

# VIRTUAL SCHOOL (REALAC)

Report to Corporate Parenting  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

January 2019



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## 1 Looked after Children Context

On 13 November 2018 there were 415 Looked after Children in Gateshead between the ages of 0-18 years old. The total has greatly increased in the last year.

### 1.1 Looked after Children School Population

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

#### Looked after Children Numbers in and out of Borough per statutory age

Current Year Group	Jul-16	Jul-17	Nov-18
Year 11	35	34	34
Year10	26	23	21
Year 9	23	29	31
Year 8	25	19	24
Year 7	12	27	22
Year6	24	23	31
Year 5	20	18	30
Year 4	14	28	24
Year 3	24	27	12
Year 2	20	15	14
Year 1	17	12	12
Reception	4	6	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>274</b>

(Figures as of November 2018)

The largest number of looked after children (LAC) within the secondary sector is in Year 11 with 34 LAC in 2018. 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. The current Year 11 cohort have accessed a substantial amount of service resource due to the complexity of pupils' needs and bespoke support that was required in response to issues relating to behaviour, alternative provision and potential exclusion. There is also support given to prepare them for their exams and next stage of their education.

Years 9 and 10 are also two of the larger cohorts and are at critical stages of their education, Year 10 will be starting their GCSE courses and Year 9 will be making their curriculum choices which will have an impact on their future.

In Primary schools the Year 6 cohort is also large, this year group will also take up a lot of service time as they will be due to sit their SATs examinations and will require support for the transition into Secondary schools.

There are also large cohorts in Years 1, 2 and 3 which suggest that there are a greater number of children coming into care at a younger age and potentially in care for longer periods.

### Looked after Children in Gateshead Secondary Schools

School	Gateshead LAC	LAC Attending Gateshead Schools from other Local Authorities	Total
Cardinal Hume	6	1	7
Emmanuel College	6	0	6
Heworth Grange	10	0	10
Joseph Swan	9	1	10
Kingsmeadow	6	2	8
Lord Lawson	6	0	6
St Thomas More	7	3	10
Thomas Hepburn	1	0	1
Thorp Academy	3	1	4
Whickham	9	3	12
<b>Total</b>	63	11	74

(Figures as of November 2018)

Overall the number of Gateshead LAC, including LAC from other Local Authorities attending Gateshead secondary schools, has decreased from the previous academic year from 95 to 74.

The school with the largest total of Looked after Children combined (Gateshead and non Gateshead) is Whickham with 12 whilst the lowest is Thomas Hepburn which has 1.

REALAC has a role in supporting other Local Authority LAC who attend Gateshead schools. There has been a drop in the number of non Gateshead LAC attending Gateshead schools with the current figure at 11 compared to 18 in the previous year. However, some pupils

from other local authorities can impact on REALAC when complex pupils attend Gateshead schools or other Local authorities seek places in our good and outstanding schools.

The figures for OOB may not always be totally accurate as we do not always get informed about OOB LAC attending Gateshead schools.

## 1.2 Looked after Children Educated out of Borough

Out of Borough	Number of LAC
Primary	31
Secondary	37
Special	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>

There is a significant number of Gateshead LAC being educated out of borough, (30% of the total Gateshead LAC population). This has necessitated an increased need to attend PEP meetings beyond Gateshead to ensure Pupil Education Plans are completed.

### Looked after Children Educated out of Borough across all Key stages

Key Stage	Total
Early Years (EY, N & R)	3
Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2)	4
Key Stage 2 (Year 3, 4, 5 & 6)	27
Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 & 9)	23
Key Stage 4 (Year 10 & 11)	22
Key Stage 5 (Year 12 & 13 HE)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>

(Figures as of November 2018)

Some of these pupils are beyond the local region, we have children placed in London, Cumbria, Scotland and other areas of the country.

### Looked after Children Educated out of Borough according to setting

Number of out of borough Educational Settings
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<b>Primary</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Primary Special</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Secondary (including middle)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Secondary Special</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>

(Figures as of November 2018)

The 82 Gateshead LAC educated out of borough is spread across 53 settings, of which 21% are special school places.

### 1.3 Special Educational Needs (SEN) and LAC

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Single Plan</b>	<b>SEN Support</b>
<b>Reception</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>98</b>

(Figures as of November 2018)

The table above gives a Breakdown of Looked after Children who have Special Educational Needs. There are 55 pupils with Educational Health Care Plans and a further 98 who receive SEN Support. REALAC closely works with SEN teams, schools and social care to ensure statutory processes are initiated and supported to ensure appropriate provision is in place.

