ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23
SHROPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Introduction

1.0
This is the Annual Report for Shropshire Virtual School 2022-23. It is a statutory duty for the Head Teacher to inform key stakeholders about the work of the Virtual School through the year.

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

Context

1.1
During this academic year the country moved through the Covid period into a post-pandemic phase. Nationally there has been recognition of the significant impact on young people in education and how the attainment/progress gap has widened for vulnerable learners. As a result, key activities of our Virtual School have been focused on supporting our young people with their attendance, emotional well-being and resilience, ensuring well targeted academic interventions are in place and expanding our participation offer to increase their access to cultural capital.

There has been a +12% change in the numbers of looked after children from year –2 to 13. (Year -2 refers to two years before Reception). The most significant upwards trajectory has been in Key stage 5 with a +22% change, most of this increase being due to the rise in the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People (UASYP), increasing from 42 in July 2022 to 72 in July 2023. The year 2022/3 saw a +79% change in the numbers of Looked after Children in years -1 to 11 with an EHCP, this has resulted in a +70% change in pupils attending LA specialist or independent schools; 33% of our pupils with an EHCP attend a mainstream setting.

As a school we needed to increase our capacity to successfully meet current and future need whilst retaining high quality staff. The Virtual School has undertaken a significant restructure which has increased the overall number of posts and will provide more all year working rather than term time only. The 'new look' Shropshire Virtual School has just started on September 1st 2023 and there is a second stage of recruitment planned for the new financial year 1st April 2024 to support the growth in numbers of looked after children and young people.

Regionally, our Virtual School has been strongly involved with the West Midlands Virtual School Head Teachers group and development of the Regional Virtual School Conference, as well as a new one for Designated Teachers in the West Midlands (which was well attended by Shropshire schools). We have a strong presence at Together 4 Children (our Regional Adoption Agency) with development of materials and training delivery to parents. To support the developing profile that Shropshire Virtual School has across the region Shropshire Virtual School has expanded the project work with the West Midlands Arts Links and collaborated with Telford & Wrekin Virtual School to deliver cluster participation events in sports and the arts, for example the Women in Theatre workshop and performance this summer.

Profile

1.2 Shropshire is a largely rural and landlocked county in the West Midlands. It borders multiple other LAs, including Wales. There are 151 schools across the local authority (LA): 127 primary phase schools, 19 secondary schools, 1 All-through school, 3 special schools and 1 Pupil Referral Unit.

Approximately a third of Shropshire primary schools are classed as small or very small. There currently 3 schools with under 30 pupils and forecasts suggest that the number of schools in Shropshire with less than 30 pupils will increase. For September 2023, 45 out of 127 primary schools and 18 out of 19 secondary schools are academies. All 3 of Shropshire's special schools are academies and only 1 school became an academy during 2022/23.

Ofsted data published at the end of June 2023 indicates that the percentage of good and better schools is:

	% of good or better (All schools)	% of good or better (Primary schools)	% of good or better (Secondary schools)
National	88%	84%	81%
West Midlands	86%	87%	81%
Shropshire	86%	89%	85%

('All school' data also includes nursery schools of which there are 0 in Shropshire and Special schools).

1.3
At the end of July Shropshire Virtual School was supporting 647 Children who are Looked After from year -2 to 13 (the year in which they turn 18). Numbers peak in Key stage 2 and also in the Post 16 phase, where there has been a change of +22% in numbers through the academic year, in addition to the +27% change on the previous academic year.

Data overview: CLA Pupil data overview by Key Stage, July 2023

Month	EYFS	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	TOTAL No in STATUTORY SCHOOL YEARS	KS5	TOTAL of all CIC (yr-2 to 13)
Sept	97	57	115	114	71	400	130	584
Feb	99	57	117	114	74	402	152	613
July	102	62	126	118	81	428	158	647

1.4
Vulnerability data for CLA in the Statutory School Years and Early Years at the end of the academic year indicated that:

- The number of CLA with an EHCP and/or identified SEN from year -1 to 11 has risen significantly again this year, going from 27% of the cohort in September to 41% in July
- 32 of our CLA attend a LA Specialist School, 38 attend a specialist independent school and only 5 attend a Pupil Referral Unit with this expected to decrease to just 2 for September 2023.
- 136 (30%) attend an Out of Authority school, this is an increase on last academic year.
- 67% are looked after under a Full Care Order, 21% under an Interim Care Order, 11.4% under Section 20 and 2% under a Placement Order.
- 9 are UASYP.
- 72% of children attend a school judged to be Good or Outstanding by OFSTED.

1.5
Vulnerability data for CLA in the Post 16 phase at the end of the academic year is:
- 30 (19%) have an EHCP, which is a decrease proportionally on last year.
- 61% are at a provider out of area, which is an increase on last year (54%)
- 45% are UASYP. Over the academic year 2021-22 numbers grew from 14 to 42 and this year numbers increased to 72.

1.6

During the academic year 2022-23 the Shropshire Virtual School team for the CLA workstream was made up of the Head Teacher and

- 3.8 Specialist Teachers
- 1 Specialist Access to Education Officer
- 1 Post 16 PA
- 2 Education Advice and Support Officers (EASOs), with 2.4 additional postholders who started in the summer term (funded by the PP+ Grant)

1.7

The majority of postholders in the service, including the Head Teacher, have been employed on terms that mean they do not work in school holidays. Caseloads have been well above the national average.

Posts for supporting Extended Duties for Children with a Social Worker and Previously Looked After Children were Grant funded and made up of:

- 1 Asst Head
- 1 EASO

Other posts in the service have been as follows:

- 1 Participation Support Officer (Grant funded)
- 1 Business Co-ordinator
- 1 part time Administrator from November 2022 (Grant funded)

A Business Plan was submitted to the Executive Director to support the future proofing of the Shropshire Virtual School. A consultation for restructure of the service commenced in November 2022. There were opportunities for feedback & amendments were made, with the final structure being presented to the team in Spring 2023. Key features of the new structure are:

- growth to meet increased demands and duties.
- more through year posts
- more permanent posts to support sustainability of the service.
- case load ratios more in line with national average
- year -2 children to have an allocated VS Link
- opportunity for team members re progression
- a whole school approach rather than silo 'families'
- a distributed leadership model

Recruitment for the new structure took place during the summer term and the service is fully staffed for a September 2023 start.

1.8

Our Virtual School has a Governing Body that meets termly, it is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families Kirstie Hurst-Knight. There is a Head Teacher representative (and Deputy Chair), a Parent Governor, the CLA Service Manager, the Principal School Improvement Advisor, an Associate Elected Member and a Looked-After Childrens Participation Worker. The member of staff who represented the staff group on the Governing Body has left the service and a new staff Governor has been appointed. An Early Years Governor is currently being sought.

The Terms of Reference for the SVS Governing Body has the Corporate Parenting principles at the heart of it and has a focus on support and challenge. The Virtual School Head Teacher attends Corporate Parenting Steering Group and presents the school report with recommendations for action. The Virtual School Head Teacher and Asst Head represent the school at various LA Panels such as Complex Cases, Inclusion Advice Forum, Stepping-Stones and PATHS so that educational advice for the children being supported can be provided. The School is represented at various key groups such as Safeguarding Summits, Steering groups and Boards (eg the SEN Partnership Board and the Shropshire Music Service Board) so that our children and young people's needs and achievements can be widely represented and advocated for.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

Educational Progress

1.9
The launch of Our Shropshire PEP has enabled significant improvement in data gathering on Attainment and Progress from ePEP, in terms of accuracy, consistency and completion by schools – and this in turn has meant improved termly reporting and forecasting. Going forwards into the new academic year, the termly reporting and forecasting will be developed with a new Asst Head who will have responsibility for this area. One of the priorities will also be Pupil Progress meetings (as well as leading a Task and Finish group around resources to support home learning.)

