

Westmorland and Furness Virtual School

Annual Report 2022 to 2023

Introduction

I am pleased to present my first Annual Report for Westmorland and Furness' Virtual School. This report is presented to the Virtual School Governing Body and the Corporate Parenting Board to outline the activity of the Virtual School and the educational outcomes of Children Looked After (CLA) in Westmorland and Furness in the academic year 2022 to 2023. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas of development to achieve the best outcomes for CLA. The report also outlines the activity and impact the Virtual Schools extended responsibilities around Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

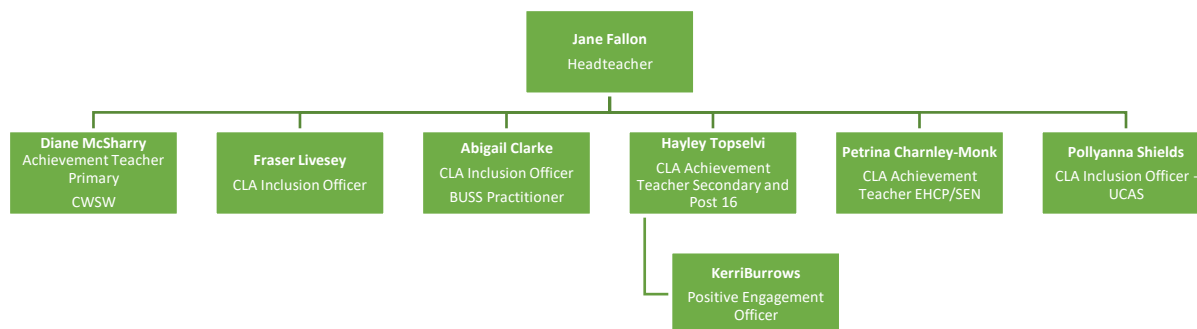
During the last academic year, the Virtual School Team, through the process of Local Government Reform (LGR) has split into two to cover the new unitary authorities of Cumberland and Westmorland with Furness. I am proud of the Virtual School's journey and the progress, achievement, and development of the service, and now we must take that forward into two new virtual school teams.

For Cumbria as a whole, the academic year 2022/23 has once again been extraordinary in the challenges that our children, social workers, schools, carers, support services and communities have faced due to a return to normality after the COVID 19 pandemic. During this academic year the Virtual School has contributed to two major inspections, the ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) and the SEND Inspection. The work of the VS was judged as 'good' in the former and mentioned favourably in the latter. Finally, this year, after almost 3 years we introduced the ePEP (electronic personal education plan) which was rolled out to schools in the Autumn term 2022.

This year in both Cumbria and latterly the new unitary authorities we have witnessed and enjoyed many individual stories and moments of success, triumphs and achievements for our children in care. We recognise, however, that if we continued to do the same things in the same way as a Virtual School, then we will only achieve the same results, and not better. We are constantly searching for more effective and efficient ways of securing all the support that is needed for 'our children' to succeed and flourish.

The Virtual School Structure

The Virtual School encompasses CLA of statutory school age and care leavers up to the age of 18 if they are in or return to education. The Virtual School is located within Education and inclusion Directorate and line managed by the Assistant Director. The structure of the Virtual School Team is below and indicates how the role and responsibilities of the Virtual School has changed and is changing since LGR. The Westmorland and Furness team is now a smaller team with staff having to take on extra responsibilities to cover the statutory and non-statutory duties of the Virtual School.



Cumbria's Virtual School Role

As the Virtual School Head I see the Virtual School having four main roles:

1. **Promoting the Education of Children Looked After (Statutory since 2014)**
 - Ensuring that every child looked after of statutory school age is receiving an appropriate education at a suitable setting and achieving their potential.
 - Monitoring the cohort as if it were a single school
 - Providing support, challenge and training to school
 - Working closely with, and provides training for children's social workers and other professionals
 - Overseeing the Pupil Premium Plus Grant for schools

