Virtual School Head

Annual Report

2022/23

Introduction

The statutory duties of the Virtual School Head include the production of an annual report to inform key stakeholders about the work of the Virtual School over the course of the year. The following report is a summary of work undertaken and the achievements of the looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need whose education we oversee.

2023 marks ten years of Trafford Virtual School and, more personally, ten years of my role as Virtual School Head in Trafford. It has been such a privilege to be part of the work of Virtual Schools both locally and nationally through being trustee of the National Association of Virtual School Heads. The role of the Virtual School has developed hugely in this time, from the introduction of statutory duties in terms of overseeing the education of looked after children and management of Pupil Premium funding, to an extension to oversee the education of previously looked after children and, most recently, children in need. The DfE definition of Children in Need is those who have been open to Social Care and subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan in the past six years. In Trafford this means that our team has grown and I am very proud of the way the team's expertise has developed to meet these new challenges. However, the thing that makes me feel most proud is our children and young people. Being in this job for such a long time has allowed me to see children grow into incredible adults whether that is qualifying as a Social Worker and writing a reference for their first Supervising Social Worker role, hearing that they have recently started a job as a mechanical engineer on the team which will be the first ever to decommission a fusion reactor, or seeing pictures of a placement in Korea for one of our University students before they head to Finland for a study year abroad. It has been my priviledge over the past ten years to bear witness to amazing resilience and incredible achievements!

These incredible care experienced adults have also become an important part of our Virtual School service and we now have sixteen YouCan Peer Mentors trained to support our younger children. They are amazing role models and have so much credibility because they have 'been there' themselves. I feel very lucky that these mentors also bring their expertise to our service and this year we have developed a vision of three strands of Virtual School: the team, the Governing Body and the YouCan Peer Mentors. In July we held a service development day to bring the three strands together, with Josh leading an epic game of 'Splat' to break the ice! This year we will be developing leadership roles within the YouCan Peer Mentor team who will represent the group at Virtual School Team Meetings, Governing Body Meetings and Designated Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead Forums.

Bringing people together has been a theme for Virtual School this year and we started the year with our first 'Bridge Conference' for schools, social workers and other professionals who support our children. There were over 200 attendees at the conference and it was a great opportunity to share information about what the support Virtual School can offer and promote the idea of everyone being 'education champions' for our children. In order to support this multi-agency audience to better understand the education system we provided Education Champions Guides and we have developed the Virtual School website. We have also rebranded the Virtual School to better communicate what we do. Our new logo features a bridge, to represent the way we make connections between education and social care, and a child reaching for the stars to represent the high aspirations we all have for our children.

The extension of the remit of Virtual School to oversee the education of children in need has meant that we need to think differently about the work we do. There are now over 5,300 children whose education we oversee. In order to make a difference for this wider group of children we firstly need to understand their educational experience, and getting to grips with data has been a top priority this year. We are now confident that we know who these children are and we can start to look for patterns in this data in order to target our support. One way that we have been doing this is through our new Children in Need Panel where we discuss any child who falls into the following categories:

- Children Missing Education
- Elective Home Education
- Part-Time Timetable
- Alternative Provision
- Severe Absence

- Subject to Suspension
- Ever Permanent Exclusion
- EYFS not attending nursery
- Unmet SEND Need
- NEET/At risk of NEET

Membership of this Panel will be growing next year and will include key partners from Education, Social Care and Health. We intend for this Panel to become an effective means of information sharing and driving forward best practice to ensure every child gets the best deal in education.
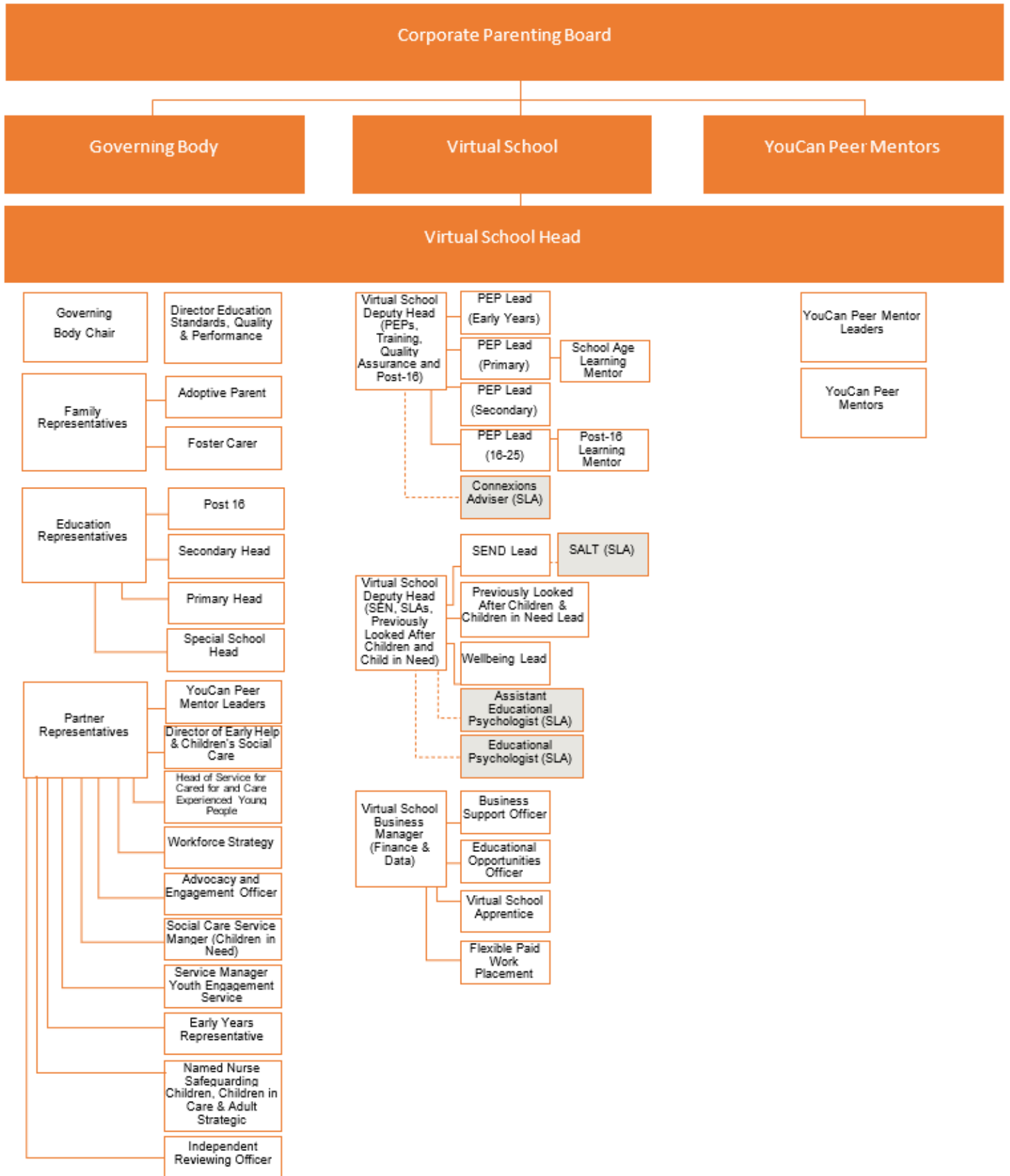
Our drive to ensure all of our children achieve their best in education also includes a priority around ensuring that every school understands our children's needs and the impact that attachment difficulties or experience of trauma might have. This year we launched our Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme and we have been working with two leaders from each of seven schools who are working towards a post-graduate qualification and have been accessing half termly supervision with a Clinical Psychologist to support them to enact culture change in their schools. This is a rolling two year programme and the schools will all be accessing whole school training in year 2. In the autumn term we will be developing a model Trafford Relational Behaviour Policy and we will be recruiting schools to become the second cohort. We hope that a Post-16 and Early Years provider will join us this year too. Attachment and Trauma Awareness will be the theme of our 2023/24 'Bridge Conference' where participating schools will be presenting their learning.

The theme of belonging was also a focus at this year's 'Ask the Experts' Day in August. Fifteen of our children joined us to share their ideas about the reasons children might or might not like attending school and what schools can do to help them feel they belong. Their artwork and ideas will be shared at the 2023/24 Bridge Conference and can be found throughout this report.

Trafford Virtual School, our partners in Education and Social Care and members of the Corporate Parenting Board are immensely proud of the achievements of our children and young people. We look forward to working together, alongside Parents and Carers, to face the challenges that the new academic year will bring and ensure that all of our children have the best opportunities to achieve their potential.

Virtual School Team Structure

Corporate Parenting Board

Governing Body | **Virtual School** | **YouCan Peer Mentors**

Virtual School Head

Governing Body Chair

Director Education Standards, Quality & Performance

Family Representatives
- Adoptive Parent
- Foster Carer

Education Representatives
- Post 16
- Secondary Head
- Primary Head
- Special School Head

Partner Representatives
- YouCan Peer Mentor Leaders
- Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care
- Head of Service for Cared for and Care Experienced Young People
- Workforce Strategy
- Advocacy and Engagement Officer
- Social Care Service Manger (Children in Need)
- Service Manager Youth Engagement Service
- Early Years Representative
- Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, Children in Care & Adult Strategic
- Independent Reviewing Officer

Virtual School Deputy Head (PEPs, Training, Quality Assurance and Post-16)
- PEP Lead (Early Years)
- PEP Lead (Primary) — School Age Learning Mentor
- PEP Lead (Secondary)
- PEP Lead (16-25) — Post-16 Learning Mentor
- Connexions Adviser (SLA)

Virtual School Deputy Head (SEN, SLAs, Previously Looked After Children and Child in Need)
- SEND Lead — SALT (SLA)
- Previously Looked After Children & Children in Need Lead
- Wellbeing Lead
- Assistant Educational Psychologist (SLA)
- Educational Psychologist (SLA)

Virtual School Business Manager (Finance & Data)
- Business Support Officer
- Educational Opportunities Officer
- Virtual School Apprentice
- Flexible Paid Work Placement

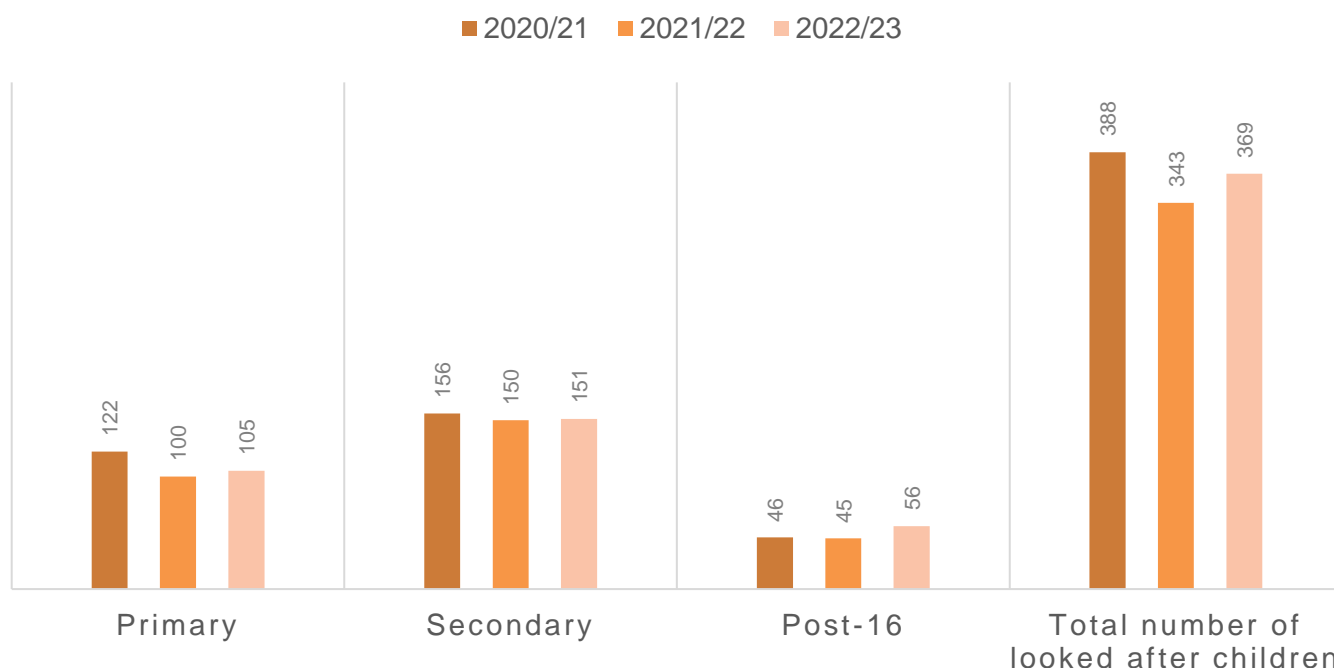YouCan Peer Mentor Leaders

YouCan Peer Mentors

Virtual School Roll

At the end of the 2022/23 academic year, there were 369 looked after children on the Virtual School roll. This is in line with previous years excluding 2021/22 when the number dropped to 343. Trafford looked after children in Reception to Year 11 attend 117 different schools in 21 local authorities. 63% of our children attend schools in Trafford which is 7% lower than in 2021/22. In total, 89% of pupils attend school within Greater Manchester.

At the end of the 2022/23 academic year there was one pupil recorded as CME (Child Missing Education). This pupil is an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child and became looked after at the end of the summer term.

