



## **CORPORATE PARENTING SUB OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**Monday, 11 January 2016 at 1.30 pm at the Bridges Room - Civic Centre**

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From the Chief Executive, Jane Robinson

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Item

Business

**1. Apologies**

**2. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 6)

The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 October 2015

**3. Education Annual Report** (Pages 7 - 40)

Report of Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

**4. Missing from Care Annual Report** (Pages 41 - 52)

Report of Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

**5. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee may wish to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds indicated:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

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6. **Case Study - Foster to Adopt (Pages 53 - 60)**

Report of Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

7. **Inspections by OFSTED of Gateshead Children's Homes and Regulation 44 Visits (Pages 61 - 66)**

Report of Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

Contact: Rosalyn White - email: [rosalynwhite@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:rosalynwhite@gateshead.gov.uk), Tel: 0191 433 2088,  
Date: Thursday, 31 December 2015

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## **CORPORATE PARENTING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**5 October 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Brain (Chair)

Councillors: Oliphant, Clelland, Simcox and Robson

### **CP08 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McNally and co-opted members Julie McCartney, Ann Page and Sasha Ban.

### **CP09 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2015 were approved as a correct record.

### **CP10 SATISFACTION SURVEY – YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRESENTATION**

The Committee took part in a group work session with young people, to discuss the results of the 'Tell Us' Survey. It was reported that there was a 22% return for 11-17 year olds and some returns were received from care leavers. In addition, work was carried out with One Voice to look at consultation for younger children, as a result of this a stall was in place at the Fostering Fun Day where responses were received from 5-11 year olds. From the survey, information was also gathered around the aspirations of young people.

The groups looked at the answers that Looked After Children gave around safety; in schools, where they live, on the internet and when out and about.

The point was made that there are a number of areas where it was felt young people would be more positive, however it was acknowledged that this may be due to the age of some of the young people who took part. It was confirmed that work is ongoing around how to gather the views of a wider range of Looked After Children as not all young people want to provide information through the survey. It was also pointed out that some young people will always just want to return home and therefore there will be limitations as to how happy and satisfied they will be.

It was suggested that some of the questions should be made clearer so that there is no ambiguity in the results.

**RESOLVED -** That the Committee noted the information presented.

## **CP11            PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW**

A report was presented around current performance for looked after children's services for 2015/16. It was confirmed that there are currently 373 looked after children, this is a 10% increase over the last six months. It was noted that a number of audits are ongoing around the reasons for this increase, however during May to August there was a reduction in the number of Looked After Children leaving care.

In terms of age ranges it was noted that there has been an increase in the number of under 2's coming into care. There are also higher numbers of 15 to 17 year olds in care, this is evenly split between males and females.

The number of children accommodated under a Section 20, cases that have parental agreement and have not been to court, have increased by 12.5%. This continues to be under scrutiny as well as ensuring parents are giving informed consent. It was noted that the increase in Section 20 cases is in line with national trends.

It was noted that placement stability remains strong, with 83% of children who have been looked after for over two and a half years in the same placement. This is higher than the national average of 67% and the regional average of 69%.

It was reported that 140 children (37%) are placed out of the Borough. From this figure 80% are placed with Gateshead Foster Carers living outside of the Gateshead boundaries. 14 looked after children are placed outside of the region; two are placed in Sheffield due to risks with being closer to home, five are placed in London with family. It was confirmed that those children placed outside of the area are still visited by their social worker and Chris Hulme visits on a monitoring basis.

In terms of adoptions, there has been nine adoptions between April and August 2015, five of which were within the best interest date timescale, this is a decrease on last years figures. It was reported that there has been an increase in the time taken to match a child to an adoptive family, from 210 days to 255 days. It was confirmed that this is due to the additional needs of some of the children being placed.

In relation to care leavers it was noted that 83% of the 191 young people aged 18 to 21, are in suitable accommodation. It was reported that three young people are not in contact with the service and do not want to be contacted. 27 (45.8%) of those young people are in education, employment or training.

It was reported that the MOMO (Mind of My Own) app has been launched, this allows young people to raise issues and get quick response times. It was confirmed that by week four there was 40 users of the app.

RESOLVED -            That the Committee considered the contents of the report.

## **CP12 FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received a report highlighting progress over the last 12 months in the Fostering Service.

There are 350 foster carers currently, which is an increase on previous years. It was reported that de-registration figures were high in the last year but this was because a number of carers became adopters or special guardians. It was also reported that there has been a high number of connected people identified and the service has done well in placing children with family members. In relation to the age of carers it was noted that 53% are over the age of 50, there are also a number who are in their late 60's and this needs to be considered in terms of recruitment in the near future.

The number of referrals during the year was 345, this is a 7% increase from previous years and is a growing trend. The highest demand for placements was from the 10-15 years age range, also large sibling groups was a key feature during the last year.

In terms of conversion rates for carers, from enquiry to approval, this currently stands at 13%, this is against a national average of 11%. It was noted that careers events have been held and continue to be popular, however all local authorities are recruiting from the same pool and all face similar pressures.

Key areas for service development were identified; reviewing of Payment for Skills scheme to ensure it is working, development of the Staying Put scheme which will have a knock on effect of reducing placements, continuing work to achieve recruitment targets. It was also noted that additional support and training will be developed for complex teenager placements as well as reducing Independent Fostering placements.

It was questioned what support would be developed for complex teen placements. It was confirmed that this would involve additional training, a more responsive proactive service, models from across the country have been looked at. Work is also ongoing with the Youth Service in order to enhance the current package and maintain these placements.

It was queried whether any provision had been made for any refugees who may be coming into the area. It was confirmed that there is a small diverse range of BME foster carers, which is always looking to be increased, and neighbouring local authorities can be called upon if necessary.

It was suggested that new carers should be welcomed by the Mayor as an opportunity for them to be recognised.

**RESOLVED -** That the Committee considered the contents of the report.

**CP13 THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee received the annual report outlining the work of the Looked After Children and Young People Health Team during 2014/15.

It was reported that the team remains stable and the yearly returns have improved for immunisations, dental checks and annual health assessments. It was noted that initial health assessments continues to be a challenge with only 51.2% compliance. It was confirmed that consents are coming through but there are issues around capacity in the team. In terms of Review Health Assessments, the return is adequate and 86% were completed within 28 days of their due date.

Leaving Care Health Consultations have been redesigned following issues raised by the CQC around quality of the assessments. Work continues with the Children and Young Peoples Service to deal with the psychological needs of some of the looked after children.

It was noted that the Drug and Alcohol Services are now commissioned by a different provider and this has led to more recognition of lower level referrals. Sexual Health Services figures remain stable, with five known pregnancies of looked after young women. The Family Nurse Partnership continues its positive work to support mother and baby placements. In addition, one young dad was identified during 2014/15 and he has been referred to the Young Dad's Project through his Social Worker. It was acknowledged that the service will not be aware of all fathers, therefore they will not all engage with the service and support organisations.

The Designated Doctor and Nurse have attended foster and adoption panels and provided advice. In addition training has been provided to foster carers as well as staff training around quality of health assessments. A number of audits have been carried out on the back of inspections, this was the first of three commissioned services to be inspected.

Over the next year Newcastle Gateshead CCG and South Tyneside Foundation NHS Trust will consider a new business plan and it is hope that this will strengthen the team. It was also noted that service provision will be reviewed against statutory guidance. Other priorities for the coming year include developing a regional pathway for the management of children with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Work will also be ongoing to improve initial health assessment timeframes.

The Designated Doctor, Dr Helen Palmer, gave an update on the work around Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It was noted that nationally 1 in 1,000 children are affected with many affected in terms of behaviour and development. Guidance has been received and it was reported that work is ongoing to develop regional guidance. It was felt that any effect on young people who are looked after could ultimately impact on placement stability as a result of challenging behaviours. Committee felt that this was a wider issue

that should perhaps be addressed by the Families OSC as it affects a wider range of children, not just those who are looked after.

It was queried why one looked after young woman was not able to access support through the Family Nurse Partnership. It was confirmed that this was due to lack of capacity within the FNP, it was noted that the team went back to the FNP twice to explain that this was a special case, however the young person was not able to access the support and it was confirmed that looked after children are not prioritised. The Committee commented that looked after young people should be prioritised due to their vulnerability. It was confirmed that this is the first refusal from the FNP that the team had seen and that service have agreed to be involved in place planning.

RESOLVED - That the Committee considered the contents of the report and its comments be noted.

#### **CP14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **CP15 INSPECTIONS BY OFSTED OF GATESHEAD CHILDREN'S HOMES AND REGULATION 44 VISITS**

The Committee received a report on the Ofsted inspection outcomes and regulation 44 independent visits carried out in the Council's children's homes. The reports written as a result of the visits are circulated to the Service Director, Social Work, Children and Families, Service Manager for Looked After Children and the Registered Manager of each Home.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

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**TITLE OF REPORT:** Education of Looked After Children – REALAC Virtual School Annual Report

**REPORT OF:** Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and Learning

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a summary of recent work by the Virtual School.

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee and provide a progress report on the work of the Virtual School.

### **Background**

2. Attached to this summary is the annual report 2014-15 of the Virtual School. The report covers service provision and activities undertaken to support the education of looked after children. It includes detailed information on:
  - Achievement data
  - Personal Education Plans
  - Training and support provided to professionals
  - Support to individual LAC
3. Officers will make a brief presentation to the Committee, drawing attention to some of the main features of the report.

### **Next Steps**

4. Officers would like to look further at the following areas:
  - The development of the Virtual School Governing Body

### **Recommendations**

5. The Corporate Parenting OSC is asked to:
  - (i) Consider and comment on the attached annual report.
  - (ii) Comment on whether it is satisfied with the areas identified for further development.

**CONTACT:** Ann Muxworthy

**EXT:** 8609

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## VIRTUAL SCHOOL (REALAC)

Report to Corporate Parenting  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 January 2016



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*Note:- data sources quoted in this report include EMIS, Care First, educationGateshead and REALAC own data recording systems and were correct at time of reporting. The accuracy of much information obtained via EMIS and Care First is dependent upon officers and schools updating the information regularly.*

## **1. Vision, Governance & Accountability**

### 1.1 Vision

Our service exists to help all of our children and young person in care to be the best they can be.

We aim to enable this to happen by having a direct impact on the life experience of our children and young people in care through working directly with them, with schools, social care partners, foster carers and the full range of support services, acting as their 'champion' in facilitating the best educational opportunities possible.

