

Virtual School Annual Report for August 2022 -August 2023



[Annual Statement from the CIC council](#)

"I chair my own PEP Meetings. This is important, makes me feel happy and like I'm in control." Young Person aged 15yrs

"I was struggling with some of my core subjects. The Virtual School organised for extra support in Maths, English and Music. This has been a great help and my most recent grades have all improved. I now feel far more confident." Young Person aged 16yrs

[Annual Statement from Director of Children's Services](#)

Dear All, I am delighted to present our annual report on the Virtual school for Children in Care and previously looked after young people.

Access to good quality education and educational opportunities is key in helping our children to fulfil their potential and broaden their lived experience. This report highlights the work of the Virtual school and the part they play in supporting schools and educational settings, to provide the best possible educational experience for our children. I am immensely proud of the service and all that our children and young people achieve.

Jane Moore

[Annual statement from the Virtual School Head](#)

As the new Virtual School Head for Leicestershire, it has been an absolute pleasure to join such an inspiring and passionate team who advocate tirelessly for the education and aspirations for our young people in care. This report reflects the hard work and dedication the Virtual School team have given, the hard work and successes of our young people and the vision and future opportunities we hope to support our young people with through their educational journey. Pupil voice is paramount as we seek to understand the support our young people need and therefore, I hope this report reflects some of the changes we are making at the Virtual school in supporting our schools to be trauma informed, advocating for the voice of our young people and also valuing the importance of a wide variety of opportunities to ensure lifelong success.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline the work of the Virtual School in Leicestershire for the academic year August 2022 – August 2023 and analyse the data for the academic year. It will also look at the key priorities for the following academic year 2023-2024. National benchmark data for 2021-22 was published in April 2023 and is considered in this report, however academic year 2022-2023 data will be added after publishing in April 2024. The Children Act 1989 places a duty on the Local Authority (LA) to promote the educational achievement of children looked after by them, wherever they live or are educated through the Virtual School Head (VSH). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 added the duty to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. These duties are set out in the February 2018 statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'.

In Leicestershire we have a team of highly skilled professionals who work passionately to support this role, its duties and advocate for our young people.

We bring together information about children and young people in care to Leicestershire and use this information to support schools, carers and young people to achieve their best in their education.

We are committed to putting our young people first and supporting them to achieve in all aspects of their education and life.

The Virtual School also provides support and advice for children previously in care and those who have been adopted and under special guardianship.

The Virtual School has a non-statutory strategic leadership role for children who have or have had a

our promise
to children in care and care leavers

by Leicestershire County Council and Partners

Our Children Our Future

- We will support you**
 - Provide emotional support
 - Whatever you do we will be there
 - Ensure all your needs are met
 - Provide advice, information, practical and financial support
 - We will make sure that you know what your rights are
 - We will not judge you if things go wrong. We all make mistakes!
- We believe in you**
 - We will value your strengths and talents
 - Support you to overcome any stumbling blocks you face
 - Support you to achieve your goals
 - Embrace your individuality
 - Encourage your aspirations
 - Support you to succeed in life
- We will respect your identity**
 - We will respect your unique identity
 - Support you to develop your own personal beliefs and values
 - Accept, respect and celebrate your identity, culture and heritage
 - Value, respect and support important relationships
 - Encourage you to express your identity positively
- We will listen to you**
 - We will listen and respect you
 - Strive to understand your point of view
 - Place you at the heart of all decisions
 - Support you to talk about your worries and happy times
 - Support you to seek independent advocacy
- We will support you to find a place you can call home**
 - We will do our best to find you a home near to people who are important to you
 - Ensure you feel safe and secure
 - As you grow we will support you to learn new skills to support your independence
 - We are here to support if things go wrong
- We will inform you**
 - Legal entitlements and services
 - Up to date and accurate information
 - Support you to access your care records
 - Provide information throughout your journey
 - We will support you if you need to make a complaint
- We will be a lifelong champion**
 - Support you to break down barriers to other agencies
 - Work together with other services to better meet your needs
 - Encourage and support you to make positive life choices
 - We will make sure you know how to get support when you need it
 - Trust and respect you

social worker (in the last 6 years). This commenced from 1st September 2021. This role is undertaken within the Inclusion team who work closely with the Virtual School, however currently this role is not undertaken within the Virtual School and will not be included in this report.

The Virtual school sits within Social Care and has strong links with both social care and education staff.

Our Guiding Principles

To be Trauma-Informed

- T** Trained staff and training offer for all stakeholders.
- R** Respectful and non-judgemental interactions with colleagues, young people and carers.
- A** Awareness and openness to others' values, opinions and vulnerabilities.
- U** Understanding the need for self-care and colleague support and supervision.
- M** Mindful, supportive and empathic approach to challenges.
- A** Acceptance, advice, and advocacy.

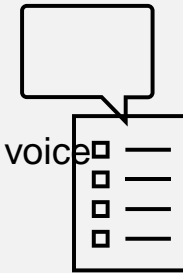


Our Vision

We are here to work with you, your school, carers and social workers so you can reach your potential, be ambitious and aim high!



Careers Days



Your voice



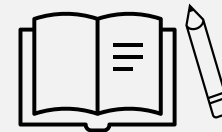
Bookclubs



Care to Dance



Artsmark



My Books, My Story



Pedestrian Arts and Crafts



PEP meetings

Our Model

All young people have access to education

To support with wider opportunities and targeted support where needed

To create a trauma informed whole school culture across the whole of Leicestershire that embeds relationships and inclusion into policy and practice

Our School
And all the things we do together



Sport

Early Years (ages 0-4)

About you

116 of you are on roll at the end of the year.

Listening - Your Voice

we have worked together to adapt your voice pages on your PEPS so we can better hear your voice

Building Relationships

we continued working with the Dollywood project so you each get a book every month until you are 5

Outcome focused - What you learnt You started your journey using the early years framework, learning lots of new things.

1537 books have been sent out to you, supporting with your early reading.



**Our new
logo
designed
by you!**

School Age (age 5-16)

About you

438 of you are on roll at the end of the year.
Your overall attendance was **86.5%**.

Listening - Your Voice

You often tell us you do not know who your Virtual School officer is and want us to consider our language when you are being spoken to in meetings.

Building Relationships - We did

We added pronouns to our PEP documents to ensure your identity and equality are listened to. We have created new Virtual School Officer passports to share with you in the next academic year, so you know who we are.

Outcome focused - What you learnt, **40.9%** achieved a 'Good Level of Development'.

50% of you achieved the expected standard in your phonics screening.

37% of you achieved the expected standard for reading in Year 2.

27.6% of you achieved the expected standard for Reading, Writing and maths in Year 6.

30.2% of you achieved a 9-4 grade in English and Maths

Post 16 (age 16 to 18)

About you

414 young people are on roll at the end of the year. **64.5%** of you are in education, employment, and training at the end of academic year

Listening - Your Voice

We listen at PEP meetings and follow up any issues raised ie support in changing courses/colleges, chasing up missing bursary payments and generally directing you to where you might get support.

Building Relationships - We did

We held a careers event at the King Power stadium to showcase employers and different career paths.

Outcome focused - What you learnt

Post 16 results – pending

This Academic Year we have

Next year our key priorities to support you are:

Trauma Informed



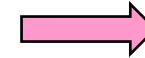
Trained **21** of your schools



Held **6** sessions of training for foster carers



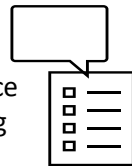
Held **4** sessions of training for social workers



- Support more of your schools to become Trauma informed so that they can support you better

Pupil Voice

88.5 % of you expressed your voice in your PEP meeting



8 of you chaired your own PEP meeting

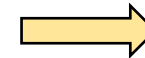


- Increase the number of you chairing your own PEPS and being more involved with your voice

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



Listened to your voice and adapted the voice section of your PEP to consider your pronoun preference

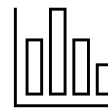


- Increase our staff knowledge around hidden disabilities so we can support you better in your PEP meetings

Collaboration



Quality assured **91%** of your PEPS to a green or gold standard which means they are the best working documents to support you



Used data to create dashboards so we know who needs help when



- Work closely with all other teams you may work with to ensure you are receiving timely education and the right provision to meet your needs

Participation



Launched Artsmark Award and lots of you have been filling in your Journey booklets.