#### Breakdown of Category for Looked after Children with Single Plan

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of LAC</b>
<b>Speech Language Communication Needs</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>Moderate Learning Difficulties</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Visual Impairment</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Social Emotional Mental Health</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Severe Learning Difficulties</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</b>	<b>7</b>

(Figures as of November 2018)

The table above shows the SEND category breakdown for Looked after Children with a Single Plan. The biggest cohort of SEND need is Social Emotional Mental Health in which there are 27. Many of these pupils are in special schools where they receive high quality education that supports their attachment and emotional needs.

#### **1.4 Looked after Children 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 the REALAC team.

As there has been a problem with the links between EMIS and the schools we are unable to give yearly attendance figures for 2017/18.

At present we can confirm that 27 Looked after Children have achieved 100% Attendance for 2017/18.

## **2 Pupil Premium Plus Grant 2017-18**

Following discussions with the Children and Young People Portfolio meeting and Schools Forum, information was prepared for schools on the deployment and use of the grant for the financial year 2017-18. It explains payments of the grant to be received by the school for each individual LAC pupil entitled to the funding. In March/April 2018, each school (maintained and non-maintained but not private schools) will receive a payment broken down as follows:

£300 paid for each term.

£500 paid based on 2 completed Personal Education Plans over a 12 month period (statutory requirement) received into the REALAC/Virtual School

£500 to be retained by REALAC/Virtual School to be used for additional support to both Individual Looked after Children and their schools

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

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

In 2018/19 The Pupil Premium Grant for Looked after Children will be increasing to £2300.

## 2.1 Personal Education Plans

The total number of LAC pupils currently tracked are 415.

Age range	Number
3-16	291
Post 16	61
Under 3	63

PEP Dates	
<b>Number of LAC In Borough</b>	<b>Number of LAC Out of Borough</b>
240	51
<b>Number of PEP Dates returned In Borough</b>	<b>Number of PEP Dates returned Out of Borough</b>
198	35
<b>Number of PEP Dates not returned In Borough</b>	<b>Number of PEP Dates not returned Out of Borough</b>
42	16

### 291 3-16 Year Olds

Completed PEPs	
<b>% of PEPs returned In Borough</b>	<b>% of PEPs returned Out of Borough</b>
83%	69%
<b>% of PEPs not returned In Borough</b>	<b>% of PEPs not returned Out of Borough</b>
17%	31%

- The REALAC team have set windows in the school year when they expect PEP reviews to be held in schools. The returns registered with the team are when they should receive the completed PEPs. Some PEPs may be received outside one of the windows because of changes to pupil circumstances e.g move of care or school place or cancel of review because of another circumstance.
- PEP contact by the team will be made with colleges and other provisions to complete post 16 PEPS in January 2019. The team will attend meetings and follow up on the provision and any issues for the students.

- There are ongoing issues around receiving information for LAC children particularly those who are aged 3 or have turned 3 and those moving educational place. This prevents the virtual school trying to follow up and monitor PEPS being completed.

### **3 Exclusions - December 2018**

With the recent increase in exclusions both in and out of Gateshead's borough, the Virtual School (REALAC) has improved its monitoring system to allow greater detail of any fixed term or permanent exclusions that our Looked After Children receive. This enables REALAC to identify patterns of exclusions and risk to pupils. This process has been in place from May 2018 and is based on each academic year. Having these details allows the Virtual School to intervene at an early stage to prevent any further fixed term exclusions or persistent issues from re-occurring and developing into a more serious situation that could potentially escalate into a permanent exclusion. In Gateshead REALAC has an agreement of no permanent exclusions with our schools. We do, therefore, explore other solutions including support to help provide the best outcome for all involved. These include: a managed move to a different school or provision, being placed on either the Fair Access Panel or the Education Inclusion Panel. Furthermore, the Virtual School can intervene by placing an additional form of provision in place to help support the Looked After Child and the school. These include the following:

- Teaching - Extra support is available from our Teacher on a 1:1 basis to help aid their studies and ensure our Looked After Children maintain an educational focus.
- Tuition – The Virtual School currently uses a company called FLEET, which allows us to allocate the tutors to any children who require extra support and these block sessions can be personalised to suit the needs of our LAC.
- Additional funding – This funding is part of the Virtual School's Pupil Premium Plus and is distributed to the school at the Virtual Head's discretion; which is then used to support our Looked After Children.
- Learning Mentor – Support is available from our learning mentor to any LAC who are experiencing issues in school. This is normally a 1:1 basis which can also include counselling if required.