2. **Promoting the Education of Previously Looked After Children (Statutory since 2018 and led by the VS Deputy Head Teacher)**
 - Giving advice and guidance to adoptive parents/SGOs (those with special guardianship orders), schools and social workers on all aspects of education
 - Working with the Adoption Team to support adoptive parents/SGOs to make the right educational decisions for their child
 - Provide training and Q and A sessions for adoptive parents/SGOs
 - Ensure that schools and adoptive parents SGOs are aware of the PP+ grant paid to schools from the DFE

3. **Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker (a responsibility bestowed on the Virtual School in June 2021 and at the time of writing is non-statutory. This is led by the newly appointed Education Officer)**
 - Working with local authority officers to identify this cohort of children and working with schools to understand their barriers to learning
 - Giving advice and guidance to schools on how to overcome barriers and signpost to agencies and services
 - Provide training for schools and social workers around attachment and trauma and BUSS

4. **Promoting the Education of UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children)**

- This is technically part of the first role, but due to an influx of these young people into Cumbria I feel it is worthy of a separate section in this report

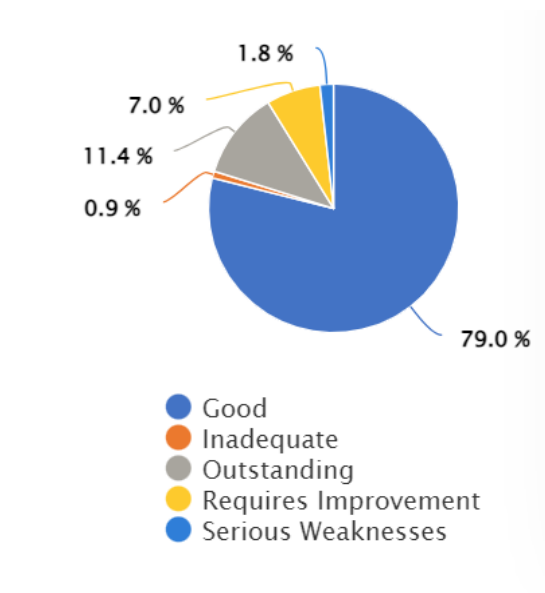
1. Promoting the Education of Looked After Children

Profile of the Virtual School (please see attachments at the end of this report)

As of September 2023, we have 149 children looked after of statutory school age and 75 post 16 equalling 224 in all key stages.

90.4% of our children attend good or outstanding schools. 133 of our CLA are male and 91 are female.

Number of Schools by OFSTED Grades



Attainment Summary

All data reported is indicative of the results obtained but not all data has been received at this point. **Please note, that these results are not validated.**

Primary results

EYFS There were only 2 children in the EYFS cohort, one already had an EHCP and the other was assessed during his reception year and is awaiting the final plan. Neither of these children achieved GLD but both made progress during the year from their starting points.

KS1 READING- 57% of KS1 pupils achieved standard in reading which is lower than the W&F score for all schools and lower than the national average of 68.3%, but higher than the NW for CLA (53%) and National CLA (46%). This is a positive since 67% either have an EHCP or are on SEN support in school. **WRITING-** The results are slightly lower for writing with only 43% achieving standard,

compared to national 60%, W&F all schools 58%, but similar to NW CLA (44%) and higher than National CLA (35%). MATHEMATICS 29% achieved the standard in mathematics, which was much lower than all other comparators.

KS1 Benchmark (CLA) (Keypas)

2023 | Keypas | Matched pupils only | CLA 12 Months

	Cohort **	CLA Matches	READING		WRITING		MATHS		SCIENCE		RWM*	RWMS*
			<EXS	≥EXS	<EXS	≥EXS	<EXS	≥EXS	<EXS	≥EXS	≥EXS	≥EXS
NCER National (all schools)	643,450	0.4%	31.5%	68.3%	39.7%	60.1%	29.4%	70.4%	21.0%	78.7%	56.0%	55.7%
NCER National (CLA)	1,590	100.0%	54.0%	46.0%	64.0%	35.0%	53.0%	46.0%	42.0%	57.0%	31.0%	31.0%
DFE Region - North West (CLA)	320	100.0%	47.0%	53.0%	56.0%	44.0%	48.0%	52.0%	35.0%	65.0%	39.0%	39.0%
Local Authority - Westmorland and Furness (all schools)	2,131	0.3%	31.8%	67.9%	41.8%	58.0%	28.8%	71.0%	15.6%	82.7%	53.6%	52.8%

KS2 MATHEMATICS- The figures at the end of KS2 show greater progress in Maths from the end of KS1 with 44% achieving standard, although this is below the national and W&F, all children, average of over 70% and below national and NW % for CLA. 37.5% significantly below the national average of 72.7% and all other comparators. Writing also slipped to 37.5% and is also below other comparators.