Distribution of Looked After Children at each school stage

■ 2020/21 ■ 2021/22 ■ 2022/23

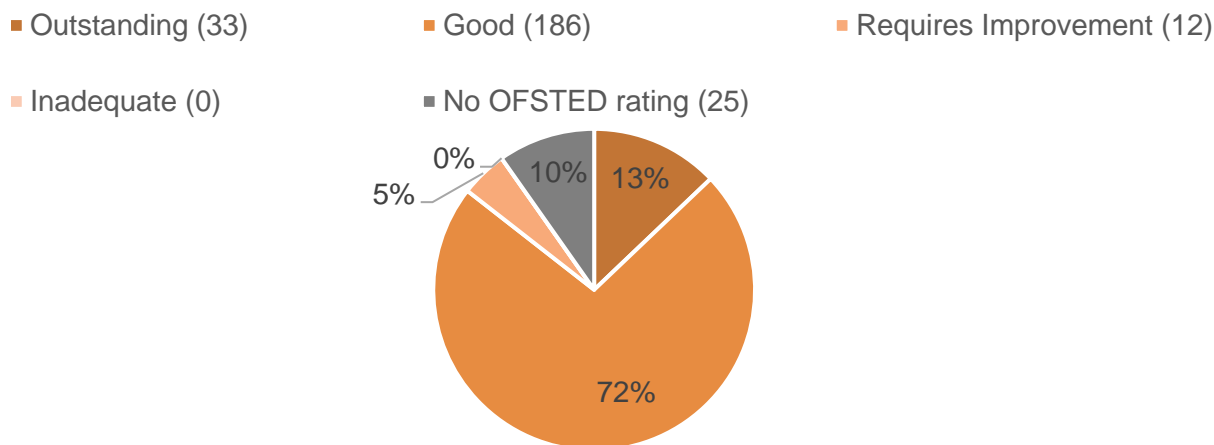|	Primary	Secondary	Post-16	Total number of looked after children
2020/21	122	156	46	388
2021/22	100	150	45	343
2022/23	105	151	56	369

Ofsted Ratings

The statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked after children' states that schools judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' should be prioritised for looked after children in need of a new school and that, unless there are exceptional, evidence-based reasons, looked after children should never be placed in a school judged to be 'Inadequate'. At the end of the academic year 95% of Trafford's looked after children in Reception to Year 11 attended 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools (excluding those attending schools that are not rated by Ofsted). This is in comparison to 96.2% in 2021/22, and 89.5% at the end of 2020/21. 14% of Trafford's looked after children attended schools rated to be 'Outstanding'. There are 25 pupils who attend schools that have not been rated by Ofsted or which are inspected by other bodies. In all but one of these cases, it is due to schools converting to academies which have not yet been inspected.

The chart below shows the proportion of pupils attending schools with identified Ofsted ratings:
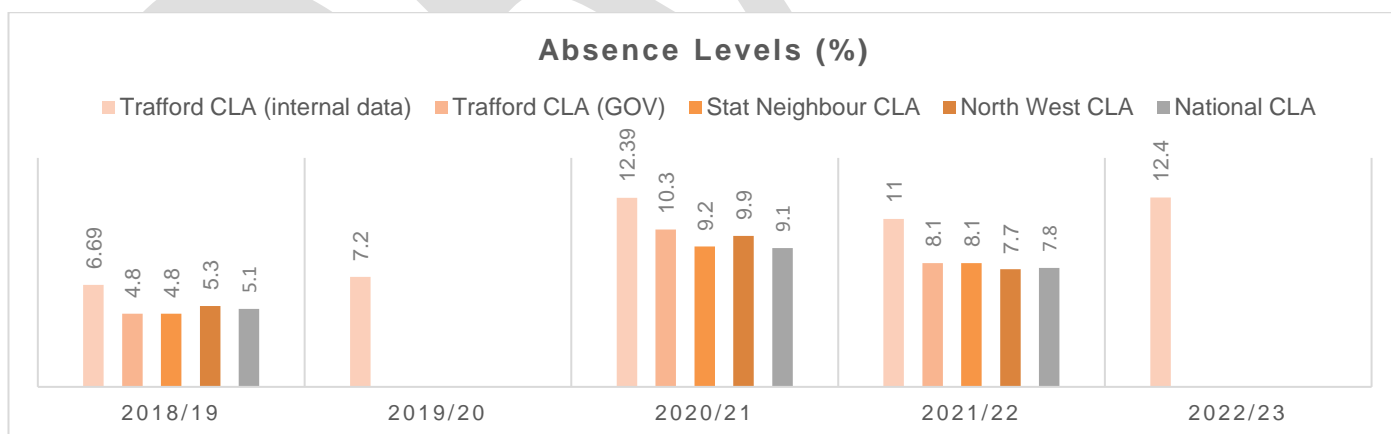
Ofsted ratings for schools attended by Trafford Looked After Children 2023

- Outstanding (33)
- Good (186)
- Requires Improvement (12)
- Inadequate (0)
- No OFSTED rating (25)

Pie chart values: 13%, 72%, 5%, 0%, 10%

Where a child already attends a school which is judged to be less than 'Good' before becoming looked after or where the school receives a lower grade at inspection while the child is already at the school, the Virtual School Head must consider whether a fall in Ofsted grading would justify disrupting a child's education with a school move.

12 pupils attend 5 separate schools which are rated as 'Requires Improvement'. 8 of these 12 pupils attend two Trafford schools that were inspected this year. All of these pupils already attended the school before the judgement changed. Virtual School prioritise attendance at PEPs for these children. There are no pupils who attend an 'Inadequate' rated school.

Attendance

Absence Levels (%)

Legend: Trafford CLA (internal data), Trafford CLA (GOV), Stat Neighbour CLA, North West CLA, National CLA

Year	Trafford CLA (internal data)	Trafford CLA (GOV)	Stat Neighbour CLA	North West CLA	National CLA
2018/19	6.69	4.8	4.8	5.3	5.1
2019/20	7.2				
2020/21	12.39	10.3	9.2	9.9	9.1
2021/22	11	8.1	8.1	7.7	7.8
2022/23	12.4				

The above chart shows the average absence over the past five years. Trafford internal data is the most accurate snapshot as that is captured from our live attendance monitoring system. Comparative data is nationally reported but may not include all children who were looked after at the end of the academic year. It is of note that the nationally reported data is less likely to include attendance for children in the most complex circumstances who may not appear on the school census. However, the Government data does give us comparative insight with statistical neighbours and looked after children nationally.

The average absence for 2022/23 was 12.4%, a 1.4% increase from 2021/22. This is a significant increase in absence compared with 2018/19 (pre-Covid). There is no published comparative attendance data for Looked After Children in 2022/23. However, we know that overall absence for all children nationally was 7.5% and that anecdotal evidence suggests that North-West Looked After Children absence was around 11%. In Trafford absence for all children was 44% higher than pre-Covid but 46% higher for looked after children meaning that the attendance gap between looked after children and their peers in Trafford is wider.

Persistent Absentees (% of students with attendance of 90% or below)

	2018/19	**2019/20 to 20th March**	**2020/21 (Schools closed to some pupils in Spring Term)**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
Virtual School (internal data)	19.8%	15% (42 pupils)	37% (88 pupils)	27% (67 pupils)	25.7% (67 pupils)
Trafford CLA (Gov)	13.8%	Not available	35.6%	22.07%	Not available
National CLA	12.9%	Not available	30.4%	18.74%	Not available
Trafford ALL	7.9%	Not available	9.84%	17.63%	Not available

67 pupils were categorised as 'Persistent Absentee' at the end of 2022/23, meaning that their attendance fell below 90%. 55 of these pupils were in secondary school, and 12 of these pupils were in primary school. 16 of the pupils who were persistently absent were in Year 11, which was 38.1% of the Year 11 cohort. The Year 11 data excludes summer half term two when pupils ceased to be Statutory School Age in line with nationally reported data.

- 41.6% of primary age and 30.1% of secondary age persistent absentees were placed with their own parent. Children placed with parents were significantly more likely to be persistently absent than those who lived with foster carers.
- 55.5% of children placed in residential accommodation including 1 Primary aged child, were catergorised as persistently absent. Children placed in residential home settings were significantly more likely to be persistantly absent than those in foster placements.
- 37.7% of pupils who were persistently absent attended specialist schools and were more likely to be persistently absent than children in mainstream schools. This is an increase from 22% in 2021/22
- 47.7% of pupils who were persistently absent had an EHCP and a further 23.7% received SEN Support. A total of 71.6% of pupils who were persistently absent had a Special Educational Need.
- 50.7% of pupils who were persistently absent attended a school in Trafford. This means that children who attended school in Trafford were less likely to be persistantly absent than those who attended school in another authority.
- 26.8% of pupils who were persistently absent became looked after during the course of the academic year.
- 23.8% of pupils who were persistently absent had at least one suspension during the course of the year and that rose to 31% of persistently absent pupils in secondary school.

Severe Absence

The Education White Paper sets an expectation that Local Authorities and Schools work together to support children who are 'severely absent'. This new term relates to children who have been absent for at least 50% of school sessions.

In 2022/23 there were 21 looked after children who would fall into this category, double the 2021/22 level. Of these severely absent pupils:

- 19 had Special Educational Needs;
- 12 had an EHCP;
- 9 attended non-mainstream schools;
- 8 were placed with their own parents;
- 3 lived in residential accommodation;
- 19 attended secondary school;
- 8 attended school in Trafford;
- And 4 became looked after this year.

Attendance Support Strategies

- A Learning Mentor is in post to monitor electronic registers, contact schools and families where children are not in school and offer enhanced support to pupils who are persistently absent. More details regarding the Learning Mentor's work can be found in the Learning Mentor section.

- Daily reports are uploaded to LCS (Social Care Database) regarding any school absence to ensure social workers are informed.

- Tuition, mentoring, and counselling are available to all children and 144 children have accessed additional support commissioned by Virtual School this year – more than half of our children of statutory school age.

- The Virtual School will be launching a new half-termly attendance training programme in 2023/24 aimed at supporting professionals and family members who have children who are persistently absent (attendance less than 90%) or severely absent (attendance less than 50%) from school, led by our Assistant Educational Psychologist and Wellbeing Lead. The sessions will explore the impact of low attendance on future outcomes, consider the ways in which mental health and special educational needs impact on attendance, share resources and strategies to improve attendance (including the Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance guidance and toolkit), and will facilitate solution focused discussions around improving attendance for looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need.

Pupils with 100% Attendance

We are extremely proud of all of our children who achieved 100% attendance this year in such challenging circumstances.

	2018/19	2019/20 to 20 March*	Summer 2020/21*	2021/22	2022/23
Virtual School	10% (25 pupils)	15% (42 pupils)	3% (8 pupils)	7.5% (18 pupils)	5.7% (15 pupils)

*Covid attendance data

Exclusion and Suspension

There have been no permanent exclusions of Trafford looked after children since the introduction of Virtual School in 2014 but in 2022/23, as in previous years, there were a number of cases where the Virtual School Head intervened, in line with the Virtual School Exclusion Policy, to support a managed move or coordinate an alternative package of education to avoid a permanent exclusion.

The table below shows numbers and proportions of pupils who were subject to suspensions over the past year. The decrease in the number of students subject to suspensions and the number of days lost is incredible considering the context of National Data. Nationally suspensions of all pupils increased year on year and increased by 22% between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

	Number of students with recorded suspension	Total days lost due to suspension	The proportion of pupils subject to suspension	Average number of days lost per pupil
2016/17	29	124	10%	0.4 days
2017/18	34	209	13%	0.7 days
2018/19	49	288	16%	1 day
2019/20 (schools open to all pupils for two terms)	40 (60 full year equivalent)	183 (274.5 full year equivalent)	15%	0.7 days
2020/21 (schools open to all pupils for two terms)	34 (51 full year equivalent)	141 (211.5 full year equivalent)	12%	0.5 days
2021/22	39	180	16%	0.7 days
2022/23	36	122.5	14%	0.5 days

There were two children in Primary School who were suspended this year. One pupil was in Year 4 and one in Year 6. This is compared to four children in Primary School who were suspended in 2021/22. Twenty six children have a Special Educational Need (72%) and twenty are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (56%). This is a higher proportion of children who were suspended with an EHCP than in 2021/22 (44%). Fifteen children who were suspended attend a specialist school (42%) which means that children who attend special school were more likely to be suspended than those who attended mainstream school.

The chart below shows the number of sessions lost to suspension for each of the 36 pupils:
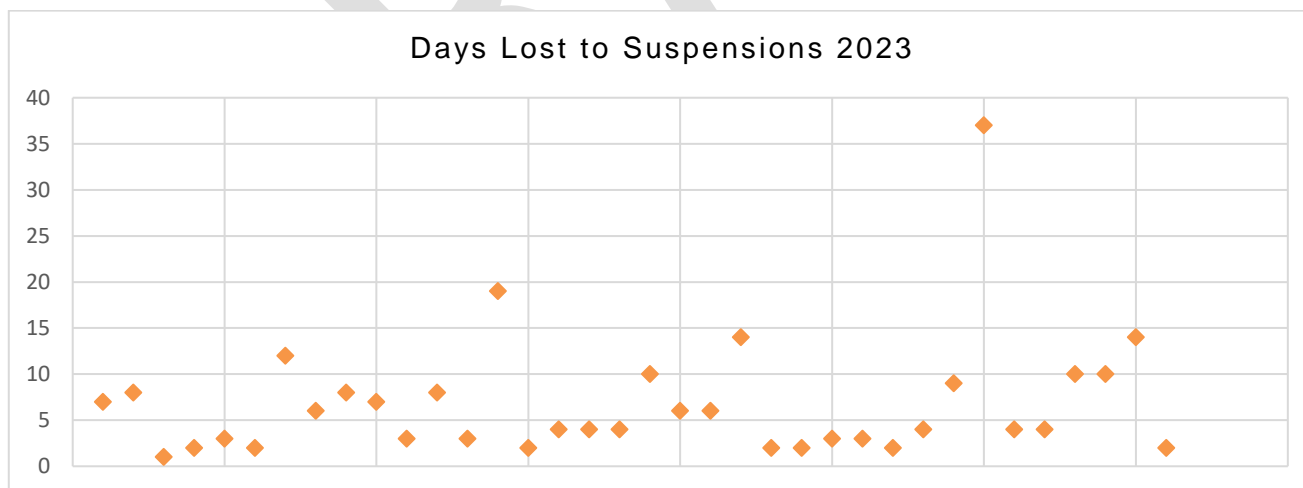
There were eight pupils whose suspensions exceeded 10 or more sessions (5 days). Three of these pupils attended out of borough independent special schools, two were in Trafford mainstream schools, one was in a mainstream out of borough secondary and two attended a Trafford Special School. Virtual School will continue to work with these schools to ensure there are appropriate support strategies in place to avoid further suspension.
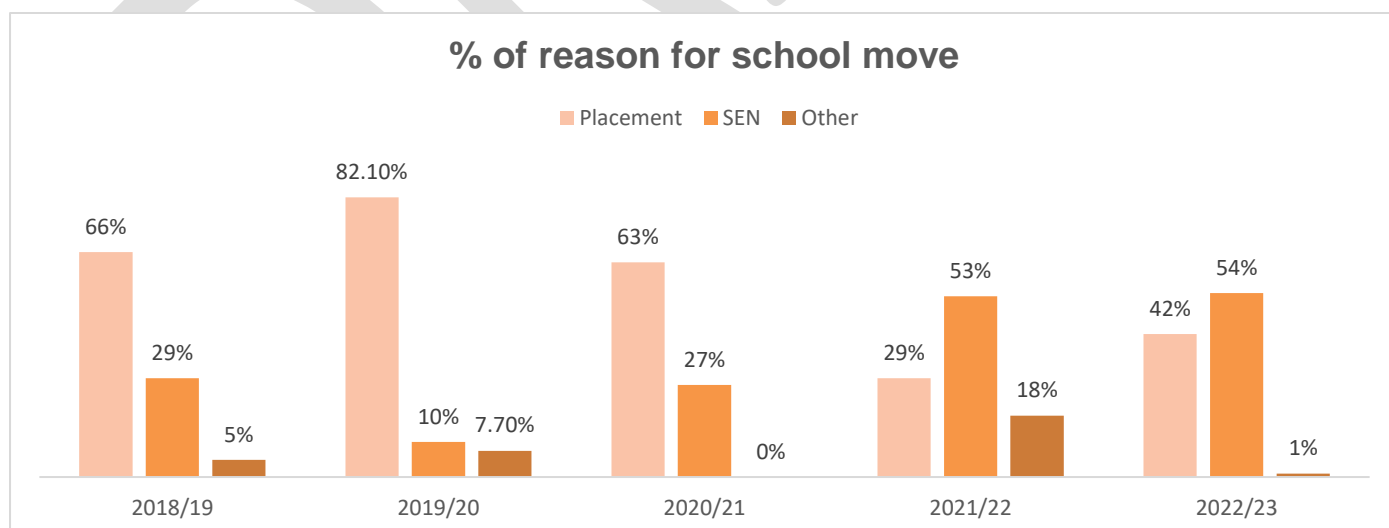
School Placement Moves