#### **3.1 Exclusion Data**

In **May** 2018, there were 395 children in care and 302 LAC aged between 3-16 years old who could receive a fixed term exclusion. During this period of 11 weeks, (May 2018 - July 2018) 13 LAC have been fixed term excluded accumulating a total of 23 fixed term exclusions and 58.5 days' worth of education missed. This is an average of more than 2 exclusions per week. The LAC who have received the fixed term exclusions range from Year 6 to Year 10 with a total of 10 different schools. The persistent offenders have been targeted by the Virtual School Headteacher to prevent these reoccurrences. Also, throughout this time frame there has been 9 occasions in which a Looked After Child has been on the verge of receiving a permanent exclusion. Of these 9 cases, 1 went to the Fair Access Panel and 1 to the Education Inclusion Panel providing a better outcome and the others have been sorted via other methods such as: providing alternative placements, receiving support by staff members of the Virtual School and extra funding to help support that specific LAC.

In **December** 2018, there were 412 children in care and 293 LAC aged between 3-16 years old who could receive a fixed term exclusion. Since the start of the academic year

(September 2018) 12 LAC have received a fixed term exclusion accumulating a total of 29 fixed term exclusions and 60.5 days' worth of education missed, averaging at two exclusions per week. The LAC who have received fixed term exclusions vary from Year 4 – Year 12 and a total of 8 different schools. This shows throughout this term there have been some LAC who have been receiving more than one fixed term exclusions. These young people are discussed at The Gateshead Virtual School's weekly team meetings and decisions are made by the Virtual Head Teacher to prevent any further exclusions or issues from escalating. Since the start of the academic year there have been 3 occasions where a Looked After Child has been on the verge of permanent exclusion and the Virtual Head Teacher has had to intervene. Of the 3 cases, 1 has been resolved via a managed move to another school, 1 is undergoing statutory assessment for a special school place and 1 has been resolved by receiving support from our learning mentor.

There is a wide variation in the reasoning behind the exclusions which are listed below:

1. Persistent refusal to follow instructions.
2. Verbal abuse towards adults and pupils.
3. Non-compliance.
4. Truancy.
5. Swearing at staff and pupils.
6. Physical assault against members of staff and other pupils.
7. Damage of property.
8. General behaviour issues.

### **3.2 Conclusion**

This monitoring process has been a success as it has allowed the Virtual School to work closer with schools and input early intervention to support both the Looked After Child and the educational setup they are attending. Also, it has allowed the Virtual School to discuss the more complex cases in more detail by having a better quality of information regarding the LAC exclusions. This also has allowed case work to be allocated around the team in an attempt to reduce the amount of fixed term exclusions that is currently on the rise both in Gateshead and nationally.

## **4 Teaching and learning**

### **4.1 Letterbox**

The Letterbox Club programme aims to inspire a love of reading and engagement with numeracy. The packs include a variety of books, maths games and stationery that are sent out in colourful packaging on a monthly basis Letterbox Club also provides us with a special pack during the Christmas period that we send to the children as an additional extra. This year's cohort includes 70 children that range from Nursey up to Year 6. The cohort is divided up into 5 different packs depending on age, for instance: - Purple (Nursey & Reception), Orange (Year 1 & 2), Blue (Year 3 & 4), Red (Year 5 & 6) & Yellow for our children who have a Special Educational Need. For many children, it's the first time they have had a letter or a parcel through the post and for some it's the first time they have had books of their own.

Feedback is positive from our evaluation forms from both Foster Carers and pupils. This feedback shows how the Letterbox Club provides such a positive impact not only on the children's reading, but other aspects of their education and valuable skills that can be

transferred into their everyday life. This is a yearly process that will hopefully continue to make encouraging influence to other LAC children who become involved with Letterbox Club.

