

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22, SHROPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL



Shropshire
Virtual School 



Introduction

1.0

This is the Annual Report for Shropshire Virtual School. It is a statutory duty for the Head Teacher to inform key stakeholders about the work of the Virtual School through the year.

Our Virtual School team are the Education Champions for our Children and Young People who are Looked-After so that they can have excellent opportunities to fulfil their potential. As part of the Corporate Parent for this group of young people we always take time to ask whether something would be good enough for our own child. Our Virtual School also provides advice, information and training on education around Previously Looked-after Children and are strategic leaders for the cohort of Children with a Social Worker.

Our School Values for all the ‘families’ of young people we support is to be “a safe and reassuring pair of hands” providing “the right support in the right place at the right time.”

Context

1.1

During this academic year the country has been moving through the Covid period into a post-pandemic phase. Nationally there has been recognition of the significant impact on attendance, mental/emotional health and how the attainment/progress gap has widened for vulnerable learners. As a result, key activities of our Virtual School have been focused on supporting our young people with their attendance, emotional well-being, targeted academic interventions and we have bought in new participation opportunities to support resilience and recovery.

The new extended role for Virtual Schools to support Children with a Social Worker came on board in September 2021. This has been a significant increase in the remit of the Virtual School, necessitating recruitment, working with new partners and organizing new data systems to support the growth in our responsibility for improving strategic outcomes for this group of children.

Regionally, our Virtual School has been strongly involved with the West Midlands Virtual School Head Teachers focus group, with the new Head Teacher for Shropshire delivering training at the Regional Virtual School Conference and our new Asst Head developing a strong presence at Together 4 Children (our Regional Adoption Agency), becoming involved in developing new initiatives and delivering training to parents. The Head Teacher has also forged a relationship with the Telford & Wrekin Virtual School Head Teacher and together we have developed successful participation events in sports and the arts. To support the developing profile that Shropshire Virtual School has across the region, the Head Teacher and a member of the team delivered workshops on attachment / trauma and supporting CLA effectively at the National Royal Springboard Conference. Feedback from the organizer was that our input was “*by FAR the best received and I am so very grateful for you for giving up your day...*”

Increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people (UASYP) in Shropshire and across the West Midlands has been a significant development with the compulsory National Transfer Scheme being re-introduced and the ratio rising from 0.07% to 0.1% of the general child population. Most of our young people in this group move to live out of Shropshire where there are faith and cultural communities for them to belong to. This has led to particular pressures in finding



relevant courses for them to join post autumn enrolment – and our Post 16 PA represents us in seeking longer term joint regional solutions.

Locally, the number of children coming into care to Shropshire has increased exceptionally from 505 in September to 579 by the end of July – and more have come into care over the summer holiday period. This has accounted for a +15% change in the number of children our Virtual School supported during this last academic year - and prior to this there was a +27% change in numbers from Year R to 18 from May 2020 to September 2021. This has resulted in considerable pressures for our team this year which they have valiantly risen to, but the challenge is taking its toll.

As a school we need to increase our capacity to successfully meet current and future need whilst retaining high quality staff. The average caseload ratio for staff in the service supporting CLA was at 1:100 at the end of July, whereas the National Average as reported by NAVSH is around 1:55-60. The national picture is also indicated in recent studies* which indicated a 1% rise in CLA nationally for the year March 2020-21, with a significant fall in numbers of children going to adoption and also for CLA ceasing their care status. Research commissioned by LAs and undertaken by CCN** predicts a potential 36% rise nationally in the numbers of CLA by 2025 – and so this is an issue nationally, but also a particularly significant one for Shropshire.

Despite these challenges, OFSTED highlighted that our Shropshire Children who are Looked-After made strong academic progress, with the Virtual School working well with partners to ensure the educational support they need to succeed is received - but the report also recognized that the partnership response for supporting their emotional health needs to improve.

Profile

1.2

Shropshire is a largely rural and landlocked county in the West Midlands. It borders multiple other LAs, including Wales. The table below indicates the landscape of educational provision for the statutory school years.

Schools					
Phase	Maintained Schools		Academies/Free Schools		Totals
Primary	83	65.9%	43	34.1%	126
Secondary	1	5.3%	18	94.7%	19
All Through	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1
Special/PRU	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3
Totals	85	57.0%	64	43.0%	149

All but one of our secondary mainstream schools are academies and 34% of primary schools are academies. In OFSTED terms 89.9% of Shropshire schools are currently graded good or better. There are ten SEND hubs (7 primary and 3 secondary), two specialist schools which are academies and one which is LA Maintained. One specialist school opened in September 2022 and caters for young people with SEMH, particularly with neurodivergent needs from year R to 11.



Our Children who are Looked After in year -1 attend at least 17 different Early Years settings. In the Post 16 phase there are multiple providers including seven sixth forms and around a fifth of our young people attend Shrewsbury College.

1.3

At the end of the academic year Shropshire Virtual School was supporting 579 Children who are Looked After from year -2 to 13 (the year in which they turn 18). Numbers peak in Key stage 2 and also in the Post 16 phase, where there has been a growth of 27% in numbers this year.

Data overview: CLA Pupil data overview by Key Stage

Month	Yr -2	Yr -1	year R	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	TOTAL No in STATUTORY SCHOOL YEARS	KS5	TOTAL of all CIC yr-2 to 13)
Sept	29	39	23	55	109	89	61	337	100	505
Dec	27	37	25	57	114	90	66	352	106	522
June	29	41	23	61	124	102	72	382	127	579

1.4

Vulnerability data for CLA in the Statutory School Years and Early Years at the end of the academic year indicates that:

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- The number of CLA with an EHCP and/or identified SEN in the Statutory school years and EYFS have risen from 31% of the cohort in September to 35% in June – and numbers of those CLA with an EHCP has seen a +22% change.
- 26 of our CLA attend a LA Specialist School, 22 attend a specialist independent school and 7 attend a Pupil Referral Unit
- 104 (23%) attend an Out of Authority school
- 249 (55%) are looked after under a Full Care Order, 112 (25%) under an Interim Care Order, 43 (10%) under Section 20, 7 (1.5%) under a Placement Order and 2 (0.4%) under Police Protection
- 7 are UASYP
- 95% of children attend a school judged to be Good or Outstanding by OFSTED. Only 1 young person attends a school rated as Inadequate, reason being coming into care in year 11 and staying at their current school after consideration by the VS, the young person's and partners' views.

1.5

Vulnerability data for CLA in the Post 16 phase at the end of the academic year is:

- 31 (24.4%) have an EHCP
- 69 (54%) are out of area
- 42 (33%) are UASYP. Over the academic year 2021-22 numbers grew from 14 to 42 and through the summer of 2022 numbers increased further with the change in the National Transfer Scheme from 0.07% of the general child population to 0.1%



1.6

Through last academic year the Shropshire Virtual School team for the CLA workstream was made up of the Head Teacher, 3.8 Specialist Teachers, 1 Specialist Access to Education Officer and 1 Post 16 PA - and 66% or 3.8 / 5.8 posts in the CLA team were funded through the PP+ Grant (of which the Conditions of Grant are for it to be used directly to improve the attainment and progress of Looked-After Children and thus measurably impact on their life chances and fulfilling their potential.)

In order to find a way to support the increasing numbers of Children Looked After by Shropshire 2 interim posts have been created and will be funded from PP+, so this proportion of posts funded by PP+ will increase to 74.4% (equivalent to 5.8 / 7.8 posts) in September 2022. The National Average, according to the most recent NAVSH data, is that 38% of a Virtual School staff is funded by PP+ and the remainder through LA funding streams. The majority (71%) of postholders in the service, including the Head Teacher, are employed on terms that mean they do not work in school holidays and this is something that needs thought in order to plan for meeting the increasing demands expected from a Virtual School.

In Shropshire every young person in care from year -1 to 13 has a named Virtual School Link allocated to their case who can provide support (and challenge) to school, carers, social workers and other partners. This in turns helps to ensure that there is suitable and high-quality education in place, champion the need of the young person and support education providers to ensure they make suitable arrangements to allow the young person to reach their full potential.

