Sefton Virtual School

Annual Report 2019-20

(revised period: April 2019-September 2020)

Produced April 2021

Contents

Introduction

Sefton Virtual School exists as a collaborative endeavour to ensure that the education of children in care is a key priority for all professionals in line with the 'One Council' focus on improving the lives of the most vulnerable. The aim of the Virtual School is to meet Sefton's Pledge to Children in Care (Appendix I) to ensure that each child is supported to fulfil his or her potential in school. The benefits of a stable school or educational placement for children who are in the care of the local authority are widely documented as critical to improving life outcomes.

Scope of Report

Normally, this report comprises an overview of available data that informs the Corporate Parenting Board in monitoring the performance of Looked After Children and draws on several sources, including data from published statistics (N.B. DfE Statistical First Release not available for 2020) and internal data collection and tracking by Sefton Virtual School and Sefton Business Intelligence Team using NCER Nexus. This report is provided for the scrutiny of the Governing Body of the Virtual School. Previous reports have run from April to March each year, in line with the dates of the Statistical First Release. This, however, has meant that the report is not synchronised with the school year. As pupils are tracked throughout the academic year, future reporting will take place in September and cover the previous academic year. This report, therefore, will cover the period up to September 2020. The 2020/ 2021 report will be written in September 2021. The leadership decision was taken in 2020 not to request attainment and progress data, and therefore this is not available in NCER Nexus. In addition to this, the Virtual Head left her position in summer 2020. As it is imperative that the Interim Virtual Head understands the progress of Looked After Children and, more importantly, targeted intervention needed following a year of disruption, the 20/21 report will rely on data collected by the Virtual School through the PEP process. This has been dependent on the cooperation of the schools, as they have no obligation to provide such data. This assistance is much appreciated by the Interim Virtual Head. For this report, data was supplied by most primary schools and that has been included, although it will be treated only as an *indication* of progress, as it has not been standardised or moderated.

<u>Overview of the Virtual School</u>

The team consists of a Virtual Head, Deputy Virtual Head, PEP Admin Officer, three Looked After Children Education Coordinators and a Family Welfare and Attendance Officer.

In August 2021, the Virtual School comprised 376 pupils of school age, 197 of whom were in primary schools and 179 in secondary schools, which is similar to the number of school age children in care in the previous year. For those pupils who are of statutory school age, there are slightly more boys than girls in both the primary and the secondary populations. Most pupils attend schools located within the borough. The remainder of children, who are placed outside of Sefton, are largely being educated within neighbouring local authorities within the Northwest. The following tables show an overview of the composition of the Virtual School:

Figure 1- Pupils by Year Group at Primary School

Year Group	Girls March 2019	August 2020	Boys March 2019	August 2020	Number of Pupils March 2019	August 2020
Reception	10	10	11	11	21	21
Year 1	16	16	15	15	31	31
Year 2	15	16	13	10	28	26
Year 3	11	10	8	10	19	20
Year 4	21	22	18	16	39	38
Year 5	7	8	17	16	24	24
Year 6	10	13	22	24	32	37
Total	90	95	104	102	194	197

Figure 2 - Pupils by Year Group at Secondary School

Year Group	Girls March 2019	August 2020	Boys March 2019	August 2020	Number of Pupils March 2019	August 2020
Year 7	14	13	18	21	32	34
Year 8	9	8	16	17	25	25
Year 9	21	21	15	17	36	38
Year 10	26	25	18	17	44	42
Year 11	22	21	19	19	41	40
Total	92	88	86	91	178	179

Placement of Pupils

The majority of pupils are educated within the borough and a substantial number of pupils are educated in Liverpool schools. The number of pupils attending provision within the borough is 74.5% and is the same as the last academic year. Of those children who are educated out of borough, the majority of children are educated in neighbouring local authorities, within a relatively short distance from Sefton. A breakdown of the school locations is provided in the following table:

Figure 3- Placement of Pupils by Local Authority

Out of Borough	Total number of Pupils
Bolton	3
Cumbria	2
Halton	5
Huddersfield	4
Kirklees	1
Knowsley	8
Lancashire	18
Liverpool	32
Manchester	1
Shropshire	2
St Helens	6
Warrington	1
Warwickshire	1
Wigan	3
Wirral	7
Woking	1
Total	95

Ofsted Grade of School attended by Primary Pupils

The Ofsted grades of the schools attended by pupils continue to be monitored on a regular basis and, wherever possible, pupils are guided to good and outstanding provision. The Virtual School sign posts pupils to good or outstanding provision in partnership with Sefton Admissions team.