Some comments:

***How did your child react to receiving the letterbox club parcels? (Foster Carer)***

*One foster carer quoted "Very excited to open the parcel and find lots of items to enjoy and play."*

***What was the best thing about Letterbox Club? (Child)***

*One of our LAC said "Opening and not expecting what was in it!"*

***Do you have any feedback about Letterbox Club? (Foster Carer)***

*"Excellent! From each and every parcel my child took some of his books and counting games to school to play with. He will use the items for year to come, thank you!"*

## **4.2 Private Tuition**

Within the period September 2017 - July 2018 a total of 16 Looked after Children received one to one private tuition totaling 275 sessions overall. The majority of these sessions were through a national company called Fleet Tutors. We have also now started to use a local company called Vision for Education and arranged sessions through other Virtual Schools for some of our children placed Out of Borough.

The numbers receiving tuition are slightly less than in the previous year, we have been able to fund this by using some of the Pupil Premium money that we retain in REALAC.

The tutoring support offered during this period was in English and Math's and targeted mainly at Years 10 and 11 LAC to support those who were about to take their examinations. We were also able to offer some sessions to Year's 12 & 13 for students who were re-sitting their examinations.

## **4.3 Learning Mentor Support**

Our learning mentor is a qualified counsellor and has significant experience in supporting children in secondary and primary schools. Since she took up post in June 2018, she has worked with 17 Looked After Children supporting their emotional wellbeing in both an educational and personal settings. She has been an advocate for them and they have shared issues and concerns they have regarding their education. Seven students are key stage (KS) 4, six students KS3 and three students KS2. Depending on each young person's needs and abilities, she has used strategies such as cognitive behaviour therapy to help them simply manage a day. She has helped them build their confidence and self-esteem. She has supported them in class to ensure they do not miss out on lesson content and peer interaction.

She has built a strong and positive relationship with social workers, schools, foster carers and more importantly the young persons that receive support. As a result trusting relationships have developed where pupils will share issues, for example, two secondary students had a similar issue with their tutors and the mentor was able to work with the school to help resolve this. Other examples of her work show how some of our children with

complex mental health needs and trauma are responding well to her consistent contact with them.

In the new year she will be using the Drawing and Talking therapy programme to support some of the emotionally vulnerable students, within their educational setting. This programme helps them to feel safe, build their confidence and self-worth and break down any anxieties they may have.

She will also be delivering Group Theraplay sessions to primary school children, to again promote healthy, positive relationships and help with feeling safe, protected and confident.

#### **4.4 Education Psychology**

Over the last year there has been a two day group theraplay training course which was delivered in Gateshead through the Theraplay Institute in July 2018. Schools with historically high numbers of looked after children were offered a free place with the agreement that they would then run at least one group theraplay intervention in their schools during the academic year 2018-2019. The training was attended by representatives from 13 schools as well as 2 members of the REALAC Team, 2 Educational Psychologists and a member of the Early Years Team. This has greatly increased capacity to deliver an evidence based intervention which draws upon principles of attachment theory, inter-subjectivity, brain research and the importance of play, to support looked after children in our schools as well as other vulnerable young people including adopted children and those living with family members through Special Guardianship Orders. It has also increased the capacity within the REALAC team to deliver the intervention in those schools that have not accessed the training. Feedback from those who attended the course was excellent and there are a growing number of groups within schools. We have now established a network meeting which takes place twice a year where we share good practice. We have also linked up with a regional network meeting to share practice with other local authorities.

We have continued to use our transition document which we developed based on evidence from the resilience literature, to offer an additional layer of support for our looked after children as they make the transition from primary to secondary school. This piece of work involves collecting information from Year 6 staff about areas of strength, areas for development, supportive strategies and key outcomes. The information is then passed to secondary schools to be discussed at the initial Year 7 PEP. We hope that this will be embedded as an annual process, dependent on capacity within the team.

The Education Psychology role has also involved delivering training to primary and secondary schools, staff from Newcastle college and foster carers. Topics have been related to the impact of early trauma and attachment difficulties for young people in schools and Supporting Young People who have been given a diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

A trainee Educational Psychologist has some time allocated to the REALAC team and she is about to start work with a carer and looked after child using an evidence-based approach called Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) which focuses on attunement and relationships.

Additionally the REALAC EP is involved in liaison with the Educational Psychologists in Gateshead around their work with looked after children in the schools that they cover. She has also been directly involved in casework and facilitating statutory processes with a number of looked after young people who have not been able to access an Educational Psychologist input through the usual school route linked to changes in care and education placements.