1.7

The guidance below indicates the responsibilities for the Virtual School in relation to Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Numbers of Children with a Social Worker are highly transient, but in August these stood at 422 in Shropshire (238 on a Child Protection Plan (CP) and 184 on a Child in Need Plan (CIN)), with 34 of these having an EHCP. Data indicates that the numbers of children on CIN or CP Plans peaks in Key Stage 1, year 6 and then Key Stage 4. The data indicates 26 young people not having Education – and this is a priority focus area for us to target improvements in. The numbers of PLAC are not known as Virtual Schools are not responsible for tracking this data, only for providing information and advice on request.

Shropshire Virtual School has an Asst Head leading the workstream for CWSW and PLAC. There is also an Education Advice and Support Officer who supports with information, advice and training. These posts are funded from the Grants specific to these two 'families' of children.

1.8

Our Virtual School has a Governing Body that meets termly, it is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families Kirstie Hurst-Knight. There is a Head Teacher representative (and Deputy Chair), a Parent Governor, the CLA Service Manager, the Principal School Improvement Advisor, a member of the VS team, an Associate Elected Member and a Looked-After Childrens Participation Worker.



There is a new TOR which all Governors have agreed to and the Corporate Parenting principles are at the heart of their support and challenge. The Virtual School Head Teacher attends Corporate Parenting Steering Group and presents the school report with recommendations for action.

The Virtual School Head Teacher also provides monthly updates for the Lead Member for Children & Families, the Asst Directors and Principal School Improvement Advisor. This enables regular review of issues arising as well as celebration of successes for our children and the team. A Celebration Event is organized for September so that we can inspire our young people and celebrate their achievements across a wide variety of themes.

The Virtual School Head Teacher and Asst Head represent the School at various LA Panels such as Complex Cases and PATHS so that educational advice for the children being supported can be provided – and the School will be represented on the new fortnightly Inclusion Advice Forum (IAF) Panel.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

Educational Progress

1.9

The School Development Plan for Shropshire Virtual School highlights our role in supporting our young people to fulfil their potential and make the best educational progress possible. In the context of the last two years of covid, especial emphasis has been on providing high-quality opportunities for levelling-up, including interventions and training around emotional health and well-being to support strides forward in achievement. However, reports from the EEF*** indicate that the attainment gap is widening for vulnerable learners and the DFE said in 2021 that “the extent to which disadvantaged pupils lost learning by the summer term appears to be equivalent to undoing a third of the progress made in the last decade on closing the gap in primary schools”.

2.0

Analysis of our young people’s attainment and progress as the academic year progressed indicated a particular concern for their performance in Maths – and this is across both primary and secondary schools. For example, in July 2022 only 31% of our young people in secondary schools were indicated to be on track to achieve a grade 4 or above in Maths compared to 35% who are indicated to be on track to achieve the same in English. In the county there is reported to be a shortage of Maths teachers and so advice has been sought from the School Improvement Team as well as the Governors on how we can tackle improving our students’ attainment in Maths. Our service has been taking stock of how home learning has been supported, particularly in Maths so that we can actively target and promote this subject for our pupils going forwards. This approach is also in line for the DFE White Paper – and we have been consulting with the Fostering Managers and their Team to look at what carers would find helpful from us in the new academic year 2022-23. Our Carers have said that they like the Book Trust parcels we provide for supporting literacy and so we will be developing our own Maths resource pack on a similar theme for our Carers that they can enjoy using at home with our children.



To support literacy, a pilot workshop for Carers has been developed and delivered by the lead in our school team for Attainment & Progress. This was well received and will be rolled out again in the new academic year, as will workshops for Carers on PEPs, SEND and 'Dream, Believe, Achieve' which has a high emphasis on aspirations for our young people and supports learning around planning for Key Stage 4 / Options as well as for Post 16 and beyond. Numbers attending have so far been low with groups of 4-8 attending, but we hope that our joint work with the Fostering Team will encourage increased take-up going forwards.

2.1

Early on in the academic year 2022-23 it became clear that the data being entered on epep for attainment and progress needed careful attention and review so that going forwards our school could have accurate reporting to enable analysis and forecasting with integrity. As a result, a Task and Finish group was created and consult took place with schools (including specialist settings), social workers and a parent representative from PACC to collegiately develop a new approach on the PEP. This new system will collect relevant standardised academic data appropriate to each age phase as well as softer information on how our young people are attaining and progressing. To support this development new Tracking and Monitoring routines within our own school have been developed and these now feed into RAP meetings (Raising Attainment and Progress) where team members discuss the performance of individual students/schools/year groups by subject and plan for action.

2.2

One of the key barriers that is becoming a more significant theme nationally post pandemic is speech, language and communication skills (SLCN). Combined with the impact that attachment difficulties can often have on this area of learning it is particularly important for our Children who are Looked After to have excellent support with speech and language. As a result, we have looked at how the team can specifically promote SLCN at PEPs by looking at play and developmental milestones with carers and schools. One of our team has a particular interest in this field and he delivered a presentation at the West Midlands Educational Psychology Conference; the evaluations indicate it was well received. The school is now looking at purchasing a number of Speech and Language assessments from a qualified therapist so that we can improve on early identification and ensure schools have high-quality intervention programmes.

2.3

End of Key Stage 2 Results:

	Reading			Writing			Maths			RWM		
	2019	2021	2022*	2019	2021	2022*	2019	2021	2022*	2019	2021	2022*
CLA Shropshire SSD903	50.0	56.5	61.0	50.0	47.8	57.0	50.0	52.2	54.0	25	43.5	43

In 2019 children did not sit SATs, these results are teacher assessed 'Predicted Performance Outcomes'

** These results are the initial results indicated by Nexus and are as yet unverified*

These initial findings indicate a strong upwards trajectory across all of Reading, Writing and Maths for Shropshire CLA, especially in the Combined measure. According to initial reports (unverified), the data indicates that our children achieved above the CLA National Average in every subject and for the Combined Measure and that the gap has positively widened in comparison to CLA nationally even further than ever before - potentially with a +12% in Combined.



This is despite 25% of the SSD903 group of children having an EHCP and a further 21.4% having identified SEN.

As 2019 was the last in year which SATs were undertaken as actual tests it is important to take that into consideration and the DFE has asked that comparisons are not made with that year. However, considerable gains can be tracked since that year despite the challenges of Covid, so this is a considerable achievement for our children. With provisional national outcomes indicating that the disadvantage gap index has increased from 2.91 in 2019 to 3.21 in 2022 – and the outcomes for Combined for all learners declining from 65% in 2019 to 59% in 2022 - this indicates how our Shropshire Looked After learners are bucking the trend.

[Key stage 2 attainment, Academic Year 2021/22 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

In the West Midlands region, the provisional average (unverified) is indicated to be that 32% of CLA achieved the Combined measure and so Shropshire CLA may have achieved a +11% on the West Midlands CLA cohort this year. Progress data will be available once Insight have produced their report.

2.4

End of Key Stage One Results:

	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
CLA Shropshire SSD903	60.0	40.0	20.0	33.3	40.0	40.0	0.0	26.7

These results are the initial results indicated by Nexus and are as yet unverified.

SATs were not undertaken in 2020.

It is important to note that Shropshire CLA outcomes in 2019 were only based on 5 pupils. Shropshire CLA outcomes for 2022 was based on 15 pupils.

Outcomes in the Combined Measure were significantly higher than in 2019 and only just below the CLA National figure this year. Reading is the weakest area for Shropshire CLA in comparison to National Averages (as yet unverified) and although Writing is in line with the National Average (as yet unverified) this is the area of learning indicating a need for targeted support. The attainment and progress of our children who have experienced most of their education years under covid will have an especial focus in our RAP meetings this academic year 2022-23 so that we can target interventions and resources where needed to help them most.

2.5

Phonics Screening Check:

50% of our children achieved the expected standard in 2020-21 - and after some targeted intervention this improved to a 64.3% achievement rate in Autumn 2021. In summer 2022, 52% of the children in year 1 achieved the expected standard compared to the National Average for CLA at 59%, so this is a significant target area for us as we go forwards.



2.6

Multiplication Tables Check:

The average score for CLA in Shropshire Schools was 16.5 out of 25. This is the first time these tests have been held as compulsory due to covid so there is no comparative data yet.

