



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

VIRTUAL SCHOOL MODEL PILOT – INTERIM EVALUATION OF YEAR 2

AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PILOT OF YEAR 2 OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR R LEWIS)

AUTHOR(S): Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services
Linda Hawkins, Virtual School Headteacher

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the Corporate Parenting Board on the progress made during year 2 of the Virtual School (for CLA) Pilot – specifically looking at the steps taken to address and complete actions that form the Virtual School Action Plan for 2023-2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the content of the report.
- 2.1 Consider whether any further information is required on any aspect of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Virtual School Model has been an ongoing pilot project in RCT since September 2021. The first-year funding was used to carry out a scoping exercise; liaising with different departments within both Education and Children's Services on how the Virtual School Model may look in RCT. The temporary Virtual School Headteacher was appointed on 16th May 2022 and took over the responsibility of leading the former CLA Education Team from

September 2022. Changes in protocol and practice since the launch of the Virtual School have seen provision for care experienced children and young people move from compliance to involvement in strategic planning at both a local and national level including contributing to discussions regarding shaping the potential roadmap for future Virtual Schools in Wales.

- 4.2 The Virtual School Model (VSM) is well established in England and, under the Children's and Families Act 2014, local authorities have a statutory duty to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH). This is not the case in Wales.
- 4.3 The Welsh Government has recently commissioned 'Miller Research UK' to carry out an evaluation of the VSM Pilot funding to inform the future direction and viability of the VSM in Wales. The research will consider how the VSM funding has been used to support care-experienced children, and the early impacts of the funding. The evaluation will begin imminently and conclude in March 2025. As part of the evaluation local authorities, including RCT, will be asked to contribute by providing details of how this new model is working in practice and the early impacts of the funding. The voices of care experienced children and young people in RCT will be heard in focus groups; the evaluation team are keen to hear their perceptions and experiences of the support in place in their local authority.
- 4.4 The Welsh Government launched the Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales "A Shared Parenting Pledge" in June 2023. Welsh Ministers and Welsh Government are signing up to the Charter and setting the precedent for all public bodies across Wales as well as private sector organisations. The Virtual School in RCT will work to ensure the promises set out in the Charter are integral to how we work with children and their families.
- 4.5 The Virtual School is supporting the implementation of a Trauma Informed approach to supporting children and young people within RCT. Liaison has begun with the Virtual School in Ynys Mon, which is a trauma informed island, regarding the potential for any identified effective evidence-based practice to inform the development of a trauma informed approach by the RCT Virtual School. This work is in its very early stages.
- 4.6 Education and Children's Services are committed to funding the Virtual School in RCT as a permanent service to support the educational outcomes of care experienced children and young people; as such the Virtual School Head post is currently out for advertisement as a permanent role and it is hoped that a permanent post holder will be in place for September 2024.

5. CURRENT CONTEXT AND UPDATE ON PROGRESS

- 5.1 The Care Experienced Children Statistical Briefing issued in March 2024 states as at 31st March 2023, 7,210 children were looked after by Welsh local authorities. This is a rise from 7,080 on 31st March 2022.
- 5.2 On 12th April 2024, there were 635 children and young people looked after within RCT, 465 of which are of statutory school age.
- 5.3 On 12th April 2024, of the 465 school aged CLA learners, 356 are educated within the local authority and 109 out of county.

- 5.4 In the academic year 2023-2024, 66 CLA learners in RCT have a local authority maintained Individual Development Plan.

Action Plan Activities for 2023-2024

There are a number of priorities that have been embedded deeper into the ethos and remit of the Virtual School as the Pilot moved into the second year. Several ideas for excellent practice that evolved from the priorities of year one have been developed further over the academic year 2023-2024. Through robust self-evaluation of the Year One Implementation Plan and responses from other stakeholders, the Virtual School Headteacher drew up an Action Plan for 2023-2024 which reflects current overarching objectives for the Virtual School. These include:

- Building upon positive links made with other service areas within both Education, Children's Services and other 3rd sector agencies in order to continue to champion care experienced children and young people.
- Implementing a new protocol for measuring the learning progress of care experienced children and young people over time.
- Enhancing pupil and parent/carer engagement.
- Establishing an effective Management Committee.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the new PCP tool.
- Ensuring CLA local authority maintained IDPs are issued in a timely manner to ensure appropriate provision is in place to support pupils' progress.
- Demonstrating impact of the use of new data systems in terms of challenging schools in relation to attendance, exclusions, learning outcomes, softer outcomes, e.g. wellbeing and mental health for their CLA learners.

- 5.5 The Virtual School Action Plan contains 23 actions for implementation during financial/academic year 2023/24. The following section provides a high level overview of progress in relation to the actions. As such the impact statement provided for each action is intended to provide an insight / summary of the impact rather than a full evaluation due to the amount of information that would need to be included. A copy of the 2023/24 Virtual School Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1. This provides members with a more detailed overview of the individual milestones identified to support the 23 priority actions referenced in this report.

- 5.6 **Priority area 1:**
To contribute to the evaluation of the Virtual School model and Virtual School Headteacher role which is being carried out by key personnel from Welsh Government.

The Virtual School Headteacher attends the Welsh Government led National Delivery Group (NDG) for Care Experienced Children and Young People. At these forums evaluation of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and the Virtual

School Model are discussed. As stated in 4.3 of this report it is anticipated that the Virtual School will be contributing to the upcoming Virtual School Model evaluation commissioned by Welsh Government which will include listening to the voice of care experienced children and young people. The new RCT PEP designed by the Virtual School team that was developed following the work of a working party of Designated Persons for CLA in RCT schools has been shared with the NDG as part of their workstream on reviewing PEPs on a national basis.

Impact statement: By sharing the PEP with the NDG, it is hoped that RCT can contribute to a *common* template for Personal Education Plans (PEP) to aid transition arrangements and improve consistency when CLA move between local authorities in Wales.

5.7 **Priority area 2:**

- a) **To strategically meet the educational requirements of the Corporate Parenting Charter in partnership with colleagues from Children's Services and Health.**
- b) **To support Headteachers and school leadership to make trauma, informed decisions compatible for corporate parenting duties.**

5.8 A multi-agency working party with representation from the Virtual School RCT, the Educational Psychology Service RCT and an out of county Independent Specialist School has been created to develop a strategy to support schools to make trauma informed decisions re: CLA pupils in relation to exclusions and behaviour management.

