the level expected for their age group set by the DfE and they are in these provisions because they best meet the child or young person's needs.

It should be noted that there is a reduction of five of children and young people with EHCP's. This has halted the previous five years of increases and may indicate that the right support is being put in place in a timely manner.

Of the 77 young people with an EHCP, 73 are in the continuous care cohort. There were 12 young people in the Y11 cohort with an EHCP with 10 of these being in specialist provisions.

There were 49 children and young people identified as needing SEN support in those of statutory school age.

When combining the number with an EHCP and those at SEN support the data shows that 61.7% of those of statutory school age have special educational needs and are on the VS's SEN register. The largest area with primary need is SEMH which is not a surprise when consideration is made for the journey the child has made in becoming cared for.

The VS has supported schools in 8 Requests for Statutory Assessment during this academic year.

Our SENCO has oversight of all the children and young people with an EHCP and liaises between our SEN Team and Designated Teachers and very often the host school's SENCO. There is a strong working link between the VS SENCO and the named CFC SEN Officer although there is a plan to change this arrangement and share out CFC amongst more of the SEN Casework Officers.

Here is an example of some of the direct work the SENCO undertakes:

What was the issue?

- The young person was struggling to manage in school even with the support of his EHCP. He had managed in KS1 with a personalised programme and the support of a 1:1 but as he moved into KS2 the gap between him and his friends was widening and he struggled to understand why he could not access areas that he had been allowed to in KS1 as freely due to them being used by the current KS1

Our journey so far....

- The school, although trying really hard to manage this young person's needs had realised that he would need specialised provision longer term. At his Annual Review in Y2 they requested Educational Psychologist report and SEN attendance at meetings from Devon - as his EHCP is maintained by Devon. Due to Covid restrictions the Ed Psych could only meet virtually and the young person was unable to engage. SEN did not attend the Annual Review and there was difficulties in getting responses to queries
-

What we have done.

Virtual School liaised with Torbay SEN who agreed to attend another Annual Review and the Head of the Virtual School agreed to use some of the VS allocation for Ed Psych to get a robust assessment. Following this Torbay SEN challenged Devon SEN in finding a suitable school.

The VS supported the carer in arranging visits to various schools, who then met the young person but none could meet need or did not have capacity.

Torbay VS and SEN again challenged Devon in finding a suitable provision

What difference has this made?

The young person has moved to a special school in Plymouth. He is now accessing classroom learning fulltime and has started to make small steps of progress.

He was seen by the fostering agency Educational Psychologist who has recommended a high sensory diet in allowing him to regulate. The VS purchased a bike helmet which he could personalise to encourage this activity - he can now ride a bike independently.

Other recommendations included :-

Weighted blankets/toys - VS are using PP+ to purchase a weighted cat as the young person expressed interest in this and likes the carers cat.

A Trapeze bar - another recommendation was hanging from bars to help regulation. This is also being purchased by the VS using PP+

Carrying weights - school already have resources

Further recommendations will be looked at in future PEPs as it was felt that this could lead to overload if all put in together

Deep pressure rollers, swings, scooter, medicine ball, low frequency massage, emotional literacy

These recommendations have been shared with another school who had a young person who was struggling with emotional regulation

Outcomes at end of Key Stage 2 and 4 for children with SEN

At Key Stage 2 there were 2 children at SEN Support and 4 with Education, Health and Care Plans. Of the children with EHCP 4 of them have Social and Emotional Health as their primary need. The table following gives detail of their performance in the SATS.

	CFC in VS	Reached at least EXS Reading	Reached at least EXS Writing	Reached at least EXS Maths	Reached at least EXS in Reading, Writing and Maths
Number with EHCP	4	4	3	3	3
Number at School Support	2	1	0	0	0

At Key Stage 4 there were twelve young people with an EHCP with four at SEN support.

	Total in Y11	Grade 4+ E & M	Grade 4+ E only	Grade 4+ M only	5+ at Grade 4+
SEN Support	4	0	0	0	9
EHCP	12	0	1	0	0

Only two of the 12 young people with an EHCP were in a mainstream school. The outcomes above had been expected other than for one young person with an EHCP who was too poorly emotionally to take

GCSEs this academic year. This was not a decision taken lightly but one in the best interests of the child just prior to the public examinations commencing.

KS4 Transitions Work and Post 16

This is now an established post in the Virtual School with the post holder being in place for approximately two years.

This post sees a significant amount of time working with young people in Y11 in order to aid their transition into Y12 and ensure that in September of their Y12 their destination remains the same and aligned to their feedback and wishes.

The role is having an impact and good working relationships with the schools, colleges, foster carers and most importantly the young people are evidenced. Laila will attend all Spring and Summer PEPS of the Y11s (unless they have an EHCP when Anna Walker, our SENCO attends) and ensures all is in place and if necessary, equipment needed for the course is sourced through the final Y11 PEP.

WelfareCall collects the attendance figures for our post 16 cohort on a weekly basis and this sees the KS4 Transitions Officer focussing on having oversight of the attendance and address concerns where necessary, enabling her time to be on focused on impact for young people. A large proportion of the postholder's time is spent attending and supporting PEPS.

Work for post 16 also includes ensuring all NEET learners have access to support from Careers South West, or their equivalent, if out of area and training for the Care Experienced Team on PEPS as well as for post 16 providers. There are excellent links between the VS and staff at South Devon College who are our main provider of post 16 education.

The VS also benefitted from a post 16 PP+ pilot funding grant. This had been applied for in the previous academic year but we were unsuccessful. It was a complete surprise when it came through! Our KS4 Transitions Officer worked closely with SDC and the Youth Worker appointed from the Youth Trust. The project commenced with one worker and was slow to get off the ground. In the new year another youth worker was employed. This was very successful as the young people referred by SDC to the youth worker really engaged well and the youth worker was available outside of normal office hours. The only downside to the project was it was limited to those living in Torbay. If this was to be repeated it needs to capture all in this age group no matter where they live.

Here is a case study from the KS4 Transitions Officer:

Case Study

What was the issue?

One of our YP was doing very well with their A Levels and has always intended to study medicine but unfortunately, they received low mocks exam outcomes due to not listening to correct instructions from teachers and the YP needed to structure what teachers are advising, helping to support them.

We have been trying to help them change their work habit and find a better way to revise, which suited the YP. The YP has been playing games and not studying. The YP has said that they are being lazy and need to try and bring their grades back up if they want any chance of going to medical college.

Our journey so far....

We are aiming to help the YP achieve the relevant grades they require to be able to get into medical college.

What have we done?

We have maintained communication with the YP, school and carer throughout the process. We have ensured that regular PEP meetings were held to help support the YP get back on track for the grades required. We have ensured that the YP's voice was heard at the PEP meetings and that we could put a plan in place to help support them and give them the relevant information and guidance to help them achieve the best possible results. Add letter from Jane (VSHT) and contact with Carer.

What difference has this made?

The difference our work has made is that with our support the YP has helped them achieve better results, as they have re sat their tests and had a much better outcome than before. Carer paying for chemistry tuition during the holidays.

Areas for further action

To keep up with communications with the YP, school and carer to maintain open communication channels so if the YP feels they require support again then we can all work together to help them achieve the best to their ability.

Immediate next steps

- To hold a Personal Education Plan to see how the YP is progressing with their A Levels and to address any areas of concern there may be.

Aspirations for our Cared For Young People

The Virtual School is determined that all of our Cared For Young People have the very best opportunity within education to achieve their academic potential.

There are many factors which can impact on outcomes and our young people will have had varied experience of education prior to becoming cared for. This may include poor attendance and parental engagement, and this may stem from the adult's own experience of education. Having stability in their home life is also important once they become cared for and we know that placement stability is a real factor in supporting better educational outcomes. Therefore, we need to encourage a system where all the adults in the young person's life have high aspirations for them. This includes school staff, fostering families, social workers as well as the VS Team. Our job in the VS is to ensure all do their utmost for our young people.

Each young person will have a different starting point in both their care and educational journey. Young people become cared for at all different ages. Many young people who become cared for in their Y10 or 11 do not achieve well in their GCSE examinations at the end of Y11 but this is not the end of their educational journey. There needs to be an acknowledgement that our young people may not achieve outcomes in line with their peers at the usual end points such as the end of KS4 (Y11) but that with a little extra support and time they will achieve them later.

Whilst a number of care experienced young people do access higher education we also need to ensure that we offer a broad range of support to our young people to identify appropriate routes to achieve good outcomes and that university is just one avenue to explore alongside career aspirations. There are many other ways to achieve not only academic outcomes but economic well-being as well and our young people need to know the range of opportunities available to them. This will include apprenticeships and well as employment which offers future opportunity to progress.

To this end, we in the VS, will strive to support our young people to reach their potential by:

- supporting and challenging schools for both individuals and cohorts on underachievement or exclusion
- providing support to fostering families in order for them to be aspirational
- offering a wide range of opportunities such as university taster days for those in KS2 and KS4 and open these to all abilities
- good careers advice which is quality assured if school based or from Careers South West or their equivalent in the area where the young person lives
- offering literacy resources such as Letterbox, Book Buzz and access to the online Encyclopaedia Britannica
- ensuring access to 11+ coaching if appropriate
- offering wider curricular offers such as STEM days and arts based activities
- facilitating engagement with a range of careers based on a young person's interests

- our KS4 Transitions Officer attending Y11 PEPS from the Spring Term in order to gain an understanding of career aspirations and ensure that barriers are identified which may impact on this aspiration.
- responding to underachievement by ensuring extra support such as 1:1 tuition is offered.
- supporting all professionals to understand their role in raising aspirations.