2.7

Good Level of Development:

For the SSD903 cohort, 42% of Shropshire CLA achieved a Good Level of Development at the end of their Reception year. This is above the National Average for CLA at 41% and the West Midlands Average for CLA at 40%.

(Data taken from Nexus)

Particular themes have emerged through analysis of the data - and these are listening skills, self-regulation, managing self, relationships, comprehension, word reading, writing, number and numerical patterns – these will be a focus for RAP meetings going forwards.

2.8

End of Key Stage 4 results:

Some good news stories regarding our year 11 students are that 1 young person achieved 10 GCSEs (including equivalents), 2 achieved 9 GCSEs and 9 young people achieved 8 GCSEs. One student with an EHCP was barely able to attend education through year 11 due to time in 'crisis' placements, but she sat 2 GCSEs with our Virtual School staff invigilating each paper and the support of the TMBSS Centre. She achieved a 3 in English and a 3 in Maths despite missing some papers due to health reasons – and this young person was recognized with the Karen Bradshaw Award at our Celebration Event.

The results based on a SSD903 cohort size of 34 are as follows:

Achievement by indicator for SSD903 cohort	English grade 4 or above	English grade 5 or above	Maths grade 4 or above	Maths grade 5 or above	English and Maths both at grades 4 or above	Eng + Maths both at grades 5 or above	5 GCSEs at grades 9-4 inc E+M	5 GCSEs at grades 9-5 inc E+M
Number	13	7	12	5	10	4	8	3
%	38.2	21	35.3	15	29.4	12	24	9

(These were gathered from the carers/young people in results week and so are unverified)

Further information due from the Insight team will enable us to see how this compares to National and Regional Averages for CLA once available.

Historically the end of Key Stage 4 results are as follows:

	9-5 English & Maths				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
LAC Shropshire %	6.7	10.7	Data not collected	10.5	16.7
LAC National %	7	8	7	14	13



It is difficult to compare this year's outcomes with 2020 and 2021 where young people had grades based on Teacher Assessment due to Covid. 2019 was the last year in which year 11 students sat GCSEs as Exams and so this would be the most comparable year for the 9-5 including English and Maths indicator, however data was not collected for Shropshire CLA and the DFE has stipulated there should not be comparisons with 2019.

The indicator of 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including English and Maths is key to support students' progression into the Post 16 phase at Level 2 or above - and the results above indicate that 24% of our students achieved this. Nearly 30% of the students achieved English and Maths at grades 4 or above which will also stand them in good stead for success at Key Stage 5.

2.9
Early indications from July were that 42/48 Year 11s (88%) were on track to achieve a successful transition into Education, Employment or Training (EET).

At the mid-September point there were

- 92% (116 / 126) of post 16 students in education, employment or training (EET)
- 7.9% (10 / 126) of post 16 students not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- 88% in Full time Education
- 2% with Training Providers
- 2.4% in Employment

Additionally, an important success this year was that through joint working with the SEND team **100%** of our year 6 CLA with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) had a named year 7 destination ahead of the summer break – and that 15/16 (**94%**) of our year 11 CLA with an EHCP had a named year 13 destination before the summer break.

Another activity this academic year to support destination planning was to introduce a Shropshire Virtual School Transitions Calendar. This was set up as a month-by-month activity tracker to show ownership of tasks and give clarity to the team members in School Years and Post 16. Further action to support transition to our main Post 16 provider was to respond to the need for Attachment & Trauma Training and so we organised this for all the staff at Shrewsbury College. The impact was evidenced in the shifts from the pre to post audits where the average score given by staff for their understanding of the core information was 3.16 and this improved hugely to an average score of 4.4 (out of a maximum of 5).

3.0
Key Stage 5 outcomes:

Some of our students have been very successful this year. One student gained a 1st in her degree in history from York University. She is thinking about teaching or becoming a historian – and we are supporting her with getting some work experience. One of our A Level students is progressing to Edinburgh Napier University where she will be studying Criminology. Another student completed their Level 3 Health and Social Care at Shrewsbury College, she was predicted Merits and one Distinction, however on receiving her results she achieved three Distinctions! She is now progressing on to Chester University to Study Adult Nursing. Over the past two years she has worked extremely hard and demonstrated high levels of commitment, motivation and dedication to her studies and future aspirations.



All of our young people in the Post 16 phase on Level 1 or 2 courses completed successfully this year, as did a young person on their apprenticeship. All will be now progressing on to the next relevant level. The only exception is one young person who is remaining on level two but is changing to Mechanics with the view that she will do the Level three Fabrication and Welding programme. All UASYP students who undertook an ESOL course are continuing on to the next level. We have high numbers that will be starting ESOL programmes in September, many of these young people have completed the Wolverhampton College summer ESOL course plus had tuition.

For those young people leaving year 13 this summer:

- 60.3% are continuing on current courses (either A Level or Vocational/BTEC and progressing a level)
- 11.3% are in employment
- 6% are in an apprenticeship
- 3.7% are going to university
- 16.9% are NEET and 1.8% are missing

Educational engagement

3.1

An excellent achievement this last academic year has been that 0 Shropshire CLA have been Permanently Excluded. At least 11 permanent exclusions have been prevented through the hard work of the Team and our partners. Last year's Annual Report indicated that 2 young people were permanently excluded with 2 further permanent exclusions avoided.

The impact of our work on reducing Permanent Exclusions has improved the long-term life chances for our young people. An actual example of this is for one young person in year 6 who has just transitioned to year 7 this September. We worked with partners to arrange an alternative creative timetable funded by PP+, he then received support from TMBSS and had a supported transition to mainstream primary in the summer term - then mainstream secondary this September. The outcome was the primary Head Teacher reports that the pupil was 'absolutely brilliant' with no behaviour issues, that he had settled well and shown a friendly and cooperative attitude, interest in his learning and a wish to do well. He participated in the end of term school trip to the Welsh coast and his behaviour and attitude was excellent. The SENCO at his secondary school now adds "Just to let you know that he has had a super start to the year. He's settling in well so far".

3.2

With national Covid rates rising through the Autumn term and into Spring, Attendance across the country in general was significantly affected. The Childrens Commissioner's report indicated that nationally 1 in 4 children (all learners) were persistently absent in Autumn 2021 [cc-voices-of-englands-missing-children-june-2022.pdf](#) The Persistent Absence Figure (PAF) for CLA Nationally Autumn-Spring was 19.6% according to Nova reports, however Shropshire 's PAF for CLA compared slightly favourably with the figure standing at 18.85% at the end of the Easter term.



By the end of June our attendance figure for Shropshire CLA was 92% and the DFE data reported attendance for All Learners to be at 91.5% on 26 May 2022. By the end of the academic year the PAF for Shropshire CLA had reduced to 17.6%. This is still very high relating to the more 'usual' academic years but is also difficult to compare to performance during the previous 2 years of Covid when attendance was measured differently with use of the X code. The Head Teacher and Specialist Access to Education Officer set up monthly Attendance Scrutiny Meetings to drive forwards improvements and it was identified that the significant element contributing to the PAF this year was illness (not necessarily of the covid type), fixed term exclusions and reduced timetables.

3.3

In order for the Virtual School to robustly track and monitor Reduced Timetables (RTTs) and Fixed term exclusions (as well as other attendance indicators) new tracking systems were developed in Autumn 2021. There was a need for accurate data to support analysis, planning and action around attendance, which in turn supports safeguarding. The ePEP system was ready to collect attendance data from schools on a weekly basis in September and over 90% of young people's data has routinely been coming in on time re the weekly deadlines this year. This is still a work in progress to achieve 100% and we also continue to work on improving schools contacting us and Corporate Parent eg Social Worker on the same day as any Exclusion so that we can swiftly respond and support or challenge as needed.

New Guidance on RTTs and a Tracking process for the Virtual School team was produced for January 2022 and practice began to change as a result. There has been an average of 12 young people on a RTT per month during this academic year, several of which were educated on RTTs in the academic year 202-21 while having an EHCP. Intensive work on this priority group enabled some success.

- September 92% of CLA on a RTT had an EHCP and this was reduced to 35% by April.
- 50% of CLA on a RTT started the RTT in the *previous* academic year and this was reduced to 29% by April.

