	<p align="center">Corporate Parenting Committee 22 April 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</p>
	<p align="center">Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - Cllr Gwen Grahl</p>
<p align="center">Brent Virtual School for Looked After Children Annual Report September 2022 – August 2023</p>	

Wards Affected:	ALL
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Michaela Richards Acting Head Teacher – Brent Virtual School Michaela.Richards@brent.gov.uk

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 (BVS) during the academic year 2022-2023 in monitoring and supporting looked after children to achieve the best possible educational outcomes. Data contained in this report is for looked after children who were in the care of Brent Council for the academic year 2022-2023, and the report includes outcomes for all children who have been in care for a year or more as of 31 March 2023 (“the eligible cohort”).¹

1.2 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

This report sets out the work of the virtual school, the achievement of Brent’s looked after children and the developments that have taken place in the reporting period. The work of the virtual school contributes to the following borough priorities:

- **The Best Start in Life**
- **Prosperity and Stability**
- **A Healthier Brent**
- **Thriving Communities**

¹ 1.1 The DfE sets the eligible cohort for reporting on external examinations as at least 13 months before the day of the first exam. This is acknowledgement of services requiring time to be able to support and affect positive changes.

2.0 Context

2.1 At the end of the academic year in July 2023, 345 children and young people were on roll with the BVS. 24 were under four-year-olds, 195 pupils were aged 4-16 years old and 126 were 16–18-year-olds. Throughout the course of the academic year this number will have fluctuated by as much as 10% in either direction due to the nature of the cohort.

2.2 The BVS operates as a multi-disciplinary team supporting young people in care to achieve the very best they can. The team comprises of advisory staff (both teaching and non-teaching), an educational psychologist, education officers, a Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and year 11 education officer, a post-16 advisor, an enrichment coordinator and a performance officer. The team draws on the expertise of colleagues across the Inclusion Service as well as the additional services contracted by the local authority, such as Prospects (careers advice) and Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST). The team works closely with social workers and foster carers, as well as school and setting staff.

2.3 The priorities for BVS in 2022/23 were:

- a) To provide online surgeries for designated teachers on improving the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and the use of the pupil premium to raise aspirations, targeting schools and settings where the need for additional support has been identified (Section 8).
- b) To continue to provide an enrichment curriculum both online and onsite, drawing in expertise as required and rooting this into the interests of looked after children (sections 11 and 12)
- c) To increase direct work by the advisory teachers and life coaches in school and colleges where young people are experiencing challenges to remain positively engaged (sections 3, 5 and 10)
- d) To establish a set of measures to evaluate the impact of the BVS Extended Duties Team (ExDT). (Section 13)
- e) To review the multidisciplinary support that aims to ensure effective earlier identification of SEND needs in tandem with the new guidance for Virtual Schools in supporting the educational outcomes for all children with a social worker (sections 6 and 13).

2.4 The BVS was successful in delivering against the five priorities during the academic year 2022/23, the details of which are contained in the relevant sections of the main body of the report.

3.0 Attendance

3.1 At the end of 2022/23 academic year the school attendance for Looked After Children in KS1 and KS2 (Primary) was 95% compared to 93.68% in 2021/22. School attendance at KS3 and KS4 (Secondary) was 84%, compared to 82.42% in 2021/22. LAC Attendance for the last academic year has increased in line with pre-pandemic figures and are, along with the general population figures, some of the highest figures nationally.

3.2 To maintain and increase attendance, the following actions are taken:

- Monitoring attendance via an online attendance collection platform

- Making attendance a priority target on all PEPs where attendance is identified as a cause for concern.
 - Regular meetings with LAC and Permanency Service managers to discuss attendance and support where needed.
 - Fortnightly attendance meetings where below 95% attendance is flagged and discussed as well as serious concerns of below 90%.
 - Early intervention where attendance is between 95% and 90% is highlighted as a concern.
 - Working collaboratively with Education Welfare Service (EWS) to monitor attendance.
- 3.3** At any one time, there will be small number of looked after children or young people who are awaiting a mainstream school place, a special school place or an appropriate alternative provision. This will be for several reasons: for example, children may have newly arrived from abroad as an unaccompanied minor (UASC) for whom an age assessment is required; or children may be placed into care as an emergency; or they have had a change of care placement at short notice. In a small number of cases, school placements break down and the child or young person may not yet have been allocated a new school place. Throughout the academic year 2022/23 this number fluctuated between 8 at the highest point down to 0.
- 3.4** To ensure that children who are between school placements do not miss education, the BVS arranges 1:1 tuition for the core subjects of English and maths, which is funded by the Pupil Premium Grant. This usually takes place in the home setting, although older pupils may be taught in their local library. For some LAC, particularly those who have missed periods of schooling prior to care, mentoring is commissioned to prepare and support them back into education.
- 3.5** Children not on a school roll are monitored at fortnightly meetings, which ensure these pupils are receiving suitable education in the interim period and that timely action is being taken to secure a school place. The majority of Brent LAC are placed into an appropriate education setting within the statutory timescale (20 days). For children where there is challenging placement stability or vulnerability issues, the BVS leadership team meets with LACP leadership team to ensure a holistic approach is taken to enable the child to access education.