Finally, our young people need to know that they have adults who believe in them and their potential to do well. This will allow the young people to believe in their own potential too and therefore give them the desire to do well. This is one of the most difficult things to achieve if a young person does not believe in their own abilities.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People

There have been 20 UASC in the Virtual School during the year. All 20 are male. There have been 18 who were in Y12 or 13 on arrival. Of these 18 were studying on a course designed for ESOL in a FE college close to where they are living.

There were 2 of statutory school age one in Y10 and one in one in Y11. Both of these boys were in mainstream schools in the local authorities where they were living.

Early Years

During the academic year the Inclusion Officer, who was overseeing all Early Years PEPS has worked closely with the LA's Early Years Team in order to ensure our Cared For Children who attend Early Years settings have an evidenced, high quality experience. This has seen the allocation of an Early Years Advisory Teacher who will quality assure a sample of PEPs each term as well as attending PEPS when necessary or requested by the VS. This then enhances the links the VS has developed by attendance at the Early Years Provider network meetings and gives greater oversight and support to our Cared For Children who attend Early Years settings.

The Head of Service for Early Years also sits on the VS Governing Body.

Post Cared For Work

This area of work is one added to our brief around five years ago. The work is for those children who were previously cared for and moved either to live with a family either with a final adoption order or a Special Guardianship Order. The work is one which sees the VS offer advice and guidance to those holding the Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order.

Here is a case study from one piece of work undertaken this year.

Case Study - PCFC- Child A

CONFIDENTIAL

What was the issue?

Carer A got in touch with virtual school to have a conversation around what support could be given to a Carer caring for a previously cared for child.

Carer explained during this conversation some of the challenges she is facing especially around Child A feeling "different" from other children as she knows she is adopted. Also, she discussed how she felt because of how well Child A was doing academically it was sometimes hard to explain how she worried about other challenges and issues Child A faced especially around her social and emotional wellbeing.

Carer also talked about how she felt unsure of how she was doing raising a CFC child and if there was any services or support groups she could contact to provide some support for her.

Ultimately Carer felt in need of some guidance especially around what to do next to address her concerns and that is ultimately why she felt the need to reach out to the virtual school.

Our journey so far....

After speaking to Carer regarding about what she would find supportive and how to best proceed it was agreed between the virtual school and carer that a EPAC meeting would be arranged to help carer open the narrative with school around her concerns and for her to be able to share some of her concerns.

I as an intermediary contacted school to arrange the EPAC meeting ensuring carer was copied into the request so they had a clear trail of the work being done on their behalf and were involved and supported by the virtual school.

There was some initial hesitation around arranging the meeting but once reassurance had been made that the meeting would be required it was quickly arranged, Carer was contacted by school using the schools messaging platform and an EPAC meeting was put in place.

The EPAC meeting was held and went wonderfully, the school were supportive of the carer and explained some of the social and emotional behaviours were expected due to the age of the child as well discussing some of the positives of Child A with carer.

One of the key points was the discussion around adoption and how Child A was fully aware she was adopted, Carer and School agreed to revisit Child A's Adoption Story work and maybe add to the document to reflect the change in Child A's life up until this point.

What difference has this made?

Carer left the meeting feeling supported and listened too and positive school were understanding of her struggles and challenges.

Carer has left feeling more confident in the education received by Child A at school, more confident the Social and emotional needs will be developed with a greater understanding of the challenges Child A will face.

Immediate next steps

- For a termly EPAC meeting to be put in place hosted by the school to invite the carer.
- For the virtual school to find if there are any support groups for adoptive parents in the area.

PEPS AND PP+

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the child/young person, carefully tracking their progress and supporting them to achieve and be aspirational. All children looked after (CFC) have a statutory care plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority who looks after them. The Personal Education Plan is a legal part of the Care Plan, which is a statutory requirement for CFC from the age of 3 years, if in educational provision, up to the age of 18.

The key personnel who should be involved in every PEP meeting are the child, the social worker, the carer and the school's Designated Teacher or Early Years Lead or FE College lead for CFC.

For children of statutory school age the PEP must be held every term. Each VS team member has oversight of particular age groups or SEN and will attend the PEPs for each child at least once in the year and for those who are struggling at school every PEP until progress is being made. This also includes advising, supporting and challenging on inclusive practice in order to maintain children in their schools.

Each team member also has the responsibility of ensuring all PEPs for their children are completed termly and are of a sufficient enough standard.

The VSHT will read every PEP when targets are submitted and if any issues are noted the PEP is referred back to the relevant Designated Teacher for improvement. DTs are asked to remember that the PEP is the VSHT's window on to the child's educational record and the rich discussions that my team describe must be captured in every PEP.

Since September 2015 the Virtual School has used an electronic PEP for children of statutory school age. This ensures that timescales for PEP completion can be monitored more easily than in previous years. The VSGB sets a target of 90% of PEPs to be completed within timescales. It is pleasing to note that we always exceed this target every term. One area for work is ensuring that all professionals who should attend do attend or if unable send a representative in order for their not just to have education staff present.

The VS staff will liaise with Designated Teachers over academic targets within PEPs. The VS will target children in Y6 and Y11 who are within a 40-mile radius to work intensively towards SATS/GCSE English and maths. Where it is impossible to work directly with a child the specialist teachers will advise/liase over suitable targets and interventions funded through PP+. These children are discussed at our half termly Progress Review Intervention Monitoring (PRIM) meetings and their data is closely monitored.

In 2013 the DfE introduced Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) for children looked after and previously looked after children. In doing this, the DfE acknowledged the enduring impact of trauma and loss in the children's lives and the key role of schools in supporting children who have had a difficult start in life. Pupil Premium Plus currently stands at £2410 per child and will be £2530 the following year. The Local Authority who looks after the child is responsible for distributing the PP+ to schools and academies. The Virtual School Head has responsibility and accountability for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating the PP+ to benefit each child looked after by the LA. Each Virtual Head must develop a policy for the funding of PP+ for the LA. The grant must be managed by the Virtual School Head and used to improve outcomes and 'narrow the gap' as identified in the PEP in consultation with the Designated Teacher in the school.

Pupil Premium Plus continues to be welcomed and embraced by schools especially by the Designated Teachers. It has given weight to the Personal Education Plan meetings as it has given the Designated Teachers a resource to use for interventions. Torbay has a policy on PP+ which describes the process. This is updated annually. Very simply if a target is identified through the PEP process which will enable the child to accelerate progress or engage more meaningfully in education it needs to be evidenced through the PEP as a SMART target, written with costs. This then comes to the VSHT for approval.

An area noted last year through the PEP for improvement was the voice of the child. It must be noted that there are Outstanding PEPS where the voice of the child is truly captured within the PEP process and the VS team are working hard to ensure children either attend their PEP meeting at best or at least complete their views prior to the PEP.

The vast majority of targets in the PEPS are SMART which are clear and progressive.

There continues to be 80% of targets being achieved.

Our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator has had a real focus on improving the quality and standard of all PEPs and has had good impact when working with a Designated Teacher to improve practice. She ensures all new DTS have training on the system as well as doing the same for social workers who are new to Torbay.

PEPs continue to be a discussion item at our half termly DT Forums.

It was identified that completed PEPs were not consistently being added to the child's record on LCS. We decided the pragmatic response to ensure consistency in records being recorded on LCS that our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator would take on this task. Our PEP toolkit has been updated to reflect this.

PP+ funded projects

There are a number of projects and interventions which are supported through PP+ such as The Get Gritty Transition Project. This was designed to increase resilience in the child and effect a smooth transition into Y7. It uses the medium of Outdoor Education in order to set challenges which increase

individual resilience and enhance teamwork. This transition project started in the summer term of 2015 and has proved very successful. It takes place after SATS and not only enables young people to have strategies to help them overcome challenges with a positive mind set but also enhances the relationship of the child with the VS staff. We should never underestimate the power of relationship and the team have found this very beneficial when working with the children in Y8 or 9. There are now five activity days in the summer term after SATS. The staff then closely monitor the group during their first weeks in secondary school. Each child who moves from Y6 to Y7 gets a transition pack which includes a rucksack which has an array of stationery and educational resources to support them in their new school.

As with last year it was possible to run *Get Gritty* and it was a pleasure to see this happening again as a group of young people. Two of the three members of staff who supported it this year were new to *Get Gritty*. All those who took part absolutely loved it. All received a *GG* Transition bag which contains stationery items as well as reading resources which are designed to support their emotional wellbeing through the transition into their new school.

All of the Attachment in Schools Training is paid through PP+. The Attachment work commenced in October 2015 and has developed since then. There is a clear understanding that getting all professionals to understand attachment is crucial in order for all of our young people to gain the very best they can from our schools. We have a clear strategy on ensuring that training is ongoing each year and training is now not only offered to schools but also to Early Years settings as well as colleagues from social care. This appears to be showing good results with positive change happening in schools and a greater understanding that a behaviour policy has to include an understanding of the impact of attachment and trauma on the child and the behaviourist model does not work with a child with significant trauma or attachment needs. It should be noted that all but one school in Torbay has undertaken some form of training in attachment. This would be at least one day of training. It is pleasing to note that 30 schools have sent at least one member of staff on the Seven Day Attachment course with 215 training places being taken up.

