



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 10 January 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Committee Members only at 9.30 am in the Council Antechamber.

Access to the Public Gallery

Access to the Public Gallery is on Level 3 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. There is no public access from any other entrance.

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

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Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors –

Reid (Chair), N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Bell, Fletcher, Gartside, Hewitson, Judge, Lovecy, Ludford, Marsh, McHale, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

Co-opted Members -

Mr G Cleworth, Canon Susie Mapledoram, Mrs J Miles, Ms L Smith and Mr Yacob Yonis

Agenda

1. Urgent Business

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

2. Appeals

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

3. Interests

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023.

Pages

7 - 14

5. Fostering Service Annual Report 2022-2023

Report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

Pages

15 - 58

This report sets out what the Fostering Service has achieved over the past year and what its priorities are for the coming year.

6. Annual Adoption Report

To follow

7. Annual Virtual School Head's Report

Report of the Director of Education

Pages

59 - 114

This report provides an overview of the work that has been undertaken during 2022-23 to promote the education, employment and training of the Children and Young People overseen by the Manchester Virtual School. This includes Children and Young People in the care of Manchester, Manchester Care Leavers, Previously Looked After Children who attend education settings within Manchester, Children and Young People with a Manchester Social Worker and Young People supported by the Youth Justice Service.

8. Overview Report

Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Pages
115 - 124

The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviews the services provided by the Council and its partners for young people across the city including education, early years, school standards and valuing young people.

In addition to the elected members the Committee has seven co-opted member positions. These are:

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester – Canon Susie Mapledoram
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford – Mrs Julie Miles
- Parent governor representative – Mr Yacob Yonis
- Parent governor representative – Vacant
- Parent governor representative – Mr Gary Cleworth
- Secondary sector teacher representative – Vacant
- Primary sector teacher representative – Ms Laura Smith

The co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors are able to vote when the Committee deals with matters relating to education functions.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. To help facilitate this, the Council encourages anyone who wishes to speak at the meeting to contact the Committee Officer in advance of the meeting by telephone or email, who will then pass on your request to the Chair for consideration. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

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Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website www.manchester.gov.uk

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

Joanne Roney OBE
Chief Executive
3rd Floor, Town Hall Extension,
Manchester, M60 2LA.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

Rachel McKeon
Tel: 0161 234 4497
Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 2 January 2024** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Bell, Fletcher, Gartside, Lovecy, Marsh, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Mr Y Yonis, Parent Governor Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People

Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

John Rowlands, Executive Principal and CEO, Greater Manchester Academy Trust (GMAT)

Apologies:

Councillors Hewitson, Judge, Ludford and McHale

Canon S Mapledoram, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

CYP/23/54 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023.

CYP/23/55 Attainment Headline outcomes 2023 (provisional)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Education which provided a summary of the 2023 provisional outcomes of statutory assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. It also provided a list of actions which were being progressed to address some of the gaps in learning.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes;
- Year 1 Phonic Test outcomes;
- Key Stage 1 outcomes;
- Key Stage 2 provisional results;
- Key Stage 4 GCSE provisional headline results;
- Stage 5 A Level provisional headline results; and
- Next steps.

The Committee heard from John Rowlands, Executive Principal and CEO, Greater Manchester Academy Trust (GMAT), which was a small multi-academy trust which provided nursery, primary and secondary education in north Manchester, as well as associate leadership and management support to a local authority-maintained nursery and Children's Centres. He outlined how the Trust provided a cradle to career approach within the area, supporting children, families and communities. He reported that the area served had high levels of deprivation and that the Trust worked to understand the lived experience of the children and focused on both quality of teaching and mitigating the impact of social disadvantage, working with the Council and other partners. He highlighted the importance of young people having not only good results but also developing the right character and a positive perception of their area. He informed the Committee about the role of the Trust's Manchester Communication Research School, whose role was to impart evidence-informed practice across the region and beyond. He highlighted some of the work the Trust had been doing to secure improvements, including a focus on early years and on mental health, both in school and within families, supporting community cohesion and working with partners on issues such as housing. He provided an overview of the current position, including the impact of the pandemic, particularly on younger children, which schools were working to address, and positive results at GCSE, highlighting the progress made by children from disadvantaged backgrounds. He finished by emphasising the importance of investing in early years now in order to secure positive future outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the approach taken by GMAT, including work with the local community;
- Competing pressures on headteachers and senior leadership teams;
- School workforce;
- International New Arrivals;
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), including how children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and other additional needs were being accommodated, including in relation to Behaviour Policies; and
- The impact of the pandemic and lessons learnt.

John Rowlands outlined how his Trust recruited teachers, based not only on teaching ability but also on their alignment to the Trust's values and highlighted the excellent teacher training centres in the region. In response to a question on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), he reported that the Trust used a long-term model based on evidence-informed practice to address needs and gaps in the school workforce. He informed Members how the Trust had responded to the arrival of 26 pupils evacuated from Afghanistan, supporting them and their families. He advised that there was a recruitment and retention challenge in schools in relation to both teachers and the wider school workforce and highlighted the Trust's retention policy. In response to a question on advice for secondary headteachers in relation to supporting the transition of pupils into Year 7 where they had not come from a

primary school within the same Trust, he reported that it was important to work with the Council on excellence in transition and to understand the context and lived experience of those children entering the school. He reported that his Trust had put in place a pastoral tracker across 17 schools in north Manchester which helped with obtaining a full picture of a child and family's circumstances and he advised that parents were key partners who were experts on their circumstances and it was important to work effectively with both the family and professional partners.

The Assistant Director of Education reported that all schools were expected to make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND, including in relation to the application of behaviour policies, and she highlighted some of the support available to schools, including the Inclusion Toolkit, outreach support from special schools and the Autism in Schools Project. In response to a Member's question about children who had not yet received a diagnosis, she advised that the approach taken was to meet the presenting needs, rather than waiting for a diagnosis.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted the positive impact of Manchester schools on the city's children and the impact that not being in school or early years settings during the pandemic had had, stating that more time should be spent as a country considering the impact of this and the mitigation needed to address it. In response to a question about increasing numbers of children with SEND, he advised that there was a challenge in identifying whether some children had missed developmental milestones because of the pandemic or had longer-term additional needs. He advised that further information on the work the Council was doing could be included in a future report on SEND.

The Assistant Director of Education outlined some of the learning from the pandemic, including the importance of a holistic approach from schools, continuing education as much as possible while children were not in school, particularly in relation to literacy, and the disproportionate impact on young children from missing out on early socialisation and the importance of taking steps to address that quickly after that period.

In response to a question about teaching children who had English as an Additional Language (EAL), the Director of Education reported that this was part of the routine work of some Manchester schools who had become experts in this but that in cases where children from, for example, Afghanistan, were placed in schools which did not have that experience, the schools were being paired up with more experienced schools which could share their expertise. In response to a further question about EAL, John Rowlands reported that his Trust had five tiers to reflect the different levels of English that pupil might have with a separate approach for each tier, which could include enabling them to study their heritage language.

The Chair advised that the Committee would receive a further report at a later date with a breakdown of the results including by gender and ethnicity and would then be able to look into these factors in more detail. She highlighted the experience of white disadvantaged boys and the importance of parental support and expectations. She welcomed the work that GMAT was doing, including working with children from their early years throughout their education as well as working with the community, and asked what more support the Council and Councillors could provide, for example, in

relation to housing. She highlighted the challenges families were experiencing in relation to housing and how the Council was working to address this. She also asked how budget constraints impacted on the Trust's ability to do this work.

John Rowlands reported that GMAT had an effective partnership relationship with the Council and other organisations such as Shelter to address housing issues. He acknowledged the Chair's point about constraints on school budgets and advised that efficiencies could be achieved as part of a multi-academy trust as well as by sharing resources across the wider group of schools which were part of the Family Zone.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/23/56 A progress update on Childcare Sufficiency 2023 and the Early Years Capital Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the Manchester's Childcare Sufficiency Report 2023 and a summary of progress to date on the capital investment made in the Council's Early Years estate.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- The Early Years National Context;
- Sufficiency of childcare and early learning opportunities in Manchester;
- New childcare entitlements from April 2024;
- Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- Capital improvements to the Early Years estate;
- Phase 2 update;
- Additional developments to the Early Years estate; and
- Lease reviews.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the focus on training the workforce;
- The decarbonisation bids for six Early Years buildings;
- Concern that the funding to develop and expand wraparound childcare in Manchester for primary school aged children from working households only related to term-time; and
- That some of the areas with insufficient 2-year-old places to meet potential demand were very close together (for example, Old Moat, Withington and Fallowfield) and what was being done to address this.

The Lead for Statutory Area Early Year Access and Sufficiency reported that she would speak to officers in Capital Programmes to get an update on the decarbonisation bids. In response to a Member's question, she provided an overview of the Dingley's Promise Inclusive Practice Training and stated that she

would check how FASD was covered in the training and respond to the Member. She acknowledged the Member's point about working parents needing wraparound childcare during school holidays and stated that it was hoped that developing sustainable wraparound provision during term-time, which included supporting families to claim all their entitlements, would help providers to extend the offer further.

The Director of Education highlighted the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme which ran during the school holidays for children who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that a lot of work was taking place on Early Years buildings which would have a demonstrable impact on the buildings' carbon footprint, whether or not the bids referred to in the report were successful.

The Chair expressed concern about changes in immigration rules, levels of pay and qualification requirements in the Early Years sector affecting recruitment and retention. She highlighted that the new funding for wraparound care was for the set-up costs and that parents would still have to pay for their children to attend breakfast clubs and after-school clubs under the current Government. She informed Members about the difficulties some parents in her ward were experiencing in finding childcare places. She asked what was being done to increase capacity in the Early Years sector as the free offer expanded, including the recruitment of additional childminders, advising that billboards could be used, as well as reaching out to black and ethnic minority communities. She expressed concern that asbestos removal work to the Early Years estate in her area had been carried out during the day and advised that it should be carried out on evenings and weekends.

The Lead for Statutory Area Early Year Access and Sufficiency confirmed that recruitment and retention of staff was the main issue affecting the sustainability of the Early Years sector. She reported that the Council was working with Greater Manchester colleagues on strategies to address this, including training opportunities, as well as raising this issue through consultations. She stated that this had included sending representation on the challenges being faced to the Education Select Committee, including highlighting that pay rates were low. She acknowledged Members' concerns about neighbouring wards which had sufficiency issues, advising that her team looked at this wider picture, and she provided an update on the areas Members had raised and work to improve sufficiency, including exploring options for existing providers to expand their provision and supporting providers with the recruitment and retention of staff. In response to comments from the Chair about encouraging schools to increase their Early Years capacity, including taking children from the age of two, she confirmed that this was something which could be explored further in areas where more places were needed. She informed Members about a consultation that the Council was currently undertaking with childminders in the city, including making them aware of the new funding streams. She reported that due diligence was being carried out in relation to all asbestos removal work.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People expressed concern that the Government was expanding entitlement to free childcare without funding the sector properly. He informed Members about plans to better recognise

and reward the work of childcare providers, including an event at Gorton Monastery in February 2024.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/23/57 Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022- 25 - Progress Update

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an update on work done by the Council which had had a positive impact on increasing the number of young people accessing Education Employment Training (EET) opportunities in the city over the last 2 years. It also outlined the plans for this work moving forward which aligned with the Our Manchester Forward to 2025 Strategy and Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. The report outlined how the cohort of young people post 16 was set to increase year on year which was causing significant pressure on places across the post 16 sector. It stated that plans were in place to expand existing provision and to open new provisions but there was no planned growth of places for technical courses. It also stated that projected continued growth of the post 16 cohort in the next few years as well as the planned reform of Level 2 technical education might adversely impact on the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training going forward.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background/context;
- Progress to date in relation to;
 - Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
 - Post-16 provision;
 - The Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI); and
 - Qualification reform; and
- Business engagement and Skills for Life.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Tracking young people who had been identified through the RONI after they had entered college and supporting them beyond the first term;
- That NEET prevention work needed to be FASD-, neurobehaviourally- and trauma-informed;
- To request that a representative of Career Connect be invited when this item was considered again;
- The approach to supporting young people with SEND who were at risk of becoming NEET;
- The lack of clarity on post-16 technical pathways, which was making it difficult for schools and students to prepare;
- Mentoring opportunities;
- The need for additional sixth form provision in north Manchester; and
- Challenges in finding work experience placements.

The Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure emphasised the importance of urgently addressing the pressure on post-16 technical and vocational places, highlighting the impact on the quality of the post-16 offer and on the number of young people who were NEET and he reported that the Council was working closely with partners on this.

The Post-16 Lead outlined how young people who had been identified in Year 11 as at risk of becoming NEET were supported, stating that this continued over the summer period. He reported that checks were then carried out early in the new academic year on whether they had started at their planned destination and, if not, further support was quickly put into place. He informed Members that in the last academic year, schools had been encouraged to identify young people earlier, in Year 10. He informed Members that work took place with partners to provide appropriate support for young people with SEND who were at risk of becoming NEET. He also informed Members about work to provide a range of opportunities for young people, beyond traditional college places, including providers who could provide appropriate opportunities for targeted groups of young people.

The Director of Education informed Members that a member of staff from Career Connect was co-located in special schools for children with social, emotional and mental health needs and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) so they would have a good understanding of and relationship with the young people they were supporting. She reported that a lot of other special schools had sixth forms so would continue to work with and support their young people. She advised that, for young people with SEND in mainstream schools, the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) in the school would work with the SENCO in the college on their transition. She informed Members that all secondary schools had access to a mentoring programme. She acknowledged the Member's point about the need for more sixth form provision in north Manchester, advising that the Council was working hard in exploring options to address this gap.

In response to a Member's comments about supporting young people who had been identified through RONI beyond their first term at college, the Director of Education reported that post-16 settings had pastoral departments to support students. The Post-16 Lead reported that there was also a transition period and that, if a young person left their course or training provision, they could receive support from Career Connect.

The Director of Education reported that the specification for the technical pathway was still unclear. She reported that the T-Level was an equivalent level to A-Levels and a pathway to university but could be too difficult for some 16-year-olds wanting to take a technical route, who needed another qualification as a stepping stone, such as a BTEC qualification; however, she advised, that the Government planned to abolish BTEC qualifications for subjects which had a T-Level.

The Chair reported that some schools wanted to provide a sixth form but were unable to obtain the funding for this. She asked about student places at Manchester College, following the closure of some of its sites. She commented on the changes in the approach to supporting young people with learning disabilities, enabling

greater independence. She reported that, following the abolition of Connexions and Aim Higher, a lot of support for students was now provided by colleges themselves but that this impacted on their budgets. She expressed concern at the gap between Level 2 qualifications and Level 3 T-Levels. She highlighted the role Social Value could play in providing apprenticeships and supporting young people.

In response to comments from Members about funding to expand post-16 places, the Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People advised that the Council had duties for sufficiency at post-16 without having the funding but had been working creatively to try to address sufficiency issues as well as lobbying the Government. He acknowledged the importance of work experience placements, advising that this had been raised through the Our Year engagement and that addressing this would be a priority within the work to become a UNICEF Child-Friendly City.

The Director of Education reported that Manchester College had rationalised its estate, closing some of its sites while installing state-of-the-art facilities at the city centre and Openshaw campuses, in order to deliver technical qualifications, and that this had not been a reduction in student places.

Decision

To request that a representative of Career Connect be invited when this item is considered again.

[Councillor Bridges declared a personal interest as a Board Member of the Manchester College and Governor of the LTE Group.]

CYP/23/58 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2024
Subject:	Fostering Service Annual Report 2022-2023
Report of:	Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

Summary

Manchester is a large local authority with a total of 1,340 children in our care on the 31.3.23. The Fostering Service ambition is to provide foster families for all those children who need one. We continue to strive to meet this ambition and this report sets out what we have achieved over the past year (1st April 2022-31st March 2023) and what our priorities are for the coming year.

Successes for 2022-2023

- Our Ofsted Inspection took place in April 2022 and we were judged to be ‘good’ with our children in care and children in Private Fostering Arrangements judged to be living in ‘safe and secure homes’.
- This year we have doubled the number of new foster carers approved within the year.
- This year we have retained more foster carers in the service. Whilst we need to increase our net gain, in the current climate the improved retention is a success for the service.
- The Kinship Assessment team returned to the Fostering Service this year with the aim of improving the assessment and support offered to our kinship carers. In the initial year we have identified significant improvements in these areas.
- The quality of our practice continues to improve across the service with a 17% drop in deferrals at panel. Indicating that our assessments and quality of practice are in line with requirements.
- We have been successful in our strategy to ensure that our Fostering Panel represents the community they serve. The panel now accurately represents the general population of Manchester as identified in the ONS Census data 2021. We also have a larger cohort of panel members from Black backgrounds, which reflects the larger cohort of Black children within our cared for population.
- In November 2022 we implemented the Fostering Networks Mockingbird Model. This new initiative is an evidenced based ‘extended family model’ which improves the experiences of foster families and consequently supports recruitment and retention. This will support our aim to be able to offer a foster family to every child in Manchester that needs one.
- In December 2022 Manchester City Council were awarded ‘Fostering Friendly’ status for our work to support existing foster carers and to promote fostering within our organisation.

Priority actions for 2023-24

- We have not been successful in recruiting enough new Foster Carers to provide a foster family in Manchester for every child who needs one. For 2023-24 this continues to be a priority. We want to achieve a net gain with an increase of Foster Carers across Manchester.
- We still need more carers who meet our children’s cultural needs. We will be specifically targeting people who are able to care for our older children, and people who are able to meet our children’s racial, cultural and identity needs.
- We need to further embed our stability offer for our carers. This will support recruitment and retention of foster carers and help them to feel more confident in caring for our older children. This will achieve greater stability for our children who will be able to remain living with their foster families.
- We will develop our support and training offer for Kinship Carers to meet the specific needs of these families and to support families to progress to legal permanence so that children can grow up within their kinship networks, without ongoing social work intervention.
- We will launch our new training programme in Autumn 2023, we will continue to evaluate the impact of training and promote the requirement of training for our foster families.
- We will embed a ‘whole system approach’ working alongside our colleagues in the children’s teams and wider directorate.
- We will continue to build and support a stable, diverse, confident and talented workforce in the fostering service.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider the progress and impact being achieved by the Fostering Service in Manchester and the goals set out for 2023-24 with regard to:

1. Recruiting more foster carers, and carers who meet our children’s cultural needs.
2. Retaining the right foster carers and supporting them to ‘stick with’ our children and provide them with stable and loving homes.
3. Developing our kinship offer to ensure our families and communities are offered the right support to care for the children in their networks and to provide them with a permanent home.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	None
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in	This service, policy or function does not impact adversely on different protected or disadvantaged groups. Our strategy aims to promote further

meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	equality, diversity and inclusion within our service delivery and recruitment.
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Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The Fostering Service employ staff and foster carers from a range of cultural backgrounds, which reflects the culture and ethnicity of most of the children we work with.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Fostering Service employ staff with experience and knowledge of the area. We work with staff across the service and take a role in driving improvements and development across the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	We are now working in our local communities and within our organisation to recruit more Manchester Foster Carers and Social Workers with the skills and potential to deliver on our ambitions.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The Fostering Service have a specific recruitment strategy for new staff and we have successfully recruited new talent to the service over the last year.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Fostering Service are involved in the GMCA, Coram Baaf, Fostering Network and North West Leads networks. We have also implemented the internationally recognised Mockingbird Programme in 2022.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Contact Officers:

Name: Billie Walbank
Position: Service Lead Fostering
Telephone: 0161 277 1605
E-mail: billie.walbank@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Adele Ion
Position: Assistant Director Provider Services
Telephone: 0161 277 1605
E-mail: adele.ion@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Fostering Annual Report 2022-23

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report is prepared for those with executive responsibility for children's services and corporate parenting, to enable consideration of the service and to be assured that the local authority is having a positive impact on Our Children.

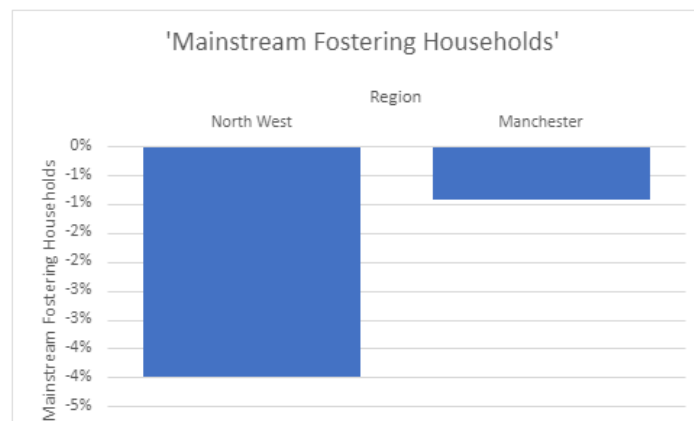
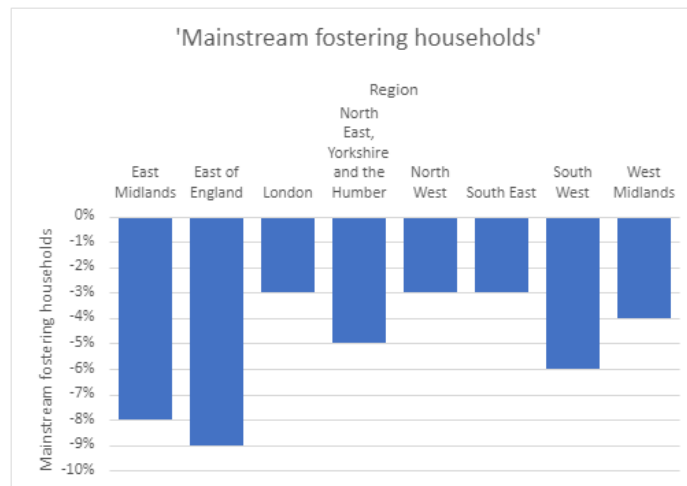
2.0 Background

- 2.1 This Fostering Service Report meets the requirements of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Regulation 35) and Fostering Service: National Minimum Standard 25.7 The Regulation states that the 'executive side of the local authority;'
1. Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every quarter.
 2. Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users.
 3. Satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.
- 2.2 This report is completed annually and this report covers 2022-23. It measures our progress and what we have achieved over the past year. It also sets out our priorities for the next year.