Impact statement: A secondary school in RCT which permanently excluded two care experienced pupils in the academic year 2023-2024 has not excluded any further CLA pupils since the working party delivered training in March 2024.

5.9 **Priority area 3:**

To quality assure the CLA PCP process, ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted and every opportunity is taken to include the voice of the child.

For care experienced children/young people with additional learning needs, part one of the PCP meeting is the PEP. Pupil voice is intrinsic to the new PEP created by the Virtual School Team. Each section includes questions/statements which need to be addressed by the child/young person themselves. This includes 'my strengths', 'what I can celebrate about me', 'my good day', 'my bad day', 'what is important to and for me' 'what is working/not working for me', 'my barriers to learning', 'what I wish my teacher knew about me', 'I can...' statements and 'my next steps in learning'. In effect, the revised PEP puts an enhanced emphasis on ensuring the attendance of children and young people at the PCP meeting by putting the voice of the child/young person at the heart of the discussion within the PCP meeting format. Where it may not be possible for the child/young person to be present at their PCP meeting the Virtual School has provided schools with person centered tools to elicit responses from children and young people prior to the PCP meeting – this includes ideas that can be used with children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

As part of the new CLA PCP quality assurance (QA) process, the Virtual School Team are attending PCP meetings during the summer term. This will enable the Virtual School to evaluate person-centred practices with a particular focus upon the participation of children/young people in their PCP meeting and schools' use of person centered planning tools prior to the meeting. This will provide benchmark data for the Virtual School to develop performance measures/ targets moving forward. The Virtual School Headteacher is also facilitating some PCP meetings to demonstrate best practice.

Impact statement: By the end of the Summer term benchmark data / information will inform measures and targets moving forward to ensure more effective participation of children and young people in PCP meetings.

5.10 **Priority area 4:**

To agree the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee and ensure participation from care experienced young people (when relevant and appropriate) in line with the Children, Young People and Education Committee's recommendations in the radical reform for care experienced children and young people report.

In his report 'An integrated approach to improving educational outcomes for looked after children in Wales' (May 2020), Sir Alasdair Macdonald cited within his recommendations best practice in relation to governance arrangements of Virtual Schools in England and Scotland which included Virtual Schools having a Management Committee to provide an additional local level of scrutiny, support and accountability. In line with the above recommendation, the RCT Virtual School has recently established a Management Committee. As there is no current Welsh Government guidance in relation to Management Committees for Virtual Schools, RCT has based their Management Committee governance arrangements upon the Welsh Government 2014 statutory guidance for Management Committees of Pupil Referral Units.

Management Committee members include a cross-section of representation, including Headteachers from Primary, Secondary, Faith, Welsh medium and Special schools, the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, Children's Services representatives. It is hoped that there will be involvement of a foster carer and a care experienced young person.

On 8th April 2024, the Management Committee agreed roles and responsibilities in line with the above guidance. The Management Committee has received a presentation on the role of the Virtual School Head and the 2023-2024 action plan. The Chair of the Management Committee has reached out to Head of the Family Support and Accommodation department within RCT Children's Services to request a Pioneer Foster Carer to form part of the committee. The Virtual School Headteacher has identified a young person to attend an appropriate and relevant Management Committee meeting.

The work of the Management Committee is in its very early stages as only two meetings have taken place.

Impact Statement: The Virtual School Headteacher now has a group of critical friends (management committee) to support in the performance her functions,

which will include critical and questioning support. The management committee are aware of the priority actions for the Virtual School.

5.11 **Priority area 5:**

To develop relevant and appropriate policies pertaining to the Virtual School and its procedures and processes.

The Virtual School Headteacher has liaised with Virtual Schools in England to ascertain which policies are pertinent to the Virtual School and its protocols and procedures. Below is a list of some of these policies:

- Budget and funding
- PEP
- Tuition
- Transition
- Joined up working
- Training.

On Monday 18th March 2024, the Virtual School held a Collaborative Learning Day which included a workshop on policy writing for schools. This involved looking at current school policies and deciding how CLA could be represented in these policies. Examples include:

- School Uniform Policy – exemption from having to wear school uniform when first arriving at a school as CLA often have many school moves and often these moves are unplanned, therefore there may be no time to get a uniform before starting at a school.
- Transition policy – provide CLA pupils with enhanced transitions.
- Relationships Policy – ensuring trauma informed approaches are threaded through the whole policy.

Next Steps: Virtual School Headteacher to develop policies in the summer term 2024.

5.12 **Priority area 6:**

To introduce the new Personal Education Plan (PEP) to schools at the CLA Forum.

The new PEP has been well received by school staff. Pupil voice is intrinsic throughout the document. Schools completing the PEP document are now required to click a link which opens up a Microsoft Form. The purpose of this is to RAG rate the pupils' targets for Language, Literacy and Communication, Maths and Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Impact statement: There is now a system in place through the Microsoft Form to track pupil progress. Moving forward we will be able to identify individual pupils who are not making expected progress; intervention can then be identified to support the pupil.

5.13 **Priority area 7:**

To develop a robust system to track the submission of PEPs by schools, ensuring higher levels of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timeframes.

The Virtual School Headteacher has proposed that schools are provided with two PEP deadlines per academic year which will enable the Virtual School to identify more effectively schools that are not adhering to statutory timeframes and offer support where needed. The Director of Children's Services is currently liaising with Welsh Government in terms of the guidance they have issued around PEPs.

Next steps: Agree the process and share with the Designated Person (DP) for CLA in each school via the Teams channel, Access and Inclusion newsletter and at the DP Forum. Establish benchmark data and performance indicators for improvement.

5.14 Priority area 8:

To develop and implement a Quality Assurance Framework to ensure schools track pupil progress appropriately

Pupil progress in the PEP is now able to be tracked via a link to a Microsoft Form where all relevant data regarding pupil progress is requested. At the end of this academic year there will be sufficient data to inform a quality assurance framework and identify improvement priorities. The framework will examine how many PEPs have evidence of RAG rated targets. The framework will be utilised once per term and schools identified as not tracking pupil progress will be offered support.

Next steps: Interrogate the data using the quality assurance framework at the end of the academic year and establish a set of improvement priorities and performance indicators.