Figure 4- Ofsted Grade of Schools Attended by Looked After Children at Primary School

Ofsted Category	% of Pupils March 2019	August 2020
1	6.8	6.2
2	81.8	82.8
3	10.3	10.0
4	1.1	1.0
Total	100	100

89% of primary pupils attend good or outstanding schools, a slight increase on the previous year.

Figure 5- Ofsted Grade of School Attended by Looked After Children at Secondary School

Ofsted Category	% of Pupils March 2019	August 2020
1	20.7	16.8
2	51.1	63.1
3	17.4	12.8
4	10.8	7.3
total	100	100

80% of looked after children attend good or outstanding secondary schools, an increase of 8.2% since 2019.

Attendance

N.B. This analysis covers the period until the closure of schools due to the government's lockdown of public buildings, due to the Covid pandemic.

Figure 6 Overview of Attendance at Primary Level September 2019-March 2020 for children looked after for one year or more at the 31st March 2020

Year Group	number of pupils	<90%	90-95%	95-100%
R	14	0	3	11
1	25	4	7	14
2	20	1	1	18
3	17	1	3	13
4	32	3	8	21
5	20	1	5	14
6	28	4	5	19
	156			
Total as a %		9%	20.5%	70.5%

Figure 7 Overview of Exclusion at Primary Level September 2019- March 2020 for children looked after for one year or more at the 31st March 2020

Year Group	Number of children to receive at least one fixed term Exclusion
R	0
1	0
2	0
4	1
5	1
6	6

Figure 8 Overview of Attendance at Secondary Level September 2019 to March 2020 for children looked after for one year or more at the 31st March 2020

Year	Total Number of Pupils	<90%	90-95%	95-100%
7	23	2	5	16
8	24	6	5	13
9	35	9	7	19
10	37	11	9	17
11	36	18	7	11
Total	155			
Total %		29.6%	21.2%	49.03%

Figure 9 Overview of Exclusion at Secondary Level September 2019- March 2020 for children looked after for one year or more at the 31st March 2020

Year Group	Number of children to receive at least one fixed term Exclusion
7	4
8	4
9	2
10	7
11	8

Attendance figures are a matter of concern, particularly in Secondary school. A number of measures (increased challenge to carers, incentives, increased frequency of monitoring) have been put in place to address this.

Exclusion figures are low in primary schools, with the exception of Year 6. The trend is an increase as children get older (with the exception of Year 9) and the Virtual School is working closely with professional colleagues to explore ways of meeting challenges without resorting to exclusions.

Attendance and Type of Placement

The following table provides an overview of attendance by type of placement.

Figure 10: Overview of Attendance by Type of Placement

An analysis of those children by type of placement was undertaken for those pupils who have less than 90% attendance. The results are as follows.

Placement	Placed with Parents	Placed with Friend of Relative	Foster Care	Residential Home or School	Other*
No of pupils	53	60	157	40	1
No below 90%	19	9	11	22	1
Total as % proportion Of all LAC	30%	15%	18%	35%	2%
Total as % for individual group	35%	15%	7%	55%	100%

*ICS file locked and therefore no placement information

30% of all children who are persistently absent are placed with parents, 15% of children who are persistently absent are placed in foster care with a relative or friend, 18% of pupils who are persistently absent are placed in foster care, 35% of pupils who are persistently absent are placed in a residential setting.

35% of children who are placed with parents have below 90% attendance, 15% of all children placed in foster care with a relative or friend have below 90% attendance, 55% of all children in a residential setting have below 90% attendance and 100% of all children in other setting have below 90% attendance.