2.0
Summary of results for academic year 2022-23

Data Source: Nexus. The results below are not yet validated. The DFE stipulate that national and regional data is confidential so cannot be included in the report at this time. As 2019 was the last in year which SATs were undertaken as actual tests it is important to take that into consideration and the DFE has asked that comparisons are not made with that year. Data for comparison with our statistical neighboring authorities is being sought but is not available at this time.

2.1
Good Level of Development (GLD)

% achieving a Good Level of Development	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	41%

Please note due to EYFS reform data prior to 2022 is not comparative.

The data on Nexus indicates that Shropshire CLA achieved **above** both regional and national averages this year.

2.2
End of Key Stage One Results:

	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	60.0	40.0	48.1	20.0	33.3	44.4	40.0	40.0	51.9

	RWM Combined		
	2019	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903**	0.0	26.7	37.0

* SATs were not undertaken in 2020.

The data on Nexus indicates that Shropshire CLA achieved **above** the national average in all indicators of Reading, Writing and Maths – and that in the Combined measure they achieved **above** national and regional outcomes.

Trajectory through the academic year for year 2 CLA

On track to achieve Expected or above	Reading	Writing	Maths
End of Autumn term	27.4%	28%	34.4%
End of Spring term	34%	30%	37%
SATs Data from Nexus	48.1%	44.4%	52%

A significant positive is the trajectory of achievement through the academic year that our children made – for example in the Autumn term only 27.4% of the cohort were on track to achieve the Expected standard or above in Reading, but by the SATs this was increased to 48.1%. Interventions were targeted at this group and paid off with gains through the year as follows:

- Reading - a gain of 20.7%
- Writing – a gain of 16.4%
- Maths – a gain of 17.6%

Writing is indicated to be the weaker area for Shropshire CLA, but still performing above National and Regional Averages according to unvalidated Nexus data.

2.3
Phonics Screening Check

% achieving a Pass	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	58.8	50

Shropshire CLA performed below regional and national averages. As a result, a focused intervention is being sourced for those coming into year 1 this September.

2.4
End of Key Stage 2 Results:

	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	50	58.6	54.2	50	55.2	44	50.0	53.6	38

Combined Measure – Reading, Writing and Maths

% achieved Expected Standard	2018	2019	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	40	25	42.9	39.1

Initial data from Nexus indicates that Shropshire CLA achieved **above** regional and national averages in Reading, but there was a noticeable gap in Maths outcomes. However, in the Combined Measure (which is an overall indicator for Reading, Writing and Maths) Shropshire CLA are indicated to have achieved **above** both regional and national averages.

The data also suggest that the gap between Shropshire all learners and CLA has **narrowed** from 2019 to 2023 in Reading and Writing but widened in Maths.

Trajectory through the academic year for year 6 children

On track to achieve Expected or above	Reading	Writing	Maths	Combined Reading Writing Maths
End of Autumn term	28%	20%	20%	12%
End of Spring term	39%	27%	27%	23%
SATs Data from Nexus	54.2%	44%	38%	39.1%

It is very positive to note that although there were very low starting points for this year's cohort of year 6 children, they were supported effectively to make significant gains through the academic year as follows:
- Reading - a gain of 26.2%; Writing - a gain of 22%; Maths - a gain of 18%
- Combined - a gain of 27.1%

This is despite 27% of the SSD903 group of children having an EHCP and a further 31% of the group having identified SEN (which is an increase in both groups in comparison to last year's SSD903 group). Progress Measure:

	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023	2019	2022	2023
CLA Shropshire SSD903	+0.85	-2.3	+0.14	+0.72	-1.18	+0.8	-2.66	-1.63	-1.68

The initial Nexus data indicates that Shropshire CLA are making **better** progress than other CLA nationally and regionally in Reading and Writing. Additionally, that our children made better progress in Reading than all learners nationally – and that in Writing they made better progress than all learners in Shropshire and nationally! Maths is an area in which progress was not as positive - and this aligns with the progress outcome for all Shropshire learners.

2.5
Multiplication Tables Check:
93% of Shropshire CLA took the test this year and this is broadly in line with overall figures. The average score was 16 and the national average for all learners is 19.

2.6
End of Key Stage 4 results
The DFE has said that this year's results should be seen in the national context of returning to pre-pandemic grading. However, the group of year 11 young people who sat their exams this summer have experienced at least two years of significant disruption to their education. These results have been collected in from young people, carers and schools so are unvalidated at this stage. The results below are based on a SSD903 cohort size of 23 compared to last year's cohort of 34. Some students are having their papers reviewed where they achieved a Grade 3 in English / Mathematics - and so the data may change.

- This summer 13 Shropshire CLA students achieved 8 GCSEs or more.

- One of these students was an UASYP who came into care in September 2022 achieved 12 GCSEs!

- One young person at a specialist independent SEMH school achieved 5 GCSEs at Grade 3 with only 1 mark off a 4 in English and Citizenship, so these marks are being reviewed. Additionally, they achieved 5 x Functional Skills accreditations at Level 2 (equivalent to grade 4s) and so earned an amazing total of 14 GCSEs, including English and Maths at grade 4.

- Another young person wasn't going to sit any exams as anxiety had escalated through the academic year. However, with all the wrap around support she did sit them and achieved 5 GCSEs including English and Maths at 4s - plus an extra 3 GCSEs through equivalent accreditations.

- Top English Language grade was an 8 – and this was by a lad who was supported through all sorts of wobbles through yr 11.

Initial and unvalidated data indicates our young people achieved the following:
- 39.1% achieved grade 4 or above in English and 17.4% achieved grade 5 or above.
- 26.1% achieved Grade 4 or above in Maths and 9% achieved Grade 5 or above.
- 22% achieved English and Maths at a Grade 4 or above.
- 17.4% achieved 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including English & Maths.

Achievement by indicator for SSD903 cohort	English grade 4 or above	English grade 5 or above	Maths grade 4 or above	Maths grade 5 or above	English and Maths both at grades 4 or above	Eng + Maths both at grades 5 or above	5 GCSEs at grades 9-4 inc E+M	5 GCSEs at grades 9-5 inc E+M
Summer 2023 %	39.1%	17.4%	26.1%	9%	22%	4.4%	17.4%	4.4%
Summer 2022 (verified) %	38.2%	21%	35.5%	15%	29.4%	12%	24%	9%

Further information due from the Insight team will enable us to see how this compares to National and Regional Averages for CLA. Some students who achieved Grade 3s in English / Maths are having their results reviewed and so this may positively affect the figures.

Our students overall had significantly better outcomes in English than in Maths, a theme that also ran through end of KS2 outcomes.

We are launching a new tuition project called Pathway to support year 11 students who achieved a grade 3 in either English or Maths with a focus on retaking their GCSE or Functional Skills Level 2 and aiming for a result of a grade 4.

2.7
Early indications from July were that nearly 90% of Year 11s were on track to achieve a successful transition into Education, Employment or Training (EET). At the mid-September 2023 point there were 88% of post 16 students in education, employment or training (EET), of these:

- 82% are in Higher Education
- 1% are with Training Providers.
- 5% are in Employment.