4.0 Exclusions

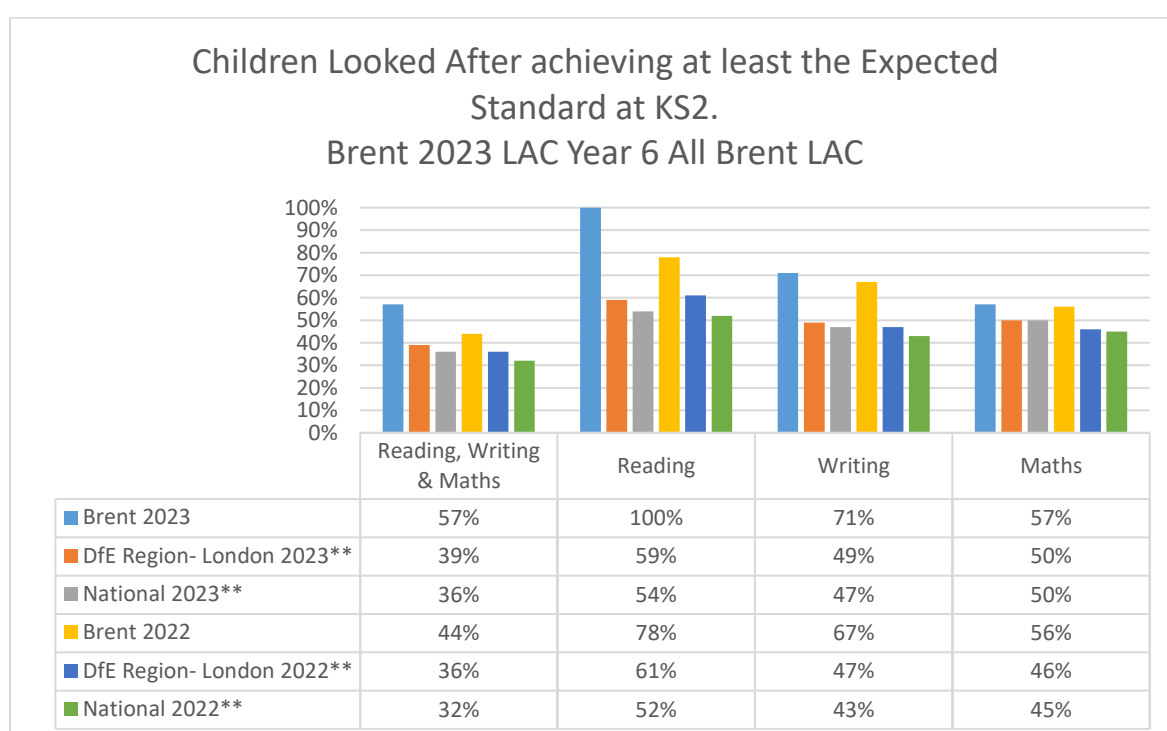
- 4.1** There was an increase in fixed term exclusions during the academic year 2022/23 in comparison with the situation in the previous two academic years (27 compared to 21 in 2021/22 and 16 in 2020/21), which compares to before the pandemic (26 in 2018/19). The BVS has actively engaged with schools where a young person's behaviour has been identified as a barrier to achievement. Additionally, the BVS has arranged respite provision, extra support in the classroom or outside of school and for those pupils on a pathway to a permanent exclusion a managed move has been arranged. As with previous years there have not been any permanent exclusions for looked after children. This is due to the close partnership working with schools, designated teachers, foster carers and social workers, addressing problems before they arise with the oversight of the BVS leadership team.

5.0 Progress and Attainment

5.1 Key Stage 2: The academic year 22/23 was the second year of testing since the pandemic and the results for the whole cohort are positive for all measures, showing an increase from last year's results. In 2022/23 Brent LAC outperformed LAC regionally and nationally for the same measures (Table 1). It should, however, be noted that the number of children in the cohort is relatively small, which means that one or two children can have a significant impact either way on results.

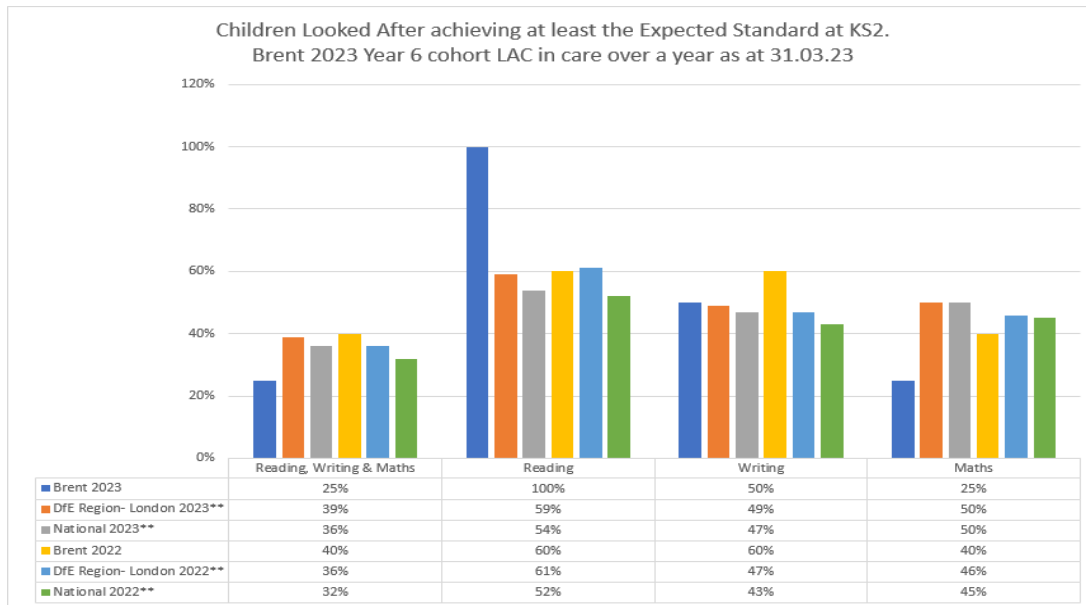
5.2 At the time of the 2023 KS2 tests, Brent had 10 LAC in Year 6, of whom there are results for seven children. Two of the three children for whom there are no results did not sit KS2 tests due to their level of SEND (both have an Education, Health, and Care Plan). Table 2 below captures the outcomes for the seven children.