Overall, children placed with foster carers have higher attendance and children in residential care have the poorest attendance. A target for the Virtual School (for the next academic year) is to work more closely with our colleagues in social care and residential care to improve attendance rates for children living in residential homes.

Good school attendance is critical for children in care. School is a key place where they can socialise, form quality relationships with adults and peers, develop skills and knowledge and feed their own aspirations. It is a place of safety and consistency. During the last year, this has been severely disrupted by the Covid pandemic. Some children will have benefitted from being at home and enjoying the company of their parents or carers, but a pupil experience survey, commissioned by the Virtual School and carried out by the Educational Psychology Service (APPENDIX 4) showed a range of experiences and attitudes. Primary school children were much keener to return to school, whereas secondary school pupils were more cautious. Improving school attendance is a main target for the Virtual School and it is clear that some pupils will need a lot of reassurance, encouragement and support when returning to school.

Attendance: March to September 2020

In March 2020 schools closed but remained open for children of key workers and vulnerable children. Schools reported on which children attended each day but did not complete attendance registers. From 1 June, the government asked schools to reopen for children in nursery, reception and years 1 and 6, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children. From 15 June, secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges were asked to begin providing face-to-face support to students in year 10 and 12 to supplement their learning from home, alongside full-time provision for students from priority groups. After the government's decision to close schools in March 2020, the instruction to Local Authorities was to collect attendance data for vulnerable children, but this was not divided into specific cohorts, such as LAC. The Virtual Head, together with the Lead officer for attendance, decided to focus on the safety of the child, making sure that carers understood the education offer and ensuring that children had access to appropriate IT equipment and could access their school's remote learning facility. All children were seen regularly and the Virtual School liaised with carers, social workers and schools to ensure that attendance was encouraged, where appropriate and safe, and that schools were able to maintain contact with their Looked After pupils.

<u>Virtual School Arrangements and Duties</u>

Sefton Virtual School currently comprises the Virtual Headteacher, a Personal Education Planning Officer, three Looked After Children Education Co-Ordinators and a Family Intervention/Attendance Officer. In January 2020, the establishment of a Deputy Head Teacher was created to enhance the capacity of the Virtual School to provide support to pupils and improve outcomes for children. The Virtual Headteacher role was combined with the Principal Educational Psychology role, and the Deputy Virtual Headteacher had an operational role in ensuring schools provide high quality interventions for pupils on a day to day basis, and in developing the skills of the Education Co-ordinators in quality assurance of PEPs, and in ensuring that schools enhanced their curriculum and pastoral offer to children in care.

The team continue to work closely to ensure that Looked After Children can participate fully in all aspects of school life and that appropriate support is put in place to ensure this group of young people achieve across the curriculum. The focus of Education Co-ordinators this year continues to be undertaking casework to prevent exclusions, ensure access to appropriate education and monitor the quality of education for Sefton's children in care. A key driver to improvement is the Personal Education Planning process. Completion rates are monitored by the governing body and the PEP Coordinator is active in supporting schools and social workers to ensure timely completion. Completion rates from schools remain high. There continues, however, to be considerable variation from schools in terms of the quality of plans and this is an ongoing focus and challenge for the Virtual School. A quality assurance system has been implemented, but this is at an early stage.

The administrative aspects relating to this process are undertaken by the PEP Co-ordinator and systems that have been put in place have had a positive impact. The LAC Education Co-ordinators have a dual role in supporting and challenging both school and social workers in relation to education and the support that young people require. The family intervention worker has a focus on improving attendance and working with those pupils who are most at risk of disaffection and persistent absence from school. Currently roles are clearly defined, and work flow systems are in place to ensure that children are supported according to need. Key priorities are wellbeing and

engagement, progress, attendance, making sure that each child receives a suitable full-time education, with a quality PEP in place that meets their needs.

The Virtual School continues to commission substantial support from Sefton Educational Psychology Service and currently shares two trainee educational psychologist with this service using a student bursary arrangement with the University of Manchester. A monthly planning meeting is held to ensure that referrals are timely and that cases are prioritised. This close partnership means that the Educational Psychologists are on hand to support the Virtual School by communicating the needs of the children and offering advice and guidance on the implementation of their recommendations.