It should be noted that all Educational Psychologists (EP) undertook the first tranche of Attachment Training and worked alongside school staff but there are now new EPs in post. The EPs ran a half termly attachment support group which stalled during the covid period. However the VS's Attachment Lead Officer undertook support of individual staff members as necessary in recognition of the impact of work with the children with attachment and trauma. It is planned that the EPs will resume their half termly support group in the next academic year. The other point to note is that EP reports now all have a section on the attachment needs of the child. This gives added weight to the VS's desire and belief in attachment and trauma-based work.

A major focus of training has been on attachment. The staff from Torbay schools who have attended see this as the 'missing link' in that for some children they could not make a behaviourist approach work. For example, not giving a child attention when they demonstrate attention seeking behaviour - this is a behaviourist approach. For a child with an insecure attachment, it is vital to give the child attention otherwise it reinforces their sense of insecurity/anxiety/lack of worth.

By the end of the academic year a further 20 staff in schools had commenced their 7 Day Attachment in Schools course.

It was also decided that we would run a course which supported schools and their SLT to move away from Behaviour Policies to Relational Policies. This commenced in the Spring Term and will be completed by the end of January 2024. There are 12 Torbay schools represented on the course with 19 participants.

All of the teachers in the VS have completed the training as well as the Inclusion Officer. All new staff in the VS will undertake the 7 day attachment training and this may also be enhanced by the Trauma Informed Schools 10 day course on supporting mental health in schools. Attachment CPD is always on offer at the DT Forum and bespoke training for schools can be requested. Wherever possible there is agreement for the training to take place as it may well improve the school experience for our young people.

One member of the team is regularly consulted by social workers around attachment and trauma and strategies for working with the children. As a result of the training and skills this member of the team has gained in Torbay over her first two years as Attendance Officer the role changed to one of Inclusion Support Officer. This also sees the post holder being our Attachment Lead in the VS.

We have identified two areas to be of benefit for our young people. One is the undertaking of SALT assessments and getting these completed in the child's timescales. This has meant we have used PP+ funding with schools requesting a SALT assessment which they then commission. Schools have found these very beneficial, and we will continue to support SALT assessments where necessary. These could be the missing link for some young people.

As our attainment for those at the end of Reception is always poor the other area we identified was a School Readiness Project called LEAPlets. Here are the basics! A lot of time in LEAPlets is spent about thinking about children's bodily regulation and development, because it's the foundation for all other development. We talk a lot about three foundation sensorimotor systems; vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile. These are a bit of a mouthful, but really they describe a child's sense of themselves and their bodies, whether their body is as strong as it could be, how they feel when they're running or jumping, and how smooth and well coordinated their movements are. We don't usually spend much time thinking about development and how a child moves from one stage of development to another - we're really used to this just happening without anyone really having to give it any thought. If a baby is well cared for, not too stressed for too much of the time, and able to spend time on their tummy, rolling and then move onto commando crawling and crawling before they start walking, then things generally do just fall into place! From walking, children start jumping, running, climbing and generally getting good at increasingly complex movements. All of these in turn build a good foundation for fine motor skills - so things like cutlery, holding a pencil or threading beads. When children have missed out on those early touch and movement experiences in their first year of life, it's important to do some work to redress it, and this is the work that we do at LEAPlets. You'll get really good at analyzing how your child is moving and noticing changes if you come to LEAPlets. As well as thinking about movement, we'll also think about a child's emotional development. On a psychological level, we know that being under too much stress can be really damaging to brain

development - babies are born with a brain that has phenomenal potential, but how it actually develops is entirely dependent on the relationships and experiences that they have. We know that when babies and young children consistently well looked after, they can struggle to trust other adults or make good relationship. They can constantly be on the lookout for danger and thinking that the bad things that happened are going to happen again. When they're in this state of mind, they're not working with a part of their brain that will let them learn - they're just trying to survive. We spend a lot of time at LEAPlets thinking about this too, how to help children shift from that state of mind where they're primed for survival, to a state of mind that allows them to stay in the moment of an experience and manage not knowing or not being in charge - to be open to relationships - and to have some space in their mind where they might be able to begin to play or to learn.

All the children who took part in the School Readiness Project made progress. It will be important to monitor this progress through their Reception year. Due to the progress seen in this first year the project will run again next academic year.

It is also important to give concrete examples of the attachment work we undertake and its impact. The following have been produced by the VS staff who undertake attachment/relational work with young people:

Storyboard - Yr 3 pupil
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• **What was the issue?**

- **Relational traumas and losses experienced:-**
 - ❖ House moves - moved home in the summer holiday.
 - ❖ YP has been exposed to drug taking/dealing, criminality, domestic violence, and neglect.
 - ❖ FOC - has supervised contact.
 - ❖ Lives with mother, half sibling and full sibling
- There were elements of emotional harm/neglect.
- Despite an interim care order being issued on 23/2/23, no placement could be found for YP and siblings, so they remain in the home being cared for by MOC, with daily checks twice a day from the Social Care team. YP's presentation at school was such that school felt that there was a risk of harm to others, so a reduced timetable was agreed with VP team before the care order was granted. YP was unable to enter the classroom or have any interaction with the teacher. He was attending school for a few hours in the mornings, but not engaging with learning.

• **Our journey so far....**

- When the YP came into care, I was tasked with challenging his limited attendance and inclusion in school, whilst also listening to the school's real concern about managing YP's presentation and wanting to avoid exclusions.

- I arranged a meeting to look at YP's education provision. Because of the social care situation, this child was still in MOC's care, with social workers visiting daily. The family were aware that any day the children were going to be removed. Consequently, this meeting was tense and MOC displayed big emotion over her children being removed from the home and YP was hyper-vigilant and fearful of professionals and unknown adults.
- At the initial meeting, school and MOC were resistant to increasing YP's time in school. Because his survival strategies depended on him having total control, his response to things he didn't want, was to smash things, physically hurt people and run. So, he was at risk of permanent exclusion.
- The Educational Psychologist who had been unable to work with YP, also expressed concern over trying to force an increase in his time in school, so I spent time improving my relations with school, MOC so that I could work with their concerns instead of imposing a fulltime timetable. We held face to face meetings, and I regularly checked in with the social worker and Designated Teacher for Cared For Children to talk through incidents, to try to avoid exclusion.
- Through working alongside people, we were able to come to an understanding that it was in YP's best interest to attend school on a full timetable, particularly as there were safeguarding concerns around him being in the home.
- We looked at his needs and agreed a bespoke IEP that would move him to a full timetable. The Virtual School and Social Care funded two days at Inspire and I offered to work with YP at the allotment for an afternoon, as my allotment had provided a school plot for local schools to use, which his school visited every week.
- I have supported Thursday afternoons both at the allotment and in school on rainy days. I observed that YP has a connection with nature and was able to lead the other children in observing wildlife species, share knowledge of nutritional foods and the necessity to protect the ecology of our environment. Being in an outdoor learning environment showed YP to be a very bright child, with an extensive vocabulary and World knowledge, so a full timetable of education was crucial for his progression. It has taken time for him to be more open with me, but he has and shared that he felt like his previous teacher hated him. So, every time he tried to go into class, he felt this hate and knew he wasn't wanted. We were able to explore if what he felt was really how the teacher was feeling and that sometimes even if personalities didn't match well, we had to find ways to work with each other. I shared this with the team around him in school and they worked at making sure he had a thorough transition period with his new teacher and classroom. Since joining his new teacher, YP is attending school full time, going into the classroom and with support accessing lessons.

- **What have we done?**

- Listen to the child's belief that the class teacher hates him and understand why he felt under threat when asked to go into the classroom.
- To agree a safe working space, where YP can work assisted by a 1:1, that he has a positive relationship with.
- Put in place therapeutic interventions funded by Social Care and the Virtual School.
- Identifying there is trauma due to DV, substance misuse and family's involvement in criminal activity and whilst he remains in the home, there is a need for him to be emotionally supported by working with trusted adults and monitored daily by the social care team.
- Work closely with the designated teacher, 1:1 and pastoral team to identify a team around the child, to monitor and support progress.
- To secure agreement over afternoon interventions, to gradually move to a full timetable.
- I offered to work directly with YP, accompanying a group of children to work on the school allotment, to add another afternoon to his timetable.
- Working with YP and key adults to prepare for the transition to a new class.
-

• What difference has this made?

- The episodes of property being destroyed and physical responses to other people has lessened.
- When I first met YP, he appeared guarded, hyper-vigilant and suspicious of adults. He didn't feel comfortable making eye contact with me, speaking to me and sought separation. Now I am greeted with a smile, he is willing to work alongside me and talks to me more openly. I have also witnessed YP accepting working with other adults more frequently, although still on his terms.
- With interventions in place, YP is now attending school on a full-time timetable.
- Following the success of the transition preparation, YP is now working in the new class and is positive about the new teacher.
- He is presenting as more open and communicative.

