 Brent	Corporate Parenting Committee July 15 2020
	Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People
Brent Virtual School for Looked After Children Annual Report September 2018 – August 2019	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	3 Appendix 1 – Training report Appendix 2 - Enrichment report Appendix 3 - Activity and impact report from Brent Educational Psychologist, within the core BVS team
Background Papers:	
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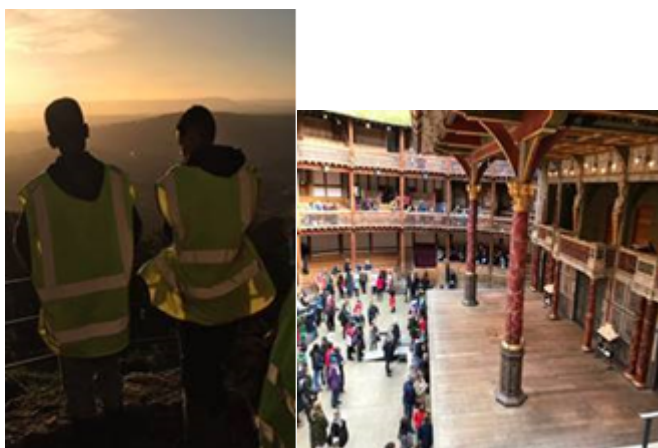


Figure 1- 2: Brent Looked After Children at Jamie's Farm in Wales and at The Globe theatre, London.

1. Purpose of the Annual Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the annual report is to outline the activity and impact of the Brent Virtual School during the academic year 2018-2019. Data contained in this report is for looked after children who were in the care of Brent Council for the academic year 2018-2019, and includes outcomes for all children who have been in care for a year or more as at 31st March 2019, ("eligible cohort"). The final DfE data sets for eligible cohorts were published in April 2020.

2. Summary Statement of Impact for 2018-2019

- 2.1. In partnership with settings and schools, social workers and carers, Brent Virtual School has supported children and young people in its care in the following ways during 2018/19:
 - Attendance has improved for the Virtual school pupil register as a whole, from 86% to 88%, which was a key priority from the previous year.
 - All 203 pupils received appropriate education, with 91% in Good or Outstanding schools, consistent with previous year.
 - There were no Permanent Exclusions, as per previous year's data.
 - Improved performance data at KS1 with 100% Good Level of Development (GLD) at EYFS and 100% achieved expected standard in Year 1 phonics test.
 - At Key Stage 2 Reading reached the expected standard for 40% of the cohort.
 - At Key Stage 4, 15% of the eligible cohort achieved a pass in both core subjects of English and maths.
 - 89% of LAC had a destination school or college place secured for September 2019.
 - Brent Celebration event welcomed over 150 LAC at Brent Civic Centre, with speeches and performances from several young people.
 - **Enrichment:** a diverse enrichment programme took place across the year, including two week long residentials at Jamie's Farm in Monmouth, Wales; Theatre trips, University visits and equine therapy. A new Enrichment coordinator post (supported by virtual schools in Harrow, Barnet, Brent and Ealing), and fully funded by John Lyon's charity, enabled a much wider enrichment programme to be in put in place, as per Virtual school priorities for the previous year, and with positive impact (details within Appendix 2).
 - **BVS Team Expansion:** the team was strengthened by the arrival of the permanent Deputy Head and a full time Post 16 advisor, enabling the KS5 cohort to be monitored and supported alongside Statutory School Age pupils. ePEPs took place for all post 16 LAC, and resulted in stronger EET data for the 16 – 18 year old LAC cohort. NEET figures decreased by 15% in Year 12 and by 10% in Year 13. (Post 16 LAC support was prioritised for action in previous year's annual report.)

- **Training Offer:**
 - 75 education and social care professionals attended KCA attachment training at Brent Civic Centre (four days across the academic year). Kate Cairns Associates (KCA) is regarded as a field leader in this area of work, which supports LAC outcomes in school. Attachment theory is one of 4 approaches which underpins the work of all professionals working with Brent LAC, as part of the Brent Practice Framework and which ensures a consistent and evidence based approach. ***“Inspirational training - I wish all schools had this as standard.”***
 - 74 colleagues from Brent council and schools attended Mental Health training at Brent Civic Centre (three days across the academic year), delivered by AC Education. Further online modules from AC Education have been made available to a number of education and social care professionals since 2018: these modules again support the Brent Practice Framework to ensure a holistic support for Brent LAC. ***“Brilliant training – best I’ve had on mental health. Very empowering.”***
- **Contextual safeguarding:** this has also informed the working practice of Brent Virtual School during 2018-2019: using this approach has enabled more joined up planning and mapping with social care colleagues, taking into account local contextual risks to inform strategic decision-making e.g. for school placements.

Case Study: male, aged 16, during transition from school to college (September 2018)

AA was at risk of exploitation and significant harm due to his gang involvement. A contextual safeguarding approach was taken in response to the risks presented whilst AA was in the community. The concerns heightened when AA started to abscond frequently from his placement and his relationship with his then foster carer deteriorated. Following an assessment of the risks posed to AA, social care made the decision to move the young person out of borough.

The BVS life coach worked jointly with social care to identify a college close to AA’s new placement. The Life Coach supported AA to enrol at college and ensured they had effective pastoral support in place. The Life Coach continued to engage AA and following the move to the new foster carer the Life Coach supported AA acting as an intermediary between social care, foster carer and college – ensuring the young person’s voice was heard. At the autumn PEP, the LAC designated member of staff and the course tutor reported that young person was engaging well and attending all his lessons. (He has remained EET until summer 2020.)

3. Role of the Brent Virtual School and the Virtual Headteacher

- 3.1 The Virtual School in Brent (BVS) has the overall responsibility for the priority admission of LAC into Good or Outstanding schools; for the attendance of LAC at school or college, and for the attainment of LAC at each Key Stage. Virtual School monitors and supports the LAC cohort with individually tailored interventions to ensure that looked after children (LAC) achieve the best possible educational outcomes. Looked after Children attend mainstream and special schools in the communities where they live, but receive additional support from their Virtual school which is based at Brent Civic Centre.
- 3.2 BVS strives to achieve the best possible educational outcomes by:

- Co-ordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans (PEPs) in schools
- Monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of Pupil Premium in line with DfE guidance
- Tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of LAC
- Using tracking data to highlight individuals who are not on target to achieve their predicted outcomes, and providing them with additional educational support
- Ensuring Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) needs are identified and supported appropriately, including applications for statutory assessment
- Implementing a range of targeted interventions to raise academic standards
- Providing support and challenge to LAC, schools and carers, ensuring that expectations around achievement are high
- Ensuring effective transition between schools or specialist providers
- Encouraging LAC to have high aspirations about their futures and helping to remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for foster carers, designated teachers, school governors and bespoke training for alternative learning providers and staff in schools
- Encouraging LAC and their carers to engage in a wide range of enrichment activities
- Providing education updates and expertise for the various LAC and Permanency panels; keeping education and educational attainment high on the agenda for LAC, across CYP
- Celebrating LAC achievements
- BVS supports LAC from Early Years (aged 3) to 18 years, and beyond (up to the age of 25), if the young person is in education or training. BVS regularly provides education advice and information for Care Leavers, including those due to be released from YOI.
- Brent VS attends key panels in Brent including Entry to Care and Care Placements, ensuring education is of the highest priority and considered alongside home placement, for all looked after children/young people. BVS is a key stake-holder at the bi-monthly Partnership meeting, chaired by Head of Service, LAC and permanency, which brings together relevant partners to support positive LAC outcomes; the meeting is also attended by Brent Care Leavers.

3.3 The revised Statutory guidance in February 2018 extended the Virtual school duty to include previously Looked after Children and states under the main points:

- Looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. VSHs have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role was made statutory.
- For looked-after children, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others.
- For previously looked-after children, the VSH will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs are not acting as part of the corporate parent role in these circumstances, but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to relevant parties.

4. Brent Virtual School Staff

The Virtual School team comprised a Head, Deputy Head, 3 LAC Advisory teachers covering Early Years and KS1 to KS4, a Data Analyst to track and monitor LAC data, a Post 16 personal advisor and a finance/administrative worker, on a school business apprenticeship programme.

This team is supported by a 0.6 Educational Psychologist, and full time Year 11 Life Coach who supports with Year 12 destinations.