My Books, My Story was nominated for 3 awards and we **won 1!!**



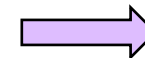
- Continue to partner with wider curriculum and participation activities to increase your opportunities in a variety of areas.

Support to return to education

19 of you attended University this year

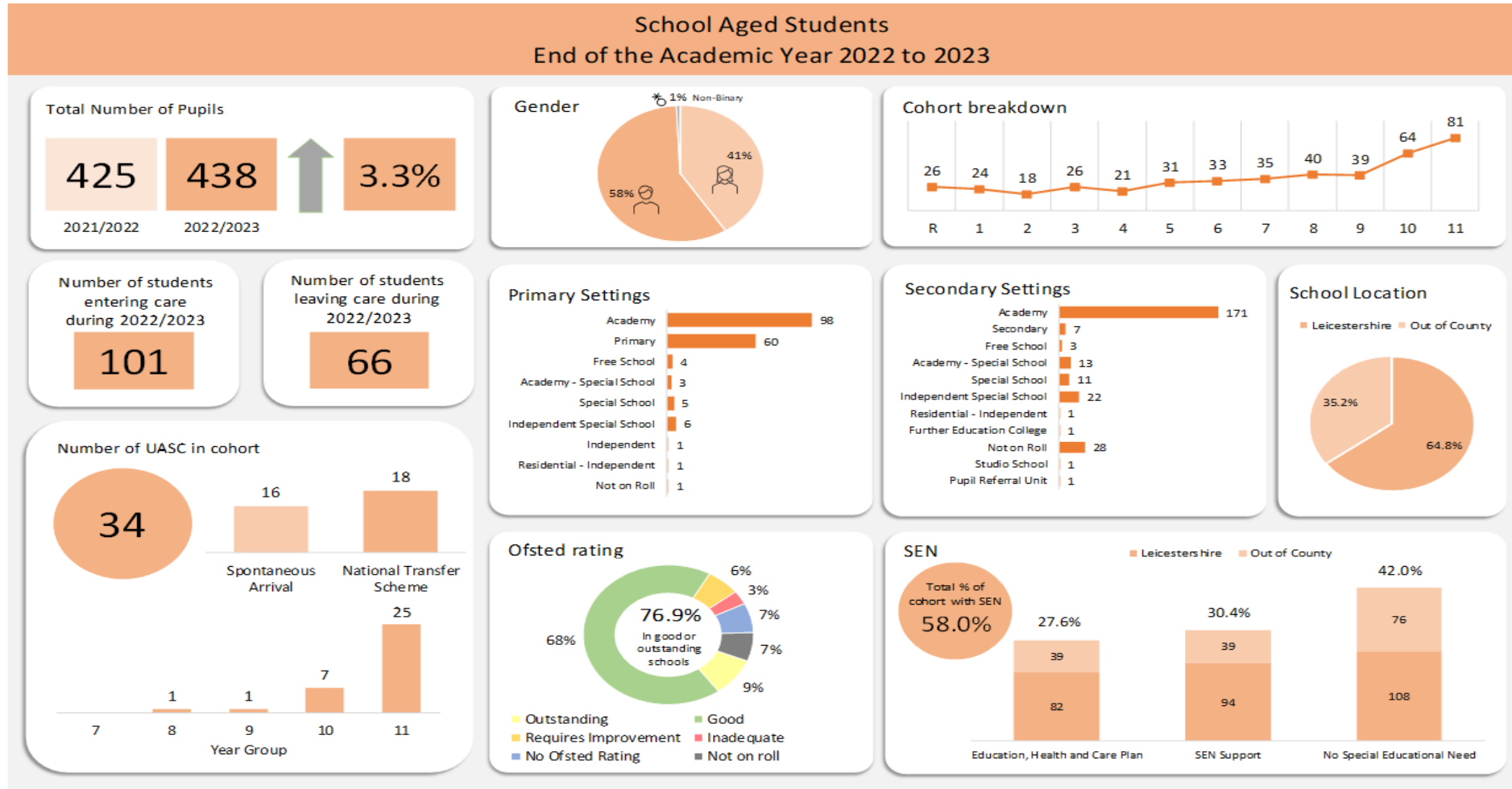


86 of you attended the careers events



- To develop our offer to support those of you who are Not in Education, Employment or Training

Contextual Data



NB – 26 pupils at some point in the academic year were accessing some alternative provision

[Appendix 1: Virtual School Contextual Information 2022-2023](#)


Appendix 1 -
Contextual Data - Ar

[Appendix 2: Alternative Education 2022-2023](#)


Appendix 2 -
Alternative Educatio

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The Virtual school has a duty to ensure the quality of Personal Education Plan (PEP) and arranges PEP meetings for Early Years children attending a nursery or setting, in primary and secondary schools and in post-16 education. Leicestershire PEPs are led by the school, with attendance from the Virtual school, social worker, carer and engagement with the young person.

The Virtual School quality assure every PEP. Each section is rated (red, amber or green) and feedback provided.

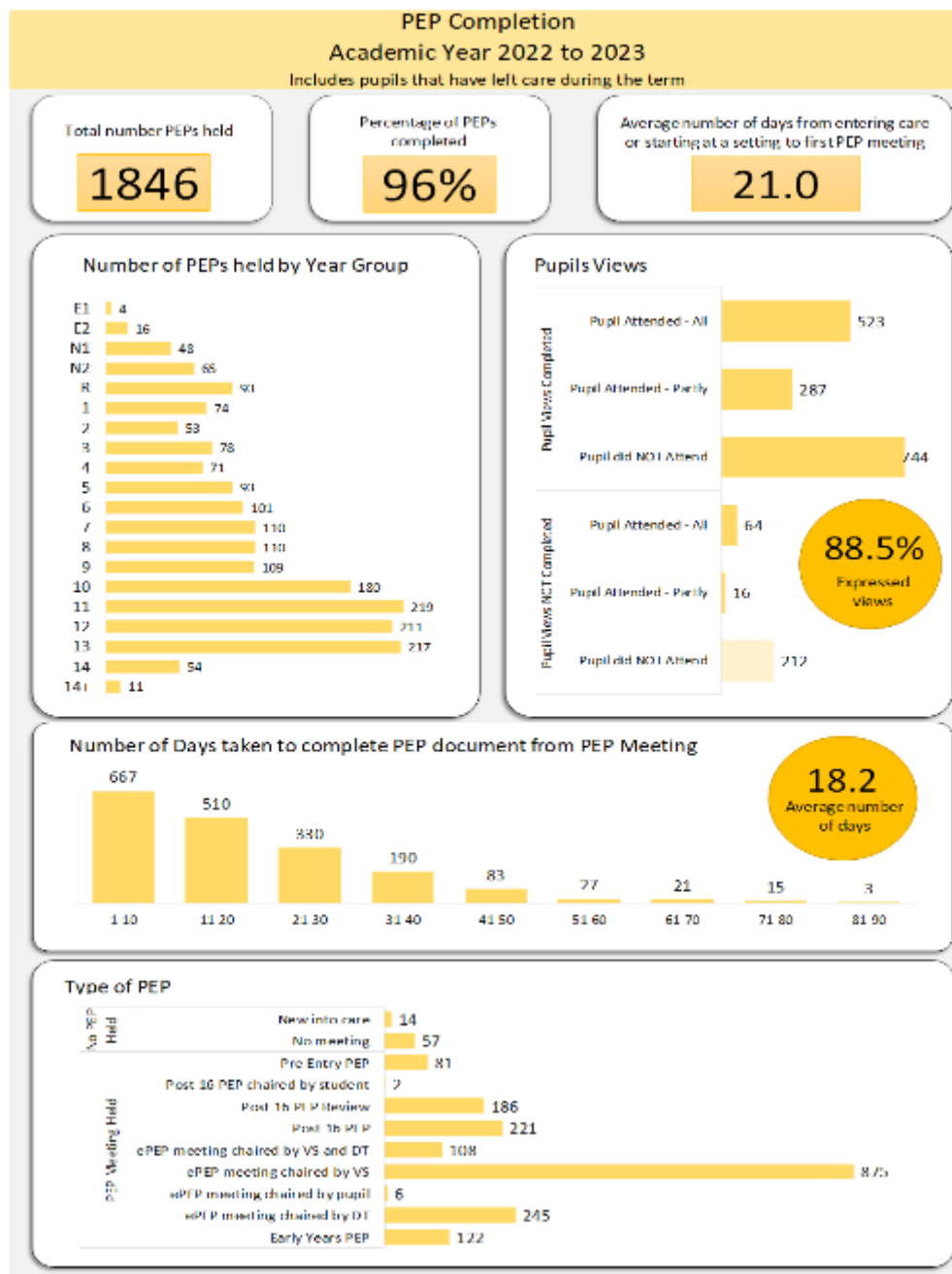
NB:

