

## NOTICE OF MEETING

<b>Meeting</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date and Time</b>	Wednesday 5th July 2023 at 10.00am
<b>Place</b>	Chute Room, Ell Court South, Winchester
<b>Enquiries to</b>	members.services@hants.gov.uk

Carolyn Williamson FCPFA  
Chief Executive  
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

## FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

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## AGENDA

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider, having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 12)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.

**4. DEPUTATIONS**

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

**6. BOARD MEMBERS FEEDBACK - ENGAGEMENT AND RECENT ACTIVITIES**

An opportunity for Board members to provide a verbal update on their recent engagement activities.

**7. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTION LOG**

To receive a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services providing an introduction to the proposed Corporate Parenting Board's Action log.

**8. REFUGEE TEAM/UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN UPDATE (Pages 13 - 20)**

To receive a presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the Refugee Team and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

**9. UPDATE ON CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE EXPERIENCED ADULTS COUNCILS**

To receive a presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults Councils.

**10. HAMPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022 (Pages 21 - 40)**

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services providing the annual report for 2021-22 for Hampshire's Virtual School.

**11. ANNUAL CHILDREN IN CARE REPORT 2022-23 (Pages 41 - 62)**

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services providing the annual report for 2022-23 for Children in Care.

**ABOUT THIS AGENDA:**

**On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.**

**ABOUT THIS MEETING:**

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County Councillors attending as appointed members of this Committee or by virtue of Standing Order 18.5; or with the concurrence of the Chairman in connection with their duties as members of the Council or as a local County Councillor qualify for travelling expenses.

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

AT A MEETING of the Corporate Parenting Board of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY  
COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Tuesday, 28th March, 2023

Chairman:

\* Councillor Ann Briggs

\* Councillor Phil North  
Councillor Fran Carpenter  
\* Councillor Pal Hayre  
\* Councillor Juliet Henderson  
\* Councillor Wayne Irish

\* Councillor Arun Mummalaneni  
\* Councillor Jacky Tustain  
\* Councillor Malcolm Wade  
\* Councillor Tim Davies

Also present: Cllr Heron, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services  
Cllr Forster, Executive Member for Education

## 46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Fran Carpenter. Cllr Tim Davies was deputising for her.

## 47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore, Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made.

## 48. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.

## 49. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

50. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded the Board that in the past month, 48 events had been put on, which allowed Members an opportunity to meet children, foster carers and social workers. Eight of the events had been attended by three Members.

She asked Members to try to attend at least two events per month and explained that some were virtual and at different times of the day. The Chairman went on to explain that the Board had a responsibility to have an understanding of the care experienced young person and be able to evidence the impact of responses to their voices.

She reported that there was a plan for an open dialogue with the children, social workers and carers on how the Board can achieve this.

51. **BOARD MEMBERS FEEDBACK - ENGAGEMENT AND RECENT ACTIVITIES**

Cllr Tustain had made a visit to Basingstoke and met foster parents where she could listen to the concerns they had. She welcomed a workshop where the Board could have a discussion on how they could make improvements to engagement, and asked that some of the events to which the Board had been invited be clarified.

Cllr Henderson had attended two children's homes, in Winchester and Basingstoke. She commented that she had seen how skilled the Acting Manager was. She had also met a seventeen year old Afghan and was impressed with the social worker and all of the people supporting him.

Cllr Wade had visited an unaccompanied asylum seeker and was impressed at how Hampshire was working with him. In particular, he was very impressed by the school and the social worker who was present. He had also attended a New Forest monthly team meeting and had explained to the staff what the Corporate Parenting Board does. He agreed that the Board should engage and listen to better understand the voice of the child in order to be better placed to make decisions and make a difference.

The Board discussed the need to include solutions for improvement onto the action plan, so that progress and impact could be monitored.

A suggestion was also made that Members could be offered the opportunity to shadow social workers to gain a better understanding.

52. **FEEDBACK FROM OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT ON CHILDREN IN CARE**

The Board received a verbal report with feedback on the OFSTED focussed visit on children in care from the Deputy Director of Children's Services. It had been a two week inspection, which included looking at data and policies. The outcome had been extremely positive, with 'impressive practice' having been highlighted in the letter from OFSTED.

There were three recommendations which would be on the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan. These related to:

- The timeliness of initial, and review of, Health Assessments for children in care.
- Independent Reviewing Officer capacity.
- The voice of the looked after child at the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Board discussed ways to ensure that the voice of the child is heard by the Board, for example, by arranging for children and young people to attend the Board outside of its public meeting.

Resolved:

The Board noted the update on the Feedback from the OFSTED focussed visit on children in care.

53. **NATIONAL REVIEW - CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS - SUMMARY REPORT**

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services regarding the National Review – Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings.

The officer explained that the purpose of the report was to respond to a request from the Child Safeguarding Review Panel to the Director of Children's Services to review the placements of children in care placed in children's homes jointly registered with independent special schools. This National Review was the result of a widespread abuse scandal in Doncaster, and all Directors of Children's Services had been asked to undertake the two following urgent actions:

- To review the placements of Hampshire children placed in children's homes jointly registered with independent special schools. Ofsted later clarified that this relates to a total of fifty-nine schools. Hampshire had fourteen children placed in eight of those schools.
- That the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) reviews all information about those settings recorded by the LADO over the last three years and ensures that robust action was taken and all relevant LA's were contacted where necessary.

The Board heard that the review had been a significant piece of work, with more children being looked at than the review had asked for. The main outcomes were that:

- There were no significant weaknesses or concerns for any child reviewed. It had confirmed assurance in the processes in place and highlighted some things to take on board.

- There had been one school where there had been a previous 'inadequate' Ofsted grading. The care of the Hampshire children had already been under significant scrutiny and had recently been removed from the setting.
- All Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals over the last three years had been reviewed.

In response to questions, the Board heard that:

- Given that this review found no issues and provided assurance that a robust quality assurance process is in place, a regular review of this type is not seen as a proportionate use of time. Moving forward however, the key questions asked would be kept under review to ensure none were missing.

Resolved:

The contents of this report and the addendum report were noted by the Corporate Parenting Board.

#### 54. **ANNUAL REPORT - CARE LEAVERS**

The Board received an annual report on the activity of the Care Leavers Service from the Director of Children's Services. The officer introduced the report and outlined the responsibilities of the corporate parent 'to do everything that can be done for every care experienced young person to give them the opportunities that other children and young people get' and also reminded the Board of the Council's Pledge to Care Leavers.

The Board welcomed the report and agreed that care leavers require a good quality of care and discussed the areas in which these young people have lower outcomes, for example, the number that enter the criminal justice system.

The Board agreed that the aim of reduction in care leavers entering the criminal justice system should be included in the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan as an area of priority and metrics included in the next report.

The Board heard that all care leavers are written to annually three months either side of their birthday.

In answer to a question from a Member, officers agreed to look at what others are doing to learn any relevant lessons to improve contact.

Since the Pandemic, mental health and wellbeing issues have been seen and some people have not re-entered the education system.

In response to questions from Members, the Board heard that all district and borough councils are engaged with, a joint protocol is being developed and that Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend as much to borough and district councils as to the County Council.



The Board discussed ways in which to engage with the district and borough councils and share good practice. They agreed that:

- a letter should be sent to Leaders of Borough and District Councils regarding Corporate Parenting Responsibilities and sharing good practice.
- The Chairman and officers would visit Borough and District Councils to raise awareness regarding corporate parenting responsibilities.
- Data regarding any measurable outcomes of the impact of the council tax discount scheme, leisure passes and access to apprenticeship schemes would be sought and reported back to the Board.

Resolved:

The Board noted the good outcomes that are being achieved by Hampshire's Care Leavers and the plans of the Care Leaver Service to continue to improve those outcomes further in 2023.

That the Board continues to offer support and challenge to the Care Leaver Service in maximising the offer for Care Leavers.

The Board continue to promote the corporate parenting responsibility Hampshire County Council and the district borough councils hold.

## 55. **CARE PLAN AUDIT AND IRS UPDATE**

The Board received a presentation on the Care Plan Audit. The officer explained that:

- 240 audits had been completed, the findings of which were illustrated in age brackets for context.
- 87% of children had felt their life had improved since becoming looked after. Those who had not replied positively could have just entered care or been in the under 4 age group.
- The 72% response from parent that their child's life had improved was an exceptionally good score.
- The Children in Care Team and the social workers aim to bring together everything the child needs and work to ensure that care Plans are signed by the children and their parents.
- Childrens' views, thoughts and wishes are taken into account within the Care plan.

The Board and officers discussed the need to reword the survey to achieve clarity on whether parents had not been asked to contribute to their child's care plan or had declined the opportunity.

In terms of Personal Education Plans, children had made good progress since becoming looked after and schools had made use of the Pupil Premium. Emotional/Mental Health needs was a growing area of need.

In response to questions from Members, the Board heard that:

- emotional/mental health needs might not mean a need for referral to CAHMS, but to a SENCO or alternative.
- Significant progress had been made on resolving the backlog of health assessments and regular meetings are held between officers and their health colleagues.

Officers agreed to keep the Board updated on the completion of timely Health Assessments for looked after children, and provide a further report on the progress of Care Plan Audit actions in due course.

Resolved:

The Board noted the contents of the presentation on the Annual Care Plan Audit 2022.

## **56. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN CARE**

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services informing it about the provision of placements for children with disabilities who are in the care of the Local Authority.

The officer introduced the report and explained that disabled children are treated as any other child. There is a small cohort of 63 disabled children and complex needs can make them difficult to match, other non-disabled children can be equally difficult to place due to their needs. Every child has a 'My Life, My Future' Plan.

The officer confirmed that children are placed permanently, but circumstances can change and so are kept under review.

The Board noted that these children were some of the most vulnerable and requested an annual report on children with disabilities in care.

Resolved:

The Corporate Board noted the content of this report.

## **57. UPDATE ON THE PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN FOR 2023**

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on Participation and on the progress made against the Participation Strategy and plans for further developments in 2023.

The Board heard that:

- The aim is to ensure that voices are used strategically to improve services by providing more routes for its influence.
- Two new independently facilitated Councils had been introduced for Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults, an action plan had been developed and OFSTED had confirmed that the Service had been moving in the right direction.
- A Participation Network is being built to share learning and resources.
- There is a review of the processes used to capture and respond to feedback to make questions more strategic and become smarter with technology.
- Events are being run to reach a wider cohort of young people in care or with experience of care.