• Areas for further action

- Continued collaboration between home, school, social worker, and Virtual School to ensure slow progress continues.
- The Educational Psychologist will attempt to work with YP now that there is a stable period in his environment and his fear of professionals is not so acute.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Virtual School to provide attachment training to the whole school.
- Deepen new adult relationships, to help YP experience safe, trustworthy adult relationships.
- Next term to prepare plans to reduce interventions to enable YP to access a more academic full timetable.
- For class teacher to attempt to obtain some academic data for YP.

• Immediate next steps

- Secure funding to enable the therapeutic intervention to continue.
- The Educational Psychologist to meet with YP.

What was the issue?

Relational traumas and losses experienced:-

- ❖ More than 10 social worker changes.
- ❖ Has been in care half his life in more than 13 placements.
- ❖ Had a serious head injury in a car accident.
- ❖ YP has been exposed to addiction and neglect.
- ❖ MOC - has supervised contact.
- ❖ FOC - has never had contact.
- ❖ Lives with foster carers, two other foster children.

There are elements of emotional harm and neglect.

YP came into care in 2018, aged 2 years.

Awaiting long term matching for present carers.

Our journey so far....

At the PEP meeting, it became apparent that YP's presentation had escalated to the point that carers and school were struggling to meet their needs.

The Virtual School funded weekly Art Therapy sessions, as an SEMH intervention.

However, things came to a head when on a particularly difficult evening, the carers communicated that they may not be able to continue with the placement. There followed a suspension from school due to the YP hitting a member of staff with a piece of wood and throwing a glass vase in the Headteacher's office.

This period was the same time of year that the YP had had their car accident, so we had discussion around memory of the body and how the trauma of this event may be surfacing.

We held a meeting and the Headteacher expressed concerns over keeping staff, children and YP safe when their presentation was so explosive. A great deal of support had been put into place including a 1:1 funded by the school, whilst waiting for the outcome of an RSA. Before considering actions going forward, I carried out an observation of YP in a structured lesson. I was also able to see how much support the school had put in place and the strong commitment from staff to make the YP feel valued.

The observation showed me that this YP was overwhelmed by the classroom environment and

expectation of the school day. They were unable to: maintain focus for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair for enough time to complete a task, communicate without shouting and interrupting the teacher. In short, they were unable to regulate and thrive in a classroom environment at this time. When allowed outside for a sensory break, I observed that they were more relaxed and freer with their movements - physically moving and digging seemed to calm them and they were able to engage with conversation, follow instruction and cooperate with peers better.

The YP was eager to engage with me and show me what they were doing. They were curious and bright, so I was able to talk about the things they liked and felt comfortable with.

Seeing how different their demeanour was outside gave me the idea of finding an outdoors intervention. I have worked with a company that work with YP in forest, moorland and beach settings to build self-esteem, foster independence and explore emotional and mental health issues. I discussed this provision with school and Carers, who were initially reluctant. They viewed putting in such an intervention as rewarding poor behaviour but agreed to give it a chance. As Monday was identified as a particularly difficult day for the YP and consequently staff, it was agreed that the intervention would take place on a Monday afternoon. I arranged a visit to the school to introduce the practitioner to the YP. The meeting started with the YP on a bean bag, under a blanket, completely closed to talking to us. I slowly coaxed the YP to where we were sitting by talking about all the things that they had in common with the practitioner and when they were asked if they wanted to see the bicycle that the practitioner had cycled to school on a connection was made. By the end of the meeting the YP was on board and excited about trying the sessions.

I had feedback from each session, which was positive. The YP was engaged, cooperating and even shared a book in the forest, something they avoided doing at home and school. However, school and carers were not fully on board with the intervention because they felt it was a treat and the YP was so excitable on Monday mornings. I spent time visiting the carer and talking through how we needed to view the intervention positively keeping the status quo was not helpful to addressing the YP's needs. The YP had a lack of male role models in their lives, so seeing how positive the experience was for the YP and the good relationship they were building with the male practitioner slowly changed the carer's point of view. I spoke to both school and carer and suggested we all try celebrating the excitement the YP was feeling on

Monday mornings and how important it was that staff recognise that the intervention was not a treat but meeting a need.

The carers are now fully on board and supportive of the intervention.

I began working with the YP on Thursday afternoons, looking at emotions, reactions and regulation using music. The carer had mentioned that the YP liked singing and had a ukelele, so I based my sessions around a story that takes an emotional journey and taught the songs on the ukelele.

Because the YP has a very short attention span I also supplemented the music with draw and talk activities and introduced some soft toys and puppets, each one representing an emotion, which the YP responded very well to. Using these characters, I was able to mirror situations that had happened and explore how the YP viewed them and their actions.

Through this work, the YP was able to share the anxiety and fear they sometimes felt in school and their feelings of toxic shame about what they described as 'being bad'. Using the soft toys, I was able to explore what 'being bad' really was - sometimes making

wrong choices/misunderstanding/making mistakes and look at different strategies to manage the strong feelings that arose. From the stories the YP told, I understood that what looked like extreme anger, aggression and disruption came from a place of fear and the absolute need to run from that fear. I was able to share with carers and school what it was like for the YP when adults 'came for him' and he didn't have anywhere safe to run to. School have responded by requesting Virtual School funding to buy a wooden hut that will be turned into a safe space to run to.

Through working alongside the carer and YP's 1:1 to identify the YP's attachment type, we looked at appropriate responses and interventions, that may be beneficial. Together the YP and I designed a sensory box, which I have made. I shared each stage of painting, adding embellishments through photos, which kept the connection between us in between sessions.

At the CFC review, it was found that due to many changes of social worker, none of the therapeutic interventions suggested by the Clinical Psychologist assessment had been followed up. I have worked alongside the current social worker, school and carers to inform a multi-disciplinary assessment to identify how best to support this YP to progress to the best of their ability, thrive and build positive relationships. Throughout the period that we have had the forest and music intervention in place, things have become calmer in school. The YP recently attended their first Celebration of Achievement Awards, which can be loud and busy

and they managed to attend the whole event, which the carers were so surprised and thankful for.

What have we done?

- Listen to and understand what the YP is experiencing when they are dysregulating.
- To support staff and carers to understand how meeting a YP's need is not the same as rewarding bad behaviour.
- Put in place therapeutic interventions funded by the Virtual School.
- Identifying there is trauma due to neglect, multiple rejections, and substance abuse there is a need for YP to be emotionally supported by working with trusted adults in a trauma/attachment informed way.
- Work closely with the designated teacher, 1:1 and pastoral team to identify a team around the child, to monitor and support progress.
- To secure agreement over afternoon interventions.
- Working with key adults to prepare for the transition to a new class.
- Agreed to provide whole school attachment training.

What difference has this made?

- The episodes of property being destroyed and physical responses to other people has lessened.
- The staff working with YP have another point of view to consider regarding presentation.
- Carers are more understanding of how behaviour is communication.
- He is presenting as more open and calmer.
- YP has been given an opportunity to explore safe connections with trusted adults.

Areas for further action

- Continued collaboration between home, school, social worker, and Virtual School to ensure slow progress continues.
- Recommendations from multi-disciplinary assessment to be actioned.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Virtual School to provide attachment training to the whole school.
- Deepen new adult relationships, to help YP experience safe, trustworthy adult relationships.
- For class teacher to attempt to obtain some academic data for YP

Immediate next steps

- Secure funding to enable the therapeutic intervention to continue.
- To integrate YP into the Virtual School Music Group.

Other work:

Through the work the interventions use:

PROTECT:

- ✚ helping the child to feel safe enough to share feelings, thoughts and develop their own capacity for help-seeking with other trusted adults.
- ✚ Help the child to feel understood,
- ✚ Use of PACE.

RELATE:

- ✚ Through PACE enable the child to feel secure to access their learning.

REGULATE:

- ✚ Affect attunement and develop empathy.
- ✚ Change dysregulation with reasoning and communication.

REFLECT:

- ✚ Help the child make sense of what is happening and why it is happening.
- ✚ Address negative self-referencing 'I am bad so people will leave me'.

Storyboard - Yr 8 pupil

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What was the issue?

Relational traumas and losses experienced:-

- House moves - 5 changes of placement since coming into the care of the LA in 2013
- During the period of time leading up to the child being taken into care there was 1 further relationship identified with moc. During this period there were episodes of DV and neglect.
- FOC - left when the young person was approx. 1 years old
- 3 other siblings; separated from two of the siblings, on assessments being completed.

There were elements of emotional and physical harm/neglect.

MOC - had been cared for from the age of 12.

Foster carers are supportive of their child and has been a constant support since 2019. There have been concerns raised by foster carer as to the young person's mental health and presentation. The presentations described by the carer had not been seen at school.

Presentation at home: mental health and anxiety; repetitive speech; processing issues

Presentation at school: happy young person with mix of friends; often will act like the 'class clown'.

Sense of humour.

Our journey so far....

I have worked alongside the Secondary School to understand the young person and how best to support him given the difference of behaviours seen between school and home. The young person had developed a positive relationship with the school counsellor; however, this had ended abruptly

with the school counsellor being away from school and not returning. Professional difference between home and school and concerns raised.