- Year 14 and 14+ PEPS are only held on request of the young person and therefore, not included in overall percentages.
- The young people included in the No Meeting figure, are those young people who have not had the required number of meetings in the academic year.
- New into Care - are those young people who came into care within the last month of the summer term.
- As well as the 1846 PEPs that were held, the officers of the Virtual School attended and recorded 157 additional educational meetings which are not included in the PEP report.



Appendix 3 - PEP Completion - Academic Year 2022-2023

Appendix 3: PEP Completion 2022-2023

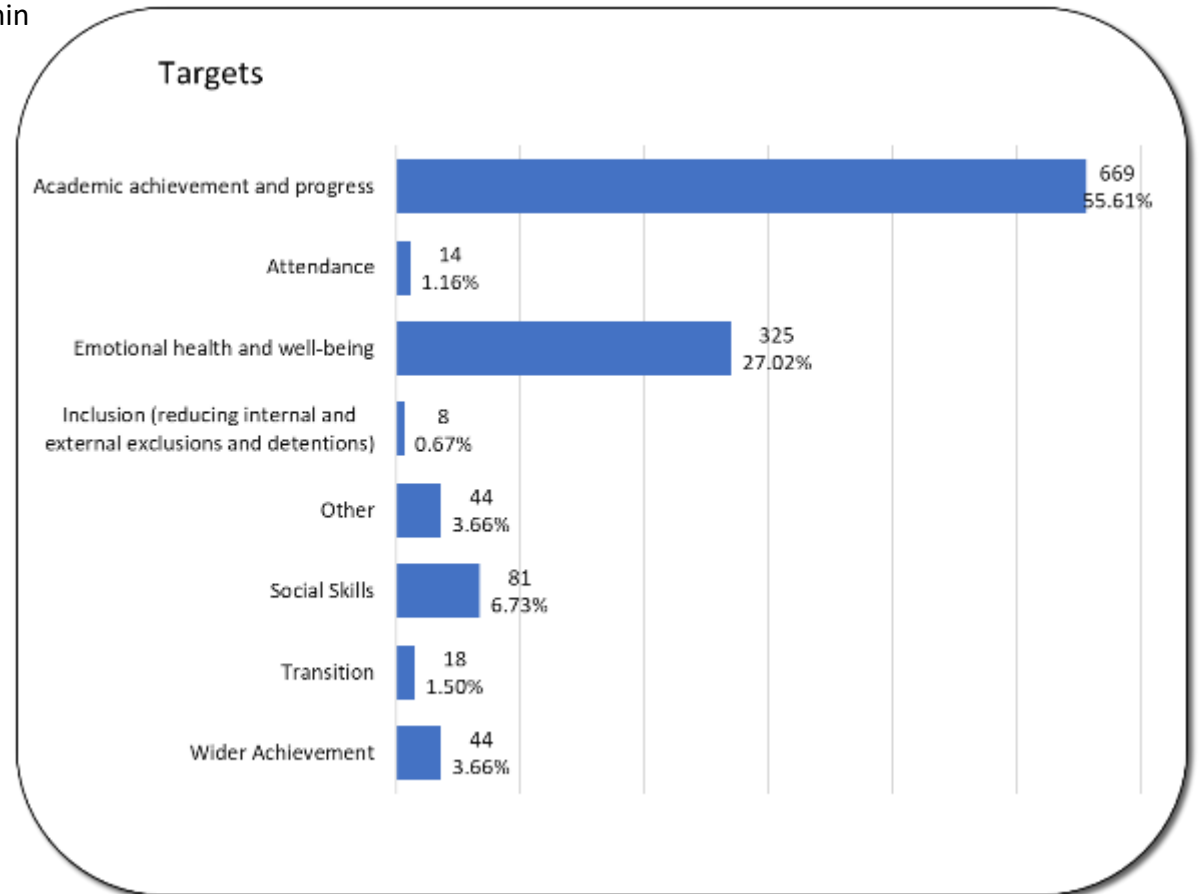


Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) Allocation to Schools (2022-23)

The VSH manages the Pupil Premium for looked after children and monitors closely its use and impact, ensuring that schools allocate funding to interventions that support the individual needs of the child. Schools are held accountable for the results of children in care and for using the PPP grant appropriately and effectively to support and improve educational outcomes. Schools complete a PPP plan within the SMART Targets section of the PEP which is monitored by the VS, who support and challenge PPP decisions on an ongoing basis via termly progress review meetings and data returns.

The impact of PPP allocated to schools during one term is monitored at the PEP meeting in the following term, i.e., the impact of PPP allocated in the final term (summer) of 2022-23 will be reviewed in the autumn term of 2023 - 24.

Analysis shows that 80% of targets linked to PPP spend during 2022-23 were successfully achieved, compared to 77.5% the previous year. 66.7% of those targets made significant or moderate impact on the outcomes for our young people in a range of areas. We have been working within our team and with schools to make targets more SMART to ensure the impact increases moving forward.



[Pupil Premium Plus \(PPP\) – Pooled Resource](#)

The PPP grant was set at £2,345 per eligible pupil and allocated for the Leicestershire VS to manage on behalf of its looked-after children. £400 top-slice is retained by the VSH to support pupils whose educational needs exceeded the per capita grant. When the termly PPP allocation is insufficient to meet a child's needs, additional funding can be applied for from this pooled PPP funding. The VS encourages schools to take on the responsibility for arranging any support required for pupils. This means that pooled funding is allocated to schools for them to commission provision for complex cases. This might typically be for higher-cost ongoing provision such as employing a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to provide support for effective transitions, academic progress and emotional stability in class, ongoing 1:1 tuition or agreed therapeutic input where needs do not meet CAMHS thresholds. The VS continues to use the pooled resource to commission provision for pupils temporarily not on roll of a school e.g., 1:1 tuition and to fund VS book parcels, participation activities, incentives and rewards and to fund a bespoke service from Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service.



Appendix 4 - Use of
Pupil Premium - Aut

[Appendix 4: Use of Pupil Premium - Academic Year 2022-2023](#)

[Additional funding in support of Catch-up](#)

The government has provided additional grant funding to support a range of “Disadvantaged pupils”, amongst whom are looked-after children. In addition to the ‘regular’ Pupil Premium Plus (PPP), there have been the “LAC Recovery Premium” and the “School-Led Tutoring” for LAC grants.

[Pupil Premium Plus \(PPP\) – LAC recovery premium 2022-2023](#)

ESFA allocated provisional amounts of £145 (primary) and £276 (secondary) per eligible child in a mainstream setting, and £290 (primary) and £552 (secondary) per LAC pupil in AP/special schools and special units to be used for the benefit of the looked-after child's educational needs as described in their personal education plan. As with PPP funding, it was to be managed by the designated virtual school head (VSH) in the local authority that looks after the child. This was in addition to the ‘regular’ PPP grant and offered additional support for schools to help LAC children catch up on education missed during the pandemic. The needs of each child were identified during termly PEPs and funding allocated accordingly, ensuring all the funding was distributed by the end of the academic year.