The Board were very positive about the report and looked forward to the future developments.

Officers will provide a further update to the Board in due course and include 'instigate change' to the slide presentation which demonstrates the Action Plan for 2023: the next iteration of our participation journey.

Resolved:

The Board:

- Noted the contents of this report.
- Continues to endorse the priorities for participation in 2023.

## 58. **HAMPSHIRE HIVES**

The Board received a presentation about the Hampshire Hives, a review of the last 12 months and future development.

The officer and gave an overview of the Hive Model and explained that:

- More Hives were needed, with a further seven planned for April 2023, bringing the total to 23 providing a capacity of 482 fostering families.
- Birth children were included to give them opportunities to develop relationships with other birth children.
- There are plans for overnight stays, the inclusion of residential homes, and care leavers being given the opportunity to attend family events.

The officer outlined the impact of Hives, one year in as described on page 80 of the agenda pack and case studies with views of fostering families.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:

- Emergency foster carers and those out of the County were included.
- New Hives are being developed in areas where carers have requested them.
- Just under half of foster carers are opting in to the Hives.

The Board was supportive of the Hives initiative.

Resolved:

The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

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Chairman, Corporate Parenting Board



# Hampshire County Council

# Children Seeking Asylum

Presentation for Corporate Parenting Board  
5 July 2023

Gina Dickinson & Sarah Marston

# National Transfer Scheme (NTS)

- Home Office confirm 45,000 people illegally entered the UK in 2022. Number predicted to rise to 80,000 in coming year
- Most arrivals are via small boats
- Top 5 Countries are Afghanistan, Sudan, Albania, Iraq, and Vietnam
- Approximately 5,500 children - 94% are males aged 16/17yrs old

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- Local Authority to take 0.1% - Hampshire's mandated number 285. Currently 235 children seeking asylum, with an additional 386 care leavers
- HCC notified of small boat arrivals and given 5 days to place. Once placed, children become 'Looked After' under Section 20 Children Act 1989
- HCC receives £143 per child per night by way of contribution for costs of placements. Current placements costs between 30-62k pa
- Children arriving spontaneously – local response taken and children are age assessed and made 'Looked After' – HCC receives £114 per night

# Specialist Refugee Teams

- Teams will include 7 Social Workers, 2 Family Practitioners, 6 Care Leaving Personal Assistants, and Admin staff
- Hampshire currently cares for 235 children, 160 of these are in Refugee Teams – once fully staffed the remainder will transfer in, taking pressure off the Children in Care teams
- Experienced worker with knowledge of the legislative immigration framework
- Work closely with Willow Team to complete trafficking and age assessments, and explore risks around exploitation
- Work closely with Red Cross to locate and make contact with birth families
- Therapeutic approach used in recognition of the trauma children have gone through

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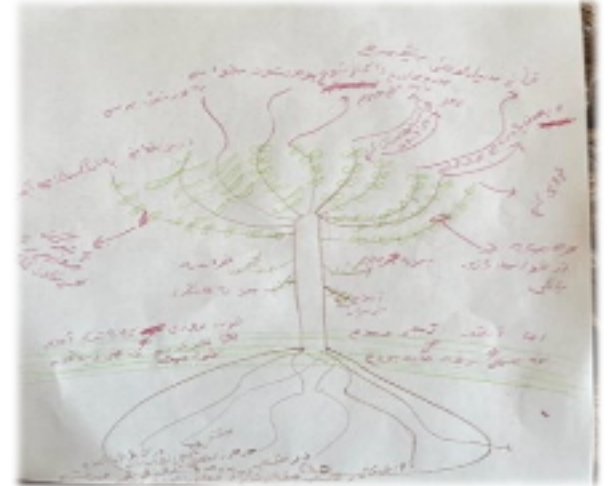
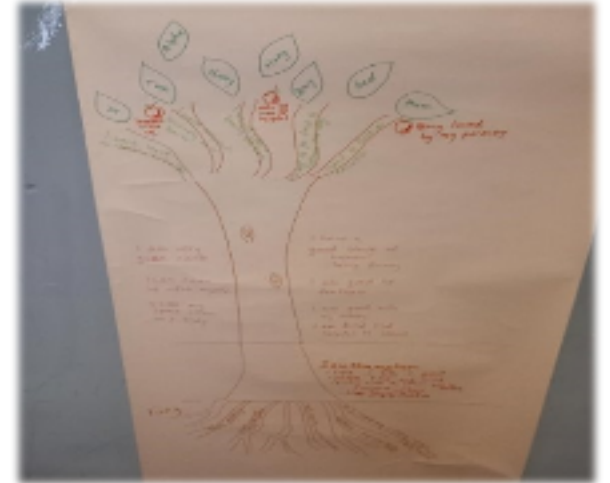




# Participation

- Vietnamese children enjoying a recent participation event at Eastleigh Football club
- Lunch after provided an opportunity to discuss their collective journey to the UK and gain a greater understanding of the specific needs of this cohort of children
- Children encouraged to be part of the Care Council

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## Challenges

- Shortage of foster placements – negative media can cause potential carers to forget that they are just children
- Approximately 60% of placements are out of county – increased risk of exploitation
- Currently a gap in formal education provisions for children aged 17 and who are between school and college
- Supporting children seeking asylum to integrate into the community
- Increased risk of exploitation

## HCC Response

- Dedicated team working with foster carers to dispel myths around caring for children seeking asylum. Drive to bring placements back to Hampshire and out of London  
[Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Child | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)
- Holding regular participation events so that the children can meet one another
- Working with the virtual school to look at bespoke alternative learning programmes, and connecting with partner agencies to provide ESL courses
- Independent Reviewing Officers with specialist knowledge of working with unaccompanied children

# Questions

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## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Panel:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	5 July 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Hampshire Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021-2022
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

**Contact name:** Michelle Nye, Head of Virtual School

**Tel:** 01962 835227

**Email:** [michelle.nye@hants.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.nye@hants.gov.uk)

#### Purpose of this Report

1. This report provides an overview of the Virtual School's work and focus during the academic year 2021-2022, together with an analysis of educational outcomes, where published, for Hampshire's cohort of children in care. It sets out the priorities for securing improved individual and cohort progress, educational experiences, and outcomes for children in the care of Hampshire.

#### Recommendations

2. That the Virtual School's priorities are agreed to secure further improvements to the educational outcomes of Hampshire's children in care.

#### Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to outline and analyse the end of key stage achievement of all children and young people, from early years to 18 in the care of Hampshire County Council (academic year 2021-22). It sets out the priorities for improving the effectiveness and impact of the Virtual School so that, together with schools, settings, and post-16 providers, we secure greater individual and cohort progress, better educational experiences, and better outcomes for Hampshire's children in care.

#### Contextual Information

4. The Virtual School sits within the Education and Inclusion Branch but works closely with the Children and Families branch of Hampshire Children's Services Department (CSD) and the Access, Resources and Business Development Branch, in relation to data, information, and admissions.
5. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for the Virtual Schools in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Close working relationships are nurtured

with all other services, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Early Years Advisory Team, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology, Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service, Hampshire Futures, and wider health services.

6. The Virtual School in Hampshire is small in relation to the size of cohort. Therefore, ensuring that all teams prioritise this group of children and the building of capacity across schools and the wider children's workforce is a key component in our strategy to improve educational outcomes.
7. Accurate information is maintained as to how children in our care are progressing in their education. The Virtual School intervenes when a child or young person in Hampshire's care is not achieving as well as they can. We provide training and information for schools, foster carers, and social workers. Furthermore, the Virtual School ensures resources, including the pupil premium plus, are distributed effectively and monitors the impact on the educational experiences and achievements of children in care.

## **Finance**

### **Pupil Premium Plus**

8. In line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, the Virtual School publish a policy document which makes clear the expectations and arrangements in place around pupil premium plus for children looked after. [Pupil Premium Plus and funding | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/pupil-premium-plus-and-funding)
9. For transparency, the Virtual School Head also reports specifically to Schools' Forum on the use and impact of pupil premium plus. Arrangements for distributing the pupil premium plus grant are reviewed annually.

### **Summary of performance for the academic year 2020-21 Attainment and progress of cohorts by chronological age**

10. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, most exams, tests and assessments resumed in the academic year 2021/22. Pupils included in the 2021/22 KS2 and KS4 school performance data may have experienced varying levels of disruption to their schooling due to the pandemic. It is recommended that the KS2/KS4/KS5 data be used with caution. Performance data for 2022 should not be directly compared with 2019 and earlier.
11. The following analysis refers to children in care in the 'OC2' or 'published' cohort during 2021-22 academic year. That is children who have been in care for a year or more as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
12. There may be some differences between the internal local authority and verified KS4 dataset, due to rounding and some unmatched data where not all children's results have been included. Where this is the case, it is clearly indicated on the datasets used.

## Outcome for Hampshire’s children in care Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) results

13. Standards in the EYFS are assessed during the final year of this Key Stage, in the first year of statutory education in schools. This is measured by the proportion of pupils that have reached a good level of development (GLD). In 2019, there was an improvement in outcomes across all measures. In 2022, GLD is just below national figures as indicated by NEXUS data. In this cohort, three children have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and ten children are on Special Educational Needs (SEN) support which is a higher percentage than in previous years.

### EYFSP - OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	GLD	
			No	%
2018	HCC	35	18	51.4%
	National CLA	950	440	46.3%
2019	HCC	33	17	51.5%
	National CLA	1110	540	48.6%
2022	HCC	30	11	39.3%
	National CLA	1240	500	40.3%

14. It should be noted, however, that the year-on-year GLD data cannot be used for comparison to 2022. This is due to the new statutory framework and outcomes as part of the Early Years Reforms 2021. The Early Learning Goals used to calculate GLD are not the same as those in previous years, therefore cannot be compared for the purposes of identifying trends. Additionally, due to Covid-19, any results should not be directly compared. Hampshire CLA are below those of National CLA for 2022 and improving outcomes is a focus for the Virtual School.

15. The Virtual School agreed a service level agreement with Services for Young Children (SfYC) to ensure expertise and support is provided to this cohort. A dedicated Education Adviser for Early Years leads our strategy and approach and works with a group of specialist advisory teachers to provide termly meetings and support work, including visits to schools and settings, moderation of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and transition work.

16. There has been an increased focus on close working with the Inclusion and Advisory Teams and Admissions to ensure that information is shared on applications in a timely way and that good schools are identified. Support provided in schools was reviewed so that priority focus could be given to specific Private, Voluntary, Independent (PVI) settings.