KS2 Benchmark (CLA) (DFE)

2023 | DFE | Matched pupils only | CLA 12 Months

	Cohort	CLA Matches	RWM*		READING			WRITING TA		MATHS			GPS					
			≥ Exp	High	Avg. SS	< Exp	≥ Exp	High	≥ Exp	GDS	Avg. SS	< Exp	≥ Exp	High	Avg. SS	< Exp	≥ Exp	High
NCER National (all schools)	673,510	0.5%	59.5%	8.0%	105.1	26.6%	72.6%	29.0%	71.5%	13.3%	104.2	26.3%	72.9%	23.8%	104.9	26.9%	72.3%	30.1%
NCER National (CLA)	2,570	100.0%	36.0%	2.0%	101.9	46.0%	54.0%	16.0%	47.0%	4.0%	100.0	49.0%	50.0%	8.0%	100.8	50.0%	50.0%	13.0%
DFE Region - North West (CLA)	500	100.0%	36.0%	2.0%	102.1	43.0%	57.0%	17.0%	46.0%	4.0%	100.1	48.0%	52.0%	9.0%	101.4	45.0%	54.0%	14.0%
Local Authority - Westmorland and Furness (all schools)	2,216	0.2%	58.0%	7.4%	105.7	23.8%	75.2%	29.9%	71.7%	13.6%	103.7	26.4%	72.7%	18.9%	104.9	25.2%	73.8%	27.7%

It is worthy of note that 50% of the cohort have EHCPs, with 31% having SEN support.

Whilst the figures are lower than national averages across all subjects it is worth noting the progress pupils have made from their starting points especially given the number who have additional learning needs.

Primary (SEN) Case Study

A has an EHCP and had already stayed in nursery an extra year and was transitioning to a specialist school near her foster carer. Virtual school staff needed to work with school staff and the SEND teams from her resident authority and Westmorland and Furness to make sure the transition was supported adequately.

However, the courts deemed that A would be returning to her birth parents and the plan was for them to be with them at the end of September. We initiated meetings with the social workers (the child had three different ones during the transition period) and the SEND team so that everyone was aware of the situation which was going to be complicated by the foster carers moving house out of England before A was due to return home.

We attended meetings with the social worker and parents to explain the EHCP school request process. The parents believed that they would be able to get the specialist school of their choice but it was discussed that this might not be the case and they could, while keeping the specialist school as their preferred choice, look at other mainstream schools that could meet need. Parents were concerned about whether this was possible and reassurance was needed that whatever was in the EHCP had to be provided no matter what school they were in.

There were several changes of plan for A meaning it was the end of the Summer term when it was known that they would be returning to live with parents before the start of September which was seen as positive as it would mean that there would be less disruption to their education but also meant that the school needed to be identified sooner.

During this time, we made sure that communication was kept up-to-date for all parties and the birth parents were able to ask as many questions as needed which also supported the social worker to do their work with the family.

A place was found at the local specialist school however this wasn't going to be until October half term at the earliest as staff needed to be appointed to support their needs. We supported the transition to a local mainstream school so that they weren't out of education in the meantime.

KS4 results In the academic year 2022 to 2023 there were 35 CLA in Year 11. The results for English and mathematics are as follows. There were 9 pupils with no qualifications, 5 of whom were UASC (25% of the cohort).