Our children and young people will become:

- Successful learners
- Responsible citizens
- Resilient individuals
- Creative thinkers
- Reflective individuals

### 1.2 Governance and Accountability

A newly restructured committee for the Virtual School (VS) met in October 2015. This is a selected group of school and LA professionals who provide challenge to the VS, meeting twice a year with the Virtual School Head (VSH). This body will ensure increased challenge, dialogue and feedback to school networks of the Virtual School's work including its self-evaluation process, priorities and provision. Headteachers have expressed that they feel they have a role in ensuring LAC have a very high profile in Headteacher discussions and network meetings by disseminating information and bringing back feedback from schools. The committee are seeking membership from Overview and Scrutiny at their bi-annual meetings.

In addition, further challenge and accountability is provided to the VS via the Corporate Parenting group, performance clinics and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The VSH also reports to the School Forum funding group.

## **2. Progress since last OSC January 2015**

2.1 The following areas of work have implemented since January 2015, evidencing the on-going upward positive spiral of service improvements

- REALAC have made a significant contribution to the LA Ofsted inspection which took place in Oct – Nov 2015. A number of key strengths were identified which evidence the work of the service as well as areas for development. (see 2.2 below).
- Completion of the VS SEF process demonstrates service achievements and areas for development
- Development of the VS data dashboard has enabled the compilation of all key data information relating to the VS including numbers of LAC, achievement, progress, exclusions, SEN, attendance and PEPs.
- The Primary PEP rolled out in September 2014 went without any difficulties and KS 5 and SEN PEPs have successfully been rolled out in September 2015.
- More complex SEN related cases are now more intensely supported through the work of the Educational Psychologist.

- The addition of teaching time has improved the quality and quantity of support offered to individual LAC in need of a varied range of interventions to support their learning and progress. The quality and quantity of teaching support has increased through the work of the REALAC teacher providing a flexible and personalised approach to supporting individual LAC across primary and secondary schools.
- The first meeting of the VS governance committee has taken place where resources, challenges and future plans were shared with representatives from schools who attended.
- Tighter monitoring of use of the Pupil Premium Grant has now been implemented enabling the Virtual Head to increase accountability of schools on how this funding is being spent.
- Planning has begun for the Gateshead LAC Conference due to take place in Summer/Autumn 2016. The targeted audience will be for schools and social workers and amongst the developments shared and rolled out will be the Attachment Aware Schools programme.
- Continual improvements in the quality and quantity of PEPs is evidenced through data reports.
- Rigorous weekly case monitoring of our most vulnerable LAC (including transfer requests) is now in place demonstrating high levels of challenge to schools, increasing inclusion and reducing exclusions of LAC from mainstream settings
- A successful roll out of Letterbox 2015-16.
- Continual increase in the numbers of LAC going on work experience placements between April – December through the Pathways2work programme.
- Stronger and more effective challenge and accountability to schools in relation to LAC with SEN through the work of the REALAC SEN consultant and Education Psychologist.

## 2.2 Ofsted Feedback

### The inspectors

- recognised the huge progress made with PEPs identifying the quality had really improved
- the good strategic use of retaining pupil premium and how effective this has been to focus investment into support and results for young people
- saw that the Virtual School (VS) /REALAC service has cultivated relationships with schools and are comfortable to challenge them where appropriate
- creative problem solving where children needed additional support
- that the Virtual School/REALAC service were clear about children in alternative education and children outside of Gateshead boundary area
- could see robust tracking of school age young people and could see how key stage 5 has progressed
- were clear that they could see good management oversight and partnership working
- acknowledged the progress made with this past years cohort of GCSE results and accepted the context of the previous year in terms of SEND numbers.

The following future developments were highlighted for all LAC services in the council to consider:

- our relationships with further education provision to be improved
- further focus on our NEET to reduce the percentage not in Education, Employment and Training.
- the challenge of supporting young people/adults through to 21 years

### **3. About REALAC and the Virtual School**

The Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) also known as the REALAC service is a multi-disciplinary team funded by Care, Wellbeing and Learning within educationGateshead. The Virtual School team promotes and supports the educational achievement of LAC across all services and at every level of the authority, particularly with social workers, designated teachers and foster carers, to ensure that it is treated as a high priority.

The team provides a service to our children and young people are either looked after or at risk of becoming looked after by Gateshead Local Authority. The VS supports those children of compulsory school age and children over 3 years. It also supports early identification and provides advice to on the SEN needs of pre-school children.

REALAC is within educationGateshead, the council's School Improvement service which has a strong commitment to supporting schools and their pupils. In September 2013 REALAC was restructured and a new Headteacher and deputy headteacher of the VS were appointed. The VSH is an inspector in all phases of Gateshead schools. This development provided a greater further focus on the statutory guidance '*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children (July 2014)* and the role of schools in particular underpinning this guidance. Since 2013 a much greater emphasis was placed on working with schools to provide a greater focus on their responsibilities for the education of LAC and the monitoring of outcomes through data and performance.

The VS is supported and strengthened by a skilled group of LA services who provide training, consultation and effective partnership working e.g. Inspectors, Education Psychology Service, Education Welfare, EMTAS, SEN consultants and learning and skills. REALAC continues to maintain other strong multi-agency partnerships with schools, social care and foster carers to provide effective communication. In April 2015 REALAC was able to bring back a part-time psychologist to support its work. The service is considering expanding team capacity to support existing work with pupils at risk of exclusion and those LAC in educational settings outside of Gateshead.

The current team includes:

- Ann Muxworthy, Head teacher of the Virtual School & Lead Inspector for SEND Inclusion
- Vivienne Cunneen, Deputy Head of the Virtual School & REALAC manager (0.8)
- Rezina Chowdhury, PEP co ordinator
- Ian Hall, Data Officer
- Joanne Hoyle, Educational Psychologist (0.2)
- Jill Oliver, Administrative and PEP Support Officer
- Mary Rack, Teacher (0.6)
- Judith Sewell, Supporting Pathways Co-ordinator

The team also benefits from the support of Jean Thompson who is the special educational needs (SEN) consultant to REALAC providing school and pupil level support for LAC with SEN. REALAC also works closely with Megan Moore from the Fostering and Adoption Team who provides intense and personalised support for individual LAC, particularly in relation to behavioural issues to support placement stability.

### **4. LAC School Population**

The following tables provide an overview of the numbers of Gateshead LAC across a number of key stages, school and educational settings, LAC ethnicity and out of borough data where this has been available.

**Table 1 LAC Numbers in and out of borough per statutory age**

Current Year Group	September 2013	November 2014	July 2015
Year 11	26	44	45
Year 10	32	30	32
Year 9	27	24	25
Year 8	22	15	19
Year 7	15	23	22
Year 6	25	14	9
Year 5	8	17	19
Year 4	15	22	22
Year 3	19	19	14
Year 2	19	15	18
Year 1	16	18	16
Reception	16	11	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>256</b>

(Figures taken from REALAC, EMIS and Care First July 2015)

The largest number of LAC within the secondary sector is in Year 11 with 45 LAC in 2015, a significant increase on September 2013. LAC at Key Stage 4 are the most challenging of all LAC year groups in terms of behaviour and the risk of fixed term and permanent exclusion. The challenges and demands this places and continues to place on service delivery is significant. Last year's Year 11 cohort dominated a substantial amount of service resource due to the complexity of need and corresponding support that was required in response to issues relating to behaviour, alternative provision and potential exclusion.

Years 9, 10 and 11 LAC cohorts are large in number which is significant due to the critical stage this age range represents in the educational pathway. LAC in Year 9 will be making important decisions about curriculum choices which will impact upon their future, those in Year 10 will be embarking upon GCSE study and Year 11 LAC will be preparing for final exams.

School	Gateshead LAC Years 7-13	LAC – attending Gateshead schools from other Local Authorities	Total No Of LAC Gateshead & Other Local Authorities
Cardinal Hume	5 (7)	1 (0)	6 (7)*
Thorp	4 (7)	4 (5)	8 (12)
Emmanuel College	3 (3)	0 (0)	3 (3)
Heworth	12 (13)	1 (1)	13 (14)
Joseph Swan	11 (11)	1 (1)	12 (12)
Kingsmeadow	8 (12)	2 (1)	10 (13)
Lord Lawson	9 (7)	0 (1)	9 (8)
St Thomas More	11(11)	8 (8)	19 (19)
Thomas Hepburn	9 (10)	2 (2)	11 (12)

Whickham	3(8)	3 (6)	6 (14)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75 (89)</b>	<b>22 (25)</b>	<b>97 (114)</b>

**Table 2 LAC Numbers per Gateshead Secondary Schools**

\*Previous year figures

*(Figures taken from REALAC, EMIS and Care First July 2015) (Figures in brackets - from November 2014)*

Overall the number of Gateshead LAC, including LAC from other Local Authorities attending Gateshead secondary schools, went down since the beginning of the 2013-14 academic year from 114 to 97. There have been bigger reductions in LAC numbers for some schools more than others over the course of the academic year eg Whickham have gone from 14 to 6, Thorp from 12-8 and Kingsmeadow from 10 to 13. The school with the highest total number of combined (Gateshead and non Gateshead) LAC continues to be St Thomas More (19) and the lowest is Emmanuel College who currently has 3 LAC on roll. Also Thomas More have the highest number of out of borough LAC (8).

REALAC also has a role in supporting other Local Authority LAC who attend Gateshead schools. There was a significant drop in the number of non Gateshead LAC attending Gateshead schools in 2013-14 when figures were at 42, to 22 in 2014-15 this year.

**Table 3 LAC educated out of borough**

<b>Out of borough</b>	<b>Nos of LAC</b>
Primary	16
Secondary	25
Special	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

*(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)*

There is a significant number of Gateshead LAC being educated out of borough, (24% of the total Gateshead LAC population) of which 9% are educated at key stages 1 & 2 and 15% at key stages 3 & 5.

**Table 4 LAC educated out of borough across all key stages**

<b>Key Stage</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Early Years (EY, N &amp; R)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key Stage 1 (Year 1 &amp; 2)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key Stage 2 (Year 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6)</b>	<b>12</b>

<b>Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 &amp; 9)</b>	18
<b>Key Stage 4 (Year 10 &amp; 11)</b>	21
<b>Key Stage 5 (Year 12 &amp; 13 HE)</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

**Table 5 LAC educated out of borough according to setting**

*(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)*

The 64 Gateshead LAC educated out of borough is spread across 47 settings, of which 34% are special schools.

<b>Number of out of borough Educational Settings</b>	
<b>Primary</b>	12
<b>Primary Special</b>	5
<b>Secondary (including middle)</b>	19
<b>Secondary Special</b>	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

**Table 6 Post 16 LAC***(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)*

<b>Settings</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Nos of LAC</b>
<b>Gateshead School 6<sup>th</sup> Forms</b>	Yr 12	7
	Yr 13	0
<b>Colleges</b>	16 years	14
	17 years	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>

**Table 7 LAC by Ethnic Group**

Ethnic Groups	Year Group												Total
	Rec	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Unknown	5	1		2						1	1	2	12
Any Other Asian Background												1	1
Any Other Black Background		1											1
Any Other Ethnic Group													0
Any Other Mixed Background		2											2
Black - African									1				1
Pakistani			1							1			2
White-British	3	10	14	16	12	20	18	8	20	21	27	28	197
White-English			1	1	1	2							5
White and Black African			1	1	1								3
White Eastern European				1									1
White Western European		1											1

(Figures taken from EMIS September 2015)

Historically, White British is the largest group. This may change as Gateshead is now expanding in the amount and numbers of ethnic groups.