## Key stage 1 and key stage 2 performance

17. The two years following EYFS are deemed to be Key Stage 1 (KS1).

### KS1 – OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	RWM	
			EXS+	%
2018	HCC	42	13	31.0%
	National CLA	1540	570	37.0%
2019	HCC	44	16	36.4%
	National CLA	1630	610	37.4%
2022	HCC	53	14	26.4%
	National CLA	1720	510	29.7%

18. KS1 results are disappointing across the board both nationally and locally. There were 6 children with an EHCP in this cohort which is higher than previous years and none of these children achieved the expected standard.

19. The Government's preferred performance measure for KS2 is the proportion of children that have reached age-related expectations (ARE) in each of reading, writing and mathematics (RWM) combined.

20. In 2020 and 2021, no assessment data was collected or published at KS2 because of the impact of the pandemic. In 2022, although data has been collected by the DfE there are no published performance tables at KS2 on an individual school basis.

21. As identified in the previous VSH annual report, one impact of the current curriculum and assessment methods in place is that there are parts of the curriculum that many children in care, due to the turbulence in their lives, have simply not had time to learn securely by the end of the key stage. This implies that their final scores may reflect the lack of time they have had to learn the content rather than their capabilities.

### KS2 – OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	RWM	
			EXS+	%
2018	HCC	77	23	29.9%
	National CLA	2770	970	35.0%
2019	HCC	68	19	27.9%
	National CLA	3040	1100	36.2%
2022	HCC	64	12	18.8%
	National CLA	2810	880	31.3%



22. Results are below National figures again this year. Within this cohort, the percentage of children with an EHCP and SEN support achieving RWM was higher than those in 2019 which is pleasing as there is a County focus on SEN Support, through our School Improvement Service. Virtual Schools will continue to focus on raising attainment through targeted work.

#### Key stage 4 performance

23. Secondary school performance measures and their associated GCSE courses have undergone unprecedented change between 2016, with new, harder GCSE courses being introduced year on year until the final year of change in 2019. The end of that process of change should have meant that from 2019, year on year comparisons could be carried out with validity.

24. However, due to the pandemic, in 2020, GCSE exams were not taken by students; instead, they were awarded Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs), based on what their teachers expected that they would have achieved had they taken their final exams. These grades, when aggregated nationally, showed an increase relative to 2019.

25. In 2021, still during the pandemic, a system of teacher assessment was adopted nationally that led to the award of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Once again, there was an increase relative to 2020. Although there was much discussion about the fairness of this system and unwarranted grade inflation, many schools reported that the system of continuous assessment had favoured students who traditionally may not have fared so well under the terminal exam method of assessment. It was notable that this positive effect was more pronounced in the cohort of students experiencing vulnerability.

26. In the face of a situation where grades had increased over the two pandemic years, Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation), the non-ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, exams and tests in England, announced that in 2022, the approach examination boards would take to grading would reflect a midpoint between summer 2019 and 2021. They stated that it would be more meaningful to make comparisons with 2019 results, because this is when exams were last taken. However, when making this comparison, note should be made that results in summer 2022 will be higher than when summer exams were last taken in 2019, but lower than in 2021, when grades were awarded by teacher assessment.

Exam Year	Area	Attainment 8		Progress 8		9-5 inc
		Cohort	A8	Cohort	P8	En and Maths
2018	HCC	81	27.5	74	-0.79	
	National	3400	24.5	3400	-0.94	
2019	HCC	89	22.6	82	-1.17	

	National	3720	25.0	3720	-0.97	
2022	HCC	107	20.3	107	-1.33	13.1%
	National	3980	25.9	3980	-1.06	14.0%

27. For 2022, the A8 figure less than the National CLA. The P8 score is also below National CLA which is disappointing.
28. Of the 107 children who had been looked after continually for at least 12 months, 14 children (13.1%) achieved English and maths at grades 9-5.
29. Of these 107 pupils, 40 had been in care for five years or more. This is lower than the previous cohort where 65 had been in care for five years or more in 2021. Length of time in care is a known factor which impacts on educational outcomes (University of Oxford 2013).
30. The remaining 67 pupils entered the care system during their secondary school years and 22 of the 67 entered care in Key Stage 4. The time preceding this is likely to have been chaotic and unstable, with significant risk of gaps in learning.
31. The 'Strength and Difficulties' questionnaire (SDQ) is used with every looked after child as an indicator of need, with an 'abnormal' score indicating a significant level of need. 17 of the 107 children had 'abnormal' scores.
32. In terms of special educational needs, in the overall cohort in Year 11, there were 44 children with EHCPs and an additional two at the assessment stage in May. Of the 44, 20 were in other local authority areas. There were 23 children placed in special schools. In the OC2 cohort, 26 (24.3%) had an EHCP.
33. In the OC2 Year 11 cohort, the designations were as follows:

ASD	MLD	PD	SEMH	SLD	Not known
2	6	1	14	1	2

34. In terms of school placement stability, 20 children experienced a change of school during Year 11, slightly less than the previous year although improved care placement stability suggests school changes were more planned and supported. However, none of these children achieved the 'basics' measure, although two children achieved a level 4 in maths. The reduction in school changes in key stage four remains a priority for the Virtual School and our local authority partners.
35. There were four Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in the 2021-22 OC2 cohort. No child in this cohort achieved the 'basics' measure although two sat an exam and one child achieved an English GCSE (9-4).

## **Attendance**

36. The DfE published data 'Outcomes for CIN (including CLA) for the 2021 reporting year, sets out the published data for children in care for 12 months as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the OC2 cohort. For Hampshire's children in care, the overall absence rate for 2021-22 was 8.9% whilst the equivalent national figure was 9.1%. The persistent absence rate for Hampshire's children in care was 31.5% with the equivalent national figure at 32.1%.
37. The impact of Covid on attendance of our children and on the reliability and accuracy of data and recording to provide a narrative is significant. For the previous year with data available (2019), the cohort was 759 and the overall absence rate was 5.6% and persistent absence was 13.2%.
38. The Virtual School will continue to monitor and track attendance carefully to ensure that we target children and young people who are at risk of persistence absence. This is especially important in the context of supporting our most vulnerable students who are still struggling to transition back into school following the pandemic.

## **Exclusion**

39. Two Hampshire CLA were permanently excluded in 2021 – 22 whilst in care which is the same as 2020-21.
40. In relation to exclusions, the DfE's 'Outcomes for CIN (including CLA) sets out published data for CLA 12 months as of 31 March 2021.
41. For Hampshire's school age CLA, attending HCC & OOC schools 2021-22, there were 1452 children in the cohort and there were 574 suspensions which is 39.53%.
42. For the previous year with data available (2020-21), the cohort was 1414, the fixed term exclusion rate was 27.72%, although the academic year had a shortened Spring term and reduced attendance due to the Covid lockdowns.
43. The reduction in fixed term exclusions will remain a key priority for the Virtual School this academic year.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

44. Consultation, not applicable.
45. The work of the Virtual School impacts positively on Hampshire's children in care.

## **Our aspirations for children and young people looked after**

46. The Virtual School and Virtual School Head have a lead role in promoting the educational achievement of children in its care. However, to meet our aspirational targets, we require all schools, the local authority and partner agencies to share the responsibility and to prioritise their needs as corporate parents.
47. Education that encourages high aspirations and individual achievements, with minimum disruption and maximum stability, is central to improving short and long-term outcomes for children in our care. This is strongly reflected in our joint work across schools and services.
48. In line with DfE statutory guidance for local authorities, our aspiration is that all children and young people attend a good or outstanding school which meets their individual needs and have good school attendance.  
We want every child in care to:
- Enjoy their education and become positive and resilient learners who know their own strengths and talents.
  - Benefit from the protective factor of being in care and make improved progress and achieve better educational outcomes once they feel stable and secure.
  - Be prioritised by schools and services in line with the collective corporate parent duty.
  - Receive the same support from their foster carers as they would from any good parent.
  - Have a voice that positively impacts on the services they receive.
  - Have stability in their care and education placements.
  - Receive good advice and guidance to ensure they can progress into further education, employment, and training and, when appropriate, university.
  - Know that their achievement and successes will be celebrated.

### **Reporting arrangements and accountability**

49. The Virtual School self-evaluates against the overarching Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). It is expected that key priorities are also identified by Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board which scrutinises the work of the Virtual School and holds it to account. The Virtual School Head reports annually to departmental management teams across both Education and Inclusion and Children and Families branches, with regular updates and reports through the year, including within the Inclusion Management Team.

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

50. The Virtual School uses an internal (non-commercial) Personal Education Plan (PEP) template which has been developed over time. The process is managed by the Virtual School team in collaboration with social care and school-based colleagues. The current PEP format is set up to draw relevant data into Virtual School datasets so we can fulfil our duty to monitor the

attainment and progress of our children in care. It is a requirement for this data to be presented to Ofsted during an inspection of Children's Services.

51. Despite joint work with designated teachers and social workers to improve the percentage of PEPs completed and submitted to the Virtual School, the return rate fell in 2021-22 to 60.9%. This was disappointing however it is recognised that although the rate is low, PEPs are completed by schools and social workers but not always returned to Virtual School due to the complexity of the system and the fact it is completed and passed on by more than one person.
52. As a Virtual School, we recognise the priority need to improve the compliance and quality of the PEP process, as it is a key tool to drive forward progress for our children and young people.
53. The Virtual School are working with Transformational Practice Team to review the current PEP system to move to an electronic PEP system.
54. The Virtual School does not have the capacity to routinely attend or contribute directly to all PEP meetings of statutory school age children. The quality assurance and audit process is therefore key to fulfilling our duty to raise standards and is delivered dynamically through 'Corporate Parent' visits and by regular themed audits. In this financial year, the VSH has strengthened the relationship with HIAS and commissioned more dedicated time to enable more PEP auditing and feedback to schools to be undertaken as part of 'Corporate Parent' visits.
55. The Virtual School uses a PEP audit tool developed in line with expectations from statutory guidance and best practice from other local authorities. In relation to school age children, the Virtual School currently undertakes a retrospective termly audit of around 10% of PEPs returned. The Virtual School identify a specific focus for the PEP audit drawing on themes and concerns that may arise from data analysis, training and operational casework.
56. The focus for the spring and summer term 2022 audit in Hampshire was the transition of pupils in reception classes, year 1 and year 7. The audit found evidence of some high-quality work to promote the education and well-being of children. In most cases the child's voice was the strongest part of the PEP, however many young people identify a subject area where they needed support, and this was not often reflected in the targets or linked to pupil premium spend. In most plans, there was evidence of a good knowledge of the child's care needs and educational progress. The most prominent finding of the PEP audit was that the quality of target setting and action planning was not consistent. The child's voice, the carer's voice and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score feature rarely in the detail of target setting and action planning. On a small number of documents, targets and actions appear to contradict the understanding that

should have been derived from the child's voice, the carer's voice and the SDQ. This is an area that needs strengthening in a number of PEPs.