Research suggests that any placement move will have a detrimental impact on a child's educational attainment. Education Matters in Care states:

"Being able to stay at the same school and avoid disruption to their education has a strong association with educational attainment for looked after children"

There were 24 pupils who experienced school placement moves in the 2022/23 academic year. This is approximately 9% of the cohort of pupils of statutory school age. The chart below shows the proportion of pupils from Reception to Year 11 experiencing school placement moves over the past five years:

14%	14%	8%	7%	9%
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
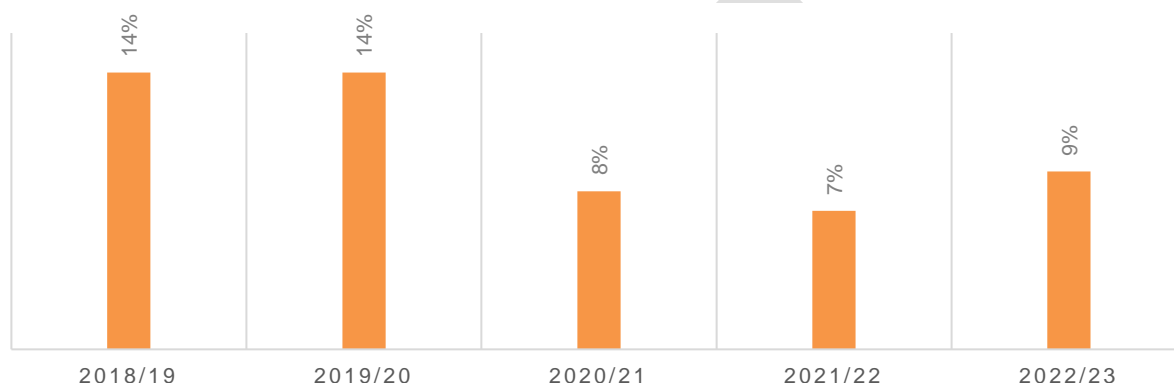
Further analysis of the reasons behind these school moves shows that 10 (42%) were due to a placement move, 13 (54%) were due to special educational needs and 1 (4%) was due to the young person becoming permanently excluded shortly before becoming a looked after child. The chart below illustrates the reason why there was an in-year school placement change over the last five years. Post-covid, the main reason for this has changed from home placement move to moves driven by a Special Educational Need.

% of reason for school move

Placement ▪ SEN ▪ Other

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Placement	66%	82.10%	63%	29%	42%
SEN	29%	10%	27%	53%	54%
Other	5%	7.70%	0%	18%	1%

*other refers to either school placement breakdown or managed move to avoid exclusion
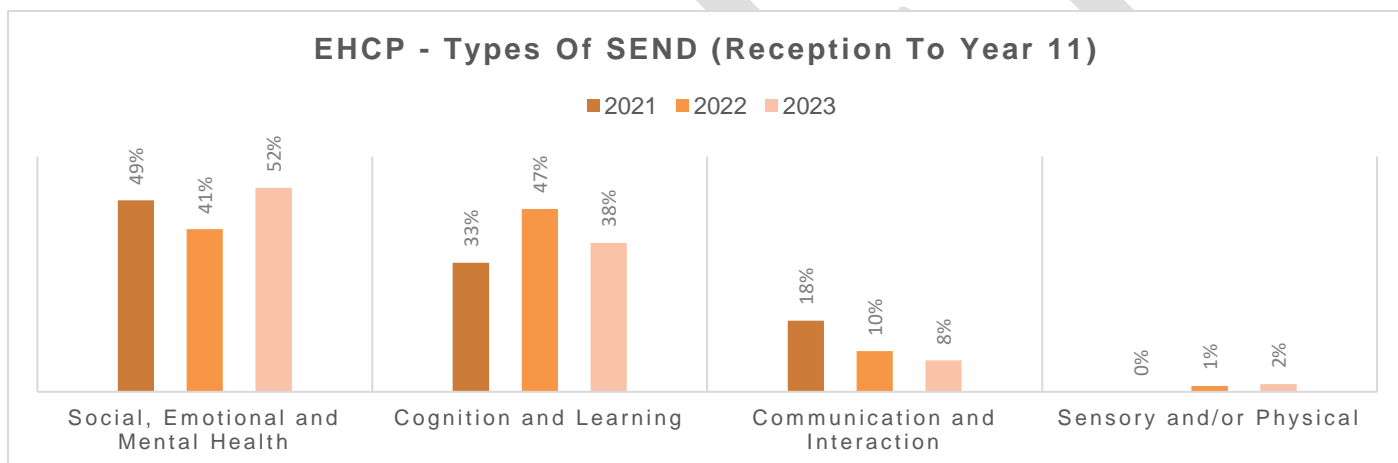
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Reception to Year 11
At the end of the 2022/23 academic year there were 155 pupils from Reception to Year 11 with an identified Special Educational Need. This is 60.5% of the cohort which is higher than in 2021/22 (54%) and the 2021/22 rates for looked after children across all comparators: National (57.4%); Statistical Neighbours (57.01%); and the North West (53.23%). However, it should be noted that the rates in this comparative data is likely to increase for 2022/23.

There were 90 pupils (35%) in Reception to Year 11 who had an EHC Plan. This is lower than in 2021/22 (37%) but higher than the 2021/22 rates for National (30.28%), Statistical Neighbours (31.81%) and North West (26.72%). As above, the rates in this comparative data are likely to increase for 2022/23.

This year we have continued to work closely with the SEN team to gather data with regards to the four broad areas of need for children with EHCPs. The chart below shows the breakdown of these areas of need. This year the main area of need for Trafford looked after children is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (52%).

EHCP - Types Of SEND (Reception To Year 11)

■2021 ■2022 ■2023

	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction	Sensory and/or Physical
2021	49%	33%	18%	0%
2022	41%	47%	10%	1%
2023	52%	38%	8%	2%

Post-16 (Year 12 and 13)
There were 37 young people (41% of cohort) in Year 12 and 13 who had an EHC Plan. This figure includes those who turned 18 during the course of the year but remained open to the service as Care Leavers. This is a slight decrease from 45% in 2021/22.

The chart below shows the breakdown of the four broad areas of need. This highlights that the main area of need for Year 12 and 13 Trafford looked after children is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (59%). This is consistent with data in previous years, however Communication and Interaction has seen a 5% increase.

EHCP - Types Of SEND (Year 12 And Year 13)

■2020/21　■2021/22　■2022/23

	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction	Sensory and/or Physical
2020/21	67%	18%	15%	0%
2021/22	68%	22%	11%	0%
2022/23	59%	24%	16%	0%
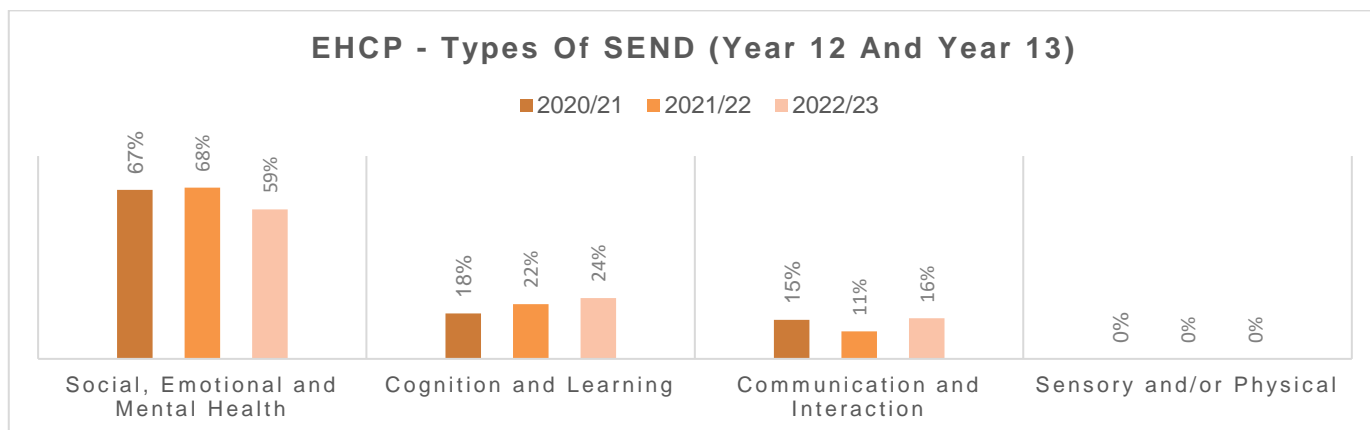
SEND Policy Update

This academic year we have also updated the SEND Policy to reflect the extension to the Virtual School's role to include strategic oversight and responsibility for children with a social worker. The purpose of the SEND Policy is to improve outcomes for looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need and to document our offer for this group of children. A draft copy of the revised SEND Policy has been shared with the Virtual School Governing Body and will be shared more widely and uploaded to the Virtual School website in the next academic year.
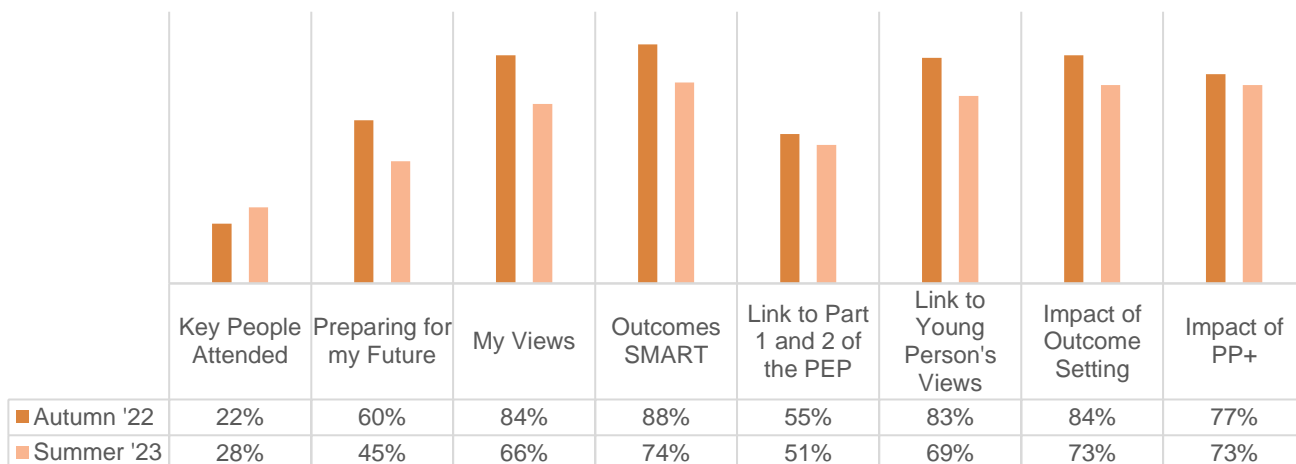
Voice of the Child Forum

A Voice of the Child Forum was delivered in February 2023 with several Designated Teachers from specialist settings. This was to identify how to make the ePEP and accompanying guidance more inclusive for our children within these settings. Following the forum, a guidance document was devised, and Voice of the Child training will take place on a half termly basis from September 2023 to improve the way that pupil voice is obtained and recorded on the ePEP.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The Virtual School has seen a significant increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after by Trafford. In September 2022 there were 7 children, 4 of whom were school aged (57%). By July 2023 there were 21 children, 14 of whom were school aged (67%). Children in Year 12 and Year 13 were able to access appropriate ESOL courses in Further Education settings and progress was monitored via termly PEPs. The children of statutory school age were put on roll at local mainstream secondary schools and a bespoke package of Alternative Provision was in place for each child to support their progress and educational success. Additional resources and support were also approved via the children's PEPs. In 2023/24, the Virtual School will be liaising more closely with colleagues in social care and education settings, as well as other North-West Virtual Schools, to create a package of guidance and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and the professionals who support them.