	Attainment 8 score	Progress 8 score	9-4 E&M y/n	9-4 Eng y/n	9-4 Maths y/n	9-5 E&M y/n	9-5 Eng y/n	9-5 Maths y/n
Number Achieved	24.81	-1.35	6	8	6	2	4	4
Number counted in cohort	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
%			24.0%	32.0%	24.0%	8.0%	16.0%	16.0%

KS4 Benchmark (CLA) (DfE)

2023 | DfE | Matched pupils only | CLA 12 Months

	Cohort	CLA Matches	Attainment 8	Progress 8			9-5			EBacc		Entry			
				Cov.	Avg. Score	Conf. Int.	EBacc Eng. LL	EBacc Mat.	E&M	Entry	APS	EBacc Slots	Other Slots	Triple Sci.	≥2 Lang.
NCER National (all schools)	551340	-	46.4	94.3%	-0.03	±0.00	60.8%	50.9%	45.4%	39.6%	4.07	2.8	2.8	25.7%	3.1%
NCER National (CLA pupils)	3600	100.0%	24.8	92.0%	-1.07	±0.05	23.0%	17.0%	12.0%	14.0%	2.03	1.9	2.0	7.0%	1.0%
DfE Region - North West (CLA)	680	100.0%	24.2	96.0%	-1.20	±0.11	24.0%	14.0%	11.0%	15.0%	1.95	1.9	2.0	6.0%	0.0%
Local Authority - Westmorland and Furness (all schools)	4902	-	46.2	97.0%	-0.10	±0.04	59.5%	48.1%	42.2%	23.9%	3.96	2.8	2.8	37.2%	0.8%

Points to note

In terms of the results at KS4, the CLA in W and F were significantly below National and regional attainment levels for results at GCSE grades 9 to 5 (there are no comparators at 9 to 4 at the time of

writing). This is since over half of the CLA at this level did not take the GCSEs in English and Maths through being entered for other qualifications such as Entry Level and Level One or not sitting the examinations at all. Several of the CLA were UASC, who again did not sit the examinations. We are working with providers to ensure that these individuals gain a qualification in English and Mathematics, post 16.

Progression into Employment or Training

Destinations of Year 11 Children Looked After September 2023

	Current Destination/Status	Number in total cohort	% of total cohort
Current Y12	FE College	10	37
	Employment and Training	1	4
	6 th Form College	2	7
	Apprenticeship	1	4
	Special School	1	4
	Alternative Provision	3	11
	Not in Education Employment or Training	9	33
	TOTAL	27	100%

Data Source: Inspira October 2023

NEET Status of Children Looked After September 2023

	NEET Status	Number in NEET cohort	% in NEET cohort
Current Y12	New Mum	1	13
	Actively Seeking College place	4	50
	Seeking Employment	1	13
	Offered College place but did not take up.	2	24
	TOTAL	8	100

Data Source: Inspira October 2023

The situation in Year 13

Destinations of Year 12 Children Looked After September 2023

	Current Destination/Status	Number in total cohort	% of total cohort
Current Y13	FE College	15	44
	Employment and Training	1	3

	6 th Form College	3	8
	Internship	1	3
	Special School	6	18
	Alternative Provision	1	3
	Not in Education Employment or Training	7	21
	TOTAL	34	100%

Data Source: Inspira October 2023

NEET Status of Children Looked After September 2023

All year 13 who are NEET are currently recorded as seeking employment or training.

Data Source: Inspira October 2023

CLA School Attendance

An update will be given during the meeting on the data capture software

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

74% of our CLA in Westmorland and Furness currently have identified SEND, with 36% having an EHCP and 38% being on SEN Support. This is significantly above the National Average, where 56% of CLA are identified as having SEND. In line with National Figures for Looked After Children, the vast majority of our children have SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) as their Primary Need.

The virtual school staff work to ensure that any SEND are identified and assessed without drift or delay; and ensure that our children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. 1:1 coaching of SENCOs across the county and the Virtual School's participation in SEND's EHCP panel have helped secure EHCPs for our children. We have a dedicated Achievement teacher to work with children with EHCPs and another member of the team that works specifically with children with SEN.

In addition, we have developed a SEND section on our website to support our children, carers and professionals with information, advice and guidance.