Going forwards the Virtual School will be focusing on reducing the number and length of RTTs, especially for those with an EHCP. The guidance needs to be refreshed at the beginning of the academic year with the Team and targets will be built into the School Development Plan.

3.4

As we progressed through last academic year it became clear that we needed to track the children with an EHCP where there were significant attendance concerns. To support this a SEN Tracker and fortnightly meeting monitored and then targeted actions to resolve the students' situations as swiftly as possible. Joint meetings with SEN enabled an integrated focus and together we achieved some success. Twenty-six young people in this group were on the SEN Tracker in September, this was reduced to 21 in November and 18 by the end of July. There has been further development through the summer with a revised and improved Escalation process for this specific integrated work ready to start in September.



3.5

The numbers of Shropshire CLA who have not been on roll at a school during the year are very low, with an average of only 2.6 per month during 2021-22 academic year. Last year 8 pupils were without a school placement, 7 of which had EHCPs. This year for example there was 1 student with an EHCP who has moved placement multiple times and so has remained not on roll (but has had support from us in other ways eg tuition), one student without an EHCP was moved out of county and remained not on roll for a period in the autumn but had tuition from us. The only other student was 1 UASYP in year 11 who it took several weeks to get a school place for (out of area) and 3 additional year 11 UASYP who arrived in the summer term. At that stage of the academic year we focused on supporting them with intensive English Tuition and opportunities for engagement in the community plus support towards a Post 16 destination.

Barriers to swift admissions have been identified from our data as being around several factors. With 23% of our CLA from year -1 to year 11 needing an out of authority school, this means that the team often encounter delays and as a result we take action to contact the local Virtual School in order to progress an admission for the child. Joined up working between West Midlands VSHTs usually supports this process well because of the relationships we have.

The longest delays are where the child has an EHCP and needs an out of authority (OOA) school place, usually of a specialist nature – and where an independent setting is the best option for the child then this entails more time to ensure financial agreement is obtained. Shropshire SEN are now working in line with the Belonging Regulations which has meant a recent change in practice which we have had to respond to ie the Shropshire SEN dept now tends to pass the child's file to the relevant LA for them to seek an appropriate provision. However, the SEN team have worked with us on this so that there is flexibility and support for us to escalate to Senior colleagues in OOA SEN departments when the need arises. In September the Virtual School team will need to lead on cases where our children with an EHCP need an OOA provision and this will be built into practice.

Move of home impacts on admissions too – for example the young person who has not been on roll at a school for the longest period has had multiple placement breakdowns including moving in and out of county often with significant incidents around health and safety. In particular, when our young people move to a crisis placement this is having a worrying impact on attendance and admission. Going forwards, more emphasis needs to be placed through integrated working to ensure every child accesses a registered education provider even when they are in this crisis situation – and that they have a full-time education offer too in these circumstances.

3.6

Fixed term Exclusions (FTE) for Shropshire CLA have totalled 239 lost days this academic year with 96 incidences for young people. The DFE state the national FTE rate for 2020-21 was 4.25* but that the number of suspensions increased from the 2019-20 year. This year the Shropshire CLA FTE rate has been 6.25 and so once national data is available, we will be able to show a comparison.

- Most FTEs have been in Key Stage 4
- 76 FTE lost days were for CLA with an EHCP
- All of these 76 were in secondary schools
- 25.5 of these 76 days were from specialist, independent or alternative provisions



This level of data will now allow us to make year on year comparisons within our own Virtual School and help us to set targets. The creation of our new Training Offer will be built into the School Development Plan with the aim of reducing Exclusions and will focus on building capacity in schools via becoming attachment and trauma responsive, aiming for relational policies and supporting with toolkits to achieve progress in inclusion across the county.

*Taken from [Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

3.7

Regarding engagement in the Post 16 phase the NEET figures were

- 36% in November 2020
- 17% in May 2021
- The average monthly NEET figure from September 2021 to July 2022 has been 16.7%.
- The figure in July 2022 was 20% and has been influenced by new UASYP arrivals, especially from Easter onwards, many of whom have moved to live OOA where there was no ESOL course provision from January onwards.
- Taking this situation into account the July NEET figure was considerably less at 11% for citizen learners.

With 54% of all our Post 16 learners needing an OOA provider this also impacts on the time needed to support this group effectively, especially where more 1-1 intensive work towards EET is required.

The table of EET Data at July 2022 shows where our young people were engaged, with the significant majority of them (80%) attending colleges and the second largest group (7%) attending 6th forms.

Year Group	EET numbers	College	6 th Form	Employment	Training	Apprenticeship	Missing
12	49	39	4	2	2	1	0
13	52	42	3	3	1	2	1

An additional factor that is identified as impacting on our young people with an EHCP with SEMH as the primary need is the number of places currently available at relevant provisions. In July 2022 8 / 26 young people who were NEET had an EHCP ie 31% of the NEET cohort. Five out of these eight (63%) young people have SEMH as their primary need. This issue has been shared with the SEN Manager and some joint Quality Assurance is planned so that new opportunities can start to be created.

Shropshire Virtual School have created a Work experience offer with a local employer – Morris housing. This needs an increased take-up and so this will be a target in the School Development Plan this year – as will be a pilot venture into creating opportunities in the ‘Family Business’.



Educational opportunities and enjoyment

3.8

One of the key actions last academic year around demonstrating our effective use of PP+ was the creation of a PP+ Support Map so that there is an 'at a glance' guide to what opportunities are available for our young people. A number of Service Level Agreements have been undertaken with external providers to enable a wide range of services, for example from Aspirational Careers 1-1 Support to Literacy support with pupils receiving Book Trust parcels through the post.

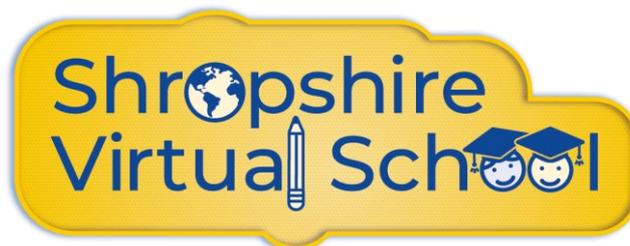
One of our new providers is an independent Educational Psychologist and she has been responsible for delivering Emotion Coaching for Foster Carers and Schools/Social Workers – and for supporting schools with 'Time For You' which is an innovative coaching approach where school staff can ask for advice and support around our Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. This has been very well received to date with all sessions completely filled and some schools writing in to say how worthwhile it has been.

Three Service Level Agreements have been purchased with Tuition providers so that high quality tuition can be arranged across a range of subjects and age phases. This supports the Virtual School team to organise the tuition swiftly and to develop good knowledge of each provider's service in order to match well with their student. This has supported us also with contributing towards the effective provision of a School Led Tuition offer with 330 children receiving just over 2300 hours of 'school led tuition' interventions.

3.9

A key development last year at the Virtual School was the creation of a new post for Participation. The postholder started after the Easter break and has already contributed significant benefit for our pupils. This last academic year there have been 8 events with over 150 young people participating. The first participation event last year was a workshop for our young people to design a brand-new logo for our school. Three winners were chosen from over 20 entries to take part in development work with a professional artist – and it was fantastic to see their thoughts come to life on screen!

All the children who entered had a postcard from the Head Teacher with a voucher to thank them for taking part. The three Winners had a special visit from our Participation Support Officer in the summer break to present them with some art sets as a thank you for their time and hard work. Our new logo is now launched and can be seen here!



The final logo includes the Shropshire colours, letters being represented by educational items such as the pencil, the earth to represent the "world being your oyster", the two young people with mortar boards to represent how high our aspirations are and the two characters symbolise diversity. We are grateful to all the schools who supported the young people to take part.





In the February half-term break a music workshop was held for our younger pupils so they could try out a variety of instruments. Great fun was had, including in the ukulele group as seen here! A performance was put on for Carers in the afternoon and we were very proud of all our children who took part.

After Easter our young people took part in a 'Back to Basics Outdoor Education' day where they were given opportunities to take part in bushcraft activities and activities to build trust. One of our young people who took part said "this feels like a family!..." The front cover of this report shows a photo from that day.

The Virtual School has created a twitter page so that we can promote and celebrate our children's achievements (as well as advertise the training and events we put on.)