Personal Education Plans

The statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' was published in February 2018. This statutory guidance emphasises the importance of PEPs as an integral part of the Care Plan of all looked after children. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority that looks after the child and the school that they attend. Guidance states that PEPs must be updated on a termly basis for all children from pre-school to the age of 18.

In September 2021, Virtual School launched a new electronic PEP, which is integrated into the child's Care Plan on LCS (Social Care database). The electronic PEP better facilitates multi-agency working whilst ensuring that information can be shared more securely than using the previous 'paper' plan. Our PEP Leads continue to support PEP meetings to help improve completion rate and quality. An updated version of the electronic PEP will be launched at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2023 and this will be accompanied with bespoke training for new Designated Teachers delivered by the Virtual School Deputy Head.

Virtual School are unable to attend all PEP meetings and the criteria for Virtual School involvement in supporting professionals is as follows:

- New case on Virtual School roll
- School placement move
- Need for independent chair due to professional disagreement (e.g. Pupil Premium)

- Pupil educated out of borough
- Key year groups
- Red' rated case (Concerns raised at Virtual School Resource Panel due to poor attendance/engagement/school rated less than 'Good' by Ofsted etc.)

Below are the PEP competition rates for the last three years:

	Overall Completion	Reception-Year 11	Early Years	Post-16
Autumn Term 2020	**89%**	**94%**	**85%**	**76%**
Spring Term 2021	**91%**	**92%**	**70%**	**94%**
Summer Term 2021	**90%**	**93%**	**80%**	**76%**
Autumn Term 2021	**86%**	**88%**	**85%**	**83%**
Spring Term 2022	**88%**	**91%**	**62%**	**93%**
Summer Term 2022	**82%**	**85%**	**56%**	**56%**
Autumn Term 2022	**83%**	**87%**	**88%**	**70%**
Spring Term 2023	**81%**	**84%**	**71%**	**71%**
Summer Term 2023	**89%**	**92%**	**79%**	**79%**

Quality Assurance Analysis 2022/23

This year Virtual School have continued to work with colleagues in social care and in schools to develop our Quality Assurance tool which places greater focus on the voice of the child and measuring the impact of PEPs rather than on compliance. The Virtual School responded to feedback from schools regarding the use of an Ofsted grading system and have now amended this to a RAG grading system with 'Green' PEPs meeting all expectations of a good PEP and 'Red' PEPs needing improvement in some areas. A dip sample of PEPs were quality assured in the Autumn Term 2022 and at the end of the academic year. Both samples included at least one PEP from each education setting that our children attend. More PEPs were quality assured where a school had a high number of looked after children. The Quality Assurance tool provides detailed feedback regarding areas of strength and areas for development to drive forward improvements in PEP quality.

The Virtual School maintained high expectations when judging what makes a 'Green' PEP.

The Quality Assurance tool requires all all key adults (Designated Teacher, social worker and carer) to attend the PEP meeting, and for all of the following areas to be rated at least 'Green' for the PEP to be rated at least 'Green' overall:

- The Voice of the Child: Preparing for my Future
- The Voice of the Child: My Views
- Individual Progress and SMART Outcomes: Outcomes are SMART
- Individual Progress and SMART Outcomes: Outcomes clearly link to Part 1 and 2 of the PEP
- Individual Progress and SMART Outcomes: Outcomes are linked to the young person's views
- Individual Progress and SMART Outcomes: The impact of SMART outcome setting is clearly recorded
- Individual Progress and SMART Outcomes: The impact of Pupil Premium Plus/Post-16 funding is clearly recorded

In the Summer Term the Virtual School quality assured 152 PEPs from 137 different settings. The table below shows the outcome of the quality assurance dip sample.

Quality Assurance Rating	Summer Term 2020		Summer Term 2021		Summer Term 2022		Autumn 2022		Summer 2023	
	287 PEPs		304 PEPs		107 PEPs		115 PEPs		152 PEPs	
Green	60	21%	51	17%	6	6%	0	0%	13	9%
Amber	174	61%	187	62%	85	79%	96	83%	112	74%
Red	17	6%	10	3%	14	13%	19	17%	27	17%

The chart below gives further analysis of the reasons PEPs did not reach the highest rating. As there are multiple factors in achieving 'Green' a single PEP can achieve ratings in several areas.

In the chart below improvement is indicated by a reduction in Summer 2023 (light orange)

(%) of reason For Why PEP Was Not Rated 'Green'

	Key People Attended	Preparing for my Future	My Views	Outcomes SMART	Link to Part 1 and 2 of the PEP	Link to Young Person's Views	Impact of Outcome Setting	Impact of PP+
Autumn '22	22%	60%	84%	88%	55%	83%	84%	77%
Summer '23	28%	45%	66%	74%	51%	69%	73%	73%

The Virtual School has seen an improvement in the overall quality of PEPs and in the majority of each individual area over the course of the academic year. This is a result of the high level of engagement from Designated Teachers with training over the course of the academic year. 61 Designated Teachers from 56 different education settings attended PEP and Quality Assurance training hosted by the Virtual School Deputy Head, and a further 44 Designated Teachers from 40 different education settings attended 1-1 PEP training with the Deputy Head or with a PEP Lead.

In the Summer Term, the Virtual School recorded a decrease in key people attending children's PEP meetings, and in 74% of these instances it was due to absence of the child's parent or carer. The Virtual School will be working closely with families and with Provider Services to overcome any barriers to carers attending PEP meeting, and support for all carers to be strong education champions for our looked after children.

However, the main reason for PEPs not being rated 'Green' was due to outcomes not being SMART. In response to this, the Virtual School will be launching a new training programme in 2023/24 which will include:

- New Designated Teacher Training (half-termly)
- Quality PEP Training: Setting SMART outcomes (half-termly)
- Quality PEP Training: Capturing the Voice of the Child (half-termly)

In addition, 'Red' PEPs will be Quality Assured on a termly basis by the PEP Leads, providing more feedback and support to Designated Teachers to improve PEP completion. The Virtual School Deputy Head will provide 1-1 support to schools where PEPs were close to being rated 'Green'.

Pupil Premium

The Conditions of Grant for Pupil Premium state that funding for looked after children should be managed by the Virtual School Head. This means that Trafford Virtual School is responsible for monitoring and auditing the use of this funding and ensuring that the money makes a real difference to the individual children looked after by Trafford Local Authority. Pupil Premium for looked after children cannot be carried forward into a new financial year and must be spent before the end of March or returned to the Department for Education. Therefore this budget requires careful management.

As set out in the Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy, the majority of Pupil Premium funding has been made available to schools to meet the specific needs of individual children in line with the targets on their Personal Education Plan. Specific needs might include attendance at a school residential, additional tuition or access to the support of a Teaching Assistant. However, guidance suggests that "*it may be appropriate to pool some pupil premium for activities to benefit the authority's looked after children more holistically*" and Trafford Virtual School continues to pool resources in order to offer looked after children enhanced services such as a dedicated Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Careers Adviser. This year this centralised resource has included funding to train an existing member of the team to become an in-house Play Therapist specialising in supporting looked after children and Learning Mentors to support school attendance and Post-16 transition.

Pupil Premium Budget 2022/23

In 2022/23 (financial year) the total Pupil Premium allocation was £723,000 (not including Early Years allocation). This compares with £729,295 in 2021/22 and £759,780 in 2020/21. The decrease in funding is due to the decrease in the number of looked after children in Trafford.

£199,650 was requested by schools via pupils' PEPs and the chart below shows what these requests were for (Reception – Year 11). Year on year requests for teaching support have been highest, however, demand for teaching support did decrease this year. It should be noted that this does not include teaching and therapeutic support commissioned directly by Virtual School via the Alternative Provision Framework. Further information on this can be found in the Alternative Provision section of this report.

Reception To Year 11 Pupil Premium Spend 2021/22

Legend: 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23

	Activities / Clubs	Educational visits	Equipment / resources	Teaching Support	Therapeutic / Counselling
2018/19	19%	5%	13%	43%	19%
2019/20	21%	4%	12%	45%	18%
2020/21	18%	2%	15%	54%	11%
2021/22	8%	1%	11%	65%	15%
2022/23	10%	1%	10%	49%	30%
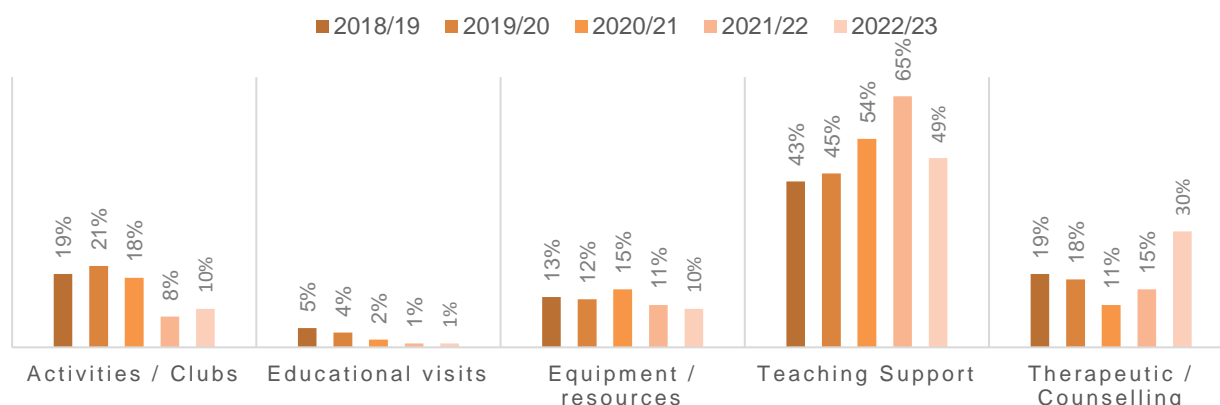
Post-16 Pupil Premium

Following Trafford Virtual School's successful bid to be part of a Post-16 Pupil Premium Pilot, a further £41,400 was allocated to support young people who attend Further Education. This was a slight increase to the £33,000 granted in 2021/22. We continue to use this funding primarily for an attendance monitoring system for Post-16 young people and to employ a Post-16 Learning Mentor in order to be more proactive in supporting young people to maintain Further Education places.
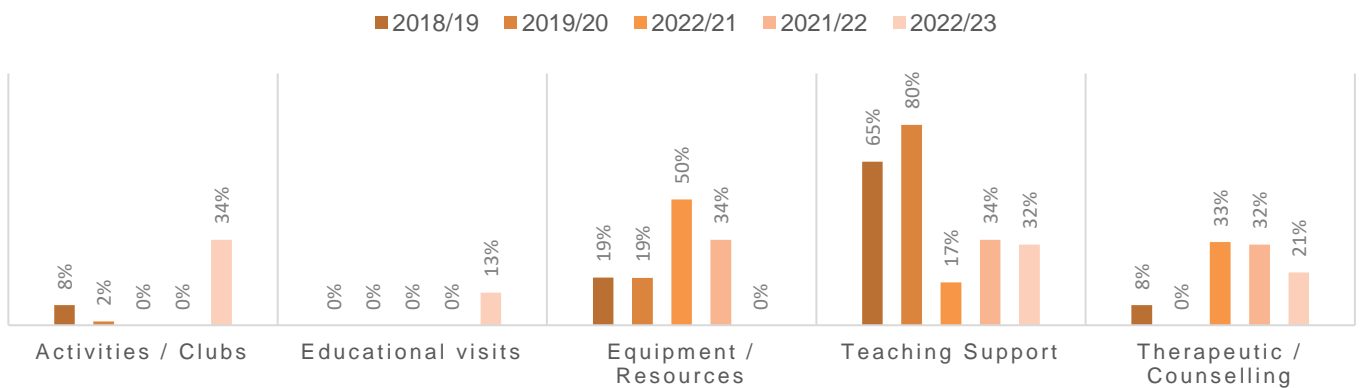
Individual young people can also access post-16 Pupil Premium funding via their termly PEP. This notional annual £300 has been allocated in the same way as Early Years Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium for pupils in Reception to Year 11 via PEPs which are considered at a monthly Virtual School Resource Panel. The chart below shows the resources requested:

Post-16 Pupil Premium Spend

■ 2021/22   ■ 2022/23

	Activities / Clubs	Equipment / Resources	Teaching Support
2021/22	11.75%	47.79%	40.46%
2022/23	23%	7%	70%
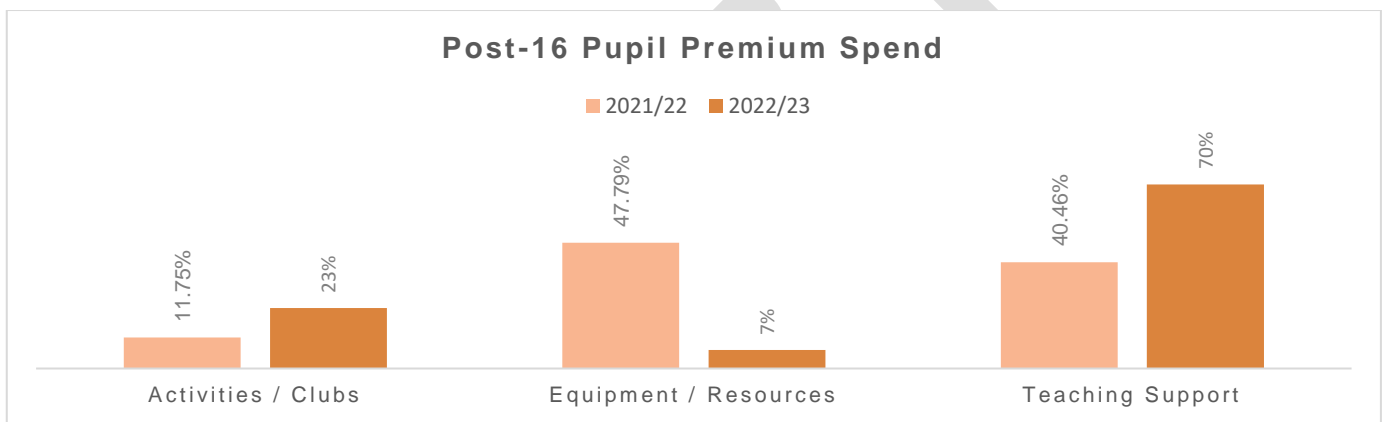
Early Years Pupil Premium

Trafford Virtual School received a further £3,384 in Early Years Pupil Premium, which is at a lower rate of £300 per pupil per year. A total of £3,095 was requested through Early Years PEPs compared with £598 in 2021/22 and £5,226 in 2019/20

EYFS Pupil Premium Spend 2021/22

■ 2018/19   ■ 2019/20   ■ 2022/21   ■ 2021/22   ■ 2022/23

	Activities / Clubs	Educational visits	Equipment / Resources	Teaching Support	Therapeutic / Counselling
2018/19	8%	0%	19%	65%	8%
2019/20	2%	0%	19%	80%	0%
2022/21	0%	0%	50%	17%	33%
2021/22	0%	0%	34%	34%	32%
2022/23	34%	13%	0%	32%	21%

Alternative Provision and One-to-One Tuition

The Alternative Provision Framework is a collaboration between Trafford Virtual School, Trafford SEN and STaR Procurement. The framework currently has 49 providers offering a range of services including Qualified Teachers, Non-Qualified Teachers, Vocational Opportunities, Counselling/Mentoring Services and Transport. The Virtual School is currently working with nine active providers.