## 5. LAC & SEN

The following tables provide data relating to LAC with SEN, across a number of key stages and year groups.

**Table 8 LAC with Statements & School Action Plus**

Year	Statement	School Action Plus	SEN Total
Rec	1	0	1
1	1	1	2
2	2	0	2
3	1	0	1
4	2	1	3
5	3	1	4
6	1	0	1
7	2	5	7
8	7	0	7
9	6	1	7
10	9	3	12
11	15	3	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 (49)</b>	<b>15 (22)</b>	<b>65 (71)</b>

(Figures taken from REALAC, EMIS and Care First July 2015 - Figures in total brackets are from November 2014)

18 out of 45 of the Yr 11 cohort (2014-15) were SEND (40% of the overall cohort). The highest numbers of SEND were at Key Stage 4, with also 38% of the year 10 classified as SEND. Similarly in 2014 there was a significant increase in the numbers for LAC with SEND at Key Stage 4. This then had a significant impact upon the attainment of the year group and also on the use of resources of the service.

**Table 9 Year 11 SEND pupils by category of need**

Breakdown of Year 11	Number of Children
Communication & Interaction	4
Social Emotional & Mental Health	7
Cognition & Learning	7

(Figures taken from EMIS System July 2015)

Table 9 shows the SEND category for this year's Year 11 cohort. Notably the areas which will have a significant impact on attainment are cognition and learning needs and behaviour.

**Table 10 Gateshead LAC educated out of borough including SEN**

Key Stage	Out of Borough LAC <u>WITHOUT</u> Statement	Out of Borough LAC <u>WITH</u> Statement	Total
Early Years (EY, N & R)	3	0	3
Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2)	4	3	7
Key Stage 2 (Year 3, 4, 5 & 6)	8	4	12
Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 & 9)	7	11	18
Key Stage 4 (Year 10 & 11)	11	10	21
Key Stage 5 (Year 12 & 13 HE)	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>64</b>

(Figures taken from REALAC, EMIS and Care First July 2015)

45% of Gateshead LAC educated out of borough have a statement of SEN. It is expected that this figure would be high as many LAC are educated out of authority where specialist placements have been identified to suit their needs.

## 6. LAC School Attendance

Attendance figures are drawn down to the Virtual school on a termly basis from EMIS and via school information requests. LAC who achieve 100% attendance are rewarded with a certificate and a voucher from REALAC. Where low attendance is identified as an emerging issue this is picked up in the PEP or reported by social workers and this is then followed up by REALAC officers.

**Table 11 LAC School Attendance**

	2013	2014	2015
<b>LAC</b>	94.6%	95.7% (NA – sec 94.9%, prim. 95.2%)	94.40%
<b>All Gateshead</b>	94.7%	95.5%	95.4%

*(Figures taken from EMIS July 2015)*

Attendance is good and consistent at this rate for several years. It is average and in line with national averages for all pupils in primary and secondary schools. There is a slight reduction when compared to other pupils in Gateshead than previous years.

## 7. Achievement and Attainment

The following is a breakdown per key stage of LAC achievement at the end of each key stage.

### 7.1 End of Reception

By the end of reception 42% of LAC made a good level of development and 58% were below. Therefore, more than half are working below age related expectations.

### 7.2 Year 1 Phonics

50% of LAC were working towards the required standard and 50% were at age related expectations.

### 7.3 Key Stage 1

**Table 12 Key Stage 1 Results - Gateshead Comparison**

	2013		2014		2015	
	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools (16)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools (11)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools (12)	All Ghd Pupils
<b>KS1 Reading L2+ %</b>	56%	87%	55%	88%	83%	89%
<b>KS1 Writing L2+ %</b>	63%	85%	55%	87%	83%	88%
<b>KS1 Maths L2+ %</b>	69%	89%	55%	91%	83%	92%

*(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)*

There was a very significant closing of the gap between Gateshead LAC (in Gateshead schools only) and all other Gateshead pupils in the Key Stage 1 results in 2015. The numbers of Gateshead LAC achieving Level 2 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths went from 55% in 2014 to 83% in 2015, compared with 87% and 89% respectively for all other Gateshead pupils in those years.

**Table 13 Key Stage 1 Results - National Comparison - All Looked after Children**

	2013		2014		2015	
	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (16)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (12)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (15)	National LAC
<b>KS1 Reading L2+ %</b>	56%	69%	50%	71%	86%	
<b>KS1 Writing L2+ %</b>	63%	61%	58%	61%	87%	
<b>KS1 Maths L2+ %</b>	69%	71%	50%	71%	87%	

(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)

Key Stage 1 results have significantly improved for all areas in 2015 and are **\*expected to be above National Average in 2015**. Current tracking data suggests that in 2016 attainment will also be close to national levels for LAC.

#### 7.4 Key Stage 2

**Table 14 Key Stage 2 Results - Gateshead Comparison**

	2013		2014		2015	
	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools(10)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools(13)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in Ghd Schools(6)	All Ghd Pupils
<b>KS2 Reading &amp; Writing &amp; Maths L4+ %</b>	80%	80%	77%	80%	67%	81%
<b>KS2 Reading L4+ %</b>	80%	89%	92%	90%	83%	90%
<b>KS2 Writing L4+ %</b>	90%	84%	77%	86%	83%	87%
<b>KS2 Maths L4+ %</b>	90%	89%	85%	88%	67%	89%

(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)

The 2015 figures shown above are based on 6 pupils only so this must be considered when making comparisons on previous years' results and also non LAC cohorts as such small numbers cannot be considered statistically viable. Level 4 achievement in Reading and Writing at Key Stage 2 in 2015 remains a positive outcome although there was a dip in maths in 2015 which was unusual compared to previous years.

**Table 15 Key Stage 2 Results - National Comparison - All Looked after Children**

	2013		2014		2015	
	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough)(11)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough)(19)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough)(9)	National LAC
<b>KS2 Reading &amp; Writing &amp; Maths L4+ %</b>	73%	45%	63%	48%	67%	
<b>KS2 Reading L4+ %</b>	73%	63%	79%	68%	78%	
<b>KS2 Writing L4+ %</b>	82%	55%	63%	59%	78%	
<b>KS2 Maths L4+ %</b>	82%	59%	74%	61%	67%	

(Figures taken from REALAC July 2015)

Key Stage 2 achievement of L4 or higher in Reading, Writing and Maths is historically well above the national average for all LAC and a very positive trend for all Gateshead LAC. This would indicate that our primary schools serve our children well and that placement stability and quality care from carers, contributes to high attendance, support and achievement.

## 7.5 GCSE RESULTS

**Table 16 GCSE Results - Gateshead Comparison All pupils**

	2013		2014		2015*	
	Ghd LAC in GHd Schools (16)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in GHd Schools (25)	All Ghd Pupils	Ghd LAC in GHd Schools (29)	All Ghd Pupils
<b>5A*-C inc Eng &amp; Maths %</b>	31%	62%	12%	59%	17%	
<b>5 A*-C %</b>	56%	90%	40%	67%	24%	

(Figures taken from REALAC September 2015) **\*Provisional Figures**

The achievement gap between LAC and other pupils in 5A\*- C En & Ma has reduced in 2015 from 12% to 17%. The gap has reduced despite the high percentage of SEND in 2014 and 2015 cohorts. A significant group of these pupils did not take GCSE and equivalence to register results.

**Table 17 GCSE Results - National Comparison All LAC**

	2013		2014		2015	
	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (23)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (35)	National LAC	Ghd LAC (includes out of borough) (44)	National LAC
<b>5A*-C inc Eng &amp; Maths %</b>	35%	16%	9%	12%	20%	
<b>5 A*-C %</b>	57%	37%	29%	16%	27%	

*(Figures taken from REALAC September 2015)*

Current tracking based on school assessments is predicting that 5A\*-C will be above the national averages for LAC in 2015 based on previous averages. This is the usual profile for Gateshead, however, in 2014 for some pupils gaining both English and Maths was a challenge in and out of borough. 2013 was a particularly good year with low SEND and a small group giving a higher percentage difference.

**Headlines on Outcomes**

- 70% of LAC at primary schools are making age related expectations
- At secondary level, in 2015 Year 11 - 67% made national expected progress by Year 11. In Year 11, 18 pupils were SEND and 89% in special schools or PRU
- 5A\*-C in English and Maths has significantly improved in 2015 on the 2014 dip and the prediction for the 2016 cohort is that it will be above the national averages also.
- 5 A\*-C has been above the national averages for 3 years.
- Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths L4+ historically is well above the national averages and a positive trend for all Gateshead LAC.
- 58% of Children by the end of Reception are below a good level of development.
- Key Stage 1 results have significantly improved for all areas in 2015 and are expected to be above the national average in 2015. Current tracking data suggests that in 2016 attainment will also be close to national levels for LAC.
- Majority of pupils are making good progress in primary schools when tracking age related expectations.
- Gateshead LAC pupils are making similar levels of progress in English and maths to other LAC pupils.
- Current Year 11 are making good progress when compared to starting points.

*Please note:-*

*At the time of writing this report, Year 2 and Year 11 2014-15 results are not validated, therefore the data is based on information from schools which may not be fully accurate. Changes in recording GCSE grades were introduced in 2014, therefore results for those pupils who re-sat exams and got higher grades are not included if they were entered and passed exams early in Year 10. Both sets of data are not a direct comparison due changes in government benchmarking from September 2014.*

**8. Exclusions and Alternative Provision**

**8.1 Exclusion**

Exclusion of any LAC is seen as a final and last resort for all schools and will only occur after all other avenues have been exhausted, including additional meetings involving other professionals.

LAC permanent exclusions are very rare in Gateshead as schools, REALAC and the Education Support Service work collaboratively to identify solutions to the threat of permanent exclusion eg managed move to another school, or identification of suitable, quality alternative provision.

**Table 18 LAC Exclusions**

Year	2013	2014	2015
<b>Fixed Term (episodes)</b>	38	44	31
<b>Permanent</b>	1	0	1 * not in care when excluded

*(Figures taken from EMIS July 2015)*

Fixed term exclusions have reduced on previous years. The one pupil reported as permanently excluded had been excluded before he came in to care. Episodes of fixed term exclusions are less than 5% of all Gateshead pupils overall.