Secondary and SEND Case Study Written by a Virtual School Achievement Teacher for CLA with EHCPs

Our young person came into care in 2009 at the age of 14 months and has been in one placement through his care journey. The Virtual School had worked with this young person since they started school in Reception, with one Achievement Teacher overseeing their education throughout their primary and secondary years. The young person displayed no significant additional need around SEMH, had no SEN through primary school but did have additional needs around literacy, acknowledged as being dyslexic in 2022.

In 2022 things changed significantly for this young person, developing very quickly a number of symptoms leaving him socially isolated, vulnerable, and unable to access school. An undiagnosed constellation of symptoms affecting his nervous system, eyes and legs left him physically exhausted, feeling anxious, unsafe and vulnerable in his secondary school. Over the course of six months his attendance had dropped below 30%. In Sept 2022 the Virtual School supported the implementation

of a Fatigue Management Plan, offering advice and support to school. The Virtual School worked quickly to support the process of revisiting his SEN needs, diagnosis of need and application for an EHCP. Working closely with health, paediatrics, neurology, and our Educational Psychologists an Educational Health Care Plan was quickly agreed. Our young person presented with severe and persistent levels of social, emotional difficulties which were so complex they necessitated a multi-agency response, the Virtual School organised fortnightly TAC meetings to plan around this young person's needs for nearly 12 months. Regular patterns of school absence and poor attendance was requiring a high level of input from both Inclusion Officers and Achievement Teachers within the Virtual School.

By the end of 2022 there was significant deterioration in health and anxiety related conditions. This young person was not managing more than 30 minutes in school a day, at best. Having long established relationships with the carer and young person made it easier to engage with the young person and understand their view. It was decided in the best interest of the young person that a change of school was required, despite being in Year 10 the Virtual School supported this move and looked to another local school to open up discussions around a school move. The Virtual School discussed with SEND and led the transition process, along with a very fabulous social worker and carer. The Virtual School and SEND agreed that the young person could and should repeat Year 10 in agreement with the young person and carer, due to 12 months of lost learning. The EHCP was finalised for this young person in July 2023 as they transitioned to their new school on a reduced timetable. Since March 2023 the Virtual School had agreed to fund 1:1 tuition in English and Maths, on a daily basis, to enable the young person to continue to access education. Which they engaged with diligently despite huge fatigue. This level of support was funded through Pupil Premium Plus.

The success of this move is immeasurable, in both the presentation of this young person and their engagement in school and education. They are now in a supportive school, quickly developing new and trusting relationships with fantastic support staff. They are accessing on a daily basis, the Virtual School are still supporting and attending fortnightly meetings to monitor their progress and agree levels of engagement, which constantly reviews progress and goals. We now have a young person whose anxiety is massively reduced and who now has the opportunity to re-engage in school life and education. He feels confident and has confidence in staff working with him. School report significantly reduced symptoms, as does his carer. This young person was nominated for the CiCC awards in 2023 by his Achievement Teacher for his resilience and determination, we are really proud of him! It's still early days but on a whole we are seeing significant changes. The plan remains to continue to increase this young person's time in school and build his sense of belonging in his new setting.

2. Promoting the Education of Previously Looked After Children

The virtual school team have supported children who have been previously looked after by doing the following:

- attending adoption support parent consultation meetings
- responding to individual requests of help from parents, school staff and adoption support social workers.
- delivering training on Attachment, trauma and learning to schools throughout Cumbria and also out of county schools

Adoptive parents have been supported by the Virtual School team who have delivered a series of Education question and answer sessions. These sessions allowed parents to discuss a number of key issues they were experiencing with their child and then seek advice about possible next steps to support their child.

3. Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker

It has been an exciting year for the work with CWSW. The funding has been extended until March 2025 which enables a more strategic approach to be adopted. We have continued to work towards addressing the initial priorities:

- Enhancing partnerships between education settings, the local authority and other partner agencies so that they all work together effectively.
- Identifying the needs of the cohort and addressing barriers to education, ensuring pupils make good educational progress.
- Offering advice and support to key professionals to help children make progress and promoting practice that supports children's engagement in education.
- Provide training and information sessions as and when appropriate and necessary.