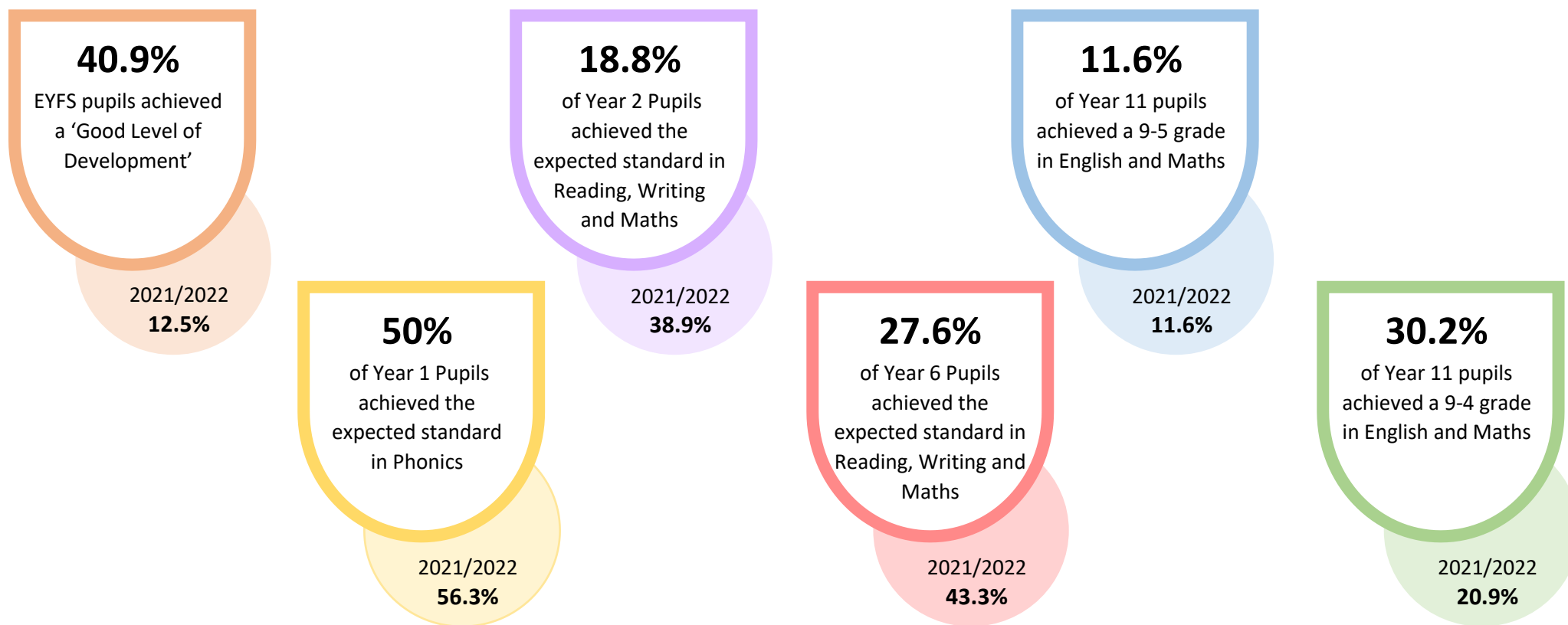
School-Led Tutoring 2022-2023

School-led tutoring (SLT) grant is part of the tuition offer from the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) and is intended to help close the education gap between vulnerable children and their peers which widened during COVID-19. The VS was provided with SLT funding specifically for their LAC pupils with the requirement that schools contribute 40% of the cost of tuition from the Pupil Premium Plus grant, adding up to a total of £270 per pupil in a mainstream school or £705 per child in AP/special schools and special units for a 15-hour block of tuition. Funding was released to schools based on need identified in the termly PEP meetings with tuition being arranged directly by schools or, in the case of children not currently able to attend school, arranged by the Virtual School. The VS can signpost tutoring providers from their standing list should schools require.

Tuition support can include interventions which support improving educational attainment, for example, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) where subjects such as maths and English may not be appropriate. The interventions had to have been completed by the end of the summer holidays 2023 and the VSH is required to report back to the DfE on:

- the total amount spent on school-led tutoring for LAC pupils in the academic year 2022 to 2023 (by mainstream funded pupils and specialist provision funded pupils)
- the total number of LAC pupils who have received tuition through the school-led tutoring grant in the academic year 2022 to 2023
- the total number of hours of funded tuition through the school-led tutoring grant funding in the academic year 2022 to 2023

Summary of Children in Care Attainment ([provisional data](#))



All data is provisional and subject to change. Unless stated otherwise, all data is based on pupils who were in care for at least 12 months as at 31st March. All Leicestershire and National figures are provisional (Source: NCER)

NB; Analysis of data will be provided in the April update once final data is confirmed.



Appendix 5 -
Provisional Results -

[Appendix 5: Provisional Results Academic year 2022-2023](#)

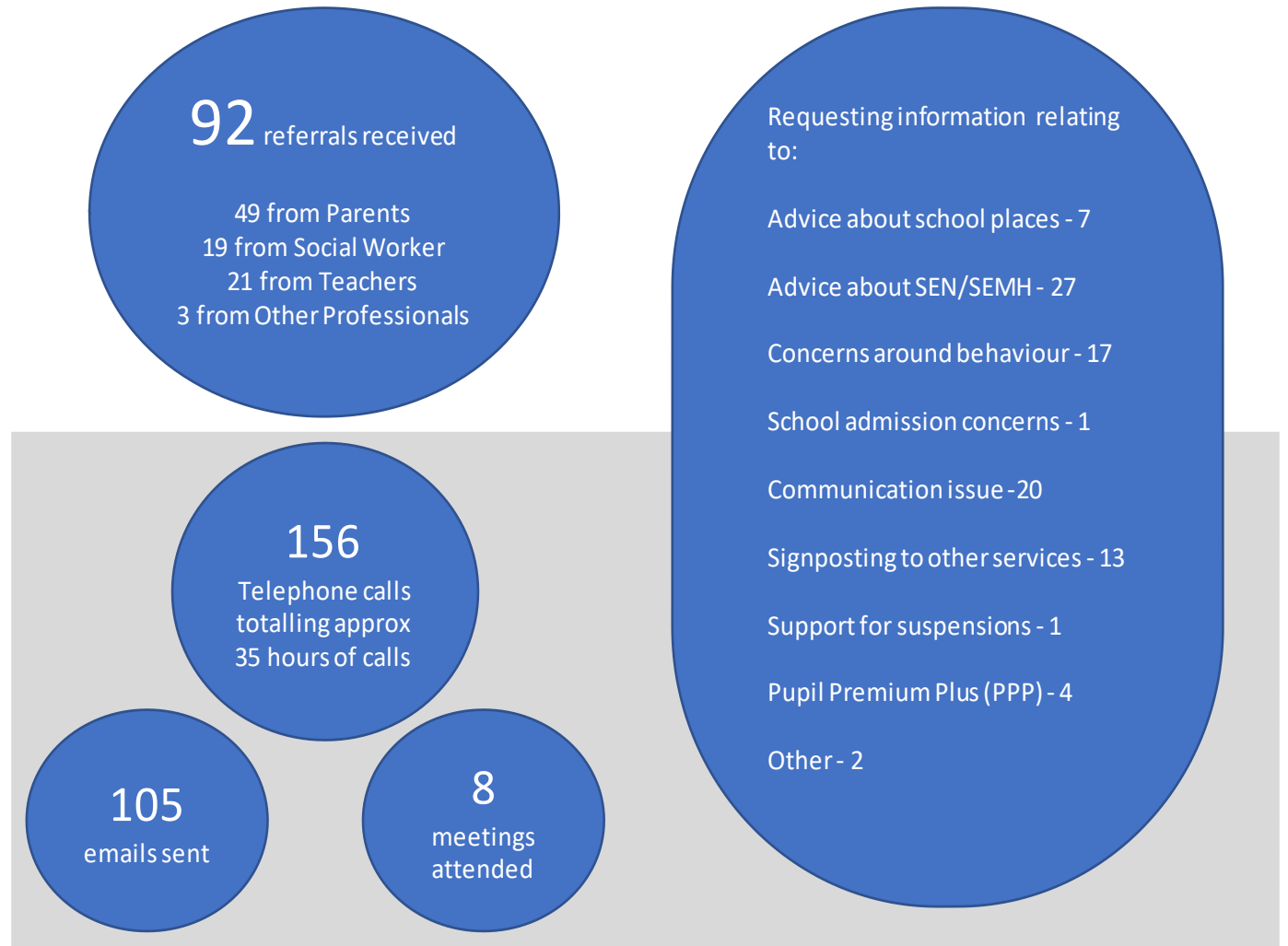
Previously Looked-After Children

The number of requests for advice and information relating to the education of previously looked-after children has risen steadily since the introduction of the role in 2017.