**Table 19 Reasons for LAC Fixed Term Exclusions**

Reasons for LAC Fixed Term Exclusions	Numbers
<b>Persistent disruptive behaviour</b>	8
<b>Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult</b>	8
<b>Physical assault against an adult</b>	4
<b>Physical assault against a pupil</b>	2
<b>Drug &amp; alcohol Related</b>	2
<b>Theft</b>	3
<b>Other</b>	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

*(Figures taken from EMIS July 2015)*

Reasons for fixed term exclusions are mainly due to threatening and disruptive behaviour and lead to school places becoming unsettled for the schools and the pupils. Some persistent disruptive LAC need managed moves because relationships break down which can contribute significantly to disengagement. There were a much larger number of key stage 4 LAC than usual requiring change of place in 2015 because of behaviour and school relationships.

The number of LAC Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) figure reported in November 2014 was 44. (The previous academic year 2012-13 the figure was 39). The FTE figure reported in July for the period September 2014 – July 2015 was 32 and involved 16 pupils, 9 of which were male and 7 were female. The majority of FTE related to reasons of verbal abuse/threatening behaviour and physical assault both this year and last year.

## 8.2 Alternative Education

A trawl of all Gateshead secondary schools in September 2015 evidenced that only one LAC was on an alternative programme. This alternative is still proving successful for that individual young person. In November with the addition of the Behaviour Support Service in the data, this had increased to three.

The VS has requested that all schools inform REALAC and the LAC's social worker and carer if any child is being considered for an alternative programme. Schools have also been issued with

guidance information, reminding them that they are responsible for their LAC when on alternatives and they need to work closely with the provider to ensure regular, quality PEPs are undertaken. Secondary schools' responsibilities to their LAC have been and continue to be heavily emphasised with secondary designated teachers at their termly network. Attachment and Foetal Alcohol Disorder Syndrome (FASD) have been highlighted as significant contributory factors to our children's behaviour, ability to form positive relationships and ultimately engage with learning. This is an area of work the service is growing and expanding so that schools are more knowledgeable and skilled in understanding the needs of LAC and therefore better equipped to meet those needs with more positive outcomes.

## 9. Case Management

**Table 20 REALAC Referrals by Key Stage**

Key Stage	Numbers of LAC Referrals
Early Years	2
1	4
2	9
3	14
4	23
5	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

9.1 REALAC case records (December 2015) show that from October 2015, approximately 73 referrals relating to individual LAC were being dealt with and supported by the REALAC team as part of the service's case management process.

It's very important to note that the numbers of requests for support regarding individual LAC is well in excess of the above figure as we do not note every request for support in our case notes, only those where it becomes clear that on-going monitoring is required. Neither do these figures take into account, the follow up support and challenge provided by the team to individual social workers, schools and carers, where the PEPs have demonstrated underachievement/lack of progress and/or the need for additional support and these have been queried and followed up by the team. Where there is a very *significant* lack of progress and underachievement for individual LAC demonstrated in PEPs, these are monitored via the service's case management process eg recording in case notes, discussed at team case meetings and monitored more closely by individual team members. In addition these figures do not include LAC from other Local Authorities placed in Gateshead who are also supported by the service on request by Virtual Heads in other areas.

It is clear that Key Stages 3-5 dominates in terms of support required, with Key Stage 4 taking up a significant amount of the service's resources the majority of which will be relating to risk of exclusion and behavioural issues.

**Table 21 REALAC referrals by Case Type**

Referral/Support Request Type	Numbers of LAC Referrals
Transfer/In Year Admissions	14
Teacher Support	8

Risk of Exclusion/Behavioural Issue/ Disengagement	24
SEN Guidance & Support	12
Progression & NEET Concerns	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

9.2 The above table demonstrates the nature of referrals made to REALAC during the aforementioned period although this is a more complex picture than it appears. For example, a LAC may present challenging behaviour which has led to a managed move/transfer to another school. This data has attempted to identify and reflect the 'primary need' at the point of referral.

As already mentioned it is clear that secondary aged LAC, especially Key Stage 4 dominates in terms of support required relating to risk of exclusion and behavioural issues. Support for primary LAC tends to relate to in year school transfers (many of which required involved negotiation, challenge and discussion with the receiving school) as well as emerging SEN issues that need to be raised with school SENCO's that often begins the process of the LAC in question acquiring a single plan.

9.3 The type and amount of support provided by the service to support learners, social workers, carers and schools varies considerably and is very difficult to capture accurately without adding an onerous burden onto the team at this point in time as the predominant need to ensure all capacity is used efficiently to directly support individual LAC and professionals. However as an example, the time given to any individual LAC over a specific period of time depending upon need can vary from a few hours (eg offering advice, liaising with relevant professionals/carers, emailing and on going monitoring) to many days of support over a number of weeks for our most vulnerable LAC (eg attendance at various care team and PEP meetings, active one to one work and support, key point of contact for professionals responding to various issues, resource identification and on going monitoring).

9.4 The Educational Psychologist is involved with individual children at different levels. This involvement takes the form of

- Complex individual casework with young people with SEN who have not been able to access Educational Psychology input through the usual school route for clear and specific reasons,
- Support and advice for REALAC team members linked to individual cases that they are involved with.
- Liaison with members of the Educational Psychology team to highlight or discuss young people in schools.

In addition to her role linked to individual young people, the Educational Psychologist delivers training to carers, educational professionals and schools.

The Educational Psychologist has a further role in terms of supporting to schools to develop their provision to more effectively support the needs of looked after children. The current focus is to develop an attachment aware schools initiative which will initially be piloted by 2 or 3 schools and will then be launched at a conference focused on supporting young people with attachment difficulties in school. It is hoped that this conference will take place in summer 2015 or Autumn 2016.

## **10. Post 16 Progression, Higher Education & NEET**

The following table provides an overview of the progression pathways of the Yr 11 LAC from 2014 and 2015 respectively. REALAC have worked with Connexions to identify the destinations of these cohorts and undertaken follow up work to support individual LAC at risk of being NEET.

**Table 21 LAC Progression Routes 2013 - 15**

Cohorts	2014 cohort (Source Connexions/REALAC Nov 2014)			2015 cohort (*provisional data from Connexions/REALAC as of 22/09/15)		
	Y12 (No of LAC:35)	Y13 (No of LAC:22)	Y14	Y12* (No of LAC:46)	Y13* No of LAC: 34)	Y14* No of LAC 19)
<b>6<sup>th</sup> form</b>	8	5	N/A	11	7	
<b>College</b>	15	7	N/A	14	12	2
<b>2014:Training 2015:Study Programme</b>	4	2	N/A	3	4	
<b>Traineeship</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	1	1
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	2	1	N/A	3	2	1
<b>NEET</b>	4	3	N/A	7	5	6
<b>University</b>		1 (open university)				6
<b>Princes Trust/personal Development Programme</b>			N/A	3		
<b>Not available</b>	1* teenage parent	1* unavailable as pregnant	N/A	1 health concerns	1 teenage parent	2 Teenage parents
<b>Other</b>	1: unknown	2: 1 unknown 1 custody	N/A		1 custody 1 employment without training	1 custody

**Number of LAC is based on who was in local authority care as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.**

**Figures for Year 14 (18 year olds) were not available from Connexions in 2014 as they were deemed to technically have left care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, although still being supported by their established workers**

*\*Information is provisional as of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015*

The above table shows that there is still a good percentage of students staying in 6th form, going to college, trainees and in apprenticeships. In 2015, there was a high number of behaviourally challenging and SEN LAC which contributed to an increase in NEET figures from previous years. Despite numerous offers of placements students' chose not to access or engage. This has necessitated further discussions across services to address students who are hard to reach.

### **NEET & Higher Education**

On-going across service work to develop efficient systems of reducing and preventing LAC NEET is in progress. The VS works closely with other LA officers with specialist knowledge and skills including the Connexions service, fostering and Social Care colleagues in order to identify Gateshead LAC in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training), to consider needs and how to reduce the risk. This includes developing tracking systems for all LAC at Key Stages 4 and 5 to aid early intervention, developing the Key Stage 5 PEP for LAC in school sixth forms and an equivalent plan e.g Careers Plan for those LAC attending colleges, in training etc.

The numbers of LAC progressing to higher education remains very low and is an area of concern. It is most likely that some LAC engage with HE at a later stage but there are no figures at present to capture this.

## 11. Training and support

REALAC support to professionals (designated teachers/school staff, social workers, carers) includes the following:-

- Responding to daily educational queries and requests for support with individual LAC, the nature of which relates to a wide range of areas affecting LAC education eg PEPs, SEN, progression, behaviour, attendance exclusions, progression, bursaries, resources, admissions and transfers
- Attendance at meetings eg PEPs, care team, strategy meetings, SEN and LAC reviews
- Training eg PEP training for social workers and school staff, foster carers training programme
- Facilitation of the termly secondary designated teacher's network
- An extensive annual training programme for carers covering a wide range of topics across all key stages
- An annual 'Education Marketplace' support event on key education areas relating to the education of LAC including changes in policy and practice relating to assessment, SEN processes and provision, PEPs, admissions, attendance, exclusions, transfers etc was held for the first time for foster carers and social workers in July 2015. This event is repeated every year for foster carers, social workers and IROs to inform their role in supporting the educational progress of their LAC

In addition, REALAC are currently planning a LAC conference due to be held in the Summer or Autumn (TBC) 2016 aimed at supporting schools and social workers. The programme will include amongst other areas the following:- launch of the Attachment Aware schools initiative in Gateshead, the latest research on LAC and achievement from leaders in the field and an opportunity for social care and schools to communicate their concerns and needs and to strengthen their partnership.

REALAC also intends to set up a primary school designated teachers to create a means of communication and information dissemination between schools and the service.

### 11.1 Foster Carer Training

Below is a summary of the foster carer education training programme delivered during 2014-15. 172 carers attended the main training programme with an additional 50 attending the second successful Education Marketplace event held in July 2015. In total 14 sessions were delivered to 222 carers, social workers and care officers (the vast majority of attendees at sessions were carers).