Additional posts for 2018-19:

Because of the significant proportion of Brent LAC who come into care during KS4, a number of additional posts were set up, one permanent role and the others shorter term, in order to provide tailored support to this older statutory school age cohort:

- The Post 16 personal advisor role was established as a permanent role, to address attendance and engagement for the post-16 cohort with stronger NEET data as a result.
- A further temporary role was created to support the high percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) on the Virtual School register. The summer programme for UASC in 2018 was highly valued with very positive feedback from schools and participants, resulting in better school engagement/attendance for the autumn term.
- A temporary post of attainment and achievement advisory teacher was further created from January to December 2018, to support the most able students to achieve their potential. This KS4 attainment consultant was successful in raising outcomes in the previous academic year; for 2018-2019, GCSE outcomes were more mixed in terms of national performance measures, due to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); furthermore, there wasn't the financial opportunity to extend this post until June 2019.
- A part time role was created to support the extended responsibilities of working with previously LAC i.e. adopted children and children under a special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

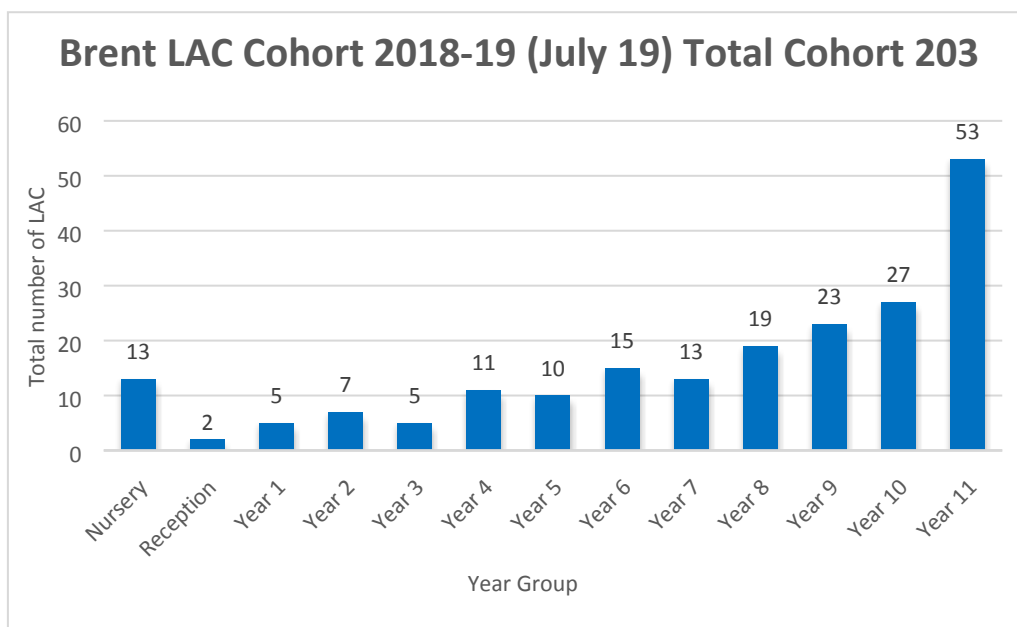
5. Post LAC Support in Brent

A small grant received from the DfE to support PLAC in Brent was used to fund a part time post. Previously looked after children face many of the same challenges as Looked After. A 2018 survey by Adoption UK revealed that adopted children are another vulnerable group in terms of Exclusion, SEND, and attainment. According to Adoption UK, PLAC were permanently excluded at a rate of just over 20 times that of the general pupil population and were 5 times more likely to receive a Fixed Term Exclusion. Furthermore, nearly half of all adopted children represented in the survey had a recognised special educational need, including 45% with SEMHD needs. In these respects there is clearly correlation with the LAC cohort, so similar approaches to supporting achievement were put in place working with fostering and adoption teams within LAC and Permanency.

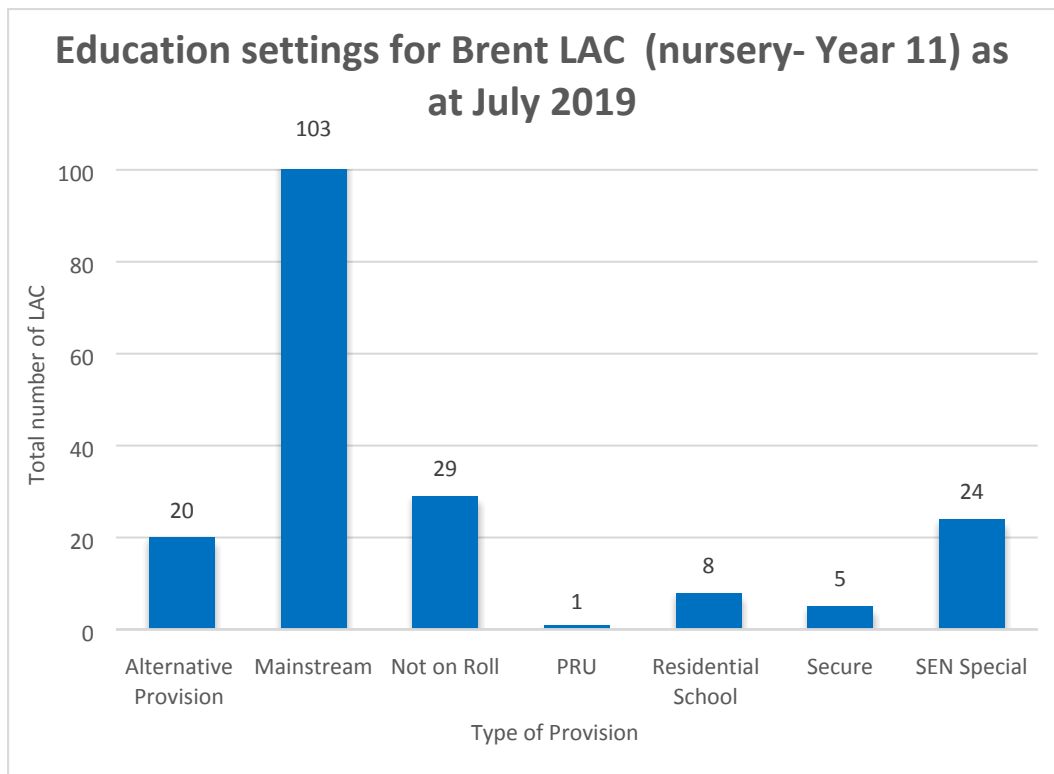
The scope of this role in Brent is in accordance with the 2018 DfE guidance: it is not likely to involve direct case work, or attendance at PEPs or other school meetings, but will encompass advice, guidance and training for schools and other professionals working with Post LAC children. The PLAC consultant made significant progress in identifying the cohort: i.e. establishing a reliable data set to know which schools host the Post LAC children, working with data colleagues, and communicating with all Brent schools. The majority of delivery was focused on upskilling Designated Teachers in Brent schools, and supporting parents/carers at informal coffee mornings in schools where a number of Brent PLAC are placed. The Post LAC consultant was co-located with the adoption team for advice and guidance on educational issues, and attended one meeting per term for adoption social workers and SGO fostering team.

6. Brent's Looked after Children population 2018-2019: nursery to year 11

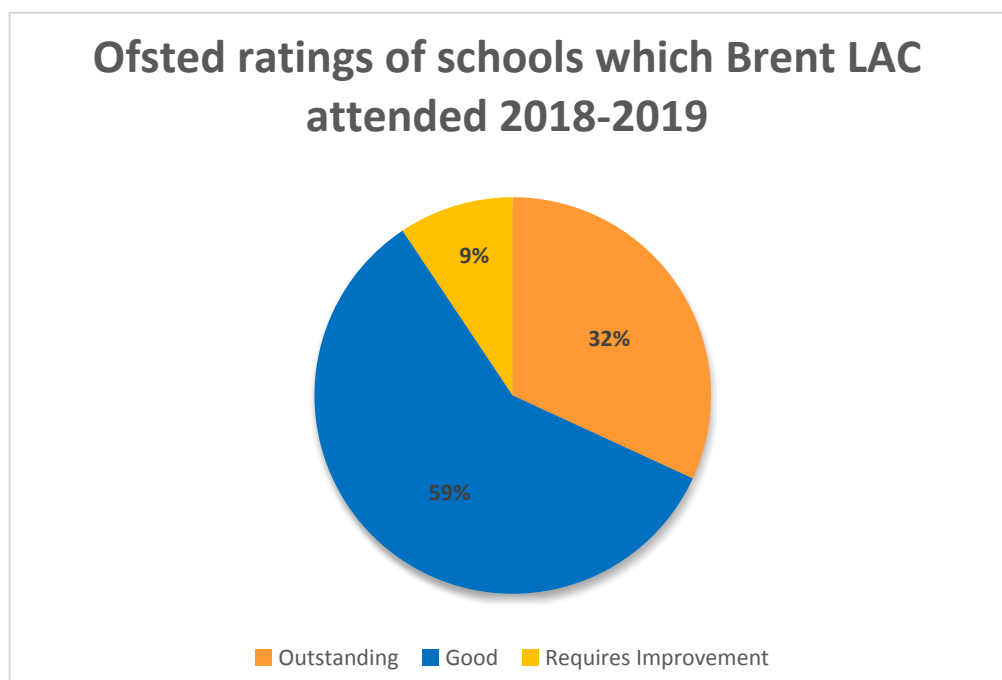
- 6.1. In July 2019 203 (Nursery - Year 11) children were looked after, attending 66 Brent schools and 97 schools outside the borough. Of these, 124 were in schools in greater London, with the remainder placed outside London, some at a significant distance, including residential placements in Wales and Scotland. The Virtual School maintains contact with LAC wherever they are placed and PEPs have taken place during 2018-2019 in Wales, Scotland and at Young Offender Institutions within, and beyond greater London.



- 6.2. LAC numbers remain the highest at secondary school age, as most Brent LAC come into care over the age of 11. By this age, there are often entrenched issues, such as poor school attendance, which can impact on LAC home and school placement stability. The highest number of statutory aged LAC is within school years 9 – 11 accounting for over 50% of the total statutory cohort; 25% of the total cohort is in Year 11.