Table 1: **2023 KS2 All CLA in KS2 cohort**



5.3 Of the whole cohort of 10 children, seven had been in care for at least a year on 31 March 2023 (the 'eligible cohort'). Considering the two children with an ECHP who were not tested, Table 2 presents the results for five children who had been in care for at least a year. There was a significant increase in the reading results for this cohort compared to Brent LAC in 2021/22 and against the local and national measures. In comparison, there was a significant decrease in the maths results from the previous year and also against current and previous regional and national data for LAC. The results for writing are fairly comparable with all measures. Whilst it is pleasing to see the increase in the reading results, which demonstrate that BVS literacy interventions have had impact, it highlights that there is a need for further maths support and therefore will be a focus for the next academic year.

Table 2: 2023 KS2 CLA in care at least one year at 31/03/2023



5.4 BVS has always supported tuition as a time limited intervention for students who require this, in addition to booster programmes for year groups sitting external exams (Year 6 and Year 11) have been organised for the February half term and the Easter holidays. Following the pandemic additional catch-up funding was received from the DfE and this was used to further expand the offer. To support achievement in numeracy and literacy, during 2022/23, as with previous academic years, the BVS subscribed to the Letterbox Club – a subscription that delivers books and educational games to children aged 5 to 12 monthly. Subscription to Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library that offers a similar programme to Letterbox covers babies to 4 years old. Online book club led by the primary advisory teacher, Promoting the Achievement of Looked after Children (PALAC), MathsWhizz (software subscription), and individual tuition or group intervention. In total 43 Children engaged in either booster or PALAC sessions, whilst a further 31 had access to MathsWhizz and/or Literacy subscriptions during the academic year. The results indicate that the focus on literacy has been effective. As with the enrichment programmes a statistical correlation is not readily available for these activities. However, all are valuable resources in supporting children’s development as recognised through the PEP process and feedback from carers and young people.

KS2 Case Study BH

BH is a Year 7 Pupil. There were concerns raised in Year 6 when his attendance dipped under 80%, so targets aimed at improving his attendance were agreed at his Spring PEP. An analysis of his attendance patterns revealed a reluctance to come to school, always on a Monday.

BVS worked with his primary school and enlisted the help of a mentor. The school allocated him a learning mentor at the same time and this had a positive impact on BH's attitude during the early part of the Summer Term. This was, however, short-lived as a familial bereavement and a change of teacher impacted negatively on him and he stopped coming into school.

A robust transition plan was devised by the BVS in consultation with social care, the school and, crucially, BH, with a focus on improving his attendance incrementally. This including him spending time at his allocated secondary school, agreement for Daily Check-ins with a senior member of staff, engaging him in photography and linking his access to this to his attendance, transition work with his learning mentor and BH meeting with an EP to devise a plan that gave him a sense of control.

At the end of the summer term his attendance, despite rising was still only 87.04%. BH moved to his secondary school in September. He initially struggled to attend school but his secondary school would collect him from home and take him to school and on the days where he was refusing to attend they sent a teacher to his home to educate him off-site to avoid gaps in his learning. In addition, his learning mentor worked on developing a learning mind-set with the BVS chairing monthly attendance review meetings. At the end of his first year in his secondary school he finished the school year with his attendance at 95.43%.

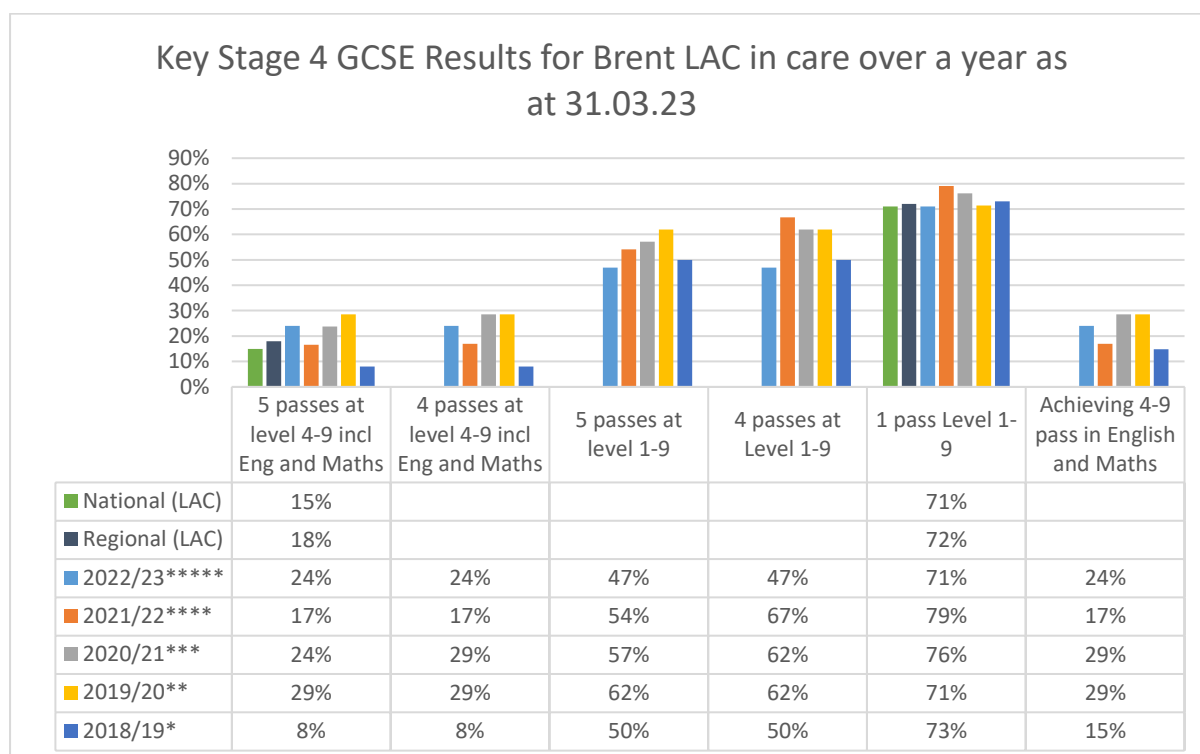
5.5 Key Stage 4: At the end of the academic year 2022/23 there were 38 Year 11 students of whom 8 were UASC. It is worth noting that there has been a significant decrease in this cohort from the previous year reflecting a trend over the past 4 years (60 Year 11 students of whom 23 were UASC in 2021/22). The Statistical First Release (SFR eligible cohort) was 30 of whom 13 were either UASC who did not sit external examinations or children with an EHCP and significant needs which meant that they did not sit exams. 17 students sat exams and counted in the SFR results.