57. The key findings and themes in the PEP audits are used by the Virtual School to inform our practice, planning and priorities in several ways. We use it to inform the content and focus of our training programme for designated teachers, social workers and foster carers.
58. In 2021-22 we held additional training for designated teachers on writing an effective PEP in view of the variable quality of some of the target setting identified in the 2020-21 audits. In addition, we enhanced our PEP toolkit training to ensure classroom/subject teachers were included to sharpen action planning in core subjects and provided an additional session on use of the EYPP (early years PP+) in view of inconsistency in action planning for this cohort.
59. The Virtual School is small in relation to the size of the cohort. Therefore, building capacity across schools and strengthening the role of the designated teacher is central to our strategy to improve educational outcomes. A key component is the high quality of our guidance and training on PEPs delivered to designated teachers, foster carers and social workers.
60. The Virtual School has developed a comprehensive PEP Toolkit which helps schools to identify and understand children's unmet needs and areas of difficulty. As well as supporting needs analysis, it offers practical guidance on strategies and interventions to raise attainment. This innovative tool was identified by Ofsted as enabling key professionals to understand the reasons for lower attainment.
61. We continue to strengthen the breadth and quality of our training offer on Moodle, including for out of county schools.
62. The improvement of PEP compliance and quality remains a priority for the Virtual School.

### **Previously looked after children (PLAC)**

63. Previously looked after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship (SGO) or child arrangement (CAO) order.
64. DfE statutory guidance requires Virtual Schools to promote the educational achievement of this group of children by providing advice and guidance to those with parental responsibility as well as to schools and services as part of their statutory duty. The DfE provides a time limited grant to support this work and our activities have focused on building capacity and developing an information and resource base which will be sustainable once the funding has ceased.

65. In Hampshire, the grant has been used to fund a specialist Education Officer focusing on providing advice, guidance and support to previously looked after children. The post holder has built a wide network of local and regional partners, including Adopt South and Hampshire's Fostering and Adoption Team, and has successfully developed the offer to schools and parents jointly across the region.
66. The Virtual School has developed an Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) and our exemplary practice in this area has been recognised by both the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH) and the Rees Centre (Department of Education).
67. Whilst there is no requirement, or capacity, to provide direct casework, inevitably this has been part of the work, with the post holder supporting a range of queries from parents expressing concerns around individual children, and has proactively signposted them to appropriate services, such as SEN, school transport and the Inclusion Support Service. These queries have also helped shape the resources and information that are being offered centrally to parents via the Virtual School website and Moodle. This has contributed to a constant flow of information and helped to reduce frustration whilst parents seek the help they need for their children.

### **Post-16 The Virtual College**

68. The Virtual College is the post-16 arm of the Virtual School and supports our care experienced young people on their post-16 journeys. Introduced in 2018, the Virtual College ensures that looked-after young people have access to high quality, post 16 education, employment and training. Specialist post 16 advisers deliver advice, guidance and face-to-face support for young people as they transition from Year 11 onwards, raising their aspirations and attainment, creating new opportunities and enabling progression into 'good jobs'.
69. As part of the Children's Services post 16 Careers and Participation team, the Virtual College is fully integrated into the wider RPA (Raising Participation Age) statutory functions supporting all young people to participate successfully in formal education and training in year 12 and 13.
70. All young people in England are required to participate in formal education or training until their 18th birthday, under Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) legislation. Hampshire County Council has a statutory duty to support young people aged 16 and 17 (and up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs).
71. The Council is held to account by the Department for Education (DfE) for its performance against this duty, including the proportion of young people in education, employment and training (EET) or not (NEET); and the proportion of young people whose activity is unknown.

72. As part of the Council’s corporate parent role, there are additional duties for the Virtual School to support the participation and educational achievement of looked-after children and young people from pre-school up to age 18. Support for post 16 (AY12-13) is delivered through the Virtual College managed by Hampshire Futures.
73. The Virtual College model uses a robust and wide-ranging dataset to target resources effectively and provides a dedicated ‘Education Participation Adviser’ to each young person in Hampshire, to support and enable effective transition from year 11, monitor and track their progress and to ensure they sustain their post 16 placement. An update on educational achievement of looked-after young people, post 16, participating in formal education and training programmes in academic year 2021-22 is provided below.
74. The participation rate in post 16 education and training for looked-after young people has increased since the introduction of the Virtual College support through specialist advisers, prioritised at key stages of the academic year.
75. Intended destinations in year 11 are identified earlier and college applications are submitted ahead of the overall cohort (by the end of February each year). The September Guarantee (statutory duty on LAs to ensure a guaranteed place in education Year 12-13) is also secured earlier for young people being supported by the Virtual College team. **Table 1** below shows Hampshire September Guarantee performance in 2022, comparing Virtual College with overall cohorts.
76. In Hampshire, the percentage of looked-after young people securing an offer of a place in post 16 education is higher (97.9%) than the overall cohort (97.1%).

<b>Table 1: Virtual College RPA compliant offers in comparison to wider cohort</b>			
<b>(Source: November MI CCIS Submission to DfE)</b>			
<b>HCC</b>	<b>Yr 11</b>	<b>Yr 12</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Virtual College Cohort	94	89	183
Positive Offer	94	89	97.9%
Negative/No offer	0	10	
Hampshire Cohort	14,155	14,927	
Positive Offer	13,915	14,328	97.1%
Negative Offer	240	599	

(NB Hampshire Final figures subject to confirmation expected March 2023)



77. September Guarantee performance for the overall cohort in Hampshire is significantly above national (95.5%) and regional (93.2%) averages (most recent published figures are for 2021).

78. **Table 2** below shows the Hampshire participation in education, employment and training for the Virtual College cohort at the end of AY2021-22, including three-year trend and comparison with national average.

<b>Table 2: Looked-after participation in education, employment and training (EET) (Source: NCCIS June 2022 LA Tables)</b>					
	<b>HCC</b>				
<b>Destination</b>	<b>June 20</b>	<b>June 21</b>	<b>June 22</b>		<b>England</b>
EET Total	83.4%	84.4%	88.5%		80.1%
NEET	15.0%	14.4%	10.1%		17%
Not Known	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%		2.9%
Combined NEET and Unknown	16.6%	15.6%	11.5%		19.9%

79. Participation of looked-after young people in post 16 education and training is increasing in Hampshire. All measures are above national averages and NEET/Unknown is lower than the national figure.

80. Where appropriate to the young person, Virtual College advisers are supporting access to alternative options, for example, three successful placements in 2022 with the Office for National Statistics as part of the government's Care Leaver Covenant.

81. In August 2022 the Virtual College cohorts (Yr12/13 resident cohort) was 205 young people in Hampshire, an increase of over 11% on the previous year.

82. **Table 3** below shows FE data for AY2021-22 for the Hampshire Virtual College cohort. Information has been provided by schools and colleges from Hampshire and neighbouring local authorities.

<b>Table 3: Hampshire Virtual College FE achievement data AY2021-22</b>			
<b>Virtual College</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>Change %</b>
Cohort	184	205	+11.4%
FE	114	133	+2.92%
Completed/Passed	71	67	-16.47%

Withdrawn	12	30	+12.03%
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83. There were 133 young people from the Virtual College cohort who attended college courses in AY2021-22. This represents a 2.92% increase compared to AY2020-21.

84. There were 67 young people who completed college courses and 30 young people who withdrew from education. In addition, two young people withdrew from college and successfully completed an RPA compliant work-based learning provision. This represents a 16.47% decrease in the number of successful completions and a 12.03% increase in the proportion of young people who withdrew or did not complete qualifications from college courses.

85. The Virtual College have continued to monitor and support the 30 young people who withdrew/did not completed their college course of those, 11 progressed into employment no training, 9 withdrew due to poor mental health, 8 re-engaged with working towards provision i.e., STEP and 2 withdrew due to pregnancy.

86. There are prominent trends within the early leaver cohort, these can be summarised in to 4 categories: poor mental health, not meeting attendance/behavioural expectations, placement stability/move, change of ambition.

87. Across all levels, 36 young people remain on their programme of study and are expected to complete courses in AY2021-22, including 21 young people on 2-year courses. **Table 4** below shows the breakdown of qualification levels.

<b>Table 4: Hampshire Virtual College breakdown of qualifications AY2021 /22</b>				
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Complete/ Pass</b>	<b>Withdrawn/ Not Passed</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
Entry Level	14	4	18	2
Level 1	14	6	20	0
Level 2	21	9	30	3
Level 3 Vocational	7	7	14	22
Level 3 Academic	6	4	10	12
GCSE	2	0	2	0
ESOL	3	0	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>36</b>
	69.08%	30.92%	100%	

88. For AY2021/22, of students on level 3 courses, just over one third followed an academic A-level course route with just under two thirds of students following a level 3 vocational/ technical route.
89. Four Year 13 students successfully progressed to Higher Education in AY2021-22, with an additional two deferred places for AY2022-23. University destinations include:
- Psychology & Counselling at Bournemouth University
  - Business and Marketing at University of Westminster
  - Law at University of Westminster
  - Circus Arts at The National Centre for Circus Arts
90. The Virtual College has enhanced the level of resource for looked-after children and young people, utilising Virtual School funding and external grants such as the European Social Fund to enable an increased level of support. More can be done to increase the reach of the Virtual College, through the Virtual School and local college partnerships to further improve Year 11 transition and post 16 PEP support (including the extended responsibility to children with a social worker).
91. The Virtual School collects an update from Hampshire and neighbouring local authority colleges annually around their specific offer for children in care, so this is visible to young people and their carers as they make their post 16 choices. The 2022 edition of 'What's Next' is now available online <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-college/cic-virtual-college-what-next.pdf>

### **The Virtual School's approach to improving educational outcomes**

92. There are several factors which impact on the educational outcomes of children in care. [A study by the Rees Centre, The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data](#) (2015) noted that, controlling for all factors, there are several which consistently contribute to low educational outcomes of young people in care in secondary schools. These include the length of time children are in care, the number of changes in placement (with each additional change in placement after age 11 associated with one third of a grade less at GCSE) and the number of school changes (with young people who change school in key stage 4 scoring over five grades less than those who did not). School absence and exclusion are also significant factors as are placement and school type with young people in residential settings, special schools or pupil referral units scoring lower than those with similar characteristics in mainstream schools.
93. The Virtual School ensures that these factors inform the practice and priorities of their work as outlined in this report. We place significant focus on ensuring, through training, that designated teachers and schools have a better understanding of children's social, emotional and mental health

needs to ensure they can be supported to remain in the best mainstream schools wherever possible.