3.0 Main issues

- 3.1 Since the annual report was produced, we have made progress against our priority actions.
- 3.2 Unfortunately, the national picture remains a concern.
- 3.3 The Office for National Statistics have now published their report 'Fostering in England April 1 2022 to March 31 2023.' The findings report:
- 3.4 At the end of March 2023, there were around 43,400 fostering households in England. This total has remained fairly stable over the last 5 years, but the make-up has altered. Since 2019, the number of mainstream LA households has fallen by 11%, and the number of family and friends households has increased by 21%.
- 3.5 This year, there has been a 5% decrease in the number of LA households.
- 3.6 The number of applications in 2022 to 2023 (8,010) was the lowest in several years, at 18% lower than 2018 to 2019 (9,740). In 4 of the last 5 years there has been a year-on-year decrease in applications. Over the same period, the number of deregistrations has fluctuated. This year, the number of leavers exceeded the number of joiners.

- 3.7 This mirrors our experience in Manchester. However, our recruitment and retention figures do exceed the national and local figures with the number of households exiting Manchester in 2022-23 being less than 1%.



- 3.8 Despite the challenges faced we have made continued progress this year.
- 3.9 Of the households recruited since April 23: 60% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 40% are white British. Of the 60%, 20% are black Caribbean and black African households, 26% are Asian households and 14% are families with Middle Eastern heritage. The new foster families entering our service reflect the diverse population of Manchester and our children.
- 3.10 Our support and stability offer has also continued to develop and this year to date we have experienced fewer carers leaving the service. We have worked closely with our partners to strengthen our offer and the majority of our carers report that they feel well supported and receive a 'good' or 'excellent' service in Manchester.
- 3.11 In October 23 we launched our first Mockingbird Constellation in South Manchester. This constellation includes the Hub home carers and 6 fostering households (both recruited and kinship carers). The launch has been a success, and we are now planning our second constellation to be launched in the North or Central district.

- 3.12 This success is also impacting on our children, and we have experienced a decrease in children experiencing 3 moves or more. This year this has decreased from 10.4% to 9.6%. More of our children have also remained in their foster family for over 2 years. This has increased from 64% to 66%.
- 3.13 In recognition of the huge contribution that our kinship carers offer to our children we have also developed and strengthened our kinship offer. This year we have 2% more of our children living with Kinship Carers and we have achieved a further 8% drop (since April 23) in children who are moving from these carers in an unplanned way. We have worked alongside our kinship carers to gather their views and wishes. In response to this we have launched a bespoke training offer. Which includes preparation training, 'Foundations to Attachment' training alongside CAMHS and regular 'Family Events' which provide an opportunity for informal peer support and for children living in kinship arrangements to be able to meet other children with shared experiences. This was something that our kinship families told us would support them and the impact of this is clear.
- 3.14 Our Training programme continues to develop with a focus on trauma informed approaches to care. We have worked alongside CAMHS and 'Beyond Psychology' to deliver face to face and virtual training which focuses on therapeutic approaches to support children recover from trauma. This training has been accessed by foster carers and our staff within the service have also accessed trauma informed training programmes to build on this shared language, understanding and approach.
- 3.15 We have continued to build and support a stable, diverse, confident and talented workforce in the fostering service. We have focused on recruitment of new workers and developing our existing cohort with regular training, learning opportunities and development sessions and days. We are experiencing great success in this area and we have achieved a 19% decrease in our vacancy rate and a 15% decrease in turnover this year.
- 3.16 We continue to experience the national and local pressures in relation to fostering and our ability to offer a foster family to every child in Manchester who needs one. However, we continue to work creatively and consistently to address the challenges and to support our children to live in stable and loving homes with care givers who can meet their needs and support them to thrive.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee Members consider the progress and impact being achieved by the Fostering Service in Manchester and the goals set out for 2023-24 with regard to:
1. Recruiting more foster carers, and carers who meet our children's cultural needs.
 2. Retaining the right foster carers and supporting them to 'stick with' our children and provide them with stable and loving homes.

3. Developing our kinship offer to ensure our families and communities are offered the right support to care for the children in their networks and to provide them with a permanent home.

5.0 Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1 - Annual Fostering Report 2022-2023

Annual Fostering Report



2022-2023

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Manchester is a large local authority with a total of 1,340 children in our care on the 31.3.23. The Fostering Service ambition is to provide foster families for all those children who need one. We continue to strive to meet this ambition and this report sets out what we have achieved over the past year (1st April 2022-31st March 2023) and what our priorities are for the coming year.

Successes for 2022-2023

- Our Ofsted Inspection took place in April 2022 and we were judged to be 'good' with our children in care and children in Private Fostering Arrangements judged to be living in 'safe and secure homes'.
- This year we have doubled the number of new foster carers approved within the year.
- This year we have retained more foster carers in the service. In the previous year we experienced a net loss of 19 fostering households. This year we have experienced the right carers staying with Manchester and our decrease has been 2 fostering households. Whilst we need to increase our net gain, in the current climate the improved retention is a success for the service.
- The Kinship Assessment team returned to the Fostering Service this year with the aim of improving the assessment and support offered to our kinship carers. In the initial year we have identified significant improvements in these areas. The quality of assessments presented to panel has improved, with a 25% drop in deferrals at panel. We have also experienced a 20% drop in unplanned endings for children in kinship care arrangements. For our children in temporary approved fostering arrangements, we have also significantly improved the timeliness of these assessments and decisions, with a 70% decrease in assessments exceeding the 24-week timeframe.
- The quality of our practice continues to improve across the service with a 17% drop in deferrals at panel. Indicating that our assessments and quality of practice are in line with requirements.
- We have been successful in our strategy to ensure that our Fostering Panel represents the community they serve. In 2021-22 our panel membership was 87% White. In 2022-23 we made considerable changes, and our panel membership is now 58% White and 42% from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds. This accurately represents the general population of Manchester as identified in the ONS Census data 2021. We also have a larger cohort of panel members from Black backgrounds, which reflects the larger cohort of Black children within our cared for population.
- In November 2022 we implemented the Fostering Networks Mockingbird Model. This new initiative is an evidenced based 'extended family model' which improves the experiences of foster families and consequently supports recruitment and retention. This will support our aim to be able to offer a foster family to every child in Manchester that needs one.
- In December 2022 Manchester City Council were awarded 'Fostering Friendly' status for our work to support existing foster carers and to promote fostering within our organisation.

Priority actions for 2023-24

- We have not been successful in recruiting enough new Foster Carers to provide a foster family in Manchester for every child who needs one. For 2023-24 this continues to be a priority.
- We still need more carers who meet our children's cultural needs. We will be specifically targeting people who are able to care for our older children, and people who are able to meet our children's racial, cultural and identity needs.
- We need to further embed our stability offer for our carers. This will support recruitment and retention of foster carers and help them to feel more confident in caring for our older children.
- We will develop our support and training offer for Kinship Carers to meet the specific needs of these families and to support families to progress to legal permanence.
- We will launch our new training programme in Autumn 2023, we will continue to evaluate the impact of training and promote the requirement of training for our foster families.
- We will embed a 'whole system approach' working alongside our colleagues in the children's teams and wider directorate.
- Continue to build and support a stable, diverse, confident and talented workforce in the fostering service.

Purpose of the Report

This Fostering Service Report meets the requirements of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Regulation 35) and Fostering Service: National Minimum Standard 25.7 The Regulation states that the 'executive side of the local authority;'

1. Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every quarter
2. Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
3. Satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

Manchester City Council's Fostering Service

The Fostering Service for Manchester is a large Local Authority service located in Etrop Court, Wythenshawe, Manchester. The Agency Decision Maker is Adele Ion and the Registered Manager is Billie Walbank Service Lead.

There are now six teams within the Fostering Service as follows:

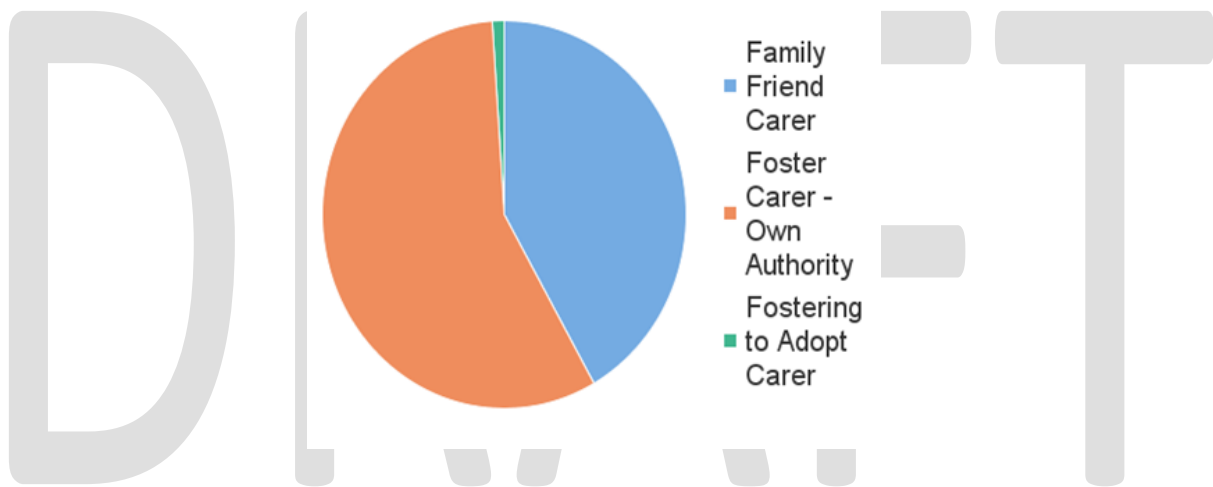
- Recruitment and Assessment Team (4 supervising social workers, A Training Officer, Recruitment Officer and Recruitment Support Officer)
- Recruited Carer Team 1 (6 supervising social workers)

- Recruited Carer Team 2 (6 supervising social workers)
- Kinship Assessment Team (9 supervising social workers)
- Kinship Support Team 1 (6 supervising social workers)
- Kinship Support Team 2 (6 supervising social workers)

To explain the distinction between kinship and recruited carers; the former are carers connected to a specific child either by family relationship or friendship. The approval of these carers relates to a specific child. The latter are foster carers who have been recruited by the service and approved to take any child within a category of approval (age, gender, number).

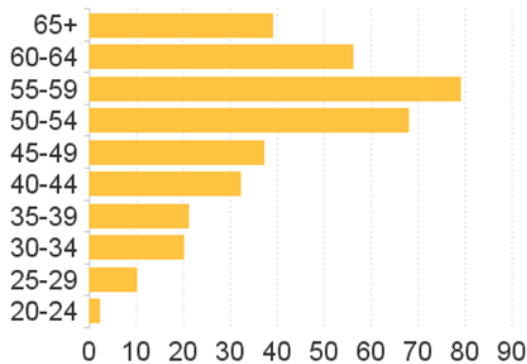
At year end we had 376 Foster Carers in Manchester. 216 were Recruited Foster Carers, 4 were Foster to Adopt carers and 158 were kinship carers. This is small decrease (6) in the number of Foster Carer's in Manchester. We have experienced a small increase in our number of Recruited Foster Carers and a slight decrease in our number of Kinship Foster Carers in the city.

Carer Type

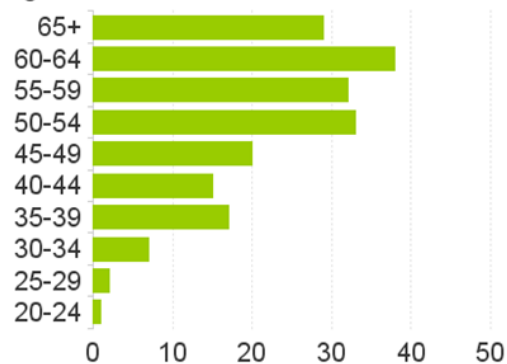


Demographics

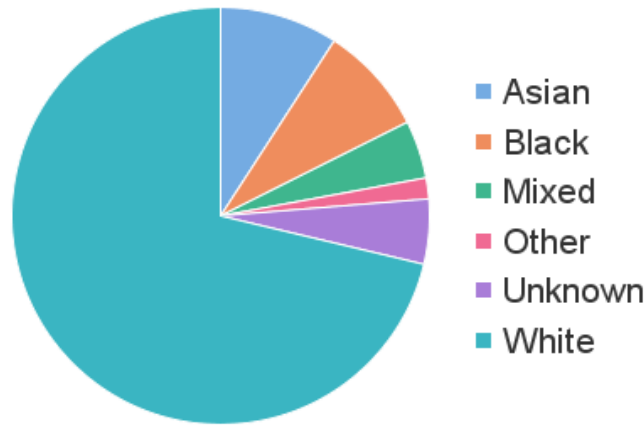
Ages of main & linked carers - Female



Age of all main & linked carers - Male



Ethnicity of main & linked carers

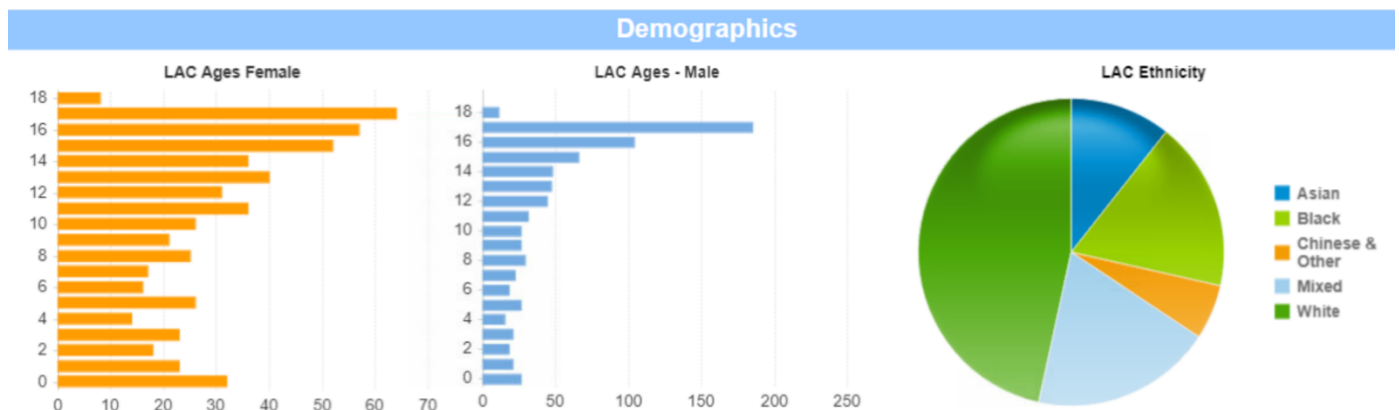


Our Carer demographic remains consistent and comparable to last year. There is a particular issue in respect of the age profile of carers. Whilst the Local Authority benefits from the maturity and skills provided by these carers, there is a need to address the fact that a significant cohort of carers are in the 60+ age range as this could cause us to lose lots of carers in a short time period and therefore impact on our ability to deliver sufficiency.

71% of all our foster carers are white, 9% Asian, 8% black, 1% other and 4% mixed heritage. This is comparable to last year but sees a very small increase in White and Asian carers. This compares to a children’s foster care population where 46% are White, 17.8% are Black, 10% are Asian, 5.7% are classified as Chinese or other and 19.11% are mixed heritage. There remains a need to focus on recruiting more carers who meet our children’s cultural and identity needs. Alongside supporting our children in foster families which are not a cultural match.

Children and Young People Demographics

We had 1,340 children looked after in Manchester at the end of this year. 524 of these children were placed with foster carers in Manchester (295 with Internal Foster Carers and 229 with Kinship Foster Carers). This remains consistent since last year, with 39% of our children living in Manchester Foster Families.



There is a growing proportion of specialist looked after children's placements, which require specific talents from our recruited foster Foster Carers. Our biggest cohort of children are aged of 10+ and male. We know that our children come from a diverse range of cultures and our Foster Carer demographic is currently 71% White. Having looked at the data we continue to concentrate on recruiting from the following communities: Foster Carers who live in dual heritage/ mixed heritage households and Black Foster Carers from British, African and Caribbean backgrounds. Our recruitment strategy continues to focus on a wide range of Foster Carers to ensure we are better able to meet our children's needs.

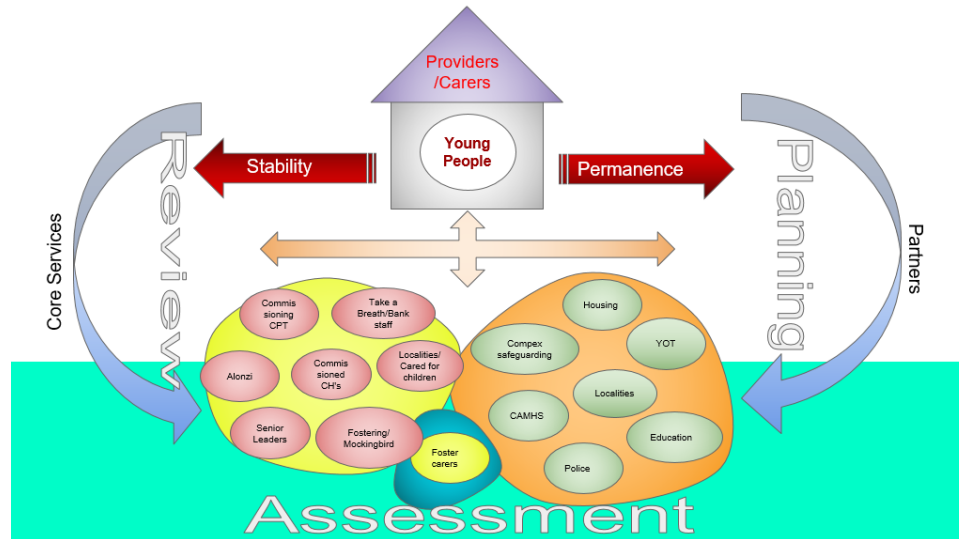
Our recruitment strategy sets out the work we aim to complete to target families who can meet our children's cultural needs. This includes working with partners such as AFRUCA and The Muslim Heritage Centre and a much greater presence in local communities. Our Recruitment and Retention Officer will start in post in October 2023 and will be instrumental in building and strengthening links with communities, to promote the need and to address any barriers that people or communities may experience when considering fostering.

We are also working with our partners across the city to strengthen our stability offer. A working group was established in January 2023. This group includes representatives from key partners and the aim is to ensure there us a clear and visible offer supporting stability for children and carers. We have new initiatives such as Mockingbird and Take a Breath that will be implemented in 2023-24 and we want to ensure that this offer is embedded and that there is a partnership response to stability and support.

To further support our Foster Carers to look after older children work with our Alonzi Hub provision to provide a stability offer to our Foster Carers. This provides access to a range of support offers including:

- Mental Health support worker
- Speech and Language therapist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Short Break
- Outreach support
- Family Group Conference

Referrals for support are discussed and agreed at a weekly stability meeting which is chaired by our Cared For Children Lead, Fostering, Virtual Schools, Health, CAMHS and the Alonzi Hub. The impact of this work has yet to be embedded however, the model and offer for children living at home is very successful and we anticipate the same to be said for children in family-based care.



Under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) there is a voluntary agreement that local authorities would accept UASC up to 7% of its total child population. Within Manchester this could amount to 98 UAS children and young people. Currently Manchester has a growing population of UASC who are 'spontaneous' arrivals and via the NTS. As a result, the service now cares for 175 unaccompanied children which is 13% of our cared for population. This has doubled since last year (when these children made up 6.5% of our cared for population). Approximately 11% of these children are living with foster families in Manchester. In response to this increase we are working with our partners in Manchester and across the region to increase recruitment of carers and tailor our support to the carers and children in these arrangements.

Fostering in Manchester 2022/23

The last year has been one of continued change and development with positive feedback following an independent review and an Ofsted inspection in 2021-22.

In May 2022 the Kinship Assessment Team returned to the Fostering Service following 2 years of this work sitting within the Children's Locality Teams. In the following 12 months significant improvements have been made in regard to quality of practice, timeliness of assessments and the support and training provided to kinship carers and their families.

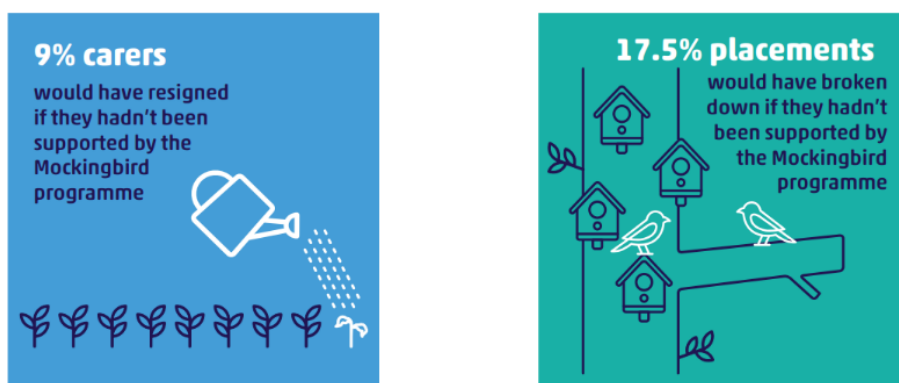
An Independent Review of this area of the service, was undertaken in September 2022. This review took place 5 months after the service returned to Fostering. Whilst "noteworthy improvements in the quality of practice" were identified, it was acknowledged that "There has not been enough time for actions to be fully implemented or progress sustained." The Independent Review did acknowledge the commitment and skill of the management team who were "committed to ensuring the welfare of children is central to its role in assessing the suitability of connected carers."