5.6 To support both the primary and secondary cohorts, Pupil Premium funding was utilised in several ways. Primarily funding was sent to all schools to ensure that PEP targets were achieved. The funding that was retained by the virtual school supported the enrichment programme and several 'Aim higher' activities, such as university visits, residentials and trips to key government offices (Parliament and 10 Downing Street). A number of children accessed mentoring and/or tuition at pertinent times of the year. As well as some of the more generic interventions, the virtual school also funded bespoke interventions, where there was evidence that these could support improved outcomes and individual aspirations, such as subscriptions to National Geographic for a child who expressed an interest in the natural world and geography, music software for a young person who was identified as a talented musician and cricket whites and club membership for a talented cricketer.

5.7 The number of LAC achieving the headline figures of 5 passes at level 4-9 including English and maths has remained the same as in the previous academic year. Over the past 5 years there has been a positive increase in this measure from the 7% pass rate in 2018/19. In 2019/20 when results were based on teacher assessments there was a considerable spike to 28% but it is encouraging to see in the years following the pandemic and with the return to public examinations that the results have continued to hover in the 20% region. This is a marked improvement on the pre-pandemic period. Brent continues to compare favourably to LAC national and regional figures for the headline measure of 5 passes at level 4-9 including English and maths.

5.8 24% of the 'eligible cohort' achieved 5 passes at level 4-9 including English and maths in comparison to 17% in 2021/22. As with the whole cohort there has been a positive increase in this measure over the past 5 years. BVS continues to work with Pan London colleagues and research partners to understand the best ways to support Brent LAC to reach this measure, as it influences their further education opportunities and outcomes as adults.

Table 3: Achievement rates for GCSEs 2018/19-2022/23



*The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN/disabilities and ESOL (24 LAC) total cohort-53

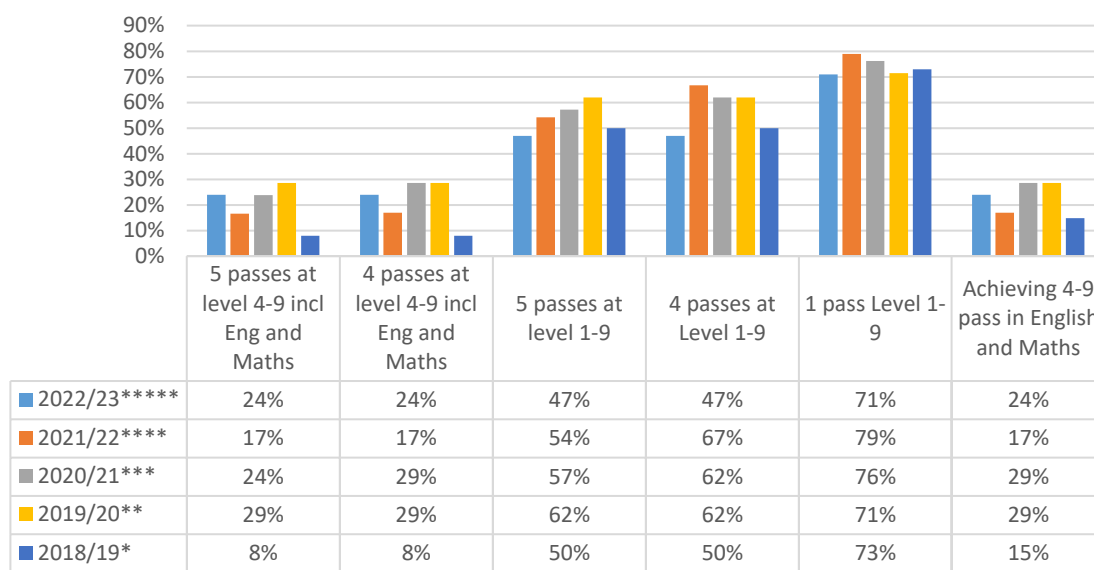
**The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN/disabilities and ESOL (7 LAC) total cohort-36

***The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN/disabilities and ESOL (9 LAC) total cohort-43

****The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN/disabilities and ESOL (22 LAC) total cohort-57

*****The above data is for the whole LAC cohort minus SEN/disabilities and ESOL (10 LAC) total cohort- 35

Key Stage 4 GCSE Results for Brent LAC in care over a year as at 31.03.23



*The above data is for the eligible LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (13 LAC)

**The above data is for the eligible LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (2 LAC)

***The above data is for the eligible LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (3 LAC)

****The above data is for the eligible LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (10 LAC)

*****The above data is for the eligible LAC cohort minus SEN and ESOL (5 LAC)

5.9 Of the five pupils who had been in care for at least a year and made expected progress at KS4, achieving 5 passes at level 4-9 including English and Maths, three had been in long term care ranging from 6 -13 years and all three were in care at the end of KS2. Two achieved expected standards in Reading, Writing and Maths and one pupil achieved the expected measure in reading and writing but slightly missed the expected measure in Maths. This narrative almost mirrors the narrative in 2021/22 and clearly shows the correlation between long term care, positive key stage two results, and outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4. Again, as with last year's report all five pupils were in stable and supportive foster care placements for five years or longer. This clearly show the correlation between placement stability: "stable homes, built on love" and positive education outcomes.