94. The quality of bespoke training and support for designated teachers in their statutory role has contributed significantly to the capacity and expertise that exists in our schools in meeting the needs of care experienced children. An ambitious attachment and trauma aware schools programme commenced in April 2019, led by the Virtual School following co-construction with schools and local authority services. The Hampshire programme is part of the Alex Timpson national programme of attachment aware schools and is being externally evaluated by the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford. There are 78 schools who have completed the ATAS Programme and a further cohort will begin during this academic year.
95. The Virtual School is continuing to provide support through termly network meetings and bespoke school support where appropriate. The Virtual School has also responded to training needs identified by schools and commission Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Service where needed for specific inputs. The emphasis going forward is on designated teachers disseminating their knowledge and expertise widely within their school community through training, development, and peer support. It is expected that approaches, such as emotional coaching will be shared with key members of staff to promote a whole school ethos. As a result, designated teachers can influence what happens in the classroom in real time, supporting colleagues to co-regulate with children who struggle with their emotions, which may de-escalate situations which could result in sanctions, such as a fixed-term exclusion. We will continue to develop our virtual offer to designated teachers and increase those accessing the Virtual School Moodle.
96. The Virtual School is collaborating with colleagues across Hampshire to develop our online training offer for social workers, foster carers and residential workers.
97. The partnership with the Advisory Teacher Team within the Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT) has been strengthened, as a result of our specialist Education Adviser in the Virtual school working in partnership to drive a joint approach, targeting intervention at those children most vulnerable at point of transition into year R. We hope this will continue to build professional knowledge across settings and schools, around the impact of attachment and trauma on our youngest children and how to best meet their development needs.
98. We monitor attendance and exclusion data for all our children in care to identify young people at risk of non-engagement and to ensure appropriate assessment, intervention and support packages are in place in a timely way where needed.

99. The Virtual School works closely with social work colleagues and managers to ensure that, where placement moves are essential, school moves are avoided especially in the final years of schooling to maintain school stability. Wherever possible and appropriate, children have continued at their school whilst care placement changes have taken place. This work is underpinned by the Virtual School's protocol around school provision. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school/guidance>
100. We also ensure that our children and young people are prioritised to attend schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding'. We ensure that the network around children focus on progress over time in recognition that many children take longer to make significant progress.
101. The progress of children in care does, of course, show much variation, which suggests that interventions do need to be tailored to the characteristics and experience of individual children and should be reflected in the needs analysis and actions plans in their PEPS. It is important to remember that children in care will also experience multiple factors simultaneously and will feel the impact of these vulnerabilities in individual ways. It is evident that a number of children enter care during their secondary school years, so important that our schools can identify and address gaps in a timely way.
102. The Virtual School will continue to work with a range of teams and services to explore what good corporate parenting looks like in different contexts, raising awareness, developing the evidence base of good practice, and developing increased accountability around the statutory duty, so children in care are consistently prioritised.
103. During 2021-22 and beyond, the Hampshire Virtual School and College will consolidate its approach as an 'all through' integrated service with a view to ensuring consistency of approach and promoting collaborative working to improve educational experiences and outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

104. The Virtual School remains committed to removing the inequality in educational outcomes between children in care and the wider population of children. This means working in partnership with the whole system for children across schools, education and inclusion and social care, returning constantly to the question for us as corporate parents – *'Would this be good enough for my child?'*

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	Yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

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## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Panel:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	5 June 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Annual Children in Care Report 2022-23
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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#### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the achievements, progress and challenges of the services provided by Hampshire Children's Services to children in the care of Hampshire County Council.
2. This report will focus on the work of the statutory social work teams.
3. This report will not duplicate information already shared within reports presented to the Corporate Parenting Board this year but will refer to such reports / presentations.

#### Recommendation(s)

4. The Corporate Parenting Board support the priority areas for Children's Services, in relation to our children in care as being:
  - Strengthening the voice of the Looked After Child and impact on service delivery.
  - Promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the CLA Health Assessment process and service so that it meets the physical and mental health needs of Children in Care (including dental and immunisations).
  - Improve the educational outcomes of Children in Care and effectiveness of the process and service, including the service provided by the Hampshire Virtual School.
  - Improve placement stability and increase placement choice for Children in Care.
  - Children in our care will be safeguarded from harm including, all aspects of exploitation.
  - Increase opportunities for Children in Care to safely live outside of the care system through Special Guardianship (SGO) assessments and reunification to family where appropriate.
  - Ensure the needs of all children seeking asylum in the UK are understood and met through new service delivery.

- Improve the training for all social workers for Children in Care resulting in measurable impact.

## **Executive Summary**

5. Children in the care of the local authority are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. It is vital that the care we provide to children in care is of the highest standard and that everyone involved in supporting and providing that care is aspirational for all our children.
6. This report aims to assure the Corporate Parenting Board that Hampshire's children in care are well supported, and the needs of our children are known, and plans are reflective of the need to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people.
7. The report will provide the Board with the characteristics of Hampshire's children in care, the age and length of time in care, where children are currently living, the number of children in foster care, residential homes or other settings, the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and placement stability.
8. The report will also provide information about social worker caseloads to reassure the Board that these are manageable and social workers are able to dedicate sufficient time to children, regardless of their level of need.
9. The report will provide information on children who go missing to evidence how we are safeguarding them from harm and risk of exploitation. It will also provide information on the population of UASC who are being looked after by Hampshire and how their needs are being met.
10. The report should be read alongside the Virtual School update report and the presentation, to update on the Children in Care Health Assessments in 2022. These set the context and outline the current focus to improve the timeliness of children's statutory health assessments and the transformation work to improve the quality and timeliness of the Personal Education Plans.
11. The report also needs to be read alongside the update on the Participation Action plan report presented to the board in March 2023. It will detail how children and young people are able to express their views, wishes and feelings and how Children's Services consider this. It also includes the work to improve how we are planning to strengthen and show the impact of the voice of the child on service delivery through the Children in Care Councils and Care Experienced Adults Councils.
12. The report will outline the key areas of focus over the next twelve months.

## **Who are our "Children in Care"?**

13. Children in the care of the local authority is any child / young person between the age of 0 -18 years that has been in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours. This generally means any child or young person that has been unable to remain living at home and there is a need to

be looked after by foster carers, in residential homes or with other relatives, this sometimes includes children living with their parents.

14. Children can become looked after because of a voluntary agreement by their parents, or because of a Care Order made by a Court.
15. Young people between the ages of 16 – 18 years old can provide their own consent to come into care and do not require the agreement from those with parental responsibility.
16. A continued significant priority for Children's Services to improve the quality of care that is provided, and crucially, that it is the right children, in care at the right time. This is reflective of the changing needs of children and their families and in recognition to the importance of family life and home being the preferred place for children and young people to grow up in, if it is safe.

### **Hampshire Demographic**

17. Hampshire Public Health have published the Starting Well Summary, ([Starting well - Children and young people | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) 2019 – 2024 which looks at all children in Hampshire aged 0 -19 years and how well they do living in this area.
18. The summary highlights that there are just over 322,000 children and young people aged 0 to 19 years living in Hampshire. This makes up nearly a quarter of the County's total population (23%) which is slightly less than in England as a whole (24%).
19. Overall, Hampshire children and young people have good health and good life chances, with low levels of infant and child mortality and good educational attainment. However, this masks some significant inequalities.
20. In Hampshire, our children are less likely to:
  - live in poverty (1 in 10 compared to 1 in 5 nationally).
  - be homeless (1 in 1,000 families compared to 1 in 500 families nationally).
  - be born with low or very low birth weight (1 in 16 compared to 1 in 13 nationally).
  - be born to teenage mothers (1 in 167 12-17 year olds compared to 1 in 110 nationally).
21. Our children are more likely to:
  - attend school regularly (lower persistent absenteeism and lower permanent exclusions: 1 in 3,300 compared to 1 in 1,500 nationally).
  - be in education, employment or training. Only 3% of 16-18 years olds in Hampshire are not in education, employment or training (compared to 4.2% nationally).
  - to be immunised against infectious diseases (most immunisations achieving 95% coverage).

22. In Hampshire, the level of educational attainment at all stages of development is good, with performance better than national comparators across all educational stages (January 2017). However, for different groups of pupils, variations in performance are evident. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Given the right support, children with SEND and vulnerable children, including those with disabilities, can thrive and develop.
23. However:
- 1 in 10 of our dependent children under 20 years old lives in relative poverty.
  - 1 in 10 of our children under 16 years old lives in a low-income family
  - 15% of 15 year olds have a long term illness, disability or medical condition.
  - One third of Children in Care are affected by poor emotional wellbeing.
  - Increasing numbers of children have complex health and social care needs.
  - Children in care are less likely to be up to date with their immunisations.
  - It is estimated that in Hampshire between 7,864 and 14,156 children experience some form of disability and that 1 in 3 disabled children lives in poverty.
24. The main causes for concern in Hampshire are:
- Increasing obesity and overweight in 4–5-year-olds (22.8% up from 21.1% previous year (2014/15) and more than national figure of 22.1% nationally).
  - Emotional wellbeing of our children and young people - there are higher rates of hospital admissions for self-harm (10-24 year olds) in Hampshire than nationally (590.9 per 100,000 compared to England's rate of 430.5 per 100,000,2015/16).
  - Educational attainment in disadvantaged groups including SEND.
  - Small and decreasing proportion of young children achieving the daily physical activity levels.
25. All the above is relevant when we consider the care we provide children who are looked after in Hampshire, and this is also reflected in the priority areas for children in care.
26. The Health Assessment report presented to the board in October 2022 outlines the significant work to improve the timeliness of Health assessments, which consider the children's general health as well as their emotional wellbeing. Further updates will be presented to the board.
27. The Virtual School annual report presented to the board in 2022 also gave an overview of how children in care are supported around their education and including those with SEND.
28. The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is of huge importance and has become increasingly prevalent after the COVID pandemic. One of the focused interventions Hampshire are developing, is to ensure that children in care's needs are fully understood and that children and young people have access to mental health and emotional well-being services when needed. Consultations with the CAMHS specialist workers from our

Specialist Intensive Worker hubs will provide support and guidance to the child, carer and worker, and help to make referrals to core CAMHS in a timely way, where necessary.