2.8
Additionally, an important success this year was that through joint working with the SEND team:
- 100% of Year -1s have a confirmed school place (except for 1 new into care at the end of summer term)
- 100% of yr 2s had a confirmed place for year 3.
- 100% of yr 6s had a confirmed place for year 7.
- 50% (7/14) of yr 11s had a confirmed destination – main reasons for those not yet having a confirmed destination are planned placement moves over the summer for 3 of them, new into care students at end of term and getting swift responses from Other Local Authority SEN depts.
- 100% of year 11s where Shropshire SEN are administering the Plan have a confirmed destination except for 2 new into care.

2.9
Key Stage 5 outcomes
There were some considerable successes for our students at the end of Key Stage 5 this year.

A levels

Student initial	Grades achieved	Subjects	Next steps
A	AAB	Classical Civilisation, Art, Criminology	Durham University to study History
O	A*A*BC	Maths, Electronics, Physics, Further Maths	St Andrews University to study Physics
E	C Result unknown	Welsh Baccalaureate Animal Management L3	Not yet determined
K	DEU	Sociology, Law, Access to Law	Support with destination planning being given by SVS

Level 3 courses

Student initial	Grades achieved	Subjects	Next steps
M	Distinction	Fashion	Huddersfield University to study Fashion & Textiles
P	Pass	Massage therapies	Employment in Caribbean

Well done cards and vouchers (eg for books) have been arranged by our service to congratulate the above students and support them on their next steps.

3.0
Overall, 70.12% of young people in year 12 and 13 combined completed their course. For those young people leaving year 13 this summer:
- 53% are continuing on current courses (either A Level or Vocational/BTEC and progressing on to the next level)
- 22% are in employment.
- 5% are going to university.
- 1.3% are in an apprenticeship.

This year there has been a significant rise in employment (from 11.3% to 22%) and a rise in the proportion going to university (from 3.7% to 5%).

Very positively, the figures also indicate a significant reduction in NEET from last year at 17% to 11% this year.

Educational engagement

3.1

An excellent achievement for two years running is that no Shropshire Looked After Children have been Permanently Excluded – and that 23 permanent exclusions have been prevented during this academic year through the hard work of the Team and our partners. This is in comparison to only 11 last year and is likely to indicate the pressures schools are under re inclusion.

The impact of our work on reducing Permanent Exclusions has improved the long-term life chances for our young people. For example, one young person in Key Stage 3 was at high risk of Child Exploitation and also of being permanently excluded when he came into care. Shropshire Virtual School worked with the Social Care practitioners including the residential staff where he lived and the secondary school to create a personalized curriculum on a reduced timetable and a planned phase him into main lessons, then breaks and lunches (as social times were a high-risk time for him) - and finally into the full day again. This was achieved despite incidents of criminality through the year and there was lots of support and challenge to the school. The young person also then reintegrated home and the Care Order ended.

3.2

Reports from the DFE indicate concern at national level re attendance for all learners. However, Shropshire CLA bucked this trend - the Persistent Absence Figure (PAF) for Shropshire CLA for the academic year was only 16.5% compared to 22.5% for all learners nationally. This was also an improvement of 1.1% for Shropshire CLA on last year. Additionally, the overall attendance for Shropshire CLA remains strong with attendance of 93% which is slightly above the average of all children nationally for the year (92.5%). There will be improvements in the forthcoming academic year on attendance reporting for CLA with adjustments on the system to allow us to report in more detail on authorized / unauthorized absences and illness.

3.3

This academic year has been a challenge in terms of inclusion – and reports reflect this as being part of a national situation. There has been an average of 17 young people on a Reduced Timetable (RTT) per month during this academic year. This is higher than we aimed for, but the key was effective use where in the child's best interest. Some of these RTTs were to support a young person's integration into school to reduce anxiety or support medical needs, for example one young person was struggling with school attendance due to emotional based reasons for school avoidance. Close working with her grandparents (who she lives with) enabled her to be supported through a reduced timetable to slowly build up time into a new school. She also received tuition and made good progress as a result. This year she will go into year 11 and will be supported with next steps to help achieve her ambition of becoming a lawyer.

3.4

For young people who have an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) and had a RTT at some point in the academic year there was intensive work on this priority group which enabled some success. In September 2022 there were 8 CLA with an EHCP who were on a RTT - and although this number increased during the year, many were closed - and this was reduced to a total of 6 (mostly different) young people by the end of July 2023. The Virtual School tracks the young people with an EHCP and holds fortnightly Escalation meetings to resolve the students' situations as swiftly as possible. This year 37/58 (64%) had their situation resolved by the end of July 2023 e.g new provision was provided or a RTT ended. Going forwards the Virtual School will be looking to minimize the drift / delay when young people are living out of the area and need swifter support from the LA SEN team, although there is pressure on places in specialist provisions in the West Midlands.

3.5

The numbers of Shropshire CLA who have not been on roll at a school are very low, with this situation applying to only 1 young person for most of the year (and an overall average of 1.5 per month). This is an improvement on last year's average of 2.6 per month and the previous year where 8 pupils were without a school placement, 7 of which had EHCPs.

There has been a notable barrier to swift admissions for young people with an EHCP in a neighbouring Authority. Support came forth from our own Shropshire Head of Service for SEND, working in conjunction with the VS Head Teacher and the Childrens Commissioner - and resolution was found so the young person could start at a new specialist provision.

The Virtual School Head Teacher worked collaboratively with the new Service Manager for CLA around working towards ensuring that Shropshire CLA moving to live out of county in a crisis have education at registered providers and are thus accessing their legal entitlement and safeguarded.

3.6
The Suspension rate for Shropshire CLA was 27% in 2021-22 and in 2022-23 this was reduced to 10.7%. This is a huge improvement especially in the context of the national picture of post-pandemic inclusion and a significant growth in the number of CLA which put pressure on practitioners in the team. The DFE state the number of suspensions increased from the 2020 to 21 and again in 2021-22. Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England, Summer term 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

- Most Suspensions took place in September and the Spring term.
- 50% of all suspensions were for Key Stage 3 students and 30% for Key Stage 4 students, compared to last year this is a shift towards younger pupils.
- 43% of all suspensions were for students at out of area schools.
- 81 days of suspension were for CLA with an EHCP ie 32% of the total number – all of these students had Social Emotional and Mental Health as their primary need.
- 25% of these were for primary students, compared to last year where all were in secondary schools, this shows a marked shift towards younger pupils.
- 41% of suspensions for students with an EHCP were from specialist or independent schools.

This data indicates that with a marked shift towards an increased proportion of suspensions being given to younger pupils we will need to look as a service at how we can increasingly target the PP+ Grant to support them. One such example of a development is our new Service Level Agreement with a Horticultural Therapist who will be able to start work in schools this Autumn.

3.7
Regarding engagement in the Post 16 phase the NEET data was as follows:

- The average monthly NEET figure for Shropshire CLA from September 2021 to July 2022 was 16.7% and this was reduced in 2022-23 to 12.9%
- The Local Authority NEET and not knowns rate for Shropshire all learners* at the end of 2022 was 7.9% and for Shropshire CLA in 2022-23 this rate was 12%.
  *Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

The NEET figure and rate was influenced by new UASYP arrivals especially from Easter onwards, many of whom live in other Local Authorities and so it can take a little longer to access a provider and course given that spaces are limited across the region. However, the Virtual School achieved good outcomes for this group as even in July only 6 /22 young people who were NEET were UASYP. Excluding UASYP the NEET figure at the end of the summer term was 10.3%. At the end of the academic year the data indicated that

- 64% of the NEET group had SEMH as their main barrier to attending education, training or employment, Only 21% of this group have an EHCP and so the Virtual School will look at where an EHCP might have been needed at an earlier stage to support the young people into engagement in key stage 5. Additionally, more alternative opportunities at post 16 for students with SEMH are needed and so the Virtual School is part of the LA working group on developing Internships.