In the following 6 months further improvements were made. Unregulated arrangements reduced by 70%. Deferments at Fostering Panel also reduced significantly, and the quality of assessments

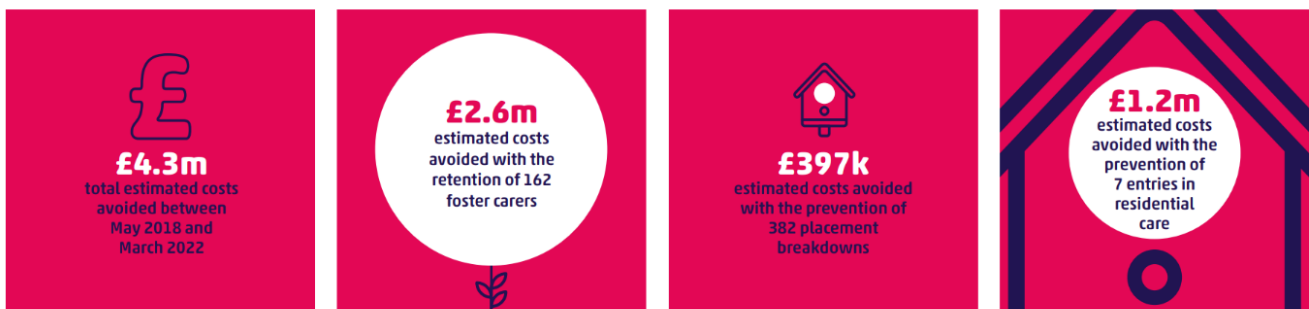
has significantly improved. The Service also implemented the first ‘Skills to Foster’ programme specifically for Kinship Carers alongside a calendar of family events and groups to provide peer support for kinship carers and opportunities for children to meet other children who were experiencing similar things. We have received positive feedback from our families about these developments to the service and consequently we are experiencing more engagement from our kinship families with a significant increase in attendance at events, training and support.

In November 2022 we implemented the Fostering Network Mockingbird Model in our service. This is an exciting step, and the Mockingbird Family Model is aligned to our vision and ethos within the service.

“The Fostering Network’s Mockingbird programme is an innovative method of foster care using the Mockingbird Family Model. This is an extended family model that provides sleepovers and short breaks, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities.” (Fostering Network)



The Mockingbird model is an internationally recognised programme which improves stability for foster families, alongside improved recruitment and retention of foster carers.



(Mockingbird Impact Report 2022)

This programme is now being implemented with a designated Project Manager within the service. We will have our first constellation set up by July 2023 and once successfully implemented we aim for this to grow and expand within the city.

In December 2022 Manchester City Council were also awarded ‘Fostering Friendly’ status from the Fostering Network.

“Our Fostering Friendly employers scheme offers businesses of any size a chance to make a difference for foster carers and the children they care for in their local communities and improve support for their own employees at the same time.

The Fostering Network’s Fostering Friendly employers’ scheme helps employers to support and recognise the roles of their employees who foster and involves no direct costs. Members of the scheme agree to put in place a fostering friendly HR policy for all foster carers in their employment (regardless of their fostering service). This includes offering foster carers flexible working and paid time off for training and settling a new child into their home.” (The Fostering Network)

With the support of this scheme, we will be targeting existing Council employees to promote fostering and recruit more foster carers for Manchester.

What our children told us in 2022-23

Our carers and children have provided feedback for the year and a lot of this feedback has been positive. Carers have complimented the support they receive from their Supervising Social Workers and our children have achieved good outcomes. Manchester City Council held an Achievements Award and many of our children living in Foster Families won awards. These included awards for teamwork, self-belief, problem solving and being special stars. Feedback from our children told carers:

“You let me be who I am, you love me and help me to have fun and play games”,

“I can talk to you about anything. I know you will tell me the truth, which is very important to me”

“You always show me that I’m part of your family, and I feel happy and safe”

“You always let me know it’s ok to show my emotions and you help me feel happy again”,

“You are funny, and I know you love me”,

“I have 2 families now”

Fostering Thank You Film 2023 - YouTube



We are also listening and taking action when our children report anything they are unhappy about in their foster families. This year we received 1 formal complaint from a child who had lived with a foster family. This was fully investigated and the Service Lead for the service met with this child to listen to her story. Following this, learning has been disseminated throughout the service and the wider organisation. Whilst our number of complaints is low, we are aware that we need to remain curious and ensure that we are visiting children and seeking their views regularly. We have held learning sessions on 'Children's feedback' and how we gather this in a meaningful and honest way. We have several good practice examples of feedback that is creative, child led and gives us a good picture of life for that child in their foster family.

Supervision of our carers

Supervision of foster carers continues to take place at a minimum of every 6 weeks for all of our carers.

As well as quantitative increases, there have been ongoing qualitative improvements in terms of our focus on issues and risk and oversight of the findings from Supervisions. Applying reflective supervision sessions and learning.

Supervisions now routinely capture the voice of the child and this is achieved in quite detailed ways. Some of these improvements have been positively impacted upon by the Wednesday learning sessions which have focused on the need to provide appropriate challenge to foster carers.

We can also point to more frequent and thorough manager oversight and accountability for timeliness of supervisions and a team and service focus through our audit activity.

Allegations and Practice Concerns

The service has continued to focus on this area this year and we are confident that positive changes are now embedded. Our staff have a sound working knowledge of the allegations process and their role in safeguarding our children. Process is routinely followed and there is appropriate management oversight and grip. The Fostering Panel evaluation also shows that the quality of investigations is good and there has been a notable and sustained improvement in this area.

This year the service investigated 34 allegations against Foster Carers. This is a 22% reduction in allegations made. Last year we investigated more allegations and deregistered more carers due to concerns regarding their suitability. This has resulted in the service being more assured that the carers we support and supervise have the appropriate skills and behaviours to care for our children. When allegations are made against carers, we investigate these appropriately ensuring that the children are safeguarded and supported. Our Foster Carers are also signposted to our commissioned independent advice and support service so they are also appropriately supported through the process.

When an allegation is made against a carer, we always undertake a full investigation and return to the fostering panel and ADM for a review of the carers approval. This ensures that our investigation is robust and has appropriate oversight. This process is not followed in all fostering services across the county. In some services investigations cease if the concerns are deemed to be unsubstantiated or do not meet Lado threshold. However, we continue to follow this process to ensure that our response is robust and we can clearly demonstrate that a child's concerns have been acted upon and we can provide clear evidence of the process followed and the reasons for our final recommendations.

The type of allegations are detailed below:

Physical abuse: 21
 Sexual abuse: 4
 Neglect: 6
 Emotional abuse: 3

This breakdown remains consistent with more allegations being made regarding physical abuse. The prevalence of this is experienced nationally. *“Physical abuse continues to account for the largest number of allegations. In 2020 to 2021, 53% of all allegations were related to physical abuse; this percentage has remained very similar over the years.”* (Ofsted, Fostering in England 2020-2021 11.11.2021) There are various hypothesis for this. Often physical abuse is easier to identify, there are also instances of false allegations being made if children are unhappy in foster homes. There have been instances where carers have used inappropriate physical interventions. These allegations also relate to physical instances between carers. These have been classed as physical abuse due to the potential risk to the children. All allegations are thoroughly investigated and assessed so that appropriate recommendations can be made. Of the allegations of physical abuse made in the year, only 3 were substantiated (2 related to domestic incidents between

carers and 1 related to physical abuse perpetrated against the children). The children were moved from these homes and the carers were deregistered.

This year we have demonstrated significant strength in our immediate response to safeguarding concerns. We are clear on thresholds and when allegations are made, we take immediate steps to assess any potential risks, and to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. We are doing this alongside our partners and our managers are evidencing robust oversight at the point of allegation.

Following investigation, we deregistered 6 carers in the year. One of these carers challenged our decision via the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM). The IRM endorsed our decision and unanimously recommended that this person was unsuitable to continue fostering.

We continue to work across localities to improve the quality of joint investigations. These have improved within the year with more effective communication at the point of allegation and a clearer understanding of respective roles during joint investigations.

Our allegations management process also links closely with our training requirements and following an allegation and investigation our Foster Carers have a clear training and development plan and recommendations. We need to ensure that these actions and recommendations are followed and that impact is evaluated and monitored within the service.

Fostering Learning

Since February 2021 the service have held weekly learning sets that are well attended. Each of these is an hour long and is used as the forum through which practice issues can be aired and new developments introduced. The following areas have been discussed this year:

- Impact on carer training for our children
- Secure Base Training
- Foster Carer Reviews
- Adoption support for carers
- Recruitment and Retention Strategy
- Recording
- Family Time
- Alonzi Offer
- Muslim children in care
- Children's Feedback for reviews
- Foster Carer Training Offer
- Coram Voice
- The Local Offer
- Staying Put
- Black History Month
- Leaving Care
- Eclipse
- Co-production with our children and carers
- Identity
- The Fostering Network membership

- Introducing Mockingbird
- Identity and Plans
- Family Group Conferencing
- Fostering Panel Requirements
- Foster Carer Supervision

In addition to the above we complete a quarterly Quality Assurance Report with a focus on learning and development across the service linked to our file audit work. We hold service Plenary sessions at the start and end of each quarter to set goals and measure our impact. This has seen a sharpened focus on the quality of our work with children and carers, and allowed us to focus on supervision and training, identity, and planning. Staff have very much welcomed this approach and see more value in feedback. As a consequence, our audits are identifying improved practice each quarter. We are now grading more of our practice as 'good.'

We have also held a staff questionnaire and Service away day, which allowed us to have space and time to reflect on our priorities and embed some of the changes we have developed through our QAF. Overall both the staff questionnaire and service day were well received, and both had very positive outcomes in terms of staff welfare, motivation and the desire to progress our learning culture.

Recruitment, Resignations and De-registrations

Recruitment of Foster Carers continues to be a vulnerability in the service. This dip in recruitment is experienced locally and nationally. "Since 2018, the number of approved mainstream fostering places has decreased by 5% while the number of children living in care has risen by 9% over the same period." (Stable Homes, Built on Love Pg 89)

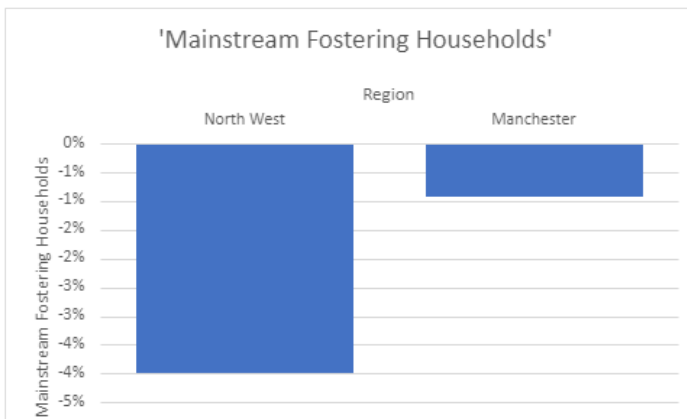
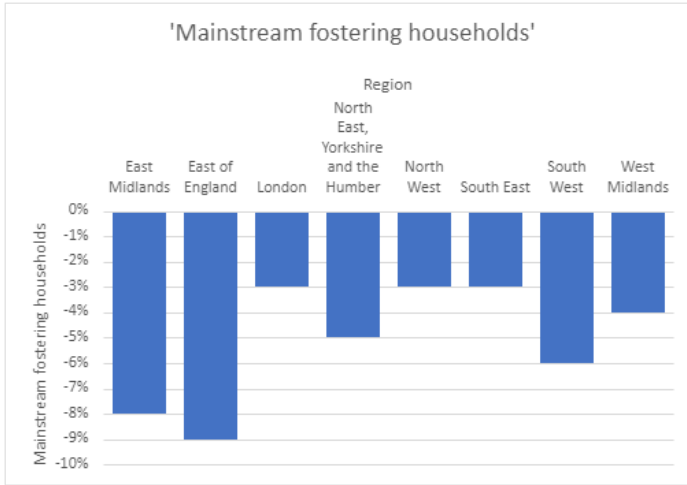
The Office for National Statistics have now published their report 'Fostering in England April 1 2022 to March 31st 2023.' The findings report:

At the end of March 2023, there were around 43,400 fostering households in England. This total has remained fairly stable over the last 5 years, but the make-up has altered. Since 2019, the number of mainstream LA households has fallen by 11%, and the number of family and friends households has increased by 21%.

This year, there has been a 5% decrease in the number of LA households.

The number of applications in 2022 to 2023 (8,010) was the lowest in several years, at 18% lower than 2018 to 2019 (9,740). In 4 of the last 5 years there has been a year-on-year decrease in applications. Over the same period, the number of deregistrations has fluctuated. This year, the number of leavers exceeded the number of joiners.

This mirrors our experience in Manchester. However, our recruitment and retention figures do exceed the national and local figures with the number of households exiting Manchester in 2022-23 being less than 1%.



Our data within Greater Manchester demonstrates that recruitment remains a vulnerability. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) published data in March 23. This showed that across the 10 boroughs “approximately 8% of carers have been approved in the latest 12 months compared to 10% that have exited. This means fostering services are generally shrinking, with Manchester being the only exception. However, this growth is not enough to keep up with demand.” (GMCA Fostering data insights Q3 2022-23) Our recruitment and retention has greatly improved this year. However, we still do not have enough carers to offer a foster home to all our children who need one.

We have a disparity between need and enquiry, with the vast majority of interest coming from people who wish to care for babies and young children. Our older cohort of children needing foster homes remains prevalent and we are attempting to address this through promotional campaigns and awareness. We have been working with our partners in GM on a GM strategy to target and recruit new carers, given this is a local and national issue. Pooling resource and producing a strong marketing campaign should support our recruitment drive. This campaign ‘Fostering Unfiltered’ will go live in May 2023.

We have also become a ‘Fostering Friendly Organisation’ and we will be promoting this status to encourage staff within the organisation to consider fostering.

This year we approved 22 new Foster Families for Manchester. This is almost a 50% increase on last year (when we only registered 12 new families within the year)

Service Representatives meet with GM partners regularly to share best practice and to share successes

We deregistered 24 of our Recruited Carers in the year, which has resulted in a decrease of 2 fostering households. Last year we saw a decrease of 19 fostering households. Whilst this is an improved picture in relation to recruitment and retention, we have still not achieved any net gains within the year. Whilst the de registrations relate to an ageing Foster Carer cohort and changes in circumstances relating to other caring responsibilities, we have been unable to recruit enough new foster carers to replace those exiting the service.

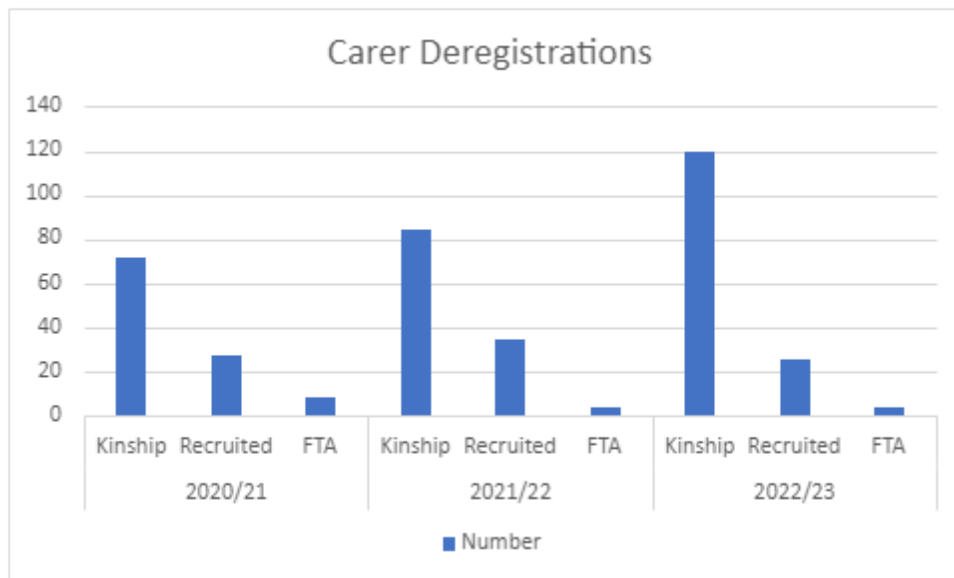
Registrations

This year we registered 94 new Kinship Carers, 22 new Recruited Carers and 8 Foster To Adopt (FTA) Carers. We know we need to focus on our recruited carers and we have reviewed our sufficiently strategy and work streams to support this.



De-Registrations

We de-registered 116 Kinship Carers, 24 Recruited Carers and 4 Foster to Adopt carers.

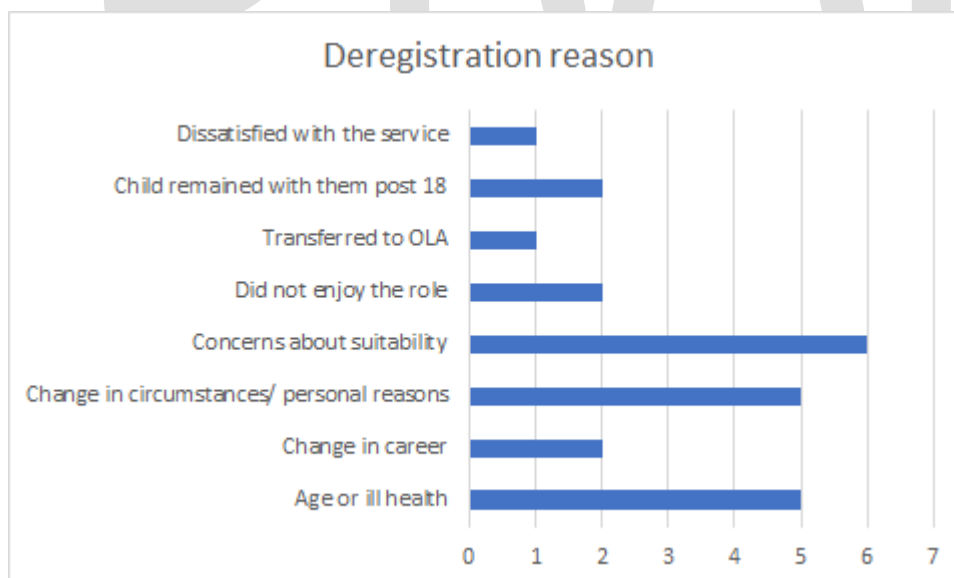


Deregistration's in the year by reason

In regards to the deregistration's initiated by foster carers, the reasons for these are outlined below.

Recruited Carers

Of the 24 recruited carers who left the service in the year 50% left due to changes in their circumstances- such as ill health, a change in employment or a change in their family circumstances. 25% left following concerns about their suitability to foster. 8% left as they found the role too difficult, 8% ceased fostering as their children remained with them as adults, 1 foster carer transferred to the local authority they resided in and 1 left due to their dissatisfaction with the service.



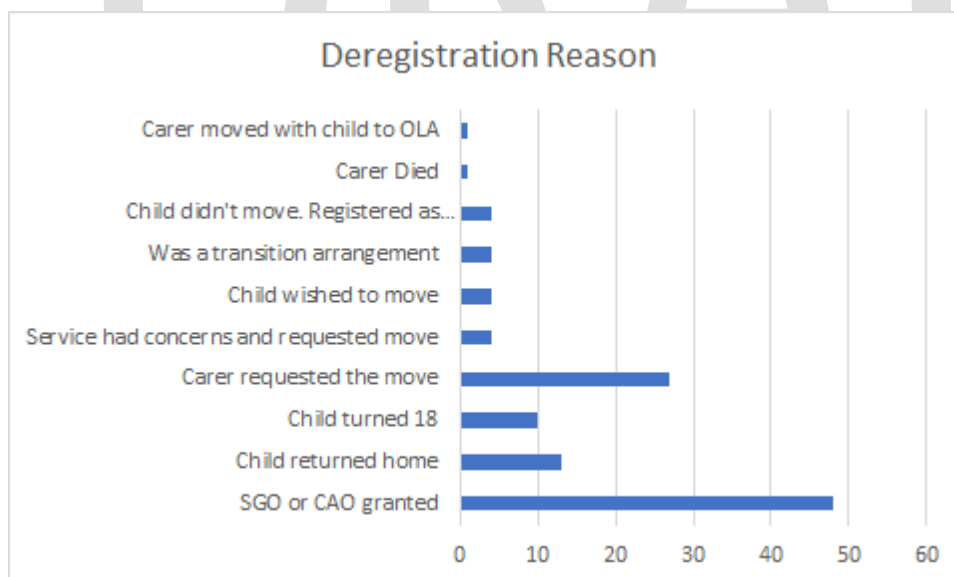
These figures demonstrate that our deregistration's are largely appropriate and predictable. 20% of our carers ceased fostering due to age and/or ill health, this is expected considering our ageing cohort of carers. We continue to support and monitor our carers effectively and we have made

appropriate decisions to deregister carers when we assess that their care falls below the expected standards. Positively only 3 carers left due to being dissatisfied with our service or with the fostering role. This is a reduction on last year (when we saw 8 carers leave for these reasons). This figure could indicate that our enhanced stability and support offer is supporting the retention of the right carers in our service

Kinship Carers

We saw a large number of kinship carers de-registered from the service this year. The majority of these de-registrations were due to children achieving permanence within these arrangements or within their birth families. Due to this our number of Kinship Carers who are caring for family under fostering arrangements has decreased. These carers have been supported to acquire responsibility for the children in their networks with an ongoing support offer from the organisation. This is in line with our ambition and the principles set out in the governments 'Stable Homes built on love' Strategy 2023 which states identifies the potential of kinship arrangements but the difficulties in managing these through existing regulatory frameworks: "Kinship carers should not have to become foster carers, and children should not become looked after, in order to stay together."(Pg 77)

Of the 116 kinship carers who left the service in the year. 62% of these arrangements ended due to the child achieving permanence, either through SGO or CAO, a return to their parent's care, or reaching the age of 18. 7% of these arrangements ended as they were transition arrangements, or they were contingency arrangements which were never required. Unfortunately, 35% of these deregistration's were unplanned. Children moved out of these households due to concerns about the care provided or the carers capacity to offer the care the child required. Whilst this number remains too high we have achieved a 20% reduction in these unplanned endings this year



The figures above can be attributed the changes in the kinship service and the return of the kinship assessment team to our service. Considerable work has been undertaken in this area of the service. Following the redesign there has been a focus on the quality of assessment and support offered to kinship families. The quality of assessment has improved considerably with consideration given to the long term needs of our children and families. We have focused on enhancing and tailoring support for kinship families this year. The figures above show that this is having a positive impact on stability in these arrangements. Kinship carers face significant challenges in respect of housing, poverty and family relationships. Our service has responded to

these needs by enhancing payments as well as offering more community-based interventions and support. In April 2023 we launched family events and additional peer support for our carers and families. Our support now extends to all members of the family, not just the carers and cared for children.