- EP assessment arranged and follow-up meeting to discuss the outcome of the report.
- SEND review meeting.
- SALT assessment completed to have a better understanding of the young person's needs - The report showed difficulties and deficit with receptive and expressive language; unable to read social situations and the ability to mask the difficulties being experienced through the ability to repeat back simple spoken sentences without having to understand them.
- Direct work in trauma and Mental-Health informed practice/Theraplay
- Interventions to allow the child to be in the moment; have elements of surprise in a safe and contained space; develop trust; rich relational experiences.
- 1:1 intervention around Maths. Building on relationship with the tutor and informing tutor of working with the young person in a trauma informed way
- Communication with key professionals /school staff provide reflective space.
- Colleague within the VS has completed a lesson observation and feedback provided to the Designated Teacher and to inform the next PEP / carer.

It has been our aim from initiating the work to offer a transparent approach to development, and share information as progress is made to all involved.

What have we done?

- To support the yp and ensure their needs are met through direct and indirect work
- Interventions that support the young person with their learning
- Identifying there is developmental trauma and through the work being completed start to encourage exercises to support the vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile sensorimotor skills. Developing core strength and awareness of space and body as well as stamina
- Work closely with the designated teacher to inform of continued support needed.
- Meet and greet.
- Regular check-ins

What difference has this made?

- The child has built trust with their tutor and going from dependency to interdependency.
- The child is able to follow direction from school staff and engages well with the direct work.
- Increased awareness of feelings and emotions alongside strategies to help them settle to learn

Areas for further action

- Continued support for the child to become more dependant learner.
- A new counsellor is due to start at the school. The need to develop a trusting relationship with this key adult.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Continued support for staff, as required, as well as carers
- Develop further peer relationships.

Immediate next steps

- Review PEP targets
- Social worker to make a referral to the Cared for Nurse Team re: assessments.

Other work:

Through the work the interventions use:

PROTECT:

- helping the child to feel safe enough to share feelings, thoughts and develop their own capacity for help-seeking with other trusted adults.
- Help the child to feel understood,
- Stay socially engaged and use of PACE.

RELATE:

- Cross the transaction
- Attachment play
- Through PACE enable the child to optimally activate neurochemicals opioids/oxytocin etc., (CARE system)

REGULATE:

- Affect labelling
- Affect attunement
- Change emotion with emotion.

REFLECT:

- Help the child make sense of what is happening and why it is happening
- Talk about 'protective factors'
- Address negative self-referencing 'it's my fault'.

The teachers and inclusion and achievement officers in the VS are responsible for ensuring that the young people who are allocated to them also achieve their academic potential. The teachers are the first line of communication between the Designated Teachers who will have the attainment data and details of interventions. There is a real push for each school to ensure interventions are in place for English and maths in Y11 and reading and maths in Y6. On occasions they will work 1:1 with children where other interventions have not been successful. This will usually see tuition being in place until the final examination in that subject has been taken.

The final account for PP+ (financial year to March 2023) follows:

Pupil Premium Expenditure 2022 - 2023

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
DfE Grant	£586,410	Summer PP+ Targets	£119,472.70
Contribution - Recovery premium	£19638.75	Autumn PP+ Targets	£119340.78

	Spring PP+ Targets	£134,952.78
	Salary costs	£67323
	Direct spend via Business Admin	£152,332.99
	AP Provision for 1 child	£4526.50
	School Project Funding	£8100
TOTAL:	£606,048.75	TOTAL: £606,048.75

It is important to note that PP+ is used to fund three posts in the VS. These three posts are vital to the running of the school. The first is our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator and without this post I believe our PEP completion rate would fall. Alicja Powell is our PEP CO-ordinator and the first person Social Workers and DTs contact for training, advice or trouble shooting support. Our second is the KS4 Transitions Officer. Laila Rehman is the post holder, and this post was created to oversee our post 16 cohort. Finally, our Admin Officer, which is a part-time post, is funded through PP+. Amy Jones is the post holder and undertakes work just like a BSO in a school. So completing orders for resources, keeping a budget sheet of annual spending, taking minutes at the Team Meetings and most vitally acting as the clerk to the Virtual School Governing Body.

Please note PP+ runs in the financial year and Recovery Premium and School Led Tutoring runs through the Academic Year.

For this academic year Recovery Premium totalled £33,527 and School Led Funding £33,111.76. This spend is reported directly to the DfE in September and provides 60% of the cost of tutoring. PP+ is used to provide the top up.

Support Work

As well as our work on attachment the team in the Virtual School act as a champion for each child and will support the child and their school to navigate barriers to learning. All the team members embrace this role and enjoy the opportunity to both support and challenge in order for our children to reach their full potential.

There are also three extra curricular clubs which operate throughout the year.

On a Monday at 4pm - Get Remixed with Louise Kilshaw and Becky Somers

On a Tuesday at 4pm - Get Musical with Fiona Fenton and Katie Cavanna

On a Wednesday at 4pm - Get Bowling with Tracey Powell and Laila Rehman

Extended Duties

As reported in last year's report this grant and extension to the duties of the VS was in place from September 2021. As we were notified in June 2021 of this, we were not able to create roles and the recruit for September. In January 2022 two members of staff commenced this work - Katie Cavanna and Lyndsey Pengelly.

'The Department for Education extended the role of the Virtual School, providing additional funding to better support children and young people with social workers to make educational progress, maintaining a culture of high aspirations and raising standards. The DfE sees this as an opportunity to enhance the partnerships between education settings and local authorities. The expectation is that the Virtual School will work with the wider community to help better understand and address the disadvantages these young people can experience.

The DfE reports that children and young people with a social worker are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school, and between 2 and 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers. This group are also more than 10 times likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils. Attendance in an educational setting is vital for a young person to make educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. Attendance is also a protective factor, offering a safe space and being visible to, as well as having access to, supportive adults and professionals.

There are a number of barriers to engagement and learning for this cohort of students. This may include family barriers, lack of access to advice and guidance, unsuitable education pathways, confidence issues, mental health, disabilities, health conditions, and social expectations. The Covid pandemic has further increased barriers to attendance and engagement. It is likely that some of young people have increased mental health and wellbeing needs, will have been at increased risk whilst having to spend more time at home, will have had routines disrupted, feeling more vulnerable.

The DfE has agreed to continue to fund this role for the academic year of 2022/23.

Aim of Extended Duties

Our aim is to strengthen the partnership between education settings and the Local Authority through collaborative work, identifying and addressing the needs of our children and young people with a social worker to ensure that they have access to support that will ensure they make educational progress. We want to be able to offer advice and support to education providers so that our children and young people can make progress. This should build on the work undertaken by the VS for CFC and highlight the same principles should be in place for children with a SW as for CFC.

We look to build relationships with Headteachers, Governors, Designated Teachers, SENDCOs and Designated Safeguarding Leads, and bring together the Virtual School resource, schools, and Children's Services to focus on promoting educational outcomes for this group of children and young people.

We want to promote educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children with a social worker are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

Action Taken

We have been in post since January 2022. We have had a very busy year thus far and so have listed the highlights from the commencement of our posts until we moved to the Vulnerable Pupils Team.

- Analysing CiN and CP attendance data available to us at the end of each half term and comparing to previous data. We have also manually cross-referenced information harvested from different databases, highlighted anomalies and shared our finding with colleagues in Children's Services so further investigation can be undertaken.
- Building relationships with DSLs, including attending and contributing to DSL forums, liaising with DSLs when colleagues in Children's Services have questions, and using any data available to instigate conversations. We have also investigated further training required and liaised with the Learning Academy to provide this.
- Attended a range of meetings within Children's Services that helped us to better understand how teams work together and how our role might support moving forward. This included a PRP meeting, SEND panel and SEND Team meeting.
- Building relationships with Extended Duties colleagues from other Local Authorities, sharing good practice, resources, planning and outcomes.
- Met with Sarah James of TESS to share information gathered from schools and to better understand how TESS supports schools, then promoting TESS, reminding DSLs to use the service if they buy into it and encouraging others to consider buying into the service.
- Analysing the attendance records at training events and forums, focussing on which schools engage with services, and where we need to work harder to promote relationships between schools and services. We have then advised colleagues on how to improve engagement.
- We have developed work instigated by colleagues in Children's Services, creating a directory of local and national contacts for a range of needs that the young people and their families might have. This has been shared with colleagues and with school DSLs.

- The creation of a handout for schools to adapt and use, with key contacts for organisations their young people and families might need.
- Met with Shaun Evans and the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and LADO Team. One of the IROs has become a link member of staff, meeting with us more regularly to discuss individual pupil attendance and engagement concerns.
- Met with social worker Team Managers to start building links, and we have created an information and Q&A sheet for social workers to refer to when considering a young person's education and the positive impact attendance can have on an individual.
- Met with Lucinda Wills of the Learning Academy to design further training opportunities for DSLs, DTs and school SLT.
- Supported children with a social worker in their transition from Year 6 into Year 7, and building links between schools. We have been able to organise additional school visits, supply some children with resources, and subsidise some places at summer school.
- Promoted and visited HAF and community groups, building relationships with stakeholders and better understand what is available for our children and young people.
- Attended training and seminars to enhance our understanding of adverse childhood experiences, and how our role can best support our children and young people.
- Offered advice to both schools and social workers regarding supporting individual children and young people in our cohort.
- Presented to other service teams within Children's Services about our roles and how we can work collaboratively to raise the profile of education and attendance for our children and young people.
- Taking on an enhanced overview of the education of children and young people with a social worker, working with colleagues in Children's Services to challenge and support schools in raising aspirations, attendance, and engagement with our young people. This is to be done by monitoring attendance, academic outcomes, liaising with schools, IROs and social workers, and attending meetings as appropriate so that we can advise, share resources, or signpost support.
- Updating resources to share with schools and services on a regular basis so that the DSLs, DTs, and school SLT have relevant materials to best support their pupils.
- Work with IROs, attending regular forums and meetings where we can discuss individuals and plan support, also building strong links between IROs and the Virtual School. The IROs will also be invited to attend DSL and DT training and forums if relevant to their role.
- Continue to develop strategies and organising events with colleagues in Children's Services and schools for transition points in education.
- Promoting, attending, and offering support at DSL, DT and SLT forums, ensuring that schools are fully aware of the support available to them.
- Promoting and contributing to training opportunities for DSLs, DTs and SLT through the Learning Academy and the Teaching School Alliance. This is to include attendance forums, attachment training, and training for school governors.
- Completion of both the 7-day Touchbase Attachment Lead qualification and the TISUK Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools (Practitioner Status) so that we are ensuring that we match the skills, knowledge and understanding of the Virtual School Team.
- Explore how we capture the voice of the child/young person and the voice of the families being supported.