The purpose of the framework is to provide a greater range and flexibly in the alternative education packages Virtual School coordinates, ensuring that they meet our children's needs and offer best value for money. The framework affords us the ability to quickly implement provision, secure in the knowledge that the vendor has been through robust due diligence checks.

In 2022/23 financial year pupils had access to over 6,351 sessions or over 15,824 hours of alternative provision. This is a similar level to 2021/22 but still significantly higher than pre-Covid levels. 144 pupils accessed some level of provision which is an decrease of 13% from 2021/22. Attendance levels increased slightly to 80% from 78% in 2021/22 and engagement in sessions delivered was high (95%).

Educational Opportunities

The Educational Opportunities Officer has a vital role to play in promoting the aspirations of our young people. The Educational Opportunities Officer works closely with PEP Leads to identify children's interests and to create opportunities by working with local agencies and providers to help raise their aspirations. This can be both through individual and group opportunities.

University Visits

This academic year, Virtual School have carried out three group University Visits. The aim of the visits was to raise aspirations for our young people and for them to experience a lecture, a site tour and to find out what funding and support is available for Care Experienced students.

Seven Year 11 students visited Liverpool University and Edge Hill University to enable them to compare a city university with a campus based university to give them an insight into where they would like to study. They could also draw comparisons between the two in terms of the financial, practical and emotional support available.

Five of our Post-16 students also had a very successful and enjoyable visit to Edge Hill University. Feedback included 'young person thoroughly enjoyed the visit so much so it's his first choice. We're planning to go again on an open day together to look again especially the drama department. As well as other universities.' The young person concerned also booked onto a drama summer school at Guildhall School, London.

Exam Support

Our Year 11 cohort also benefitted from an exam support session, preparing them to deal with any exam-related anxieties in preparation for their GCSE exams. The session was run by Kooth at The Talkshop in Sale. Feedback included one young person who 'enjoyed the session and was able to explain the breathing technique to her carer.'

Transition Sessions

Our Year 6 cohort have been involved in transition sessions at Gorse Hill Studios to prepare them for their move to Secondary School. Five young people took advantage of the sessions which included activities such as music, drama, cooking, art and physical activities such as going to the park and playing games. The aim of the sessions was to build up their confidence and provide the opportunity for them to discuss any concerns relating to moving schools. The Virtual School 'YouCan' Peer Mentors supported our young people by planning and delivering the sessions.

Reading Dog Project

Seven of our Primary Children took part in The Reading Dog Project. All children who participated made considerable progress with their reading. Improvements in relationships with peers and on behaviour at home and school were also noted. This year two new schools will be using Pupil Premium to directly fund the therapy dogs for Social, Emotional and Mental Health based outcomes and the schools previously involved continue to request funding for this too.

Chester Zoo

Another group visit was to Chester Zoo for our Year 10 Cohort. The aim of the visit was to enjoy the zoo animals, find out about different jobs available at the zoo and also attend an education session relating to Business and Marketing. Our young people were fully engaged and asked lots of questions during the session as well making new friends on the visit.

Individual Opportunities

Individual opportunities include one young person who completed a week of work experience with MP Andrew Western and another young person who attended Kickstart, a five week project run by Salford University for Year 7 and 8 students. Kickstart provided opportunities to develop confidence and develop life skills, learning new activities such as cookery/nutrition and circus skills.

Aspirations Audit

As well as creating opportunities for looked after children the Educational Opportunities Officer also conducts a termly Aspirations Audit. Data is gathered from children's PEPs in the autumn, spring and summer terms utilising the Preparing for my Future section. All this information is obtained directly from the voice of the child. By carefully going through the entries for each child, trends for each year group have been identified and this will inform planning for experiences and excursions offered to the children and young people. This will enable Virtual School to target strategic interventions that capture the interest of the children and young people, with the aim of increasing engagement and impact.

Below is the thematic breakdown of interests for all completed PEPs during 2022/23.

Children and Young People's area of interest by theme (%)

Theme	%
Animals	4.9%
Automotive & Engineering	2.5%
Business & Retail	4.6%
Childcare & Teaching	6.0%
Computing	2.5%
Creative, Digital Media & Music	0.4%
Design, Visual Arts, Performing Arts & Music	13.0%
Hair, Beauty & Media Make-up	2.8%
Health & Social Care	0.4%
Hospitality, Catering, Travel, Tourism & Aviation	5.3%
Humanities & Social Sciences	0.7%
Logistics	0.4%
Public Services	8.8%
Science & Medical Science	7.7%
Sport & Outdoor Pursuits	8.1%
Trade	7.0%
Miscellanous	0.4%
Not stated	24.9%

Careers Adviser

The Virtual School Careers Adviser has a key role to play in supporting our children and young people to plan for their future career goals. The Careers Adviser is responsible for overseeing the careers guidance for our children and ensuring that all young people in Year 11 have accessed careers advise to help them consider their Post-16 plan.

As well as providing advice, information, and guidance to young people, the Careers Adviser also supports carers, parents, and other professionals involved with our children and young people. They also monitor college applications to ensure all Year 11's have applied and received a place at college, an apprenticeship, or alternative education provisions.

The Careers Adviser also works closely with the Educational Opportunities Officer and the Secondary PEP Lead to plan education visits to further inspire our children and young people to reach their full potential. More information regarding these opportunities can be found in the Educational Opportunities section above.

YouCan Peer Mentoring

2022/23 was the second year of the YouCan Peer Mentor scheme which is commissioned through Gorse Hill Studios. The Care experienced mentors are trained to support our younger looked after children either in 1-1 mentoring or by leading group sessions. Via the training, they can achieve AQA Unit Awards, including:

- Developing Personal Confidence and Self-Awareness
- Peer Mentoring
- Peer Mentoring Introduction to Supporting Clients with Complex Needs

This year the Peer Mentors have supported weekly sessions and group work with 14 young people, engaging in activities such as school transition preparation work and sessions focusing on managing emotions. The Peer Mentors have also supported many of the educational opportunity visits to universities this year and led a Q&A forum at Trafford Virtual Schools BRIDGE Conference in September 2022 with an audience of over 200 people.

As the scheme develops, the mentors are not only supporting looked after children and young people, but are also playing an important role as the 'voice of the child' enabling the Virtual School team to develop their own practice and strategic vision to ensure children are at the heart of everything we do.

In 2023/24 YouCan Peer Mentor Leaders will be appointed to further develop this work.

Learning Mentors

The Learning Mentor's role is to work closely with identified pupils in order to support them in achieving their potential. They offer bespoke support to children in primary and secondary schools and to Post-16 students. Further information on the role of the Post-16 Learning Mentor can be found in the Post-16 section.

Learning Mentor (Statutory School Age)
The role of this Learning Mentor is to monitor attendance using our online attendance management system, contact schools and families when a child is absent from school and provide more intensive support when there are attendance concerns. In 2022/23 the Learning Mentor provided direct support to 26 looked after children. Support ranged from high, medium, or low level support depending on the needs of the pupil. In most cases, the Learning Mentor supported children and young people or their carers with emotionally based school non-attendance. A high proportion of persistently absent young people are placed with their parents or family members and these children have been a focus for this work. More insights into attendance characteristics can be found in the attendance section earlier in this report.

Although the majority of work has been low level support, the need for higher level intervention and support increased term on term, more than doubling when comparing Autumn 2022 to Summer 2023 as illustrated below.

Level of Support provided to Children and Young People 2022/23

Autumn 2022 ■ Spring 2023 ■ Summer 2023

	High Levels of Support	Medium Levels of Support	Low Levels of Support
Autumn 2022	6%	13%	81%
Spring 2023	11%	17%	72%
Summer 2023	15%	8%	77%
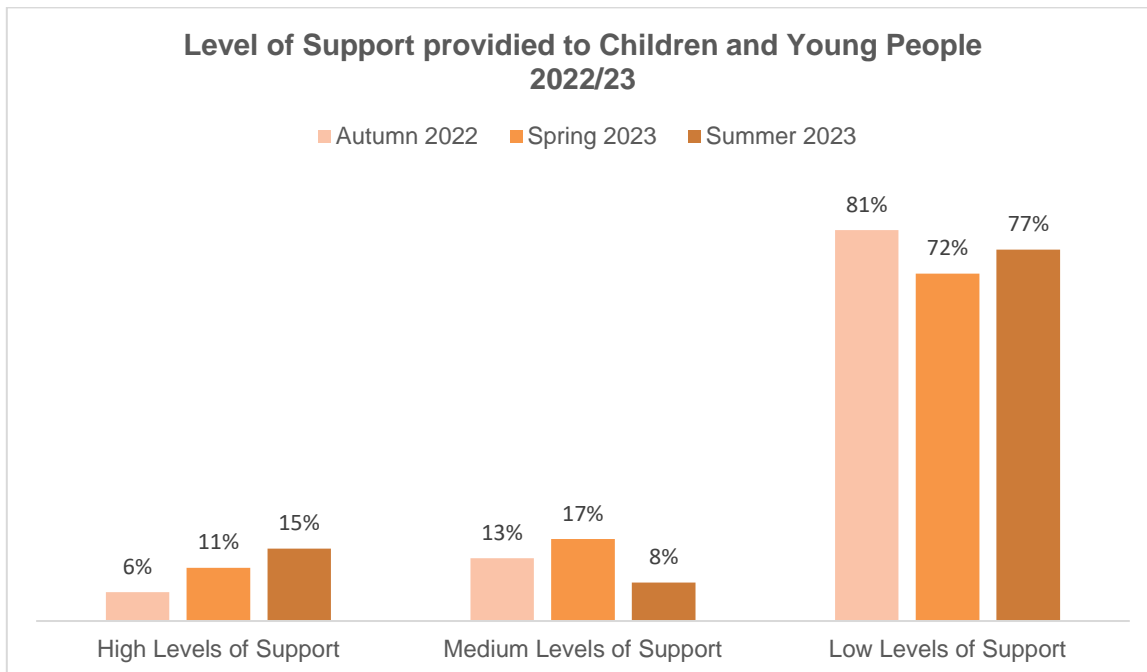
Case study – Kayleigh (pseudonym)

Kayleigh struggled to attend school for a number of months due to anxiety and was classed as 'severely absent'. The Learning Mentor developed a relationship with Kayleigh and their carers, to support them to agree to attend an initial visit with the mentor to the Medical Education Service provision. By building trust and supporting Kayleigh to express their concerns and needs, Kayleigh felt able to transfer their tuition sessions from a local library to the MES in readiness to start the new school year in September 2023. Kayleigh also felt confident and empowered to attend their PEP meeting in person for the first time with support from the Learning Mentor and her tutor.

Case study – Jamie (pseudonym)

Jamie has identified anxiety and attachment difficulties and found the transition to secondary school in September 2022 incredibly challenging. The Learning Mentor was able to form a trusted relationship with Jamie which enabled them to identify that leaving their carer was the main area where they needed support. Initially, this was intensive support up to three hours a day, but it reduced steadily over a short period resulting in Jamie being able to travel and remain in school independently. The support increased and decreased depending on Jamie's needs until they felt fully secure and no longer needed support from the Learning Mentor.

Therapeutic Learning Mentor

Play therapy can help children with emotional, behavioural, and mental health difficulties, creating a safe space for children to explore and express their thoughts and feelings through the medium of play. Over time, a trusting therapeutic relationship is built between the child and the play therapist, helping the child to find ways to help themselves.

This year over 100 sessions have been accessed by 10 children via 1-2-1 and group work. On average, children have received 30 sessions each. The table below shows the impact of the 1-2-1 play therapy

sessions which is measured by the reduction in their Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores.

	Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D
Pre-Therapy	22	27	27	18
Post-Therapy	0	23	14	7

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is used to measure pro-social behaviour, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems. The questionnaire asks about the young person's attributes, some positive and others negative which culminate in a score. The higher the score, the more that young person may struggle in terms of their emotional wellbeing.

Overall, improvements after an average of 30 sessions for children who accessed play therapy in the last academic year were:

- Total Difficulties - reduced by 17%
- Emotional - reduced by 23%
- Hyperactivity - reduced by 11%
- Conduct - reduced by 17%
- Peer - reduced by 24%

Educational Psychology

Just like other schools, Trafford Virtual School purchases services from the Education Psychology Service. This allows the Virtual School to start assessments for pupils where concerns have been raised and gather evidence to support Education and Health Care Assessments, 'fast tracking' vulnerable children and providing additional support and strategies. The Education Psychologist (EP) and Assistant Education Psychologist (AEP) also deliver training and research projects on behalf of the Virtual School.

This academic year 23 children have had Educational Psychology involvement at school and EHC assessment reports have been collated for 11 children. Educational Psychology support has involved a mixture of school support consultations, assessments and training.