- 6.3. Over 50% of looked after children are in mainstream education with a further 25% in Alternative Provisions, residential schools or special schools, where all pupils have an Education, Health and Care plan.



- 6.4. 91% of statutory aged LAC attending school were in Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding schools. 9% of LAC attended schools that were Ofsted rated RI (Requires Improvement).

Requires Improvement school placements:

- Four of these Looked After Children were placed by the courts in two separate secure units (Oakhill and Rainsbrook), which were both judged RI by Ofsted; the LA and BVS had no control over these admissions, but did ensure that PEPs took place and that educational outcomes were monitored.
- One LAC attended a SEN special school, which was rated RI, a year after entry to care. A more recent Ofsted inspection (February 2020) has since rated the school as Good, and monitoring throughout this period has ensured the pupil met personal progress targets.
- Four LAC attended two local Brent primary schools. Of these four pupils, two were siblings who attended the school prior to coming into care. In all cases it was judged that any disruption to education would cause further and unnecessary anxiety at a time when recent entry to care meant that stability and routine, alongside trusted school and peer relationships were of significant importance.
- Two LAC attended a local secondary school. Both had attended prior to the school being rated RI and were in year groups 9 and 11. A more recent Ofsted inspection (November 2019) has rated the school as Good. Both pupils received strong pastoral care during KS4 with tight academic monitoring from BVS.

BVS monitors the progress and achievement of all LAC, paying particular attention to those placed in schools that are less than 'Good', and ensuring there is consistent support for those placed out of borough.

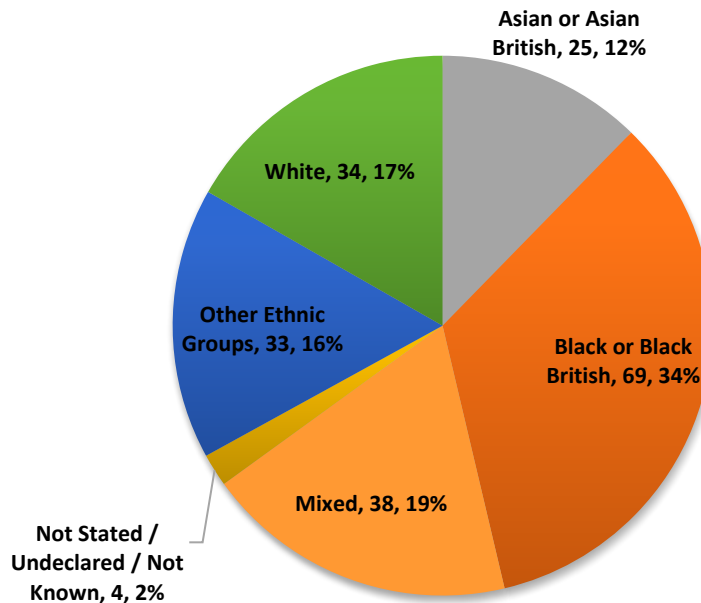
7. LAC Not In School

- 7.1 At any time, there are a few children or young people who are awaiting a mainstream school place, a special school place or an appropriate alternative provision. This will be for a number of reasons:
- newly arrived from abroad, as an UASC with no age assessment
 - emergency entry to care, or change of care placement at short notice
 - school placement has broken down and pupil is assigned a new provision, but not on roll yet

Between school placements, BVS arranges 1:1 tuition for English and maths, funded by the Pupil Premium Grant. This usually takes place in the home setting, although older pupils may be taught in the local library. For some LAC, particularly those who have missed periods of schooling prior to care, mentoring is commissioned in order to prepare and support them back into education.

- 7.2 BVS monitors LAC not on roll at fortnightly meetings, ensuring these pupils are receiving suitable education in the interim period. By far the majority of Brent LAC are placed within statutory time-scale (20 days).

Ethnicity of the Brent LAC Statutory School Age Cohort 2018-2019 (total cohort of 203)



- 7.3. A disproportionate number of Brent LAC are black British, in comparison with LAC national figures. For Brent Virtual School, this cohort makes up 34% of statutory school-age LAC. Nationally, considering the totality of virtual schools, the comparative figure is 8%, which is in line with the wider population. For the borough of Brent, which is more diverse than any other borough in the UK, 18% of the general population are black British: therefore, although there is still a disproportionate over-representation of black British pupils in the LAC cohort, it is less so, given the ethnic diversity of the borough.
- 7.4. BVS has a number of initiatives in place to support this over-represented group, such as mentoring with a company whose specialism is working with black boys; targeted work with the LAC attainment consultant; and access to the Promoting the Achievement of Looked after Children programme (PALAC).
- 7.5. The diversity of the BVS team also supports the diversity of Brent LAC via informal mentoring with professionals who are from similar cultural backgrounds to themselves.
- 7.6. A similar percentage of LAC (between 17- 20%) are from the following ethnic groups: White, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. Other ethnic groups include the majority of Brent's UASC, whose number continues to grow within the LAC cohort both at statutory school age and post 16. UASC who arrived in Brent during this academic year (2019-2020) were from Afghanistan, Eastern European and East African countries. The majority of the UASC cohort are male, and over the age of 14, with a similar number (35) in the post 16 LAC cohort too.
- 7.7. UASC continue to be the largest growing cohort across both statutory school age and Post 16. The majority of UASC arriving in Brent are placed at one of the specialist ESOL provisions, which are attached to the following 3 Brent secondary schools:
- Newman Catholic College (Ofsted rated Good)
 - Queens Park Community school (Ofsted rated Good)
 - Claremont School (Ofsted rated Outstanding).
- 7.8. Many Post 16 UASC have been placed at Harrow College (Ofsted rated Outstanding) and are engaging in their ESOL programme. Where UASC have the academic ability they are quickly

transferred from ESOL courses at these provisions, into GCSE classes, and some achieve strong GCSEs either in year 11 or year 12.

7.9 Case studies for UASC arriving in Brent during 2018 - 2019:

UASC, aged 15 on arrival in UK

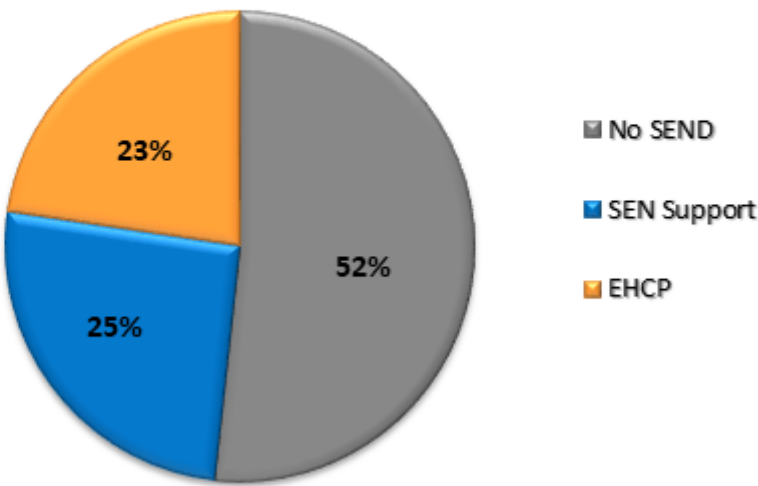
Pupil DW arrived in the UK from Eritrea in January 2019. His journey from Eritrea to UK took 4 years, via Sudan, Libya and France. He said that he was imprisoned and beaten in Sudan and Libya, as he did not have the money to travel further. On arrival into the UK, he was admitted to a specialist ESOL provision at a school near his placement. He quickly started to acquire English, despite a lack of formal schooling in Eritrea, and also displayed a talent for art, evident from doodles in his note-books. He was referred to the Kiln Theatre Art Project in Kilburn, where he later contributed to an art display at the theatre. Through the Virtual school, he has become involved with a second theatre group and is developing his set design skills. He hopes to be an artist full-time when his studies end.