Schools and partner agencies have been offered the opportunity to access online training using a company called ANSPEAR funded by the virtual school. Training in the BUSS model has continued to be offered and over 300 people from a range of professions and services have accessed the Introductory Webinar and almost 100 being trained to level 1. We also have 20 professionals trained to deliver the BUSS in Education group work and have run 6 groups in 5 different venues offering a 10-week intervention for children and their families/carers. (BUSS Case Study). The feedback from the families and the staff involved has been positive.

A number of small pilot projects have been run in different secondary schools looking at addressing attendance and they have recorded some success. A larger scale pilot project addressing Resilience and attendance was developed and offered to several schools across Cumbria. Family Action were commissioned to deliver the programme and the data suggests some positive impacts. This piece of work with the LA working with schools and third sector agencies to tackle a national crisis – school attendance, has drawn the attention of SKY News a piece was broadcast on 27/9/23 that highlights the proactive approach. One of the schools involved in the initial project will be working with the VS to further develop the project based on the learning from the pilot, in the 2023-2024 school year.

Social Workers have been accessing an opportunity to gather advice relating to educational matters and this has had positive impacts for several young people.

Another positive aspect of the work this year has been working with colleagues from across the NW in the same post. We have developed some resources such as a support tool for social workers and other professionals to use when supporting families to challenge permanent exclusions and these are being shared with colleagues in different parts of the LA



BUSS Case Study.docx



Pilot project case study.docx

[Warning over 'grossly inadequate' mental health support for schools that could make high absence levels 'the new norm' | UK News | Sky News](#)

Promoting the Education of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC)

In Westmorland and Furness Virtual School, we currently have 24 UASC (plus 4 care leavers that are were under VS until the end of August 2023). We also have 1 young person who is unaccompanied but does not need to seek asylum and has English as a second language. 15 of these have become looked after since April 2023, and all of them, including the 4 care leavers, have arrived since August 2022. They have become looked after as a result of age disputes raised by young people in the asylum hotels in Barrow-in-Furness, the national transfer scheme or spontaneous arrival in the area.

Whilst the majority of them live in the Northwest, including Preston, Liverpool, Oldham and Carlisle, we also have a young person living in Gloucestershire. We have young people from Vietnam, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Morocco, Egypt and Eritrea. The languages include Kurdish, Arabic, Pashto, Tigrinya, Dari, Farsi and Ahmaric.

The Virtual School has employed a member of staff, UASC Inclusion Officer (UASC IO) to lead on supporting the education for this cohort of young people. We support UASC by finding suitable educational provision, securing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lessons, and supporting education staff (Designated teachers/college staff) to ensure they are able to cater for the needs of the young people. The ESOL lessons are now mostly accessed using the Flash Academy app which is monitored by the UASC IO who sets assessments and lessons to meet the needs of the student. We have 20 logins for this app which are prioritized for UASC/EAL learners while they are out of provision or NEET. Other students can have access to this if there are spaces available and currently 15 student is accessing this to support his college work and 4 students are without other educational provision.

Children of school-age are expected to be taught the breadth of the National Curriculum alongside their peers. This is often supplemented by English as Additional Language (EAL) tuition in school. Post 16 learners mostly undertake ESOL courses, which generally consist of ESOL (from First Steps, pre-entry level, to Functional Skills Level 2), maths, ICT and life skills/citizenship. When young people reach a certain level of English and maths, they may undertake a vocational course or A-levels. The level needed is dependent on the course they wish to do, and we have 2 students who are doing this currently.

Due to the nature of the trauma that these children and young people have been through, there are varied issues that need to be resolved for them to successfully access education. We have found that many of them have trouble settling into their placements, new way of living and routines. Many have sleeping issues as they have slept during the day and travelled at night and from the situations they have been party to. Many UASC, especially those between 14 and 16 have requested placement moves to meet their cultural and/or religious needs which has delayed and disrupted their education further. The UASC IO has supported the move with Flash Academy and liaising with education settings to ensure continuation of provision.