5.15 Priority area 9:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance process for tracking pupil progress and revise for 2024-2025 as necessary

We can evaluate the effectiveness of the quality assurance process after two full terms of data collection. Evaluation will include the following questions:

- Is the Microsoft Form consistently working through the link in the PEP?
- Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting schools that are not tracking pupil progress?
- Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting progress/lack of progress of pupils over time?
- Is the Quality Assurance process identifying progress/lack of progress for different cohorts of pupils?
- Do we need to amend the Quality Assurance process?
- Is there other data that we need the Quality Assurance process to demonstrate?

Next steps: To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework in January 2025.

5.16 **Priority area 10:**
Use range of data to improve outcomes for cohorts of CLA pupils.

The Virtual School Dashboard has been a key development during the pilot and now provides the Virtual School with data on CLA attendance and exclusions. It provides data relating to the number of CLA in RCT, the number of CLA attending RCT schools, the school they attend, their year group, whether they are in receipt of free school meals, schools' attendance bands, attendance codes of individual pupils, attendance by year group (provides historical information on attendance), exclusions, permanent exclusions, reason for exclusion, length of exclusion. Moving forward the data team are working on adding data for reduced timetables, PEPs and IDPs to the dashboard.

Impact statement: The Virtual Headteacher has easily accessible data relating to CLA and as such is able to report to CLA quality assurance panel on CLA attendance and exclusion and how The Virtual School is providing challenge and support to schools identified as having poor CLA attendance and/or a high rate of CLA exclusions.

5.17 **Priority area 11:**
To evaluate the 'Out of County' Monitoring Protocol to ensure provisions and settings providing statutory education to RCT CLA pupils are delivering on their responsibilities in terms of improving pupil outcomes.

The Out of County Monitoring Protocol takes the format of a questionnaire where responses from Out of County educational settings may trigger a package of support for the school and/or pupil to address identified concerns with their educational provision. The Out of County Monitoring Protocol is carried out three times per academic year. The first evaluation of the protocol took place in the spring term 2024 and identified that the process is not being completed by the majority of Out of County schools. In response, the process has been simplified by transferring the questionnaire to an online Microsoft Form and, whilst there is no statutory requirement for Out of County settings to take part in the monitoring protocol, it is hoped that we will see an increase in responses from Out of County schools.

Impact statement: The evaluation of the Out of County Monitoring Protocol identified the next steps needed in securing a better response from stakeholders in Out of County schools.

5.18 **Priority area 12:**
a) To provide relevant and appropriate training to in county and out of county schools in terms of making trauma informed decisions when providing education and emotional support to care experienced children and young people.
b) To monitor the impact of training that the Virtual School provides and demonstrate evidence of impact on practice and pupil outcomes.

Online training in 'Best Practice in Pupil Voice' is planned for the summer term for all out of county schools. The training programme for RCT schools is currently being reviewed and will be available to schools in September 2024. Training opportunities will include 'Making Trauma Informed Decisions'.

Next steps: A full timetable of training for schools in Trauma Informed Practice. Monitor the uptake in training opportunities of both RCT and out of county schools.

5.19 **Priority area 13:**

To review current RCT Virtual School Model structure and make recommendations for change.

Due to the success of the Virtual School Pilot both the Education and Inclusion Services and Children's Services have made the decision to make the role of Virtual School Headteacher a permanent role and are committed to the Virtual School model as a continuing service. Following the completion of the recruitment process during the summer term it is anticipated that the permanent post holder will take up their position from September 2024. The Virtual School Headteacher has explored roles within other Virtual Schools in Wales and England to inform the development of the virtual school in RCT.

Next steps: Appoint a permanent Virtual School Headteacher and consider the structure of the Virtual School.

5.20 **Priority area 14:**

To collaborate with 'Pioneer Fostering' in order to support foster carers to ensure children and young people in their care receive the best possible educational outcomes.

The Virtual School Team met with the Pioneer Foster Carers Group on the 30th January 2024. An audit of the training needs of the foster carers identified the following priorities:

- ALN – the new legislation and code
- IDP
- Teaching reading
- Numeracy.

On the 24th April the Virtual School Team will begin a series of training sessions for the Pioneer Foster Carers Group. The first session will address ALN. Subsequent sessions will cover IDP, phonics and early reading skills, using games to teach Maths, using the outdoor environment for learning, thinking skills and multi-sensory learning.

Impact statement: The initial meeting with the Pioneer Foster Carer Group enabled the Virtual School Team to audit training needs and design a bespoke calendar of training events.

5.21 **Priority area 15:**

To evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of a pilot project designed to support schools in self-auditing their whole-school systems and practice for care experienced children. To identify good practice and areas for development to inform Virtual School planning for 2024-2025.

Five schools took part in the pilot project. The first activity as part of this pilot was for schools to complete a self-audit tool: Evaluating whole school systems

and practice for care-experienced children. From the responses to the audit schools were required to develop a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis highlights strengths, areas for development/opportunities, data and next steps. At the beginning of the project, 3-5 care experienced pupils in each school were asked to complete a 'Student Resilience Survey' and staff were asked to complete a 'Supporting the Needs of CLA Staff Survey'. These surveys will be completed again at the end of the project in order to evaluate impact. On Monday 18th March 2024, during the Virtual School Collaborative Learning Day each school presented to the group on an area of excellent practice for the provision of CLA, presentations included:

- Zones of Regulation
- Family Learning Hub
- Nurture
- Family Time.

Aims of the Collaborative Learning Day were to share innovation and expertise relating to effective CLA provision, to reflect on current policy and practice, considering how schools support CLA pupils, to explore how to effectively measure progress and capture impact, for the Virtual School to provide an overview of making trauma informed decisions to support CLA provision. An expectation of the project was to carry out a case study based on the areas of development identified in the SWOT analysis. A follow up session has been arranged for 16th May 2024 for schools to present their case studies.

Impact statement: High levels of collaboration as part of this project has ensured school staff have benefitted from a wealth of professional learning. The outcome of the pilot will inform the Virtual School's planning in relation to the roll out of training on self-evaluation of whole school systems and practice in relation to care-experienced learners to all schools in 2024/25.

5.22 **Priority area 16:**

To formulate a robust system for alerting the Virtual School as to when pupils' IDPs are due for review in order to increase the percentage of CLA IDPs finalised within statutory timescales.

An Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Coordinator within Access and Inclusion drafts all CLA IDPs for the Virtual School. As part of this role the ALP Coordinator tracks the CLA IDPs in terms of dates for review, time needed to draft, draft IDP issue and final IDP issue. The Virtual School Headteacher quality assures all CLA IDPs. In the absence of national performance indicators relating to the completion of IDPs for CLA learners within statutory timescales, Access and Inclusion has developed a local improvement performance indicator for 2024/25 which is that 80% of LA maintained IDPs for CLA will be issued within 12 weeks (RCT pupils in all schools) for 2024/25.

Impact statement: A more concise process of quality assuring CLA IDPs has been developed to ensure that a higher number of CLA IDPs are finalised within statutory timescales.

5.23 **Priority area 17:**

To quality assure the delivery of Additional Learning Provision on a CLA IDP by visiting schools and capturing pupil voice.

Although all CLA IDPs are maintained by the local authority it is the responsibility of the school to provide the additional learning provision (ALP) outlined in the IDP. The Virtual School Team will be making visits to schools during the summer term to capture pupil voice in relation to IDPs. Questions asked will include: 'Do you know what your targets are in your IDP?'; 'Can you tell me what support you receive in order to achieve your targets?'; 'Do you know who you can go to for support?'; 'Are you receiving any individualised interventions to help support you?'

Next steps: To carry out school visits during the summer term and analyse outcomes of visits to inform future support for schools.

5.24 **Priority area 18:**

To ensure the PDG/LAC Bursary is used to target identified areas for improvement and evaluate impact.

The PDG/LAC Bursary 2023-2024 has been used to support the education of care experienced children and young people. Several pupils received 1:1 support whilst they were experiencing a turbulent time to support their access to education, many pupils are being supported as they prepare for the transition to secondary school, staff training in the Helping Hands Project provided secondary school staff in 7 clusters with the knowledge and skills needed to implement an enhanced transition project for Year 6 pupils within the cluster primary schools. A cohort in one secondary school enjoyed a visit to 'Jamie's Farm' and a large cohort of young people in Year 10 and 11 who are not attending school have been provided with a bespoke package of education based around their individual interests.

Impact statement: Pupils supported with 1:1 support continued to attend school every day. The Year 10 and 11 cohort of pupils attended all bespoke education sessions and some completed work towards formal qualifications.

5.25 **Priority area 19:**

To implement and evaluate a pilot project in collaboration with the Education, Employment and Training Team: 'Planning our Way' to support Year 11 pupils with destination choices at post 16.

This action was not achieved as secondary schools in RCT did not take up the offer of 'Planning our Way' as they had already engaged in the 'Green Light Project'.

Next steps: The Virtual School Team are continuing to work collaboratively with the Education, Employment and Training Team in developing a Year 10/11 post 16 destination project to ensure every care experienced young person has a destination after they have completed their statutory education.

5.26 **Priority area 20:**

To work pre-emptively with schools and Central South Consortium to identify CLA pupils at risk of permanent/high levels of exclusion and provide challenge and support to reduce exclusions.

This work is in its early stages. As part of the trauma informed practice training the Virtual School Team are delivering messages to school staff via the DP Forum and school visits about the importance of school staff making trauma informed decisions, especially when considering exclusion of a CLA pupil. Exclusion is not a trauma informed decision and the Virtual School Team are talking to school leaders about alternatives to exclusion. In May 2024, the Virtual School Team are attending a training session 'Strengths Based Strategies for Children on the Edge of Exclusion' and will cascade this information to schools in the aim to strengthen the message we are delivering on the need to make trauma informed decisions.

It is anticipated that the revised PEPs and the range of live data relating to exclusions that is now accessible to the Virtual School will enable the Virtual School to provide targeted support and advice to schools more effectively on both a systemic and individual pupil level, including more effective targeted allocation of PDGLAC funding.

Performance indicators have been developed to measure performance in relation to exclusions for CLA pupils and the potential impact of the Virtual School in reducing exclusions for CLA pupils with challenging behaviours.

Next steps: To attend training session and share learning with schools. To provide support to schools where there are identified concerns on a systemic and individual pupil level to reduce the number of exclusions incurred by CLA pupils in line with LA performance indicators.

5.27 **Priority area 21:**

To work pre-emptively with schools to identify CLA pupils at risk of low attendance/with low attendance and provide challenge and support to improve attendance figures for CLA pupils.

As for exclusion data, the Virtual School Dashboard provides data on CLA attendance at school. Attendance of CLA pupils is now monitored monthly by the Virtual School and individual pupils with decreasing levels of attendance are identified. The Virtual School Team arranges multi-agency meetings in relation to these pupils. High levels of collaboration take place when discussing poor attendance of care- experienced pupils; social workers are key when working with foster carers and staff in the residential homes in RCT. The specialist Educational Psychologist for CLA works closely with foster carers and residential home staff, this work includes teaching carers how to work with the PACE model to support children and young people to attend school.

Next steps: Training in the PACE model to continue in September 2024. To provide targeted support to identified schools/pupils to improve attendance rates of CLA pupils in line with LA performance indicators.

5.28 **Priority area 22:**

To develop a process to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

The Virtual School Dashboard is now able to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

Impact statement: We now have the data relating to the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement. Moving forward the Virtual School Team will include actions in the Virtual School Action Plan for 2024-2025 to reduce the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

5.29 **Priority area 23:**

To identify barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements/provision and agree potential solutions.

The Virtual School Team has completed a large piece of work around this priority area and has identified that barriers tend to relate to the need to develop a greater understanding in schools of the importance of implementing robust trauma informed decisions. As a result, the work of the Virtual School during 2024/25 will have a strong focus upon developing trauma informed practice in schools. The Virtual School has provided a stronger solution-focused presence from Education Services in multi-agency meetings regarding support/interventions that can be offered to pupils who are not attending school. Actions taken by the Virtual School Team include engaging with alternative education providers. Some examples of these are a tutor with a therapy dog, online tuition, cookery lessons, and the commissioning of a range of approved alternative education providers. The Virtual School Team has also carried out case studies on pupils who are without a school placement to identify barriers and potential solutions. Case studies highlighted the continued need for effective communication between all parties in relation to school admissions.

Impact statement: All pupils who attended the alternative provision arranged by the Virtual School have attended and engaged. The Virtual School has a greater understanding of the barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements to inform planning for 2024/25.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 This is an information report.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is an information report.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 This is an information report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 This is an information report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The legal requirements for children who are looked after who have special educational needs or an additional learning need are set down within the Education Act 1996, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (Wales) 2018 and the associated statutory Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code (Wales) 2021.

11. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015

- 11.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*', most notably:
- Strategic Priority 2: Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
 - Strategic Priority 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families
- 11.2 The information in the report contributes to the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan, 'Making a Difference'.
- 11.3 The implementation of the new Welsh Government ALN legislation and the processes and systems developed at a local council level will ensure that some of RCTCBC's most vulnerable learners will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes.
- 11.4 The above also contributes in particular to the following wellbeing goals:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities.
- 11.5 Organising services so that they are focussed on early intervention and prevention is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015¹ and a key element of RCTCBC's Corporate Plan.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 The Virtual School Model is a universal provision that will support the Council in improving the outcomes and wellbeing of all CLA learners in Rhondda Cynon Taf and as such is a strategic provision relevant to all wards.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The Virtual School Model pilot is coming to an end and as mentioned previously in this report, RCT have made the decision for the Virtual School to become a permanent service within Access and Inclusion. As can be seen from the above information, good progress has been made in relation to the 23 priority areas outlined within the Virtual School Action Plan. The Welsh Government's full evaluation of the national Virtual Schools Wales pilot will be completed next year and as a result there may be further funding and / or strategic support and guidance for the Virtual School model on a national basis. Whilst awaiting a national steer following the above evaluation, the Virtual School in RCT is working closely with the Virtual School Headteachers in Cardiff and Ynys Mon,

¹ [Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015](#)

strengthening cross border arrangements and ensuring that RCT continues to improve its provision for CLA learners.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

Item: AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PILOT OF YEAR 2 OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Background Papers

Officer(s) to contact: Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services
Linda Hawkins, Virtual School Headteacher

Appendix 1

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A01	To contribute to the evaluation of the Virtual School model and Virtual School Headteacher role which is being carried out by key personnel from Welsh Government	M01	Attend National Delivery Group Meetings	October 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Hannah Bevan
		M02	To share responses to the Whole School Evaluation Questionnaire 23-24 with all relevant stakeholders within the National Delivery Group	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Discuss the Virtual School Model and Virtual School Headteacher role with Jane Dodds, member of the Senedd for Mid and West Wales	Monthly	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Contribute to discussions with Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education in Wales regarding the Virtual School Model and Virtual School Headteacher Role	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M06	Share the WG evaluation process with the Director of Children’s Services to encourage a wider response to the Virtual School Model evaluation	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
A01	Success Criteria	M01	National Delivery Group, Enfys Dixey, lead for Virtual School Model evaluation (Welsh Government) and ESTYN aware of the evaluation of the Virtual School Pilot in RCT Year 1		
		M02	Key personnel in Welsh Government have a detailed understanding of the work of the Virtual School and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher		
		M03	Welsh Government evaluation of the Virtual School Model includes a wide breadth of stakeholders		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A02	To strategically meet the educational requirements of the Corporate Parenting Charter in partnership with colleagues from Children's Services and Health	M01	<p>Discuss Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in terms of the education of care experienced children and young people and how we can support schools to deliver on these articles: 28: Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity</p> <p>To establish a multi-agency working party with representation from secondary and primary schools to develop a strategy to support schools to make trauma informed decisions re: CLA pupils in relation to exclusions and behaviour management</p>	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
	To support Headteachers and school leadership to make trauma, informed decisions compatible for corporate parenting duties	M02	<p>Discuss with the Post 16 ALN Steering Group:</p> <p>Principle 9 of the Corporate Parenting Charter:</p> <p>... providing opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. Example: Offering care experienced children and young people work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, internships, traineeships and apprenticeships</p> <p>Discuss how the Virtual School can support schools to provide these opportunities through the MATSM</p>	November 2023	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M03	Present the Corporate Parenting Charter at the Secondary and Primary School Heads meetings in order to ensure an understanding in schools in order for schools to develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, so that they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales	ASH March 2024 PSHT March 2024	Linda Hawkins
A02	Success Criteria	M01	Schools can demonstrate how pupils' rights are met in the culture and ethos of the school. Schools can evidence the non-punitive strategies utilised when supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences, trauma and attachment difficulties. Schools have a positive relationship policy in place. Multi-agency groups established Strategy developed and communicated to schools 50% reduction in fixed term exclusions for CLA pupils compared to 22/23 50% reduction in permanent exclusions for CLA pupils compared to 22/23		
		M02	Multi-agency Transition Screening Meeting (MATSM) highlights care experienced children and young people who need work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, internships, traineeships and apprenticeships in Years 10 and 1. All Year 10 & 11 CLA pupils have accessed at least one of the above		
		M03	School leaders and school staff have a thorough understanding of the Corporate Parenting Charter and how the educational requirements of the charter can be met at school through making trauma-informed decisions and utilising pupil voice		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A03	To quality assure the CLA PCP process, ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted and every opportunity is taken to include the voice of the child	M01	Devise a Quality Assurance Framework for CLA PCPs	January 2024	Team
		M02	Share the protocol with Designated Persons/ALNCOs at Forum	February 2024	Team
		M03	Introduce dip sampling as part of the Quality Assurance Framework. This method will enable us to test out quality of practice in relation to PCP meetings, both in terms of gaining a baseline and then going forward to monitor progress	May 2024	Team
		M04	Feedback to schools post dip sampling, including areas to celebrate and develop	May 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Identify best practice in pupil – voice and invite relevant schools to share the good practice at CLA Forum	July 2024	Linda Hawkins
A03	Success Criteria	M01	Regular timetable of Quality Assurance in place for PCP Reviews. Higher compliance with statutory IDP timescales – target 90%		
		M02	Protocol shared with DPs / ALNCOs. – shared understanding of expectations improves quality and increased compliance with statutory timescales		
		M03	Quality Assurance of a dip sample of schools' PCP Reviews from Rhondda, Cynon and Taf schools completed. Baseline information identified to inform future service delivery performance		
		M04	Feedback to schools is meaningful and informs future planning of PCP Reviews		
		M05	Subsequent dip sampling identifies improvement in practice compared to baseline information		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A04	To agree the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee and ensure participation from care experienced young people (when relevant and appropriate) in line with the Children, Young People and Education Committee's recommendations in the radical reform for care experienced children and young people report	M01	Agree the terms of reference for the Virtual School Management Committee during the first Management Meeting	November 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Identify care experienced children and young people and foster carer representative to attend relevant and appropriate management committee on a rota basis	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Nicole Katchi
A04	Success Criteria	M01	All committee members aware of the TOR of the Virtual School Management Committee		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M02	Representation from foster carer and care experienced child/young person in relevant Management Committee meetings		
A05	To develop relevant and appropriate policies pertaining to the Virtual School and its procedures and processes	M01	Identify relevant and appropriate policies – looking at established virtual schools in England for advice on policies needed	November 2023	Team
		M02	Write policies that are relevant to the work of the Virtual School in RCT	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Ensure robust quality assurance of policies	January 2024	Management Committee
		M04	Disseminate policies to relevant services/teams, agencies, etc	January 2024	Team
		M05	Develop a timetable for the reviewing of all policies	January 2024	Team
A05	Success Criteria	M01	Relevant policies in place and shared with appropriate stakeholders		
		M02	Calendar of policy review in place		
		M03	Policies scrutinised by Management Committee		
		M04	Policies disseminated to relevant stakeholders		
		M05	Timetable in place		
A06	To introduce the new Personal Education Plan	M01	Publish revised PEP guidance that aligns with the new PEP	February 2023	Team
		M02	Develop a training presentation to be delivered to designated persons for CLA in Forum	October 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	(PEP) to schools at the CLA Forum	M03	Deliver presentation in Forum and offer online 'catch up' sessions for designated persons who were not present at forum	October 2023 February 2024 June 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes Team Team
		M04	To develop and implement a QA process to evaluate effectiveness of revised PEP and establish baseline information	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Evaluate effectiveness of QA process and revise for 24/25		
A06	Success Criteria	M01	Revised PEP guidance is published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. New PEP is being used for all PEP meetings taking place in every relevant school in RCT		
		M02	Training presentation is completed		
		M03	DPs and relevant professionals report secure understanding of the new PEP PEP is a successful document for capturing the education, progress, goals and aspirations, next steps in learning etc of CLA pupils		
		M04	QA process implemented. Baseline information collated and informed service delivery Good practice and areas for development identified and shared with relevant stakeholders Subsequent QA demonstrates improvement in quality of PEPs compared to initial baseline information		
A07	To develop a robust system to	M01	Research how other Local Authorities in Wales track the submission of PEPs	December 2023	Team
		M02	Discuss findings of the research	December 2023	Team