Due to the high number of phone calls the VS received during the year and the work that each phone call entailed the VS were only able to attend a small number of very complex meetings. From next academic year we have introduced a VS PLAC duty desk to try and support with our increasing requests for advice and support.

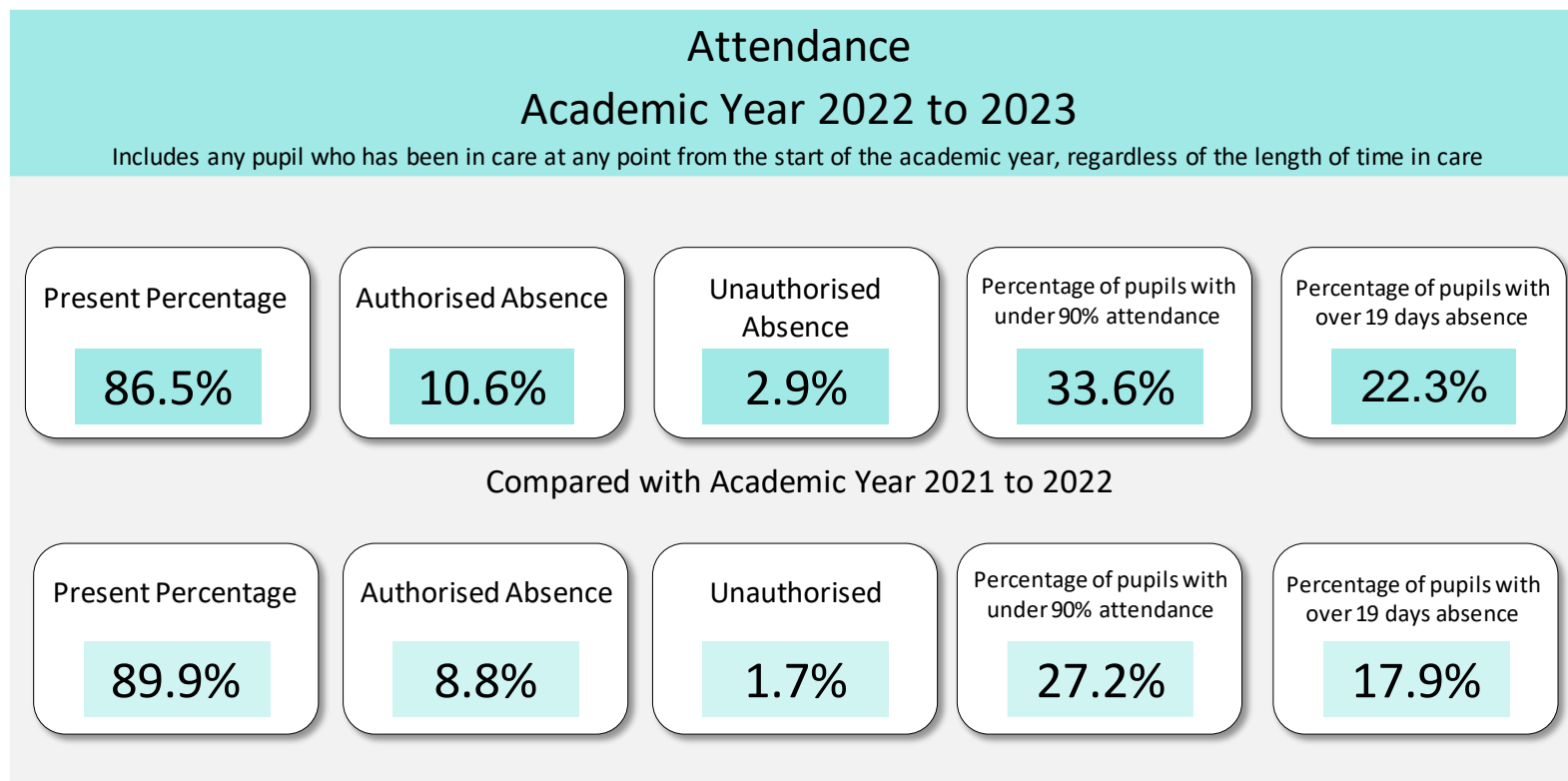
NB of the 92 referrals, numerous phone calls in addition to this to support with the queries.

PLAC support offered during 2022-23 Academic Year



Attendance and Suspensions

Reporting is prompt and supported using Welfare Call alerts; weekly and ongoing attendance and exclusion reports allied to termly Social, Emotional and Mental Health RAG reports from schools enable the VS to robustly monitor and respond to issues arising.



In 2021-2022 there were

- 14 young people not on roll at the end of the academic year
 - Of these 5 young people were Yr 11 UASC's, 2 young people were Yr 10 UASC's, 5 young had an EHCP and were waiting and 2 had no SEN

In 2022-2023 there were

- 28 young people not on roll at the end of the academic year
 - Of these 13 were Yr 11 UASC, 3 were Yr 10 UASC, 1 was a Year 9 UASC, 6 had an EHCP and 4 had no SEN

NB The one of the main reasons for the drop in the attendance percentage, is due to number of UASC in Year 11 arriving late in the academic year and because they are marked as authorised absence until they are placed on a school roll.

There have been no permanent exclusions of children in care for several years – this is the result of collaborative work across schools/settings and Behaviour Partnerships with the VS. Reporting is prompt and helped using Welfare Call alerts; other weekly and ongoing reports against attendance and exclusions ensure we are robustly monitoring and supporting this agenda with schools and children and young people.

Overall, suspensions have risen slightly from 49 in academic year 2021/2022 to 58 in 2022/23. Suspensions at Secondary phase have risen. Within this figure, there are forty-nine pupils who received FTEs across Year 7 to Year 11 at secondary phase, a total of two hundred and eighty-one days lost of education between them compared to one hundred and eighty-one days the previous year. The main reason for suspensions being reported is for persistent or general disruptive behaviour which has increased significantly from the previous year as the main reason.

The Virtual School works closely with Schools/Settings/Services to develop understanding of issues involved and are working to improve and develop the Trauma informed agenda with schools to ensure consistent practise and support is in place for our young people.



Appendix 6 -
Suspensions - Acade

[Appendix 6: Suspension dashboard 2022-2023](#)



Appendix 7 -
Attendance - Acade

[Appendix 7: Attendance dashboard 2022-2023](#)

[School Admissions \(2022-23\)](#)

The Virtual School strives to ensure that applications for school places other than at normal transition points are processed without delay with as little disruption to the child's education as possible. In 2022-23, there were 79 applications during the academic year for a change of school for Leicestershire LAC. Admissions authorities of all mainstream schools must give the highest priority in their oversubscription criteria to looked-after and previously looked-after children and cannot refuse to admit a looked after child based on challenging behaviour or refer a looked after child for action under the Fair Access Protocol on the basis of challenging behaviour. Looked-after children can be admitted as 'excepted pupils' in relation to the infant class size limit if they are admitted outside the normal admission round and schools cannot refuse admission on the grounds of being full.