UASC, aged 17 on arrival in UK

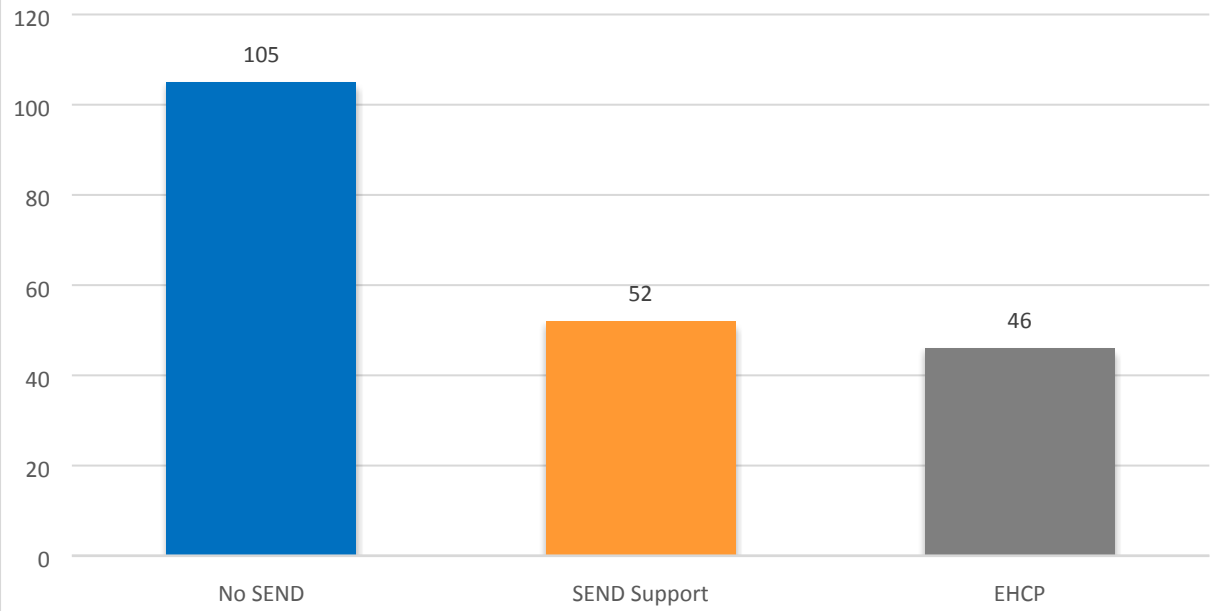
Pupil TDP arrived in England in July 2015 having travelled from Vietnam to the UK. When he arrived in the UK he could not speak English but was a highly motivated learner. Through his interpreter he said he wanted to be a computer engineer when he left school. The VS funded a place at an ESOL summer school, and applied to a local secondary where there was specialist ESOL provision. He continued to be supported with additional tuition, and access to VS led events so he could practise his conversational English. It became increasingly apparent he was a strong mathematician and excelled in computing. Whilst his progress in these subjects was outstanding he continued to struggle with his English. When he did his GCSEs in 2018 he achieved A* in Further Maths, A in computing but E in English and D in English Literature. He has since been supported to improve his English. His progress led to him being referred to a specialist Computer Engineering access course, which when completed, will grant him access to a computer engineering degree course.

8. Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

% Looked After Children in nursery-Year 11 with Special Educational Needs 2018-2019

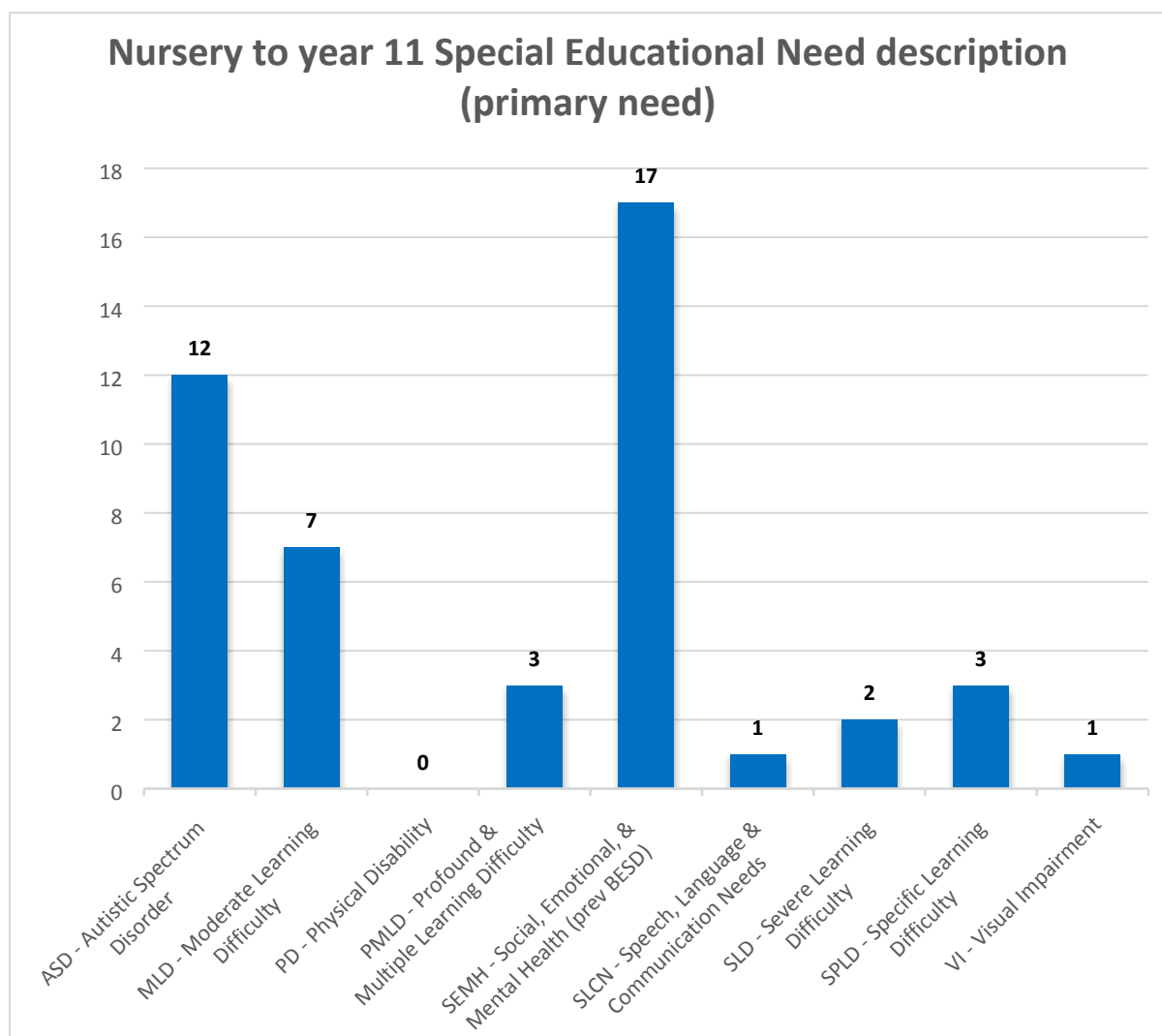


Number of Looked After Children in the Virtual School with Special Educational Needs 2018-2019



8.1. The number of Brent LAC with special educational needs is almost 50% (48%) which is disproportionately high in comparison with the wider school population, although the LAC national figure is higher still at 56%.

23% of Brent LAC have an EHCP compared with 3% of all children and 27% of LAC nationally.



8.2. The largest primary need for all Brent LAC both on SEN support and those with an EHCP continues to be Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD), which is consistent with LAC national data. Nationally black British boys are more likely to have an EHCP for SEMH than other ethnicities; this holds true for Brent LAC with 9 out of 17 EHCPs for SEMH belonging to black British boys, within the statutory cohort. The second largest primary need is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). 50% of this group are black British boys. Across the general population the largest primary need is ASD. The additional needs and support required for a child with an EHCP could be a contributory factor for a higher level of family breakdowns within this cohort of black British boys, hence linking this SEND LAC data to the ethnicity LAC data above.

9. Primary Need

- SEMHD account for 31% of all Brent LAC with an EHCP
- ASD accounts for 20% of all Brent LAC with an EHCP
- Moderate Learning difficulties (MLD) account for 10% of all Brent LAC with an EHCP

Undoubtedly the high percentage of Brent LAC with SEN support or an EHCP is a significant barrier in the achievement of LAC at school, both at KS2 and KS4. The high figure for those with SEMH is also relevant when analysing exclusion figures for Brent LAC, as there is often a correlation between social and emotional mental health and school exclusions.

Brent Virtual School has commissioned external training via Kate Cairns Associates, as above. As well as the central sessions they have delivered for professionals at Brent Civic Centre, there has been a wider offer to a number of Brent schools. With this training, and via the termly Designated Teacher forum, BVS is building an understanding that behaviours which can be regarded as negative in schools, for example, restlessness, difficulty in concentrating, low level anger, an inability to regulate and manage emotion, are often a result of trauma and other adverse childhood experiences. As such, exclusions are not always the appropriate response. BVS recognises the additional needs and complexities for LAC and works closely with partners to ensure that suitable education provision is in place for those with complex needs or challenging behaviour. BVS has also commissioned online training for schools, social care colleagues and carers through AC Education, who offer a range of courses, some of which are specifically focused on SEND:

- ADHD and Conduct Disorders
- Autism
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Physical and Learning Disabilities
- Understanding Dyslexia and Dyspraxia
- Working with Disabled Children and Young People
- Supporting Pupils with Mental Health Difficulties

10. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

10.1. Pupil Premium Grant is received annually from the DfE and depends on the number of children in care, in Brent for that particular year (see table below).

Financial Year	DfE confirmed no. of LAC	Income Budget £	Expenditure Outturn £	Variance £
2020-21	219	(513,555)		
2019-20	219	(503,700)	503,300	(400)
2018-19	223	(512,900)	557,409	44,509
2017-18	284	(539,600)	539,600	0

10.2. The Pupil Premium is managed by the designated virtual school head in the local authority that looks after the child, and used for the benefit of the looked-after child's educational needs as described in their personal education plan. Each local authority virtual school make their own pupil premium payment arrangements to schools for their looked after children. Brent Virtual School allocates £1100 per LAC to schools and retains £1200 to spend on centrally funded interventions, residentials, tutoring and other enrichment activities – to which all Brent LAC are invited, although those placed a long way out of borough cannot attend all London based activities.