## Data for Children in Care

29. As of December 2022, Hampshire had 1822 of its children in care, this being 0.56% of Hampshire's population. The following table shows the gradual increase in numbers over the last 12 month period.

Date	CLA
04-Jan-22	1,709
07-Feb-22	1,712
07-Mar-22	1,714
04-Apr-22	1,729
02-May-22	1,736
06-Jun-22	1,742
04-Jul-22	1,742
01-Aug-22	1,751
05-Sep-22	1,746
03-Oct-22	1,793
07-Nov-22	1,799
05-Dec-22	1,822

30. The number of CLA has continued to increase over the last 12 months in spite of ongoing transformation programmes to keep more children safely at home and in the community, which have slowed the increase of children coming into care.
31. There has been a significant increase in UASC in Hampshire over the last 24 months, rising from 67 in 2020/1 to 106 in 2021/22 and as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 now sits at 239.
32. We have only seen a 1% increase in our children in care population which is a nominal increase (excluding our children seeking asylum where we are unable to influence the outcome of coming into care due to their circumstances). As well as this, the work to reunify children home when safe and appropriate remains a constant focus to ensure that only the right children are in public care.

**Table 1 - The age, gender, and type of placement for children in care**

Gender	Age Group	Sum of Clients											Grand Total
		With parents	Family centre	Indep. Living (not B+B)	Foster (rel or friend)	Foster (HCC)	Foster (IFA)	Placed for Adopn.	Res home	Secure unit	YOI or prison	Other	
Female	< 1	3	2	.	2	12	1	.	1	.	.	.	21
	1 - 4	7	.	.	21	26	8	11	.	.	.	.	73
	5 - 9	14	.	.	31	55	45	.	4	.	.	.	149

	10 - 15	22	.	.	52	131	70	.	42	1	.		318
	16 - 17	10	.	42	14	39	21	.	22	.	.	10	158
<b>Female Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>719</b>
Male	< 1	2	3	.	2	19	3	2	.	.	.	.	31
	1 - 4	16	3	.	19	31	15	18	.	.	.	.	102
	5 - 9	16	.	.	44	57	58	3	16	.	.	1	196
	10 - 15	21	.	1	56	116	158	.	82	.	.	3	437
	16 - 17	11	.	101	26	34	104	.	70	1	1	9	357
	U/b	.	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	.	4
<b>Male Total</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,127</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1,846</b>

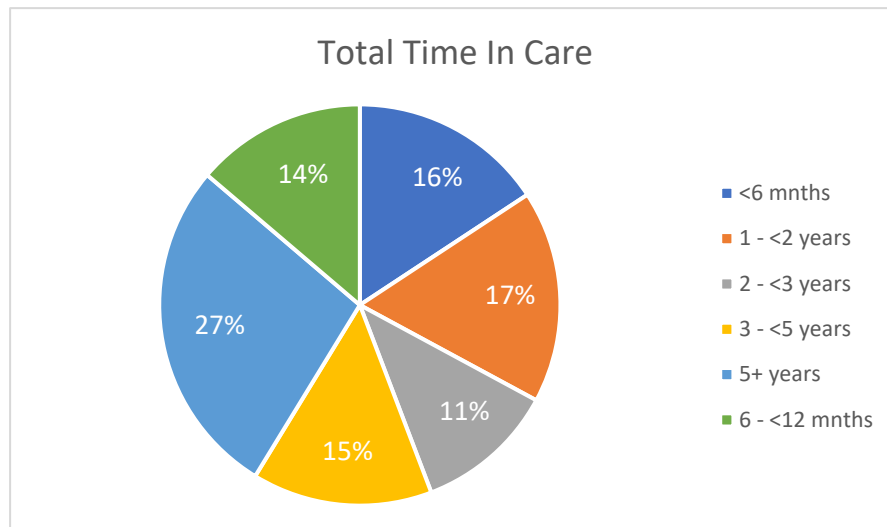
33. The above reflects where children and young people are currently placed and this shows our greatest proportion of children in care are between the ages of 10-15 years old, with significantly more males than females in care.
34. With regards to the main placement, it is positive to note that more children in care are placed with foster carers, and an increasing number being placed with Hampshire carers, currently 522, which is reflective of the work to increase the number of in house foster carers.
35. There is also an increase in the number of children who are 16 and 17 years old over the last 2 years that live in supported accommodation (rising from 88 to 144), which is reflective of the work to promote their independence and transition to adulthood.
36. What is also significant to note, is the number of children placed with parents, the data reflects 122 children which means they are children subject to a Court Order but in their parents' care. There is further information regarding this within the reunification section of this report.
37. It is also of interest to note that there is an increasing number of children, 267 who are placed with family members or friends who have been approved as Connected Carers. All of these children are identified by Children's Services in our work to reduce this number of children in care but can continue to be supported under an alternative legal order such as a Special Guardianship Order.

### How long are children in care?

**Table 2 – Time in care**

Time in care	Grand Total
<6 mnths	<b>289</b>
6 - <12 mnths	<b>253</b>
1 - <2 years	<b>315</b>

2 - <3 years	208
3 - <5 years	267
5+ years	505
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,837</b>

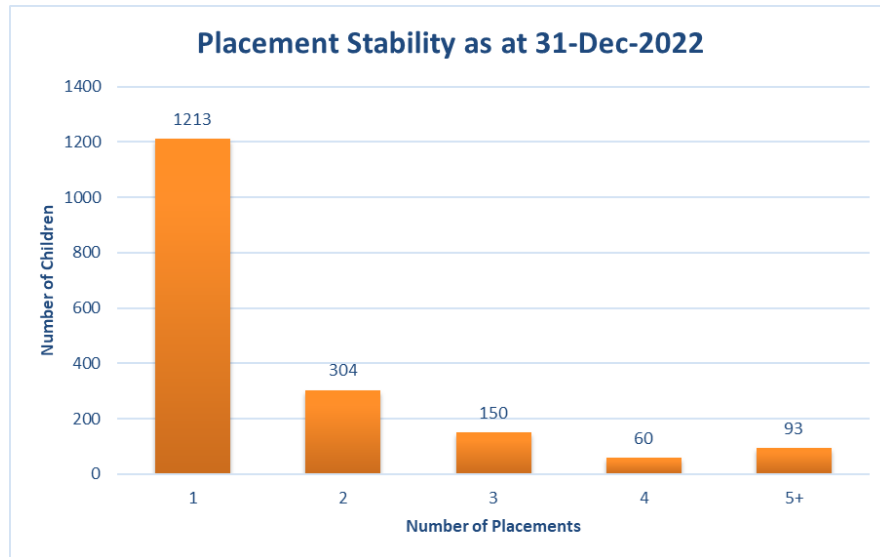


38. The data shows that most children are in care for over five years, with 27% of children being in this age bracket. The least number of children are in care are between 2-3 years at 11%. This data is similar to that of 2 years ago. However, there is a decrease from 20% to 15% (64 children) now in care between the ages 3-5 years; but an increase of 3% (107 children) now in care over 5 years.
39. This data cannot be taken in isolation, it serves to provide high level information and trends may change over time with the changes to practice meaning children are only in care for as long as needed. Within 12 months of being in care 30% of children exit the care system. This is to be expected as matters placed before the Court should be concluded within 26 weeks, by which time a long-term plan will be identified which could be for return home, to wider family under alternative orders, or a plan for adoption.

### Placement Stability

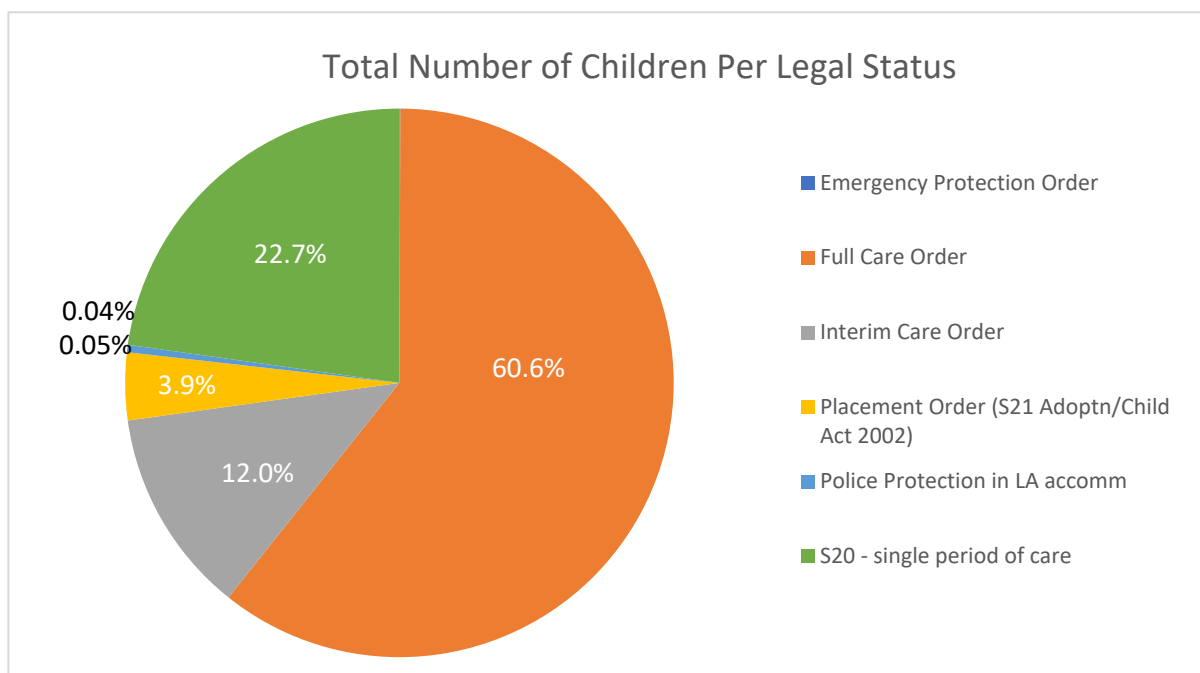
40. The below chart reflects the stability of children in care over the last 12 months. Positively most children (1,213) children remain in the same placement, an additional 304 only having one move. A smaller number of children, 93 having had over 5 placement moves over the year.
41. Placement moves can be for positive reasons, that children are returned to family, that children are able to transition from residential care to foster care. Equally it can mean that children's needs are not being best met in the current placement and there is a need to move. The important factor is that we know the reasons for the move.
42. An example of a child's journey where changes of placements are for a positive outcome could be a 1-year-old placed in foster care, the matter is placed before the Court and the conclusion of Care Proceedings is that the

child's needs will be best met via adoption. The child then moves to the adoptive placement but initially remains a child looked after. Another example is an 8 year old, initially being placed in a residential placement due to complex needs, but after a period of two years was moved to a foster placement and was able to live in a family environment safely. Both of these examples would mean that the child's care journey consisted of two placements.



