# Corporate Parenting Panel

## Virtual School Head Report

## June 2021

*NB:*
*1. Final 20-21 academic year data is not yet available.*
*2. All data in this report relates to the total CLA cohort (any child who is or has been looked after for all or part of the academic year) and not the statistical cohort used for national reporting of data.*
*3. Some information may appear inconsistent as numbers of children vary at any point in the data collection.*

## Headlines

- Post 16 – NEET rate has declined
- PEP completion rates are good
- In-year school moves have declined
- Fixed term exclusions/suspensions (FTE) have increased

## Post 16 EET

*EET – young person is in Education, Employment or Training*
*NEET – young person is not in Education, Employment or Training*

The Virtual School monitors young people in school years 12 and 13. The Year 12 cohort is all young people in the care of Warwickshire. The Year 13 cohort is split into those who are in care and those who left care on their 18th birthday.

20-21 has seen a slight decrease in the rate of NEETs. At the end of Quarter 4 2019-20, there were 12.6% NEETs, 87.4% EET or other (this includes criteria such as pregnant or parenting, in custody, in hospital). At the end of Quarter 4 2020-21, there were 11.2% NEETs, 88.8% EET or other.

The percentage of NEET remains higher for those in Year 13 than for those in Year 12.

*Table 1: NEET overview at the end of Quarter 4 2020-21*

| Total Post 16 cohort | Year 12 | Year 13 in care | Year 13 care leavers |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11.2% | 12.3% | 17.4% | 5.6% |

At the end of Quarter 2 20-21, there were 11.3% NEETs, which rose to 13.3% in Quarter 3. The increase is partly linked to the pandemic, with many young people not enjoying remote learning. Targeted support enabled the rate of NEETs to return to Quarter 2 levels in the final part of the year. Support included Virtual School monitoring of support within settings, intervention from onsite Careers Advisers or pastoral support, and referral to agencies such as Prospects Careers Service, as required.

Deena Moorey, Virtual School Headteacher, Lead Commissioner Report June 2021

**Potential September Destinations**
Information regarding potential September destinations is shown in Table 2.

Overview:

College – the majority are confirmed course offers, some are intending to apply or are currently applying.

School – this relates to those staying on at sixth form provision to do A Levels or similar, as well as though who attend special schools and have significant learning needs.

Apprenticeships – some have already started and intend to continue, some have applied and have confirmed places, others are applying or considering this as an option.

Training – courses that prepare young people to be in EET, often following a period of being NEET or for those with EHCPs.

Employment – where the young person is already employed and will be continuing, as well as those who intend to or are currently seeking employment.

Other – includes those unavailable for EET due to being in hospital, ill health, in custody, parenting, etc.

Unknown – where the young person has not yet decided what they want to do, or where the Virtual School has been unable to obtain the information at this time.
NEET – where young person is currently or anticipated to be NEET.

*Table 2: Intended destinations for Sept 21*

| June 20 year group | college | school | university | apprent'shp | training | employment | other | unknown | NEET |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yr 11 | 58.4% | 18.2% | n/a | 5.2% | 1.3% | 0 | 3.9% | 12.9% | 0 |
| Yr 12 | 65.6% | 8.2% | n/a | 4.1% | 1.6% | 9.0% | 4.1% | 4.1% | 3.3% |
| Yr 13 | 56.5% | 1.7% | 2.6% | 6.1% | 1.7% | 16.5% | 1.7% | 6.1% | 6.9% |

It is interesting that there is a higher proportion of Year 11 who have not decided on a course of action for September. This is potentially due to the way education has been delivered during the pandemic, and uncertainty over the future. Early NEETs referrals have been completed as applicable, to support those most at risk of not engaging with EET in September.

## Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Termly PEP completion rates have steadily increased and are now consistently above 95%.

In the summer term 2020, 96% of PEPs were fully reviewed and recorded. By the first week in June 2021, 88% of summer term PEPs had already been completed. In the autumn term there was a 99.2% completion rate and 97.3% in the spring. There have been delays associated with school bubble closures and staff availability due to isolation etc, which impact on completion rates.

## School Stability

In 2018-19 there were 101 in-year school moves. These are moves outside of the normal transition round, such as moving from primary school to secondary school. This reduced to 92 moves in 2019-20. Up to the third week in June 2021 there have been 76 in-year moves, with 19 taking place since April.

School moves cannot always be avoided but, where possible, arrangements are made to ensure children stay in their familiar settings with known adult and peer support networks.  Changes in curriculum coverage; GCSE course content; teaching styles; setting ethos, routines and expectations; peer support networks and adult support networks, can all impact negatively on CLA.