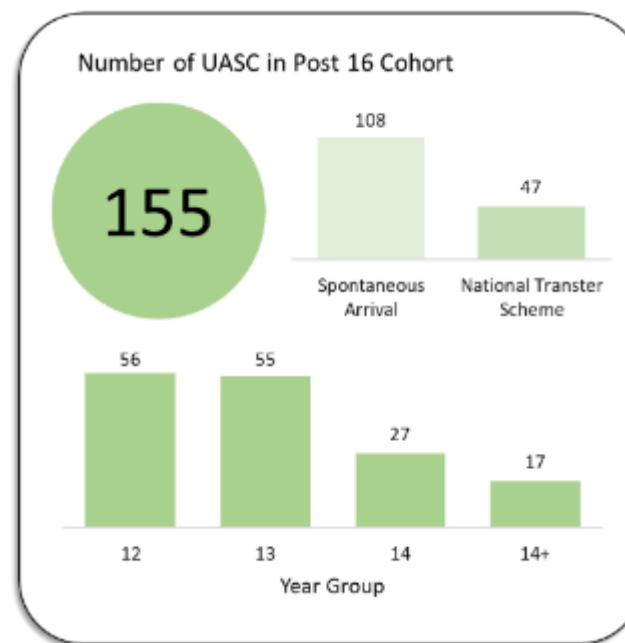
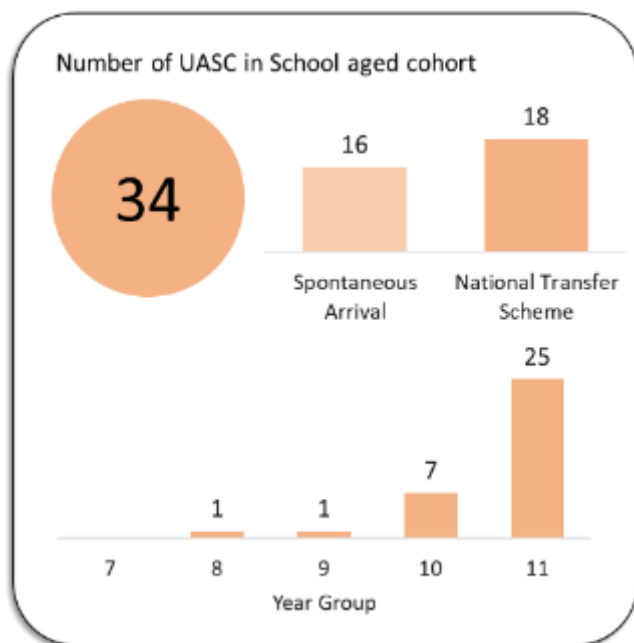
As a result of the circumstances of looked-after children, there tends to be a higher rate of in-year school admissions applications submitted for LAC than their peers. This is more usually due to placement moves.

When a child is removed from the roll of one school and is awaiting a new school place, they are reported as a Child Missing Education. Under these circumstances the VS funds 1:1 tuition to maintain a pupil's engagement in education or negotiates the commissioning of 1:1 tuition by SENA services, so that the impact of the delay in accessing formal education is minimised, and to ensure all children have an offer of educational input.

UASC

The VS has the same responsibilities for UASC as it does for any other Leicestershire looked-after child or care leaver, starting with the identification of appropriate education provision and monitoring of progress once enrolled.

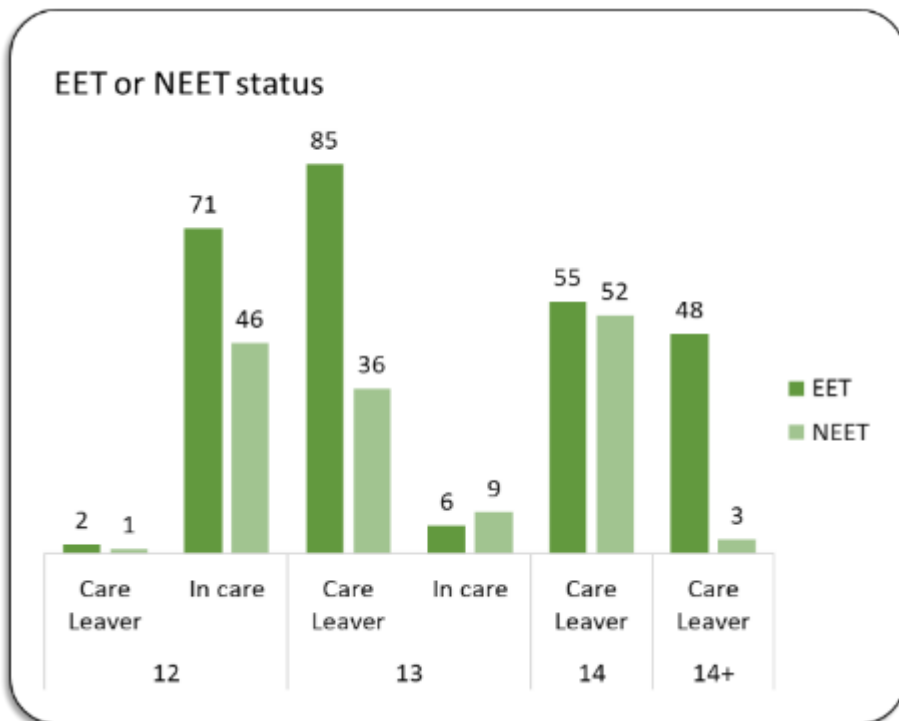
At the end of academic year 2022-23 there was 34 UASC students of statutory school age compared to 14 the previous year and 155 post-16 compared to 50 the previous year, making a total of 189 compared to 64 the previous year. This is a significant increase in our UASC cohort. This has therefore meant we have had to adapt our response to number of PEPs and increase a casework officers' role to include UASC PEP work. We are continuing to look at the needs of this cohort of young people and working in partnership with others to ensure the best education and provision is provided.



Support for Early Years

The VS took on the role of supporting Early Years looked-after children from the Early Years Team at the start of the 2019-20 academic year. The increase in the number of children in this cohort has been supported by primary specialist SEAs and COs taking Early Years children onto their caseloads. See appendix with contextual data. We have been working hard to develop new pupil voice pages for PEPs to ensure our youngest children have an opportunity to share their voice in a manner that suits their needs and age. We have developed observation opportunities to allow this to be captured in a broader way.

Post-16 Young People and Care Leavers



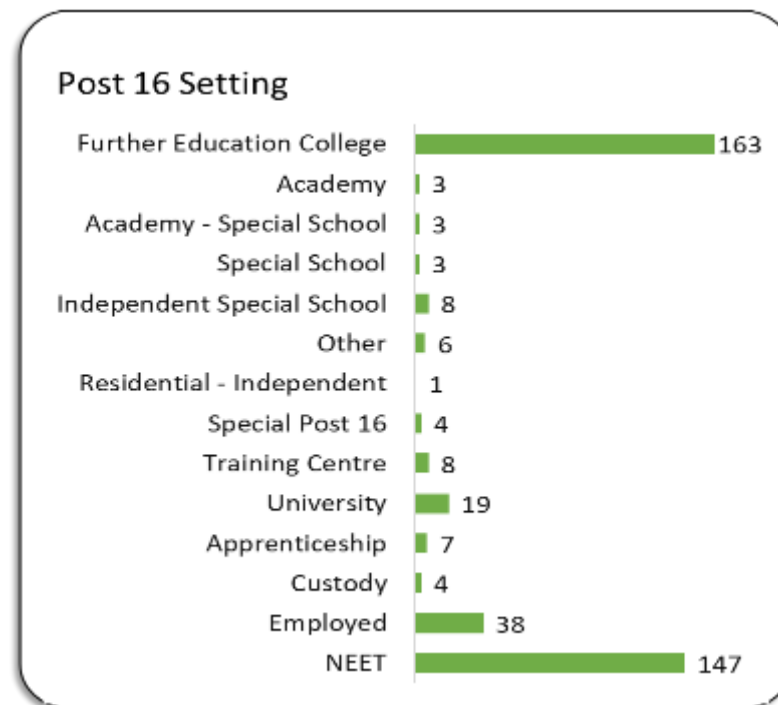
Priority is given to ensure all young people at the end of KS4 (age 16) have an identified destination and remain in Employment, Education or Training (EET) during subsequent years. College Designated Persons (DP) for looked after children are invited to the summer PEP meeting of Year 11 pupils whose college destination is known to ensure that plans are in place for a smooth transition into college.