The Virtual School and Career Connect (Sefton's commissioned careers advice service) work in partnership to improve the advice made to our young people and reduce the number of those who are not in education or training (NEET). Collaborative working between the Education Co-ordinators and Career Connect advisors is growing, with a member of the Career Connect team attending the weekly Virtual School team meeting. The Deputy Virtual Head attends meetings of the Post 16 Partnership, which aims to improve networking and collaboration between all agencies involved in decision making and the offer of education, employment and training.

Several training opportunities have been provided to stakeholders including Designated teachers, foster carers, and school governors. The sessions have included information regarding the experiences of the young people, promoting inclusion, promoting reading and the requirement to support the education of children in care as a priority. Training to Sefton Governors is aimed at ensuring governing bodies are aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children and understand how they should offer support and challenge to their schools.

<u>Response to the Covid Pandemic</u>

In March 2020, a national lockdown resulted in significant changes in the arrangements and working practice of the Virtual School. The team began to work from home, in accordance with Sefton Council directives. Guidelines were issued to Education Coordinators. Priorities were to contact carers/ schools of Looked After Children and ensure that they had appropriate provision for home learning, with the

safeguarding of children a priority (Appendix 2). Following updated information from the Government and Local Authority, additional guidelines were issued (Appendix 3). In addition to monitoring vulnerable children, and encouraging them to attend school, the usual business of dealing issues around education, wellbeing, newly LAC cases and school enquiries continued.

With many carers ill or shielding, it was imperative that parents and carers were equipped to support children learning at home and in particular to minimise disruption for children facing transition. The following measures were taken:

- Education resources were shared with the Foster care Training Officer for distribution to foster carers.
- Team meetings increased to twice weekly, to improve communication and support the wellbeing of the team.
- Career Connect contacted pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 about next steps in EET.
- Virtual School collaborated with SENIS to update transition lists for schools, in order to support transition of LAC and SEND pupils.
- A new 'Covid' summer PEP document created, with emphasis on the safety of the child and access to school or, if attendance is not possible, home learning. Schools have the option of deferring Pupil Premium Plus payments until the autumn term to fund 'catch up' activities.
- Weekly meetings set up with Attendance and Social Care managers to monitor attendance and to support Social Care in ensuring that all vulnerable children were seen and had access to IT equipment to enable them to access school work at home.
- Virtual School undertook doorstep visits to ensure that children were seen, safe and heard, and that they had equipment and resources to facilitate learning and wellbeing. They were also informed and reminded that school was open and ready to welcome them.
- Pupil Premium funds used to purchase equipment for education and wellbeing of children at home (e.g. office equipment, exercise equipment and garden play equipment). Reading books distributed to Children placed with foster carers following training on reading with children.

- 'First Day Response' system set up by Attendance manager for vulnerable young people (LAC, CIN, CP) to ensure that absences are challenged and return to school is accelerated. The VS team took over the visits for Looked After Children.

- Regular meetings with Career Connect colleagues to liaise regarding support for Year 11 and Post 16 pupils to reduce cases of young people leaving education or training by removing barriers e.g. changing to a more suitable course, receiving travel training, mentoring, financial support with equipment, etc.

- Meetings held with Educational Psychologists to refer pupils needing assessment, and to prioritise cases. Support given to children in transition to KS3. EPs working from home but would access children remotely wherever this was feasible.

- Monthly meetings with SENIS managers to manage risk assessments, share information and improve efficiency when responding to the needs of children with SEND.

- Regular communications from Admissions regarding any LAC applying for schools has resulted in early intervention to avoid school change, or to ensure that the most appropriate school was found. With an increase in children coming into care, and changes in care placements, it is vital that our children attend the best school available and do not change schools unless in the best interests of the child.

- Increased Virtual School attendance at multi-agency planning meetings for complex cases, children out of education, children moving schools and/ or placement. This has resulted in fewer moves for our children, and a more bespoke package of care and services (Appendix 4).

- Funding given to foster carers (£50 per child) from PP+ to assist with home schooling during 'Lock down'.