### Legal Status of Children in Care

43. The legal status of a child in care is important, it specifies who has legal parental responsibility for a child in care enabling decisions to be made. In respect of children who are in care under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, the responsibility rests solely with the parent and when a Care Order exists, this responsibility is shared between parents and the local authority. All children who are in care, but living with a parent, will be subject to an interim or care order.





44. The children who are looked after under a full or interim Care Order make up the greatest number, which is to be expected. There is a decrease of 4.4% compared to 2 years ago. The number who are looked after under Section 20 agreement has increased by 5.7%, which is as a result of the increased number of children seeking asylum (UASC) now cared for by Hampshire.

### **Ethnicity of Children in Care – excluding UASC**

45. This data has not altered significantly in the last 2 years with the majority of Hampshire’s children in care being White British(87%).

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
African	10	0.61%
Any other Asian background	8	0.49%
Any other Black background	8	0.49%
Any other ethnic group	22	1.35%
Any other Mixed background	17	1.05%
Any other White background	34	2.10%
Bangladeshi	2	0.12%
Caribbean	1	0.06%
Chinese	6	0.37%
Gypsy/Roma	4	0.24%
Indian	2	0.12%
Information not yet obtained	11	0.67%
Refused	4	0.24%
Traveller of Irish Heritage	3	0.18%
White and Asian	24	1.48%
White and Black African	20	1.23%
White and Black Caribbean	20	1.23%
White British	1422	87.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1618</b>	

### **UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children**

46. Hampshire currently have 228 UASC under the age of 18 years and currently in care. There has been a significant increase in UASC in Hampshire over the last few years, rising from 67 in 2020/21 to 106 in 2021/22 and 228 as of 31 March 2023. They now make up 12% of Hampshire’s looked after population. UASC are supported in specialist foster placements or in supported accommodation.

47. The majority of these continue to be 16 – 17 years old and from Afghanistan.

**Table 3 – Age of UASC**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count of Client name</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
11	2	0.87%
12	1	0.43%

13	5	2.19%
14	12	5.26%
15	32	14.03%
16	89	39.03%
17	87	38.15%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>228</b>	

**Table 4 – Nationality of UASC:**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Count of Client name</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Afghan	94	41.22%
Albanian	13	5.70%
Burkinabe	1	0.43%
Egyptian	5	2.19%
Eritrean	10	4.38%
Iranian	13	5.70%
Iraqi	11	4.82%
Kuwaiti	1	0.43%
Nigerian	1	0.43%
Not Recorded	36	15.78%
Pakistani	2	0.87%
South Sudanese	1	0.43%
Sudanese	20	8.77%
Syrian	6	2.63%
Turkish	6	2.63%
Ukrainian	1	0.43%
Vietnamese	7	3.07%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>228</b>	

48. Hampshire have created a specialist Refugee team. Since the team went live at the beginning of March 2023, all UASCs that were open to the children in care teams have been transferred.
49. This figure is made up of children who have come through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) as well as children who have arrived spontaneously into the UK.
50. The number of UASCs has increased due to the mandatory quota moving from 0.07% to 0.1%. The Home Office is anticipating that there will be an increase in the number of people arriving in the UK via small boats and therefore the department has expanded the provision and recruitment to an additional team is being put in place in preparation.
51. There continues to be a good link with the NTS who have provided opportunities for workers to visit the Kent Intake unit to support with learning around the process.

### Disabled Children:

52. There are currently 687 children open to the Disabled Children’s Team, of which 63 children are in care, 37 of these children are subject to Interim/Full Care Orders with the remaining 26 children in care under a voluntary arrangement.
53. Of the 63 children, 7 children are in in-house foster care, 16 children are in IFA foster care, 1 in family and friend arrangements, 5 are in independent living and 31 are in residential care. The residential care usually incorporates the education provision specifically to meet the child’s needs.

With parents	Indep. Living (not B+B)	Foster (rel or friend)	Foster (HCC)	Foster (IFA)	Res home (NCP) childn.	Res home other	School	Other	Grand Total
3	5	1	7	16	26	4	1	0	63

### Children in Care Teams

54. Hampshire have 6 children in Care Teams, each having one Team Manager, one Assistant Team Manager and on average 8 social workers (slight variation reflective of case numbers). The average caseload for a CIC social worker is 20 children per full time social worker.
55. The Children in Care team used to have a stable workforce, but unfortunately several teams are now having to rely on Agency social workers. However, all those that work in the team are passionate and committed to children in care.

### Outcome Based Placement Team

56. The Children in Care teams work closely with the Outcomes Based placements team, with the purpose of ensuring that children are in the right provision for their needs and that the provider is accountable for targeted support to meet the young person’s needs. This ensures that focus is on promoting and meeting the needs of young people and encouraging their development. A specific Support Needs Assessment is used to ensure progression is made throughout the course of placement, identifying clear SMART goals to inform the wider objective of the long-term care plan.
57. Through the child’s placement, outcome planning meetings are held with providers who are supported and monitored to remain on track with the local authority care plan, this enables children to move on at a time that is right for them.
58. The Outcomes Based Placements team also guide transitions which are required to enable children to move from residential placements back to family, connected carers or foster care. Linking closely with fostering teams

and the independent fostering agencies. In 2022, the team have successfully supported 20 children to have their support reduced or move to residential provision with a reduced package of support. There have been 2 children that have stepped across to foster care and 3 to post 16 supported accommodation.

## **Reunification**

59. Hampshire introduced the Hampshire Approach in 2018 as a method of social work intervention, this is a strengths-based approach focusing on building positives relationships with families, identifying strengths and using this to support change in other areas. For children in care, this has a significant impact around their plan, which aims to ensure that they are in care for as long as needed. Previously a permanence decision would be made for a child to be placed in care and it would be the plan until they reached the age of 18 years.
60. In recognition that family situations can change, there has been significant progress around working with children and their families to enable children to be safely reunified to the care of family over time. This is carefully considered and uses the adapted NSPCC Framework for Reunification to provide a robust assessment to progress plans.
61. Hampshire saw 277 children reunified to the care of their parents in 2022. All were previously in care: for 160 children previous placement was fostering and 66 previous placement was residential.

## **Special Guardianship Orders**

62. It is recognised that children who remain placed within their family or with friends do better, they continue to remain within their family environment where their sense of belonging is maintained within the family.
63. There are currently 868 children living with their Special Guardians in Hampshire. In the period June 2022 to May 2023, 68 children who had been in care for 12 months or more, stopped being looked after as their carers became Special Guardians.
64. There are currently 271 children who are living with their wider family or friends, but due to various reasons, the carers are Connected Carers and the children remain looked after. The children in care teams continue to review these regularly to see how we can increase the number of connected carers offering this vital support as a Special Guardian, this meaning that the child would no longer be looked after and provide the carers with parental responsibility to enable them to make decisions for the child.
65. The post SGO support team was launched in January 2023, and this new team will provide advice and support to Special Guardians. Connected Carers have told us that if they move to become Special Guardians they are worried about not receiving practical support with some challenges e.g. family time, not receiving the same financial support and also not being able to access training. The Post SGO support team has worked closely with the national charity, Kinship Care, and are developing a service that will ensure

Special Guardians are receiving the support and guidance that they require. It is anticipated that the number of Special Guardianship Orders being made will increase.

### Children who go missing from care

66. It is vital that we know the whereabouts of all children in care, this is closely tracked as it is known that children who go missing from care are at increased risk of child exploitation.
67. Child exploitation includes:
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
  - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
  - Modern Slavery
  - Trafficking
  - County Lines (drug running)
68. When a child is looked after and is missing, Children’s Services will show the same concern as any good parent by taking the necessary steps to understand where children are going and why.
69. Over the past 12 months there have been 695 children being reported missing. There will be several and repeated instances for some children. We are aware in each district which children frequently go missing and there is close monitoring of these. A risk assessment/safety plan will inform what support services and actions are required to prevent children and young people from going missing, and to judge when it is appropriate to report them missing to the police. These are determined by individual needs and risks - for some high-risk young people, this would be immediately when out of visual sight of staff, for others this would be if they have failed to return home by 10pm.

Month	Missing Episodes	Missing Children
Jun-22	148	65
Jul-22	180	74
Aug-22	184	57
Sep-22	150	55
Oct-22	135	60
Nov-22	150	55
Dec-22	110	36
Jan-23	115	64
Feb-23	117	49
Mar-23	125	56
Apr-23	125	56
May-23	156	68
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1695</b>	<b>695</b>

70. There is a close working relationship with the Willow/MET teams who work with young people at risk of exploitation. This work is also supported by the

4LSCP (Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership). There is a need for all agencies to work together to tackle exploitation to ensure that there is an effective response to the changing needs within the County.

71. For children who go missing from care they are offered a return from missing conversation and leaflets are provided to both children and their carers to provide further information which they read to increase their understanding of why we are worried when they are not where they are supposed to be.
72. There are a number of different strategies in place to ensure that children in care have effective plans and support with issues around exploitation, below is an indication of just some of the work in place:
  - Training – There is access for staff to attend training to increase their understanding around current issues regarding child exploitation, the Willow Team are responsive and will deliver district sessions where the needs arise.
  - There is a separate HIPS (Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth, Southampton) Missing training set, managed by the Willow Team.
  - There are two missing coordinators employed in Willow whose task is to work with children who go missing frequently, Willow also review the daily missing data as a duty task.
  - There is currently a targeted piece of work by police under Child Centred Policing work where there is a review of all the 'safe and wells' interviews as there is a difference between the work that the police do when meeting children once returned, to that of social workers but to equally consider how the two agencies can effectively work together to support vulnerable children.
  - The Missing People charity have just reviewed the HIOW Constabulary Safe and Well process and are embedded in the HIOWC training and we are able to use their services to report missing children.
  - Op Salvus – is a Police project around High-Risk missing children who get an upgraded response from the police where MET issues are a concern.
  - Op METs – Willow TM & Police Sergeants meet monthly to review high risk cases where missing and exploitation are issues and quality assure the risk level.
  - There is a HIPS Strategic & Operational MET meeting process looking at best practice across the county.
  - District Op MET – local multi-agency meeting to consider the high and medium risk young people, looking at emerging risk and disruption planning at a local level.
  - CERAF (risk assessment tool used by professional to determine a risk level) – upgraded to review and score risk around all forms of exploitation including Missing.
  - UASC Collaboration – A multi-agency pan Hampshire review of UASC children including long-term missing and trafficked children.
  - NRM – (National Referral Mechanism) - Training has been set up and Hampshire is a pilot area for local NRM decisions.