National data for 2019 shows that at Key Stage 2, children who move schools attain significantly lower than their peers. For CLA who moved schools, 32% achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, compared to 38% who had not moved.   At Key Stage 4, the outcomes for children staying at the same school are almost double those who move. For CLA who moved the difference was even more significant: those who remained at the same school achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 45.5, compared to those who moved where the average Attainment 8 score was 13.7. Progress at both key stages is also much better for those who do not move schools.

## Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE)

Across 2019-20 there were 99 separate fixed term exclusions issued to forty-nine CLA. The number of FTE issued this year has significantly increased, with 138 periods of exclusion so far.

*Table 3: Incidences of FTE*

|                     | Number of FTE issued | Number of CLA |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Autumn 20           | 54                   | 32            |
| Spring 21           | 35                   | 25            |
| Summer 21 to date   | 49                   | 35            |
| Total               | 138                  | 70            |

In 2019-20 the increase in FTE, following a year on year decline, was associated with one secondary school. In 2020-21 this school and the other schools in the same academy trust, have continued to exclude on multiple occasions. The schools are all

in Nuneaton and there is a large amount of work across Education Services and Social Care with these schools. The academy leaders are keen to improve outcomes, which include reducing exclusions. They have onsite provision opening in September, whereby rather than excluding children, they will be supported in the onsite provision instead. This will be coupled with staff training and development, enabling better understanding and more appropriate responses to behaviour that challenges.

In addition, there has been an increase in the number of FTE for CLA across the country. All Virtual Schools across the West Midlands region have seen a significant increase. When discussing with headteachers, it is apparent that the pandemic has impacted on this. Schools had to introduce many new rules to adhere to Covid safe practice; stress levels increased in staff; work loads of senior staff increased with additional measures and legislation being continually introduced; bubbles continually opened and closed. A notable increase was observed with the wider return to schools after 8th March. Increased class sizes, less adult availability, increased noise levels, return to possibly more formal teaching, return to prior classes and peer groups was evident and headteachers noted that although children such as CLA had been in school throughout, they were unsettled by the changes.

Whilst this does not condone the increased number of FTE, it does go some way towards explaining them. Hopefully when the new academic year starts, there will be a decrease in the number of incidents.

Reasons behind exclusions have changed and there have been an increasing number for swearing at staff or not following rules. Table 4 details reasons broadly associated with the FTE, as described by schools.

*Table 4: Reasons for exclusion*

| Reason given | Number of exclusions |
|---|---|
| Aggressive or dangerous behaviour | 8 |
| Assault on child | 21 |
| Assault on adult | 9 |
| Drugs/alcohol | 8 |
| Persistent disruptive behaviour | 20 |
| Refusal | 38 |
| Racism | 1 |
| Social media misuse | 2 |
| Verbal abuse to child | 4 |
| Verbal abuse to adult | 20 |
| other | 7 |

**Overview of CLA excluded**
- Nearly 2x as many boys were subject to exclusion than girls: 40 boys, 24 girls.
- 90% CLA were from secondary schools: 4 from KS1; 5 from KS2; 25 from KS3; 34 from KS4.
- Type of school where exclusions issued: 16 ISP; 9 specialist; 114 from mainstream.
- 25 CLA received more than one FTE.

Each FTE is considered and where appropriate a professionals meeting is organised by the Virtual School. A report is shared with attendees after the meeting and Education Advisers monitor the implementation and impact of actions agreed.

This year has also seen an increase in permanent exclusions being issued. Two were redacted after Virtual School intervention but one was upheld due to the personal circumstances of the child it involved.

## Unauthorised Absence

For the period 1$^{st}$ September – 30$^{th}$ April there were 42 CLA (7.7%) with unauthorised absence equating to more than one week of missed education. By May half term this had decreased to 7.1%
The Virtual School RAG rated the 42 children as follows:
Red – 9
Amber – 21
Green – 12

- Cases RAG rated Green had historic unauthorised absence and were no longer a concern by April. Attendance generally improved with placement stability and/or school intervention.
- Cases RAG rated Amber were being monitored but attendance may have improved, or the CLA was in Y11 with just a few weeks left at school. Generally improved due to placement stability, school intervention or reducing mental health concerns. For Y11s, there was not always an improvement, merely lack of time to intervene at that point, although in many cases comprehensive intervention and support had been in place across the year.
- Cases RAG rated Red were where there were current and significant concerns.

All CLA with unauthorised absences were secondary age. Five CLA entered care this academic year and had historic attendance concerns. Three of the four in care prior to this year, have only had attendance concerns in this academic year.

Support/intervention was and is in place for all nine CLA. One has since returned home but improved attendance has only been seen in one of the other eight cases. There are regular professionals' meetings and actions and impact are reviewed. Plans with very small steps are often in place, alongside support from multiagency professionals. Social, Emotional, Mental Health and wellbeing continue to be the main barriers, alongside, but often linked to, school avoidance or refusal.

Deena Moorey

Virtual School Head, Lead Commissioner
June 2021