The UASC IO has attended most PEP meetings for UASC and EAL learners in the previous academic year as most have been starting at new settings and/or are new to care and have attended as many CLA reviews as possible. They have updated a document outlining the virtual school's processes for supporting UASC to represent changes due to the Local Government Reorganisation. The virtual school both the Northwest and Northeast regional focus groups for those supporting UASC has also been attended by the VSH and UASC IO. The UASC IO was vice-chair for the Northwest group but has now taken on the Chair's role. The UASC IO attends the half termly Westmorland and Furness UASC working group meetings with agencies from across the council, including being part of the UASC auditing formation.

UASC Case Studies Written by Virtual School Inclusion Officer

Case Study One. After being supported to use the Flash Academy ESOL app while waiting to start college, 1 student completed maths GCSE in June 2023, gaining a level 3 after only being in the country in October 2022. He also passed his entry level 1 ESOL course. Because of his for his hard work with his studies and joining in with the college community, he was awarded student of the year at his college.

Case Study Two. R arrived in the UK in November 2022. They could not speak any English and was extremely distressed. They had experienced much trauma in his home country and on his journey, including the death of his father and being made to heavy lifting work as a child. It is unclear as to whether they had been to school at all and they are unable to read or write.

They were placed in semi-supported accommodation in Burnley. The UASC IO organised for them to have Flash Academy ESOL lesson but they struggled to engage in them even with support from their placement workers. They also displayed immature behaviours for their age which was a concern. They had very little concentration. As they were Year 11 when they arrived, it was difficult to find them a suitable school place that could provide them with very basic English learning when others in that year group were sitting their GCSEs.

R was found a place at a local College on their Year 11 UASC alternative provision scheme. This was initially going to be for only 16 hours a week but the UASC IO was able to negotiate this to 25 hours a week so that they were afforded a full-time education. It was becoming more apparent that their understanding was limited in their own language, for example, even with an interpreter and repeated discussions, they did not understand the school system here and refused to attend the PE sessions of his timetable. They were also becoming disruptive in the English lessons that they did attend and towards the end of the term had stopped going. The UASC IO thought that the lack of engagement in class was more to do with their ability to understand what they were being asked to do rather than defiance. It was felt that an educational psychologist assessment would be helpful to try to understand the extent of their needs.

This happened, along with a speech and language assessment, in August 2023. It was found that they had severe learning difficulties which would mean the course they were doing would have been to difficult for him to complete even if more support was offered.

The UASC IO spent time trying to find a college course that would meet their specific needs. This was difficult as their case appears to be quite unique and the colleges do not cater for young people with severe learning difficulties and also cannot speak English. This seemed to be in other areas as well, as the UASC IO contacted other VS UASC officers in the North and East of England to see if they had any suggestions, especially as accessing online education in the form of tutoring would not be effective for him either and nothing suitable was suggested. It was also important that they weren't isolated from other young people.

A new college has agreed to support them now and they have completed a trial period with them. It has been helped by one of the SEND team at the college speaking their first language and she is able to support them with work. The UASC IO is now requesting an EHC needs assessment for them as they will need 1-1 in his lessons, extra sessions to teaching in a contextual manner and to support emotional literacy and concentration skills, and extra time to complete their studies

Finally, Praise for the Virtual School

[Warning over 'grossly inadequate' mental health support for schools that could make high absence levels 'the new norm' | UK News | Sky News](#)

We'd love for you to join us as a panel member as we feel the work Westmorland and Furness Council are doing to support UASC using Flash Academy and more generally is really valuable and would be a great story to share with other organisations facing the same issues.

I hear you have delivered some amazing training to some of my CET colleagues and was rather hoping I could ask you to deliver a couple of training sessions on Emotional Literacy in the next academic year.

I thank you very much for your time and for allowing Abi to come and support us. I have learned masses from her and her endless positivity and enthusiasm as well as understanding of The BUSS Model and the children involved have been invaluable to me. As I am sure you already know, she is worth her weight in gold!

Jane Fallon

Virtual School Head

November 2023

Key Priorities for the Academic Year 2023 to 2024 What Needs to Change?

What Needs to Change?

Area for Improvement	What does success look like?	Reference in detailed plan/ Reference to Education and Inclusion Plan
Children with a Social Worker: The Virtual School will promote the education of children with a social worker with the aim of narrowing the attainment gap and improving attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an increased knowledge of the role of the virtual school and its responsibility towards this cohort.• The Education Officer for Children with a social worker continues in this capacity post LGR.	