**Table 22 LAC Education Training Programme**

2014 – 15 Training	Nos of Attendees	Feedback
PEPs (x 2 sessions)	26	<i>Very informative. This will help me with my PEP. This training has identified that I may have been doing PEP wrong with the current social worker. So I now know and have been given the correct information on PEPs and where to go for help if I need it.</i>
Key Stage 1 & 2 Numeracy	7	-
GCSE Maths	12	<i>Understanding that we do not have to be good at maths to a help child develop the right</i>

		<i>attitude.</i>
<b>GCSE English</b>	5	<i>It was really useful to have the experience and hear .... strategies in helping children develop, maintain good reading and learning habits, this session was lively useful and energetic</i>
<b>Success in secondary School</b>	4	<i>Excellent course, leaving a lot of food for thought in providing sufficient support in strategies to enhance learning. Thank you</i>
<b>Beyond Secondary School</b>	10	-
<b>Early Years</b>	6	<i>Very informative, great course, very enjoyable</i>
<b>Higher Education and Raising Aspirations of LAC</b>	15	<i>Excellent! Schools and Social Workers should be aware and attend</i>
<b>SEN Awareness</b>	18	<i>Excellent information given, a very well presented course</i>
<b>Preventing and Tackling Bullying</b>	35	<i>Overall rated Good – Excellent</i>  <i>Excellent facilitator, clear and easy to understand</i> <i>Excellent session very clear and concise.</i> <i>DVD's very powerful and gave an insight into how children and young people feel, thank you.</i> <i>Resources and materials were very good and useful. Aware of Anti-bullying but his session gave further insight and understanding and was worth re-visiting</i> <i>Very informative course</i>
<b>ADHD Awareness</b>	17	<i>I will be able to deal with ADHD in a calm effective manner</i>
<b>Attachment and Learning</b>	17	<i>Thought provoking, very informative</i>
<b>Education Marketplace (REALAC Meet &amp; Greet Event)</b>	50	-

*(Figures taken from Organisational Development Training co ordinator January – December 2015)*

## 11.2 Training for Social Workers & Designated Teachers

During 2014-15 training for social workers continued to focus on the PEP process on request or through REALAC monitoring of training need although social workers can attend the wider education training programme delivered for foster carers if they wish.

Similarly all schools can request training and support when required. Equally training and support is offered to those schools where monitoring indicates a need. As with social workers, support with the PEP process is the main area of need for schools, but also support in liaising with social workers regarding PEPs and/or issues to do with individual LAC is a priority for schools. Primary schools are continuing to be supported with the new PEP process implemented in September 2014.

**Table 23 PEP training and support Nov 2013 – Nov 2014**

<b>Type of Training/Support</b>	<b>Social Workers</b>	<b>School Staff</b>
One to one & Group	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
REALAC attendance at PEPs	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>
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(Figures taken from REALAC November 2015)

Also the PEP co ordinator visited 7 out of borough schools to support with PEPs.

A huge amount of support is given around the PEP process via telephone and email conversations to both social workers and schools.

PEP training was re delivered to the IRO team 3/12/14, jointly with the virtual head to who also discussed the VS's role.

With the changeover of SEN statements to the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the PEP co ordinator has directly contributed to the consultation and development process to combine and align LAC reviews and PEPs with the EHCP.

## 12. Personal Education Plans

12.1 The Gateshead PEP process and documentation has been significantly re-developed since 2013 to reflect statutory requirements resulting in a highly robust PEP process that now covers the age range from Early Years up to Post 16 within mainstream and special schools. All of the Gateshead PEPs have been redesigned to take into account context, age and the type of academic and progress information that can be expected in the different settings. An SEN PEP document has been developed to support SEN LAC in all schools and has been considered in conjunction with the single plan process. In addition a post 16 PEP for those LAC attending 6<sup>th</sup> Form schools was rolled out alongside the SEN PEP in October 2015.

12.2 LAC who have had a PEP within the previous 7 months and/or a date was agreed for the PEP to take place within that timeframe:-

**Table 24 PEP Analysis** (as of October 2015)

Primary Out Of Borough		Primary In Borough		Total LAC
PEPs In Date	PEPs Out of Date	PEPs In Date	PEPs Out of Date	Primary
14	9	80	24	127

  

Secondary Out of Borough		Secondary In Borough		Total LAC
PEPs in Date	PEPs Out of Date	PEPs In Date	PEPs Out of Date	Secondary & KS5
43	21	87	34	185

  

57	30	167	58	312
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As of October 2015, the total number of LAC was 376 (which includes 60 under 3 aged LAC who did not require a PEP at that time). At the time of data analysis and in accordance with the aforementioned criteria, **72%** of Primary and Secondary LAC in and out of borough had an up to

date PEP/agreed PEP meeting date, leaving **28%** of PEPs for the same group not completed and/or without PEP dates set for completion.

There have been a big improvement in the percentage of PEPs in date because of close REALAC monitoring of social workers and designated teachers and their compliance with the Gatehead process in consideration of their statutory duties. There are still issues with PEPS for LAC out of borough being out of date. REALAC's ability to extent our current PEP monitoring process beyond Gateshead is an on going challenge, although we continue to try to improve this area of service delivery. Where possible, REALAC staff do attend PEPs for LAC educated out of authority, supporting schools and social workers through the process and documentation.

12.3 In addition other actions taken to improve the numbers and quality of PEPs include:-

- Training to all partners (social workers, foster carers, schools)
- The VSH has set out expectations in contact with schools both written and verbally. She has written to all schools, Social Care managers and social workers explaining emerging PEP developments and emphasising the need to prioritise PEPs and compliance with the Gateshead process.
- REALAC has collaborated with Care First IT managers to set up systems to enable the weekly publication of PEP data demonstrating to service managers where social workers have/not initiated PEPs which is discussed during supervision. This resulted in a big increase in PEPs initiated during last academic year.
- Managers from Social Care have been involved in monitoring the social worker input to PEPs.
- REALAC undertake a termly data trawl for out of date PEPs.

12.4 Future and on-going developments

- Training and support will continue to be offered to schools and social care
- Stronger links between REALAC and other social care teams eg Safeguarding team, IROs to be made to support the improvement of PEPs quality and quantity
- Continue to ensure greater accountability of the spending of the Pupil Premium Grant ensuring
- Increase REALAC capacity to support and challenge those educating our LAC outside of the authority
- Support the LAC team and Connexions in the development of a post 16 PEP for those LAC not attending school 6<sup>th</sup> forms
- Continue to work with Care First IT and performance staff to ensure accountability through the weekly PEP data report

## **13. Work Experience**

13.1 Background

The Pathways2Work (P2W) project aims to support Looked After Young People aged 15 - 19 in gaining work experience during their school/college holidays within a real working environment. This opportunity is also open to students who require work experience for entry onto university courses. A young person can work for a period of one day to several weeks. They are supported to help identify the correct type of placement suitable to their needs.

The P2W Co-ordinator works in partnership with Social Care and foster carers to help give all young people access to quality work experience. They are financially supported via an expenses payment of £10 a day, which covers any reasonable travel/lunch costs that they may incur. The young person is expected to take responsibility for the completion of their timesheet, diary and feedback sheet to help them reflect on their time there and recognise the skills employer's look for.

13.2 Pathways2Work Data

**Table 25 Pathways2Work Participation** (April 2014- Oct15)

Half Term	Number of participants 2014	Total days 2014	Number of participants 2015	Total days 2015
February	N/A	N/A	7	27
Easter	1	5	3	18
May/June	0	0	1	3
Summer	3	21	14	90
October	3	9	8	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>176</b>
Number of students doing more than 1 week			8	
Number of individual participants (eg as the same person may take part in several weeks of work exp)			25	
Weekly work experience to support education	1	5	1	9

**Table 26 Pathways2Work Breakdown per year group** (April 2014 – October 2014)

Year	Breakdown by year group	Feb	Easter	May/ June	Summer	Oct	Male	Female
2014	Year 10				1		1	
2014	Year 11		1			1	2	
2014	Year 12				2	1		3
2014	Year 13					1		1
2014	Year 14							
	<b>Total</b>		1		3	3	3	4

**Table 27 Pathways2Work Breakdown per year group** (Feb 2015 – Oct 2015)

Year	Breakdown by year group	Feb	Easter	May/ June	Summer	Oct	Male	Female
2015	Year 10	1			7	1	6	3
2015	Year 11	6	3	1	2	5	13	4
2015	Year 12				4		1	3
2015	Year 13					2		2
2015	Year 14				1			1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 28 Pathways2Work Breakdown per school** (Feb 2015 – Oct 2015)

<b>Breakdown by School 2015</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Easter</b>	<b>May/June</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Total of individuals</b>
Joseph Swan				PY & KY & WA	PY & KY	3
Heworth	JB			1 DNA (JC)		1
Whickham	LR	LR			CF	2
Thomas Hep.	JL & TH			SC		3
Kingsmeadow	CC	CC	CC	AM & MR	DG	4
Thorp	CM			1 DNA (CM)		1
Linhope	JK			JK		1
(Out of borough)				NB		1
STM				CN & 1 DNA (ER)	CN	1
BSS		DB				1
Furrowfield				LR	AL & LR	2
Hilltop				CB & JH		2
Post 16 provision non school				KH & NA	AH	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>

**Table 29 Pathways2Work Drop out rates** (April 2014 – Oct 2014)

Non-starters	4	All changed their minds
Drop outs other than for illness	2	1 was placed in a garage which gave them a realistic experience of 'how cold it was' and they found the environment difficult and decided that this wasn't the career for them. 1 dropped out, reasons unclear, but their key worker said he was unmotivated
Left due to behavioural issues	1	The young person had returned to a previous placement which had been very successful, but the employer reported that they did not return with the same positive attitude they had the first time. They had changed carers 4 days before their work experience, which may have raised their stress levels. The employer was informed of this and were advised of the young person's situation

**Table 30 Pathways2Work Drop out rates** (Feb 2015 – Oct 2015)

Applied, but pre-cancelled	9	These placements did not start for a variety of reasons eg sickness, needing a DBS (which didn't come through in time), one started a traineeship, others went on holiday, 1 wanted more time to prepare for his exams, 2 others started a volunteer programme with NCS
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Arranged, but did not attend any day	3	1 “changed their mind” 1 unable to contact 1 had a variety of reasons, but I feel he was too nervous (despite 2 pre-visits)
Drop outs other than for illness	0	
Left due to behavioural issues	0	

### 13.2 Types of Placement

In 2014 types of P2W placements included the following; Motor cycle repair, childcare, games design, joinery, psychology/counselling and painting & decorating

In 2015 there was a significant increase in participation. There was a broader choice of employers engaged with the project and increased interest from students. This resulted in 2015 in far broader range of P2W types of placement which included the following; Joinery, catering, motor vehicle, beauty therapy (within a Day Spa, within a prestigious hotel) electrical installation, accountancy, military preparation, childcare, elderly care, hospitality, retail, legal services, hairdressing, dog grooming, animal care, manufacturing, engineering, interpreting, admin, graphic design, law, mental health services.

### 13.3 Evaluation and Feedback

Evaluation is sought from both participants and the employer, the aim of which is to measure any improved outcomes for the young person. Whilst feedback was sought in 2014, how this was captured was reviewed and procedures changed for October 2015.

From October 2015 the process of participant feedback was as follows;

- During the initial meeting any new participants complete a self-evaluation form based on many of the key skills employers look for e.g. communication, team work etc
- At the end of their work experience, participants complete a second self-evaluation form to establish whether they feel it has been beneficial in helping to develop these skills.