The role of Assistant Educational Psychologist focuses on supporting Educational Psychologists with training, advice, and referrals. The Assistant Educational Psychologist may conduct initial consultations with schools once a referral for Educational Psychology support has been made. Since returning from maternity leave in March, the AEP has conducted 16 initial consultations for young people raised at both the Education Resource Panel and the Child In Need Panel. Between August 2022 and February 2023, 33 consultations were carried out. In addition to this, a further 8 young people have been offered a write up of target strategies due to concerns around Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance. The Assistant Educational Psychologist was also involved in direct work in a variety of ways, from supporting TAs to plan and deliver interventions to direct therapeutic work with young people.

ELSA
The Assistant Educational Psychologist supports delivery of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) training programme which has continued into its fourth cohort this year. This has involved sixteen teaching assistants who all qualified in the Summer Term. The twelve schools involved in the ELSA training programme included a secondary school which is the first to undertake the training. ELSAs will go on to deliver specialist and bespoke in-school interventions with the aim of supporting children to identify, process and regulate their emotions. Children who attend these sessions will include those that have their education overseen by the Virtual School.
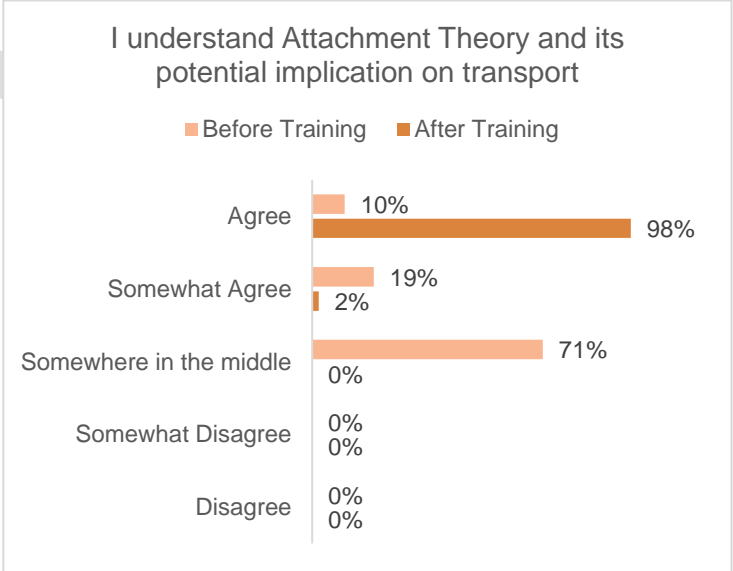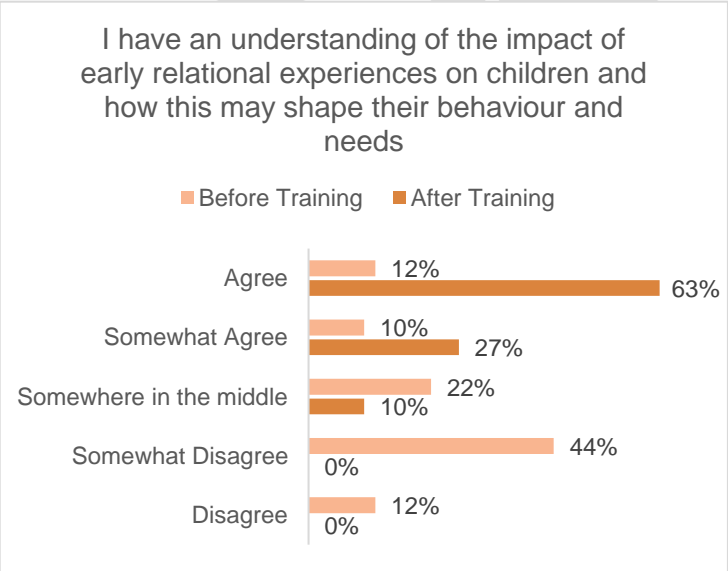
Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme

The Trafford Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme was successfully launched in 2022. 14 members of staff, from seven Trafford schools, and five members of the Virtual School team have been working towards a 20-credit Postgraduate module with The University of Chester in Attachment, Trauma and Mental Health. This qualification is assessed through a practitioner enquiry on an area of strength or development identified in whole school audits carried out by the Virtual School in conjunction with a Clinical Psychologist and Attachment and Trauma consultant. The programme also provides funding for the two leaders from each school to access half termly supervision with a Clinical Psychologist and networks to support each other with this culture change in their schools. In 2023/24 each school will access whole school training and the group will co-produce a model Relational Policy Framework which will be shared with all Heads at a Relational Inclusion Twilight. There will be an opportunity for other inclusive approaches to be promoted at this event such as Trafford Inclusion Charter.

In 2023/24 we will be recruiting a children's reference group (three pupils from each school) and hope to have three sessions with them before the Bridge Conference on 8th February. A second cohort of schools will be recruited in Autumn Term 2023.

A theme identified in all schools during the audits was the importance of training being delivered to every single member of staff, including Passenger Assistants who transport children with special educational needs or disabilities to school. To this end, Virtual School identified a training need and worked with the Trafford Travel Coordination Unit to deliver training on Attachment and Trauma. A Clinical Psychologist delivered the training to seven Travel Co-ordination Unit Officers and 38 Passenger Assistants. Pre and post training questionnaires were carried out and we had 41 responses, as detailed below. Our next step is to monitor the impact that this training has had on staff and children in schools. Results from the respondent can been seen below.

I have an understanding of the impact of early relational experiences on children and how this may shape their behaviour and needs

■ Before Training ■ After Training

Response	Before Training	After Training
Agree	12%	63%
Somewhat Agree	10%	27%
Somewhere in the middle	22%	10%
Somewhat Disagree	44%	0%
Disagree	12%	0%

I understand Attachment Theory and its potential implication on transport

■ Before Training ■ After Training

Response	Before Training	After Training
Agree	10%	98%
Somewhat Agree	19%	2%
Somewhere in the middle	71%	0%
Somewhat Disagree	0%	0%
Disagree	0%	0%

Speech and Language Therapy

The role of the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service is to support teachers and carers to identify potential communication difficulties in children; and to provide direct/indirect intervention to help develop children's communication skills and reduce the impact on their education.

The Virtual School Speech and Language Therapist returned from maternity leave in June 2023.

Since June 2023, there have been 4 new referrals, described further in the table below.

Child	Key Stage	Referrer	Main reasons for referral	Waiting time from referral to assessment (weeks).
1	EY	Nursery	Using language	18+ *
2	EY	Nursery	Attention and listening, Using language, Speech sounds.	8 *
3	EY	Health Visitor	Social communication, Attention and listening, Play, Understanding of language, Using language.	4
4	3	School	Social communication, Attention and listening, Understanding of language, Using language.	**

* Referred prior to SALT being back in post.
** Referred in the last week of summer term. Assessment appointment booked for September 2023.

Case Study – Saadaat (pseudonym)

Saadaat is an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child. He was referred to the NHS Speech and Language Therapy service in March 2023 (while there was no Virtual School Speech and Language Therapist in post). Concerns were expressed about his language and social communication skills. According to the referrer, his second language acquisition also seemed delayed when comparing to peers with similar backgrounds.

This referral was rejected by the NHS, with a request for school to provide information about his language skills in his first language.

In July 2023, the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapist made contact with the school. The SENDCo explained that they did not have any means of assessing the young person's first language, and therefore the referral had not progressed. With the flexibility afforded by the Virtual School the referral was able to be progressed and the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapist has arranged to meet with the young person in school in September with an interpreter. This should enable assessment of language skills in both his first language and in English to be carried out in order to help determine if there is an underlying language or communication difficulty.

Virtual School Flexible Paid Work Placement/Apprenticeship

The Virtual School Flexible Paid Work Placement is a ring fenced position for any Trafford care experienced young person. They can access as many hours as they wish, up to full time. The aim is to offer an opportunity to learn what is expected of being a part of the Virtual School team with the chance to apply to become to the Virtual School Apprentice. The role provides experience of both social care and business administration, working with Talk Shop, Connexions and the Children in Care Council and they also become a member of the Virtual School Governing Body, championing the voices of children and young people.

During 2022/23 there have been two people in post as the Flexible Paid Worker, gaining experience of an office environment and learning 'work skills'.

Previously Looked After Children and Children in Need

In September 2021 the remit of the Virtual School was extended to include a strategic leadership role as champions for the education of children who have had a social worker in the last six years (Children in Need), creating a culture of high aspirations and improving outcomes. The role of the Previously Looked After Children Lead was extended to become the Previously Looked After Children and Children in Need Lead as many areas of the work overlap. For the purposes of this section, Children in Need includes previously looked after children unless otherwise stated.

One of the main priorities for the Previously Looked After Children and Children in Need Lead has been networking across education provisions and Social Care and raising awareness of the extended duties of the Virtual School. This began at the Bridge Conference in September and continued through the promotion of the Educational Champions Guide and Virtual School Children in Need offer. As well as the wider Children in Need work, the service has supported schools in meeting the needs of children who are adopted or subject to Special Guardianship Orders, guiding schools in accessing Pupil Premium Plus and suggesting ways to use this money to benefit the educational outcomes of those children and young people.

Advice and guidance have also been offered to parents on how to access the Adoption Support Fund through either the Regional Adoption Agency e.g. Adoption Counts or the Trafford SGO team. The Adoption Support Fund can be used to fund therapeutic interventions for individuals and the family. A focus has also been to build stronger links with the Adoption Counts social workers, adoptive parents and schools to support Trafford's Previously Looked After Children.

The data below shows the number of contacts Virtual School have had this year regarding 'Children in Need'. In this instance, the term 'Children in Need' refers to those children who are currently on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans or Previously Looked After (Adopted or Special Guardianship), as defined by the Department for Education. In some circumstances, support and guidance have been provided for children who have been open to social care in the last six years who are known as our 'EVER 6' cohort. Virtual School have supported a wide range of people this year including schools, social workers, adopted parents,
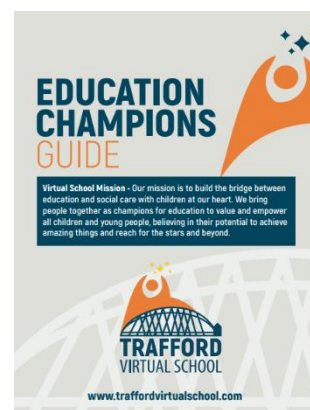
SGO teams, regional Adoption agencies, complex safeguarding and Youth Justice.

The level of support requested increased significantly from the beginning to the end of the academic year.

Term	Number of contacts
Autumn 2022	2
Spring 2023	22
Summer 2023	37

Children in Need Panel

Virtual School piloted a 'Children in Need' panel in March 2023 and since then this has developed over the summer term and now includes Previously Looked After children or those on Child in Need and Child Protection plans. Children can be referred to the panel where there are concerns about their education. These referrals are then organised into categories of need, following a similar format to the established Looked After Children Panel. These panels have identified themes to feed into our strategic work for the next academic year. As a priority, schools with a high number of pupils on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans will be contacted and meetings will be arranged with Designated Safeguarding Leads. At the end of the 2022/23 academic year Children in Need Panel discussed children who fell into the following categories:

Category	Number of children
Child Missing Education (CME)	4
Full Time Unregistered Alternative Provision	3
Elective Home Education (EHE)	3
Part-time Timetables	3
Severe Absence	26
Suspension (within previous month)	20
NEET/At Risk of NEET	18

Case Study – Ben (pseudonym)

Ben became a Child in Need in May 2022, following a criminal investigation. He was then suspended from school due to dysregulation. This led to an extended period of Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance. During this time Ben became reluctant to leave the house and there were concerns about what he was accessing on the internet and his mental health. Youth Justice supported Ben with regular visits, and social care assisted his family in caring for his mental health. Ben expressed that he would like to return to school and at this point Youth Justice asked the Virtual School to initiate planning discussions. School agreed to support Ben in returning to school on a phased return and put Alternative Provision in place for one afternoon a week. His attendance is now 86% and his school have described him as 'thriving'.

Case Study – Rose (pseudonym):

Virtual School first became involved with Rose in September 2023, when contact was made by a Designated Safeguarding Lead in a secondary school. Rose had not attended school for the whole of the 2021/22 academic year. She is a Previously Looked After Child and now living with her grandparent under a Special Guardianship Order. School was concerned about her physical and psychological welfare. Virtual School supported the school to pull together multi-disciplinary meetings involving CAMHS, 42nd Street, Social Workers and The Education of Vulnerable Children Team, which resulted in the School successfully applying for a place at Trafford Medical Education School (MES). Virtual School also supported the school in beginning an application for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). She was enrolled at the Medical Education Service in April 2023 and her attendance since then has been much improved.

Case Study – Jane (pseudonym):

Trafford Virtual School were contacted in January 2023 by a mother seeking support for a Previously Looked After child who was on roll at a mainstream secondary school. Jane and her two siblings were adopted at very young ages. A Child in Need plan supported the family due to the complex needs of all three children and the recent death of their adoptive father. Jane has complex special needs, including ADHD and unmet attachment needs, and is supported by an EHCP. When Trafford Virtual School were

contacted Jane was in Year 8 and had not attended school since May 2022. Jane's mother felt that school were not meeting Jane's needs and consequently, the relationship between parents and school had broken down. The transition from primary school to secondary had impacted Jane's mental health, manifesting in self-harm, suicide attempts and emotionally based school non-attendance. Jane's mum contacted Virtual School for support with finding a specialist provision that could meet Jane's needs and re-engage her in education. Jane's mum reported that a stabilising factor in Jane's life was her love of animals and her mum had encouraged her to volunteer at a local riding centre. This had a positive impact on her self-esteem and she gradually began to attend the centre on a more frequent basis. Virtual School supported an application to the riding centre's attached school by arranging an emergency Annual Review with her existing school. Jane is now happy, accessing full-time education and enjoying the experience of school.

Intelligence and Insights

One of the main priorities in meeting our extended Children in Need duties in 2022/23 was to establish a clear dataset for this cohort and to develop processes that would support both the strategic and case level work of Virtual School. Capturing attendance was the first step in achieving this goal and this was facilitated by the implementation of the EYES data system. This will be further developed through the introduction of a Virtual School module which will go live in August 2023.