<p>Raise the profile and visibility of the virtual school in order that Cared for Children, elected members, carers, officers, corporate parenting board, schools and partners understand the new statutory responsibilities re: promoting the education of children with a social worker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be enhanced partnerships between education settings and the local authority in terms of accessing attendance data. • Agencies working with children and families will further understand and address the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience. • The Virtual School will demonstrate the benefits of attending an education setting, ensuring there are mechanisms in place to offer advice and support to teachers and social workers and CWSW attendance improves 	
<p>Mathematics: Raise the educational attainment of Cared for Children in mathematics in order that they reach their full potential</p> <p>ePEPs to be scrutinised where there are targets set for mathematics to ensure that PP+ is having a positive impact</p> <p>Targets to be set for all pupils in mathematics where they are below expected level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make at least expected progress across the curriculum • An increased number of pupils at KS1 and KS2 reached the standard in mathematics. • An increased number of pupils gain at least a grade mathematics at GCSE. • Interventions funded from PP+ have a positive impact 	
<p>ePEP Quality and Monitoring: Ensure CLA make good progress in their education and social and personal development by robustly monitoring the impact of PP+ spending, PP+ recovery spending and the CWSW Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the PEP will improve to cover the full range of education and development needs (Care planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations, 2010 and Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children 2018). • An ePEP will continue increase completion rates and improve quality assurance meaning that the VS can effectively monitor pupil progress through the ePEP 	
<p>Training: The virtual school's role in the professional development of designated teachers, teachers, head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virtual school's role in the professional development of designated teachers, teachers, head teachers and governors will 	

<p>teachers and governors is not broad enough</p>	<p>be better defined, through a more coherent, systematic and strategic training programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virtual School will continue to deliver training on a face to face basis where possible, but will also develop online training for when this is not possible • The Virtual School, due to its diminished capacity to deliver training (post LGR) will increase its use of training agencies to broaden it's training offer (eg AC Education) and will also make better use of School Development Team to organise venues and training 	
<p>Care Experienced Individuals: Review the capacity of the virtual school to plan, support and monitor the service provided to care leavers thereby ensuring that a greater proportion gain positive destinations of further or higher education, training or employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a consistent approach to the level and quality of support received by Care Leavers they achieve good outcomes. • The Virtual School has a designated achievement teacher for care experienced individuals so that post 16 planning does not leave young people vulnerable • The take up of post 16 PP+ is increased and is promoted by VS, PAs and SWs so that there is a positive outcome for this cohort and achievement is at the highest level • The number of those who are NEET decreases 	
<p>SEND: There is too much drift and delay in the identification and assessment of our CLA with SEND, particularly for those who reside out of county. SENDCos are regularly inexperienced at submitting robust requests for statutory EHC assessment in line with the graduated response, especially for our children who have experienced developmental trauma. EHCPs are not being updated promptly enough, as per the SEND Code of Practice. We need closer collaboration with our partners in SEND, Health and Social Care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the appointment of a SEND Lead for W&F Virtual School • Our CLA with SEND will be identified and assessed without drift or delay and will make good progress in line with their abilities. • SENDCos will be better supported to make successful EHCP applications • The VS and SEND team will work more collaboratively to meet the needs of our CLA with SEND • There will be more seamless SEND processes for Out of County CLA with SEND 	

<p>UASC: Not all UASC have appropriate access to the internet at home to complete online learning. Children of school age need to access school quicker. Mid-term access to ESOL courses for post 16 UASC. More WaF collaboration for overall UASC planning. Enhance ESOL provision in WaF for possible UASC arrivals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking that all UASC have effective internet access to assess suitable education resources. May need work between social care and commissioning. • Continue with developing working relationship with the young people and their carers/key workers. • Work with other VS and admissions team to speed up processes. • Further discussions with colleges. • Work with WaF colleges to design ESOL offer. • Further work on supporting studies once they turn 18 as their educational journey is often only just starting at this point. Possible outreach support with PAs. • Renewed momentum on WaF UASC working group. 	
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