5.10 All five pupils who achieved expected outcomes at Level 4-9 passes including English and maths had 1:1 tutoring in the core subject/s either delivered in school, externally through the Lumina programme in partnership with Harrow School or sourced using pupil premium funding. Whilst one pupil had an EHCP, the other four had no SEN needs and maintained positive attendance throughout Key Stage 4. Three of the five were regular attendees on the BVS enrichment programme. Feedback from one carer on results day validated the approach:

"All the extra-curricular activities that you have provided for her definitely made the difference."

5.11 There were six students who did not achieve any GCSE passes who were eligible for entry. One of the prevailing and common themes for these students were contextual

safeguarding concerns and missing episodes which understandably impacted on the consistency of their education. For some of these students there were also mental health needs that impacted on school attendance and subsequently exam entry. All six students received additional support throughout Year 11 to help them to reengage in education and support their needs, but this did not lead to successful outcomes. In contrast with the students who did achieve at GCSE, all six students had been in care for 3 years or less ranging from 3 months (at the time of first exams) to 3 years. All six students were either placed in semi-independent provisions or residential homes and only two achieved the expected levels at Key Stage 2 in reading and writing only. Placement type does not necessarily correlate with poorer outcomes, however the length of time in care does as it means a shorter period of stability prior to exams.

Key Stage 4 Case Study DT

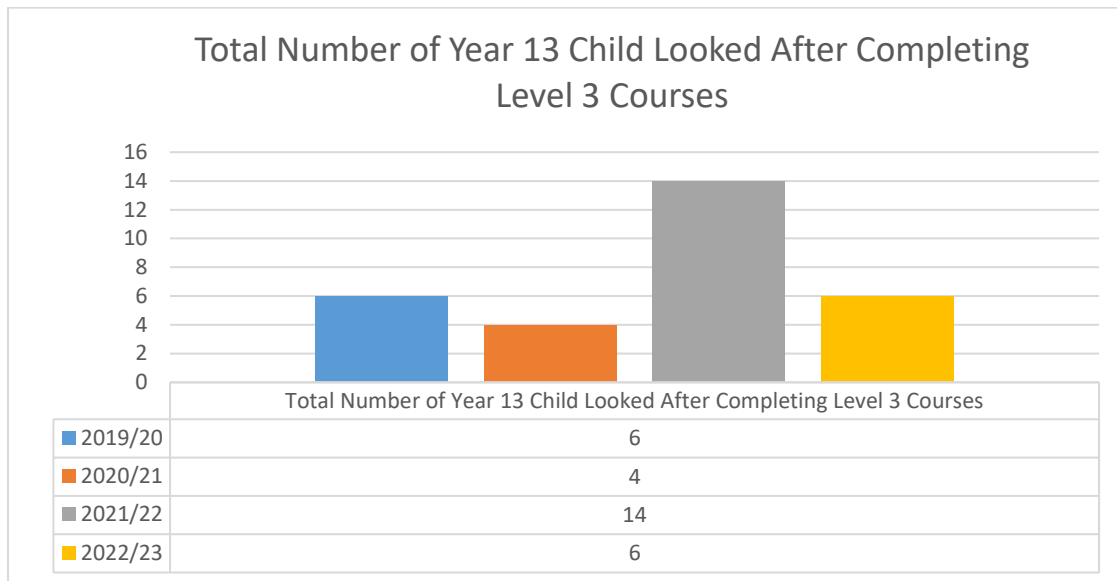
DT is one of a set of twins. He came into care because of significant neglect and physical abuse. At the time he came into care he had an EHCP for Social Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD). Shortly after coming into care his primary school placed him on a 45-day exclusion as an alternative to permanently excluding him. It was agreed locally to move him and siblings to their paternal grandparents who lived outside London. DT found it difficult to settle into his new school, but they offered outstanding pastoral support. They quickly identified that he would need support to better access the curriculum in place. Despite this support his KS2 results were below the expected standards. He successfully transitioned to Secondary School and did well but after being there for almost three years, amid allegations of bullying, he was moved to another school near his home. The School and Virtual School put in place an extensive support package which met his academic and emotional well-being needs. At the end of KS4 he exceeded his expectations by gaining Grade 4s in both English and Maths as well as BTECs in Sport and Business and Enterprise.

- 5.12** Identifying these trends are key to the early intervention programme that BVS puts in place for young people. BVS also recognises that for some young people, particularly those new to care, it may not be appropriate for some interventions to take place immediately. Some young people are not of statutory school age when they are ready to engage which is why post-16 funding has been championed by virtual schools for several years. With the trial funding that was agreed in 2022/23, BVS are hopeful that for some young people who were unable to engage positively in education at Key Stage 4, with further support they will achieve positive outcomes in in Key Stage 5.
- 5.13 Post-16:** The number of post-16 young people that were in education, employment, or training (EET) at the end of the academic year 2022/23 is in line with the same reporting period last year (80%). There were regular meetings between the BVS Post-16 Advisor, the Performance Data Officer, and Prospects advisors to review the position of all students and to ensure those young people who were NEET were receiving direct and targeted support. During the academic year 2022/23 a bespoke programme focused on the harder to reach NEET cohort was developed with the view to support these young people into EET engagement. Whilst the early stages of the programme appeared positive the engagement was not at the anticipated level. Through our self-evaluation processes one of the key areas identified as a reason for non-engagement was the lack

of collaboration with young people in the development of the programme. This is a target for the academic year 2023/24 and the plan is to relaunch the programme in the summer term.