Out of the 4 participants who completed the initial self-evaluation, 3 have returned the second self-evaluation. Further details can be seen on the individual skills comparison, but the data suggests that one common area the participants initially lacked confidence with, was their communication skills. All 3 reported an improvement by the end of their placement.

Students also evaluate how their placement has been e.g. whether they felt supported, what their induction was like, whether they enjoyed their placement etc.

**Table 31 Pathways2Work Evaluation Summary (date)**

Area being evaluated	5 really good	4 good	3 okay	2 bad	1 Really bad
Induction	100%				
Enjoy their placement	66%		33%		
Felt supported	66%	33%			

Helpful to learn something new	100%				
Helping with their decision making	33	33	33		

The majority of employers return their feedback sheet about the young person, which is then shared with the young person, so that they can reflect on their time. Generally comments from employers are excellent or good. Where appropriate, constructive feedback is given to the young person based on the employers feedback. The 'Employers guide to Pathways 2 Work' was reviewed and extended to help ensure employers are aware of how to offer a 'Secure and Successful' placement

### 13.3.1 Feedback comments

"...can I just say a huge thank you to you and to Tesco who in my experience have provided 'real' work for my YP to get a flavour of the world of work, the challenges and rewards. The young person really enjoyed the work experience this opportunity offered and she hopes to return to them on a part time basis when she is legally able and Tesco seem keen for this to happen. She was thrilled to receive a huge make-up hamper and tub of sweets as a thank you to her contribution over the week from the teams she was placed with. The whole experience has been invaluable. Thank You" (feedback from foster carer Oct 2015).

"We found the young person to be polite, friendly, enthusiastic and very hard working...he behaved well, was keen to learn and took pride in finishing each task" (feedback from employer Oct 2015).

- I enjoyed meeting new people...and learning about their roles"
- "I have improved my listening skills and my independence skills".
- " really enjoyed my time there would defo go back again"
- "I really enjoyed my work experience at ...."
- "I really like this placement and I have had a lot of fun and would love to come back, maybe volunteer" (Feedback taken from student's feedback sheets)

Examples of replies to the question "What skills have you improved" or "What have you learnt" (Feedback taken from participants diaries)

- "Listening and knowledge"
- "My people skills"
- "Learning about the work"
- "My pumpkin carving skill, I am now a pro!"
- "My communication skills as I had to ask several questions and also my listening skills has improved"
- "My photocopying skills is brilliant now as I didn't know how to at first"
- "I have learnt to be very safe whilst doing this"
- "Everything"
- "I have learnt to have a good relationship with tenants and keep them happy"
- "I have learnt about the skills needed to do this type of work"
- "I need to have good organisation skills and good listening skills"

### 13.4 Recommendations for the Future

- Increase foster carers awareness of the project.
- Set the programme within a broader Career Education Programme
- Don't wait for applications, but target students where work experience would be beneficial
- Produce a 'Guide to Work Experience' to help ensure young people are more prepared for their work experience via 'what if' scenarios

## 14. Choices

REALAC continues to sign up to the Choices programme, which is part of the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership.

'Choices' is a targeted programme designed to introduce the idea of Higher Education and help to raise the aspirations of looked after children.

The programme has traditionally been targeted at year 10 & year 11 students and in 2015, sessions were introduced for year 8 & 9. Unfortunately the original year 8 & 9 sessions did not run this year, but over October half term, they ran a Zombie Apocalypse – Foster Family Fun Day, which was aimed at year 8 & 9.

Each of the Year 10/11 sessions had an academic taster combined with a specific area of university eg 'Student Finance', Student Accommodation'. There was also a session specifically for Foster Carers, which aimed to increase their awareness of HE and the support available for looked after young people. The sessions are ran by student reps, many of whom were previously looked after children, which helps as the participants can relate to the reps life story and personal situation.

**Table 32 Choices LAC Participation**

Choices Programme	Number of participants (who attended at least 1 session) sept 2012/aug 13	Number of participants (who attended at least 1 session) sept 2013/aug 14	Number of participants (who attended at least 1 session) sept 2014/aug 15
Year 7,8 & 9 (plus siblings)	N/A	NA	2
Year 10&11	3	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

**Quotes from Choices Together year 10 & year 11 evaluations:**

*'I learnt that uni is going to be fab!' – Choices Together student*

*'You can reach your goals if you try' – Choices Together student*

*'It has given my foster child aspirations for his future. He has made new friends and built his confidence up. He has enjoyed every session.'* – Foster Carer

*'My young person feels more confident in her opinion of university. We talk about her options and what is available for her.'* – Foster Carer

We also invited the Choices Together co-ordinator to the REALAC Market Place event to try to increase the Foster Carer's awareness about the programme, which will hopefully then increase the number of participants for next year.

## 15. Teacher Support

### 15.1 Letterbox Club

Letterbox Club is a Literacy and Numeracy programme aimed at years 1, 3, and 5 and is overseen by the REALAC teacher. Each child involved in the project receives a monthly pack sent home (over a 6 month period) which includes top quality reading materials and educational math's games. The ethos of the scheme is to increase the children's self-esteem, motivation and learning through ownership of the quality packs. It is expected that the children will use and read the books provided and the Foster Carer will support them in reading and playing the activities.

Letterbox is an ongoing year on year activity. This year 45 children have taken part in Years 1, 3 and 5 (April 2015 – Dec 2015) and received 6 monthly packs of resources plus a special Christmas pack.

It is difficult to gauge the direct impact of a programme such as Letterbox on any individual LAC's progress and achievement. Previous testing methods were reviewed and then ceased to be continued as they did not adequately test the direct impact of the programme. Qualitative feedback from carers and the children involved in the scheme is a useful proxy indicator of the usefulness of the scheme. This, alongside progress and achievement data is an indicator of the overall impact of the combination quality teaching and additional support our LAC receive. REALAC's current priority is to identify support for those LAC who are not meeting age related expectations or who have special needs and to consequently provide a range of interventions to support their on-going achievement such as challenge of school, social worker, additional teaching time etc require additional to ensure they make progress.

## 15.2 One to One Support

Since joining the team in March 2015 the REALAC teacher has provided a variety of one to one support to eleven LAC (4 primary, 6 secondary and 1 post 16) during the period March 2014-December 2015. This amounts to 124 sessions of on average one hour per teaching session.

The variety of secondary aged support provided included preparation for maths and English GCSE/Functional Skills exams, support with Health & Social Care GCSE. The variety of primary aged support provided included support with Literacy and numeracy, skills development support e.g. memory, working on relationships and understanding feelings.

This role is still evolving and the expectation is that the REALAC teaching role will concentrate on giving a more intensive period of support to individual LAC in order to increase the likelihood of positive impact.

## 15.3 Private Tutoring Report December 2014 – December 2015

**Table 33 Tutoring**

2014/2015		
Subject	Number of Students	Hours completed
English KS3	3	21
Maths KS3	3	31
English KS4 GCSE	6	50
Maths KS4 GCSE	6	57
Functional Skills	1	11

English and Maths tutoring was given to a range of students from year 8 to year 11.

4 other students, who were out of full time education at various points throughout the year, were also provided with Science tuition. These were weekly placements put in place until the student returned to full time education.

Within the period September 2013 – November 14 a total of 9 Children received one to one private tuition totalling 137 sessions from a national company called Fleet Tutors. The numbers receiving tuition have is less than previous years due to a much reduced Personal Education Allowance

Budget but it remains a feature of the service. This will be reviewed in light of the imminent appointment of a teacher to the service.

The tutoring support offered during this period was in English & maths and targeted mainly at Years 10 & 11 LAC to support those who were about to take their examinations. Most of the LAC received tutoring in both subjects.

## **16. Pupil Premium Grant 2015-16**

Following discussions with the Children and Young People Portfolio meeting and Schools Forum, the following information was prepared for schools. This is to inform them of the arrangements for the distribution of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for Looked After Children (LAC) for financial year 2014-15 and the role of your school in ensuring that payments are received by school for each individual LAC entitled to the funding.

In January 2015, each school (maintained and non maintained but not private schools) will receive an instalment of £1000 for each LAC on their school roll for three terms (or pro rata). It is expected that schools will use this funding to:-

- directly support the achievement and attainment of LAC
- close the attainment and progress gap between LAC and their peers
- support underlying issues and interventions for LAC who are at risk of exclusion, non attendance and other issues that may affect learning

A second instalment of £900 will be paid to each school no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 for each LAC recorded on school roll subject to:

- every LAC having an up to date PEP (statutory requirement) completed within the last 6 months

In the absence of the above, schools will also receive their funding once a PEP meeting date has been agreed between the social worker, foster carer and school and section one of the PEP has been completed and sent to REALAC administration.

All social workers and designated teachers must follow the Gateshead PEP processes in ensuring each LAC has an up to date quality PEP. REALAC will monitor and compile an accurate list of qualifying schools for Finance in accordance with the above expectations.

## **17. Priorities 2015-16**

The Virtual School continues to ensure it is delivering on its six key operational priorities as outlined in the VSH Handbook June 2015. (The Rees Centre).

The VS:-

- knows which pupils are on the roll
- knows where they live and where they go to school.
- knows, at any time, how they are doing through schools, foster carers, social workers and the staff of REALAC
- determines what actions to take if they are not doing well enough.
- evaluates the impact of actions taken to improve attainment and progress;
- understands accountabilities within and beyond the LA including inspection.

16.1 Following the VS self evaluation process which was undertaken in the Autumn 2015 the following priorities were identified and included in the VS School Evaluation Form (SEF).