Some examples of this are:

Shropshire Virtual School @ShropVirtualSch
 Jo Kelly | 6 Jul 2022 | 18:10

Lots of fantastic news about our children re SATs, whether its achieving Expected Standard or amazing progress despite challenges - well done to all of them!
 🙌 And hot off the press, one of our lads has been selected for Youth & Community Development with a Town Football Club 😊

243 replies, 7 retweets, 4 likes, 13 hearts, 0 comments, 0 shares, 0 retweets.

Shropshire Virtual School @ShropVirtualSch
 Jo Kelly | 5 Jul 2022 | 19:10

We are so PROUD of one of our lads...his school report says he is a "fountain of knowledge", he is "tenacious" and also has "a heart of gold" - everything a parent would want to hear :)

246 replies, 6.1 retweets, 3 likes, 12 hearts, 0 comments, 0 shares, 0 retweets.

In both the Easter and Summer breaks, we held a Band Build event where our Key Stage 4 students had the opportunity to write their own songs, learn covers, take part in drumming sessions and then undertake a performance on the Friday afternoon as the culmination of the week. Below is a photo from the Summer 2022 group where the Mayor of Shrewsbury came and praised our young people to the skies!





In the Spring we were delighted that one of our young people in year 4 won the West Midlands Writing Competition put on by Virtual Schools across the region!

This same young man also wrote in his PEP that “I believe people should have as many dreams as they want.” We were so taken with his aspiration that we have adopted it (with his permission) and it is now on our Shropshire Virtual School T-shirts and banners for our events.

This September we held a Celebration Event for our young people and saw the Band play at the event. In the morning the young people took part in a ceremony where they received medals, certificates and vouchers for those who were winners/highly commended. In the afternoon there was lunch and lots of activities including falconry, a silent disco, garden games and inflatables.





There were opportunities for our children to be recognised for their achievements from Friendship, Helping at Home to Academic Success – and also opportunity for them to have some fun together. Many compliments came in after the event including one from the Director of People Tanya Miles who said “Thank you to you and your team. It was a wonderful day and brilliant to meet our wonderful children and young people and their carers.”

Our older group will have the opportunity to be recognised for their achievements in the October half-term along with the Care Leaver group and we look forwards to this collaborative event in Care Leavers Week.

4.0

The academic year 2021-22 saw the creation of new Training opportunities for our partners. In addition to those events for Foster Carers, Schools and Social Workers already mentioned a key development this year has been the Nurture Project. The PP+ Grant has been used to purchase a Service Level Agreement with NurtureUK to create four roll outs of the 3 days Theory and Practice Training. This training has inclusion and recovery at its heart and the commitment from the 20 participating schools is that by September 2023 they will open their own Nurture class/resource. This aims to improve support not just for Looked After Children, but also Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker. Several Virtual School staff have also been included in the training so that we can support the embedding of the training and sustainability of the project. Some examples of feedback from delegates is as follows:

“Brilliant training, wonderfully delivered with enthusiasm. Really engaging with lots of thought-provoking ideas and practice to consider.”

“Really enjoyed exploring the neurobiological aspects of the learning as this enabled me to link the lots of other behavioural theorists to the physiological reactions we often observe in children. Thank you”

“I can’t wait to get back and put into practice the new techniques.”

Aspire Training is booked for this Autumn, this aims to build capacity across four secondary schools to deliver personalised aspirational mentoring towards planning for post 16 destinations and onwards.



Training for Designated Teachers New to Post (and Refresher) has taken place every term, as has the Network Meeting for Designated Teachers (DTs). Training for Governors New to Post and also Updates have taken place through the year. A termly Newsletter from the Virtual School is now part of our routine so that we can advertise events for our partners and also opportunities for our young people.

A training calendar specifically for Foster Carers has been designed to support home learning and confident engagement in educational matters. Our Virtual School Team are delivering these sessions and their content varies from 'The ABC of SEN' to 'Making a Difference at PEPs' and 'Supporting your Child with Reading'. The feedback from the Emotion Coaching training we provided for Foster Carers was that:

- 94% of the group felt that the training was of high quality
- 100% felt the trainer was knowledgeable and engaging
- 94% felt the training was beneficial

Going forwards a new Core and Enhanced Training Offer over 2 years will be developed to build capacity in schools for recovery, resilience and inclusion for our young people across the 3 'families' of children we support.

Personal Education Plans

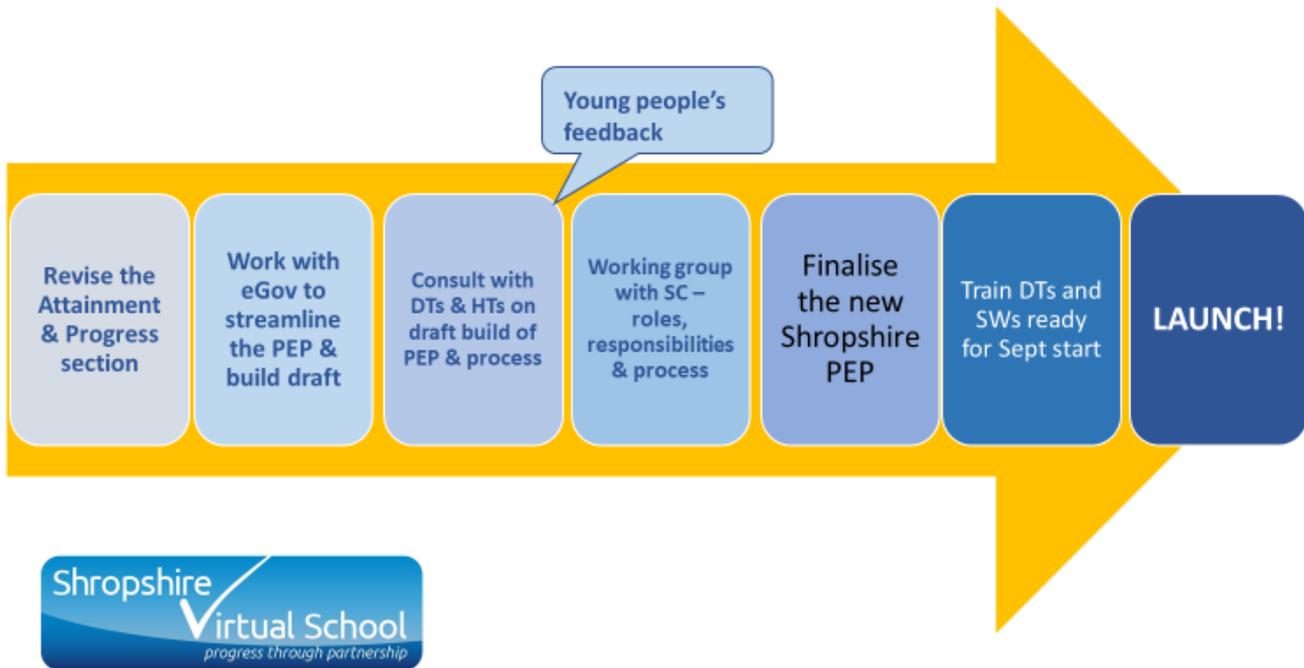
4.1

In Autumn 2020 51% of Shropshire PEPs were Good or Outstanding quality and in the Spring Term of 2021 this dropped to 48%. The Virtual School identified in last year's Annual Report that completion and quality of Early Years PEPs were a high priority for development, as were PEPs in general and a target was set by the previous Head Teacher for 60% of all PEPs to be of good or outstanding quality for the new academic year 2021-22.

This year there have been a significant number of developments with the aim of swiftly driving up PEP Completion and Quality. An Audit in November further identified improvements were needed in a number of areas including on PP+ reporting – and at the Designated Teacher Autumn Network the Head Teacher explored the subject, consulting with the network on their views. A Task and Finish PEP Group was established and the journey towards Our new Shropshire PEP began. Virtual School Team development sessions enabled ideas to be tried and tested and consultation took place with Social Care Managers, Heads, DTs and PACC (Parent and Carer Council).



Developing the New Shropshire PEP



In response to consultations the Virtual School took a “You Said We Did” approach and the result is a PEP that is more streamlined, user friendly with clear roles / responsibilities and transparency about what makes a PEP good Quality.