5.14 There were 6 Year 13 students who completed Level 3 courses, which is a decrease on the previous academic year. It is of note though that the cohort size also decreased from 93 to 70. Despite this the number is still higher than pre pandemic numbers. Of the six, one is currently at university whilst four are in employment.

Table 4 Total Number of Year 13 Child Looked After Completing Level 3 Courses



Post-16 Case Study AA

AA came into care following a breakdown in an adoptive placement, when he was 6 years of age, after his adoptive mother felt she could no longer cope with his behaviour. He was diagnosed with ADHD and prescribed medication to help him manage his emotions and behaviour better, whilst at his mainstream primary school, he was issued an EHCP with a recommendation that he attend a special school.

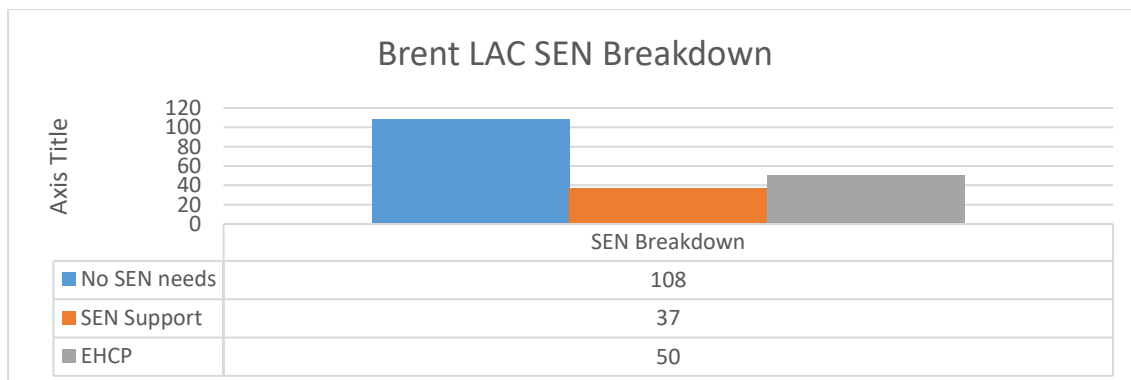
He started at a specialist SEMH School in Hillingdon. Over the next three and a half years he had six placement breakdowns and moves causing him to be moved to new placements and new schools in various parts of the England. In Year 9 he was placed in a residential placement and started to attend their linked SEMH School. He was settled in this placement until this long-term residential placement broke down due to him not being safe as he went missing and exploited substances resulting in emergency hospital admission. He was moved to to another city due to risk of associations and to prevent him from getting involved in county lines/ gangs. Despite this his absconding escalated and he was not attending school. He was eventually found after a lengthy period and was then moved to another location.

Initially there were concerns that he might abscond again from his new placement, but a support plan devised in conjunction with social care, the placement and virtual school provided him with a significant support plan, including close monitoring by placement staff, mentoring, tutoring, whilst we sought him a school place, and frequent contact with his S/W. Although there were a few significant negative incidents at the start, he began to positively engage. In late 2020, he was allocated a school place at a small but supportive SEMH school.

He continued to have regular conversations with his former P/A whom he learned to trust and is now confident enough to ring his former Advisory Teacher in the Virtual School if he wants to discuss his education. He can reflect on some of his previous behaviours and has made a real effort to engage with the professionals supporting him. He has now left care and is currently attending University in the Midlands, where he is making good progress on his course.