Post 16 Senior Education Advisors conducted 466 PEPs and were much busier supporting a larger KS5 cohort who had more concerns around education as a result of the uncertainty around courses. The close links with all local colleges, forged over preceding years helped to ease the passage of young people into college, and to access appropriate support.

Number of Post 16 Not in Education,

Employment or Training (NEET) over the past two years: 35.5% in 2022-2023 compared to 39.6% in 2021. We will always discuss with the social worker to make a referral where we feel a young person may be NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

The Post 16 grant has been confirmed from the government to come into effect from September 2023 for the next 2 academic years. We have appointed a Post 16 casework officer to support with PEPS for this cohort of young people and will be able to therefore expand our offer to focus on our NEET young people and apprenticeship drive.



Training

The VS continues to deliver a wide range of training to schools and college staff, governors, social workers, carers and adoptive parents. The aim of the training is to help all professionals understand the needs of children in care and previously looked after children by identifying the barriers and strategies to support them. We have moved back to face-to-face training where possible as we gain the most engagement from these sessions, and feedback suggests these are valued more in general.

Between September 2022 and August 2023, the VS delivered training as follows:

- Attachment and Trauma training sessions delivered to 21 schools/mixed staff groups (2x one-hour sessions)
- Induction Training for Designated Teachers of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in October and February,
- Emotion Coaching training to foster carers
- Training to governors
- Training to social workers
- Early Years training to settings
- Training to Adopters,
- ASDAN Training
- Key Adult and Principles of Theraplay courses

We have also expanded our offer to train Alternative provisions, of which 3 so far have taken part and feedback has been extremely positive.

Participants have made the following comments in response to the questions, "In what ways have you benefited from this training and what will you do as a result of this session?"

"Reflection on own practices and reflection on change that can be made in dept."

"Try to empathise more. Think about what the child is feeling/thinking more."

"Being more aware of how I respond to behaviour and thinking of the 3 steps."

*"Very helpful and informative"
"Will change protocol"*

[Achievements and participation](#)

Participation in the arts and sporting events is a huge part of our young people's lives. It develops friendships, provides opportunities to experience things they may not have tried before and has a huge benefit in supporting wellbeing and mental health. The Virtual School are committed to providing as many opportunities as possible across a wide range of activities as possible to ensure all young people are given chance to engage in a variety of things.

[My books my story](#)

Following the success of the My Books, My story project, we were nominated for 3 awards. We won 1!! Please see a link to the online exhibition and some photos below!

[My Books, My Story | Culture Leicestershire - Heritage, Libraries, Collections and Learning](#)



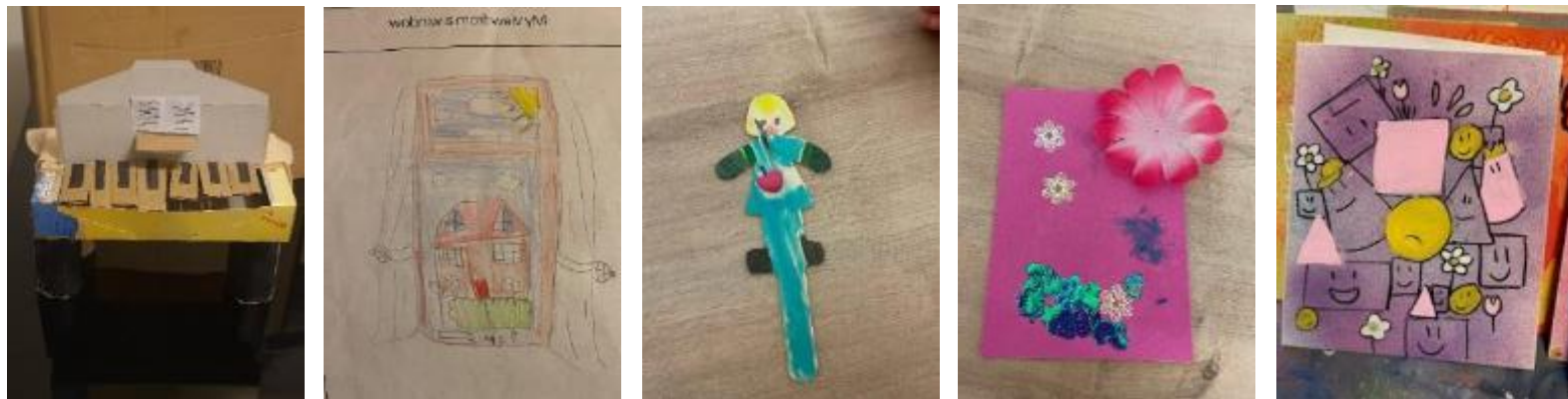
Forest Schools

Outdoor learning and being out in nature has huge benefits. It provides the opportunity to be creative and focus on wellbeing. The Virtual school in partnership with the corporate parenting team has ran a forest school project across the year. We have had great engagement from our young people, alongside their carers, providing the opportunity to bond and build lasting relationships.



Artsmark Journey

As part of the Artsmark journey, our young people have been completing arts journey booklets, where they have taken part in designing instruments, creating artwork, singing, and dancing at home.



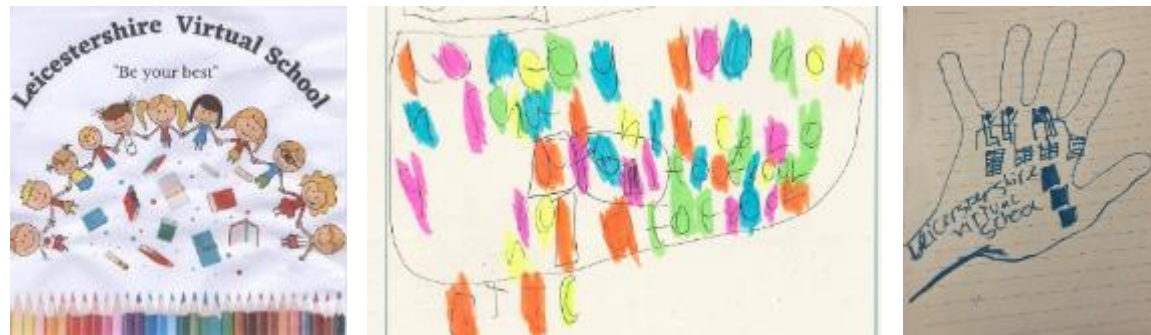
Pedestrian

Working with Pedestrian over the February and Easter holidays, our Primary and secondary young people took part in lots of arts based activities. Look at some of the fantastic creations they made.



Logo

As the launch of our Artsmark Journey, we ran a logo competition to allow young people to design a new Virtual School Logo. We had some fantastic entries and as a team decided to use elements from different entries to create our new logo which will be used in our letters, newsletters and on our website. Look at some of the entries we had.



Leicester City in the Community Inspire me careers day

We held a carers day as part of the Inspire me project in partnership with Rutland Virtual School. Young people were invited for a tour of the stadium and were spoken to by a range of staff working within different roles within Leicester City, including the club historian, grounds keeper and media suite experience.



Careers event at the King power

Our fabulous post 16 team worked extremely hard to pull together exhibitors from colleges, universities, and employers across the county to enable a fantastic careers event to take place. We had a great turn out and excellent feedback from our young people about the experience.