Special care was taken to ensure the PEP is written in the first person (ie for the child) - and that their views are the very first thing that are discussed in the meeting itself in their newly revised form. The young people have already begun to engage more fully with their PEPs through the transformed questions – for example a year 1 child wrote in her PEP that “My friends are: Everyone in my class. That's a lot of names to write. I like my friends. The best thing about my class is they love me and I love them. When I grow up I would like to be: Police officer on Fridays, Fire fighter on Thursdays, Vet on Mondays, Paramedic, Nurse at the weekends, and I would also like to be a Foster Carer and a Teacher on a Tuesday.”

Our new Shropshire PEP launched on 5th September after much training with Social Workers, Schools and Carers. Comments received at training have enabled us to tweak and further improve the final version and so far comments have been mostly positive – for example from a school who said “thank you I am really looking forwards to using the new PEP.” However, the Autumn term in particular will be a huge period of change for SWs and Schools to contend with and so quality may drop while there is a need for adoption and embedding.

While this development has been ongoing the data indicates that there have been significant improvements in PEPs for our young people.

Year -1 PEPs

- Last academic year 35% were of Good Quality
- This summer we ended the academic year with 83% being of Good Quality with an average completion through the year of 92%



Year R to 11 PEPs

- Autumn 2020 51% of Shropshire PEPs were Good or Outstanding quality
- Spring Term of 2021 - this dropped to 48%.
- Autumn 2021 58% of PEPs were Good Quality
- This rose to 80% in the Spring term 2022 with an average of 97% completion each term

In the summer term this dropped off slightly to 73%, the reasons being capacity in the team being severely stretched and multiple changes in Social Work teams led to a high proportion of PEPs being cancelled in June/July. This drive towards higher standards will continue into the academic year 2022-23.

Historically young people in Shropshire had NEET to EET meetings and so in Autumn 2021 it was a priority to ensure the Virtual School created a PEP format and process. By the end of the autumn term 28 PEPs had been achieved and by the end of March nearly 70 PEPs had been achieved. The target was for every young person to have at least 1 good Quality PEP in the year, with young people who were NEET as the priority group. This was not fully achieved and so the School Development Plan for 2022-23 targets three PEPs a year for all Post 16 young people and we will progress the new Post 16 PEP (which will sit in the LCS platform). This new PEP is in draft and has been tested with some young people and with staff at Shrewsbury College with positive feedback – so the next steps are ready to take.

One of the areas for development going forwards is for year -2 children to be supported to have PEPs. Social Workers and Settings are encouraged to undertake PEP Meetings and record on the epep platform (as with other PEPs.) The capacity of the Virtual School has been such that it has not been possible for support to be directed towards this group of children and so is a key feature of the Business Plan for future proofing the school.

The School Development Plan contains aims for a SDQ process to be developed and scores recorded on PEPs. In the meantime, our new Shropshire PEP has scales from 1-5 points describing our children's social and emotional well-being, their relationships and behaviour so that concerns or progress can be identified and acted upon.

Pupil Premium Plus

4.2
A new PP+ Policy was published ready for the new financial year April 2022-23 and included the new guidance from the DFE as well as increased detail for schools on its effective use. The amount that the Virtual School gives to schools on a termly basis rose to £410 per pupil from April 2022 (not including independent schools). A paper trail was also set up to support tracking of and reporting on spend. This enabled the Virtual School to also report to the DFE on the School Led Tuition Grant. The Recovery PP+ Grant went towards supporting Participation events and the Nurture Project (both of which have been mentioned in sections 3.9 and 4.0 with good impact to date.)

The PP+ Grant was fully spent in the financial year 2021-22 and no monies were returned to the DFE. There are many examples of impact as mentioned in other sections of this report. Another example of this can be found in the PP+ spent on personalised mentoring interventions from the company Aspire. The intervention crosses 2 financial years so reports for both academic years have been included and reflect the improvements in reporting we asked for through the last year.



SUMMARY for academic year 2020-21

- 11 young people were supported through year 11 into 12, 73% had an EHCP
- 91% made an application to post 16 EET and 82% had success with their application
- 64% were EET at the start of year 12 and 55% (6/11) were EET at Autumn half term
- Of those 5 who are NEET 1 is in the middle of securing an apprenticeship currently, 2 moved placement and 2 continue to be supported to engage.

SUMMARY for academic year 2021-22

- 20 young people were supported through year 10 and 11
- 100% of young people increased their self-assessment scores in 6 out of 13 areas, this was 61% in all 13 areas
- 89% of young people felt clearer on their pathways and actions
- 83% of the young people have a clearer vision of their future

The impact on NEET to EET is currently being undertaken

Some examples of feedback from the young people:

- *'I feel more excited about my future'*
- *'Before I started the sessions, I lacked confidence and wouldn't ask for help but now I do'*
- *'I understand what really matters to me'*
- *'I feel I can aim higher'*
- *'I overcame my fears'*

Improvements have been made in how the Virtual School uses PP+ as a swift response to arising needs, as would a good parent do ie there is no need to wait until the next PEP. An Additional Request Form was created on Teams so that the team could ask the Head Teacher to consider additional funds at any time and this form also categorises spend to support analysis and planning. Going forwards further improvements will be made to support finance administrative activities especially around Out of Authority schools so that, like a business, the Virtual School can be effective with closing the end of financial year.

A significant amount of PP+ is spent on staffing – 74% of staffing is funded by the Grant at September 2022 and this is almost double the national average according to NAVSH at 38%. An additional large spend is £23k for the epep platform and attendance collection. Both of these factors limit the spend on opportunities for our children and are an important consideration for planning for the future. To note, some other key expenditure groups from the 'standard' PP+ Grant in financial year 2021-22 were:

- 46% to schools for the termly amounts
- 7% to equipment / resources
- 4.2% on Educational Psychology
- 4% on Letterbox (Literacy resource)
- 4% on aspiration towards EET
- 3% on cultural engagement



Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

4.3

There has been change this year in the structure of staffing at the Virtual School around meeting the needs of PLAC. Previously, a Specialist Teacher had this included in their role but with the advent of the extended responsibilities the decision was taken to employ an Asst Head to lead on PLAC and Children with a Social Worker and the postholder started in January 2022. Additionally, an Education Advice and Support Officer (EASO) was employed as a first point of call for parents and schools and the postholder started after the Easter break.

Fundamental to this Asst Head role is the joint work with Together 4 Children (T4C) the Regional Adoption Agency to develop resources and training for parents and schools. Two training sessions have been delivered by our team to parents across the Region and these were very well received. Our Shropshire team has also been instrumental in developing the new EP-PLAC (Education Plan for PLAC) for the Region and the plan is for this to be ready to roll out this Autumn.

In Shropshire, specific advice and guidance on PLAC was shared with the Network of Designated Teachers on 29th June focusing on their roles and responsibilities with regards to PLAC and particular emphasis was placed on consultation with the Virtual School *in advance* of any potential exclusions so that we can build proactive lines of support. The DTs asked for increased support around signposting for parents, transition and SVS Participation activities. Additionally, Head Teachers were invited to an event in June where there was presentation and discussion about shaping the future of the Shropshire Virtual School and some of the support they asked for was around information on the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) as well as tools for assessment of emotional needs linked to attachment – and so these are built into the School Development Plan for 2022-23.

From January to June advice was given around 48 children who are previously looked after. The main themes have been Exclusion, use of PP+, the Adoption Support Fund and the SEND process. Several permanent exclusions were avoided through discussions with schools, parents and LA partners eg SEND. Relationships have been fostered through attending meetings with the Adoption Support team and the Social Worker for Special Guardianship Orders to support transitions for children moving from being Looked After. A new process for using the PP+ Grant to support children during this transitional period is being created and will be ready this Autumn term. The Adopter Hub was bought in by the Virtual School as a resource for the Adoption Support Team to share amongst practitioners and also parents – and it has also been shared with schools taking part in the Nurture Project so they can have additionality through the webinars and extra reading.