### Leadership and Management

- Further engage with the Virtual School committee to sustain challenge and participation with schools and social care

- Monitor the impact of school visits across clusters on the quality of PEPs
- Finalise the progress and tracking processes of our LAC within the current context of assessment developments in schools
- Sustain the strong liaison and engagement with all partners to meet individual LAC needs and provide appropriate challenge
- Successfully host a LAC conference aimed at schools and social workers at which there will be a launch of the 'Attachment Aware Schools' initiative, opportunities for the development of a local action plan from schools and social workers to improve outcomes for our LAC

#### Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- Monitor
  - schools' responses to learner views and needs within the PEP document and ensure these are incorporated into the action plan targets
  - schools' reporting of learner progress, seeking clarification and challenging where individual pupil progress is not clarified
  - the PEP targets and school reporting of spending of the pupil premium fund in the PEP document, ensuring the latter informs the former to the benefit of the individual LAC
- Develop schools' understanding of the impact of attachment and foetal alcohol difficulties on learning and provide them with the support/strategies and approaches to engage learners and help them to feel safe and secure at school
- Work with other services in the LA to address NEET and those LAC disengaging from education
- Continue to resource and support a range of projects that support achievement and attainment e.g. letterbox, foster carer training programme, teaching, tutoring.
- Develop and implement the post 16 career plan/PEP in collaboration with the LAC team the Early Years PEP for non school based LAC
- Extend existing guidance and training for schools who use alternative providers for LAC beyond the current guidance regarding PEP to include quality of teaching and learning etc
- Develop and deliver training to social care colleagues and carers on assessment and progress to support their input into PEPs
- Review current procedures for use of tuition and Fleet tutoring in relation to the needs of the service/LAC and resources available

#### Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

- To continue to challenge those schools considering exclusion of LAC and hold them accountable for the support they are putting in place to reduce barriers to learning for our most vulnerable children and young people
- To provide quality support and training and promote good practice in schools in supporting LAC so that they are more able to meet emotional and behavioural needs
- To continue to identify non-attenders and take appropriate, prompt action
- Continue to provide quality work experience placements for looked after children

#### Improve Outcomes

- Sustain a focus on 5A\*-C English and maths
- Sustain key stages 1 and 2 positive trend of results
- Increase 5A\*-G entitlement so that low ability pupils gain more accreditation
- Provide a new analysis of progress/individual pupil tracking

## 17.2 Challenges

Whilst considerable changes to the service have been made resulting in a more efficient and effective service, we have identified that considerable work still needs to be undertaken to ensure that the service achieves the highest standard possible so that all our looked after children are fully supported in accordance with their needs.

The challenges experienced by the service relate to capacity issues both in terms of numbers of staff available to undertake the areas of wide ranging work areas identified as part of the VS/REALAC remit, as well as the need to develop staff's knowledge and skills to enable the VSH role to undertake its statutory duties to the highest standard.

Specific areas that need addressing

- include continuing to ensure up to date high quality PEPs for all looked after children placed within and outside of the authority.
- identification of appropriate provision for our most disengaged LAC unable to progress in mainstream settings (Gateshead PRU provision is in the review stage and it will be some time before a new fit for purpose provision will in operation)
- ensuring all looked after children have a quality service, not just the most disengaged
- Increasing REALAC visibility in schools and amongst our LAC

## 17.3 Plans to overcome the Challenges

The Virtual School is

- working on increasing the capacity and efficiency of the team to improve service delivery
- developing a system of school visits, tighter case management and a more efficient quality assurance of PEPs through delegation across the team
- working in partnership with other services to identify alternative means of preventing and supporting excluded LAC through eg direct Pupil Premium enhanced funding to schools
- considering the addition of an out of borough worker to support Gateshead LAC placed in educational settings out of authority
- implementing greater school level of contact by REALAC to build the team's relationships and visibility with school and LAC
- working in partnership with other LA teams to support the review of the LA PRU provision

## 18. Recommendations

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepts this report as an evaluation of the work of the service and the impact the service is having on the educational achievement and well-being of children and young people in care in Gateshead.

Ann Muxworthy, Head of the Virtual School January, 2016

**TITLE OF REPORT:** **Missing from Care Episodes and child sexual exploitation for Children and Young People Looked After by Gateshead Council**

**REPORT OF:** **Strategic Director Learning and Children and  
Director of Children's Services**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an updated summary of missing from care episodes from April 2014 to November 2015 and an update regarding protection and monitoring of child sexual exploitation.

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### **1. Background**

Young people who go "missing" from the care of the Council whether from foster care or residential care, do so for many often complex reasons which cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances and their experience within the Looked After system.

### **2. Policy Context**

Gateshead Council has clear procedures regarding missing children and young people which incorporate a joint protocol between Northumbria Police and Children's Social Care. The procedures and data systems form part of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB's) oversight of arrangements. A designated officer is a legal requirement for each Local Authority. This remit is delegated to Service Manager Looked After Children.

### **3. Definition of Missing from Care**

***"A Looked After young person is considered missing if he/she is absent from her place of residence without authority."*** Children can be reported missing within 30 minutes to 3 hours from their anticipated return time.

To identify the type of missing activity there are three main categories of missing episodes outlined in the missing children and young people procedure, 'Unauthorised absence', 'Missing' and 'Absconder'. In addition a missing strategy for each young person may be different depending upon the management of assessed risks relating to the young person.

## Unauthorised absence

Some children absent themselves for a short period and then return and during their absence their whereabouts are known or they have made contact. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or accidentally, and may be testing boundaries, but do not jeopardise their wellbeing. This kind of boundary testing is within the range of normal teenage behaviour and not necessarily considered a risk.

Whether the absence is careless or deliberate, if there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety, or that of the public, it may fall within the unauthorised absence category. The assessment of the carer is initially that they are safe but are away from home without permission. It is still important that staff/ carers record these incidences (as unauthorised absences, not missing episodes), in case the level of risk changes and decisions are auditable. Unauthorised absences must be carefully monitored however as the child may subsequently go missing.

If a child's whereabouts are known then they cannot be 'missing'. For example, in some circumstances young people staying with a friend without prior agreement may not be 'at risk' and it would be inappropriate to flag this event as a missing from care incident or report it to the police.

In situations where a child is absent without permission the first response may be that providers of their care along with any relevant staff from their responsible authority, which could include the child's social worker, should act as a responsible parent and take all practical steps to establish the child's location and to ensure that they return to their placement without delay.

A child or young person who is absent should be classified as unauthorised absence if the criteria below apply:

- They have deliberately or carelessly absented themselves
- They are likely to return of their own accord or they are staying with others known to them
- They are likely to be easily located
- They are unlikely to suffer or cause significant harm whilst absent

Some police forces in the country formally record episodes of "unauthorised absence" and provide a different response to these cases than episodes where people are reported "missing". This process was introduced following revised guidance for police forces from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Northumbria Police has decided not to adopt the new definition, and all missing reports are given the same "gold standard" response.

## Missing

A child is categorised as missing when their location or reason for absence is unknown **and/ or** there is cause for concern for the child because of their vulnerability or there is a potential danger to the public.

A child or young person who is absent should be classified as missing if one or more of the criteria below apply:

- There is identified or imminent risk of the child or young person being exposed to significant harm
- The child or young person poses a risk of significant harm to others
- There are suspicious circumstances
- The absence is out of character or unusual behaviour
- There are indications that the child has already come to harm
- There are indications that the episode is not a deliberate or careless act
- There are indications that the child or young person
- Is not expected to return within reasonable time limits
- Is not staying at homes of others known to them
- Will not be easily located

A child or young person in this category must be reported to the police.

### **Absconder**

An absconder is a child or young person who is absent from a placement without the permission of the responsible person and who is subject to a legal order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings.

A child or young person in this category must be reported to the Police as soon as possible and treated as a wanted person. The Police must be made aware of the particular order under which the child has been placed in the residence and the expiry date of the order.

## **4. Risk Assessment**

In assessing the significance of any child's absence a risk assessment must be conducted. The service has developed a screening assessment tool based on the Phoenix model developed in Manchester. This tool is completed by the care team and if there is persistent missing episodes is presented to the Multi agency Sexual Exploitation Trafficking meeting.

Where a child is missing, relevant staff from Local Authority and Police, must consider the above definitions and take into consideration the child's care plan and factors listed below, when assessing risk:

- The legal status of the person in care (e.g. Emergency Protection Order, Full or Interim Care Order, remanded, curfew conditions etc.)
- Previous behaviour patterns. (Such as a history of absence and quick return)
- The child's state of mind/perceived risk. (Is child likely to self-harm or commit suicide? Does child see risks in a balanced way?)
- Group behaviour at the time of the absence
- Whether the young person is perceived as running to someone or running from a situation
- Any physical or learning disabilities the child may have which increase the risk to them
- Is the child vulnerable due to age or infirmity or any other factor?

- Is the child suspected to be the victim of a significant crime in progress, e.g. abduction?
- Are there family /relationship problems or recent history of family conflict, including domestic abuse
- Does the missing person have any physical illness, disability or mental health problems?
- Are they in the company of a person who may cause them harm?
- Do they require essential medication which is not likely to be available?
- Is there ongoing bullying or harassment, e.g. racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns and/or cultural issues?
- Do they pose a threat of harm to others?
- Is there drug or alcohol dependency or substance misuse?
- Any other particular circumstances at the time of the incident influencing the risk assessment?

As a minimum requirement the risk assessment should be reviewed every eight hours and the level of prevailing risk agreed by carers and other professionals responsible for that young person's health safety and well being.

It is important that the assessment of risk is a dynamic process and should be re-considered and challenged at every point during a child or young person's absence.

## **Categories of risk**

### **HIGH**

The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the child or young person is in danger through their own vulnerability or may have been the victim of a serious crime, or

The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public are in danger.

### **MEDIUM**

The risk posed is likely to place the child or young person in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

### **LOW**

There is no apparent threat of danger to either the child or young person or the public. The key messages from research regarding young people Missing from Care over the last five years indicated the need for a regional approach and highlighted that:

- Few young people leave their local area
- Many stay with friends known to them/relatives, less than a third or a quarter sleep rough
- Most common reasons for running away are conflict with parents/step parents and carers and wanting to spend time with friends and partners
- Young people who runaway are more likely to be absent from school through refusal to attend or exclusion

- Young people are at as much risk whether they are missing for the first time or on any subsequent occasions
- Young people who go missing place are often very vulnerable and place themselves at risk and are exposed to violence, victimisation, sexual exploitation and involvement in crime

## 5. Overall data

There were 865 missing episodes in total in 2014-2015, of which 572 (66%) were looked after children. This represents a slight increase in the total number of missing episodes compared to 2013-2014 and a large increase of over 100 episodes in terms of the number of missing from care episodes.

To date in 2015 (April–October) there have been 558 missing episodes, 444 of which (80%) were looked after children. This represents a decrease in the total number of episodes compared to the same period last year (573) but a large increase in the number of missing from care episodes (378 or 66%) and this would suggest that year-on-year 2015-2016 will see a large increase overall.

Each month the number of individual young people in total and individual Looked After Children reported missing varies and is different from the number of missing episodes. In January 2015 there were 13 individuals reported missing from care and in May 2014 there were 22.

Over the course of 2014-2015 there were 66 episodes where a young person was missing for over 24 hours. The majority of those young people were missing from care and is an increase from the previous year where there were only 44 episodes lasting 24 hours or more. To date in 2015-2016 (until 31 October) there have already been more episodes of missing from care for over 24 hours than there was in the whole of 2014-2015.