10.3. In 2018-2019 the retained, cumulative balance funded the following BVS activity:

- Life Coach to support post-16 transition, and EET destinations for Year 12

- February half term and Easter Holiday revision sessions for Year 6 tests and Year 11 GCSEs, held in Brent
- Additional 1:1 tuition, educational mentoring sessions and additional support to a number of individual LAC who were not in school for a variety of reasons or were between schools due to foster placement changes
- Maths Whizz software purchased to accelerate numeracy progress in KS2/3
- PiXL online subscription to support attainment at KS4 across all subjects
- Annual Brent Celebration Event for LAC, including awards.

11. Mental Health support

- **TaMHS** (targeted adolescent mental health support) provides 3 days a week of counselling sessions to Looked After Children in school their own schools, thereby avoiding unnecessary travel to appointments at NHS clinics, which can result in stigma and reluctance to engage. The TaMHS offer, fully funded by BVS comprises:
 - 1 day at Newman Catholic College supporting UASC with Art therapy and counselling;
 - half a day based at Ark Academy seeing individual LAC for counselling;
 - 1 day for individual referrals at Preston Manor school;
 - Managing behaviour with attachment in mind (MBAM) group for foster carers on Friday mornings in the autumn and spring terms.

“CK has engaged well in sessions and makes good use of the materials; we will continue until the end of the year. “

“I have just started work with A A-K, year 10; she has attended two sessions and will continue until the end of the academic year.”

“FW is an unaccompanied asylum seeker from Afghanistan; he has attended all sessions, and we have agreed to continue until the end of the academic year.”

- **MBAM**, a weekly foster carer therapeutic support group was offered to local Brent foster carers, mainly with primary aged children. Feedback for the group has been extremely positive with a number of carers citing the group and its reflective practice, as the reason why they were able to sustain placements for their foster children, during challenging periods.
- **BVS Educational Psychologist** BVS further uses the Pupil Premium Grant to fund an educational psychologist for 3 days a week. She is able to respond swiftly to EP referrals, and works with Brent LAC both in borough and more widely across neighbouring boroughs. Feedback for this work stream is extremely positive: having an EP as part of the core VS team, allows for fast access to psychology support in a number of areas, including for EHC assessment and/or referral for other services.
- **Mental Health support for Care Leavers** PPG also funds the Safe Base project, which is a mental health and wellbeing helpline for Care Leavers. Initially this project started as a pilot to support Care Leavers at university who were feeling isolated and at risk of non-completion of courses. The success of the helpline, which was recognised in the Ofsted ILACS report of May 2018, has embedded it as a key resource now for all Care leavers. Psycho-therapeutic sessions are offered via telephone, and teleconference, but also face to face if Care Leavers are available in Brent.

12. Promoting the achievement of looked after children (PALAC) programme:

12.1. This was an initiative set up in conjunction with the Institute of Education, London (IOE). This intervention uses evidence based research which indicates that for KS2 and KS4 attainment, the most powerful intervention for LAC (nationally) is to offer 1:1 academic mentoring and tuition in English and Maths but with the stipulation that this must be delivered by the class teacher at school. BVS is in its fourth year of running the intervention, paying for 1:1 tuition at KS2 and KS4, for schools to deliver targeted tuition sessions after school from October to May, in the lead up to GCSEs and KS2 national tests. Additionally, the teachers are trained by the IOE to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to deliver the programme successfully.

In 2019, 7 primary and 5 secondary pupils participated in the PALAC tutoring programme. Of these a third, (4 pupils) achieved the national expected standards.

13. Lexia Core 5 Reading Intervention:

13.1. In February 2017, Brent bought 50 licences for Lexia Core. This is an online reading programme which can be used at school and at home. It is essentially designed to increase the children's reading skills. The programme was first rolled out with schools, but they were initially reluctant to use the programme and the carers did not have the confidence to use it at home. In February 2018, Brent Virtual School employed a Literacy Consultant to visit schools and introduce the programme face to face with teaching staff, carers and children. The Literacy Consultant was able to visit schools and model use of the programme. At the end of the academic year (July 2019), Lexia reported that reading gains had been made by 76% of pupils using the scheme, and 38 progress certificates had been awarded since September 2018. Reports data evidences the most consistent users are making greatest progress.

14. 12. Brent's Looked after Children's Attainment 2018-2019

14.1. Despite the relatively low numbers of LAC in comparison with the wider population of children in Brent, national statistics for Looked after Children allow for some analysis to be made in terms of how well Brent LAC are achieving. The reports for this cohort are based on LAC who have been continuously looked after for at least a year on 31st March 2019 – "the eligible cohort".

15. Early Years Foundation Stage

15.1. Early Years attainment

Good Level Development	100%
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15.2. There was one eligible LAC in the reception cohort in July 2019, who achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD).

16. Year 1 Phonics

16.1. Year 1 Phonics decoding test

Reporting Year 1 Phonics	Achieved Expected Standard (2018-19) (1 child)
Phonics	100%

16.2. The Brent cohort taking the Phonics Decoding Test in June 2019, was one eligible LAC. Brent Virtual School continues to encourage early phonics interventions with all LAC.

17. Key Stage 1 Statutory Attainment (2018-2019)

17.1. Key Stage 1 Statutory Attainment (2018-2019) – Eligible cohort

KS1 COHORT RESULTS	2018-19			2017-18	
	Achieved Expected Standard (2 children)		National LAC	Achieved Expected Standard (note: no pupil met the criteria for eligible data set in this year)	
Subject	LAC	%	%	LAC	%
Reading, Writing and Maths	1/2	50%	38%	0/0	0%
Reading	2/2	100%	52%	0/0	0%
Writing	1/2	50%	43%	0/0	0%
Maths	2/2	100%	49%	0/0	0%

17.2. In 2018 - 2019 the Brent LAC KS1 cohort was small and consisted of two looked after children. The second pupil recorded in the data only narrowly missed achieving the expected standard in his writing. In reception, he was placed on SEN support and received targeted Speech and Language support. In Y1, he was taken off SEN and SALT support, but received extra tuition in maths. In Year 2, the focus was on supporting his reading, spelling and SEMH skills. He was living outside the borough and although his placement had been stable, he had witnessed unsettled periods within the foster home and his siblings leaving the placement. This has had an impact on his SEMH and has resulted in periods where he has been reluctant to attend school. During 2018-2019 Brent Virtual School offered online reading interventions for both of these pupils and they received Letter Box parcels and weekly Story Time Magazines. (See **Appendix 2: Enrichment**).

17.3. Key Stage 2 Statutory Attainment (2018-2019)

17.4. Key Stage 2 Statutory Attainment (2018-2019) - Eligible cohort

KS2 COHORT RESULTS	2018-19			2017-18	
	Achieved Expected Standard (excluding LAC with EHCPs)		National LAC (excl. EHCPs)	Achieved Standard	Expected
Subject	LAC	%	%	LAC	%
Reading, writing, and maths	2/10	20%	37%	1/5	20%
Reading	4/10	40%	49%	3/5	60%

SPAG	3/10	30%	53%	3/5	60%
Writing	3/10	30%	50%	2/5	40%
Maths	3/10	30%	51%	3/5	60%

17.5. Overall, there has been a decrease in the number of Brent LAC who reached the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, although as the data sets are small, they are highly volatile from year to year, and this is a consistent picture with other virtual schools. The outcome data, and the context around these young people, demonstrate the complexity and challenges of the 2019 cohort. The majority of the KS2 cohort was based out of borough.

17.6. **Note:** data set above excludes pupils at special schools and those not entered for KS2 tests due to significant special educational needs. Pupils with EHCPs who were entered for KS2 tests are included, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria (i.e. have been in care for a year or more.)

18. KS2 attainment excluding LAC with EHCPs

18.1. The LAC cohort in Year 6 for 2019 KS2 tests, had a range of Speech and Communication difficulties including Dyslexia, which impacted on pupils' progress in reading and writing. One of the cohort has Ataxia and another pupil had recently been assessed for an EHCP. Although one of the pupils did not achieve the expected standard in their reading, through 1:1 tutoring in their PALAC sessions, they made a good level of progress from their KS1 attainment. KS2 schools and LAC pupils were offered support from a Lexia consultant to participate in the Lexia programme, an online reading intervention. The pupils who used the programme regularly made progress, and achieved the expected standard at the end of the year. 9/10 children received 1:1 tuition and 5/10 of the cohort were part of the PALAC programme.

18.2. Some of these year 6 Brent LAC faced difficult and challenging home circumstances such as family bereavement, multiple changes of placement and changes of school. 50% of the KS2 cohort were attending regular therapy supplied by CAMHs or other therapeutic agencies.

18.3. The Brent cohort who achieved the expected standard in one or more subjects were all in Good or Outstanding schools. Two attended the BVS booster classes at Easter and half term; only three of the pupils attended a Brent primary school.

18.4. All LAC in this cohort benefited from tight monitoring via the PEP process.

18.5. Many of the cohort were using Lexia Core 5 reading software throughout Year 6 as a targeted intervention and receiving additional 1:1 tuition (PALAC) through the project developed alongside the Institute of Education.