## 4.5 Teacher support to pupils

The REALAC teacher has provided a variety of one to one support to fourteen LAC (7 primary, 7 secondary pupils) during the period September 2017-July 2018.

The teacher has mainly worked with pupils who have special educational needs or who have gaps in their learning as result of earlier adverse experiences. She has liaised with Speech and Language specialists and Educational Psychologists in the support of these young people. She has provided 1:1 support for pupils preparing for Key stage 2 SATs. For example, she has helped several pupils address gaps in Maths and English programmes following systematic schemes and has worked on reading fluency and inference skills. Another important aspect of her work has been in preparation for GCSEs and maintaining pupils on their GCSE courses so that they sit the exams.

## 5 Outcomes

### 5.1 Key Stage 1

Gateshead Year 2 Looked after Children cohort was 15 pupils. Below is a table showing results of their end of year assessments.

<b>Number Achieving Expected Level</b>	6	6	6
<b>Number in Cohort</b>	13	13	13
<b>% Achieving Expected Level</b>			
<b>Writing</b>	46		
<b>Reading</b>		46	
<b>Maths</b>			46

The cohort was 13 in 2017-18 which is less than 2016-17 when it was 15.

6 Children have special educational needs – 46% of the cohort, this is a large increase on the previous year when it was only 13%. Of the 13 children, 7 were working below the expected standard for their age on entry to reception. All those pupils working at the expected early learning goals for their age achieved standards in writing, reading or maths.

The table below shows a comparison between Looked after Children Results at Key Stage 1 for 2017-18 and 2016-17.

<b>% Achieving Expected Level</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
	13% SEND	46% SEND
<b>Writing</b>	80%	46%
<b>Reading</b>	80%	46%
<b>Maths</b>	87%	46%

### 5.2 Key Stage 2

Gateshead Year 6 Cohort was 18 pupils.

<b>% Achieving Expected Level</b>	<b>LAC</b> 61% SEN	<b>All</b> <b>Gateshead</b>
<b>Writing</b>	33%	82%
<b>Reading</b>	50%	80%
<b>Maths</b>	50%	81%
<b>Writing, Reading and Maths</b>	33%	70%
<b>Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling</b>	50%	84%

This is the third year for the new SATS tests which are marked differently to previous years where a Level 4 was seen as making Expected Level, they are now marked out of a 120, anyone achieving a score of 100 or above is classed as being at Expected Level, 99 or below is classed as not meeting Expected Level. The children sat a series of tests for each subject to gain their score, the exception to that is in Writing where it is graded through Teacher Assessments.

The Cohort in 2017-18 was 18 compared to 2016/17 when it was 20. 11 of 18 children were SEN – 61% of the cohort who were working below the expected standard on entry to key stage 1 with 7 at the expected standard. However, 9 children gained the expected level in reading, maths and grammar. Only one pupil didn't make the expected standard from their starting point in writing.

Gateshead schools all pupils SATs results were higher than the National Average in all subjects. We do not as yet have the national average for looked after children to compare averages for them. The Key Stage 2 results overall for Looked after Children for 2017-18 have risen in some areas such as Reading and Maths and also Writing/Reading/Maths combined from the previous year.

### 5.3 Key Stage 4

Gateshead's Looked after Children Year 11 Cohort was 30 Children. Below is a table showing Provisional Results for their GCSE/Equivalent Results.

<b>30 Looked after Children SEN 63% of which 23% in special schools</b>	<b>No of Children</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>5 (9-4)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5 (9-1)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>5 (9-4) inc M&amp;E</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1 (9-1)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>77</b>

This year's GCSE's come under the new Grading System, they are marked by a number system between 9 and 1, 9 would be the equivalent of a A\* while 1 would be the equivalent of a G. 4 is the classed as a C which is seen as a standard pass. These examinations are generally accepted as being of a Higher Level and harder to attain the standard pass or above.

23 Looked after Children achieved 1 x GCSE Passes at Grade 1 or above.	
17 Looked after Children achieved 5 x GCSE Passes at Grade 1 or above.	
6 Looked after Children achieved 5 x GCSE Passes at Grade 4 or above.	
3 Looked after Children achieved 5 x GCSE Passes at Grade 4 or above including English & Maths.	

