

Headlines- Virtual School Annual Report.

September 2022 – July 2023



Context

- As of July 2023, there were 766 Durham looked after children of statutory school age. Increase of 13.3%
- 48.04% were of primary age and 51.96% were of secondary age.
- 40.13% were female and 59.87% were male. (This includes Post 16)
- 77.6% attended County Durham schools and 22.34% attend out of County schools. An increase of 2.67% from last year.
- 76% attended a school with an Ofsted judgement of good or better. 4.6% higher than last year.
- 11.6% of children and young people attended a school with a grade of Requires Improvement or below. In line with last year.
- 92 young people attended schools where a current Ofsted judgement isn't available due to a recent academy conversion. 24 less than last year.

The full report highlights how the Virtual School works with education settings, social care and other agencies to support CLA to achieve the best outcomes for them. The body of the report also covers those who are in the Early Years and Post 16 Sector.

SEND and School Moves

- 53% of Durham children looked after had an identified special educational need (SEN) in 2022-23, There is less than 1% decrease in all areas from the figures for the same time last year. This is 3.3% lower than national figures.
- 22.2% of them are supported by an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This has decreased by 0.6% over the last year.
- 30.8% had a school SEN Support Plan, an increase of 0.3% since 2021/22.
- SEMH is the primary need for 44% of the CLA SEN cohort. 26% have a moderate learning difficulty and 8% a speech and language need. The VS are proactive in this area and ensure interventions are available for schools to access.
- In 2022-2023 there were 52 school moves during the academic year. Only 3 more than last year.
- A further 54 were suggested, but challenged by the Virtual School and therefore did not take place.
- 33% of school moves were to support moving to a permanent placement or due to distance.

Attendance and Suspensions

The local overall attendance for the whole CLA cohort was 91.04%, almost 0.6% lower than 2021/22 This can be broken down as follows:

- Attendance of primary school age CLA (including reception, Y1-Y6) = **95.5%**.
- Attendance of secondary school age CLA = **86.2%** 1.8% decrease against last year.
- Attendance of CLA in County Durham schools and settings = **89.9%** A decrease of 2.1%
- Attendance of CLA in out of County schools and settings = **90.6%** An increase of 0.6%
- There has been 1 Permanent Exclusion during 2022/23
- There have been forty Suspensions
- Twenty- one children/young people experienced more than one period of Suspension
- Twenty-Seven children attended the secondary sector, ten were primary aged children and three children attended Specialist Provision.

The Full Report

- Reflects the outcomes for EYFS and Post 16
- Gives detail around Post 16 and what is in place to develop future pathways.
- Identifies the challenges experienced by the VS around Care Placement break downs, school moves and SEND
- Identifies how PP+ is used by schools to support better outcomes for CLA
- Identifies how the SLA we source benefit our children.
- Celebrates the commitment by the Virtual School Team as they champion for our children.
- Identifies our priorities for academic year 2023/24, highlighting those we wish to develop further and those which we have identified as new priorities moving forward, through feedback from all stakeholders.
- The subgroup of the Corporate Parent Committee provide Governance for the Virtual School and are well informed throughout the year.

Priorities for 2023 - 2024

Continuing Priorities:

- To support more children to achieve higher levels / greater depth in KS2 and KS4 through early intervention and release catch up funding during the Autumn term. Close the gaps emerging in KS1
- To increase the focus on attendance for CLA. Working in partnership with the Attendance Improvement Team (AIT) and Social Care to promote a positive ethos around attendance.
- To support Post 16 to reduce NEET data through a collaborative approach and by drawing upon the expertise within the Progression and Learning Team.
- Further strengthen links with CICC, working towards the Investors in Children Award.
- to contribute to an increasingly integrated and joined-up process with health and social care teams to provide a holistic and cohesive approach to support readiness to learn whilst ensuring CLA have stability in their education setting. Ensure a robust system is in place to increase school stability through monitoring and challenge.
- Further embed the work for Ever6 CWSW through extended role of the VSH having a strategic lead with this cohort of children.

New Priorities:

- Develop work with Children's Homes to support school anxiety and other barriers to education. Drawing on the expertise of the therapeutic services we make available to schools.
- Appoint a Previously Child Looked After Officer to strengthen the Virtual Schools offer for PCLA.
- Develop ways of working with the UASC cohort to offer a package to support earlier access into education.
- Develop a cohesive system for CLA who require Statutory Assessment and require an EHCP. Produce a process that everyone can work towards to ensure needs are met in a timely manner.