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

4.4

The new extended responsibilities for Virtual Schools started on 1st September 2021 in response to the Children in Need Review in 2019 [Children in Need review](#). An Asst Head post was created to support the Virtual School undertaking its new strategic duties for Children with a Social Worker (as well as for PLAC) and the postholder started in January. An EASO role was created and the post holder started after the Easter break, being jointly shared with the PLAC workstream.

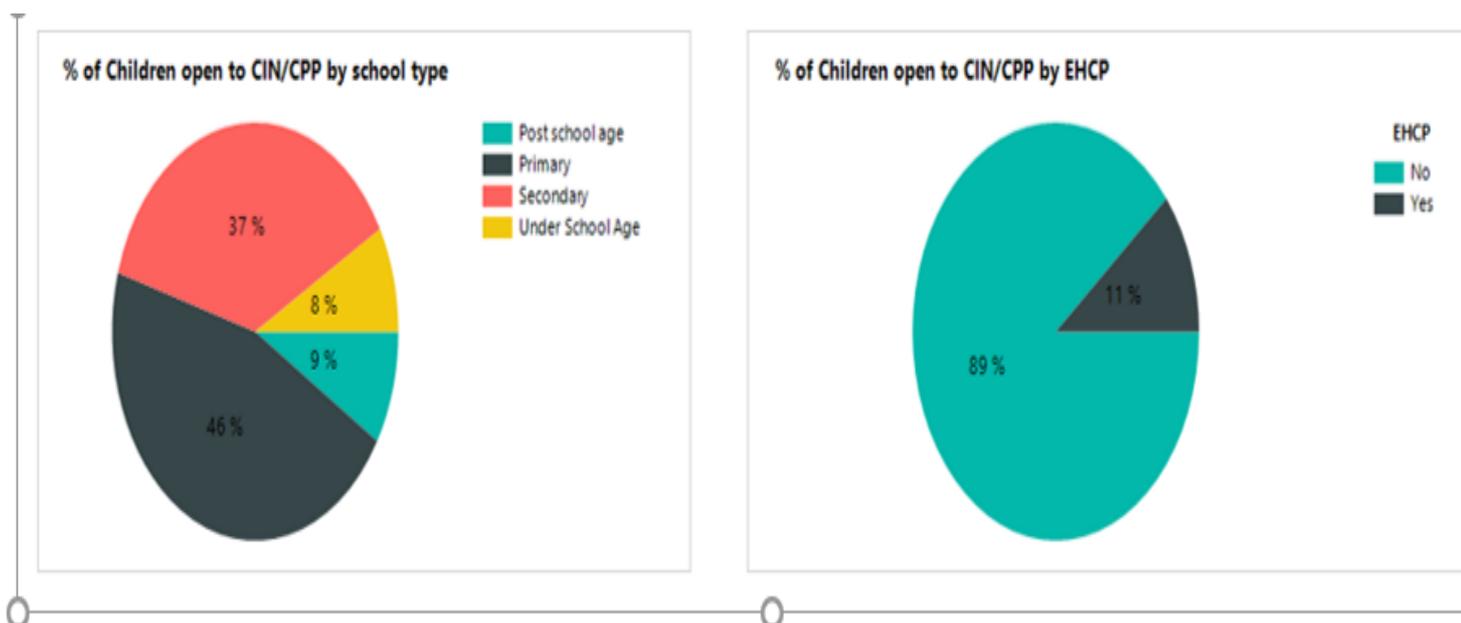


The Guidance from the DFE has recently been refreshed and the funding has been guaranteed to continue for the academic year 2022-23. The MOU has been completed and sent to the Finance Director for sign off and return to the DFE so that funds can be released. Some of the key changes in the updated Guidance are:

- increased financial reporting required
- new duties to liaise with other Virtual Schools where CWSW live
- increased emphasis on the strategic nature of the role and use of data
- Virtual Schools to work with the LA Lead for Mental Health as well as the School Senior Mental Health Leads.
- Virtual Schools to work with Schools to ensure that CWSW have access to Recovery, Tuition and Summer School programmes.
- attendance is emphasised as important in being a protective factor and the guidance lays out the role for Virtual Schools in more detail than previously.
- improved clarity on the cohort to be supported in the extended duties – this “includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the **past 6 years** due to safeguarding/welfare concerns”.

Numbers of Children with a Social Worker are highly transient, but in June the data indicated 414 in Shropshire and that there are

- 212 on a Child Protection Plan (CP)
- 202 on a Child in Need Plan (CIN))
- 34 with an EHCP
- 26 not having Education
- Data indicates that the numbers of children on CIN or CP Plans peaks in Key Stage 1, year 6 and then Key Stage 4.



Highest numbers of CIN and CPP by school September 2022

Type of school	School name	Number of CIN	Number of CP	Total
Primary	Woodside	8	1	9
Secondary	Marches	6	3	9
Primary	Harlescott Juniors	5	4	9
Primary	Holy Trinity	0	7	7
Primary	Belvidere	2	5	7
Special	Woodlands	3	4	7
Secondary	Grove	5	1	6
3-16	St Martins	0	6	6
Primary	Baschurch	5	1	6

One of the key difficulties this year has been securing timely data with integrity as it entails manually combining information from several sources. A key action has to been to try and make progress on this through this last academic year and we can now report on live numbers of CWSW, but the Attendance elements are several months in lieu. To overcome this challenge support from Insight has been sought to try and establish a data pool from LCS and Synergy – and this is in hand but currently there is no movement. However, the Virtual School has created its own in-house Tracker which enables monthly reporting on a number of variables.

Attendance is a priority focus area for the Virtual School to target improvements in, specifically Exclusions, RTTs, children not on roll and authorized/unauthorised absences – and these are all included in the Tracker. An analysis of comparative data has been undertaken so that clear aims and priorities can be developed for the School Development Plan 2022-23. The most recent data available indicates the following:

Absence

LA	Absence % CIN 31 st March 2020	Absence % CIN 31 st March 2021	Absence % CP 31 st March 2020	Absence % CP 31 st March 2021
Shropshire	11.5%	13.1 %	13.4%	16.2%
Herefordshire	11.3%	16.1%	12.7%	18%
Devon	11%	16.2%	13.3%	18.7%
Dorset	13.2%	12%	14.2%	14.1%
National	10.7% (18-19)	13.4%	13.9% (18-19)	17.6%

Shropshire were above the national figure in 2020 for CIN and just below this in 2021. Shropshire performed better than Herefordshire and Devon in 2021.

Shropshire were below the national figure in 2020 and 2021 for CP. Shropshire performed better than Herefordshire and Devon in 2021.



Persistent Absence (PA)

LA	PA % CIN 31 st March 2020	PA % CIN 31 st March 2021	PA % CP 31 st March 2020	PA % CP 31 st March 2021
Shropshire	35.2%	39%	35.3%	44.7%
Herefordshire	32.4%	45.3%	32.1%	53.3%
Devon	31.2%	50.3%	40.6%	57.4%
Dorset	40%	29.2%	45.5%	39.4%
National	30.5% 18-19	41.2%	39.5% 18-19	52.8%

PA had increased for both CIN and CP children between 2020 and 2021.
Shropshire are below National for CIN and CP in 2021

Permanent Exclusions

(no data yet for 2021)

LA	PEX CIN 31 st March 2019	PEX CIN 31 st March 2020	PEX CP 31 st March 2019	PEX CP 31 st March 2020
Shropshire	1.14%	C	0.00%	C
Herefordshire	C	C	C	C
Devon	0.63%	1.13%	C	C
Dorset	1.24%	0.85%	C	C
National	0.75%	0.43%	1.07%	0.63%

Shropshire had a Permanent Exclusion rate above the national rate for CIN in 2019. The data is unknown for 2020

C denotes data as unknown

Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE)

(no data yet for 2021)

LA	FTE CIN 31 st March 2019	FTE CIN 31 st March 2020	FTE CP 31 st March 2019	FTE CP 31 st March 2020
Shropshire	9.89%	9.55%	16.26%	15.47%
Herefordshire	10.84%	6.67%	C	16.67%
Devon	11.32%	10.91%	17.39%	11.75%
Dorset	15.30%	13.42%	19.53%	14.13%
National	11.05%	9.45%	12.6%	10.63%

Shropshire had the lowest FTE % for CIN compared to statistical neighbours in 2019 and lower than Devon and Dorset in 2020. In 2020 Shropshire was in line with the national average.
Shropshire were significantly above national for CP in 2019 and 2020

C denotes data as unknown

Data taken from

*Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK
(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)



In September 2022, 3 CIN had FTE for a total amount of 13 days – and 1 of these young people has an EHCP. There were 0 FTEs for children on a Child Protection Plan. Drill down to granular level by school/school type and reason indicates the following for the 3 CIN:

	Sept		
FTE school	Woodlands	TMBSS	William Brookes
FTE reasons	<i>PDB,</i>	<i>PA to adult</i>	<i>PA to pupil</i>
FTE - school types	<i>Special</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Secondary</i>

A significant piece of work from January to July has been the Asst Head and EASO working together to raise awareness across the LA as to the new extended responsibilities for the Virtual School and what support is available. These sessions have been delivered to Heads, the SENCO network, the Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Work Team Meetings, the Access & Inclusion Team and the SEN team. Regular monthly meetings have been undertaken with the Service Manager for Case Management Teams so that this workstream can be developed – and going forwards this will be further developed with a Terms of Reference.