We have also refreshed our training offer for Kinship Carers. We have introduced 'Preparation Training' for our kinship carers, this focuses on their specific needs, circumstances and entry in to the service. The offer includes training on family time, managing family relationships and trauma informed care. This training is offered to all our carers at the initial stage of their assessment to ensure that they are receiving support and training as soon as they start to care for the child or children. The training offer has also been extended so that carers can access all elements of the training programme pre caring for a child, whilst caring for a child and even if they are granted Special Guardianship for a child. This ensures that Kinship Carers are supported and can access our offer at all stages of their journey and life course.

In recognition of some of the barriers Kinship Carers face we have established a computer library which enables carers to loan computers to complete online training. Our support events take place outside school hours so that children and families can also attend and our Supervising Social Workers have also supported carers to access training by completing courses or individual sessions with them.

We have also refreshed our offer to Special Guardians in the city. All Guardians now have access to ongoing 'Foster Talk' membership and access to the Foster Carer Training programme. There are also SGO Support Groups held quarterly across the city for any specific SGO support. Our SGO families can also access the family events that are taking place for kinship families. This offer has been well received with increased attendance and engagement with SGO carers across the city.

There is a need to constantly recruit new Foster Carers to grow our service and to replenish our pool of existing Foster Carers. There is a natural turnover of Foster Carers in any one year. Positively, for Manchester we have seen a decrease in Foster Carers leaving the service in the last year. We have also achieved an increase in new carers being welcomed in to the service. However, we are still not achieving net gains and the need currently exceeds capacity within the service.

Our ambition is to increase our number of new Foster Carers and families in 2023/24. Manchester's goal is to ensure that a Foster Carer is available for every child and young person in Manchester that needs one. Our Recruitment and Retention Strategy will be updated next year to support our work in this area. In the following year we want to build on the progress we have made this year.

Training

Training Offer

Manchester offers a range of training to our recruited and kinship foster carers.

Usually, most of this training is offered face to face, with some e-learning courses offered as a supplement to this training to meet specific trainee/training needs – for kinship carers not in Manchester, those who find it difficult to attend training in the Manchester area, work full-time, or

have a specialist interest or need which is not met within the MCC training programme. During the period of the pandemic, we had to suspend our face-to-face training but were able to offer a wide range of e-learning courses from the summer of 2020.

This has been the first year since Covid that we have fully returned to delivering our face-to-face training programme, which we reintroduced from February 2022.

We currently commission a portion of our training from a training agency, partner agencies work with us to offer some of our core courses, and we have some in-house training. The Foster Carer Training contract was renewed in November 2021, with the addition of five new courses; Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children and Young People, Positive Family Time: Supporting Children's Contact with their Birth Family, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Awareness, Internet Safety and Guidance, A Guide to Special Guardianship Orders (including financial support). This training contract was renewed again in November 2022 for one further year.

Our training programme is structured with several core mandatory courses which all carers are expected to complete following approval, with several further courses which cover a range of relevant subjects aimed at developing and updating foster carers' knowledge and skills to best meet the needs of the children in their care.

This year between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 we have offered:

- 3 programmes of the suite of seven Standards in Foster Care courses, one of which was delivered on weekends. 1 further programme started in March 2023.
- 10 Paediatric First Aid courses, three of which were delivered at weekends.
- 7 De-escalation and Managing Behaviour courses, 2 of which were delivered at weekends.
- 5 SIDS (Safer Sleep for Babies) courses, 1 of which was delivered virtually.
- 5 Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children and Young People
- 2 Safer Care, Complaints and Allegations
- 3 Welcoming Children and Transferring a Child's Care
- 3 Positive Family Time – Supporting Children's Contact with their Birth Family, 1 of which was delivered virtually
- 3 Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Awareness
- 4 Internet Safety and Awareness
- 2 A Guide to Special Guardianship Orders, Including Financial Support
- 2 Missing From Home
- 4 The Health and Wellbeing of Cared for Children aged 0-11 years
- 4 The Health and Wellbeing of Cared For Children and Young People aged 11-19, including UASC
- 2 The Social and Emotional World of Cared For Children
- 1 Secure Base six-week programme

The Virtual School have delivered a range of courses again for us over this year

- Supporting Children to Recognise and Respond to their Emotions
- Transitions and Change

- Supporting Your Child's Learning and Development in the Early Years
- SEND Processes
- Post-16 Options and Preparation for Adulthood
- Voice of the Child, Role of the Foster Carer in Contributing to PEPs
- Anxiety Based School Avoidance
- Attachment and Trauma
- Supporting Early Speech and Language Development

We have also offered a new 2 day in-house course 'Best Practise in Family Time' which was devised specifically for both foster carers and Family Time Service staff.

We introduced a new course on Black Hair and Skin Care in February 2023, delivered by a professional hairdresser with a follow up session held in the hair salon for carers and their children and young people. This was an outcome on the work we have done in the service on supporting children's culture and identity when they are living apart from their birth families and communities. The training facilitator reported: *"I'm so pleased Manchester City Council have collaborated with us on this important project, and I hope that more local councils will join in the near future. My long-term aim is to educate all care providers, including foster carers and teachers, on the needs of afro and textured hair, the correct language and terminology they should use and put a stop to hair discrimination whilst creating environments that are inclusive, from homes, to schools, and salons to community spaces."*

In May 2022 we were able to offer the virtual training session 'How to Communicate with a Child Who Has a Low English Level'. This course was provided by the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership and aimed at carers of migrant children to help them to communicate better with the children in their care.

For the following year 2023-24 the Kinship Service have also produced a training and support programme that is specifically tailored to the needs of our Kinship Carers. This programme has been produced following feedback from our Kinship carers and families.

Take-up

While some carers have been keen to re-engage with face-to-face training again, the level of take-up over this year has been disappointing. Some course subjects have greater attendance than others, however most courses have not reached full capacity and some courses have had very low attendance. Many have required considerable promotion and readvertising to foster carers and encouragement from their supervising social workers; this included courses that had been popular and well attended prior to the pandemic. We know from liaising with our partners in neighbouring local authorities, also from the Training Hub who deliver training to local authorities and IFAs across the country, that this is a common pattern and challenge since returning to face-to-face sessions post-Covid.

There has been a continued take-up of e-learning by carers both within and outside of the Manchester area. We have had 491 Training Hub e-learning courses completed between April 2022 – March 2023, with a total of 610 allocated.

The take up of our face-to-face mandatory courses was as follows:

- Standard 1. Principles in Fostering – 37 (over 4 courses)
- Standard 2. Your Role as a Foster Carer – 41 (over 4 courses)
- Standard 3. Health & Safety and Healthy Care – 32 (over 4 courses)
- Standard 4. Positive Communication – 24 (over 4 courses)
- Standard 5. Understanding Child Development – 37 (over 4 courses)
- Standard 6. Protecting Children – 33 (over 3 courses)
- Standard 7. Develop Yourself – 25 (over 3 courses)
- De-escalation and Managing Behaviours – 85 (over 7 courses)
- Paediatric First Aid – 101 (over 11 courses)
- SIDS – 39 (over 5 courses)

The take up of the e-learning versions of our mandatory courses was as follows:

- Standard 1. Principles in Fostering – 50 completed
- Standard 2. Your Role as a Foster Carer - 47 completed
- Standard 3. Health & Safety and Healthy Care – 47 completed
- Standard 4. Positive Communication – 42 completed
- Standard 5. Understanding Child Development – 45 completed
- Standard 6. Protecting Children – 40 completed
- Standard 7. Develop Yourself – 40 completed
- De-escalation and Young People - 32 completed
- Paediatric First Aid - 41 completed

The above shows that we have increased attendance on our mandatory courses this year. Last year 731 courses were completed. With the return of face-to-face courses, we had 838 courses completed this year. That is a 15% increase on last year. Whilst this increase is positive, we want to achieve a more significant take up of training which supports our foster carers in their roles.

We have continued to focus on improving our Training and Development offer for carers and developing their Personal Development Plans (PDP). The PDP form was established as a document on LCS in March 2022. Ongoing audits tell us that there have been continued improvements in our foster carer PDPs over the last year. They are more focused, there are more individual PDPs in place for foster carers within a couple, they include more SMART training plans, are more frequently updated, include more reflection and analysis and more evidence of the link to meeting the specific needs of the cared for child. We are seeing that our PDPs are more meaningful.

Our ongoing plans are to further improve upon this to get consistency across the service and to better measure the impact that training and development has on our carers and the children and young people in their care.

Our audits also measure quality and impact, and this learning is regularly communicated to the service.

We continue to work with our partners who have delivered face-to-face and some online sessions including The NHS Vulnerable Baby Prevent and Protect Service, CAMHS-LAC, The Children's

Society Missing Service, The Virtual School, One Education and NHS Specialist Nurses for Children in Care.

This year we have been giving consideration to how we might reshape and redesign our training delivery. We have been consulting with our partner services and agencies to explore the possibility of working in collaboration with them to use the expertise we have in-house to broaden our training offer, make it more relevant to our foster carers and to include new training and development opportunities to meet the changing/evolving needs of foster carers and the children and young people in their care. This includes exploring how we can offer face-to-face training for foster carers on serious youth violence and knife crime and training on autism and ADHD, both of which we want to incorporate into our training offer.

We currently offer an e-learning course Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence and a face-to-face course on Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation which includes issues relating to youth violence and crime.

We have investigated possible training for carers on Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime by approaching Complex Safeguarding, Strategic Lead Community Safety, YOS, training officers from other NW LAs and with some training agencies and relevant organisations. At the time of writing this report, there are plans in place to deliver a face-to-face training session on Serious Youth Violence for residential staff and foster carers, commissioning an outside agency to do this with input from Youth Justice and our Alonzi Hub. Our Complex Safeguarding Service have also recently offered training for staff in relation to Serious Youth Violence. The Foster Carer Training Contract will be going out to tender again in the summer of 2023, and the Service Specification will include a training course on Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime.

Going forward, to link our focus on finding foster families for teenagers with our training offer, we are highlighting the package of relevant courses we have for carers of this age group as well as looking at the development of our training offer to support this need.

We offer several courses which support carers' understanding of children and young people's behaviour and aim to increase carers' empathy with children and awareness of child centred parenting responses including PACE – 1 day Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children and Young People, 3 day The Social and Emotional World of Looked After Children (CAMHS-LAC), 1 day mandatory De-escalation and Managing Behaviour.

We offer a number of courses that are particularly relevant to carers of teenagers – Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Awareness, Missing From Home & Care, The Health and Wellbeing of Cared for Children and Young People aged 11-19, including UASC and Post-16 Options and Preparation for Adulthood.

We plan to re-introduce the in-house Secure Base 6 session course as a regular course in our training programme and for the first time since Covid we will be re-introducing the Drug Awareness and Engaging Young People in Conversations about Substance Misuse course, delivered by Eclipse. As part of our consultations with agencies to develop our training offer, we have met with the staff from Alonzi House, they will be offering drop-in sessions for carers to support them and explore any issues they may be facing, offering practical and emotional support via their own toolkit and models.

As part of the development of our training offer, we are considering putting on themed Training and Development Days for carers incorporating sessions from different relevant agencies. We are exploring the possibility of an event focussing specifically on caring for teenagers.

This year our training officer has continued to liaise with SSWs to support them individually and has attended team meetings across the service to talk about foster carer training and ensure that staff are clear on expectations of carers in relation to training and development.

In July 22, we conducted an online survey via survey monkey, to consult with foster carers and gain their views on our current training offer, any barriers to engaging with training, training they would like to see and any other ideas. The take up of the survey was fairly low with 38 responses. Interestingly only 3 of those who responded said they would prefer online training to face-to-face or a mix of both.

We promoted our foster carer training programme at our Foster Carer Forum in January 2023 this year, the first face to face Forum since the pandemic. The Forum was attended by representatives from Virtual Schools, Youth Justice, Complex Safeguarding, Resolve, Alonzi House, SEND and CAMHS. This event was a chance to network and for carers to meet people and learn more about the support on offer across the city. In the last year our training officer has attended foster carer support groups across the city as the guest speaker, to talk with carers about foster carer training.

In this coming year we will continue with our plan to reshape our training delivery and increase engagement with and take-up of training. We will continue the work with partners to broaden the training offer. Our foster carers will be consulted on this; we held a Training Forum with foster carers in May 23 to share with them our ideas and enable them to contribute their views, which will inform our plans.

Our training officer will continue to attend team meetings, offer support to SSWs to focus on training and audits of PDPs. We also plan to hold 1:1 training clinics with SSWs to look at the training record and training needs of their carers and to support with drawing up robust PDPs.

Post-course Feedback

Post course evaluations asked foster carers to rate these statements from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree)

- *I feel I can apply the general methods, principles or skills gained from today's training*
- *I have achieved the main thing I wanted to gain out of today's session*

The vast majority of all evaluation forms returned for all courses (approximately 90%) scored 5s or 6s for both.

The evaluation forms ask attendees to rate the *Effectiveness of trainer and training methods* as Excellent, Good, Average or Poor. The majority of all evaluations for all courses (approximately 80-90%) rated this as excellent.

Post course evaluation forms also asked attendees the following questions

- *The most important thing I have gained from attending the training is –*
- *How do you think you will use what you have learned from the training?*

Some of the responses they gave are quoted below, evidencing the impact of the training:

“A healthier outlook on social and emotional development relevant to the child I have with me”

“Take time out to reflect – don’t react”

“Different ways and actions of controlling behaviour. Also, that we are getting some things right”

“Looking at our own behaviours within our household”

“PACE – Acceptance is important in understanding some of the reasons for behaviours”

“Step back sometimes – rebuild relationships – reward more”

“You can escalate or de-escalate the behaviour with your actions”

“To know the signs to look for and how to deal with exploitation” (CSE & CCE)

“I really enjoyed this course and have learnt many different things which would give me the right tools moving forward”

“It was eye-opening for me, I learnt a lot for what to look out for. I will share my knowledge with others” (CSE & CCE)

“As a new foster carer I gained a lot of information and it was great to be with experienced carers”

“Reaffirmed my sense of motivation to be involved and to try and make a difference in supporting vulnerable young people”

“Helped me re-focus on the importance of promoting cultural identity and also the importance of using the person centred approach with children in our care”

“Relaxed, informal training delivered in a very professional way”

“Excellent training”

“A clearer understanding of what an SGO actually is. I understand more about our rights and the rights for P as she grows older”

“Clearer understanding of SGO and the processes involved. It will help me to apply for an SGO”

“Learned a lot about support for the child and me. Lots of information on safeguarding and policies”

“Take more time to understand the impacts of family time on parents”

“Thinking of the parents’ view. Prepare the child for family time and support them”

“I have really benefitted from the f2f (face to face) sessions. I learn better in the f2f than online. The opportunities for discussions and knowledge sharing are invaluable”

Short Break Carers

We have approved 5 new short breaks carers within the year

We currently have 1 Multi-Link Carer and 16 Short Break Carers in the service.

Multi-link foster carers are carers linked to a number of children with a disability or additional needs and provide 210 days short break placements per an annum (18 days in a month) The multi-link provision consists of five multi-link carers. Multi-link carers are paid a retainer of £16,500 per year. When they have children placed, they receive an additional daily rate.

Our Short Breaks carers offer 'short breaks' for specific children including set days and overnight stays per month. Of these carers:

- Nine carers offer 'generic' care for children with autism, which in some cases can be less complex and managed within a short break placement with one carer.
- Four carers who provide regular short breaks to specific children and young people also provide emergency care on an ongoing basis
- Two carers provide short break care for 4 children and young people with complex physical health needs and disabilities.
- One carer offers a full-time home to a profoundly disabled child and an emergency placement for young people.
- The Multi link carer provides short break placements (18 days per month). The carer is also providing a full time foster home for a child with special educational needs.

There are two main points of access to the Short Breaks Carers, these are through;

1. The Short Breaks Panel. To access this panel there needs to be a Children and Families or Needs Led Assessment identifying that the threshold is met for short Breaks provision. The threshold is not intended to gate keep but to ensure that all other possible options for support have been tried.

2. The offer of short breaks can also be to foster carers and children who may need short breaks. This can be accessed through the Centralised Placements Team and is a good opportunity for the service to develop a bespoke offer to foster carers and their children, who may need a short break as part of their care plan and placement plan. These planned short breaks can support stability and strengthen existing arrangements.

We are sufficient to accommodate the current short break requirements however the service does need to develop and recruit to enable us to be available to increase stability, support more complex children, recruitment of new and younger carers and to avoid having to place in residential or IFA's.

Specifically, we have the 2 short break carers who provide care to children with complex health needs (and have their homes adapted for this purpose). They are both coming to the end of their fostering careers over the next few years. We have established a Steering group, some members of whom are short break foster carers to review and develop the short break offer across the broad spectrum of need.

We are focusing on recruiting more Foster Carers who are able to offer short breaks and specialist placements. Our Recruitment and Retention Strategy supports this, with a focused drive in this area planned for 2023-25.

Fostering Reviews

The fostering service employ 2 Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers (FIRO's). FIRO's are now managed from within the service and that has enabled us to adopt a different philosophy to their function. We have tried to bring the FIRO's closer to the service in terms of invitations to manager meetings and to a monthly meeting with the Service Lead to discuss themes, whilst still maintaining their independence and challenge

There was a sickness absence from November 22- April 23 which led to a dip in performance and timescales. The service has produced an action plan to distribute reviews and ensure foster care annual reviews continue during this period of absence. At the time of writing this report the FIRO has returned to work.

There has been a noticeable difference in Fostering Reviews which are providing greater challenge to carers and to Supervising Social Workers. The FIRO's have improved their monitoring and QA function, and this is having a positive impact on the quality of records and case work. However, we still need a focus on training and quality of PDP's. In order to move this forward the training officer will be providing further training across the service.

The FIRO's are supporting the performance improvement and we are seeing an improved quality of reports and greater analysis of Foster Carers meeting the required standards. We are more assured that we are holding early reviews when required for both practice concerns and allegations.

The focus on next year will be to ensure all Reviews are held within timescales and a continued focus on the quality assurance function to continue to drive performance.

Foster Panel

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a sudden change to working practices resulted in panel adapting very quickly to virtual working. There was no disruption to panel functioning as a result of this however, many difficulties and challenges needed to be resolved along the way. From the 24.03.2020, Public Health England (PHE) advice¹ was followed and the Fostering Panel operated remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Name	Role
Antony Philbin	Interim Panel Chair Independent Background in Health and Multi Agency Adult and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships
Gerard Crowther	Vice Chair Independent Background in Local Authority senior management, including safeguarding. Qualified social worker – no longer registered
Vacant post	Vice Chair

Ken McDonald	Independent Panel Member Background in CAMHS and Youth Justice (Senior Management)
Councillor Susan Cooley	Elected Member Manchester City Council
Fiona Hegarty	Advanced Practitioner Supervising Social Worker (Registered) Manchester City Council
Vicky Crichton	Advanced Practitioner Connected Persons Social Worker (Registered) Manchester City Council
Ben Collier	Advanced Practitioner Connected persons Social Worker (Registered) Manchester City Council
Elisabeth Bird	Advanced Practitioner Recruited Carers Social Worker (Registered) Manchester City Council
Jo Morris	Independent Panel member Qualified and registered social worker
Cath Connor	Independent Panel Member Qualified and registered social worker
Lisa Batkin	Independent Panel Member Qualified and registered social worker
Councillor Abid Chohan	Elected Member Manchester City Council
Councillor Erinma Bell	Elected Member Manchester City Council
Michaela Macauley	Leaving Care Worker. 20 years experience as a foster carer Manchester City Council
Lisa Forrester	Accommodation Worker Manchester City Council
Lucy Ingham	Neighbourhood Officer Manchester City Council
Dawn Johnson	Youth Offending Service Team Manager Social Worker (Registered) Manchester City Council

Panel member attendance is arranged by consultation and the rota is set 3 months in advance. Most panel members have 100% attendance for the panels they have been allocated to. There have been a small number of cancellations from panel members due to emergency personal circumstances, however these rare incidents have not affected panel quoracy.

Additional Support to Panel is provided by:

Name	Role	Status
Elaine Wright	Panel Advisor	Social Worker (Registered)
Clare Connolly	Administrator/ minute taker	Specialist Business Support Officer
Kathryn Colclough	Administrator/ minute taker	Business Support Officer Level 2
Terri-Ann Fouracre	Administrator/ minute taker	Business Support Officer Level 2

Gareth Williams	Administrator/ minute taker	Business Support Officer
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In 2022-23 nine panel members have been removed from the central list. This has been for a range of reasons including retirement, resignation and moving into roles that were no-longer compatible with fostering panel membership.

Panel recruitment took place at the end of 2022 and we have successfully recruited six new panel members, who all started sitting as members from 2023. This round of recruitment was specifically targeted at people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups in order to ensure a fostering panel that more closely represent the community we serve.

The LA have successfully recruited to the Professional Advisor post with the successful applicant starting in post at the end of April 2022. There are no recruitment or retention difficulties in relation to panel.

Throughout 2022 / 23 the role of panel chair has been filled on an interim basis. It is acknowledged that this role has been filled on an interim basis for almost two years and it will be a priority in the next year to resolve this and make a substantive appointment.

Due to the volume of work completed by fostering panel we would aim to have two vice chairs appointed. At present one Vice Chair role is vacant. The current Vice Chair has also requested to step down to a regular panel member within the next 12 months. It is therefore a focus over the next 12 months to appoint two new Vice Chair's to fostering panel.