- The 'No Limits' celebration of achievement event was cancelled, due to public meeting restrictions, but went ahead with a 'door step' delivery of top prizes. The rest were posted.

- The Virtual School set up a scheme with 'The Reader' organisation to provide remote reading mentors for vulnerable young people.

- Stationery, art equipment and books delivered to children placed with parents.

- Monthly meeting set up with Designated LAC nurse to discuss any concerns and exchange information regarding attendance, behaviour, etc. that might be linked to health issues.

Overview of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Spending

This year, Sefton has continued to distribute much of the funding (£1600 per pupil) to schools. The Virtual School retains the balance to allow for flexibility to meet individual pupil need and support whole school interventions. In line with the guidance, the pupil premium is managed by the Virtual School Head within Sefton and is used for the benefit of the child's education needs, as described in the PEP. The VSH ensures there are arrangements in place to discuss how the child will benefit from the funding with a designated teacher in the child's educational setting. Schools continue to offer wide ranging support for children in care. In the summer term, a 'Covid' PEP was created and the option to defer expenditure of PP+ was given in anticipation of a higher level of need when children returned to full time education. Analysis of the Personal Education Plans from summer 2020 indicates that Pupil Premium funding was spent as follows

Figure 11: Breakdown of Provision and Support Offered through the Pupil Premium Plus paid to schools

Provision	% of total provision 2019	% of total provision Summer 2020
Deferred		48.2
Partly Deferred		8.4
1:1 Tuition	3	9.2
Extracurricular	12	2.1
Social/ Emotional interventions	21	2.6
I.T Equipment	9	25.1
Other Equipment (books, etc) *	8	2.1

Breakfast/ After School Clubs	5	0
Trips	7	0.3
Uniform	1	1.6
Careers Advice	0.8	0
Transport	1	0
Specialist Assessments	0.8	0
Photographs	0.3	0
Milk	0.1	0
Bike/sports equipment/toys	0	2.6
Art resources	0	1.3
Music lessons	0	0.8
FSW/Home liaison	0	1
Transition support/resources	0	1.6
Not paid – No PEP received/awaiting responses	0	7.1

*In addition to school expenditure, the Virtual School will send a book each term to each pupil between the ages of 0-18. Stationery packs were distributed to all children placed with family and a payment of £50 per child was made to Foster Carers to assist with the cost of home schooling.

The support that is provided is varied and of note is the use of 1-1 tuition which, although expensive, is usually an effective and welcome method of support, which can

take place virtually. Predictably, expenditure differed from the previous year. Although social/ emotional or wellbeing interventions were identified in many PEPs, much of this (if it happened) was provided 'in house', or virtually, as many providers were unable to visit schools. As some of these services are difficult to deliver virtually, much of the identified need was not met. The option to defer payment was given, as some schools anticipated higher spending on interventions when the children returned to school after the summer holiday. Some challenges associated with Pupil Premium Plus and the Personal Education Planning process remain and these are addressed as part of the every day work of the Virtual School. An improved system of quality assurance has resulted in greater challenge and support to schools where the PEP does not represent a robust plan for the child. Training for Designated teachers has been delivered in a series of Microsoft Teams twilight sessions, as well as on a more bespoke basis in schools where there are several Looked After Children. Where a plan is not submitted, or is of poor quality, the payment is withheld, and the school and social worker contacted to discuss the plan for the child. Returns from social workers are still not as high as returns from schools, but the gap is closing. PEP returns are monitored regularly by the Virtual School Governing Body.

Understanding Pupil Progression

During 2020, Sefton has been unable to access data usually provided by the NCER Nexus Children Looked After Project. Therefore, data collection for those pupils who attend schools both in and out of borough continues to be collected manually. The national pause in assessment tracking continues to present challenges. However, PEP documentation requests that schools report whether children are meeting expected standards for the year group so that there continues to be appropriate oversight of individual pupil progress. Although there is no requirement for schools to report during the Covid pandemic, the Virtual Head has requested that schools provide progress data based on teacher assessment, although it is understood that this data is not standardised or moderated. In this way, Designated Teachers, Social Workers and the Virtual School can continue to plan to address the needs of individuals, and of particular cohorts. In order to improve tracking and analysis of data, discussions have been held with colleagues in the SIMS team and the application of SIMS will be

enhanced in order to enable the Virtual Head to more accurately track progress, produce reports and identify areas for improvement. The following data has been collected internally though the PEPs, or unofficial school reporting, and is therefore only a guideline.