### 2014-2015 data

Month	Total missing episodes	Number of individuals	Episodes over 24 hours	MFC episodes	Number of individual LAC
April	62	36	7	41 (66%)	21
May	83	48	7	44 (53%)	22
June	93	46	5	66 (71%)	21
July	66	32	4	44 (67%)	15
August	78	36	3	54 (71%)	20
September	106	43	6	73 (69%)	20
October	85	36	7	56 (66%)	16
November	71	40	13	42 (59%)	17
December	44	21	3	32 (73%)	14
January	61	24	0	37 (61%)	13
February	60	30	3	46 (77%)	18
March	56	31	8	38 (68%)	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>865</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>573 (66%)</b>	

**Placement young person reported missing from (number of episodes)**

Month	Placement young person reported missing from (number of episodes)					
	Gateshead residential		Other residential (out of borough, private)	Foster care		Other
	Blaydon	Crawcrook		Gateshead	Out of borough	
April	1	15	4	14	7	0
May	1	11	3	11	18	0
June	7	26	16	6	10	1
July	13	12	7	4	8	0
August	20	12	11	4	7	0
September	19	18	13	5	9	9
October	10	14	15	9	9	0
November	2	8	5	14	12	0
December	3	15	6	2	6	0
January	13	10	4	5	5	0
February	14	4	6	19	3	0
March	5	13	6	9	5	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>10</b>

Issues to note:

- In April 2014 there were seven episodes where a young person was missing for more than 24 hours and four of these episodes were for over 48 hours. All four of these episodes involved young people missing from care.
- There was an increase in the number of episodes reported from Gateshead Council children's homes in summer 2014. These episodes were down to a small cohort of young people who were going missing together more often than not. Meetings were held between key professionals, the young people themselves and family members and plans were put in place to reduce the number of episodes.
- In November 2014 there were 13 episodes where a young person was missing over 24 hours; eight of these episodes involved a Looked After Child. Six of the episodes involved one particular LAC and the other two episodes relate to two other children (GB and NR). BB was actually missing 10 times in total in November 2014, GB three times and NR once. There were four episodes that month where young people were actually missing over 48 hours
- In March 2014 there were eight missing episodes over 24 hours, seven of which related to a looked after child. Three of those episodes actually lasted over 48 hours.

## 2015-2016 data to date

Month	Total missing episodes	Number of individuals	Episodes over 24 hours	MFC episodes	Number of individual LAC
April	91	38	10	77 (85%)	25
May	115	49	10	80 (70%)	22
June	72	33	9	59 (82%)	20
July	81	38	9	63 (78%)	21
August	76	31	11	63 (83%)	20
September	82	41	15	55 (67%)	21
October	71	43	3	47 (66%)	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>558</b>		<b>67</b>	<b>444 (80%)</b>	

### Placement young person reported missing from (number of episodes)

Month	Placement young person reported missing from (number of episodes)				
	Gateshead residential		Other residential (out of borough, private)	Foster care	
	Blaydon	Crawcrook		Gateshead	Out of borough
April	10	27	13	16	11
May	6	23	6	28	17
June	8	13	5	27	6
July	10	15	9	2	27
August	9	18	1	11	24
September	4	22	6	11	12
October	2	21	3	8	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>110</b>

### Issues to note:

- In April 2015 there were 10 episodes where a young person was missing for over 24 hours, eight of these episodes were a young person missing from care and two of these eight episodes involved a young person being missing for over 48 hours. The eight episodes of missing from care actually involve five individuals.
- In May 2015 there were also 10 episodes where a young person was missing for over 24 hours and six of them were missing from care episodes, four of which lasted over 48 hours.
- In July 2015 there were 11 episodes where a young person was missing for more than 24 hours, eight of those episodes were a young person missing from care and on three occasions a young person was actually missing from care for over 48 hours.
- In September 2015 there were 15 episodes where a young person was missing for over 24 hours and 12 of those young people were missing from local authority care. Six of these episodes relate to a young person being missing from care for over 48 hours and one of the episodes related to a young person being missing for nine days.

## **6. Other relevant information to note**

### **MSET**

In addition to being reviewed and monitored by their own social workers and care team, children who go missing regularly from care are also monitored by the LSCB Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Sub Group (MSET). The MSET is a multi-agency group chaired by the police which meets monthly and discusses individual cases where there are concerns around missing from home/care and or Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Human Trafficking. MSET processes have recently been reviewed and strengthened, based on good practice from other areas, and a robust risk assessment and monitoring framework is in place for those cases of concern. In 2014-2015 there were 54 young people discussed at the MSET. To date 31 young people have been discussed in 2015-2016 to date.

Individual social workers attend the meeting to present the case, share information and receive information from other agencies. A diversion plan is then put in place to address and manage the presenting risks and concerns. The Registered Managers of both Gateshead Council children's homes are members of MSET, in addition to the Service Managers for LAC, Safeguarding and R&A/EDT. The team manager of the LAC & Young People's Team and Assistant Team Manager of the Fostering Team are also members to ensure that information from the meetings is disseminated appropriately.

In addition to discussing individual cases, MSET meetings also focus on wider areas of intelligence in Gateshead and other areas locally, for example known CSE "hot spots" in the borough or issues raised in MSET meetings elsewhere within the Northumbria Police force area. This information is then disseminated as appropriate so that professionals are alert to particular issues of concern.

### **Return interviews**

When a child is reported missing from home or care for the second or subsequent time in a six month period they are offered an Independent Return Interview. These interviews are undertaken by Youth Workers or a specialist CSE worker from the Children's Society's SCARPA project. The outcome of the return interview is shared with the young person's social worker, the police and any other relevant professionals. In cases where a Gateshead child is looked after and placed out of borough the information is also shared with the hosting local authority.

### **Unauthorised absences**

Northumbria Police was one of three police forces in the country not to record "unauthorised absences" and recorded all episodes where someone was reported "missing" as a missing episode. From early 2016 an absent category will be introduced and an episode will be classified as absent or missing following an assessment when the call to the police is made. A missing person is "anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another". The definition of absent is "a person not a place where they are expected or required to be". Other police forces have experienced between a 26% and 46% reduction in missing episodes when they introduced this

change. It is estimated that of the 8538 missing person reports to Northumbria 3414 could have met the absent category (40%).

Training on this change will be rolled out to residential staff etc. and reassurances have been given to the LSCB and partners that any child flagged as vulnerable to CSE will not be recorded as absent.

Since July 2015 social workers have been categorising episodes as missing or unauthorised absence on Carefirst. Obviously work is required to bring these classifications in line with those that will be used by police from 2016 to ensure that the data matches and ensure consistency across Children's Social Care.

Month	Total MFC episodes	Missing	Unauthorised absence	Not classified yet
July	63	49	12	2
August	63	55	8	0
September	55	47	8	0
October	47	37	10	0
<b>Total to date</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>188 (82%)</b>	<b>38 (17%)</b>	<b>2</b>

Over the last 12 months young people who have been recorded as missing from care have in the majority of cases returned fairly quickly to their placements. Young people who are persistent in being absent without permission, often leave their placements because of conflict primarily due to boundary setting, for example around coming in times or refusal to allow them to undertake activities which are not felt to be consistent with promoting their welfare. Some young people have links with others in other placements and are absent from their placements together. Social workers and staff are familiar with these young people, their contacts, likely whereabouts and they usually return later that day, rarely are young people in the care of the Council missing overnight or more than 24 hours.

A small minority of missing episodes of Looked After Children are for more than a 24-hour period. They are young people who are in the older age group and who have had very complex needs and backgrounds. Clear procedures are in place to manage these longer episodes.

## 7. Case Scenario

The following outlines a typical response to a young person missing from children's home:

- Child A, male aged 15 years placed in Children's home under a Care Order
- The young person leaves the building with permission to return at agreed time of 10:30pm. He does not return at this time. He has a history of coming home late and going missing.
- Staff allowed an hour as agreed in his risk assessment and then reported him missing to the police. Staff inform Emergency Duty Team with the log number and share Missing from Care details
- Parent/persons with parental responsibility informed and advised to inform staff should he arrive there.
- Further telephone calls to the police on a regular basis in order that intelligence is shared to maximise locating the young person.

- Police make a visit to the children's home at to gather further information from staff and young people
- Service Manager and LSCB Business Manager informed of all missing episodes.
- Police continue to make searches of the local area and places where the young person may be. Regular contact maintained between parties.
- Child A returns of his own accord after almost 24 hours. All parties informed. Social worker and team manager informed at next working day
- On return to the children's home the young person is spoken to by staff to ensure he is ok, to establish reasons for the missing episode
- Police make a safe and well visit to the young person.
- An Independent Return Interview in line with LSCB Missing from Care Procedures.
- A Strategy meeting is held with the police and social worker and other key professionals to discuss, debrief and review the risks and agree actions.
- The young person's name is discussed at the MSET meeting scrutinising the plan and considering the risk assessment.

## **8. Child Sexual exploitation**

The service monitors the risks of child sexual exploitation very carefully. Currently there are 14 young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation which is a similar figure this time last year. Including 3 males and 11 females aged 14 years plus.

The CSE monitoring information is scrutinised in the service performance meeting.

Planning processes include interventions to minimise risk, disrupt activity, build in direct action from services with the young person, develop incentives and sanctions. The plans are also scrutinised within the MSET meeting.

There is also an escalation process with senior management of the children and families service and the police to ensure further scrutiny.

There has been a large conference and range of CSE training delivered across a wide spectrum of multiagency services.

Further development work has been undertaken regarding the risk assessment screening tool this is presented to the MSET meeting. The tool has scores for each category of risk which produces an overall score rating indicating high medium or low risk.

## **9. Practice Improvement Plan**

Northumbria Police have two dedicated Missing from Home Coordinators with a remit to improve the police response when someone is reported missing, and to work strategically with partners to reduce the numbers of children and young people reported missing from care. The two coordinators are senior and experienced police sergeants who cover the same geographical areas as the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Units. The coordinator for the south of Tyne area is working closely with the Service Director –Social Work, Children and Families, the LSCB Business

Manager and the two local authority children's homes and private children's home in the borough.

The LSCB Business Manager has been working closely with the SCARPA project of the Children's Society as part of their work to establish a "hub and spoke" model following a number of years of successful work in Newcastle. The worker provides training to partner agency staff in statutory services, including social workers, residential staff and foster carers, on sexual exploitation and provide case-based advice to frontline staff.

The service has developed a risk assessment screening tool based on the phoenix model developed by Manchester local authority. This tool has recently been rolled out and is being completed for every young person presented to the MSET meeting.

There has also been the development of a strategic MSET group which the operational MSET group also reports. This group is developing further awareness and strategic plans linking resources to the CSE focus developing multi agency information and training.

The LSCB will continue to receive written reports three times a year on children who go missing from home and care and are at risk of sexual exploitation.

The local authority will continue to work to develop a system to capture and share accurate and meaningful information on missing from care episodes with the LSCB.

The local authority will continue to work with the LSCB to strengthen work to protect those young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation

## **10. Recommendation**

It is requested that the Looked After Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive an annual report on missing from care issues within Learning and Children.

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