- Encourage and explore ways to support school teams to share information amongst themselves and use data to inform and share best practice, including pupil lists, training opportunities, and resources.
- Improving school attendance, and we see ourselves as being part of the support network for both Children's Services and the schools in Torbay in finding ways of responding to this document positively and making those changes for our children and young people.

Cared For Children Celebrations

This academic year the task of organising the CFC Award Ceremony was delivered effectively by the Virtual School and I am delighted to say that this was the first in person event since the pandemic. It ran very much in line with how they had been prior to the pandemic.

Our keynote speaker continued in pattern of having a care experienced adult speak to our young people. This year it was Lemn Sissay. Lemn spoke with passion and sadness about his journey through care and then his journey into becoming an acclaimed author, poet and broadcaster. He read some of his poetry which linked to his care experience. This was very well received by all at this event on 25 November.

Here are the names of the awards:

Acts of Kindness

Attainment

Attendance

Community Champion

Creative Genius

Growth Mindset

Musical Maestro

Overcoming Obstacles

Personal Achievement

Perseverance

Progress Award

Sporting Prowess

Triple A

For each award, bar the Triple A which is primarily aimed at those completing their Y11, there was a primary aged winner and a secondary aged winner. The winners receive a trophy and book and Amazon voucher. All nominated children receive a book voucher and Amazon voucher.

Following the event it was recommended that a group of young people review and then make recommendations for the following year.

Here are Tracey Powell's words which were shared back in May. It was arranged to take 11 young people for pizza during an evening, supported by Sophie de Souza, Participation Officer and Mary Nairn, Disability Team Manager.

We met at a local hotel for Pizza. The young people ranged from 7 years of age - 16. They were delightful and quickly formed new friendships with each other as well as engaging with the adults. They shared their views willingly. One young person did ask if we could get Kevin Hart (Hollywood Actor) to the Awards! I did explain our budget would not allow for the private jet he would need.

The children expressed that they enjoyed the Awards, as they were. They liked the events following the Awards. Two young people shared that they did not like going up on stage, but loved hearing their name being mentioned, as well as the goody bag and certificate they received. One younger member of the group had found the speaker 'boring' but thought he was funny. One asked for more ice-cream.

Overall, they gave us good feedback and would if gave Sophie an opportunity to meet our young people in a very informal setting. Sophie really enjoyed the evening with the young people.

Celebration of Awards has been booked for Friday 20th October 2023 at the RICC

The Under 7s Celebration (Children's Tea Party) did take place on the afternoon of 22 June and was identical to previous events in that it was held in a local hotel but with a different children's entertainer from previous events along with food with party bags on leaving.

Priorities

- To focus on literacy in all age groups
- To focus on English and Maths outcomes at KS4
- Strengthen the work with the Early Years Team in order to improve outcomes in the EYFS and run a further School Readiness Project
- Review impact of first School Readiness Project in July 2023
- To continue the focus of the PRIM (progress, review, intervention meetings) on Y6 and 11 and Y5 and Y10
- To improve progress in primary writing and seek support from high performing schools
- To continue to build on the improvement in the quality of Personal Education Plans to bring consistently high-quality PEPS
- Work in partnership with colleagues in SC and schools to increase the completion and effectiveness of the SDQ through the PEP process
- To develop the child's voice within the VS
- To continue the focus and training on attachment in schools and ensure all relevant staff in schools and the LA have an opportunity to increase their knowledge
- To continue to strengthen the relationship between the VS staff and fostering families in order to ensure all fostering families have high educational aspirations for all our CFC.
- Ensure all fostering families have up to date knowledge of the changes within the curriculum at all key stages, life without levels, progress 8 and attainment 8, as well as understanding

their role in PEPs, PP+ interventions and the support they provide for children placed in their care

- To undertake the training for CFC Governors in schools in Torbay annually
- To continue to monitor suspensions and identify any impact of attachment and trauma informed practice on reducing suspensions
- To review each suspension in terms of the exclusion protocol implemented for all exclusions for children in Torbay schools
- To explore whether speech and language assessments should be prioritised for children and young people as they can have a positive impact for children and young people with attachment needs.
- Post 16 PP+ funding needs to be confirmed and a decision made on how it is used to the benefit of all our post 16 cohort no matter where they live.

Conclusions

A child needs to feel safe and secure in school and this also demonstrates to them their worth. This then optimises their belief in themselves and as the Rees Report states the young person's agency is crucial in achieving better outcomes. Indeed, without their desire to do well, no intervention will ameliorate their disadvantage.

From this report there are clear examples of the impact of our work on individual CFC but also on whole school change. As HT I am incredibly proud of the work of my team and their desire to ensure every child has a positive and successful journey through school into their adult life.

There is call for celebration with the Reading results at KS2. In the previous academic year Torbay was placed 12th out of all Virtual Schools for its Reading outcomes as recorded by the LAIT (local authority interactive tool). This is based on a result of 90% achieving this in July 2023 will see Torbay VS amongst the best, if not the best VS in Reading. A clear indication of our commitment to literacy.

There will always be room for improvement in our attainment and whilst our children may not achieve ARE in normal timescales their progress towards this is demonstrated within their PEPS. Many achieve educational milestones later than their peers and we should remember this but not use it as an excuse for under performance. Many of our Cared For Children have had disrupted experiences of school and whilst some are able to catch up others take longer to complete that journey. We must celebrate the milestones they achieve and also recognise that with good preparation for adult life they will achieve happy and successful lives.

It is clear that the schools in Torbay have a positive partnership and commitment to the Virtual School and I would like to thank Head teachers and Principals of our schools for their continued support.

The impact of the Virtual School's Governing Body can also be seen through their work. I appreciate the support and challenge of the members of the VSGB and the knowledge and skills they bring to our meetings.

It is testament to the positive impact of Virtual Schools that the Department of Education keeps extending its remit.

The Virtual School team consists of highly competent professionals with a passion to ensure our cared for children achieve the very best they can. They demonstrate on a daily basis their knowledge and understanding of the young people and have excellent links with their social care colleagues.

There are good systems in place to track and monitor our children. The VS knows its children and young people very well. It works with the child, with the carer, with the school and demonstrates doing 'with' rather than to. OFSTED wrote in its June 2018 report that effective oversight and scrutiny is conducted by the VS. This was replicated in the ILACS inspection of 2022. In the LGA's Peer Review the VS was acknowledged for the positive impact it has had with the attachment work both within the LA and in its schools.

The Virtual School will make difficult decisions when schools are clearly not the best settings for our children or resist school moves. Only the best is good enough for our children and young people.

The Virtual School offers training to a variety of professionals on educational attainment and inclusion. It also demonstrates the importance of CPD for its own staff by ensuring that team members are able to take advantage of training opportunities identified through appraisal.

The children with SEN have the benefit of oversight by the VS's SENCO as well as the SENCO in their own school. This will need to be reviewed to look at the impact of this.

Individual team members understand they all have a role to play in enabling our young people to succeed and ensure the VS is considered a Good if not Outstanding VS.

We continue to ensure that all Personal Education Plans are rated 'Good' on every occasion and that children are encouraged to participate in a meaningful way in their PEP.













It has been a great privilege to lead the VS through from its inception to what it is now in its thirteenth year. We have had very little staff change in those 13 years. I think that is testament to the aims and objectives of the VS and the way it has been managed. I would like to thank present and past members of the VSGB. I have felt both supported and encouraged to reflect on the outcomes for our cared for children.

I would like to thank each and every member of the VS over the last 13 years for all of the commitment they have shown to the young people and the way they have invested in the team. They have not been trying to be better than others but understand the power of a team which works to everybody's strengths. As a leader you cannot demand respect from your team members or demand excellence in their work. You have to prove that you truly are invested in them and therefore command respect from them. I believe I have created a team that feels valued and respected. A team that feels empowered and invested in. A team that can then use that as a model on how they

work with young people. Relationships matter and without positive relationships it is almost impossible to succeed in our work.