Sports festival

Another fantastic partnership we have made is with the Youth Sport Trust and Active together partnerships, to enable us to offer and support our young people in more sporting opportunities across the county. We were invited to take part as a Virtual School in the school summer festival;



Active Together state, 'over the course of the last year, Active Together have begun to work with the Leicestershire Virtual School to develop the sporting provision for children in care. This relationship culminated in a "Team All Star" group of looked after children attending the School Games Summer Festival at Loughborough University at the end of June for the first time. Active Together are committed to continuing to develop this relationship with the Virtual School to ensure the sustainability of opportunities for this group of young people in the future. '

Care to Dance

This academic year we have joined a new and very exciting partnership with Care to Dance CIC. We have run a 12 week intro programme followed by a celebration event and will be starting a 12 month partnership in September. This programme will also offer a dance qualification, participation events and celebrations. Care to Dance Director Beth says;

‘We are passionate about working with care-experienced young people. A core value within Care to Dance CIC is celebration; we believe that every young person has interests and talents that should be celebrated. We have seen many young people develop and grow in their confidence, telling their stories and emotions through dance. Engaging with their support system, we found, enhances their positive experience within Care to Dance. Inviting carers, parents, social workers etc to visit them at dance class or to watch a performance facilitates community for them.’



We have recorded our very first podcast with Care to Dance! [Have a listen here.](#)

Please see our Impact report for the 12 week programme from the voice of our young people.



Leicestershire
Virtual School feedt

Staff involvement

The Virtual school love to get involved in participation, meeting and supporting our young people. Here are some of the events we have taken part in this academic year;



Forest School
Team Building



CIC Easter Day



Careers Event



NAVSH
Conference



Care to Dance



Uni days

UASC football game

The Virtual School collaborated with Leicester City Football Club to arrange an exciting event for our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. On Friday 21st October, 18 young people from different backgrounds all came together to play football at St Margaret's training ground with LCFC coaches which was a fantastic way to start the day! After this they were then taken to the King Power stadium for lunch and full tour of the club. They were dazzled by the bright blue lights of the changing rooms, baths, director's lounge and trophies, and press room. They even went down the tunnel to pitch side to sit on the managers seats and see the infamous match football and immaculate pitch. The highlight was going up to Vardy's private box to see the views of the whole stadium! It was a truly fantastic day, the young people left very happy and hopefully inspired to do great things!



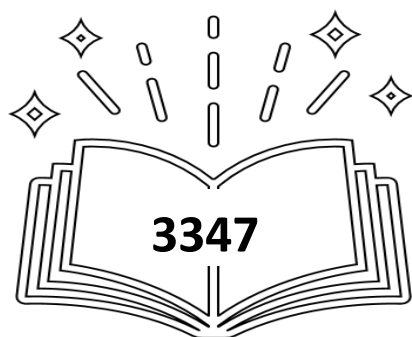
Sypac

SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care) is a monthly social meet up for care leavers. The young people get consistent staff, engage with each other in games and activities, input into council business and policy and can access EET opportunities and advice through myself and other visitors who attend meeting throughout the year. There are regular young people who come and have been doing so for many years which means that there is no upper age limit and we have members beyond 25yrs who find the monthly sessions incredibly valuable and important. The sessions help to alleviate loneliness particularly for those young people who are living independently. By ensuring the VS have input there have been many opportunities to encourage and advise young people to engage in education, employment, and training. For example, one young person completed several online qualifications during covid lockdown, another is now at Dundee University studying Space Engineering – first contact was at SYPAC after she had been NEET for over 2 years, there are several who are now attending the care leaver council regularly and we have also managed to get a few engaged with Leicestershire Cares and it is hoped that some EET opportunities will follow.

Book Parcels

1537 books have been sent out by the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme on our behalf to children in care aged 0 to 5.

1810 books have been sent out by the Virtual School to the primary school aged pupils.



We recognise the importance of encouraging reading. Children with poor reading skills will struggle to access all areas of the curriculum. To promote a love of reading and develop the necessary skills, we run our Book Clubs with monthly parcels being delivered to children in Reception through to the beginning of year 7. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides books to all looked-after children aged 0 – 5 years. The increase in the number of children in care, along with the increased cost of living means that the cost of providing high quality parcels to every child increases year on year.

We continue to purchase BookTrust Letterbox parcels for our children in years 1, 3 and 5. These parcels provide children with high quality books, resources and games to promote literacy and numeracy skills. We carefully select and purchase books for our Bookworm and Boomerang parcels. These parcels also contain resources and activity sheets with ideas for activities to carry out at home. Children have noted how much they value the book parcels. Children like receiving their named and addressed parcel in the post. The recent move to an ePEP using Welfare Cloud has enabled the child's voice to be evidenced during the PEP process. This has highlighted how well received all book club parcels are.

Children have made the following comments in response to the question, "What do you enjoy about the book parcels?"

"The books, the activities and everything that comes in the parcel."

"Gives me new books I haven't read; I get to read different Authors."

"I get two book parcels, Bookworm and Letterbox. I enjoy them, they are really entertaining and funny. Why do astronauts burp? Full of jokes and it makes me laugh."

"They are really cool books. I also got some stationery."

"I like it because they send me good books and stationery I can use at school."

On-line Reading Groups

We have delivered two more on-line reading groups for those in year 5 and year 6. The young people in these on-line reading groups have enjoyed the weekly sessions. They have grown in confidence week on week. In addition, they have all improved their reading, inference and comprehension skills. Young people have developed the ability to confidently read aloud and have had an opportunity to discuss story lines in the books. This also gave the young people an opportunity to explore issues including some which were personal. Young people were able to share worries and supported one another. It was so lovely to see the young people smiling during our sessions and feeling part of something that was just for them

[Plans for 2023/2024](#)

LCIC – mentoring

We are excited to announce we have signed a 2-year contract with Leicester City in the Community to offer their Inspire me and Foster the future programmes to our children in care across Leicestershire. These two programmes work with young people to mentor and engage young people back into education, provide opportunities to experience different opportunities and work together to support aspirations and career opportunities.



Care to Dance – including qualification

We are delighted to share that we are running the Care to Dance programme for a full year starting in September, after the success of our 12-week programme. This is an exciting opportunity for our young people to continue this journey, with the added option of completing their dance leadership award as part of the programme.

Artful Alliance with Blue Cabin



We have been successful in being selected in partnership with Care to Dance to be part of the Artful Alliance action research project. We will be working together to research the impact the arts have on our young people in care and looking at using their voice to improve our offer going forward. As part of this we have linked in with Mighty Creatives to develop a video led by our young people to capture their voice on the arts.

Charnwood Arts

We have linked in with Charnwood Arts who have opportunities such as painting, clay, music, and a recording studio! We are working together to bring some exciting events in the coming year for our young people to access and further opportunities including use of their recording studio and emerging artist programmes.

New logo and Facebook

We plan to update all our correspondence with our new Virtual School logo! Approval for our very own Facebook page here at Leicestershire Virtual School has been granted! We have just launched this and invite you to join us as we share updates and signpost exciting opportunities going forward!

UASC – Bright Path futures partnership

We have partnered with Bright Path Futures to pilot some exciting language resources for our UASC young people. This includes translated resources in 8 languages and Amiko wellbeing cards, to support new arrivals in their English language development. These resources will be given out at pre-entry PEPS and used as a supportive tool. Each resource has links to videos that can be easily accessed, and we aim to pilot this project to ensure these resources help our young people going forward.



CWSW

The next academic year sees the extended duties for children with a social worker coming over to the Virtual School. We are really excited to be in the planning stages of what our offer can look like for this cohort of young people moving forward.

2023-2024 priorities/ action plan

The VS Service Delivery Plan reflects the ambitions and ethos of the Children and Family Service Departmental plan. The priorities and actions underpinning them are under constant review throughout the year. We aim

- i. To raise the aspirations of and for looked-after children (LAC) and previously looked-after children (PLAC)
- ii. To narrow progress and attainment gaps
- iii. To improve stakeholders' understanding of the educational needs of children in care and those adopted from care and strengthen their support of education
- iv. To ensure the views of children and young people are heard, recorded, and inform decisions regarding their education.
- v. To maintain a resilient, vibrant, informed, and knowledgeable team

National developments in the education landscape will always have implications for virtual schools and their support for vulnerable children. Amongst these are the development of PPP funding for post-16, the SEN Review, the Independent Care Review and Social care; stable homes built on love.

Donna Chapman
Virtual School Head,
Leicestershire Virtual School,
Children and Family Services,
Leicestershire County Council.

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