Whilst these systems have been in put in place the Children in Need data has been collated using multiple sources including Liquid Logic (Social Care database), Groupcall (attendance monitoring database), School Census, Wonde (Government attendance database) and GIAP (Get Information About Pupils database). These systems will continue to capture data regarding children placed out of authority in 2022/23.

As of Summer 2023, the current characteristics of the Children in Need Cohort can be found in the table below. This data in based on internal records and may not include all children open on Child in Need and Child Protection Plans, particularly if they are educated outside of the local authority.

Child in Need (Whole Cohort) Internal Data								
	Whole Cohort	**% of the whole cohort**	**Pre school**		**Post-16**		**School age**	
CiN	418		92	22%	23	6%	303	72%
EHC Plan*	124	30%	2	1%	13	11%	109	88%
SEN Support*	53	13%	1	1%	2	4%	50	94%
FSM*	164	39%	0	0%	1	1%	163	99%
EAL*	54	13%	3	5%	1	2%	50	93%

	Trafford Internal Data – School age CINO Only (2022/23)		**NCER Trafford (CINO) 2022/23 31st March Cohort**	**NCER National (CINO) 2022/23 31st March Cohort**
EHC Plan	109	36%	22.1%	17.9%
SEN Support	50	16%	20.9%	22.7%
FSM	164	54%		
EAL	50	16%	14.2%	14.7%
Average Attendance %		80.59%	87.1%	84.7%
Suspensions # sessions	582			
Rate of Suspensions (per 10,000)		17.46	9.53	16.83
Persistent Absentees		40%	33.7%	39.2%
Number of PEX	10			
Rate of PEX (per 10,000)		0.30	0.47	0.38

*CINO mean Child in Need only, this data excludes Looked After Children and children on Child Protection Plans.

Child Protection (Whole Cohort) Internal Data								
	Whole Cohort	% of the whole cohort	Pre school		Post-16		School age	
Child Protection	217		43	20%	15	7%	159	73%
EHC Plan*	33	15%	0	0%	4	12%	29	87%
SEN Support*	38	17.5%	1	3%	1	3%	36	94%
FSM*	105	48%	0	0%	1	1%	104	99%
EAL*	29	13.5%	2	7%	2	7%	25	86%

	Trafford Internal Data – School age CPPO Only (2022/23)		NCER Trafford (CPPO) 2022/23 31st March Cohort	NCER National (CPPO) 2022/23 31st March Cohort
EHC Plan	29	18%	13.1%	10.3%
SEN Support	36	22%	24.6%	28.9%
FSM	105	65%		
EAL	25	18%	14.2%	12.4%
Average Attendance %		79.7%	87%	85.3%
Suspensions # sessions	185			
Rate of Suspensions (per 10,000)		3.4	9.7	21.09
Persistent Absentees		52%	44.4%	45.1%
Number of PEX	0			
Rate of PEX (per 10,000)		0.00	0	0.5

*CPPO means Child Protection only, this data excludes Looked After Children and children on Child in Need Plans.

Attainment 2022/23

In the following sections we will present data that has been or is likely to be published nationally which includes all children who were looked after over the course of the academic year rather than those who were looked after at the end of the academic year as we have in previous years. The reason for making this change is to allow Virtual School to better compare performance with national data.

At each Key Stage data relates to small and complex cohorts. The circumstances of each pupil and factors such as a high proportion of children with Special Educational Needs significantly impact overall performance. We have included contextual information about each cohort to support better understanding of this.

It should also be noted that 2022/23 data is currently unvalidated and therefore subject to change.

This year has seen a return to pre-pandemic assessment and marking in England and Ofqual have confirmed that grades this year will return to pre-pandemic levels. Therefore, 2018/19 data is the most useful comparator. The data regarding the 'Covid Year's' have been included for additional information.

Early Years Foundation Stage

NCER Data

The table below shows the proportion of children who achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) over the last five years.

	Trafford CLA Cohort size	% of Trafford CLA Achieving GLD	Trafford All Children	Gap between Trafford Looked After Children and All Children	NW Looked After Children (NCER Data)	National Looked After Children (NCER Data)
2018/19	15	33.3%	75.5%	42.2%	48%	47%
2019/20	12	42%	N/A	N/A	30%	50%
2020/21	14	43%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021/22	11	46%	71.6%	25.6%	41%	41%
2022/23 (NCER)	14 (4 children no longer looked after)	35.7%	72.2%	36.5%	40%	41%

There were 14 looked after children on Trafford Virtual School roll who completed Reception at the end of the academic year.

The 14 children that completed Reception were assessed for a GLD (Good Level of Development) using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). 5 of the 14 pupils achieved a GLD at the end of the Summer Term 2023.

The data below captures children who were looked after at the end of the academic year. It should be noted that, although only 5 of the 14 young people made GLD, 11 of the 14 were making individual levels of progress according to their Personal Education Plan.

Comparative Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of identified cohort reaching expected standard	% of identified cohort making individual levels of progress
% Summer born (EYFS only)	45%	33%	36%	33%	66%	28.5%	75.5%
% with SEN support	46%	42%	33%	33%	10%	0%	10%

% Placed with Parents	27%	50%	36%	33%	30%	33.3%	66.6%
% Connected Carer	55%	25%	29%	33%	30%	33.3%	100%
% Foster placement	18%	25%	36%	33%	40%	0%	75%

Key Characteristics

In line with national trends, areas of where children were less likely to achieve expected standard were writing, reading and communication and language.

In 2022/23 the Early Years PEP Lead has focused on preschool and reception cohorts, with a view to identifying needs earlier. This has been achieved by working more closely with families, Social Care, education settings, EP services, Speech and Language and Trafford Early Years team.

Improving PEP quality has been a primary focus for the Eary Years PEP lead this academic year. This has included training for settings and schools, 1-1 training prior to PEP submission, attending meetings when appropriate and chairing some meetings to model best practice.

Phonics Screening Test

The Phonics Screening test became a statutory requirement in 2012. The test must be taken by pupils in Year 1 and aims to assess a child's ability to decode words using only their phonic knowledge. The test is an indicator as to whether children have met expected standards at the end of Year 1.

NCER Data
The table below shows the proportion of children who passed their Phoincs Screening during Year 1 over the last five years.

	Trafford CLA Cohort size	% of Trafford CLA passing Phonics Screening	Trafford All Children	Gap between Trafford Looked After Children and Trafford All Children	NW Looked After Children (NCER)	National Looked After Children (NCER)
2018/19	19	36.8%	86.3%	49.5%	62%	62%
2019/20	17	70.6%	84.5%	13.9%	60%	62%
2020/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021/22	18	56%	82.1%	26.1%	63%	58%
2022/23	10 (3 children no longer looked after)	50%	84.8%	34.8%	61%	60%

The proportion of children who passed the Phonics Screening test has increased compared to pre-pandemic levels. The gap between Trafford CLA and Trafford all children has narrowed, however, this may not be seen as statistically significant due to the small cohort size.

Comparative Data

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of identified cohort reaching expected standard	% of identified cohort making individual progress
% PA	Limited data	40%	9%	11%	0%	0%
Achieved Individual Progress (from the previous key stage)	75%	80%	45%	100%	n/a	n/a
% school move within the academic year	0	0%	18%	0	n/a	n/a
% with an ECHP	0	20%	27%	0	n/a	n/a

% with SEN support	50%	10%	36%	33%	33%	67%
% Placed with Parents	25%	30%	27%	33%	0	33%
% Foster placement with relative or friend	50%	50%	36%	67%	33%	83%
% Foster placement	25%	20%	36%	0%	n/a	n/a
% Placement move in academic year	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a

Key Characteristics

Of the 7 children who were looked after at the end of the academic year 2022/23, 5 passed the Phonics Screening test with 2 children making greater than expected progress from the EYFS. This was achieved by implementing a bespoke package of support including SEND and therapeutic services.

Of the 2 students who did not pass, one did not meet GLD in Reception and was deemed to be making appropriate levels of individual progress. The other child was close to passing and it is expected that they will pass the Phonics Screening test in Year 2. This child was making individual levels of progress.

For the children that did not pass the Phonics Screening test, Virtual School will be attending early Autumn Term PEPs to ensure appropriate support is put in place such as SaLT interventions, Educational Psychologist involvement or additional tuition.

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Pupils in Year 2 sit English and Maths SATs papers which are marked internally by their school's teaching staff. This is the final year that this assessment will be mandatory in schools.

NCER Data

	2018/19 (Trafford CLA 18 in cohort)	2018/19 (CLA National)	2019/20 (Trafford CLA 20 in cohort)	2019/20 (CLA National)	2021/22 (Trafford CLA 16 in cohort)	2021/22 (CLA National)	2022/23 (Trafford CLA 19 in cohort)	2022/23 (NCER CLA National)
Reading	28%	52%	25%	52%	44%	44%	36.8%	45%
Writing	28%	43%	25%	43%	19%	33%	26.3%	33%
Maths	33%	51%	35%	51%	44%	43%	42.1%	45%
All subjects	22%	38%	20%	38%	19%	29%	26%	30%

Comparing 2022/23 to pre-pandemic levels there has been an increase in children who reached the expected standard in reading and maths but a slight decrease in writing. However, it should be noted that this decrease was less significant than the decrease nationally.

Comparative Data

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of identified cohort reaching the national expected standard	% of identified cohort making individual progress
Persistent Absence (less than 90% attendance)	5%	7%	27%	0%	n/a	n/a
Achieved Individual Progress (from previous key stage)	72%	86%	73%	87%	37%	n/a
% with an ECHP	27%	7%	20%	20%	0%	100%
% with SEN support	33%	43%	33%	53%	0%	75%
% Placed with Parents	17%	36%	27%	7%	0%	0%
% Foster placement with relative or friend	44%	36%	33%	40%	17%	100%
% Foster care	-	-	-	53%	38%	88%

Key Charaterictics

There were 15 Trafford looked after children in Year 2 at the end of the Summer Term 2023. 27% (4 children) of this cohort achieved the expected standard in both English and Maths.

27% (3/11) of the children who did not meet national expectations have an EHCP. One of these children met age-related in Maths and Reading but not in Writing and the remaining two children are working significantly below age related expectations. However, all three of these children are making expected levels of individual progress.

73% (8/11) of the children who did not meet national expectations have SEND. 75% of these children are making individual levels of progress, therefore, Virtual School will be closely monitoring the 25% of this cohort who are not making expected levels of progress and ensuring appropriate support is put in place such as SaLT interventions, Educational Psychologist involvement, targeted interventions or additional tuition.

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Pupils in Year 6 are assessed in Reading, Writing and Maths. Pupils are either assessed as working towards expected standard, working at the expected standard or working at greater depth in the expected standard.

NCER Data

	2018/19 (18 in cohort)	2018/19 (CLA National)	2019/20 (16 in cohort)	2019/20 (CLA National)	2021/22 (16 in cohort)	2021/22 (CLA National) **	2022/23 (23 in cohort)	2022/23 (CLA National)
Reading	28%	52%	56%	50%	54%	51%	43.5%	52%
Writing	28%	43%	50%	51%	38%	42%	34.8%	46%
Maths	33%	51%	50%	52%	33%	44%	43.5%	48%
All Subjects	22%	38%	50%	37%	29%	31%	30.4%	34%

Comparing 2022/23 data with pre pandemic levels, all areas having increased significantly. This year Trafford CLA achieved slightly higher in reading than CLA National.

KS2 Progress

In 2022/23 pupils in Key Stage 2 made positive progress which was better than previous years and local and national comparitors. The gap in progress between looked after children and their peers in Trafford also narrowed.

	Cohort Size	Trafford VS	Trafford All	Trafford Gap	NW CLA	National CLA
2018/19	24	-0.46	1.06	-1.52	0.24	-0.30
2019/20	25	0.06	1.68	-1.62	-0.18	-0.36
2020/21	No progress data due to Covid					
2021/22	24	-2.33	1.45	-3.78	0.13	-0.57
2022/23	23	0.31	1.49	-1.18	0.15	-0.51

Comparative Data

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of identified cohort reaching the expected standard in all subjects	% of the identified cohort making individual progress in all subjects
Persistent Absence (less than 90% attendance)	5%	5%	11%	17%	50%	75%
Achieved Individual Progress (from previous key stage)	84%	100%	83%	88% (17 % more than expected)	29%	N/A
% with an ECHP	21%	17%	56%	38%	0%	89%
% with SEN support	42%	33%	17%	38%	22%	89%
% Placed with Parents	21%	22%	11%	0	N/A	N/A
% Foster placement with relative or friend	42%	39%	39%	21%	40%	100%
% Foster placement	39%	39%	44%	75%	33%	83%
% Placement move in academic year	5%	22%	17%	8%	0	50%

Key Charaterictics

There were 24 children who completed Year 6 at the end of the summer term 2023. 33% (8) of this cohort achieved national expectations in both Maths and English. Of the 16 children that did not achieve national expectations, 100% have SEND, 56% of which have an EHCP. The remaining children who did not achieve national expectations are receiving a range of support, including SEMH support, Educational Psychology and/or SaLT involvement, appropriate interventions for their needs such as dyslexia support, and referrals to pathways for ADHD.
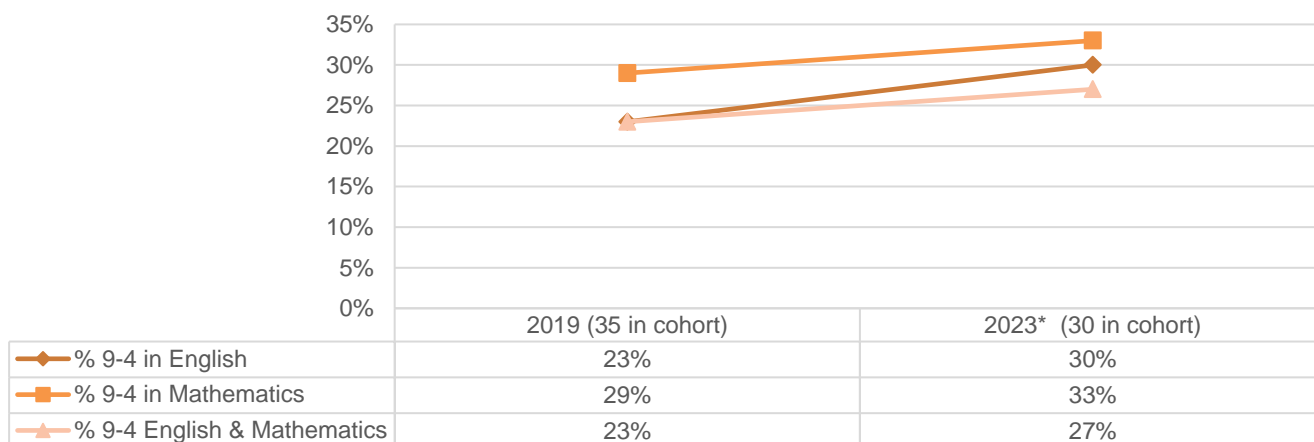
Attainment at Key Stage 4