Individuals with care experience remain a gap on panel and unfortunately no applications from either the targeted recruitment in 2022 or the previous general recruitment resulted in any applications from this group. In order to address this gap we will be exploring a partnership with the Manchester City Council's Care Consultants. This is a group made up of care experienced young adults who provide consultation to different groups within the organisation.

All panel members have received an annual appraisal with the panel Chair and Panel Advisor. Panels self-evaluation identified strengths being: the panel are able to challenge each other and the service. We have experienced consistency on our panel and the panel have adapted well to the new process for considering allegations and complaints.

Areas of development were identified as: Focus and timekeeping, and panel members sometimes entering in to care planning discussions.

Panel members provided positive feedback about the functioning of panel notably that panel members feel comfortable to challenge each other and have differences of opinion. Broader development needs which emerged from panel member appraisals have been addressed by offering panel members the opportunity to access the online training offer to foster carers and to observe skills to foster training (subject to numbers).

A development session was held in February 2023 with the following presentations :

Session 1 - Strengthening Identity in Black and Minority Ethnic Children

Session 2 – Role and Responsibilities of Fostering Panel

Session 3 – Understanding differences in Fostering Standards for Connected Carers vs Recruited Carers.

Session 2 was included specifically to support the newly appointed panel members understanding of their role. It was also used to support existing panel members in understanding the difference between ensuring appropriate support to carers and care planning.

Panel Business

Manchester has a busy Panel that meets every week (Tuesday) from 9.00 until 1.00. During the last year there have been 28 recruited carer assessments, 111 kinship carer assessments, 47 foster carer reviews and an additional 31 where the review followed allegations against the foster carer.

As from August 2021 Panel no longer considers long-term matches.

Item	Total Presented	Deferments	QA
Recruited carer assessments	28	4	Outstanding - 9 Good - 12 Requires Improvement - 3 Inadequate – 0
Kinship carer assessments	111	21	Outstanding - 6 Good - 39 Requires Improvement - 45 Inadequate – 0
Foster Carer Reviews	47	4	Outstanding – 3 Good – 23 Requires Improvement – 17 Inadequate – 0
Review following allegations	31	7	Outstanding – 2 Good – 9 Requires Improvement – 13 Inadequate – 0
Regulation 25	35	0	N/A
Representations to IRM	1	0	Decision upheld by IRM

Panel does not provide a QA rating to any deferred items and rates the full bundle on return to panel.

Business April 1st 2022 – March 31st 2023

Number of panels planned	Number of panels held
54	48

Administration

Panel is well supported by an experienced and knowledgeable business support team who manage the panel bookings, panel agenda, and attendance for panel members, panel minutes and the distribution of paperwork.

Panel minutes are always completed within MCC timeframes and run to a consistent schedule.

Quality Assurance

Panel actively provides feedback to all participants via a feedback form and panel advisors notes. The panel has continued to work within legislative guidance and its own terms of reference to provide an independent quality assurance function to the Fostering Service in Manchester.

To be able to measure if the panel meets this demand and its remit we will set objectives for the following year.

Update on Objectives 2022-2023

1. Recruit to Vacant Professional Advisor Post – Completed Advisor in post from April 2022.
2. Reduce the number of deferments at panel – Panel and the Service can report significant improvement in this area:
 - a. Total number of items heard 2021-22 = 152
 Deferments 2021-22 = 51.
 This means that 33.5% of all items heard by panel in 21-22 were deferred
 - b. Total number of items heard 2022-23 = 217
 Deferments 2022-23 = 36
 This means that 16.6% of all items heard by panel in 22-23 were deferred
3. Collect, analyse and report on user feedback to panel - This remains an area of focus going forward and will be developed further over the next 12 months
4. Ensure management oversight and recommendation is available for all case presented to panel - Panel can report improved performance on this objective. All recruited care assessments and kinship carer assessments have audit sheets completed that provide comment and sign off by managers. All allegation reviews have management oversight and sign off. All Foster carer reviews have management oversight and sign off and Fostering IRO recommendations included.
5. Ensure diversity on the panel – According to ONS 2021 census data 57% of the general population in the Manchester City Council area identified as White (British, Irish or other white backgrounds). Panel membership in 2022 had 87% within this group.

In September 2022 targeted recruitment was carried out to attract new panel members who were from black and minority ethnic groups. The purpose was to ensure our fostering panel is more representative of the population we serve.

This was completed in partnership with the City Councils REACH (Race Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) Group, whose purpose is to empower Black and minority ethnic colleagues to achieve their potential by creating positive change and cultural shift within the local authority. From this recruitment a number of new panel members were appointed and are now active members of fostering panel.

The demographic of fostering panel members is now more representative with 42% from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and 58% identifying as White (British, Irish or other white backgrounds).

Objectives 2023 – 2024

1. The panel chair is currently filled on an interim basis. A permanent appointment should be confirmed within the next 12 months.
2. One vice chair position is currently vacant with the other expected to become vacant within the next 12 months. Appointment to these two roles needs to be made.
3. Care experienced people are a gap on panel. Despite two rounds of recruitment in the last 18 months, no care experienced people have applied to become panel members. Alternative options are currently being explored with a potential opportunity identified. Links should be developed to enable Care Consultants to provide consultation to panel on recruited carers. It is anticipated that this would include a review of an assessment profile, a visit to the prospective carers home and feedback to panel on what it might be like to live with that prospective foster carer as a cared for young person. Full details to be developed in conjunction with the Care Consultants.
4. With the removal of COVID restrictions, panels to return to in person arrangements as this is more conducive to enabling foster carers to attend.
5. Reviews and Allegations. To work with the fostering service to ensure these are returned to panel in a timely manner.
6. Collect analyse and report back on user feedback to panel. This objective is to be carried over from 21-22 objectives. Feedback to fostering panel from participants is rarely received. This needs to be encouraged in order to help inform areas for panel learning and development.

Summary and Priorities 2023-24 (included in our service plan)

- We have not been successful in recruiting enough new Foster Carers to provide a foster family in Manchester for every child who needs one. For 2023-24 we will be working with our partners in GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) to produce a joint marketing campaign which attracts more new applicants to fostering. The plan is for this to be launched in April 2023.
- Incorporated into this work we will be specifically targeting people who are able to care for our older children, and people who are able to meet our children's cultural and identity needs. We will be working with our Communities, Councillors and other Community Leads and Organisations to better understand any barriers to fostering and to promote Fostering within these communities.
- We know that to achieve our objectives we need to further embed our stability offer for our carers. This will support recruitment and retention of foster carers and also help them to feel more confident in caring for our older children. We will further develop our offer so that it is widely understood and easily accessible. This offer will involve our partners and will help to stabilise and strengthen foster families when they are experiencing difficulties. We

will strengthen our planning via our weekly 'Stability Panel' but will also consolidate our 'offer' with our partners and promote this with our current and potential fostering community by April 2023.

- An integral part of this 'offer' will be the implementation of the Fostering Networks 'Mockingbird Model' in Manchester. This model is an innovative programme which "nurtures the relationships between children, young people and fostering families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community of six to ten families." This model supports the stability of children in foster care and the retention of foster carers in their organisation. We aim to launch our first constellation in July 2023..
- We will launch our Training Action plan next year. This will support the service to understand any barriers to training and any themes. The plan will ensure all our carers are accessing the training and development required for their roles and that this is reflected in up-to-date Personal Development Plans for all of our carers.
- We will embed a 'whole system approach' working alongside our colleagues in the children's teams and wider directorate. This will be achieved through joint training and development and events with our colleagues to ensure that we are all working together to achieve our ambitions for the Fostering Service and our children in Manchester.

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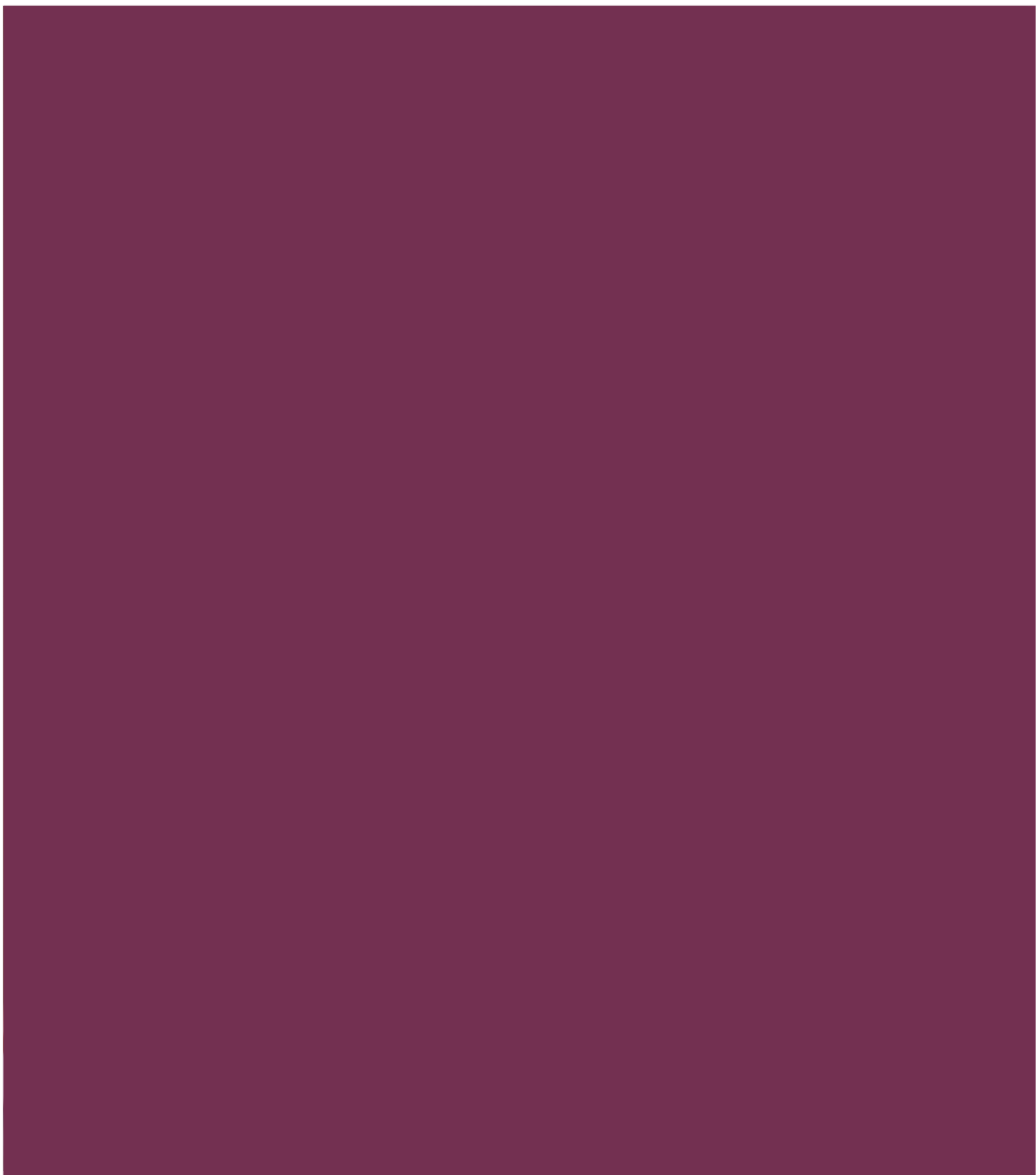
“Our Manchester Strategy places children and young people at the heart of its vision. Our aim is to ensure that Our Children will have the right home, in the right place at the right time.”



Billie Walbank
Service Lead Fostering
Manchester City Council

Chart Title

DRAFT



**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2024

Subject: Annual Virtual School Head's Report

Report of: Director of Education

Summary

The report from Manchester's Virtual School Head provides an overview of the work that has been undertaken during 2022-23 to promote the education, employment and training of the Children and Young People overseen by the Manchester Virtual School. This includes Children and Young People in the care of Manchester, Manchester Care Leavers, Previously Looked After Children who attend education settings within Manchester, Children and Young People with a Manchester Social Worker and Young People supported by the Youth Justice Service.

The report shows that in spite of the continued challenges posed by the impact of the global pandemic, improvement activity involving all partners has been ongoing, our children and young people have continued to be well supported in their Education, Employment and Training and most importantly they have continued to attend and access learning and make progress.

In line with the data for all Manchester children there have been improvements in the provisional Key Stage 4 results for the young people in our care compared to 2019. Whilst outcomes at the end of early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for the Children in Our Care have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The presentation version of the full Virtual School Head's report is attached and provides detailed information about the progress and provisional outcomes of Our Children and Young People, their views, wishes and feelings and about the multifaceted work of the Virtual School Team and next steps for further improvement.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the outcomes and review the recommended next steps.

Wards Affected: All

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>The report demonstrates the work being undertaken by the Manchester Virtual School to ensure that that every child and young person, whatever their age, identity, circumstances or ability, experiences a sense of belonging, feels respected and valued for who they are and is effectively supported to lead a safe, happy, healthy and successful life.</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>Improving educational outcomes will contribute to Manchester's young people becoming happy, safe and highly skilled and have increased life chances. Improved educational outcomes will enable Manchester's young people to contribute to the economic growth and take advantage of the job opportunities created</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p>	<p>Improving education, employment and training outcomes is essential for young people to gain qualifications and contribute to Manchester's economic success.</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring and analysis of the progress being made, and the outcomes being achieved by children and young people overseen by the Virtual School allows for identification of priorities with the aim of improving children and young people's outcomes and ensuring all young people have the best possible opportunity to succeed.</p>
<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	<p>Improving education, employment and training systems and opportunities for all children and young people will make Manchester an attractive place to live and work</p>
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>An improving education system contributes to generating future growth by a highly skilled workforce and young people committed to reducing the carbon footprint.</p>

Contact Officers:

Name: Amanda Corcoran
Position: Director Education Services
Telephone: 0161 234 4314
E-mail: amanda.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jane Johnson
Position: Virtual School Head
Telephone: 0161 219 6913
E-mail: jane.johnson@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Annual Virtual School Head's Report 09 February 2022 [Choose agenda document pack - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 9 February 2022 \(manchester.gov.uk\)](#)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government guidance, Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-oflooked-after-children> outlines the Statutory responsibilities of Local Authorities, including each Local Authority's Virtual School Head. The corresponding guidance, The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designatedteacher-for-looked-after-children> outlines the statutory duties for education settings.
- 1.2 In 2021 the role of the Virtual School Head was extended by the Department for Education (DfE) to include a duty, as yet still non-statutory, to promote the education of children and young people, from birth to the age of 18 years, who have a social worker. These are children and young people who live with their parents and who are supported via a Child In Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP) Plan. It is the young people's parents who retain parental responsibility for the children and young people and not the social worker. The information about these duties can be found in the DfE guidance document, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086931/Promoting_the_education_of_children_with_a_social_worker_-_virtual_school_head_role_extension_2022.pdf
- 1.3 The report also provides information about the joint work between the Manchester Virtual School Team and the Manchester Youth Justice Service to strengthen the multi-agency work to promote the education of all young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- 1.4 Unless otherwise stated, the data within the attached Virtual School Head's Annual Report presentation refers to children and young people who have been in the care of Manchester for 12 months or more as of 31st March 2022.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 During 2022-23 the Virtual School Team has continued to work hard with Social Workers, Designated Teachers, Personal Advisers, Carers, Youth Justice colleagues, Independent Reviewing Officers, other services and partners to support Children and Young People in their Education, Employment and Training and to enable them to attend well, make good progress, achieve good outcomes and to progress into positive destinations at every stage.
- 2.2 In all of our conversations, quality assurance, advice, guidance and training the whole Virtual School Team is, in line with the Manchester Inclusion Strategy, [Policies and strategies - Manchester Inclusion Strategy | Manchester City Council](#) focused on ensuring that every child and young person, whatever their age, identity, circumstances or ability, experiences a sense of belonging, feels respected and valued for who they are and is effectively supported to lead a safe, happy, healthy and successful life.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the outcomes and review the recommended next steps.

5.0 Appendices

- 5.1 Manchester Virtual School Head's report 2022-23 in a Power Point Presentation.

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MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Virtual School Head's Report

An overview of 2022-23

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**MANCHESTER
VIRTUAL
SCHOOL**

*Promoting the education,
employment and training of
children and young people.*

Ensuring that all children and young people – whatever their age, identity, ability or circumstances – experience a sense of belonging and are valued and respected for who they are.

Safe. Happy. Healthy. Successful.

Website:
manchester.gov.uk/virtualschools

Email:
virtualschool.education@manchester.gov.uk

Phone:
0161 219 6913 or 0161 234 4160.

**MANCHESTER
VIRTUAL SCHOOL**



Appendix 1, Item 7



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

UNICEF Rights of the Child

The Manchester Virtual School Team is actively working in partnership with others to support Manchester's ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City, a city which implements the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in everything it does. This report demonstrates that the work of the Virtual School has a sharp focus on:

Article 28 Right to education

Every child has the right to education.

Article 29 Goals of education

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.



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**MANCHESTER
VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

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During 2022-23 the Virtual School Team has been continuing to work hard with Social Workers, Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Personal Advisers, Carers, Youth Justice colleagues, Independent Reviewing Officers, other services and partners to support Our Children and Young People, from 2- 25 years, in their Education, Employment and Training and to enable them to attend well, make good progress, achieve good outcomes and to progress into positive destinations at every stage.

The views, wishes and feelings of Our Children and Young People about their education, employment and training and their life as a whole, inform and sit at the heart of the Virtual School approach. The whole team works to promote a child centred approach and the shared ethos encapsulated within Manchester's Inclusion Strategy statement; "***We believe it is important that every child and young person whatever their age, identity, circumstances or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and valued for who they are.***"

This 2022-23 report provides an overview of :

- What has been delivered.
- What has been achieved.
- What the challenges have been.
- What still needs to be done.

Unless otherwise stated, the data within this report refers to children and young people who have been in the care of Manchester for 12 months or more as of 31st March 2022. Also, unless otherwise stated, any comparative data relates to results from 2018/19 which is the last year, prior to the pandemic, when children and young people completed face-to-face assessments and exams. Some of the data, including GCSE, attendance and suspension data is currently provisional. Once published, validated data will be provided with local and national comparisons. Within the text we refer to the Children and Young People in our care as "Our Children and Young People" and also as within the data tables and graphs as Children Looked After (CLA)

Acknowledgements

2022-23 has continued to present many opportunities as well as significant challenges. The Virtual School Head and Virtual School Team would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the children and young people during 2022-23 and to thank them for their engagement and participation in developing and reviewing their Personal Education Plans (PEPs). We were delighted to hold our Annual Achievement Awards Event at The Gorton Monastery in July 2023. It was fantastic to be able to come together to celebrate Children and Young People's achievements. The event was attended by over 150 young people and their supporters and certificates, vouchers, goodie bags and trophies were distributed. It was a fantastic day.

The Virtual School Team would also like to acknowledge the hard work of all the partners who have worked to support the Education, Employment and Training of all of Manchester's Children and Young People including Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Youth Justice colleagues, Independent Reviewing Officers, Leaving Care Personal Advisers, Carers and family members. Key information from this report will be shared with all partners who are involved in the care, education, employment and training of Our Children and Young People.