- The significant majority of our students who are in education, employment or training attend college (80%)

An example of positive inter-agency working to support young people towards EET is the support put in place for CW. He attended Walford College studying Level One Independence and Life Skills. At the beginning of his studies there were lots of 'bumps in the road' but with a great deal of support and interagency working C successfully completed his course this summer and has now progressed on to his desired outcome of studying Mechanics Level one.

3.8
The new Asst Head has just started at the Virtual School and one of their responsibilities is Progression and Post 16. They will be leading on developing the family business work experience offer as well as other projects with similar focus. The Virtual School is creating a new opportunity for a Care Leaver to have an apprenticeship with a Shropshire based recruitment company and planning for this is underway in collaboration with the Care Leavers teams and the company's CEO.

Personal Education Plans
3.9
In September 2022 the Virtual School launched the new Shropshire PEP after a period of consultation and 12 training sessions https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/24091/our-shropshire-pep.pdf. This has involved a period of change where practice along with a good understanding of roles/responsibilities has now become well embedded. Change of Social Workers has been a barrier to improvement around quality through this year and so there has been collaborative working with the CLA Service Manager - and in the training for Induction of new Social Workers there is now significant emphasis on PEPs to support our colleagues.

4.0
The context of the historical trajectory on Quality of PEPs was as follows:

Academic year	Term	% of PEPs that were Good Quality (year -1 to year 11)
2020-21	Autumn	51%
2020-21	Spring	48%
2021-22 (current VS Head Teacher started in post)	Autumn	58%
2021-22	Spring	80%
2021-22	Summer	73%

During the year PEP Monitoring meetings were initiated with the individual VS Links and this has also supported improvement with forecasting and action. All of these elements have supported robust improvements in completion and quality as follows:

PEP performance data – quality	% of completed PEPs for year -1 and statutory school years that are Good Quality	% Post 16 completed PEPs that are Good Quality
End of autumn term	81%	86%
End of spring term	78%	99%
End of summer term	89.3%	83%

PEP performance data – completion	% PEPs completed in year -1 and statutory school years	% Post 16 PEPs completed
End of Autumn Term	99.5%	61%
End of Spring term	99.1%	70%
End of summer term	100%	80%

4.1

Next steps are to progress quality assurance developments with the CLA Service Manager and to undertake action where some schools consistently under deliver on PEP quality. Our target for quality is to achieve 90% or above for EYFS and school years as the next step in the ambition for all our young people to have a Good Quality PEP. The Virtual School will be starting to phase in PEPs for year -2 children this term and aim to start including them in the data from January onwards when 100% of this group of children will have a VS Link.

4.2

Historically young people in Shropshire had NEET to EET meetings and so it has been a priority to ensure the Virtual School created a PEP format and process as well as ensuring three statutory PEPs a year for all Post 16 young people. The trajectory of Post 16 PEPs has been very positive, moving from 60% completion in autumn 2022 to 80% by the end of the summer term 2023. Quality rose through the year and the outcome was an average of 90% PEPs being Good Quality but dipped in the summer term slightly as impacted by capacity.

The target is for the new Post 16 PEP to launch later this Autumn term. A training roll out for Social Workers, Carers and Providers will precede this and aim to clearly outline roles, responsibilities and expectations around completion and quality. Following this period of change we will be looking to achieve 90% or above for completion (with 100% for young people who are NEET) and 90% or above good quality PEPs. They may be a dip in completion and quality during this change period and we are planning to try and minimise the potential for that.

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

Pupil Premium Plus

4.3

A new PP+ Policy was published for the 2023-24 financial year and is on our website at shropshire-virtual-school-pupil-premium-plus-policy-2023-24.pdf

To drive the focus on supporting schools to successfully include our young people and provide opportunities such as cultural capital, transitions and academic achievement the Virtual School has created a PP+ support map. shropshire-vs-ppplus-support-map-2023-24.pdf. This continually evolves as we strive to source new opportunities for engagement and progress.
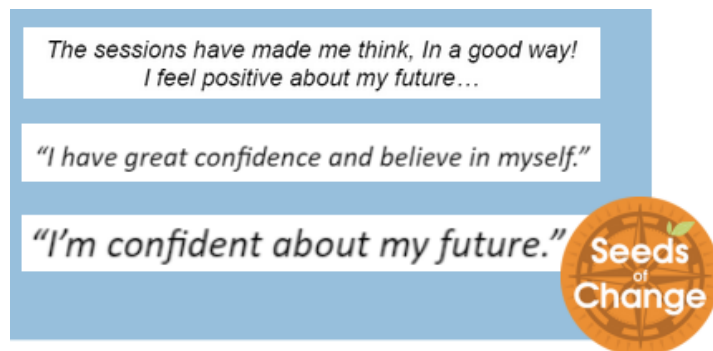
4.4

The PP+ Grant was fully spent in the financial year 2022-23 and no monies were returned to the DFE. There are many examples of impact of the spend as evidenced for example in the progress trajectory for our year 6 students where academic intervention was put in place using PP+. The Letterbox project also indicates impact on reading with 96% of children saying they love or like the books they receive and 68% of children reporting they now read more on their own as a result of the parcels.

Other examples of impact are:

A success last year was our collaboration with Aspire & Seeds of Change to provide a careers mentoring programme for year 10 and 11 students. We have created a personalised goal system for the young people to see their progress and this helps us to capture data on the project's impact. Some outcomes of note are that 90% of the young people who took part increased their self-assessment scores and that:

The sessions have made me think, In a good way! I feel positive about my future...

"I have great confidence and believe in myself."

"I'm confident about my future."

Seeds of Change

- ✓ 100% felt their vision of their future is clearer now.
- ✓ 75% felt they had improved in taking action to help themselves and asking for help when they need it and 63% are more motivated.
- ✓ One young person who was at risk of permanent exclusion said "I didn't give up…and I feel I can aim higher."
- ✓ Another young person wrote "I feel like I'm more certain of things, I know what Im going to do in the future…and I have more self-belief now"

The Virtual School works with several tuition companies to provide swift support to our students when it is most needed. In the coming year we are creating new projects with these partners to support with:

- The Pathway Project supporting year 12 students to achieve a Grade 4 in English and/or Maths in a re-sit.
- A targeted programme for Functional Skills tuition and assessment for yr 10 and 11 students with the aim of giving them the opportunity to achieve a Grade 4 equivalent. This is not something mainstream schools tend to offer and so this enhances opportunities for our young people.
- Pupil Progress meetings will identify year 1 and 4 pupils who need extra support to achieve their Phonics test pass or improve in their Multiplication Table Check.

Each school is sent a termly amount of £430 per term per child so they can plan for effective use of the Grant through the year. A report is run at the end of the academic year to analyse the spend and plan future allocations - and this process also supports completion of the submission to the DFE for use of the National Tutoring Programme.

4.5
The Virtual School has a Service Level Agreement with the Shropshire Educational Psychology Service which funds assessments, intervention and 3 x roll outs of foundation level training in attachment. Fifty practitioners from schools attended, 26% of this group were from secondary schools and 74% from primaries. Impact is evidence from feedback where scores from pre to post training doubled in terms of average knowledge and the training was rated as per the pie-chart:

There is also further work with an independent Educational Psychologist - and this supports the Time for You consultation offer for schools for CLA, PLAC and CWSW which has been very well received. 100% of schools felt it has been a safe and non-judgemental space to discuss their needs and concerns about supporting individual young people. Feedback examples are in the compliments section of this report and impact is also measured through use of Microsoft Forms after every session.