## Children's wishes and views:

73. Hampshire has a strong history of weaving the voice of children and young people into all that we do. As part of the Hampshire Approach the department now have all the recording in relation to children, including visits, assessments, plans are written to the child using strengths-based language that is appropriate to the understanding of the child. We moved away from standalone 'Participation Case Notes' and instead practitioners integrate the voice of children and young people across all recording including supervision notes. Strength based direct work tools like the 'what's working, what's not' ensures all voices are captured and inform the social worker analysis.
74. Children are involved in developing their My Life My Future plans, they do this directly with their social worker, their carer and some write it themselves. The child's perspective is embedded throughout the document and features age-appropriate scaling as both a direct work tool and also to demonstrate change over time. This has seen improved engagement from children around their care plan as they feel very much part of it.
75. Children are spoken to alone by their social worker on visits and their Independent Reviewing Officer also ensures their wishes are understood in meeting with them alone and as part of their 6 monthly reviews.
76. Review participation performance for the whole county remains above 90% throughout the last 12 months. This evidences that a high percentage of young people have their opportunity to participate in their reviews and decisions being made about their future. IROs have continued to seek children's views however following the Ofsted focused inspection, it was agreed for all children to be visited 3 weeks before their review to ensure that we capture their views independently on how they want their review to be undertaken and seek their views on what they want discussed within their meeting and what their expectations are.

## Findings from 2022 Bright Spots Survey

77. Bright Spots is a national survey run by the charity Coram Voice which collates the voice of the child and their experience in care. This is a biannual survey, which was again completed in 2022.
78. An initial review of the findings for the *Children In Care* survey has highlighted:
  - Overwhelmingly **our young people have a high level of trust in their carers**, with 100% of respondents aged 4-11 responding positively and 95% of those aged 11-18.
  - **The level of trust in social workers was also high** ranging from 89 – 100% across the age ranges.
  - 54% of Hampshire's 11-18 year olds had the same social worker over the year which is **higher than other local authorities at 34%**.
  - Positively the vast majority of our young people responded that their lives are improving with 83 – 92% across the age range describing their lives as 'a bit better or much better'.
79. Areas from the review which identify potential areas for improvement include:

- Whilst there are a number of positive responses about contact with social works, 2 in 10 of 11-18 year olds had 3 or more social workers in the past year.
- 1 in 10 11-18 year olds described 'hardly ever' having a chance to practice life skills.
- 1 in 10 8-18 year olds hardly ever felt included in decisions about them.

80. We note that there was a relatively low response rate of 17%. This has been considered to identify learning and opportunities for improvement. The full analysis is still being completed and the findings will inform service planning, transformation and service improvement projects.

## Participation

81. In recent years the responsibility for Participation has moved from a standalone role sat centrally, to every district and service. The rationale for this shift is the recognition that participation is everyone's responsibility and that we should incorporate it in business-as-usual activity.

82. Local teams have continued to deliver a broad and varied range of participation events and activities throughout 2022. Please refer to the 'Update on Participation report' submitted on 28 March 2023. This report aims to give a flavour of the breadth and impact of these events.

83. Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan, 2022 – 2025. Focus groups were carried out with 120 children and young people in Hampshire: • 77.5% were aged 11-15 years old • 14% were from ethnic minority backgrounds • 16% were identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). In addition, feedback from 479 children and young people was collated by the Hampshire Members of Youth Parliament.

84. Big Activity Week - this ran from the 1 - 5 August 2022 where 77 Children in Care in school years 3-9 and in Hampshire County Council Local Authority Care, took part in 6 activity weeks. From the New Forest to the Brecon Beacons in Wales, these young people made lifelong memories and created friendships with young people in similar situations to themselves. The week was run by Hampshire Outdoors staff along with other staff within Children Services. The week was free for all young people with the cost partly funded by National Lottery Community Fund with most of the cost coming from Hampshire Outdoors, a part of Skills and Participation.

85. Care Leavers week - Care Leavers Week in Hampshire is going from strength to strength with the largest attendance across the week that we have ever had. Our teams across Hampshire arranged a series of events in collaboration with our care experienced adults.

- Open Mic Night Hosted by Step-by-Step - Aldershot.
- Wessex Dance Academy Day Event
- Money works course - Via teams.
- Meet the Southwest Care leaver Team – Totton
- Thinking of going to Uni? Support in higher education for Care experienced Young people via Teams.
- London Meet Up



- Winchester Uni tour – Winchester
  - Crate Stack - Aldershot
  - Halloween Spooktacular – Gosport
86. Developing Child Exploitation Resources for schools across Hampshire. In 2022 Hampshire County Council's Willow Team, a multi-agency team supporting children at risk of exploitation, launched a series of short films and accompanying teaching packs for schools across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton. The films highlight the dangers of criminal and sexual exploitation, with a particular focus on the grooming process.
  87. The characters in the films were played by local young actors from The Young Creatives. The scripts were written in collaboration with young people being supported by the Willow Team to ensure their authenticity. The resources have been trialled with school groups by Willow and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
  88. C&F Awards 2022 – A young people's judging panel shortlisted the final three for the 'Above and Beyond' award. This is a way for us to involve young people in decision making about activity in the branch (assigned but informed approach).
  89. East Hants Youth Conference – The East Hants Family Support Service supported the annual Youth Conference which focused on young carers in 2022. The event provided activities and facilitated discussion for young people to understand their needs and what support should be offered.
  90. Disabled Children's Team (DCT) Audit tool for children - A SNAP audit tool has been developed for use by children, to capture the child's voice. The tool includes video clip questions using Makaton with various options to return answers via video or boxes for use with switches.
  91. Creating a multi-disciplinary residential home. Throughout 2022 we have been planning the opening of a new multi-agency health and social care residential home for young people with complex needs. The home has been renamed by young people as 'Hockley House' in honour of local artist John Hockley. Young People form part of the working group who can share their views and ideas, on everything from interior design to how residents will have their voices heard, as we work towards the opening of the home in Autumn 2023.
  92. Family Fun Day – Havant Disabled Children's Team had two family fun days in April and July 2022 in order to show support to their families, and to provide an opportunity for networking between families and professionals. The events were attended by over 40 children and their parents/carers and feedback confirmed the events were inclusive of their children's needs.
  93. Spring to spring – Test Valley, Family Support Service (FSS) held an event which included bulb planting, pictures, games, crafting, and teddy tombola. Positive feedback was received about the support offered to children and families by Family support workers.

94. Circus skills workshop – this took place over May/June 2022 half term; it a two-hour circus skills activity for children subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and their carers to attend. Carers felt it was good to meet other carers in their situation and it made them feel less alone. Staff signposted carers to community support available and encouraged attendance at the monthly SGO support group and parenting programmes where needed.
95. Theatre backstage experience at Chesil theatre, Winchester – this experience was offered to care experienced children to provide a backstage experience for 20 young people who reside in foster care or residential care locally. The activity was offered after young people had requested an activity that did not involve being onstage, singing or dancing. This evidences that staff had listened to the needs of the young people prior to providing the activity.
96. Art therapy pilot project age (8 - 12) - New Forest FSS co-delivered a 6-week art therapy programme with Hart art therapists. The activity had positive outcomes in that 70% of parents saw an improvement in their child's overall emotional wellbeing. 85% of parents report feeling closer and more connected with their children. 85% of parents have seen an improvement in their child's confidence and self-esteem.
97. The Big Conversation at Swanwick Lodge – The Youth Commission visited Swanwick Lodge to ensure these young people could contribute to the Big Conversation. Their report at the end of the visit fed back: *“Overall, the major points we will be taking forward centre around better training and changing attitudes to mental health and neurodivergence, as well as greater access to support. Before leaving, we were treated to a performance of a twenty-minute play that the children had been rehearsing for, which we enjoyed immensely”*
98. Using Arts across the Youth Offending Service – YOT and YCP offer a range of creative interventions, with Easter and Summer focused activities taking place in 2022. These events provide an opportunity for young people to express themselves through poetry and photography and also gain an Arts Award.

## Conclusions

99. 2022 was an extremely busy for the Children in Care teams, the work has been completed whilst coming out of unprecedented times with COVID. It is a credit to all social workers that they have continued to fully engage children and young people in a way that they can participate, in all visits and planning, to ensure that their voice is heard, they understand what is happening to them and a positive impact can be seen.
100. The focused OFSTED inspection on children in care in January 2023 made it absolutely clear that things have progressed in Hampshire, the language they used to describe our practice was ‘impressive’ and ‘really strong’. They did not raise any cases of concern and were overwhelmingly positive about the strength of practice in respect of children in care, UASC and those children in care who are at risk through missing/exploitation. They were similarly overwhelmingly positive about our social workers who presented as incredibly strong, professional, knowledgeable experts, who were entirely child focused in their practice.

There were 3 recommendations that we have already begun to work on:

- The timeliness of initial and review health assessments for children.
- Independent reviewing officer workloads.
- The voice of the child in the corporate parenting committee.

101. The department has continued to support children living with family and friends under alternative arrangements and without the need for them to be in care, where possible. For those children where care is necessary, the proactive modernising placements programme (MPP), continues to develop new and improved ways of working. We have seen the continued growth of the Hampshire Hives, Placement Stability workers, the development of The Great Behaviour Breakdown training to foster carers, alongside the continuation of the Hampshire Approach in all direct work. This strengths-based way of working aims to improve outcomes for children by developing a continuum of care which can provide the right accommodation and support at the right time for our children in care, and to ensure that children in care have the same life chances as every other child; and they supported to achieve their goals.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	Yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

### 1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### 2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) *will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*

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