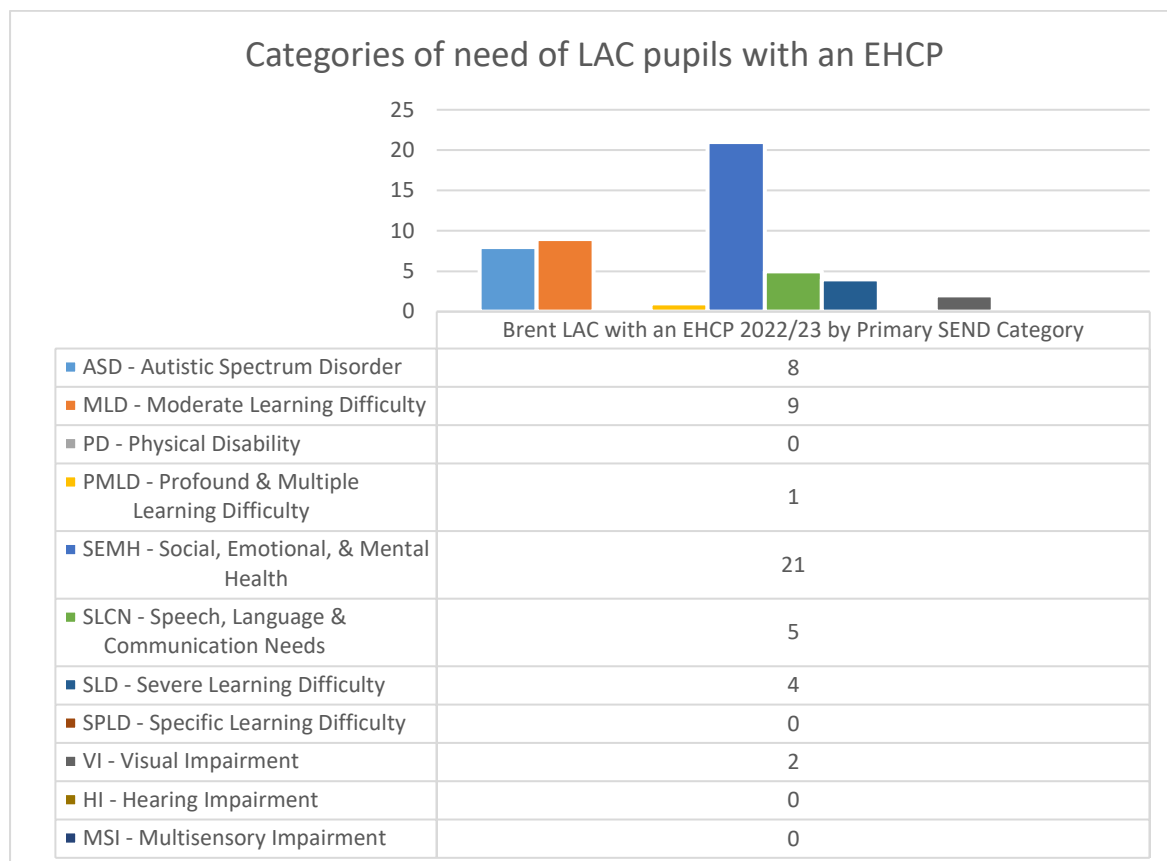
6.0 SEND

- 6.1 The number of statutory aged young people in care under the BVS with an EHCP is 50 26% of the cohort in comparison to the general population which is 3.5%. 6 of this group were in residential settings and 25 were placed in SEN special schools and 28 of 31 were educated outside of the borough.



6.2 Table 4 outlines the categories of need of LAC pupils with an EHCP. The highest area of need in the LAC cohort is social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). These figures reflect the vulnerability of young people becoming LAC, and the complex trauma and challenging environments many experienced prior to becoming LAC.

Table 4 Categories of need of LAC pupils with an EHCP



7.0 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

7.1 9 new statutory aged UASC entered the care system in the academic year 2022/23, compared to 18 in 2021/22. All but one of these young people were in Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 5, 12 UASC entered the care system during 2022/23 compared to 36 the previous academic year. There is a robust programme in place for new arrivals that includes tuition, enrichment and signposting to local community groups and activities.

7.2 Most UASC are disapplied from KS4 assessments as new arrivals into the country. The majority are placed into local ESOL provision in a school or college setting. Many progress onto further education and for some higher education. Given that most UASC enter the care system in Key Stage 4 or 5 it is imperative that post 16 funding is in place to support their education and aspirations.

UASC/Care leaver Case Study TDP

TDP arrived in England from Vietnam. 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, where he could start to acquire English. He was placed in a school, local to his placement and accessed their ESOL provision. He continued to be supported with tuition provided, a laptop purchased and access to VS led events so he could practise his conversational English.

TDP became increasingly apparent he was a gifted 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 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.

8.0 ePEP

8.1 The percentage of PEPs completed over the academic year remained within the 92-95% range. As the eGov PEP system has been operational for two academic years, there has been an improvement in the consistency of PEP completion and also the overall standard. The autumn term Designated Teacher forum was focused on PEP quality and pupil premium targets, which set the tone for the academic year. Monthly PEP training is ongoing for new social workers and where necessary individual training was also offered.

8.2 The quality of PEPs is reviewed each term and the foci changes dependent on current workstreams with at least one audit focused on LAC with EHCPs or SEN Support. The 2023 Ofsted report stated the following:

"Personal education plans provide children with realistic and achievable targets and goals. Staff in the virtual school know their children in care very well and encourage them to learn and to have aspirations for their futures."

During the summer term, 80% of PEPs were judged to be good or outstanding. BVS is continually working with schools whose PEPs fall below the required standard and the training offer is designed to support this further.

9.0 Mental Health and Wellbeing

9.1 The mental health and wellbeing of Looked after Children is supported by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST), a commissioned service delivered by the Anna Freud Centre.

9.2 During the academic year 2022/23 WEST worked with 77 LAC. In terms of ethnicity, the highest proportion were White (25%) or Black/Black British (25%), and the most frequently referred age was 14-16. There were 38 females (50%) and 36 males (48%).

During this academic year, 249 sessions were delivered - 176 direct sessions and 73 indirect sessions were delivered. 92 sessions were delivered face to face. The rate of non-attendance to sessions was 11% (28 sessions).

9.3 Alongside direct interventions with LAC and young people, WEST provide consultations and indirect intervention programmes supporting social workers, foster carers and other members of the CYP's professional network to best support the LAC. Social care staff working with Looked After children can sign up to the weekly consultation session.

9.4 Reflective Fostering Programme (RFP) Foster Carers and Kin Carers (on-line): In addition to referrals for individual work, WEST has delivered three session group programmes. Evidence promotes relational interventions with carers of LAC to strengthen attachments, improve placement stability and reduce the number of additional professionals in their lives. In total 12 Brent carers have completed the programme. 100% of foster carers reported feeling better equipped to manage the challenges ahead following the group and that the context of the group made sense to them:

"I used to jump into interactions when [CYP] walked through the door, now I pause and think about where I am. I have reflected on past incidents and what I could have done differently".

"I was initially disappointed that an intervention was offered to me and not [child] but not a day goes by without me using the strategies for reflecting that I learnt on the program. It is a life skill. It has affected all parts of my life and other relationships. I am in a better place because of it".

"I really looked forward to the sessions every week. It makes me feel like others go through it too!" "I learned more from hearing about other people's perspectives."

9.5 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

During the year as agreed with Virtual School team, WEST provided a series of workshops to support the UASC population. One workshop took place directly with young people, one took place with school staff who support these young people and the other was attendance at a college support fair to increase visibility within the college environment.

The face-to-face session introduced information around general wellbeing support, and strategies for identified and specific wellbeing difficulties - for example sleep hygiene and managing emotions related to past experiences of trauma. The population of the group was co-created through consultation with social workers and school staff.