Overall Ratings -

- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very Poor
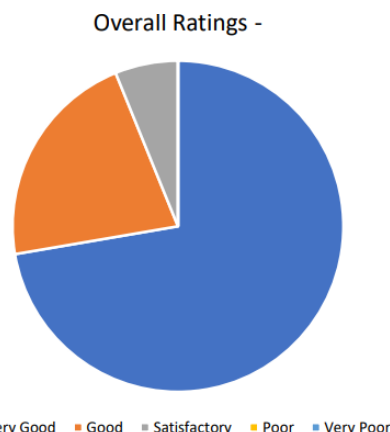
4.6
A key focus of this workstream has also been training for Carers and Adopters. The EP delivered Emotion Coaching to these groups which were very well attended - and the outcomes were:
- 100% of the delegates rating the training highly (77% strongly agreed this)
- 100% stating it would be beneficial to them (69% strongly agreed this)

Similarly, the Pathway to Adulthood training for carers and multi-agency practitioners was very well attended and the outcomes were:
- 100% rated the training as high quality (75% strongly agreed)
- 100% rated it as beneficial to them (75% strongly agreed)

4.7
The Service Level Agreement with Lifeshed has enabled the Virtual School to provide over 220 hours of personalised mentoring since March 2023 and this is now extended due to its success. Progress is measured for individual children in relation to targets and goals using a RAG rating system. An example of this is one child with complex SEMH needs at high risk of exclusion who has attended 95.2% of his sessions and is now being managed in mainstream school. Feedback from staff indicates he has tried to control adults but is now responding with more humour and is more likely to follow instruction. He has established a positive relationship with his key-mentor is interacting well with staff to choose/plan sessions and activities.

4.8
The Virtual School is working with a Speech and Language Therapist to provide a service for young people where consultation, assessment or therapy is needed. Initial feedback from schools is very positive. PP+ was also used to provide training for the Stepping-Stones practitioners in Speech and Language and this will develop into the next stage including a workshop for Social Workers and a day's forum for schools / Early Years settings working collaboratively with the NHS and Early Years Specialist Teachers at the LA.

A new working partnership with Smashlife is in draft so that the Virtual School can target mentoring support for 10 young people per school term from age 8-16, 5 young people per term for young people in Post 16 and a project over 10 weeks to support a cohort of young people in Key Stage 5 not yet in education, employment or training.

4.9
The Virtual School has used PP+ and other Grants to develop a comprehensive training offer:

Training Achieved 2022-23

8 primary schools in Becoming an Attachment and Responsive School	Essential PEP training series of these with schools and SW	Emotion Coaching awareness Training for schools and SW	17 schools The theory and Practice of Nurture
Emotion coaching for carers and Previously looked after parents	Aspire Trainers for 4 secondary schools	Dream believe achieve for carers	Continued TIME for YOU sessions
Speech and Lang for Stepping Stones	Transition training for schools	12 schools trained in The theory and Practice of Boxall profile	Pathway to adulthood for professionals
The ABC of SEN	Making a difference at PEPS	DT network sessions/ New to DT role/ Governors update	

Feedback from the training delivered to schools by the Virtual School team on Attachment and Trauma included comments such as

> Personable, knowledgable facilitators with real, relevant experience of schools and children with a wide range of needs. The sessions were a good balance between "teaching", videos, feedback & reflection. Facilitators ensured that all staff felt comfortable to share experiences, ask questions, etc.

> Both Jo and Lindsay spoke our langauge! We have a passion for safeguarding and supporting those children who've experienced trauma - you taught us so much along with embedding strategies we already use. It's so nice to hear we're on the right tracks in so many ways but we're not a complacent school and welcome new ideas, initiatives and proven strategies. I can honestly say in my 23 years of teaching, your sessions were some of the most informative and

Overall outcomes were that 90% strongly agreed they enjoyed the training and 100% agreed it helped them understand attachment, trauma and the science behind it.

5.0
Additional training to support inclusion across Shropshire included:

- ✓ 17 schools were trained in theory and practice of Nurture to set up a Nurture resource / room in their setting. There is a further roll out this Autumn.
- ✓ 41 schools attended the Transition training session and have the Transition Toolkit from Dr Tina Rae to support them in application of their learning going forwards.
- ✓ 24 schools attended our Boxall Training - and this November's Boxall training day is over subscribed.
- ✓ 71 schools attended Emotion Coaching Awareness
- ✓ The Aspire Training for personalised Careers Mentoring was fully attended by 4 secondary schools.

This is in addition to Designated Teacher Networks, New to Post Training for Designated Teachers and CLA Governor training.

5.1
The Post 16 PP+ Grant is due into our budget this month and we have created a strategic plan for an effective spend. The Grant is to improve the outcomes of Looked After young people in the Post 16 phase ie Key Stage 5. The terms and conditions outline how it must be spent on well-evidenced interventions by supporting our young people towards achieving their full potential, particularly in reference to attainment, attendance and retention. The DFE specifies that the Grant should be spent in line with achieving duties outlined in the Guidance Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and that an effective spend should enable the young people to have sustained involvement in education, employment or training. Our Post 16 PP+ strategy includes a course over 10 weeks for young people who are NEET to support them towards EET, access to a 1-1 mentoring programme, support from the Shropshire Educational Psychology team, the Pathway project for tuition (mentioned previously in this report), training events, welcome packs for UASYP and a new EASO post is being advertised to support with PEP completion and quality.

Shropshire Virtual School has put itself forwards to be part of the National Research project being run by the Rees Centre so that we can contribute towards the impact study and future development of this Grant this with the DFE.

Educational opportunities and enjoyment

5.2
Participation at the Virtual School has grown exponentially during the year. Over 150 children from different stages and ages have taken part in a variety of activities with the aim of supporting them to:
- feel a sense of belonging with our school and other looked after children.
- access opportunities that expand their cultural capital.
- promote and enable aspiration and progression.

Here is a flavour of some activities that have taken place:

- Prosthetics workshop for year 7+
- Sports day for yr-1 to 11
- Equestrian morning (SEND)
- Craft boxes for Easter
- Samba Saturday with carers and their children
- Bright Star Boxing – over 3 weeks the young people earned Sport and Fitness
      Level 2 award & Boxing Bronze award
- Music Give it a Go with the Shropshire Music Service (primary)
- Forest school (Key Stage 1)
- days Women in Theatre workshop with performance (Secondary)
- 5 days Band Build with performance (Key Stage 4) Forest Day with Smashlife (Key stage 2 & 3)
- Fire safety day at AICO (Key Stage 1 & 2)
- Careers activity at AICO (Post 16)

New activities are being planned re developing new opportunities with the Culture, Leisure and Tourism team.

5.3
A Celebration Festival was held in August for Post 16 students and Care Leavers in collaboration with the Care Leavers Team. The event was really well attended and there was also a DJ set plus live music.

Some feedback is "I would just like to say what a wonderful day both S and I had today and a big thank you to everyone who organised this as I know how much hard work it takes. It was also lovely to meet people in person and put faces to names."

5.4
Shropshire Virtual School held its annual Band Build week in the summer break and the young people attending achieved so much individually and as a group. They were supported by professional musicians to come together and try out a range of instruments, including their voices. This culminated in them performing several covers plus an original song they created as a group.

One student DJ'd for the audience as part of the afternoon performance – and we have now organized for him to have DJ equipment and lessons to develop his interest. Another success story is a lad who played drums for several of the songs and really showcased his talent; we are supporting him with drum lessons - and he has also now performed at our Celebration event in September.