Jane Johnson
Virtual School Head
November 2023



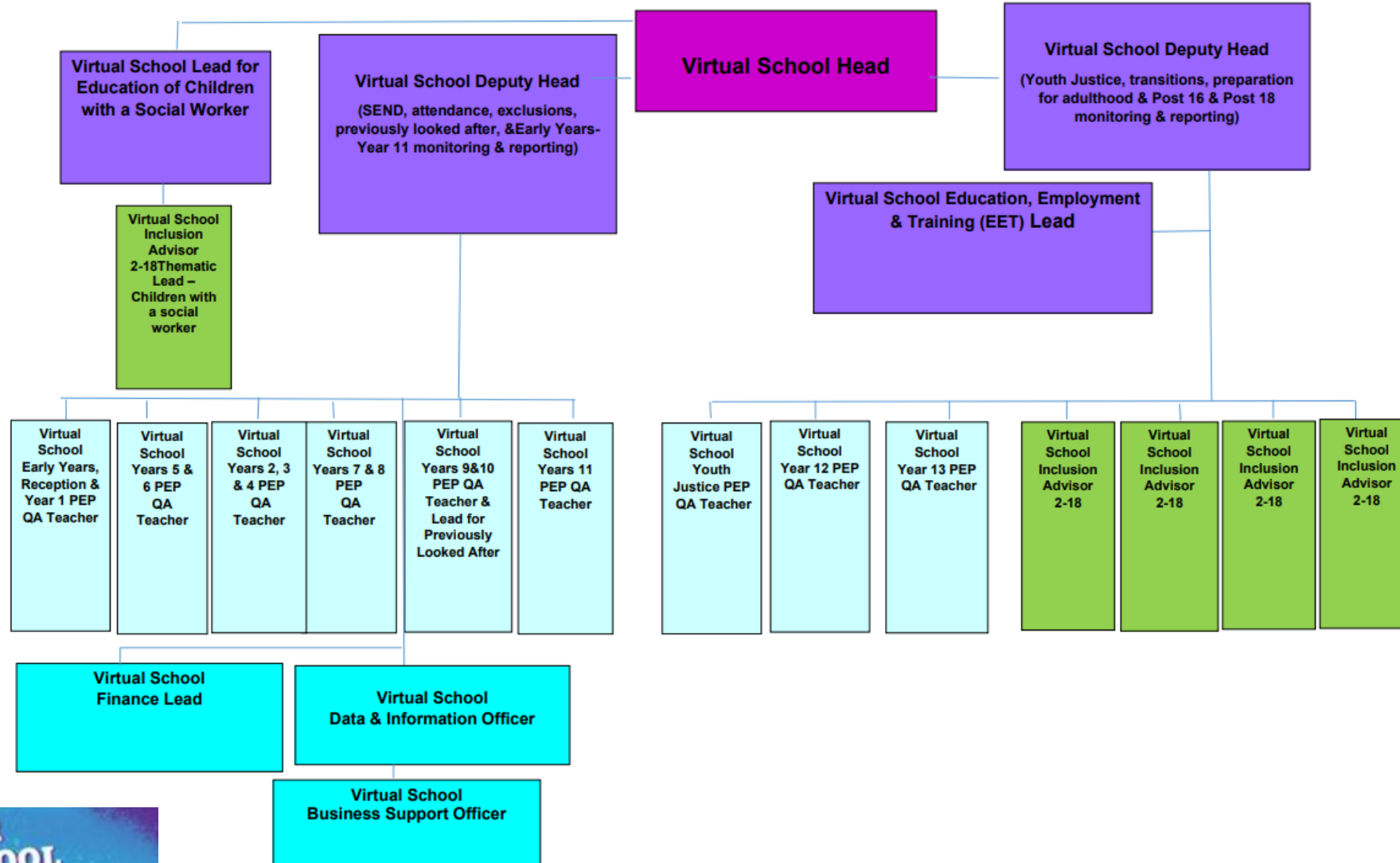
2022-23 Some Success Headlines



- **The views expressed by Our Children and Young People** demonstrate that many of their worries and aspirations are similar to those of all young people as they navigate friendships, new situations, study and exams, transitions to new education settings and preparing for adulthood. Their views also demonstrate how important relationships are to them and how talented, aspirational and ambitious our young people are whilst also needing our support to cope with and overcome the trauma they've experienced.
- 97.9% of school-aged Our Child and Young People had approved **Personal Education Plans (PEP)** in place
- 85.2% of all our school aged children and 89% of our primary school aged children **attend schools judged as good or outstanding** by Ofsted.
- 87% of children in the Early Years who are entitled to **15 hours free education** have taken it up which is a slight increase on last year at 86.3%
- 42.9% children in the Early Years have been judged by their school as being **on track to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD)** which is an increase on last year at 40%
- 24.1% of children in Year 2 (Key Stage 1) have been assessed as **reaching the national standard in reading, writing and maths** which is higher than in 2021-22 at 21.4%
- 53.7% of children in Year 6 (Key Stage 2) have been assessed to be reaching **national standards in grammar, spelling and punctuation (GPS)** which is above the national figure for Cared for Children of 50%
- Our unvalidated data shows that 31.9% of our young people **achieved Level 4+ in both English and maths GCSEs** which is a significant increase on 2018-19 at 18.2%
- 17% of young people have provisionally **achieved Level 5+ in both English and maths GCSEs** which is also a very positive increase from 2018-19 at 8.2%
- 85% of young people **successfully progressed into Post 16 Education, Employment and Training destinations** for the 2023/24 academic year.
- Our 16- and 17-year-old Young People's **engagement in education, employment and training** remains at a good level and was as high as 85% at certain points in the year. There also continues to be a good level of engagement in positive activity for those young people who are not yet in education, employment and training.
- Provisionally 8.85% of our care leavers are in **Higher Education**. The 2022 National Average is 7%.
- 81% of unaccompanied young people enrolled on **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses**, achieved 2 or more qualifications in both functional skills and/or personal development
- 92.4% of **unaccompanied young people enrolled on ESOL courses were retained in their education settings** and are either continuing or progressing on to the next level of study.
- 75% of **Young People supported by the Youth Justice Service** attended schools judged by Ofsted to be good or better.
- 2022-23 **mainstream school attendance** for Our Children and Young People was at 93.8% at least in-line with the pre-covid attendance of 93.1%
- **Primary mainstream school attendance** for Our Children and Young People at 96.1% was well above 2021-22 attendance
- Over 50 potential **permanent exclusions were prevented** for Our Children and Young People through close work with school colleagues and social workers.
- Provisional data shows that during 2022-23 there has been a **reduction in the percentage** of Our Young People with one of more incident of **suspension** from 13.2% in 2018-19 11.1% .

Virtual School Structure

The Manchester Virtual School Team Structure 2022/23



- The Government guidance, Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-oflooked-after-children> outlines the Statutory responsibilities of Local Authorities, including each Local Authority's Virtual School Head. The corresponding guidance, The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designatedteacher-for-looked-after-children> outlines the statutory duties for education settings.
- In 2021 the role of the Virtual School Head was extended by the Department for Education (DfE) to include a duty, as yet still non-statutory, to promote the education of children and young people, from birth to the age of 18 years, who have a social worker. These are children and young people who live with their parents and who are supported via a Child In Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP) Plan. It is the young people's parents who retain parental responsibility for the children and young people and not the social worker. The information about these duties can be found in the DfE guidance document, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086931/Promoting_the_education_of_children_with_a_social_worker_-_virtual_school_head_role_extension_2022.pdf
- The report also provides information about the joint work between the Manchester Virtual School Team and the Manchester Youth Justice Service to strengthen the multi-agency work to promote the education of all young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.



- Promoting high aspirations for children and young people through the Personal Education Planning (PEP) process.
- Tracking, monitoring, reporting on children and young people's attendance, suspensions and exclusions with intervention where there are concerns.
- A named PEP Quality Assurance Teacher for all children and young people from the age of 2 years up to the age of 18. The PEPQA teacher provides advice, guidance, support and challenge and attendance at PEP meetings when appropriate.
- PEP quality assurance of every PEP with written feedback provided to the Designated Teacher and Social Worker.
- Distribution and the monitoring of impact of pupil premium funding for our children and young people.
- Face to Face and online training for Designated Teachers, Social workers, Personal Advisers, Youth Justice Colleagues, employers and other partners including using a whole setting trauma informed approach, LGBTQ+ inclusion, supporting children with English as an Additional Language and ensuring positive transitions.
- Telephone Educational Psychology consultation available for all Designated Teachers and Social Workers.
- Information, advice and guidance available from Virtual School Team members and through the Virtual School Website. <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/virtualschools/> in relation to children looked after, previously looked after children, care leavers, children and young people with a social worker and young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Proactive, cross border multi-agency working to drive progress when a young person is without appropriate education, employment and training.
- Interim tuition provided for children and young people who are waiting for a school place.
- Advice, guidance, support and challenge when a child or young person is at risk of exclusion.
- Close monitoring the experience and progress of children in Alternative Provision and in educational provision judged to be less than good.
- Issuing of school directions when schools inappropriately refuse to admit a child or young person to their school.
- Advice and guidance through the PEP Process to social workers and Personal Advisors on supporting young people, aged 16 & 17, who are currently Not in Education Employment or Training, towards and into positive Education Employment and Training destinations.
- An Annual Achievement Awards Event to celebrate the achievements of Our Children and Young People.
- Promoting the use of the Virtual Education, Employment and Training Opportunities (VEETO) on-line briefings for social workers, Personal Advisers and partners.
- High levels of support to help young people consider and move into well-supported Education Employment and Training opportunities provided by MMC social value employers.
- Virtual School membership of monthly Education Access Board and Quality Assurance Board to report on progress, escalate concerns and provide scrutiny of Virtual School service and outcomes.
- Input into meetings including permanency planning, care plan review meetings, Edge of Care, Missing from Home and residential home meetings to ensure Education Employment and Training is a key focus in all young people's plans.
- Partnership work with the Youth Justice Service for the provision and quality assurance of a personal education plan for young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Collaborative work with social workers and education settings to ensure education is a key priority for children and young people with a social worker.

Summary: Virtual School 2022-23

MANCHESTER
VIRTUAL SCHOOL



What have we delivered?

- Advice, guidance, support and training to social work and Youth Justice Colleagues via Teams, emails, phone calls and a weekly Virtual School Team presence in the Locality offices, The Beehive (Care Leavers' service) and Youth Justice Offices.
- Completion and quality assurance of PEPs for Children Looked After in the Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 and for Young People supported by Youth Justice.
- Provided advice, guidance, training, support and challenge to Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Workers, Personal Advisers and Foster carers.
- Delivered a briefing session to Designated Teachers on effective application of the Primary Gatsby Benchmarks within our PEP.
- Commissioned work with Agent Ltd and Agent Academy to develop coproduced resources to support young people to be heard by professionals and to access diverse career role models.
- Delivered training to student and newly qualified teachers at MMU on trauma and attachment and supporting Children Looked After
- Continued close working with the Attendance & Exclusions Team on promoting the education of children with a Social Worker at Social Care reflective learning sessions, School clusters, DSL Networks, written guidance, attendance data sharing & dip-sampling of CP & CiN plans.
- Worked closely with employers and delivered a Northwest Post 16 conference for multiagency Local Authority professionals to reflect on the implications and opportunities of key legislative changes.
- Commissioned a CEIAG qualification for Team members to strengthen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Implemented Phase 2 of the Post 16 Pupil Premium Pilot.
- Promoted the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit.
- Commissioned interim educational provision for Post 16 unaccompanied young people.

What difference have we made?

- Increased the overall attendance (93.8% from 92.8%) and reduced the number of suspensions of CLA from 2021-22.
- Prevented over 50 possible permanent exclusions.
- Strengthened social workers', Youth Justice Workers' and Leaving Care Workers' confidence about and focus on attendance and educational experiences within the context of CiN & CP, Pathway Planning & YJ planning discussions.
- Improved PEP completion rates with a 98% completion rate of quality assured PEPs for School aged young people.
- Strengthened the focus with primary aged children on CEIAG, the world or work and career aspirations
- Enabled 40 Unaccompanied Young People to access education provision via a bespoke education offer.
- Increased the percentage of young people in EET from 73.9% in 21-22 to 77.33%
- Provisional 2022-23 GCSE results for CLA look to be at least in-line with national results for 2018-19
- Developed and implemented bespoke educational offers for some of our children with the most complex needs.
- Ensured that the needs of young people at risk of exclusion are being properly assessed, understood and met.

What have been our challenges?

- The significant increase in the number of young people aged 16 plus entering our care, including unaccompanied young people.
- A local and regional shortage of ESOL provision for Post 16 unaccompanied young people.
- Ongoing challenge to secure a named Post 16 Designated Teacher in provisions across the country when this is not yet a statutory requirement for Post 16 settings.
- Securing appropriate, bespoke education provision for young people with the most complex social care, health and education needs particularly when their care arrangements are unsettled and DoLs arrangements are in place
- Working with education settings and Local Authority Services across the country with 58% of our 800 school aged children attending 128 different Manchester schools and 42% attending 240 different schools across 40 different Local Authorities.

What do we still need to do?

- Continue to work with social workers and designated safeguarding leads to ensure a more robust focus on attendance, progress and education transitions in CiN and CP plans.
- Work with the Care Consultants, Designated Teachers and Social Workers to ensure PEP meetings are person centred and wherever possible, face-to-face.
- Continue to work with the Leaving Care Service to strengthen the focus on Education, Employment and Training in Pathway Plans with reference to young people's most recent PEPs.
- Continue to work with Education Settings and Social Workers to strengthen the CEIAG work being undertaken with children and young people.
- Continue to strengthen work with Career Connect and Employers to create, promote and match young people to opportunities.

Overview of Our Children Looked After (CLA) 2022-23 – time in care, gender and racial background

Key Stage	Percentage of all our CLA in each Key Stage	Percentage of our CLA in care 12 month+	Percentage of our CLA identified as female	Percentage of our CLA identified as male	Percentage identified as Asian	Percentage identified as Black	Percentage identified as Mixed	Percentage identified as Other	Percentage identified as White
Foundation Stage	9.6% (117)	64.1% (75)	50.4%(59)	49.6%(58)	10.2% (12)	6% (7)	24.8%(29)	1.7% (2)	57% (67)
Reception	3.4% (42)	66.7% (28)	42.9%(18)	57.1%(24)	9.5% (4)	12% (5)	23.8% (10)	7.1% (3)	47.6% (20)
Key Stage 1	6.5% (79)	72.2%(57)	51.9%(41)	48.1%(38)	7.6% (6)	17.7%(14)	22.8%(18)	7.6% (6)	44.3% (35)
Key Stage 2	16.6% (202)	80.7%(163)	44.6%(90)	55.4%(112)	5.4% (11)	10.9%(22)	23.7%(48)	4.4% (9)	55.4% (112)
Key Stage 3	19.8%(241)	85.1%(205)	44.4%(107)	55.2%(133)	10.4% (25)	15.3%(37)	17.8%(43)	2.5% (6)	53.9% (130)
Key Stage 4	22% (267)	69.3%(185)	40.4%(108)	58.8%(157)	10.9% (29)	23.6%(63)	16.8%(45)	4.1% (11)	44.5% (119)
Key Stage 5	22% (269)	43.1%(116)	21.6%(58)	78.4% (211)	25% (67)	31.2% (84)	8.5% (23)	9.3% (25)	26% (70)
All	1,217	68.1%(829)	39.5% (481) (non-binary 0.24%)	60.2% (733) (non-binary 0.24%)	12.6% (154)	19.1% (233)	17.7%(216)	5.1% (62)	45.4% (553)

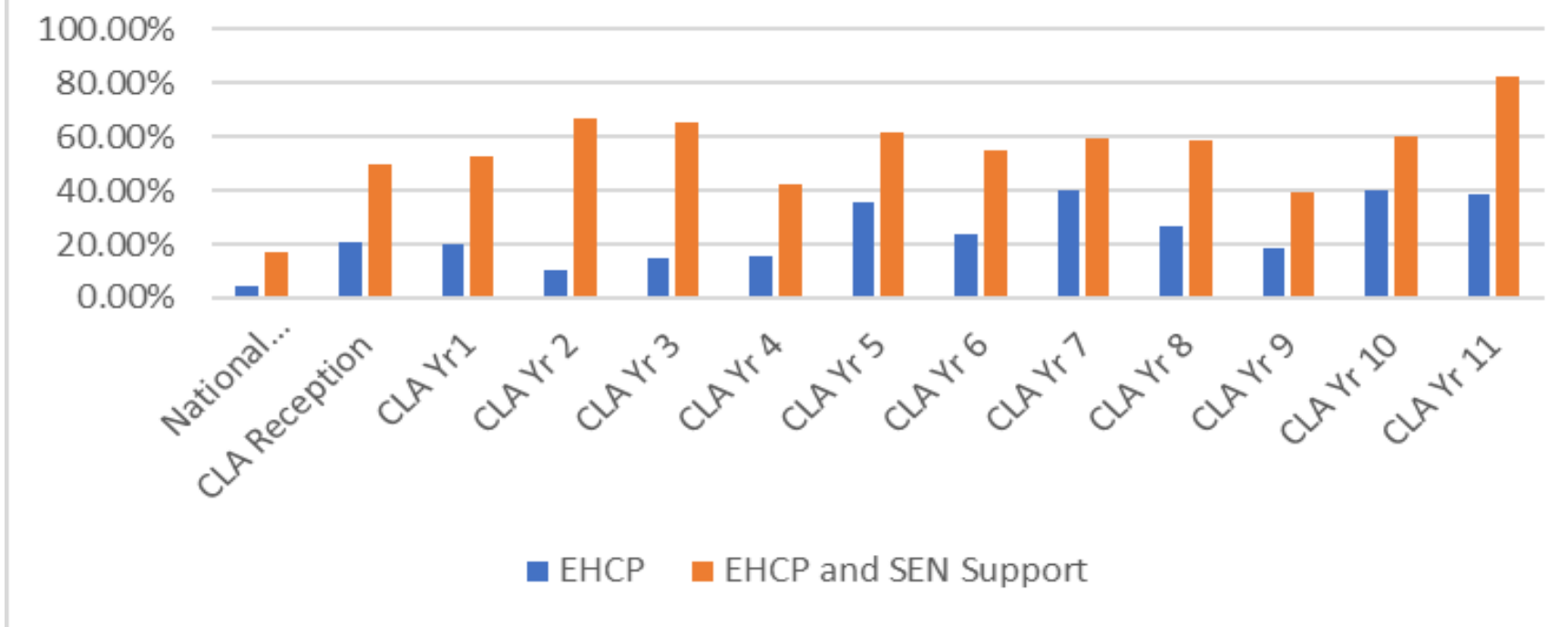
Overview of Our Children Looed After (CLA) 2022-23 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Key Stage	Percentage of CLA with an Education, Health & care Plan (EHCP)	Percentage of CLA supported at School Support SEND level	Percentage of CLA with some level of SEND	Percentage of CLA with no SEND	Percentage of Unaccompanied Young people	Percentage attending Manchester Schools and settings	Percentage attending schools and settings outside Manchester
Foundation Stage	1.7%(2)	21.4%(25)	23.1% (27)	76.9% (90)	(0)	70.2%(59)	29.8%(25)
Reception	21.4% (9)	28.6%(12)	50%(21)	50% (21)	(0)	57.5%(23)	42.5%(17)
Key Stage 1	11.4%(9)	46.8%(37)	58.2%(46)	41.8%(33)	(0)	64.6%(51)	35.4%(28)
Key Stage 2	25.2%(51)	36.1%(73)	61.4%(124)	38.6%(78)	0.5%(1)	59.2%(119)	40.8%(82)
Key Stage 3	36.5%(88)	30.3%(73)	66.8%(161)	33.2%(80)	0.4%(1)	48.7%(116)	51.3%(122)
Key Stage 4	31.1%(83)	33.3%(89)	64.4%(172)	35.6%(95)	18.7%(50)	52.3%(127)	47.7%(116)
Key Stage 5	21.6%(58)	13.8%(37)	35.3%(95)	64.7%(174)	52%(140)	63.3%(100)	36.7%(58)
All	24.7%(300)	28.4%(346)	53.1%(646)	46.9%(571)	15.8%(192)	57%(595)	43%(448)

SEND of Our Young People

Chart to show the percentage of our young people in care 12 months or more who have SEN compared to the national average



2022-23 Personal Education Plan completion



Phase	Percentage completion rate of quality assured PEPs
School Age	97.9%
Post 16	81.7%
Early Years	83.6%
Young people age 2 – 18 with a PEP in place	88.7%

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- Every Personal Education Plan (PEP) for children from the age of 2 up to the age of 18 years is quality assured and feedback is given to the Designated Teacher and Social Worker. This includes young people aged 16 plus who are not currently in Education, Employment or Training. PEPs assessed as being inadequate are not approved.
- The Virtual School Team has worked hard to improve the completion rate of PEPs for children and young people in the early years and Post 16 age groups. Progress has been made however challenges have been faced associated with staffing changes in the education settings and the exponential growth in the numbers of young people aged 16 plus during the Spring and Summer terms.

Ofsted Judgements of schools attended by our Children and Young People



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	All Schools 2023	Primary 2023	Secondary 2023
Outstanding	15.8%	11.5%	18.7%
Good	69.4%	77.5%	64%
Requires Improvement	6.2%	4.6%	7.3%
Inadequate	0.3%	0%	0.6%
Not yet inspected	8%	6.2%	9.2%
Good or outstanding	85.2%	89%	82.7%

- 85.2% of all our school aged children and 89% of our primary school aged children attend schools judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- 0.3% (3 young people) attend a school judged as inadequate by Ofsted. The young people's progress, outcomes and well-being are closely monitored by the Virtual School Team through the PEP process.

Listening and responding to the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people.

- Children and Young People been encouraged and supported to share their views throughout 2022-23 and these have been recorded in their termly PEP.
- Designated Teachers and social workers are encouraged through Virtual School Training and PEP Quality Assurance feedback, to record children and young people's views, wishes and feelings based on their ongoing conversations with them along with evidence of how these views have been responded to.
- Members of the Virtual School Team contact settings, schools, colleges, providers and social workers where there are any concerns that a young person's views, expressed in their PEP, have not been appropriately responded to.
- The following slides demonstrate some of the things children in each age group have said are going well and that they are concerned about along with the things that they have said support or could support them. The comments have been taken from children and young people's summer term PEPs.

Views, wishes and feelings of children In the Early Years foundation Stage.

What's going well:

- I eat my breakfast in the morning. I like going to B's house. He's my big brother, he gives me lots of huggles.
- I like playing outside. I like my friends.
- I like the start of the day activities, the water and sand. I like school dinner. My friend is S.
- When aunty gives me gingerbread men and breadsticks what I made I like football.
- I am good at phonics. I am happy at school and at home. I don't need nappies anymore. football - I got a medal.
- I like playing with my friends, I love living with my Daddy.
- Last time I was here, I didn't know everybody's name but I do now.
- Playing with my toys at home and playing at lunch
- I like singing songs

What I'm worried about:

- I miss my Mum.
- moving to Reception
- If my brother breaks my toys
- when T doesn't sit with me
- Daddy is at work. I worry because he works late on a Wednesday.
- I worry when my friend sometimes is not my friend. I like it when we are friends and play together. I don't like it when it is loud in the canteen or in the yard.
- When I fall down when I play at lunch and when I fall off my bike.
- Having a new teacher instead of Miss C in September
- Nothing really!

What helps or could help me:

- I wear ear defenders when the noise is upsetting me.
- I like getting help from Miss B.
- If I needed help I would ask Miss C!
- I'd like the judge to make a decision.
- New toys so I can play with everybody.
- I need help to understand what is happening and why. I need help with what happens at the end of the school day.

Views, wishes and feelings of primary school aged children.

What's going well:

- My baby brother is cute
- My Family. I love T and M and want them to be my Mummy and daddy
- Being in school
- Seeing my mum and dad. Watching programmes with C and G. I am good at reading, spelling and Maths
- I Like reading stories with my friends and playing outside. I like to go on school trips....I am going on trip soon, My Nanny told me! I like playing with my sister.
- I still go to Dance Academy and I am doing the carnival this summer and I will be performing on the stage wearing a rainbow bow.
- Maths, mainly school in total. I finally got a football team and starting training tonight
- Staying at Nannas. My mum is getting help
- Football outside at playtime and at home. At home I play with R and I accidentally booted it over the fence. Next doors dog has just had puppies and we might get one. At school I am on pen now.