English and Maths

This year has seen a return to pre-pandemic assessment and marking in England and Ofqual confirmed that grades this year will return to pre-pandemic levels. The data in the graphs below includes all children who were looked-after for 12 months or more as of March 2023 including those who had ceased to be looked after before the end of the academic year. The data is nationally reported and may be subject to some variation as more LAs load data to NCER.
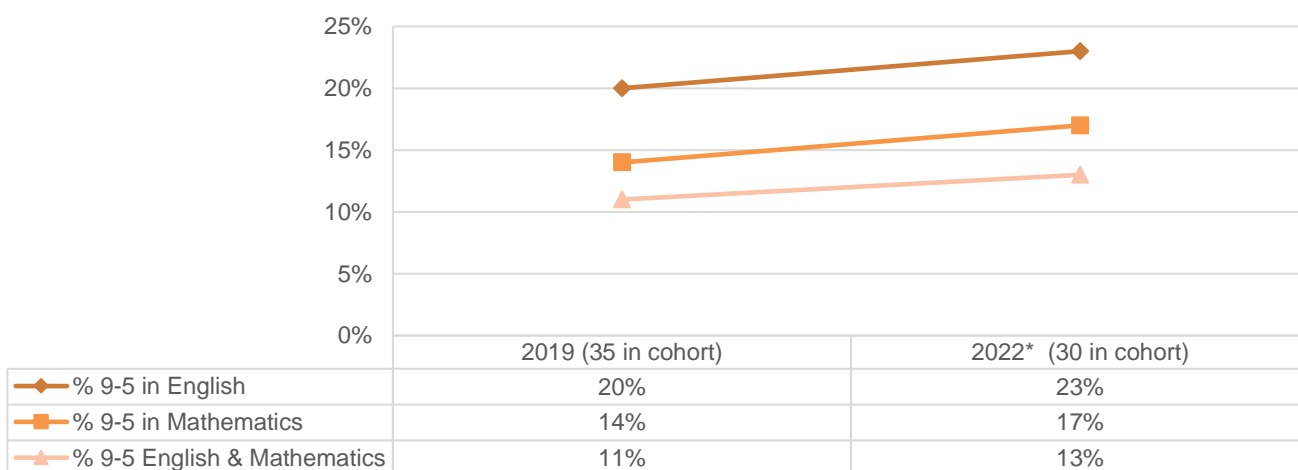
English and Maths

Percentage who achieved 4-9 in English and/or maths

	2019 (35 in cohort)	2023* (30 in cohort)
% 9-4 in English	23%	30%
% 9-4 in Mathematics	29%	33%
% 9-4 English & Mathematics	23%	27%

National benchmarking data for KS4 will be published in the new year, and as a result, this report will be updated in the Summer Term 2024, and will include Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

Percentage who achieved 5-9 English and/or maths

	2019 (35 in cohort)	2022* (30 in cohort)
% 9-5 in English	20%	23%
% 9-5 in Mathematics	14%	17%
% 9-5 English & Mathematics	11%	13%

National benchmarking data for KS4 will be published in the new year, and as a result, this report will be updated in the Summer Term 2024, and will include Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

Attainment 8 and Progress 8

The table below shows that the average Attainment 8 score for Trafford Looked After Children was significantly higher than for Looked After Children in other Local Authorities. More importantly, the average Progress 8 score for Trafford Looked After Children was over 50% higher than Looked After Children in other Local Authorities and our children, on average, made positive progress in maths.

	Cohort	Overall		English		Maths	
		Avg. At8	Avg. Pr8	Avg. At8	Avg. Pr8	Avg. At8	Avg. Pr8
NCER National (CLA pupils)	3480	24.9	-1.06	5.6	-1.16	5.1	-0.85
DfE Region - North West (CLA)	640	24.1	-1.19	5.5	-1.28	4.9	-1.01
Local Authority - Trafford (all schools)	3318	56.9	0.24	11.7	0.18	11.1	0.11
Virtual School - Trafford (12mth cohort)	17	28.2	-0.47	6.1	-0.62	6.2	0.06

Comparative Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of total cohort	% of identified cohort reaching expected standard	% of identified cohort making individual progress
Persistent Absence (less than 90% attendance)	No data available	No data available	No data available	58%	58%	13%	48%
School move within the academic year (1 or more)	12%	8%	0%	11%	5%	0	50%
Achieved Individual Progress (from previous key stage)	52%	58%	53%	61%	71%	41%	n/a
% with an EHCP	48%	55%	35%	55%	53%	15%	65%
Number of children in a specialist school	39%	30%	26%	37%	45%	6%	65%
% Placed with Parents	9%	10%	21%	18%	11%	0	50%
% Residential care placement	33%	18%	9%	21%	29%	9%	64%
% Placement move in academic year	33%	38%	35%	33%	11%	0	50%

Key Characteristics

Of the thirty eight children who were looked after at the end of June 2023 twenty eight were entered for GCSE exams and seven accessed lower level qualifications. Three children were not entered for qualifications, one due to being a new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child and two due to their complex SEND needs. Both children have an EHCP and are on roll at a Specialist School. Within the 2023 cohort, 45% attended a specialist school, and 53% had an EHCP. There were five unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

55% of our Year 11s accessed tuition or mentoring commissioned by Virtual School via the Alternative Provision Framework.

Post-16 Education, Training and Employment

In 2021/22 Trafford Virtual School was selected as one of 30 Local Authorities to be part of the Post-16 Pupil Premium funding pilot. Part of this funding was used to invest in a Post-16 Learning Mentor to support the PEP Lead (16-25) by working directly with young people, focusing on achievement and retention in Further Education. Since the introduction of these enhanced services, EET (Education, Employment and Training) rates have increased from 46% in 2019/20 to 76% in 2022/23.

Due to the success of the pilot, this extended funding will be given to all eligible local authorities in England from September 2023. This will enable Trafford Virtual School to continue the services and support established over the last two years.

EET Data

The retention rates in Further Education have increased from 2019/20. There were 5 young people who achieved Level 3 qualifications which is the highest number on record. There are 3 young people starting university in September 2023 (including 18-21 year olds) compared with 4 in 2021. We have 3 young people taking a gap year due to mental health. This year there have been 4 young people who have graduated, gaining degrees in Engineering, Business Music Production and Psychology and Criminology, with two continuing on to a Masters Degree.

The data below was captured in July 2023 and reflects the end of the academic year position for Post-16 looked after young people and those open to the After Care Service.

	% of looked after children (Year 12 and 13) in EET	% of Year 12 looked after children in EET	% of Year 13 children in EET	% of Year 12 looked after children accessing L3 qual	Percentage of Year 13 looked after children achieved L3 qual	Number of Year 13 looked after children achieved L3 qual
2019/20	46%	47%	46%	17%	1%	2
2020/21*	79.6%	93.7%	65.3%	27.6%	24%	4
2021/22	65%	69%	71%	21%	7%	3
2022/23	76%	78%	60%	11%	13%	5

During 2020/21 the retention rate of Year 12 and 13 looked after young people in EET (Education, Employment or Training) was disproportionally high compared to other years. This may have been due to college closures and the remote learning measures that were in place.

Post-16 EET Data (all young people open to Aftercare Service)

	# in cohort	UNKNOWN	NEET	% NEET	In EET	% in EET
2020/21	236	2	90	38%	146	62%
2021/22	238	1	95	40%	142	60%
2022/23	189	4	68	36%	117	62%

Data captured August 2023

EET of Post-16 young people in care & care leavers open to aftercare		2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2022/23
	Count	% whole cohort	% whole cohort	% whole cohort	National
Higher Education	21	11%	8%	8%	████
Education other than higher	66	35%	36%	37%	████
Training / Employment	30	16%	16%	16%	████
Total EET of	117	62%	60%	61%	52%

Data captured August 2023

Reason for NEET of young people in care & care leavers open to Aftercare		2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2022/23
	Count	% whole cohort	% whole cohort	% whole cohort	National
Illness / Disability	14	8%	6%	8%	████
Other	44	23%	28%	26%	████
Pregnancy/parenting	10	5%	5%	4%	████
Total NEET	68	36%	39%	39%	48%

Data captured August 2023

Post-16 Learning Mentor

In 2022/23 the Learning Mentor has worked directly with 41 young people. The mentor has focused on young people who were at risk of becoming NEET and has supported these young people to overcome barriers they have faced with attending and engaging in education. Support has included offering:

- Careers guidance
- One-to-one visits to Further Education settings
- One-to-one visits to Alternative Provisions
- One-to-one educational opportunities in line with the young person's interests and aspirations.

The outcome of this work has been demonstrated in young people completing their qualifications and progressing to the next level in their education.

The Learning Mentor has also worked with young people who have aspirations to attend Higher Education in the future. The Learning Mentor supported with planning and facilitating a trip to Edge Hill University in April. The Learning Mentor has also facilitated a number of 1-1 visits to Higher Education settings and liaised directly with 2 young people who are due to transition to Higher Education. The Learning Mentor has supported these young people and their professionals to ensure they have everything they need to progress, such as support with Student Finance, accommodation, and results day advice and guidance.

PEP Lead (16-25)

Using the same model as the Pupil Premium Plus for school age and EYFS pupils, part of the Post-16 grant has funded a PEP Lead to oversee the completion Post-16 Personal Education Plans as well as making funding available to young people to support them in their education. The Virtual School have also extended our attendance monitoring systems to oversee Post-16 students. Attendance is monitored on a daily basis in order to intervene early where there are issues and is discussed on a monthly basis with the PEP Lead (16-25) and the Learning Mentor, in order to ensure appropriate support is in place. The PEP Lead (16-25) and the Deputy Head also attend an increasing number of strategic meetings with social care and the youth engagement service in order to improve collaborative working.

In 2023/24 the PEP Lead (16-25) will be prioritising support for Year 12 and Year 13 students who have not yet achieved Level 2 Maths and English, as well as increasing oversight of NEET PEPs and the support those young people receive.

Strategic Plan: BRIDGE

B is for Belief – Our vision is that everyone in our children's lives understands their role as a champion for education, supporting children to enjoy education in the widest sense, developing a sense of identity and belonging and believing in their potential to achieve amazing things and reach for the stars

Priority 1 - To empower social workers, carers, school staff and wider partners to be 'education champions' for our children, maintaining a culture of high expectations and supporting them to achieve their best

Priority 2 - To ensure that every looked after child has an aspirational PEP that supports them to overcome barriers and achieve amazing things

Priority 3 - To raise looked after children's awareness of opportunities in careers and Higher Education to support them to reach for the stars and aspire to a bright future.

R is for Resilience – Our vision is that the resilience of our children is celebrated by everyone in their lives and they are equipped with the skills and mind-set they need to overcome challenges, manage changes and grow and thrive at every stage

Priority 4 - To support the health and wellbeing needs of our children, particularly at key transition points in their lives and education right from their early years and into adulthood

I is for Inclusion – Our vision is that all of our children, whatever their needs, are included in all aspects of education and that everyone has the knowledge and expertise to be a confident champion for education, removing barriers and maximising potential

Priority 5 - To ensure that planning for children is 'joined up' whether this is Care Plans, Personal Education Plans, SGO and Adoption Plans, Pathway Plans or Education, Health and Care Plans. All plans should complement each other and make sense to the child and family and meetings should be 'joined up' wherever it is possible to facilitate this

Priority 6 - To ensure that attendance in education is maximised for all our children, wherever they live and whoever they live with

Priority 7 - To ensure that appropriate Alternative Provision is available for children that compliments their education and supports them to achieve their best

D is for Direction – Our vision is that education and Social Care in Trafford work effectively together with the Virtual School as the bridge, setting the strategic direction for the education of looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need

Priority 8 - To ensure that the Virtual School has an effective Governing Body with senior representatives from education and Social Care. It supports the service to maintain a cohesive vision, setting the strategic direction and ensuring that key measurable outcomes are tracked and monitored across all priorities.

Priority 9 - To ensure that the Virtual School are an effective team who are supported in their wellbeing and career development in order to be able to fulfil the important roles they play as champions for our children

Priority 10 - To ensure that all key partners like schools and social care know who Virtual School are and what we can do to support them

G is for Growth – Our vision is that Virtual School grows and changes in response to our children's needs, influencing more education providers and reaching more children and families, increasing awareness of the barriers facing children who have been open to social care and strategies to overcome these

Priority 11 – To better understand the needs of our Children in Need by collating and analysing robust data sets and to use this greater understanding to disseminate key messages to partners

Priority 12 - To develop Social Care planning to ensure that education and social care partners to work together to maintain high expectations for engagement and achievement in education

Priority 13 - To further develop training for education providers about the needs of looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need to ensure that every education setting is attachment aware, and trauma informed

E is for Engagement - Our vision is that care experienced people, children and young people are at the heart of Virtual School, valued as experts in their own lives and shaping and influencing the services they receive

Priority 14 – To embed the voices of those with lived experience within the Virtual School and Governing Body, ensuring that their expertise is at the heart of everything we do and influencing practice in wider services

Priority 15 - To regularly seek and act on feedback from our children on their experiences of education and Virtual School

Priority 16 - To ensure that our children and young people are engaging in their Personal Education Plans, being supported to attend meetings and having their voices heard.