Figure 12: GCSE Results 2020 *Teacher Assessed Grades* (**TAGs**)

No of Pupils (CLA 12 months +)	%Pupils with 5 Grades 5-9	% Pupils with Grades 4-9	% Pupils with 5 Grades 5-9 including Maths and English	% Pupils with5 Grades 4-9 including Maths and English
22	13.6	18.1	4.5	13.6

Figure 13: GCSE Results 2019

No of Pupils (CLA 12 months +)	%Pupils with GCSEs Grades 5-9	% Pupils with Grades 4-9	% Pupils with Grades 5-9 including Maths and English	% Pupils with Grades 4-9 including Maths and English
36	11.1	19.4	8.3	16

These results are disappointing. However, it is important to put the 2020 results into context: 19 pupils attended specialist provision or alternative education and 7 pupils were not entered for examination at GCSE level, due illness or their level of ability.

Statistically, young people who attend Alternative Provision (AP) do less well than their peers, and a disproportionate number of our young people are in AP. Therefore, the Virtual School is taking measures to keep our young people in mainstream provision where possible. N.B. One alternative provider did not enter TAGs for a girl who had poor attendance. By the time this had been shared with the Virtual School, the appeals date had passed. Another pupil had only been entered for 4 GCSEs, all of which he passed. This suggests that he would have been capable of achieving 5, had he been supported in making more aspirational choices. Consequently, the Virtual School has liaised with Career Connect to take action to ensure that the current Year 11 cohort is visited, given appropriate guidance and supported in dealing with the challenges of school disruption. A more robust quality assurance system for PEPs has also been implemented to improve monitoring and present challenge to providers, where a young person is under achieving.

Statutory School Age Data *(N.B. this data is teacher assessed and was not a requirement for the Local Authority. It was collected through the PEP process, and with the collaboration of schools. Therefore, it is incomplete and not standardised or moderated, as would usually be the case. It will be used only as a rough guide to enable the Virtual School to target interventions and form a recovery plan).*

Key Stage 3 Attainment Data

Figure 14: Year 7 (32 pupils)	**English**		**Maths**		**Science**
Below expected standard	11		9		6
Meeting expected standard	16		19		23
Above expected standard	2		1		0
No attainment submitted	3		3		3
	62% at or above expected grade*		69% at or above expected grade*		79% at or above expected grade*

Figure 15: Year 8 (24 pupils)	English		Maths		Science
Below expected standard	7		7		7
Meeting expected standard	10		11		9
Above expected standard	1		1		2
No attainment submitted	6		7		6
	61% at or above expected grade*		66% at or above expected grade*		61% at or above expected grade*

Figure 16: Year 9 (32 pupils)	English		Maths		Science
Below expected standard	5		7		6
Meeting expected standard	13		9		10
Above expected standard	0		2		2
No attainment submitted	14		14		14
	72.2% at or above expected grade*		61% at or above expected grade*		66% at or above expected grade*

Percentages are expressed as a proportion of the actual number of returns, and not as a percentage of the cohort

This data is treated with caution but gives us some indication of the level of intervention needed. As the data suggests, literacy and numeracy skills will be a priority. Reading skills must be improved to allow children to access all areas of the curriculum and develop confidence and independent study skills, and the PEP document has been updated to ensure that literacy is a key element. It is notable that, as the age of the child increases, the reporting of attainment data decreases. There will be a number of reasons for this: attendance, lack of engagement, health problems, and so on. However, the Virtual School will work with schools to offer incentives for attendance and rewards for effort, and to request teacher assessed grades so that we can gauge (albeit with limited accuracy until the reporting policy changes) whether a child or young person is making progress or is in need of extra support to catch up.

Key Stage 4 Attainment Data

Only a small percentage of KS4 schools provided data and therefore data analysis cannot be included in this report.