OUTCOMES 2023

Performance indicator	T R E N D	2023 TORBAY cared for children %	2022 Torbay cared for children %	2023 National cared for children %	2023 TORBAY all pupils %	RAG Based Torbay CFC v national CFC
		*				
EYFS % reached GLD	↓	11.1% (1)	33% (2)	41%	63.5%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	46%	65.1%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Writing	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	35%	56.1%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Maths	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	46%	67.9%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading, writing and maths	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	NA	52.5%	R
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading	↑	90% (9)	53.8% (7)	54%	73.4%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Writing	↑	70% (7)	38.4% (5)	47%	68.7%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Maths	↑	60% (6)	53.8% (7)	50%	71.8%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading, Writing and maths	↑	60% (6)	38.4% (5)	36%	57.6%	G
KS4 % gaining a strong pass in both English and maths at Grade 5+	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	A
KS4 % gaining a pass in both English and maths at Grade 4+	↑	25% (6)	13.1% (3)	12%	49%	G
KS4 % gaining a Grade 5+ in English	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining at least a Grade 4 in English	↑	33.2% (8)	26% (6)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining a Grade 5+ in maths	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining at least a Grade 4 in maths	↑	25% (6)	17.4% (4)	NA	Not available	G
Y1 - 11 attendance	↑	92%	90.54%	92.2% (2022)	88.65%	A

% receiving at least one fixed term exclusion (continuous care group)	 	17% (29)	14%	9.8% (2021)	4.7% (902)	
% receiving a permanent exclusion	 	0%	0	0.03% (2021)	0.3% (58)	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L3 qualifications		2.8%	38.4%	Not available	Not available	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L2 qualifications		22.4%	15.4%	Not available	Not available	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L1 qualifications		2.8%	7.7%	Not available	Not available	
Total 18 - 24 year old care leavers participating in Higher Education		requested	Not on LAIT so this means less than 5 yp		Not available	

Appendix 2: Local Authorities with Torbay CFC 2022-23

Blaenau Gwent

London Borough of Richmond

Wakefield

Hampshire

Cornwall

Northamptonshire

Devon

Monmouthshire

Surrey

Somerset

Plymouth

Norfolk

Kent

Angus

Newport (Wales)

West Sussex

Gloucestershire

Liverpool

Lancashire

London Borough of Walthamstow

Bath and North-East Somerset (BANES)

Oxfordshire

Bury

Powys

Cambridgeshire

Staffordshire

Sandwell

Bedfordshire

East Sussex

The PEP Toolkit

High Quality Personal Education Planning (PEP) Guidance for Schools, Settings and Social Workers

Torbay Virtual School Website:

- <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/virtual-school/>
- Supporting the education of cared for children from ages 0 – 18 years

WHAT IS A PEP?

- The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a **statutory** document for Cared for Children (CFC).

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- The PEP is an **evolving record** of what needs to happen for Cared for Children to enable them to make accelerated **progress** and fulfil their full **potential**. In Torbay, the PEP for CFC in Early Years provision to Year 13 is completed via the Torbay electronic PEP (e-PEP) system. This is hosted by e-Gov Digital and can be accessed by following the link www.egov.uk.com. They document the education journey for children cared for by the LA.
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- The e-PEP should act as a mechanism to hold all stakeholders to account for the aspirational educational outcome for Cared for Children through targeted planning.
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- The e-PEP ensures that the key people in relation to the education of a cared for child meet, discuss, plan and regularly review:
 - Achievements, progress, and strengths
 - Needs and barriers to learning.
 - Appropriate and aspirational outcomes
 - Provision and interventions to meet the outcomes.
 - Additional funding that may be needed through Pupil Premium Plus (if eligible)

1.

For queries regarding e-PEP please contact:

tvb@torbay.gov.uk

PEP Coordinator Alicja Powell – alicja.powell@torbay.gov.uk

Telephone: 01803 208574 Mobile 07823847691

PEP RESPONSIBILITIES

PEP Responsibilities

- **Partnership between the social worker, the foster carer and the designated teacher is crucial to the pupil thriving and achieving. The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority (Corporate Parents) and the school.**

- **The Social Worker** is responsible for the Care Plan, made before the pupil becomes cared for; the PEP is legally an integral part of this plan. The social worker needs to ensure that the designated teacher is informed in advance of other meetings about the pupil, particularly CFC Reviews/Pathway Plan which are led by the **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**, however the school should not be expected to attend all these meetings.

- - The social worker initiates the PEP within 10 days of a child becoming cared for or moving to a new school. A meeting is arranged accordingly. It should be noted that a version of it should have been developed and available for the first statutory review meeting of the care plan (28 days after entry to care or accommodation).

- - If for any reason the pupil is not in educational provision, the social worker should still call a PEP meeting. A member of the Virtual School (VS) team will take the role of the DT.

- **The Designated Teacher (DT)** has a statutory role and leads on how the PEP is used to monitor and support the pupil's progress towards education targets. They should see the PEP as a useful and living document and be familiar with the statutory guidance on their role. See DfE Guidance for Designated Teacher for Cared For Children and Previously Cared for Children

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

- - The DT, particularly if they are part of the Senior Leadership team, will be the most effective person to lead the PEP

- process and have an overview of pupil premium spending. In an Early years setting, this may be a designated person.
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- • The DT should arrange and chair all PEP meetings after the first. If the DT delegates the PEP process, the PEP meeting should be attended and written up by a qualified educational professional reporting to the DT. It should be **quality assured and approved by the DT**. The person leading the PEP should have DT training with the VS.
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- • All PEPs are also statutorily required to be **quality assured by a senior member of the Virtual School**. *Criteria and Guidance for Quality Assurance of PEPS*.
-
- • The DT is required to report at least once a year to their **Governing Body (Voluntary Committee)** on the progress of Cared for Children. This includes reporting on their own training, any planning or process issues arising from the PEP and on the impact of the pupil premium on the student's progress.
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- • Schools and settings have a responsibility to ensure that they pass on information to each other when students move. It is an expectation that by the PEP meeting, the receiving school will be in possession of the pupil's file.
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- • DTs should endeavour to ensure that those responsible for the co-ordination of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) can provide reports or attend the meetings of those in year 7 upwards.

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KEY DATES FOR PEP COMPLETION 2022 - 2023

THE PEP GUIDANCE

Before the Meeting

1. Everyone has confirmed attendance.
2. Social Worker has completed Section A and marked completed on the PEP.
3. Pupil voice collected, DT and pupil have had discussion about the meeting e.g., who will be there, possible outcomes.
4. Attendance, progress, and attainment data is to hand and has been completed on the e-PEP. Information can be gathered from teachers.
5. **Other key documents** e.g., recent reports, attendance, inclusion support plans, SEN documentation, provision mapping/individual tracking documents are available as needed.
6. SEN and other relevant documentation can be attached to the e-PEP.

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The Meeting

Welcome and introductions.

Decide who will chair (the DT), take notes, and agree the timescale for the length of the meeting. Complete an attendance sheet with contact details if necessary.

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Social Worker provides an overview.

How is the child's wellbeing? Have any issues been raised about the home or school? Are there any concerns to be addressed?

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Educational achievements and aspirations

Start with the pupil voice and carer voice – What is going well? What are the challenges? What are the needs and aspirations of the pupil and carers and/or parents? School view – what is going well? Where is support offered and/or needed?

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Targets and actions

Review targets from previous PEP – Have they been achieved? If not, provide feedback on why this might be. Agree targets based on the previous conversation. Targets should be **specific to the pupil** and expressed from a personal perspective, not a service one. They should support **high aspirations** and set **high expectations** and build on what is working well and address what is not working well. Make targets SMART with a clear purpose. Identify actions that will support the achievement of the targets (interventions, provision etc)

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Next meeting

Set the date and time.

Think about the best time for the meeting – do not take pupils out of lessons unless necessary and talk to them about how best to secure their input. Attendance at the meeting is a decision that should be made by those people who best know them and their wishes. There is no 'must' and it should be 'as appropriate.'

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- The PEP should record **actions and responsibilities**. The PEP process is a **cycle of consultation, planning and review** designed to ensure that the corporate parent is collectively working to ensure that the pupil can maximise their potential. The process should:

- Be informed by the best information available.
- Contribute to stability for the pupil.
- Signal additional and/or special needs.
- Establish short term clear goals and prepare for the next stage of learning and provision.
- Record progress and achievement
- Ensure access to services and support.
- Make best value use of resources such as the pupil premium plus and demonstrate the impact on progress.

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- **Pupil Voice**

- A key feature of the PEP process is the participation of the pupil. Their voice should be at the centre of the discussion and e-PEP makes provision to record this. Where the pupil is unwilling to join the meeting, the record of this prior discussion should be presented. If the pupil does not wish to share their view, this should be recorded.
- EYFS Voice of the Child can be captured on the e-PEP system. Familiarise yourself with this so that you can translate into language suitable for the child. It is interactive and they find it a fun way to share their views.

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- **How to write good outcomes**

- Targets should be **specific to the pupil** and expressed from a personal perspective, not a service one.
- Targets are not provision – provision is what must be provided to meet a pupil’s needs and enable outcomes to be achieved.
- Targets should support **high aspirations** and set **high expectations**. They should build on what is working well and address what is not working well.

- Make targets **SMART** with a clear purpose.

- **Effective interventions and Additional Provision**

- **The Virtual School** ensure they keep up to date with current research and practice on the most effective interventions to close the gap. They call on national and local research to inform advice to schools, as well as discussions with the pupils and young people themselves. The VS can advise schools on a range of additional provisions that are available to support the outcomes of Cared for Children.