5.5
Shropshire Virtual School is proud to have celebrated the achievements of our Looked After Children on Saturday 23rd September. Over 140 children were nominated for categories such as academic achievement, determination and resilience, friendship and supporting their community – and it was fantastic to see so many parents and carers attending our event with their children and young people.

There was a ceremony where the young people's successes were read out and they could come on stage to receive their certificate, medal and prize from Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Shropshire's Portfolio Holder for Children and Families.

One family drove all the way from Leeds to bring the young people they look after and another Carer came from Birmingham, he said "This has been wonderful, I wouldn't have missed it for the world." Another Carer said "I would like to thank you all for the amazing celebration event that you organised on Saturday. The boys and I had a fantastic time and really appreciate all your hard work in making it such a memorable day."

5.6
This summer a group of our young people worked with a member of the Help at Hand service from the Children's Commissioner's Office to have input into designing their new logo. They were able to influence how the logo will look as well as having their voices heard directly by the Help at Hand team member. We are looking at how this link can develop further in future and we have the Chief Education Advisor coming to speak at our Conference on the 8th November.

Our School Council is meeting this term to look at the Education equivalent of 'Stable Homes built on Love' Guide for children and young people: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). This will be feeding into our Conference in the Autumn where Jaz Ampaw-Farr will be working with this group on the day. A new Arts project is starting to compliment this work and the young people will be creating a 3D piece of art on this theme and we have agreed with Kirstie Hurst-Knight that this will have an installation space in Shirehall on the landing.

A Newsletter from the Virtual School is now part of our routine twice a year so that we can advertise events for our partners and also opportunities for our young people. Twitter is used to regularly celebrate achievements of our young people and promote practice / awareness of national developments relating to our children.
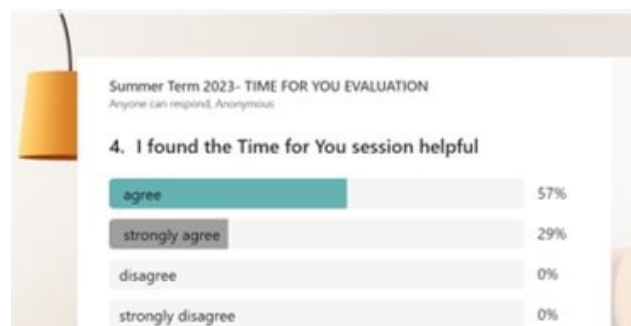
Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

5.7
We have continued to work with Together for Children across the region developing a series of documents that can used to support adoptive parents and schools with Education Advice, for example the EPPLAC (Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children). These will be available on the Together for Children website imminently (as well as all the participating Local Authorities websites.)

Additionally, Shropshire Virtual School created a series of training specifically for PLAC professionals and parents, including an Emotion Coaching training session for adoptive parents – and at the Designated Teacher Networks we delivered specific input on guidance and the support / advice offer available to schools. The Time for You slots where schools can book a consultation / coaching slot with an Educational Psychologist were very popular - 22/ 56 available sessions were schools seeking advice around children/young people who are PLAC. The main themes raised were school attendance, suspensions and regulating emotions. These sessions were received well and very positive impact was indicated from the feedback.

For example -
- 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Time For You is safe and non-judgemental.
- 86% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Time For You was helpful.

Other qualitative feedback can be found here:

Summer Term 2023- TIME FOR YOU EVALUATION
Anyone can respond, Anonymous

4. I found the Time for You session helpful

agree	57%
strongly agree	29%
disagree	0%
strongly disagree	0%

9. What did you like about the Time for You session?

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Excellent discussion about the child with Eleanor - even though the pupil was unknown to her, the process and strategies suggested matched strongly with the needs presented. Anything unfamiliar was explained clearly and summaried to make sure everyone was in agreement with the final targets.
2	anonymous	Time to reflect on current practice and what is going well and what can be improved
3	anonymous	Everything!
4	anonymous	Finding out new strategies of working. Resource ideas.
5	anonymous	It was really helpful, to talk through what we here experiencing and nice to have reassurance we are doing the right thing. Felt empowered.
6	anonymous	To know we have an action plan moving forward to help with child's transition into school, as we felt the reception teacher wouldn't listen to use without your support.

We have worked very closely with the Post Adoption team and feel that our professional relationships are growing. This year we have given advice to Social Workers, parents and schools for over 60 young people who are PLAC. Some of these cases needed several meetings and discussions to resolve the situation.

5.8
Going forwards we will be:
- running a dedicated workshop for Shropshire settings/schools on supporting PLAC, with a particular focus on how schools are spending their PP+ Grant.
- rolling out a collaborative training project with Staffordshire Virtual School with delivery on a variety of educational topics for parents
- ensuring in our new structure there is one of member of staff who has a dedicated role in supporting PLAC queries and this will be overseen by an Assistant Head.
- Rolling out our newly developed process and flowchart to outline clearly how we provide support children as they make the transition from CLA to PLAC. This includes how we use the PP+ Grant effectively in the transitional period and minimise disruption to a child's educational support package (as there can be a significant delay to schools entering a child on the census as PLAC and then directly receiving the Grant the following financial year.)

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

5.9
There has been significant development in the Virtual School during this last year in respect to the Extended Duties with the Asst Head leading on projects such as the Attendance Pilot on ePEP and the Hearts and Minds project with schools. Shropshire VS has also been involved with other Virtual Schools regionally to develop networks that support this workstream.

Numbers of Children with a Social Worker are highly transient but in July the data from LCS indicated 415 children in Shropshire on a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection Plan (CPP). The data also indicated that:

- 34 children with a social worker have an EHCP (17 CIN and 16 on CP Plans)
- The data indicates the highest number of CIN and CP are in early years, Year 1, Year 4, 6 and 10

Open CIN/CPP Plans - Summary by Academic Year Group/School Type/EHCP
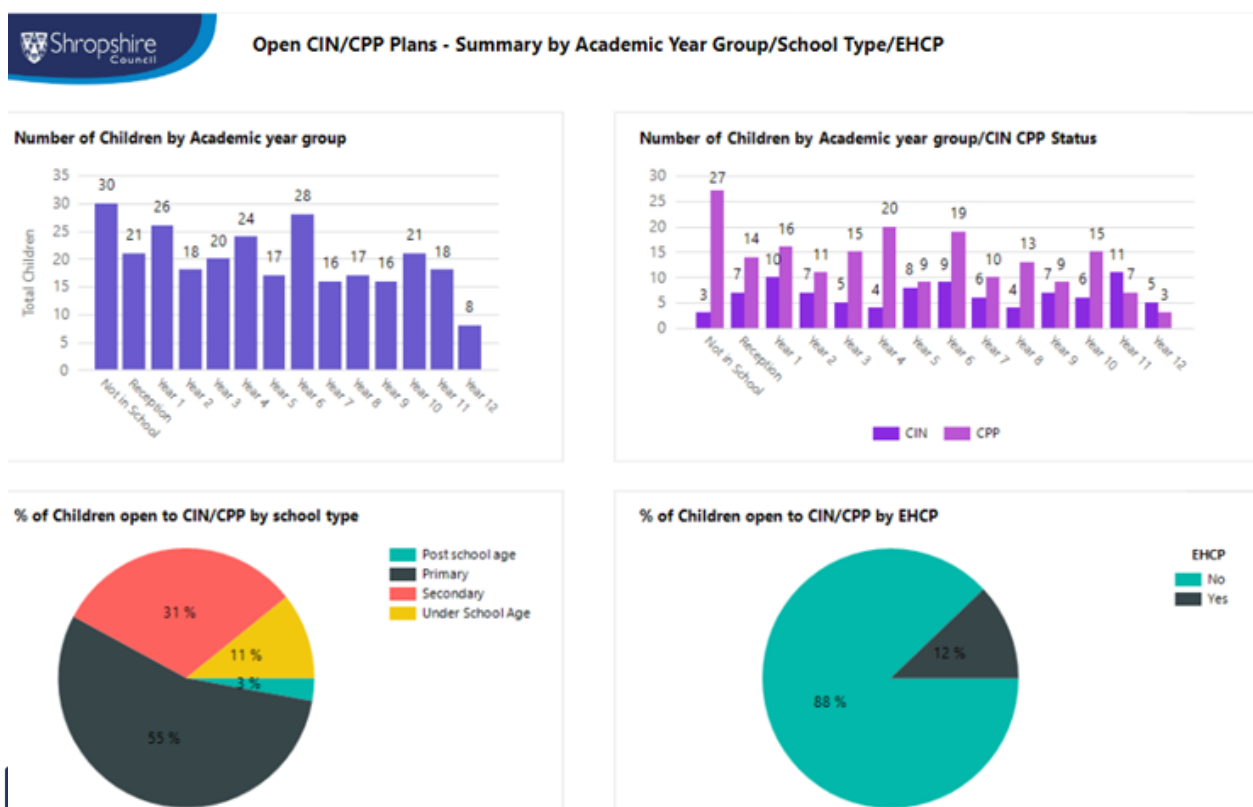
6.0
Shropshire Virtual School have created a project called Hearts and Minds using a targeted approach on data around CIN and CP numbers plus other critical education indicators eg attendance.