What I'm worried about:

- My dad's aunty died and that was sad.
- It's a long way to school.
- When I am going back home
- moving to a new school because I'll have to make new friends.
- Falling out with my friends
- About my cat Lily - I haven't seen her for ages
- I am still on the waiting list for a place at gymnastics, I really want to go.
- Year 6 might be hard
- Nervous about going to high school
- Still worried about monsters even though i know they are not real
- My teacher is leaving to go on maternity leave

What helps or could help me:

- Miss T will move to year 6 with me and continue to help me
- I do not want to see my sister
- Miss K has arranged an additional visit to my high school
- Miss A talks to my social worker S. When I've got questions for S Miss A will phone her or email her.
- I like yoga and going with Mrs C.
- carry on my morning check-in
- Everyone needs to work quicker to make sure I go home and the work needs to be done quicker and the judge needs tell us that we can go home.
- Sometimes I want help when friendships go wrong.
- Let me have time outside the classroom
- What I need is never going to happen. I wish I had every power in the world. Even powers I did not make up. But that's not going to work. I would make evil people float into the air and crash into the moon... the bad people and the weapons would go into non-existence.

Views, wishes and feelings of secondary aged young people.

What's going well:

- I think I am getting good in English because I am now getting compliments on my work, which makes me feel really good.
- I think music and drama are going well. I think I am doing well with my piano.
- I like living with my dad. I get to see my relatives a lot. I go out a lot with my dad.
- Like Uno club. Felt i did well in Maths and Spanish. I wear my glasses more
- I am looking forward to starting my options.
- School. At home. Cadets.
- I have secured my place at college.
- I am doing well in my drama - I got a grade 5 for my log book. I am still enjoying my Music Therapy sessions - we made a cd a few weeks ago and I played bass
- My GCSE's are going very well, I fell like they have been pretty easy.
- I am attending some of my lessons and going swimming. Visits with mum. Achieving my water safety badge
- I am enjoying living with N. We also have visits with mum, we went to the beach and I'm enjoying seeing her.
- Things are ok at home now that my brother is back.

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What I'm worried about:

- Been forgetful and losing my school equipment
- I get stressed during some lessons if i don't understand it.
- I am worried about having to choose my GCSE subjects soon.
- I am worried about the unknown and what life looks like after school.
- I am worried about my family in Sudan and have lost contact with them.
- I am slightly worried with my mock exams, the exams i have done so far i have found difficult.
- Just the amount of revision
- Cant focus on where I want to go due to everything that is going on at the moment
- I am worried about moving on to college I wanted to stay at school. I do not have a solicitor to support me with my asylum claim. I want to stay in the UK
- Need a little extra help with English.
- I hope I get the GCSE's I need to do the course I want at college.
- I will be nervous and worried when we get closer to results day, but first I'm going to enjoy summer
- Support in college for me as it is a big step leaving High School.

What helps or could help me:

- I would like to continue with my tuition.
- Support to find a job
- My teachers have offered to celebrate my mother anniversary with me by making a shrine in the garden and letting off some balloons.
- I don't know, we (me, Dad and his girlfriend) just keep reminding him not to do things that will get him into trouble.
- It would be nice to know where I am moving to. i want to move somewhere that has a dog because they make me feel happy. I need to be able to feel calmer and less worried
- Ensure that college know what I need and what I struggle with
- I need support with my asylum claim.
- I've not been doing as well on my R.E tests so I might need more help with that.
- I'm not sure but school isn't great for me , i have a lot to think about in my life ad it sometimes feels like i have no space to think about school

MANCHESTER
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Views, wishes and feelings of Young People in the Post 16 age group.

What's going well:

- I am attending school full time. I have started a Motor Mechanics Course
- I'm in college learning English. I feel safe I'm happy at home
- I like attending the learning centre and speaking to J who shares the same language as me.
- Everything is going well, I've been to Mosque, and I've made some friends.
- My course work is going well, I am enjoying college and looking forward to my second year
- Passing Functional skills English
- Really proud of myself and how I have achieved and I have done a lot of hard work. It makes my day
- I am almost complete in my Level 2 Hair and Makeup Media course. I feel more confident in Maths and am hoping to pass this year.
- My grades are not slipping. I go to the Library and revise independently.
- I am doing well in construction. I now know how to do some different things like how to put a screw in a wall using a drill, how to lay bricks both in a line and a corner turn, how to paint neatly.
- I have completed the year and will be returning for L2 next year I am happy I have moved into my own independent accommodation I have been nominated for the Manchester Achievement Awards
- I have completed 69% of my portfolio- this is one of the highest percentages of the class. I think I'm doing well.
- I love my course. I like the work that I am given to do and I get on with my teachers. I have made friends and I feel settled.

What I'm worried about:

- Submitting all outstanding work for my BTEC
- Applying for University
- I do not know where I will be living
- I want to go to university but I am worried about getting into debt worried that I might fail my maths GCSE and this will then put my business and Law degree in jeopardy for my second year
- Managing my own finances, settling into a new area.
- Not really anything possibly speaking exams in Spanish
- Moving away to a different prison far away from my family
- My legal status and getting a solicitor.
- It's all a bit overwhelming. I'm worried I'm not as smart as everyone says and I worry I'll let people down.
- I want to secure employment
- Exams - I get really nervous about them.
- I have lost contact with my family in Iran and I am worried about their safety.
- I am trying to stay focused on my studies and avoid any concern. What it comes, it comes.
- I don't enjoy doing homework and sometimes leave it until the last minute

What helps or could help me:

- I will continue to discuss this with my social worker
- Teacher to speak to the bursary team, tutor and social worker. To help with my current financial situation and my assignment deadlines.
- support with applying to Uni next year
- I have said in the past that I would like support for my drug use, but I only want to talk to specific people like A about this at the moment.
- Education and Children's Services to pay for the trip for me. To attend Liverpool trip and London trip as well.
- I need sport gear.
- Would like internet in the flat to feel more connected and less isolated
- support to access legal support and start college
- I want a laptop to help my learning
- I don't want to move away from my family, will like to stay around my family.
- I want to join a boxing and cricket club
- apply for more jobs
- I want to learn English, start college and get Leave to Remain status
- I need support to sit my exams, and extra tuition
- I'm really happy in the area and I wouldn't want to move area.

An overview of the Outcomes Achieved by Children and Young People during 2022-23

Our Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage - Reception



What's been achieved.

- 36% of all young people in care achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of their Reception Year which is slightly below the national average for cared for children at 41%
- In line with the data for all Manchester children, the end the early Years Foundation Stage outcomes for children in the care of Manchester have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

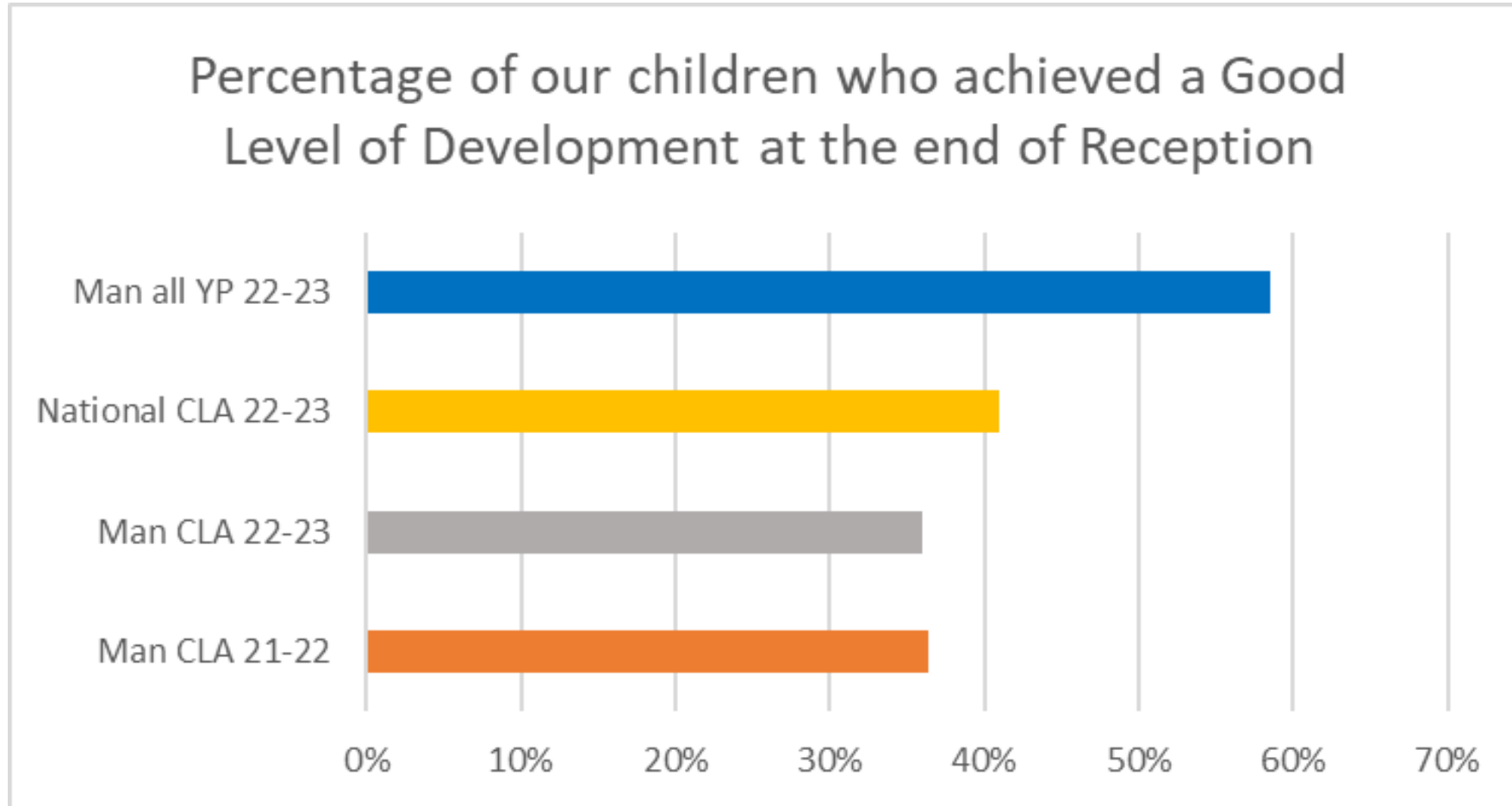
Designated Teachers report positive impact of pupil premium . The main use of it was social emotion support, Early years resources and phonics support.

- 87% of children in the Early Years who are entitled to 15 hours free education have taken it up which is a slight increase on last year at 86.3%
- 42.9% children in the Early Years have been judged by their school as being on track to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) which is an increase on last year at 40%

What the challenges have been.

- To promote good attendance, the average attendance of children in Reception is 92.5%
- 50% of children in Reception have some form of SEND which is above the national average of 13%
- 20.5% have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) which is above the national average of 4.3%
- Only 41% of children in Reception have been judged by their school as reading at or above their chronological age.

Outcomes for Our Children in Early Years Foundation Stage.



Our Young People in Key Stage 1 – Year 2



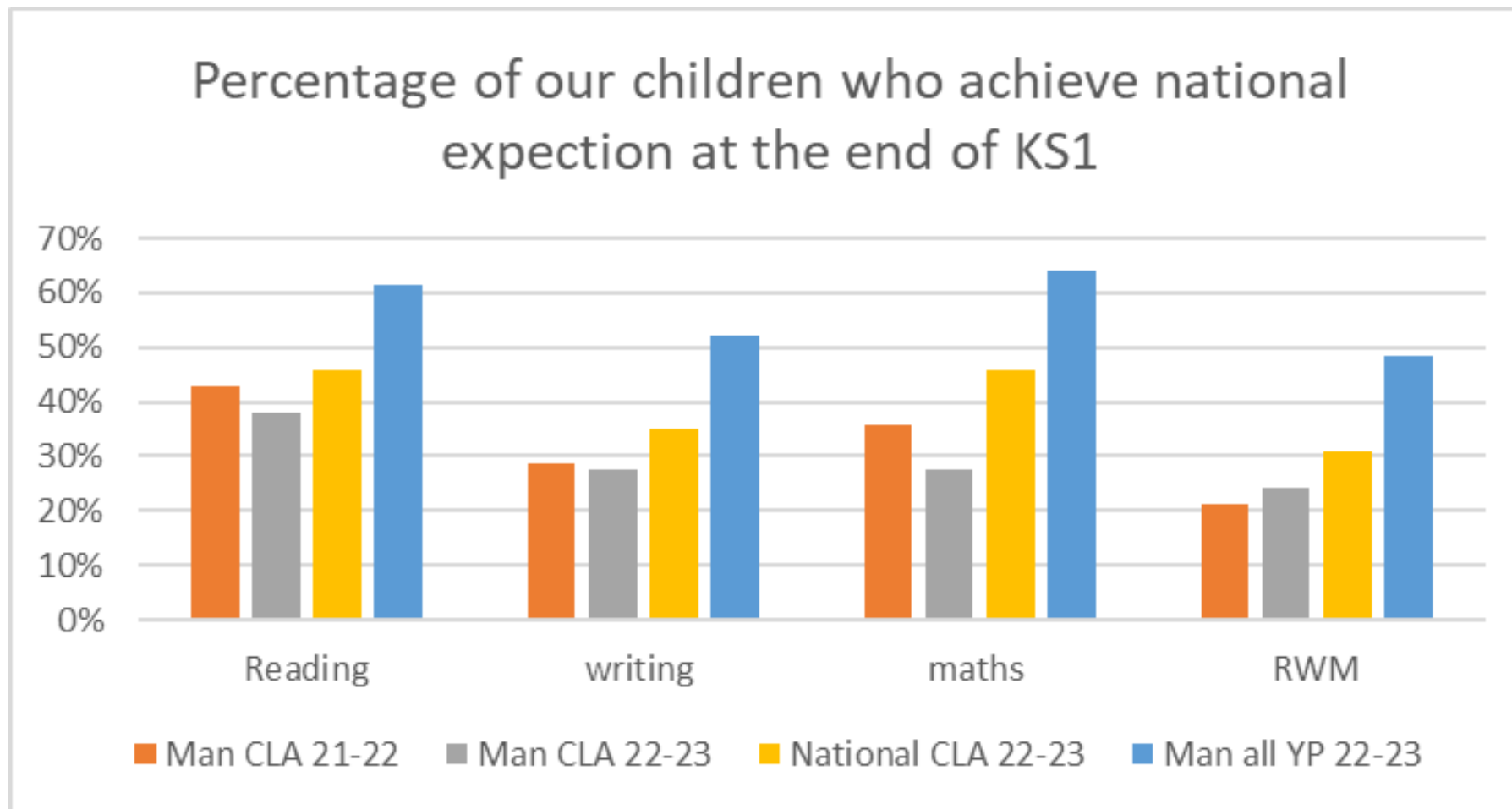
What's been achieved.

- 37.9% of children have been assessed as reaching the national standard in reading which is below the national average for cared for children of 46%. However, our children attending Manchester schools achieved 44.4% in reading.
- 27.6% of children have been assessed as reaching the national standard in writing which is below the national average for cared for children of 35%
- 27.6% of children have been assessed as reaching the national standard in maths, which is below the national average for cared for children of 46%
- 24.1% of children have been assessed as reaching the national standard in reading, writing and maths which is below the national average for cared for children but is higher than in 2021-22 at 21.4%
- In line with the data for all Manchester children, end of Key Stage 1 outcomes for children in the care of Manchester have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Designated Teachers have reported positive impact of pupil premium. The main use has been for emotional and emotional support, phonics support and 1:1 tuition/support

What the challenges have been.

- To continue to promote good attendance, the average attendance of children in Year 2 was 95.1%
- 66.7% of children in Year 2 have some form of SEND
- 10.25% have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- Only 54.8% of children in Year 2 have been assessed by their school as reading at or above their chronologic age.
- Only 41% of children in Year 1 have been assessed as reading at or their chronologic age.

Outcomes for Our Young People – Key Stage 1



Our Children in Key Stage 2 – Year 6

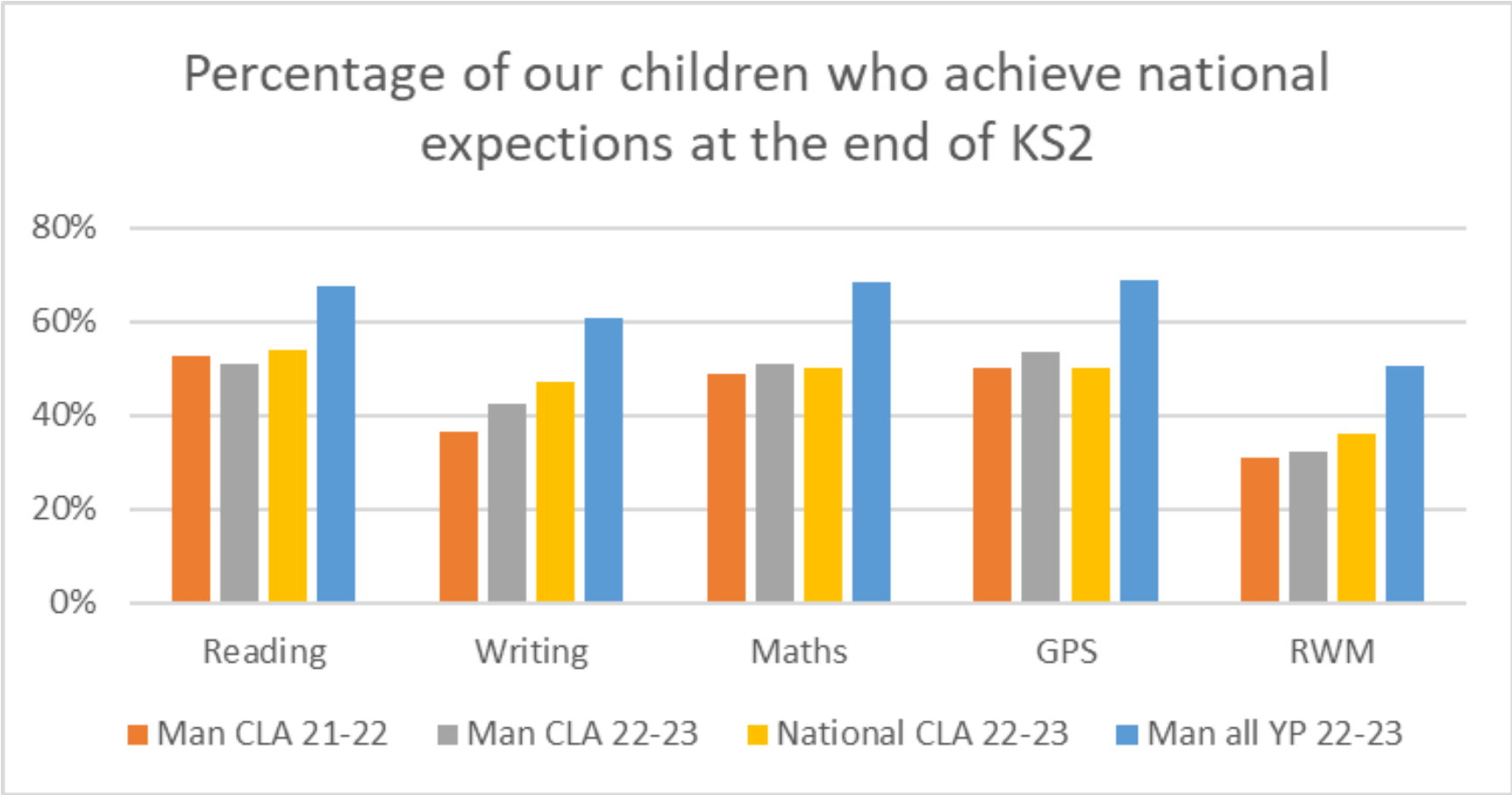
What's been achieved.

- 51.2% of children have been assessed to be reaching national standards in reading which is below the national figure for Cared for Children at 54%
- 42.5% of children have been assessed to be reaching national standards in writing which is below the national figure for Cared for Children at 47% but is higher than in 2021-22 at 36.4%
- 51.2% of children have been assessed to be reaching national standards in maths, which is above the National figure for Cared for Children of 50%
- 32.5% of children have been assessed to be reaching national standards in reading, writing and maths which is below the national figure for Cared for Children of 36%
- In line with the data for all Manchester children, end of Key Stage 2 outcomes for children in the care of Manchester have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- 53.7% of children have been assessed to be reaching national standards in grammar, spelling and punctuation (GPS) which is above the national figure for Cared for Children of 50%
- Overall Designated Teachers report positive impact of Pupil Premium. The main use for Year 6 has been Social & emotional support, 1:1 tuition and small group support

What the challenges have been.

- To maintain good school attendance, the average attendance in Year 6 was 96.5%
- 54.9% of child in Year 6 have some form of SEND
- 23.5% have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) which is a slight increase from 2021-22 of 22.6%
- Only 54.9% of children in Year 6 have been assessed by school as reading at or above their chronological age
- Only 32.7% of children in Year 5 have been assessed at reading at or above chronological age

Outcomes for Our Young People – Key Stage 2



Our Children in Key Stage 3 –Years 7,8 & 9



What's been achieved.

- 57.4% of young people in Year 7 have been assessed by their school to be reading at or above their chronological age.
- 47.6% of young people in Year 8 have been assessed by their school as reading at or above their chronological age
- 44.6% in Year 9 have been assessed by their school as reading at or above their chronological age.
- 63.2% of young people in Year 7 are judged as being on track to achieve national expectations in English at the end of KS4 and 60% in maths
- 56.3% of young people in Year 8 are judged as being on track to achieve national expectations in English at the end of KS4 and 47.8% in maths
- 41.3% of young people in Year 9 are judged as being on track to achieve national expectations in English at the end of KS4 and 45% in maths.
- Designated Teachers report positive impact of the use of pupil premium. The main use has been tuition, social emotion support and mentoring

What the challenges have been.