18.6. BVS interventions and support for the Year 6 Cohort:

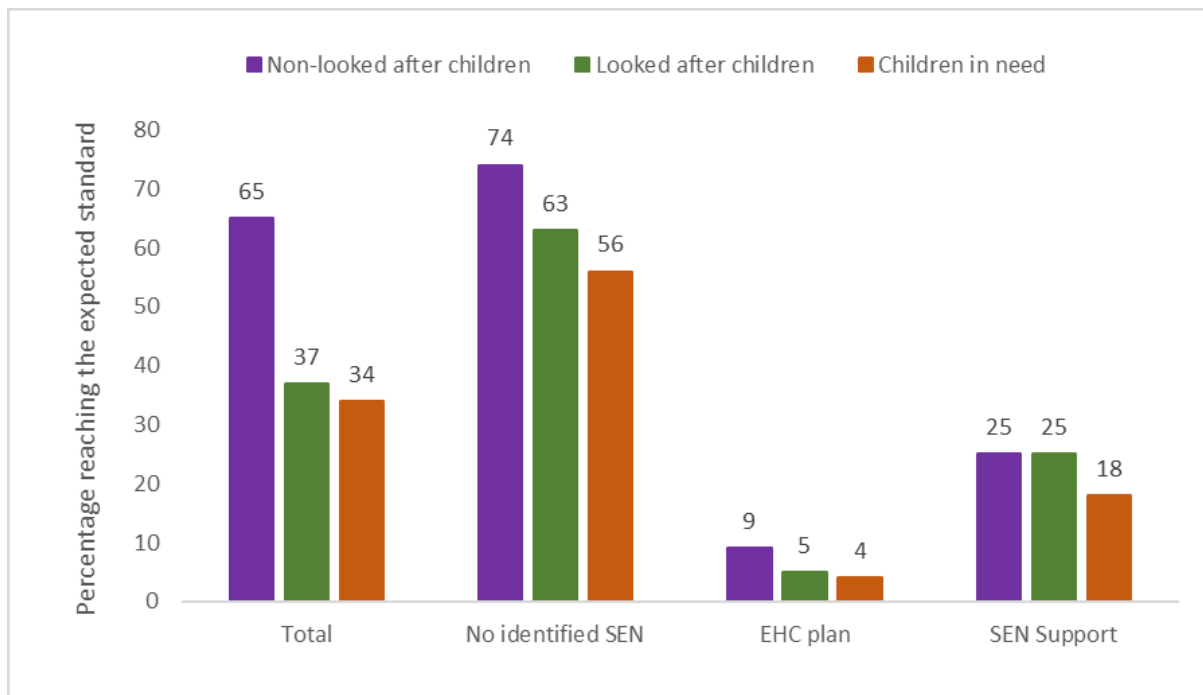
- 2.5 February half term & 4 Easter holiday booster days – subject specialist input
- PALAC and 1:1 tuition for LAC who needed to close the gaps in particular subjects
- Enrichment activities (see Appendix 2)
- primary/secondary transition training for foster carers
- PEP transition meetings for all Year 6 LAC with respective secondary schools
- Learning mentors' support with transitions and placement moves
- Lexia consultant and reading software available to all year 6 – to boost reading scores (BVS bulk purchased 50 licences for use at home or school)

- MBAM (“Managing behaviour with attachment in mind”) foster carers’ therapeutic group to support with understanding behaviours
- All children who do not reach the expected standard at KS2 are eligible for Year 7 Catch-Up funding in their first year at secondary school. BVS ensured that additional support was provided for Year 7 LAC who did not reach the expected standards; support/interventions are documented in their autumn term 2019 PEPs (personal education plans).

18.7. **National LAC data and comparison with non LAC cohort: attainment at Key Stage 2, taken from DfE publication “Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, published 26th March 2020” (DfE)**

18.8. In 2019, 37% of looked after children reached the expected standard in the headline measure reading, writing and maths. This was lower than the percentage reaching the expected standard in individual subjects which ranged from 49% in reading to 53% in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

18.9. **Percentage of children achieving the expected standard in the headline reading, writing and maths measure at key stage 2, for looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need, by SEN, 2019, England.**



18.10. Key Stage 4 Statutory Attainment (2018-2019)

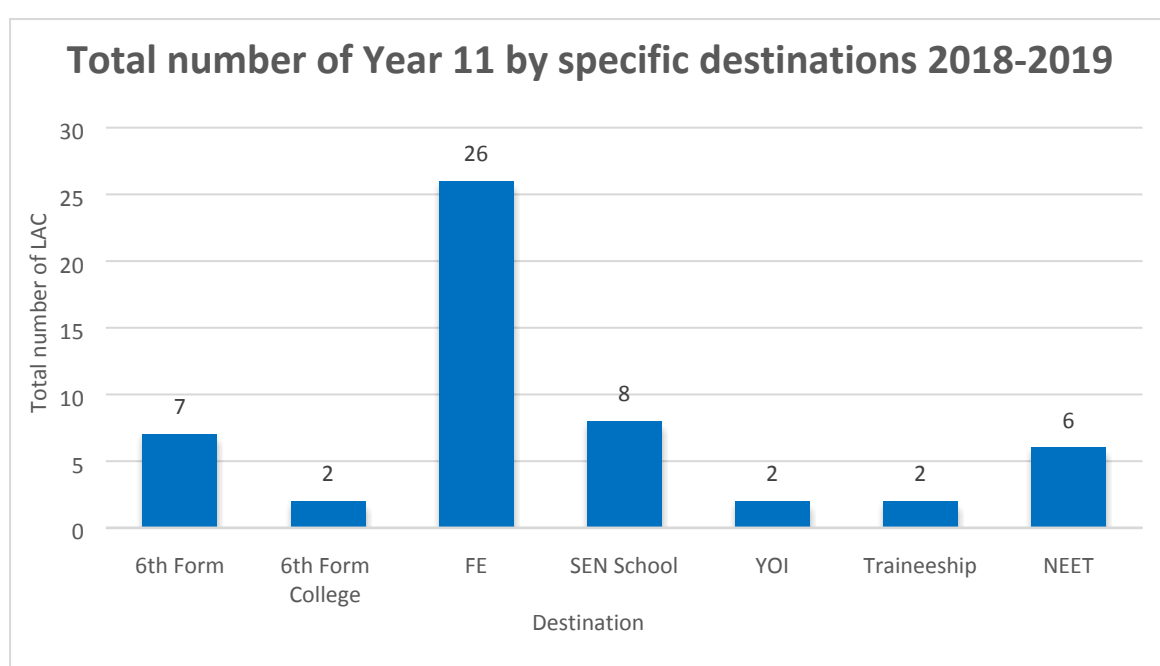
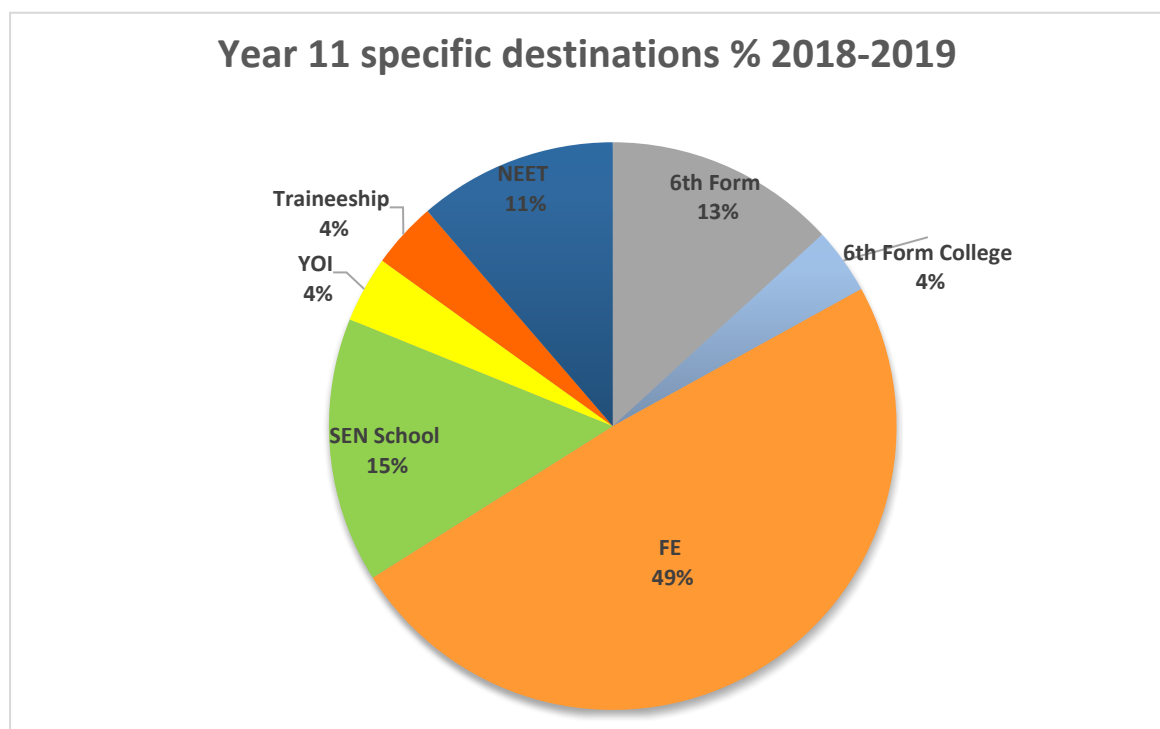
KEY STAGE 4- WHOLE COHORT RESULTS					
New grade levels	Previously known as:	2018/19*		2017/18*	
		LAC	%	LAC	%
5 passes at grades 4-9 incl Eng and Maths	5 A*-C (including English and Maths)	2/29	7%	4/37	11%
4 passes at grades 4-9 incl Eng and Maths	4 A*-C (including English and Maths)	2/29	7%	4/37	11%
5 GCSEs at grades 1-9	5 A-G	13/29	45%	16/37	43%
4 GCSEs at grades 1-9	4 A-G	13/29	45%	18/37	49%
1 GCSE at grade 1-9	1 A-G	19/29	66%	25/37	68%
Achieving 4-9 pass in English and Maths	Eng & Mat A*-C pass	4/29	14%	5/37	14%
<i>*The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (24 LAC)</i>					
KEY STAGE 4- ELIGIBLE COHORT RESULTS					
New grade levels	Previously known as:	2018/19*		2017/18*	
		LAC	%	LAC	%
5 passes at level 4-9 incl Eng and Maths	5 A*-C (including English and Maths)	2/26	8%	3/23	13%
4 passes at level 4-9 incl Eng and Maths	4 A*-C (including English and Maths)	2/26	8%	3/23	13%
5 GCSEs at grades 1-9	5 A-G	13/26	50%	12/23	52%
4 GCSEs at grades 1-9	4 A-G	13/26	50%	13/23	57%
1 GCSE at grade 1-9	1 A-G	19/26	73%	17/23	74%
Achieving 4-9 pass in English and Maths	Eng & Mat A*-C pass	4/26	15%	3/23	13%
<i>*The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (13 LAC)</i>					
KEY STAGE 4 - ELIGIBLE COHORT RESULTS, comparison with LAC national (data source: NCER)					
		Progress 8		9-5	
	Attainment 8		Avg. Score Conf. Int	English & Maths	5+ Inc. English & Maths (pupils achieving A*-C/9-4 in 5 or more subjects including English and Maths)
National LAC	19.1		-1.28 ±0.04	18%	14.0%
Brent Virtual School	12.2		-1.37 ±0.56	15%	8%