- **Measuring the impact of the pupil premium**

- The impact of all interventions needs to be evaluated. The focus should be on accelerated progress/closing the gap rather than maintaining current progress. Reviewing the previous targets is an important part of the PEP meeting.

SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Once a pupil (over 5 years of age) becomes cared for the school receive a **daily telephone call** from **Welfare Call** to check on attendance and reasons for absence. Any absence should be checked daily by the school and the DT should inform the social worker immediately of any safeguarding concerns.

- Attendance must be accurately recorded on e-PEP and if the pupil is at risk of persistent absence a PEP should be arranged urgently.

- If there has been recent fixed term suspension the reasons and subsequent actions must be discussed and recorded in detail. Exclusion of a cared for child is regarded as a serious matter. Please see our Exclusion policy. Holidays are not authorised during term time. Absence during term time other than illness/medical must be agreed by the Virtual School Head and Fostering Head of Service.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **Behaviour we may find challenging, can be an indication of unmet needs. The VS should be contacted at the earliest signs of behaviour difficulties in order that they can work with the school on early intervention solutions. The VS has links with specialist providers and can direct schools to support. Schools should try to identify**

whether there are contributory factors and intervene early to reduce the need for a subsequent suspension or exclusion.

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- Where behaviour is causing greater concern, an emergency PEP meeting is an appropriate forum for a multi-agency assessment discussion. The meeting should involve the Virtual School and should be informed by reports from relevant professionals such as Educational Psychologist, CAMHs consultant, or school SENCO.
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- The PEP should give high priority to strategies to support positive behaviour for learning.
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- The VS promotes Attachment and Trauma Aware practice and strategies, Trauma Responsive Education as well a Relational Practice.
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- The PEP document is a recording of the child’s education experience and will be added to their ‘life story’. When recording the meeting and setting targets, it is important that we are mindful of using ‘language that cares’.
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CARED FOR CHILDREN AND BEHAVIOUR WE FIND CHALLENGING

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Behaviour can be a form of communication about a child's unmet needs in their early years

Ensure you try to understand the behaviour in order to plan the right intervention and support

Know the story

They are wired to mistrust.... Establish, maintain and repair relationships

Positive rich relational experiences are key. Create opportunities for this.

Build felt safety

We cannot change children and young people, only our reaction to them: but what we do may well create the possibility of them doing things differently

Respond to the pupil's behaviour in a different way

Attuned connection before correction

Attachment and Trauma Awareness – Recommended reading list

Bomber, L., (2016) *Attachment Aware School Series: Bridging the gap for troubled pupils*, Worth Publishing

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- **Bomber, L., (2007)** *Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools*, Worth Publishing
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- **Bomber, L., (2011)** *What about me?: Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties Make it Through the School Day*, Worth Publishing
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- **Bomber, L., Hughes, D., (2013)** *Settling to Learn: Settling Troubled Pupils to Learn: Why Relationships Matter in School*, Worth Publishing
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- **Cameron, C., Connelly, G., and Jackson, S., (2015)** *Educating Children and Young People in Care: Learning placements and caring schools*, JKP
-
- **Cozolino, L., (2013)** *The Social Neuroscience of Education: Optimizing Attachment & Learning in the Classroom*, Norton
-
- **Forbes, H., Post, B., (2006)** *Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control: A Love-Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviours*, Volume 1, bci
-
- **Geddes, H., (2006)** *Attachment in the Classroom: The links between children's early experience, emotional well-being and performance in school*, Worth Publishing
- **Riley, P., (2010)** *Attachment Theory and the Teacher-Student Relationship: A Practical Guide for Teachers, Teacher Educators and School Leaders*, Routledge
-
- **Siegel, D., Payne Bryson, T., (2015)** *No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm to Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*, Scribe
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- **Street, K., (2014)** *School as a Secure Base: How peaceful teachers can create peaceful schools*, Worth Publishing
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KS5 PEPS

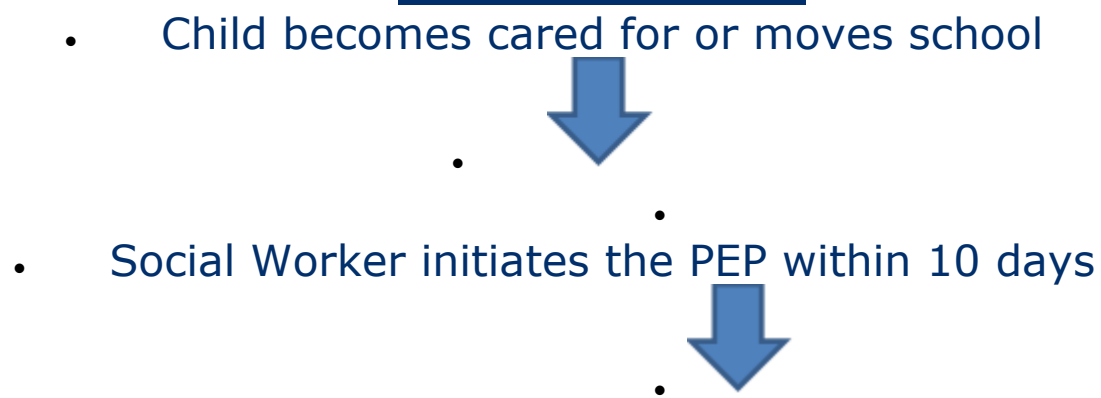
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- Key Stage 5 peps are currently held twice a year, in the Autumn Term and in the Summer Term. Any young person becoming looked after should have a pep within 10 days to inform the Pathway plan.
- **The Autumn Term PEP** (or first PEP) should cover:
 - That the young person has access to a bursary and understands when they will receive it.
 - That the course meets their long-term plans, or it is not too late for them to change if they need to.
 - They know the designated teacher and key support staff, safe spaces and how to access help.
- **Spring Term PEP**
 - The purpose of the second PEP is to ensure they are on target to reach their end of year qualification(s) and to clarify the plans for the following year.
 - A third PEP can be called by any professional supporting the young person, including school, social worker, Virtual School etc. if there are any areas of concern. This may include attendance, punctuality, or behaviour – this allows support to be put in place for the young person.
 - Key Stage 5 PEPs are accessed on the e-PEP system. The link is: www.egov.uk.com
 - All young people should be encouraged to complete the student's views regardless of whether they are in education, employment, training, or Not in Education, Employment or Training. This allows the student voice to be captured.
 - Pupil Premium plus ceases at the end of year 11, the bursary is used for transport, equipment etc.
 - For any queries regarding Key Stage 5 PEPs
 - Laila Rehman – 07776620124 or email laila.rehman@torbay.gov.uk
 - Anna Walker – 07775 014777 or email anna.walker@torbay.gov.uk
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EARLY YEARS PEPS

- Early years PEPs are currently held three times a year, in the Autumn Term, Spring Term and in the Summer Term. Any young person becoming cared for should have a PEP within 10 days to inform the care plan.
- The responsibility for holding the PEP is the same as statutory age children. For a child new to care or changing educational provision, the Social Worker is responsible for organising and chairing the PEP meeting. For all further PEP meetings, the Designated Teacher is responsible for organising, chairing the meeting and for the completion of the PEP on the e-PEP system, withing 10 days of the meeting happening. Unlike statutory school aged children, pre-school children do not have a PP+ allowance to request funding from. They are entitled to EYPP which will be paid direct to the provision from the LA the provision is under. Providers will receive a proportion of the EYPP based on the hours the young person is accessing. However, if the PEPs take place and are completed there is funding of £50 per child, linked to the targets, per term, at the Virtual School's discretion.

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PEP FLOWCHART



- - Social Worker completed Section A and marks completed
 - Designated Teacher pre-populates Section B



- Designated Teacher and Social Worker liaise to capture Pupil Voice on the PEP



- - The PEP meeting occurs and is recorded on the PEP



- - Within 1 week of the meeting, the Designated Teacher and Social Worker ensure the PEP is complete and **their sections are marked completed**



- - The Virtual School approve and pay PP+ funds, quality assure, sign off and record PEP.

Appendix 4: Glossary

ARE - Age related expectations

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (Condition)

CC - Continuous Care

CFC - Cared For Children

CPD - Continuing Professional Development

DT - Designated Teacher

EBACC - English Baccalaureate

EHCP - Education, Health and Care Plan

EOTAS - Education Other Than At School

EP - Educational Psychologist

ePEP - Electronic Personal Education Plan

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage

FE - Further Education

FTX - Fixed Term Exclusion now known as suspension

GLD - Good Level of Development

GSCE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

HEI - Higher Education Institution

KS - Key Stage

LAIT - Local Authority Interactive Tool

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training

PA - Persistent Absence

PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

PP+ - Pupil Premium Plus

PRIM - Progress review intervention monitoring

PX - Permanent Exclusion

RI - Requires Improvement (OFSTED category)

RSA - Request for Statutory Assessment

RWM - Reading, writing, maths

SALT - Speech and Language Therapist

SATS - Standardised Assessment Tests

SEMH - Social and Emotional Health

SEN - Special Educational Need

SENCO - Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SGO - Special Guardianship Order

SMART - Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant, time bound

STEM - Science, technology, engineering and maths

TA - Teaching Assistant

THRIVE - A therapeutic approach to help support children with their emotional and social development

UASC - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

VS - Virtual School

VSHT - Virtual School Head Teacher

YP - Young person