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	track the submission of PEPs by schools, ensuring higher levels of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timeframes	M03	Finalise a system of tracking the submission of PEPs by schools	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Share the information around the system with schools at DP Forum	February 2024	Team
		M05	Develop a graduated response to non-compliance	February 2024 (before Forum)	Team
		M06	Support schools to ensure statutory timescales for PEPs is adhered to	March 2024	Team
A07	Success Criteria	M01	Information regarding PEP compliance and tracking from a number of local authorities across Wales is available		
		M02	Final decision is reached in regard to tracking the submission of PEPs by schools in order to ensure a higher level of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timescales		
		M03	Schools are aware of the tracking system		
		M04	Clear step-by-step responses to non-compliance is available At least 80% of PEPs are completed within statutory timescales		
		M05	Schools feel supported in submitting PEPs in line with statutory timescales At least 80% of PEPs are completed within statutory timescales		
A08	To develop and implement a Quality Assurance	M01	Develop a process where pupil progress is tracked in the PEP (Microsoft Form)	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Create a Microsoft Form linked to the Education Record in the PEP	October 2023	Iwan Griffiths

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	Framework to ensure schools track pupil progress appropriately	M03	Present the process at CLA Forum in order for school staff to be aware how to input pupil progress in the PEP. Use the link in the PEP to demonstrate the Microsoft Form	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Quality assure the recording of pupil progress in the PEP termly using the data gathered from the Microsoft Form questions and establish baseline information	November 2023	Team
		M05	Support and challenge schools who are not recording pupil progress via the tracking process	November 2023	Team
A08	Success Criteria	M01	Microsoft form is ready for use		
		M02	Link is working successfully in the PEP (Education Record)		
		M03	School staff are confident in using the link and completing the Microsoft Form		
		M04	Data is readily available in terms of pupil progress as identified through the Microsoft Form link in the PEP Baseline information is collated and good practice and areas for development are identified to inform service delivery priorities		
		M05	Identified schools demonstrate Increased compliance		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A09	To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance process for tracking pupil progress and revise for 2024-2025 as necessary	M01	Develop a QA framework with relevant success criteria and measures. Is the Microsoft Form consistently working through the link in the PEP? Is the Quality assurance process highlighting schools that are not tracking pupil progress? Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting progress/lack of progress of pupils over time? Is the Quality Assurance process identifying progress/lack of progress for different cohorts of pupils? Do we need to amend the Quality Assurance process? Is there other data that we need the Quality Assurance process to demonstrate?	June 2024	Team
		M02	Good practice and areas for development identified and shared with relevant stakeholders	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Evaluate the effectiveness of the QA process and revise as necessary for 24/25	June 2024	Team
A09	Success Criteria	M01	QA framework developed with clear success criteria and measures to establish baseline information to inform service delivery priorities		
		M02	Schools report greater shared understanding of effective tracking of pupil progress		
		M03	Evaluation report of QA with recommendations		
		M04	Rationale for any change is recorded		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A10	Use range of data to improve outcomes for cohorts of CLA pupils	M01	Implement targeted approach to identifying CLA pupils who require enhanced support from VS for behaviour, wellbeing, attendance, academic progress	September 2023	Team
		M02	Effective use of PDGLAC bursary to support identified pupils	September 2023	Team
		M03	Impact report produced to evaluate above new process	June 2024	Team
A10	Success Criteria	M01	Cohorts of CLA pupils identified for enhanced support Clear support plans in place for schools and pupils with agreed success criteria Improved outcomes for pupils in line with their individual targets and in line with VS success criteria		
		M02	Bursary is targeted to support identified cohorts of pupils to demonstrate impact		
		M03	Report written to demonstrate impact and recommendations		
A11	To evaluate the 'Out of County' Monitoring Protocol to ensure provisions and settings providing statutory education to RCT	M01	Half termly meetings to discuss Out of County pupils	November 2023	Team
		M02	Develop an evaluation of the protocol using a series of questions: Do we have a live record of where pupils attend school out of county? Do we know how out of county pupils are doing? Do we know if out of county pupils' attendance has dipped? Do we know if out of county pupils are excluded? Do we have up-to-date contact details for out of county pupils' social workers, carers and Designated Persons? etc	May 2024	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	CLA pupils are delivering on their responsibilities in terms of improving pupil outcomes	M03	To rag rate the out of county monitoring protocol termly to determine whether it is providing the data needed to track pupil outcomes	November 2023	Team
A11	Success Criteria	M01	Diary of dates for half termly meetings is set		
		M02	Questions in the evaluation are answered		
		M03	Half termly rag rating evident		
A12	To provide relevant and appropriate training to in county and out of county schools in terms of making trauma informed decisions when	M01	Audit training needs of in and out of county schools	November 2023	Team/ Richard Evans
		M02	Create a timetable of training dates and topics	December 2023	Team
		M03	Deliver training face to face and online	January 2024	Team
		M04	Provide termly CLA Forums and 'Drop-Ins' for disseminating information, training, networking and sharing good practice in making trauma informed decisions for CLA pupils	October 2023	Team
		M05	Create a QR code for training evaluation	October 2023	Iwan Griffiths