18.11. The KS4 eligible cohort comprised 26 pupils:

- Brent LAC attainment at KS4 remains challenging. The newer measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are a useful way of analysing the whole cohort and figures are presented above, comparing Brent with national LAC data.
- Attainment 8 for Brent VS was 12.2 overall, compared with 19.1 for LAC National.
- Progress 8 score for all Brent LAC (eligible cohort) was -1.37, compared with -1.28 for LAC National.
- The 2 KS4 students who achieved 5 Passes at 4-9 had all received either PALAC intervention or tuition throughout their final year (year 11).

- The percentage of students who achieved a pass at grade 4-9 in English and Maths GCSE was 15%. 7 pupils (27% of the cohort) achieved 5 GCSEs at level 3 or above. (Level 4 is the GCSE pass.)
- In previous years there has been a marked correlation between number of years in care and more positive outcomes at KS4. However, for this cohort, some LAC who had been in care for a number of years did achieve positive results, whereas others with comparable time in care, did not.

19. Destinations at Key stage 5



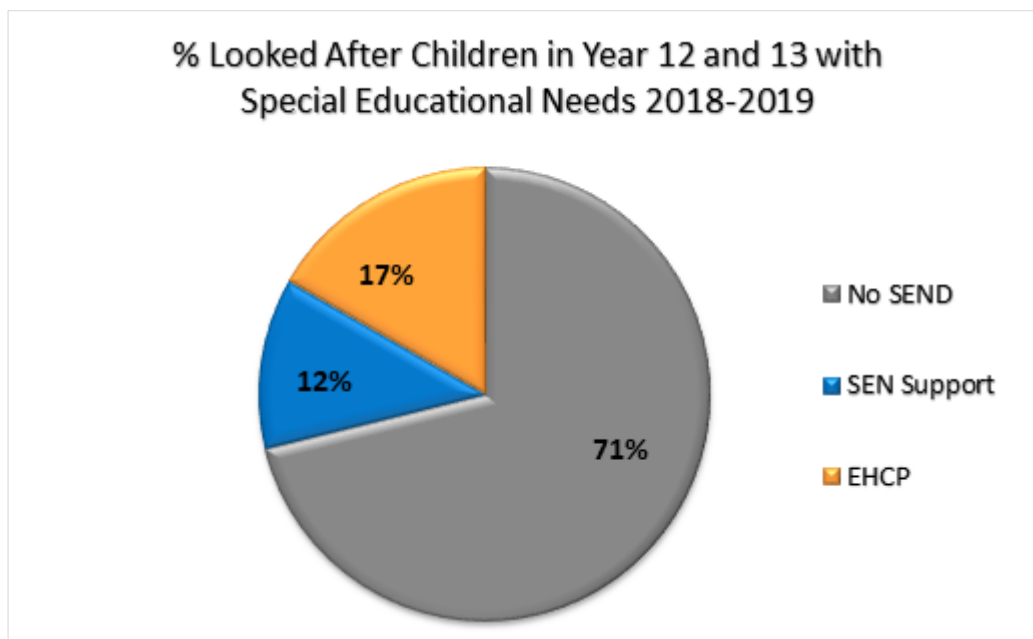
19.1. By July 2019, 89% (47 out of a total of 53) of the year 11 LAC cohort had a September Guarantee.

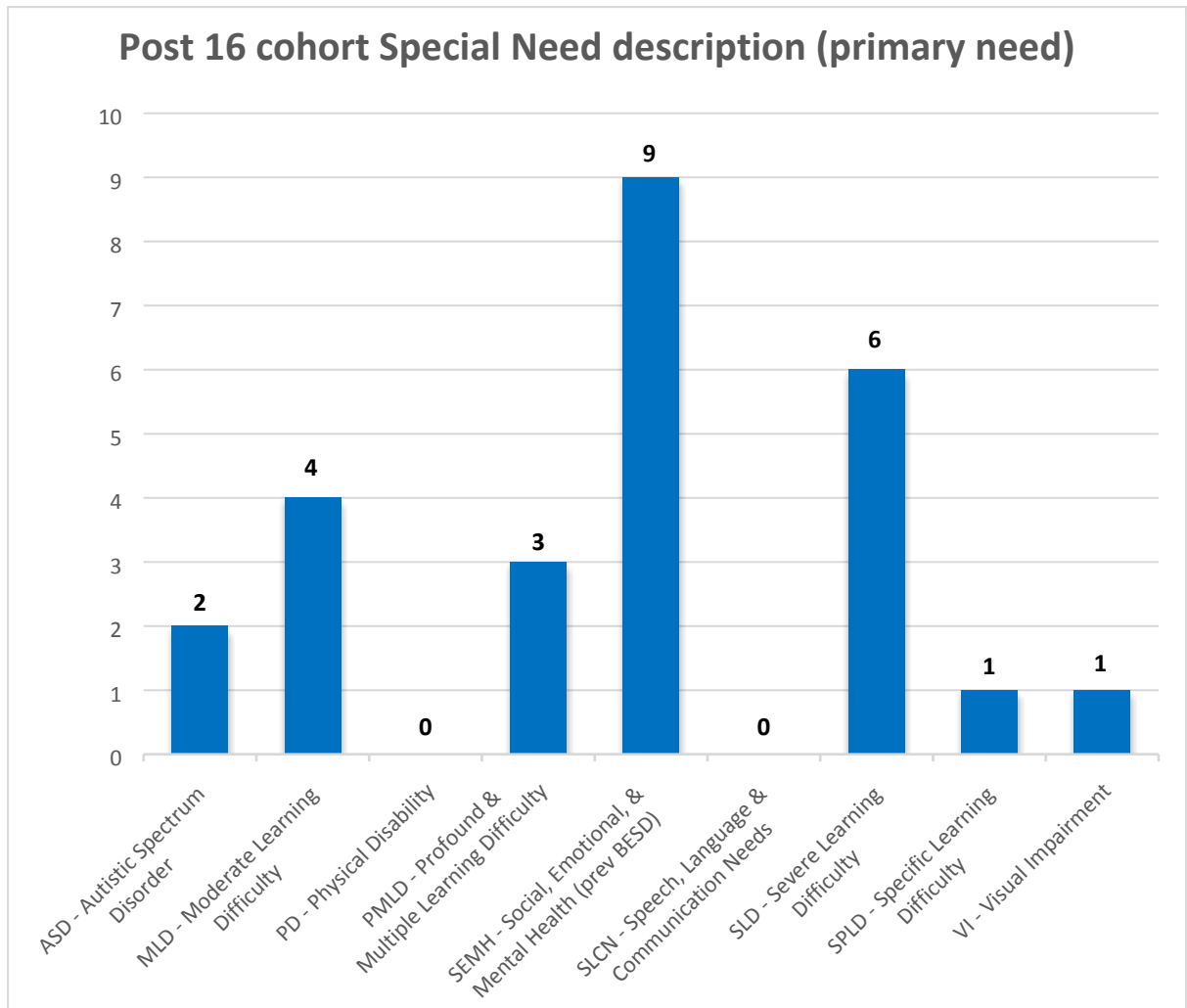
20. Support for Year 11 Brent LAC 2018-19

20.1. BVS Year 11 Life Coach, funded by PPG has maintained strong and effective partnerships with 6th Forms and FE providers to ensure Brent's Year 11 LAC were successfully supported with their transition into KS5. The BVS Life Coach is committed to implementing the BVS transition protocol to reduce the anxiety and stress attached to this life change. He attended several college open days alongside vulnerable students particularly those who did not have a September offer and were at risk of becoming NEET. He supported them with their enrolment and advocated on their behalf to implement their bursaries. The BVS Life Coach continued to work closely with the most vulnerable students into the first term of year 12 to ensure they settled into their courses and were able to sustain EET outcomes.