Please note – 63% were SEN of which 23% of the cohort attend Special schools and were not expected to make 5 (9-4) because of SEN needs. These pupils took other qualifications such as functional skills or may not be able to gain accredited courses through exams. The cohort for this year had a higher ratio of SEN children increasing from 56% in 2017 to 63% in 2018. 13% of the cohort attend PRU's because of being at risk of permanent exclusion.

#### 5.4 Post 16 Progression routes

The following table provides a snapshot of the destinations of students in year 12, 13 and post year 13 (as of 20/11/18).

<b>2018 (provisional data as of 20/11/18)</b>			
<b>Year Groups (size of cohort)</b>	<b>Year 12 (34)</b>	<b>Year 13 (32)</b>	<b>Year 14 (34)</b>
<b>Progression Routes</b>			
6 <sup>th</sup> form	8	4	0
College	13	13	11
Study Programme/ Traineeship	4	2	4
Apprenticeship	1	5	4
NEET	3	4	4
University/HE level course	Not applicable	Not applicable	3
Princes Trust/personal Development Programme	0	1	
Work (eg without accredited training or part time)	1	0	4
Combined care and education	1		
Pregnant			2
Teenage Parent	1	2	1
Not available to the work place/ Other		1 in voluntary drug rehab	1 in full time care
Not available to the work place/ Other	1 incarcerated	0	
Other	1 missing	0	

## Higher Education (HE)

The numbers of LAC progressing to higher education remains low. It is most likely that some previously looked after young people engage with HE at a later stage but there are no figures at present to capture this. REALAC continue to financially support students in their first year at university when they receive an HE bursary of £2,000.

## EET meeting

The EET meeting, which is a joint monthly meeting between REALAC and Social Care has continued to identify and plan work with young people who are NEET or who are at risk of becoming NEET. External partners have been brought into this group to improve monitoring and target work to be done with the young people. These include Gateshead and Newcastle College, Learning & Skills and Early Help's Careers Advisers.

## Work Experience

### Background

The Pathways2Work (P2W) project supports Looked After Young People in year 10 – year 13 to find work experience during their school/college holidays within a real working environment. The aim is to help to improve their chances in life by developing the skills needed for future careers. It can also improve their confidence and helps them to learn more about a particular career before finalising their plans.

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.

### Pathways2Work Participation (Feb 18 to Oct 18)

Half Term	No of students out per holiday	Total days 2018
February Half Term	6	25
Easter (across the 2 weeks)	12	66
May Half Term	2	8
Summer	12	110
October	6	26
<b>Total</b>		
Supported student to find own placement for their school work experience	1	5

## Types of Placement

In 2018, examples of placements included: Retail, Maintenance, Catering, Elderly Care, Architecture, Hospitality, Web Design/Graphics, Special Olympics, Hospital discharge, Motor Vehicle, Construction, Childcare, Sport, ICT, and Outdoor Pursuits. As a result of one work experience a pupil was offered a part time job.

## **Raising Aspirations**

Gateshead Virtual School continues to work with the North East Raising Aspirations Partnership to try to improve young people's knowledge and experience of university. This is via their Choices programme, which has 2 strands: 'Choices together' and their themed Foster Family Fun Days. Choices Together is aimed at year 10 and 11 and comprises of 5 sessions. Foster Family Fun Days are aimed at years 8 and 9, but the whole foster family can attend the sessions. Unfortunately, numbers remain low on the take up of these events, but drop out is low, indicating that the students who take part in the programme enjoy it and feedback is usually positive. To try and improve numbers, REALAC has liaised with the Choices Coordinator and arranged for them to attend a Designated Teachers meeting and facilitated contact with the Fostering team so that they can promote the programme.

## **6 Adoption**

For previously looked-after children, the Virtual school headteacher (VSH) is the source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible. REALAC has appointed a teacher to provide this advice and respond to parent and school queries as required. This has already resulted in visits to schools and phone queries from parents.

A leaflet has also been produced for schools so they can inform parents on how to get pupil premium plus funding.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 1 To further develop practice in colleges by:
  - implementing a new system for improving PEP returns for all Post 16 LAC
  - extending the Transitions Protocol for Looked After Children beyond year 11.
- 2 Continue to provide appropriate intervention and provision for those pupils at risk of permanent exclusion to maintain their school place and to challenge where schools haven't made appropriate provision.
- 3 Ensure communication with social care enables more timely information to REALAC on new children into care of nursery age.