Primary School Data

Figure 17: Primary School Data

Key Stage 1	At or above expected level	
Reading	52%	
Writing	46%	
Maths	44%	
		39% achieved at or above the expected level in all 3 areas
Key Stage 2	At or above expected level	
Reading	56%	
Writing	44%	
Maths	52%	28% achieved at or above the expected level in all 3 areas

This data is again treated with caution but it gives us an indication of the level of intervention needed. As the data suggests, literacy and numeracy skills will remain a priority since too few children achieve expected levels or above in all three areas. Reading skills must be improved to allow children to access all areas of the curriculum and develop confidence and independent study skills, and the PEP document has been updated to ensure that literacy is a key element.

Addressing Individual Pupil Need

This year there has been significant use of educational psychology assessment commissioned by the Virtual School. Those pupils who are not making progress are

reviewed and a number of pupils have received specialist assessment so that, where there are concerns regarding progress, individual needs are identified, and schools are advised of appropriate intervention. Children in care are more likely to have special educational need, and to have suffered trauma, so early intervention is key to their wellbeing and in securing the support they need to be happy and successful. To increase this resource, the Virtual School has employed a trainee Educational Psychologist in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service. This will ensure that, for those children who are not on target to achieve, there is capacity to intervene as required. Quality assurance of the PEP documents is focused on whether the plan for the child shows aspiration and clear, achievable targets that are based on sound pedagogy.

Appendix 1: Guidelines to Virtual School team at the start of the first lock down (March 2020)

Guidelines for VS
working from home.

Appendix 2: Additional guidelines issued to the Virtual School team March 2020

VS Working from
Home guidelines 26t

Appendix 3: Pupil Experiences of lockdown (July 2020)

Pupil Experiences of Lockdown.docx

Appendix 4:

GOVERNING BODY OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The Virtual Governing Body provides strategic oversight of Sefton Virtual School, ensuring that Sefton Council's vision and commitment to children in care is championed in all aspects of education. Members will be committed to ensuring all looked after children achieve their potential, through ensuring accountability and providing support and challenge to the Virtual School.

AIMS

- To challenge schools to provide a first class education and have high expectations for young people.
- To support children in achieving their aspirations and fulfil their potential
- To ensure that the attainment and progress of children is tracked regularly and that appropriate intervention is in place where required.
- To support multi-agency working to develop a co-ordinated approach to planning for the young person, breaking down any potential barriers between care and education.
- To advocate on behalf of young people
- To ensure that all children in care have a robust and effective personal education plan that focuses on learning outcomes and access to 1:1 support
- To champion the educational needs of Children Looked After across the Authority and those placed out of the Authority.
- Drive effective strategies for managing attendance, engaging young people in their education and early intervention to support improvement, having high aspirations and raising the profile of Looked After Children.
- Ensure strategic decisions are made about the allocation of resources.

- Offer support and challenge to Virtual Head, to review how all children and young people are performing
- The Virtual Head will provide the Board with regular information, advice and guidance of provisions for schools, carers and of other professionals.
- Ensure that pupil premium spending for looked after children is effective and linked to outcomes.

MEETINGS

- Clerk to be appointed
- The quorum for the meetings will be 4.
- Substitutes will be allowed for Foster Carer and Care Leaver when appropriate.
- All members will have equal voting rights. The members will work collaboratively to ensure that all decisions are made on a consensual basis. In the exceptional circumstances that there is a tie the chair will have the casting vote.
- A Vice Chair to be elected at the first meeting of each autumn term.
- The Chair will work with the Head of the Virtual School and others to produce purposeful agenda.
- If members are unable to attend they must inform the clerk. Chair will follow up absences of more than two meetings to discuss with member.
- The Governing Body may establish sub groups to carry out specific tasks.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Virtual School governing body will report to the Corporate Parenting Board

REVIEW

- The terms of reference will be reviewed annually

MEMBERSHIP

Chair -Director of Children's Services

Head of Education Excellence

Care leaver

Primary Headteachers

Secondary Headteacher

Special School Headteacher

2 Elected members

Foster Carer

Service Manager Corporate Parenting

Member of Virtual School Team