The participating schools in the primary sector are Woodside, Holy Trinity and Greenacres and the participating secondaries are Belvidere, William Brookes and Oldbury Wells.

Each of these schools has agreed to undertake the Core training elements as a whole school as follows:
- Becoming an attachment and trauma responsive school
- Emotion Coaching (Train the Trainer and Whole School)

In addition, each school will undertake a
- Bespoke element – a training/support offer evolved in consultation with their Head Teacher that focuses on inclusion themes such as restorative or relational practice, positive mental health and resilience.

To date all the primaries in the project have completed their training on becoming an Attachment & Trauma Responsive School and the pre/post audit will measure impact of this along with feedback from the delegates. The secondary schools are just starting their training with the provider KCA this Autumn.

6.1
Other schools who have high numbers of Children with a Social Worker have had support from the Virtual School in the following ways:

- Coleham and St Peters in Wem have had our Attachment and Trauma Responsive whole school training.
- Crowmoor have undertaken the 3 days Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups training - and Stokesay are in the cohort of schools for Autumn 2023.
- Ludlow and Meole Brace have been involved in our trial attendance project on epep around this cohort of children.

6.2
Data on attendance is as follows:

LA	Absence% CIN 31st March 2020	Absence% CIN 31st March 2021	Absence% CIN 31st March 2022	Absence % CP 31st March 2020	Absence % CP 31st March 2021	Absence% CP 31st March 2022
Shropshire	11.5%	13.1 %	14.2%	13.4%	16.2%	14.9%
Herefordshire	11.3%	16.1%	19.4%	12.7%	18%	25.7%
Devon	11%	16.2%	19.7%	13.3%	18.7%	17.9%
Dorset	13.2%	12%	18.7%	14.2%	14.1%	19.9%
National	10.7% (18-19)	13.4%	16.4%	13.9% (18-19)	17.6%	19.5%

Create your own tables, Table Tool – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

The data indicates that:
- CIN absence rose in Shropshire from 2020 to 2022 but has still been significantly positive in comparison to our statistical neighbours and the national figure.
- CP absence in Shropshire rose but fell by 31st March 2022 and is significantly positive in comparison to our statistical neighbours and the national figure.

The data in the following table indicates that:
- Persistent Absence (PA) increased for CIN between 2020 and 2022 but that Shropshire has a more positive outcome than statistical neighbours and nationally.
- Persistent Absence increased for CP between 2020 and 2021 but fell in 2022; also, that Shropshire has a more positive outcome than statistical neighbours and nationally.

LA	PA % CIN 31st March 2019	PA % CIN 31st March 2021	PA % CIN 31st March 2022	PA %CP 31st March 2019	PA % CP 31st March 2021	PA % CP 31st March 2022
Shropshire	35.2%	39%	41.1%	35.3%	44.7%	41.7%
Herefordshire	32.4%	45.3%	58.5%	32.1%	53.3%	65.8%
Devon	31.2%	50.3%	55.9%	40.6%	57.4%	51.5%
Dorset	40%	29.2%	52.3%	45.5%	39.4%	53.4%
National	30.5%	41.2%	48.5%	39.5%	52.8%	56.2%

6.3
Exclusions for Children with a Social Worker were as follows last academic year:
- Number of Permanent Exclusions - CIN 28 and CP 8
- Number of Suspensions – CIN 311 and CP 36
- Number of days lost due to Suspensions – CIN 946 and CP 162

6.4
A particular barrier with fulfilling the extended duties has been around data collection to aid tracking, analysis and reporting. The Local Authority Dashboard is under development to support with this; the DFE Attendance Dashboard is not yet ready to filter for Children with a Social Worker and this is targeted for a January 2024 start. We continue to advocate for progressing this within the Local Authority and have developed an Attendance Pilot on ePEP which has enabled the Virtual School to start gathering data from a sample of schools to support strategic thinking as well as to provide a focus for the participating schools.

The Virtual School visited each of the schools to discuss their needs and found the overwhelming theme was around emotional based school avoidance (EBSA). As a result, the Virtual School has become involved in the Local Authority development group for EBSA working with multi-agency partners including the Educational Psychology and Access/Inclusion teams.

6.5

Schools reported a training need around understanding processes for CIN and CP, as well as the barriers of receiving regular updates from social care. The Virtual School organised a solution focused workshop for schools with the Service Manager for the Case Assessment Team – and the outcome of this is a new training session in the Autumn term for schools with a focus on Social Care processes.

6.6

During the year 2022-23 the Virtual School gave advice to Social Workers, Schools and other professionals on over 50 children with a social worker and as a result we managed to have a permanent exclusion cancelled for a child on a CP Plan. (The guidance states that the extended duties should be a strategic role several of these cases have needed our in-depth support.) In collaboration with the Inclusion and Access team plans are in place to deliver training for Social Workers on attendance and admissions, both key inclusion themes.

6.7

The Virtual School has engaged with the Designated Social Care Officer for SEND to deliver training this coming Autumn term for Social Workers on SEND (in conjunction with the Accelerated Progress Plan.) Emotion Coaching awareness training took place in the year 2022-23 and places were offered to Social Care. The next stage of this will be in October 2023 with the Train the Trainer programme where we have over 30 schools and 20 Local Authority practitioners attending to become trainers and roll this learning out to their whole school with their LA Buddy for support.

6.8

The Asst Head at the Virtual School supports the drive to improve attendance outcomes across the Local Authority by sitting on the Attendance Steering Group and attending Missing Mondays meetings. The Asst Head is also on the Stepping-Stones Steering group and attends the hub meetings in order to provide educational advice.