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	<p>providing education and emotional support to care experienced children and young people</p> <p>To monitor the impact of training that the Virtual School provides and demonstrate evidence of impact on practice and pupil outcomes</p>	M06	<p>Chase up missing evaluations from course delegates</p> <p>Analyse feedback from training and evaluations</p> <p>Demonstrate the impact of training on practice and pupil outcomes/wellbeing</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>February 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>Team</p> <p>Linda Hawkins</p>
A12	Success Criteria	M01	List of training needs available		
		M02	Training sessions diarised for the academic year		
		M03	Completed evaluations available for analysis		
		M04	Visits to schools post training (8 weeks) to collect evidence of improved outcomes for pupils as a direct result of training		
A13	To review current	M01	Continue to research Virtual School Models in England	November 2023	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	RCT Virtual School Model structure and make recommendations for change	M02	Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Virtual School Model in Wales with Virtual School Headteachers in Powys, Gwynedd and Cardiff who have the same model as RCT	November 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Attend meetings to discuss the future plans and funding for the Welsh Virtual School Model via the National Delivery Group	TBA	Linda Hawkins/ Hannah Bevan
		M04	Discuss the future of the RCT Virtual School with Heads of service in Education	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Discuss the future of the RCT Virtual School with Heads of service in Children's Services	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M06	Provide a Virtual School Evaluation questionnaire to all stakeholders to evaluate the 2023-2024 year of the Virtual School Model and consider responses which may inform future plans for the structure of the Virtual School model in RCT	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
A13	Success Criteria	M01	Effective practice identified from established VS models to inform service delivery		
		M02	Roles and responsibilities reviewed and revised as appropriate to align with best practice models		
		M03	Attendance at meetings ensures up to date understanding of WG policy decisions re: VS in Wales		
		M04	Decision made regarding VSM following year 2 pilot		
		M05	As above		
		M06	Evaluation report completed identifying impact, areas of strength and areas for development to inform service delivery		

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A14	To collaborate with 'Pioneer Fostering' in order to support foster carers to ensure children and young people in their care receive the best possible educational outcomes	M01	Arrange a meeting to meet the Pioneer Fostering Group	January 2024	Team
		M02	Audit the training needs of foster carers in order to provide high quality training on how they can support the education of the children and young people that they care for	January 2024	Team and Educational Psychology
		M03	Arrange a series of relevant workshops for foster carers on topics such as: How to listen to a child read; Using the outdoor for learning; Executive Functioning activities; Phonics, etc	January 2024	Team
		M04	Provide training of a blended content of Trauma Informed Practice and CLA Friendly Schools	TBA	Educational Psychology
		M05	Evaluate the impact of the training on foster carers practice and pupil progress	July 2024	Team
A14	Success Criteria	M01	Awareness of the Pioneer Fostering Group – who they are and their specific roles		
		M02	Carousel of workshops arranged with relevant course providers		
		M03	Improved confidence and practice of foster carers around supporting pupils in/with education		
		M04	Improved outcomes for pupils in terms of reading/spelling age, etc		

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A15	To evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of a pilot project designed to support schools in self-auditing their whole-school systems and practice for care experienced children	M01	Meet regularly with Sunflower Therapy to maintain oversight of the project and how the 5 schools taking part in the pilot are engaging	Half Termly: September 23, November 23, January 24, March 24, May 24, July 24,	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter (Sunflower Therapy)
		M02	Analyse schools' self-audits	November 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter
		M03	Create a robust evaluation for teachers and pupils	January 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Iwan Griffiths
		M04	Examine data provided from schools from their own systems of monitoring pupil progress	May 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter
		M05	Interview pupils for feedback – have schools improved in terms of making trauma informed decisions?	May 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter
A15	Success Criteria	M01	Self -audit completed		
		M02	Evaluation prepared for distribution		
		M03	Data available in terms of pupil progress and impact statements as a direct effect of the pilot project		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M04	Pupils provide statements evidencing change in policy and practice at school in terms of CLA Friendly approaches		
A16	To formulate a robust system for alerting the Virtual School as to when pupils' IDPs are due for review in order to increase the percentage of CLA IDPs finalised within statutory timescales	M01	Discussions with ALNAS	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Lisa Carter
		M02	Liaise with CLA ALP	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
		M03	Create a system for tracking CLA IDPs	September 2023 Revisit November 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
		M04	Regular monitoring of the tracking system in order to ensure maximise the number of CLA IDPs finalised within timescale	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
A16	Success Criteria	M01	CLA ALP identified		
		M02	Tracking system in place to track CLA IDPs		
		M03	Increased number of CLA IDPs finalised within timescale – target: 90% compliance		
A17	To quality assure the delivery of ALP on a CLA IDP by visiting schools	M01	Meet to target different cohorts of schools to quality assure	January 2024	Team
		M02	Create a timetable for quality assurance in order to reach all schools with CLA pupils over time	January 2024	Team
		M03	Devise a quality assurance check list for delivery of ALP	January 2024	Team