20.2. The BVS Life Coach was instrumental in supporting a young person placed in a residential unit in Wales back to London and into Further Education. Prior to moving back to London, the Life Coach met with the young person in Wales to explore his aspirations and discuss courses/possible FE destinations in London. On his return to London, the BVS Life Coach worked with the young person to enrol them on a Foundation programme at a local college. The Life Coach worked closely with the professional network to ensure the young person did not re-engage in offending behaviour with known gang associates. The BVS Life Coach supported the young person to re-establish meaningful relationships with siblings by organising and supervising family activities.

21. Post 16 with special educational needs





21.1. The high number of LAC pupils with EHCPs in this post 16 cohort, undoubtedly contributes to the challenge of securing and sustaining a college place, with longer term EET outcomes. Brent Virtual School continues to offer intensive support to the Post 16 cohort through to the end of Year 13; for some students this support may also continue into Year 14.

22. Post 16 EET/NEET

22.1. NEET figures decreased by 15% for the Year 12 cohort, and by 10% for Year 13, based on data from the previous academic year: the increased focus and additional staffing to support this post 16 cohort was evident in the increased EET figure and also in the number/frequency of completed PEPs for this age-group.

23. Exclusions

23.1. Exclusions (2018-2019)

Exclusion Data			
	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Total number of fixed term exclusions- days	169.5	122.5	313

Number of pupils excluded- fixed term	26	21	29
Total number of permanent exclusions	0	0	0

23.2. There were no permanent exclusions for Brent LAC in 2018 – 2019: this continued the trend of previous years. Intensive work with schools, social care colleagues and carers has ensured that BVS has supported students in a timely manner, such that alternative sanctions have been put in place, rather than permanent exclusions. The total number of days lost to fixed term exclusions has increased based on the previous year's figures, as has the number of students with a fixed term exclusion (FTE). The number of days lost due to FTEs increased by 47 days, mainly due to 3 LAC who presented with considerable difficulties over the academic year and together accrued a total of 55 days lost due to FTE. Two of these students attended Brent secondary schools and BVS worked closely with them to support the re-engagement of these students. This included but was not limited to meetings between BVS deputy and SLT, advisory teachers supporting with reintegration meetings, and Brent VS advisory teacher ensuring that one student's SEND was recognised as a key factor in her behaviour and as a result, the school adopting other more supportive approaches. Support was also in place for the LAC placed out of borough, which included mentoring, 1:1 tuition, and VS advocacy on behalf of the young person, to ensure that not all behaviours led to FTEs.

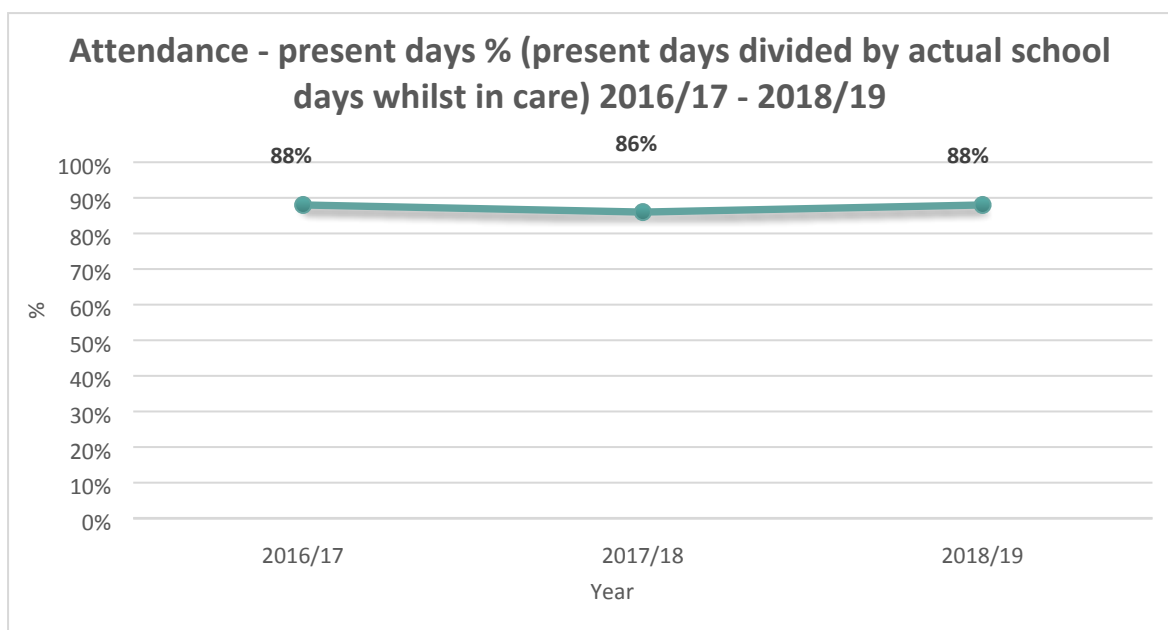
24. Monitoring Attendance

24.1. Since April 2012 the Welfare Call Service has been commissioned by the BVS to provide accurate data that enables it to monitor attendance, punctuality and exclusions for Brent LAC, wherever they live. An important aspect of the service is the daily call to each school attended by Brent LAC. Once an attendance issue is raised, the Welfare Call Service ascertains whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the type of absence, e.g. medical, exclusion, as well as alerting both the social worker and the carer.

24.2. BVS is able to access regular datasets regarding young people's attendance at primary, secondary, special and residential schools across the country. Welfare Call reports are sent daily to BVS. If any unusual absences or significant concerns are noted, the relevant advisory teacher will send an alert to the social worker, their manager and any involved person, for further investigation.

24.3. A rigorous attendance improvement plan has been in place since the ILACS in May 2018 when attendance was highlighted as an area for improvement in an otherwise very positive Ofsted inspection. This plan has driven incremental change including immediate challenge to carers if they request to take holidays during school terms.

24.4. Although attendance for Brent LAC remains a challenge, particularly at KS4, there has been a significant 2% increase since the previous year for all statutory aged LAC. The lower percentage attendance rate at key stage 4 reflects the increased challenge presented by larger numbers of older children entering the care system late. In many cases poor school attendance is already ingrained, and it can take several months if not years for LAC to realise the need to engage with the education provision on offer, and to recognise the difference that exams can make to individual EET pathways. Persistent Absence data is discussed in a monthly meeting with the Head of LAC and Permanency. Where attendance is an issue, BVS works with social care colleagues to address underlying issues and if required, uses Pupil Premium funding for targeted educational mentoring.



25. PEP completion

- 25.1. PEP completion rates remained at 96% throughout the academic year 2018 -2019 for the statutory cohort. PEP completion and quality assurance is a statutory requirement for all virtual schools and they are one of the main tools for monitoring attainment, progress and attendance. All statutory children have three PEPs throughout the year following the three academic terms. Where a child comes into care during the academic year a PEP is arranged within the first 10 days of them becoming LAC.
- 25.2. Brent Virtual School undertakes PEP audits throughout the year, which have a range of foci such as SEND or post-16. PEPs are moderated termly by the BVS team and externally by other VS teams to check for consistency and to allow for learning and development. PEP audits are also conducted termly, with a range of senior managers, including Director of Children's Services. Learning is shared with all LAC advisory teachers. The use of PEP audit notes on Welfare Call has been improved as a result of PEP audits.

26. Training and Advice

- 26.1. The Virtual School staff provide a comprehensive training programme to a range of professionals working with vulnerable students including:
- Designated Teachers (termly forums and annual conference run in conjunction with KCA)
 - Safeguarding Teams within schools
 - School Governors
 - Social Workers, and where required, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)
 - Foster Carers

Appendix 1 contains full training details.

27. Priorities for 2019-2020:

- Continue work with John Lyons foundation and other charities/groups to offer a full and varied enrichment offer to all Brent LAC, including those who are placed outside of Greater London.
- Continue to work to raise LAC school attendance, particularly at KS4.

- Build relationships with local schools and utilise these to offer more local tuition with trained teachers at both Key stage 2 and Key stage 4.
- Work collaboratively and creatively with IofE colleagues on the PALAC programme to boost attainment at KS4.
- Continue with “re-takes” programme for Year 12: as Corporate Parents, to ensure LAC have the chance to re-sit GCSEs where they have just missed the pass mark. (Build bank of reliable, quality assured tutors.)
- Continue work with post-16 students to ensure improvement in PEP completion and further reduction in NEET figure.
- PEP quality: ensure the findings of PEP audits build improved quality of PEPs; ensure PEP personal targets are achievable for all LAC.