6.9 **A selection of compliments for Shropshire Virtual School from 2022-23**

- *"Please can I ask you to pass on my thanks and appreciation to your new team for the wonderful way they have settled into their new roles and new ways of working. The service and support I have had from colleagues has been fantastic and is a reflection of your leadership and their knowledge and commitment. Despite this being the most challenging time for us all I have never felt more positive in terms of the support I have had from the VS and our ability to work together to improve the outcomes for our children." from Neville Ward, EY Service Manager*

- *Feedback from the young people about the Band build week 2023 was "Everything, it was the best ever" ; "Doing the DJing and the drumming and working with the musicians" ; "I learnt how to play the keyboard and I tried something new" and asked if we could "Do it more often please" and "more more I loved it can we have it every holidays".*

- *"I've found sessions useful. It's been a good opportunity to talk about myself and my future. The sessions have made me think, in a good way! I feel positive about my future, the next few years." (a young person about the support they received in the SVS funded project with Aspire/Seeds of Change)*

- *"I want to thank you for yesterday during JS' PEP, I had lots of questions and you were very helpful with your responses, I found it a great learning opportunity as a student. " (A Social Worker to Adriana Coupe, VS Education Advisor)*

- *"I found Eleanor to be very supportive and encouraging, with a clear understanding of the difficulties faced both by teachers and the children in our care. She was very interested in each child and was able to give helpful action points. It was useful for me as an ECT to be able to talk about the challenges that I'm facing and how it has made me feel because I want to do the best for these children." (Feedback from schools for Dr Elle Tomlinson Educational Psychologist re Time for You sessions)*

- *"Just wanted to say how amazing you are at your job. An absolute pleasure to work with you." Nicola Brayford Headteacher - for Amy Foulger, VS Lead Attendance Officer*

- *"I am currently using the Shropshire e-pep system for 4 children across KS1 and EYFS. I find the system really easy and quick to use. The way that you can follow the form through one document is really straightforward and the prompts on the final page mean that I can check I've remembered everything. Thank you! (For our new Shropshire PEP from an Asst Head at a primary school)*

- *"a tremendously helpful day of training; I look forward to sharing it with staff and deepening our whole school understanding of what it means to be nurturing." An additional compliment was "Yesterday was so good! It has given me a new framework for one particular child, and resource ideas for support, that we can put into place straight away. The course has given us a visual understanding of where we need to do more. It was so well worth revisiting the theory and profile after 12+ years. My understanding is clearer and it felt brand new. Thanks again" (feedback from our Boxall Tool training day)*

- *"The VS is always at the end of the phone and gets back to schools quickly with clear advice" and "DTs feel there is good support from the VS especially around PLAC" (feedback from our Designated Teachers at our Network event)*

- *A young person has written to James Waller-Davies to thank him for the support getting her into a school - "Thank you so much this literally means the world to me, and you will never know! This is a literally dream come true and I really appreciate it."*

7.0 Summary of Priorities from the School Development Plan for 2022-24

- Fully resourcing and future proofing the service to meet the growing numbers of CLA plus the wider duties relating to PLAC and Children with a Social Worker. We will create the sense of 'one school' in our service and Shropshire VS functions very well using hybrid working practices, whilst also supporting the well-being of the team.

- We will develop & deliver a high-quality training offer to schools with the aim of supporting recovery, resilience, transition and inclusion for our three 'families' of children and young people.

- Shropshire Virtual School will become increasingly visible to stakeholders, with high-quality regular communications and social media presence/resources. We will enhance partnerships with stakeholders, increase integrated working & increasingly influence strategic outcomes at the LA.

- Data tracking will be embedded in practice across Attainment & Progress, PEPs, CWSW, Post 16, Participation – and we will drive forward change ready relating to the new Attendance guidance. We will be able to tell how we make a difference and our KPIs are in line with or better than National Averages.

- We will develop resource & training to improve Speech & Language skills for our children – and there is impact on outcomes for children in the Early Years up to end of Key Stage 1. We will develop our home learning offer in line with the White Paper and engage Carers with this.

- Our new Shropshire PEP will be launched successfully - and this will support driving up standards of Good Quality PEPs. The Post 16 PEP is developed on to the LCS system.

- We will develop and deliver a robust Training Offer to SWs and DSLs & SENCOs to support promoting achievement and inclusion of CWSW – and we will develop robust integrated working to ensure education is a priority area in CIN and CP Plans

- We will develop robust tracking of data for CWSW so this is established and embedded for high quality reporting and planning for strategic action

- We will make a strong positive contribution to strategic work with our Regional Adoption Agency (Together 4 Children), we will deepen our support offer for parents, promoting understanding of PP+ and how it can be used effectively. We will develop a clear & positive transition offer and process to support children moving from CLA to PLAC

- We will develop an annual calendar of participation activities for each school holiday across CLA and PLAC families, including Celebration events, to support children positively engage in increasing numbers, including those living OOA. We will develop a School Council so that our young people can be supported to have a voice about things that matter to them, supporting them to be heard and shape practice for CLA in the LA

- We will develop effective use of the SDQ and SEMH scales on our new PEP in relation to supporting positive mental health of our Shropshire Children in Care.

- We will build capacity in schools for supporting positive post 16 destination planning and our post 16 UASYP will have increased opportunities to access education through the year, in or out of county. Our young people will have new opportunities created for work experience in the 'family business'

- We will build our offer for children and young people making educational transitions, increasing resources and training to support schools/provisions to build capacity.

7.1
All of these have been achieved in 2022-23 except for the following which are targeted for the second year of the School Development Plan:

- the development of the home Learning Offer – we will be using some Educational Psychology time to explore the best approach and resources for this.
- robust tracking of attendance data for Children with a Social Worker – this is dependent on the DFE Dashboard being ready for use and their target date is January 2024. In the interim we have developed our own dashboard for a pilot with a small number of schools. Meetings are also taking place with the Performance Manager in Learning & Skills to seek prioritisation for CWSW Attendance data on the LA Dashboard development.
- The SEMH scales are being used in our PEPs and the new Asst Head will look at developing how the SDQ can enhance this.
- Work experience in the 'family-business' was developed in late Spring, this was a delay due to the restructure and a high level of absence for the project lead. Out of the 23 Year 10 pupils at Shropshire maintained schools (not including specialist or independent settings) most of these students had already secured a work experience placement and we offered them an extra one in the 'family business' if they wished to take that up but none were keen to. The new Asst Head has this project as one of her responsibility areas under Aspirations and Transitions.

7.2
Summary of Priorities from the School Development Plan for 2023-25

- We will develop a distributed leadership model in the school to drive change to support improving pupil outcomes.

- We will plan proactively to ensure the school is staffed to meet capacity and caseloads are reduced to be more in line with national averages. All year -2 children will have a VS Link and PEPs from January 2024.

- We will progress the next phase of training roll outs & networks for partners/stakeholders on key themes of supporting inclusion and attendance outcomes.

- We will launch the new Post 16 PEP, including training & supporting documentation for partners. We will target PEP quality to increase to 90% in School & Early Years – and develop the new reporting process to support the quality assurance partnership with social care.

- We will continue effective use of Reduced Timetables to support emotional well-being / mental health -and develop additional inclusion projects / partnerships with alternative providers to increase offers on our PP+ Support Map and reduce the length of time Reduced Timetables are open.

- We will develop projects / interventions to Improve outcomes in Maths at end of Key Stage 2 and 4.

- We will progress our work experience offer take up in the family business and develop employability projects; also we will develop a strategic plan for using the new Post 16 PP+ Grant effectively to support attendance, attainment and retention.

- We will develop a new home learning offer to support carers engagement and pupil outcomes.

- We will progress collection, tracking and reporting of Attendance for Children with a Social Worker and aim to reduce permanent exclusions.

- We will widen our Participation Offer so there is a balanced offer across age phase, group type, location and need/ability.

- We will continue the drive towards all of our CLA attending a Good or Outstanding School

- We will work in partnership to progress use of SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)

Report by Jo Kelly, Head Teacher, Shropshire Virtual School
Date: 6th October 2023