Advice to Social Workers and Schools has been given mostly around Attendance, use of Pupil Premium, SEND and Exclusion. A survey that went out to Designated Safeguarding Leads, SENCOs and Social Workers indicated the main themes they needed support or training on were as follows:

Schools felt key barriers to supporting CWSW were mental health, inclusion, emotional based school avoidance and SEN

Schools said they would like training on attachment and trauma practice (including secondary trauma and neuroscience), transitions, emotion coaching, sensory development, emotional based school avoidance

Social Workers: would like support / training with emotion coaching, attendance, inclusion, SEND and EHCPs

In response, the Virtual School has been engaging with the Designated Social Work Lead for SEN in order to deliver training for Social Workers on SEND this autumn term (in conjunction with the Written Statement of Action.) Emotion Coaching training is taking place in mid-September, several Social Workers have requested places but none attended on the day. Discussions are taking place with the Access team so that training for Social Workers can then be delivered on attendance and admissions. The Asst Head at the Virtual School is currently on the Steering Group for Attendance developments across the LA in conjunction with the new guidance that is likely to become statutory in September 2023. The Asst Head is also on the Stepping-Stones Steering group and attends the hub meetings in order to provide educational advice.

Going forwards a new Core and Enhanced Training Offer will be developed so that the issues that schools are raising with the Virtual School in relation to the strategic offer for CWSW can be supported and actioned. This offer will focus on Recovery, Resilience and Inclusion - and will include a drive towards Shropshire schools/settings becoming increasingly attachment and trauma responsive. Data around CWSW is being used as a starting point to approach key schools with comparatively high numbers of our children to prioritise their engagement with the Enhanced Training Offer.



A selection of compliments for Shropshire Virtual School

“What a brilliant day today was and all credit to everyone for the day as it was just perfect, from the setting to all the activities and the food was amazing too. Please pass on my gratitude and thanks to Jo Kelly and all the team “ S and D were over the moon to be nominated and then to win the award for academic achievement was just perfect for them both. Thanks again and well done to you all for an amazing day” Craig Stock (Carer - regarding the Celebration Event Sept 2022)

Compliment of the day

Compliment for Lisa Peters (Shropshire Virtual School) “I just wanted to send a compliment for Lisa because she is just amazing at her job. Lisa has worked so hard... to get X back into school full-time and yesterday we finally achieved this ...such a great outcome for him and I am just over the moon. She is always such a great source of educational knowledge and support, offers guidance to me as corporate parent and leads meetings confidently and sensitively. She is an absolute pleasure to work with and such a great asset to your team”

— **Janire Denny-Arzalluz, Senior Social Worker (Children’s Services)**

“Thank you for all the excellent work that the Virtual School does and the wonderful support it provides. Our main contact...was excellent, thoughtful and hugely supportive - a pleasure to work with!” Peter Thompson (Carer)

“It has been great having Jo and Lindsay visiting schools and seeing what is happening on the ground - great partnership working!” – James Pearson TMBSS

Several members of the team won Awards at the Childrens Services event - and the whole Shropshire VS team was also nominated for Team of the Year

“I work with lots of different authorities, but your team have been brilliant and have really stood out. They know their children and are really supportive in moving forward.” – Emma Eyles, Shropshire SEN

To Anne Williams - for fighting her corner...thank you for everything you are doing for me I really do appreciate it. I know our relationship has been s*** in the past but thank you for all the effort you have put in me.” (Yr 11 student)

“Shropshire Virtual School has always looked after our children well and we have always felt understood and supported.” (Overley Hall)



Priorities from the Annual Report 2021-22

- Establish clear data baselines and reporting templates/processes for attainment and progress (including end KS2 performance predicted outcomes and SSD 903 reporting), attendance, progression and PEPs.
- To enhance data integrity for attendance, attainment & progress and PEPs
- Use data analysis to further inform draft School Development Plan – and create Task and Finish groups.
- Fast track recruitment to PLAC/CIN posts and to establish baseline data for CIN and CP indicators
- New VS HT to meet key leaders in the LA
- Seek Virtual School Twitter account
- Begin development of participation, including competition for young people to design Shropshire VS logo.
- Revisiting the Terms of Reference for the Governing Body

These have all been achieved.

Summary of Priorities for 2022-23

- Fully resourcing and future proofing the service to meet the growing numbers of CLA plus the wider duties relating to PLAC and Children with a Social Worker. We will create the sense of ‘one school’ in our service and Shropshire VS functions very well using hybrid working practices, whilst also supporting the well-being of the team.
- We will develop & deliver a high-quality training offer to schools with the aim of supporting recovery, resilience, transition and inclusion for our three ‘families’ of children and young people
- Shropshire Virtual School will become increasingly visible to stakeholders, with high-quality regular communications and social media presence/resources. We will enhance partnerships with stakeholders, increase integrated working & increasingly influence strategic outcomes at LA
- Data tracking will be embedded in practice across Attainment & Progress, PEPs, CWSW, Post 16, Participation – and we will drive forward change ready relating to the new Attendance guidance. We will be able to tell how we make a difference and our KPIs are in line with or better than National Averages



- We will develop resource & training to improve Speech & Language skills for our children – and there is impact on outcomes for children in the Early Years up to end of Key Stage 1. We will develop our home learning offer in line with the White Paper and engage Carers with this.
- Our new Shropshire PEP will be launched successfully - and this will support driving up standards of Good Quality PEPs. The Post 16 PEP is developed on to the LCS system.
- We will develop and deliver a robust Training Offer to SWs and DSLs & SENCOs to support promoting achievement and inclusion of CWSW – and we will develop robust integrated working to ensure education is a priority area in CIN and CP Plans
- We will develop robust tracking of data for CWSW so this is established and embedded for high quality reporting and planning for strategic action
- We will make a strong positive contribution to strategic work with our Regional Adoption Agency (Together 4 Children), we will deepen our support offer for parents, promoting understanding of PP+ and how it can be used effectively. We will develop a clear & positive transition offer and process to support children moving from CLA to PLAC
- We will develop an annual calendar of participation activities for each school holiday across CLA and PLAC families, including Celebration events, to support children positively engage in increasing numbers, including those living OOA. We will develop a School Council so that our young people can be supported to have a voice about things that matter to them, supporting them to be heard and shape practice for CLA in the LA
- We will develop effective use of the SDQ and SEMH scales on our new PEP in relation to supporting positive mental health of our Shropshire Children in Care.
- We will build capacity in schools for supporting positive post 16 destination planning and our post 16 UASYP will have increased opportunities to access education through the year, in or out of county. Our young people will have new opportunities created for work experience in the ‘family business’
- We will build our offer for children and young people making educational transitions, increasing resources and training to support schools/provisions to build capacity.

Report by Jo Kelly
 Head Teacher, Shropshire Virtual School
 October 17th 2022



Footnotes

*[Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting Year 2021 – Explore education statistics –71% GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

** [CCN-Newton-The-Future-of-Childrens-Social-Care-Emerging-Findings.pdf \(countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk\)](#)

***[Impact of Covid on Learning.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](#)

Sources

[Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England, Reporting Year 2021 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Key stage 2 attainment \(provisional\): 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