The workshop with staff who support the young people included opportunities for discussion, reflection, and professional development. The staff who attended were introduced to materials explaining trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, and strategies to support young people presenting with this at school. The session also provided a space for reflection on staff's own wellbeing when supporting young people with these experiences. The workshop promoted this self-reflection, and self-care and gave space to develop ideas around supporting this within the working day. Feedback from young people was positive:

"Enjoyed it"

"Found it very helpful"

"Felt listened to".

A school staff member feedback: "Really helpful to have a reminder of trauma and PTSD as sometimes it can be difficult to remember in the moment of managing difficult behaviour."

10.0 Pupil Premium Spend

10.1 BVS retains 50% of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) which is used to fund several resources and activities including mentoring, residential trips, enrichment activities; online and face-to-face training and 1:1 tuition for students out of school. The remaining 50% is allocated to schools to support the progress of children and young people looked after by Brent, the use of which is monitored through the PEP process. The enrichment programme offers LAC a wide range of opportunities both local and further afield and the Virtual School is constantly looking at ways to improve the offer.

10.2 Some of the retained PPP is used for BVS staff to provide a comprehensive training programme to a range of professionals working with vulnerable students. The content of these sessions includes:

- Governors' Training for Brent schools, promoting positive outcomes for disadvantaged groups and the effective use of pupil premium.
- Understanding trauma (Multi agency training for social workers and designated teachers).
- Reflective Fostering programme (two separate programmes for foster carers and kinship carers delivered by WEST).
- Education Online Training Programme for foster carers.
- Pornography and Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting) - delivered by Brook.
- Sexual Harassment and responding to incidents – delivered by Brook.
- Designated Teacher Forum (autumn term - PEPs and PPG/summer term - understanding and identifying EBSA).
- EPEP training for new social workers.

11.0 Enrichment Programme

11.1 The BVS enrichment programme is a valued part of the offer to young people and has grown tremendously over the past four years. The relationship with John Lyons Foundation and the Harrow, Ealing, Barnet, and Brent Virtual Schools has meant that Brent LAC have been engaged in a wide range of activities but also have had the opportunities to form friendships with other LAC in neighbouring boroughs. Additionally, over the year LAC are able to develop their confidence, networks and interests through their engagement with the programme. Over the past academic year, 98 LAC attended the following programmes:

- Springboard Youth Academy Summer Camp
- Harrow School Lumina Tuition
- Strength in Horses
- Go Ape
- Science Museum
- Thorpe Park
- Kidzania
- Arvon Residential
- Reading Clubs
- British Library

- Kew Gardens
- Brunel Urban Scholars
- Care to dance
- Jamie's Farm



(Science Museum Trip, August 2023)



(Go Ape, July 2023)

12.0 Celebration of Achievement

12.1 An integral part of the virtual school's annual calendar is the Celebration of Achievement evening, which is an opportunity to applaud Brent LAC for their achievements throughout the past academic year. It is also a time to reflect, set aspirations and celebrate with young people and the key people in their lives.

12.2 The event is funded by the retained PPG and each celebration event has a theme which is used throughout. The theme for the celebration event that covered the past academic year was Winter Wonderland and was held in December 2023, over 150 LAC ranging from 3 – 18 were celebrated and approximately 200 people were in attendance including members of the corporate parenting committee.



13.0 Extended Duties for all Children with a Social Worker

13.1 The ExDT has delivered direct work with 148 children during 2022/23, with the team maintaining a maximum caseload of 50 children at any one time. This group includes children educated out of borough, those who have experienced the most fractured education, children with very low attendance and who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Children on the waiting list are seen within two weeks for assessment of needs and work will typically start within three weeks.

13.2 Approximately 60% of all referrals are listed as attendance concerns due to mental health issues (social anxiety disorders), social and emotional issues, previously undiagnosed learning difficulties, gang affiliations and parental issues (parents with mental health problems, parents keeping children off school, parental lack of engagement). A third of the referrals relate to children at high risk of permanent exclusion from out-of-borough schools and children's parents needing support to help their children to access education and educational support. Examples of the work undertaken include:

- Preventing the exclusion of a Year 7 pupil attending an academy school in a neighbouring borough and supporting the school to access resources cross-borough.
- Providing training at the Designated Safeguarding Leads Conference about the needs of Children on CIN/CP plans and where to find support for them.

14.0 Strategic priorities for BVS for 2023/24

14.1 The core values of the virtual are attendance, achievement and aspirations and these values remain at the centre of everything that BVS do. Building on the achievements in 2022/23 and identified areas of improvement, the priorities for the next academic year are as follows:

- a) To continue to work closely with schools, social care colleagues, carers, and young people to drive up attendance, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- b) To co-design EET and enrichment programmes utilising the Post-16 funding to support young people to ensure that their needs and aspirations are addressed.
- c) To implement a way of working with all children known to a social worker, including those in kinship placements, that mirrors, as far as possible the offer to LAC
- d) To continue to provide an enrichment curriculum both online and onsite and rooting this into the interest of looked after children.
- e) To use early identification to ensure that the necessary support is in place for LAC in Key Stage 4, who are likely to underachieve in their GCSEs.

15.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

15.1 Stakeholder consultation and engagement takes many varied methods within the service, and we are committed to evaluating and developing new and creative ways of hearing from stakeholders.

15.2 Carers views are sought through one-to-one discussions with their linked advisory teacher/worker, PEP, and Support Groups. Carers are encouraged to provide written on the work of the virtual school.

15.3 Children and young people provide feedback through discussions with their social worker, IRO, school or linked advisory teacher/worker, Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, and Participation activities.

16 Financial Considerations

16.1 There are currently no financial considerations arising from this report.

17 Legal Considerations

17.1 There are currently no legal considerations arising from this report.

18 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

18.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations.

19 Communication Considerations

19.1 At this stage there are not any communication considerations.

Report Sign-Off

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children and Young People