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	and capturing pupil voice	M04	Feed findings into a Microsoft form designed to highlight good practice and areas to develop	February 2024	Team
		M05	Analyse data from Microsoft form	March 2024	Team
		M06	Identify which schools need support in their delivery of ALP and decide the best way to offer the support	March 2024	Team
A17	Success Criteria	M01	List of schools to visit is available		
		M02	Timetable adhered to in terms of school visits		
		M03	QA checklist includes lines of enquiry		
		M04	Data shows which schools need support and support from the Virtual School is evident		
		M05	Data evidenced in a variety of graphs produced by MS Forms		
		M06	Effective ALP in place and pupils making progress in line with IDP outcomes. Evaluation of QA process and targeted support in relation to impact on pupil progress		
A18	To ensure the PDG/LAC Bursary is used to target identified areas for improvement and evaluate impact	M01	Assess value for money from pervious expenditure for 2022-2023	November 2023	Team
		M02	2023 Complete service level agreement for PDG/LAC funding 2023-2024 – ensuring links to work outlined in the Virtual School Action Plan for 2023-2024	November 2023	Team
		M03	Scope areas of particular need in terms of supporting pupils' educational outcomes	November 2023	Team

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		M04	Scope areas of particular need in terms of supporting pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing	November 2023	Team
		M05	Scope areas of particular need in terms of schools supporting CLA learners	November 2023	Team
		M06	Evaluate impact of interventions/training/support provided to schools, social workers, foster carers etc provided by the PDG/LAC funding	May 2024	Team
A18	Success Criteria	M01	Effective practice identified in previous year and carried over if relevant to 2023-2024		
		M02	Service level agreement for 2023-2024 outlines several effective (known) activities and several potentially effective activities		
		M03	Clear knowledge of need of pupils and schools etc		
		M04	Fully evaluated Bursary expenditure shared with CSC		
A19	To implement and evaluate a pilot project in collaboration with the Education, Employment and Training Team: 'Planning our Way' to support Year 11 pupils with destination choices at post 16	M01	Initial Meetings with EET to organise delivery of project	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes/ Emma Brabon
		M02	Implement regular sessions in school with Year 11 CLA pupils	November 2023	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans
		M03	Regular discussions with Virtual School Team to feedback on progression of project	January 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans/Team
		M04	Attendance at GCSE results day	August 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans
		M05	Evaluation of project – pupil voice only	September 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans

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A19	Success Criteria	M01	Project outline available for Virtual School Team and schools/pupils		
		M02	Dates set for visits to schools and shared with schools		
		M03	Discussions include positive feedback of project		
		M04	Plan B visited on results day for some pupils who did not achieve desired grades		
		M05	Project evaluated successfully and planned to include Year 10 in 2024-2025 90% of pupils have planned destination		
A20	To work pro-actively with schools and Central South Consortium to identify CLA pupils at risk of permanent/high levels of exclusion and provide challenge and support to reduce exclusions	M01	Track pupil exclusions monthly. Identify schools needing support and challenge	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Arrange series of meetings with CSC (Jon Welch) to discuss strategy	November 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Jon Welch
		M03	Link with educational psychology to discuss an integrated approach in terms of reducing CLA exclusions	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Kerry Webster
		M04	Meet with school leaders to discuss alternatives to exclusion for example restorative approaches Provide bespoke training delivered by staff at Mynydd Haf – alternatives to exclusion	January 2024	Team
		M05	Attend Pupil Disciplinary committee meetings where relevant to support pupils and aim to liaise with Governing Bodies to rescind exclusions and instead adopt trauma informed decisions	September 2023	Team/ Andrew Brazier

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		M06	Continue to provide school Governors with CLA Friendly Training to raise awareness of CLA within education	November 2023	Hannah Bevan/ Donna Hughes
A20	Success Criteria	M01	Identifiable data in terms of schools needing support and challenge is available		
		M02	Strategies agreed with CSC		
		M03	Integrated approach with psychology evident		
		M04	School leaders are aware of options other than exclusion		
		M05	Increased number so rescinded exclusions for CLA pupils		
		M06	Positive evaluations for Governor CLA training		
A21	To work pre-emptively with schools to identify CLA pupils at risk of low attendance/with low attendance and provide challenge and support to improve attendance figures for CLA pupils	M01	Track pupil attendance monthly. Identify schools needing support and challenge	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Link with educational psychology to discuss an integrated approach in terms of increasing CLA attendance	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Kerry Webster
		M03	Link with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) to discuss an integrated approach in terms of increasing CLA attendance	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Dan Williams/ Kimberley Bowditch

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A21	Success Criteria	M01	Identifiable data in terms of individual pupils/cohorts of pupils with low attendance is available		
		M02	Strategies agreed with CSC		
		M03	Integrated approach with psychology evident		
		M04	Integrated approach with AWS evident Increase in attendance for CLA.		
A22	To develop a process to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement	M01	Meet with relevant colleagues in the data team in order to obtain data on CLA pupils without a placement	January 2024	Linda Hawkins/ John Tratnik/ Gregg Morris/ Aled Rees
		M02	Liaise with AWS on CLA pupils without a placement	February 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Dan Williams/ Kimberley Bowditch
		M03	Audit the reasons CLA pupils are without a school placement	March 2024	Team
		M04	Reach out to out of county educational provisions to arrange for communication between them and the Virtual School when a pupil leaves the school and where is the next destination	April 2024	Team
		M05	Discuss a plan in order to support pupils without a school placement and what role the Virtual School can take to help avoid drift and delay for these pupils, including a review of ALN Panel processes	May 2024	Team
A22	Success Criteria	M01	Data readily available for pupils without a school placement		

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		M02	Common reasons for no school placements evident		
		M03	Reasons identified and recommendations inform 24/25 planning		
		M04	Increased communication with out of county schools		
		M05	Plan with identified actions in place to reduce number of days pupils are without a school placement		
A23	To identify barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements/ provision and agree potential solutions	M01	Identify common barriers/reasons why these pupils are not accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	March 2024	Team
		M02	Carry out a case study on individual pupils who are not accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	April 2024	Hannah Bevan
		M03	Study the findings of the case study and suggest areas for improvement in terms of reducing barriers to accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	June 2024	Team
		M04	Share findings and solutions with heads of service in education and Children's Services	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
A23	Success Criteria	M01	List of common reasons compiled		
		M02	Case study completed and shared with relevant stakeholders		
		M03	Plan in place to implement areas for improvement		
		M04	HOS aware of findings and solutions		