- To continue to promote good attendance, the average attendance of young people in KS3 was 92.4%
- 59.1 % of young people in Year 9 have some form of SEND with 39.8% having an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- 58.6% of young people in Year 8 have some form of SEND with 26.4% have an EHCP
- 39.4% of young people in Year 7 have some form of SEND and 18.2% have an EHCP

Our Young People in Key Stage 4 – Year 11

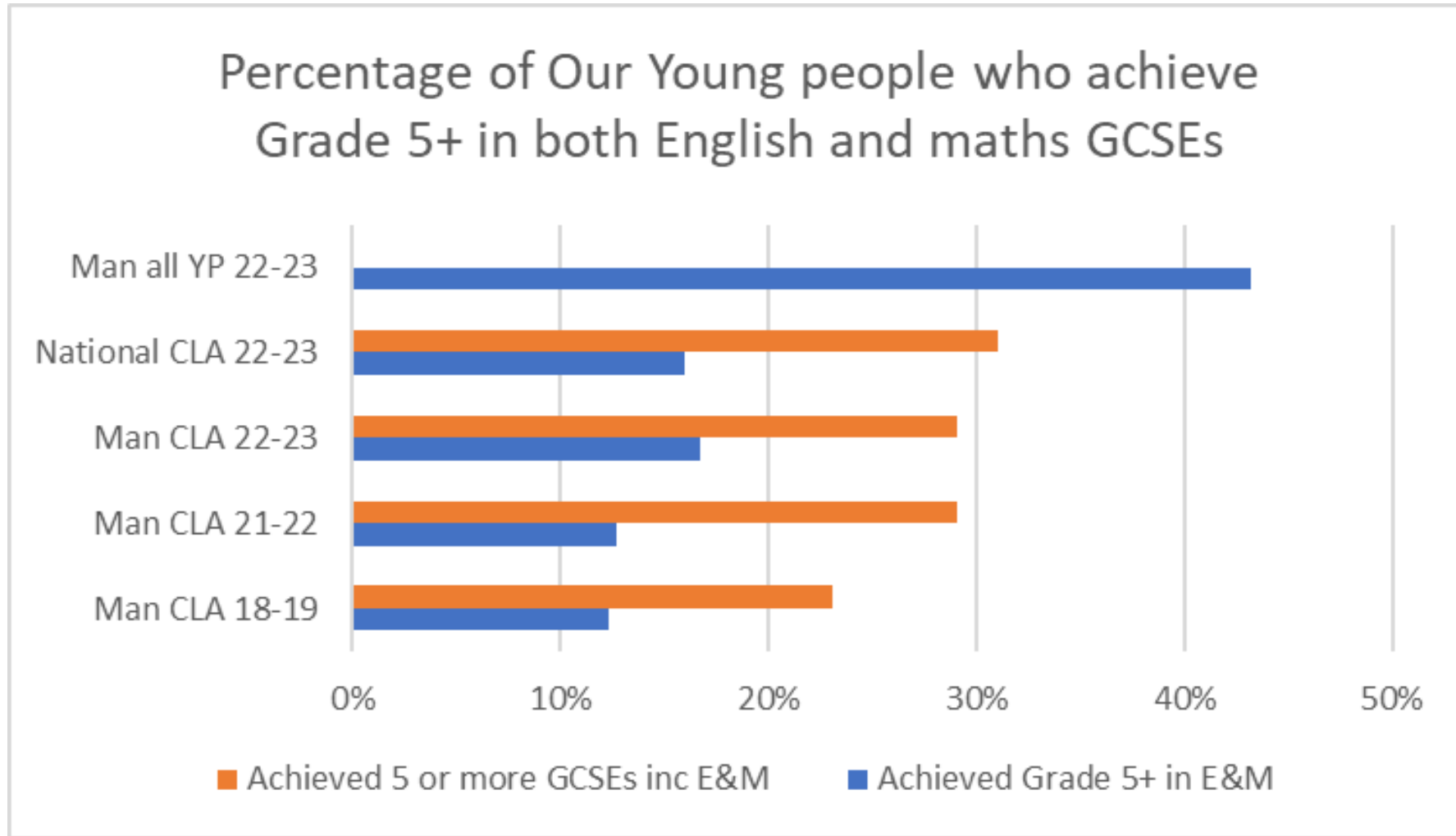
What's been achieved.

- Our unvalidated data shows that 31.9% of our young people achieved 4+ in both English and maths GCSEs which is a significant increase on 2018-19 at 18.2%
- 17% of young people have provisionally achieved 5+ in both English and maths GCSEs which is also a very positive increase from 2018-19 at 8.2%
- 80.2% of Year 11s were entered for GCSEs which is a decrease from 2021-22 at 86.9%
- At the time of writing the national figure has not been published yet for Cared for Young People.
- 78.2% were entered for 5+ GCSEs including English and maths and 29.5% of these young people achieved at least grade 4 in all.
- Overall Designated Teachers report positive impact of pupil premium. The main use being, tuition, IT equipment and other resources
- The average attendance of young people who achieved at least grade 4 in both English and maths was 94.4%

What the challenges have been.

- 51.2% of young people in Year 11 attended a school outside Manchester
- 82.6% of young people in Year 11 had an identified SEND need.
- 38.4% had an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- 63.6% of young people's EHCPs were for social emotional and mental health needs.
- 35.1% of young people in Year 11 came into care in Year 11. 50% of these were unaccompanied young people
- 54.5% came into care during their high school years.
- 31.4% had persistently absence (less than 90%) across all school types, this is an improvement from 2021-22 at 37.1%
- The average attendance in Year 11 was 75.4%

Outcomes for Our Young People - Key Stage 4



Our Young People in Key Stage 5 – Years 12 & 13



What's been achieved

- 83.33% of young people achieving Pre-Entry Level qualifications
- 86.27% of young people achieving Entry Level qualifications (some continuing across academic years)
- 78.04% of young people achieving Level 1 qualifications
- 65.95% of young people achieving Level 2 qualifications
- 91.6% of young people achieving Level 3 qualifications
- 85% of young people successfully progressed into Post 16 EET destinations for the 2023/24 academic year
- Implemented Phase 2 of the Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus Pilot
- Created a Summer School for 40 recently arrived Unaccompanied young people
- Development of partnerships with local businesses to create opportunities for work placements and paid work
- Increased presence at disciplinary meetings around attendance/behaviour support – earlier intervention
- Participation in NEET prevention panel pilot in order to support those young people identified as highest risk of NEET in year 11 ensuring robust Post 16 plan is in place early enough

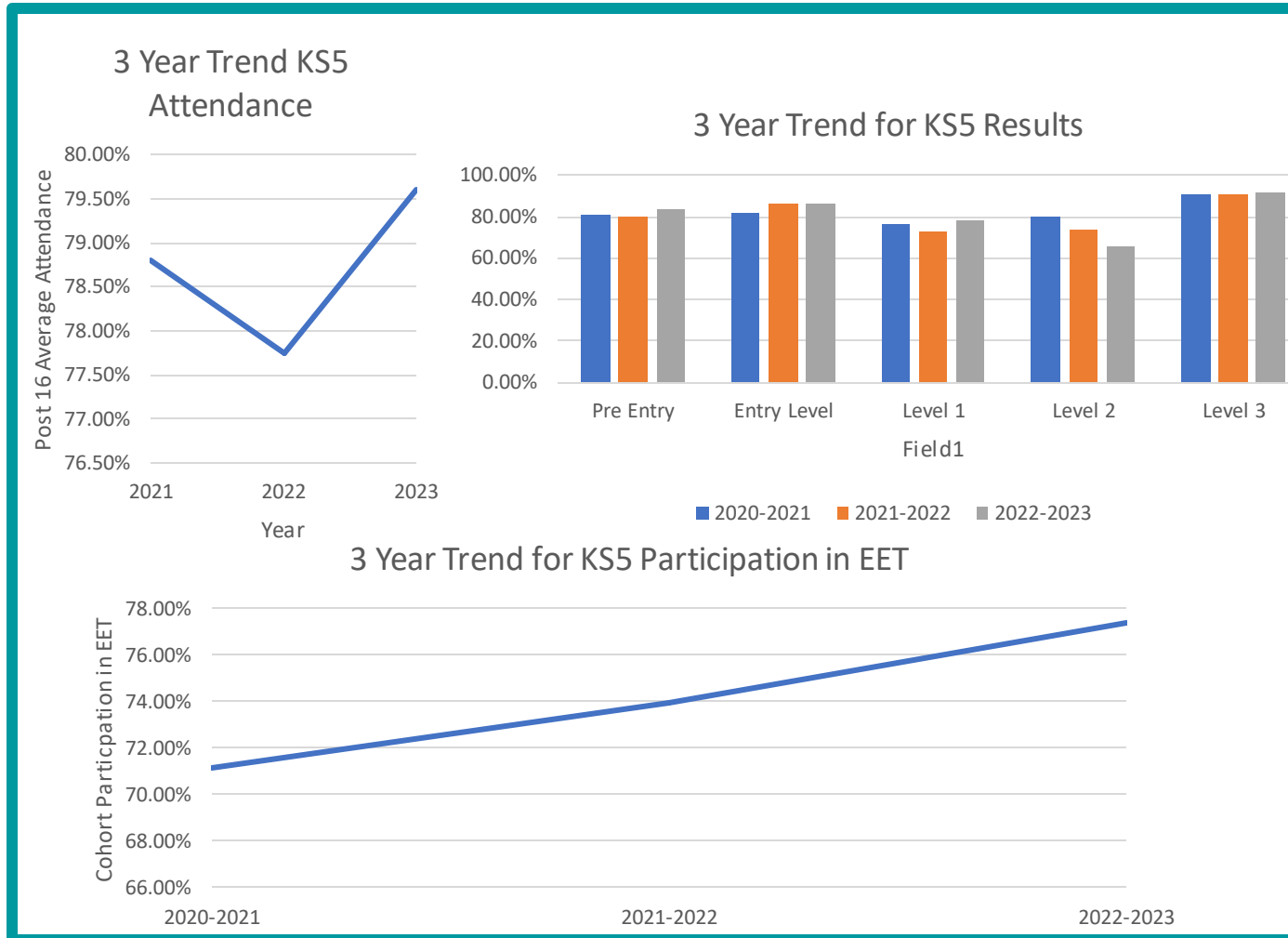
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What the challenges have been

- 41.25% of the cohort identified with having some SEND support need
- 54% of that group had an EHCP in place, with 59% of those identifying Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs (SEMH) as the primary need
- Monitoring of the SEND status of young people at risk of withdrawal and poor attendance in Post 16 settings – often not finding out about decisions to withdraw until after the decision has been made
- Ongoing challenges around collection of attendance and achievement data due to interpretation of Data Protection regulations and sharing of information agreements

Appendix 1, Item 7

Our Young People in Key Stage 5



Commentary

Some young people did struggle with a return to face-to-face learning, post pandemic, but this year, we have seen an increase in attendance with a greater proportion of young people's attendance overall being 95% and above.

Results continue to improve year on year, however we have seen a decline in success at Level 2, and this would seem to be because of underperformance in GCSE maths and English results.

In spite of challenges with sufficiency of provision, engagement in education, employment and training remains at a good level and was even as high as 85% at certain points in the year. There also continues to be a good level of engagement in positive activity for those young people who are not yet in education, employment and training.

Promoting the Education of Our Care Leavers



What has been delivered.

- Evolution of the VEETO (Virtual Employment, Education, Training and Opportunities) Meeting – including specific themed meetings for sector specific/area of occupational interest specific focus (over 120 on invitation list)
- Weekly EET bulletin developed and circulated to PA's, SW's, Foster Carer's, Youth Justice (YJ) colleagues, Employers and other partners detailing opportunities available for young people., with colleagues being encouraged to share more widely (over 140 individuals on circulation list)
- Co-located Career Connect staff within Care Leaver Service and YJ working well
- Targeted 1-1 support for Personal advisers (PA's) to explore their caseload, not just with a NEET lens, but to explore what additional support might be needed for those young people who are in an EET destination but may be keen to explore more options.

What has been achieved.

- The Virtual School continues to provide input into Beehive Steering Group, House Project, 16/17 Positive Housing Pathway and Post 16 Referral Hub
- Provisionally 8.85% of our care leavers are in Higher Education. The 2022 National Average is 7%.
- Participation in GMCA work – such as digital inclusion and wider networks
- Developing partnerships and employment opportunities with partners such as Adept Corporate Services, Amazon Logistics and warehousing, KFC, GMI Construction and exploring social value opportunities with contractors such as Westfield Minibuses

What the challenges have been.

- Challenges with some Post 16 providers bursary offer and method of payment
- Employers having fewer early career opportunities and searching for employees with a more well established work history
- Managing the expectations of employers with opportunities coming through Social Value Contracts – often may not be aligned with the needs of young people
- Upon receiving leave to remain, an increasing number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children dropping out of education in order to take up unregulated or zero hours type employment

What still needs to be done.

- Ongoing encouragement for Personal Advisers (PAs) to attend PEP meetings , particularly the final PEP before the young person becomes 18 and to consider how this information can be used to effectively inform Pathway Planning
- Ongoing work to build confidence and knowledge around EET within the broader service areas of Leaving Care, Children's Social Care, Youth Justice and links to Virtual School duties around children and young people with a social worker
- Support to strengthen the MCC Social Value offer for underserved young people and increase access to apprenticeship and employment opportunities

Promoting the Education of Unaccompanied Young People.



What has been delivered.

- Making sure every unaccompanied young person received an age-appropriate education offer – either of a school place, interim 1-1 tuition, or access to Post 16 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes
- More personalised transition offer from Year 11 to Post 16
- Summer School activity and 12 week adult education provider pilot
- Phase 2 Emotional Trauma and Support Pilot commissioned with One Education
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) training for schools
- Establishment of a dedicated Inclusion Adviser role within the team who works solely to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children across the age range

age 97

What the challenges have been.

- Greater Manchester (GM) Wide Shortage of provision of ESOL remains a challenge particularly as it appears that all authorities have experienced an upsurge in new arrivals, both via transfer schemes and as spontaneous presentations
- Increased demand for places at The Manchester College as facilities being accessed by many LA's within and outside of GM
- Increasing number of young people dropping out of education in order to access unregulated or zero hours type employment resulting in attendance and disciplinary action by colleges, and in some cases withdrawal from course – as well as potentially causing risk to young people's asylum claims

What has been achieved.

- 81% of all those young people enrolled on ESOL courses, achieved 2 or more qualifications in both functional skills and/or personal development
- 92.4% of all those young people enrolled on ESOL courses were retained in their education settings and are either continuing or progressing on to the next level of study
- Virtual School representation on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children's (UASC) Mental Health Support steering group with CAMHS and Educational Psychologists (EPs).

What still needs to be done.

- To explore opportunities with broader range of GM and voluntary partners to expand provision and offer for 16-19 year old learners so that waiting lists can be reduced and kept to a minimum.
- To ensure that school places are applied for as swiftly as possible for unaccompanied young people in Year 11 and that schools have a better understanding of processes around age validation
- To continue to intervene where young people are at risk from unregulated and/or exploitative work environments and to offer viable alternatives alongside continuing education/training offer

Appendix 1, Item 7

What has been delivered.

- Revision of the Youth Justice (YJ) PEP to focus on those children and young people with a substantive order
- Dedicated PEP Quality Assurance Teacher providing advice, guidance, support and challenge and attendance at PEP meetings where appropriate and other multi-agency planning meetings.
- PEP Quality Assurance of every PEP with written feedback to the named Teacher Youth Justice Worker and/or Social Worker.
- Delivery of focussed Electronic Personal education Plan (ePEP) training to all Youth Justice case managers and named teachers.
- Liaison with custodial setting to agree principles for use of Post 16 Pupil Premium Pilot funding for those eligible YP
- Refreshed Construction Industry's "CSCS card" preparation training offered to small groups in 2 locations in the City

What the challenges have been.

- Increase in the PEP completion rate in spite of some ongoing challenges with gathering the requisite data for creation of PEPs and appropriate case allocation
- Increasing complexity, risk and multiple vulnerabilities for some young people within the cohort

What has been achieved.

- 75% of Young People attended schools judged by Ofsted to be good or better.
- Improved oversight and intervention in the use of part time timetables and Alternative Provision
- Deputy Head sits on Alternative Provision Taskforce Management Oversight Board
- 56.52% of all young people supported by the Youth Justice Service had a PEP in place by Summer 2023
- Individual support for some of our most vulnerable Young People and their families who have been unable to access college, including challenging and appealing withdrawal/disciplinary decisions taken by colleges and seeking further support from colleagues within Statutory Assessment Teams in respect of EHCPs
- Close working relationship between the Youth Justice service, Post 16 Lead, Career Connect and other providers to develop training opportunities for young people supported by Youth Justice Service and extended involvement of Youth Justice colleagues in VEETO meetings

What still needs to be done.

- Virtual School Deputy Head has been allocated an area of responsibility and oversight on Youth Justice Board – Education
- Further challenge to settings around being aspirational for our young people and implementing appropriate expectations and oversight around attendance, part time timetables, suspensions/exclusions and appropriate qualifications.
- Ongoing rolling programme of "drop in" PEP support workshops in person in each YJ office
- Support for colleagues having trouble accessing the PEP the platform and ensuring that they are supported to be able to login and navigate around the site
- Improving PEP Completion for whole cohort

Promoting the Education of Children & Young People with a Social Worker (Children and Young People supported via a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan)

MANCHESTER
VIRTUAL SCHOOL



What has been delivered.

- Virtual School Lead for Education of Children with a Social Worker and an Inclusion Adviser with a thematic lead for Education of Children with a Social Worker are in place.
- Attended & contributed to termly Designated Safeguarding Leads & SENCO Networks.
- Regularly attended city-wide school cluster meetings.
- Completed a dip sampling exercise with social care colleagues, focussing on the promotion of education in Child in Need and Child Protection plans.
- Worked closely with the statutory lead for school attendance & exclusions.
- Worked closely with Manchester's Post 16 Lead, including attending the monthly Post-16 steering group.
- Produced an Education Guidance document for social care colleagues.
- Developed a Key Education Questions document to support multi-agency working.
- Attended the weekly Edge of Care panel.
- Attended bi-weekly Missing From Home panels in North, Central and South localities.
- Attended the monthly Attendance and Exclusions steering group
- Promoted the Manchester Inclusion Strategy Toolkit

What has been achieved.

- Strengthened relationships and raised the profile of the education of children with a social worker with education settings, social workers & other Local Authority teams.
- Monthly reporting on the attendance & EET/NEET status of children with a social worker which is used by education & social care managers in planning and supervision.
- Attendance data is matched to individual young people discussed at Child in Need panels.
- Alongside the attendance lead, provided regular education problem solving clinics that are well attended by social workers.
- Supported social care colleagues to feel more confident in conversations about education.
- Resolved barriers to education for individual young people through conversations at panels and networks.
- Enhanced the focus on promoting the education and attendance of children with a social worker within Child in Need and Child Protection plans.

What the challenges have been.

- Ensuring the right data reporting was available from the new EYEs system to support improvement planning.
- Continuing to promote multi-agency working in supporting the education of children and young people with a social worker.
- Finding strategies to support children and young people to improve school attendance, where long term low attendance has become embedded.

What still needs to be done.

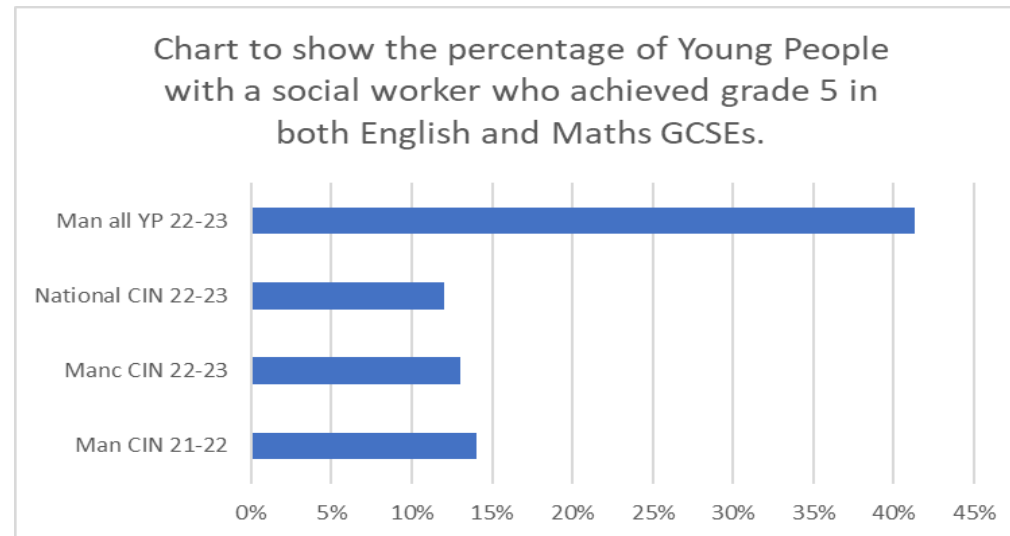
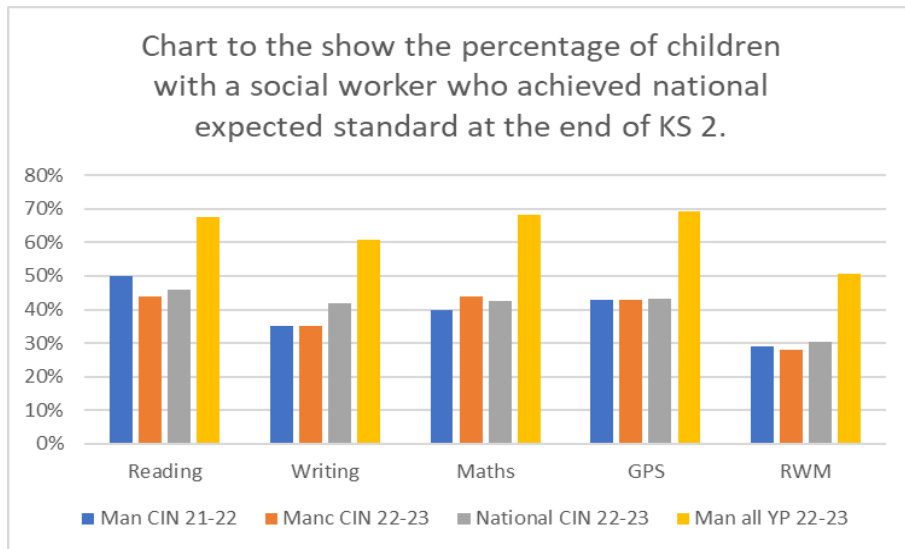
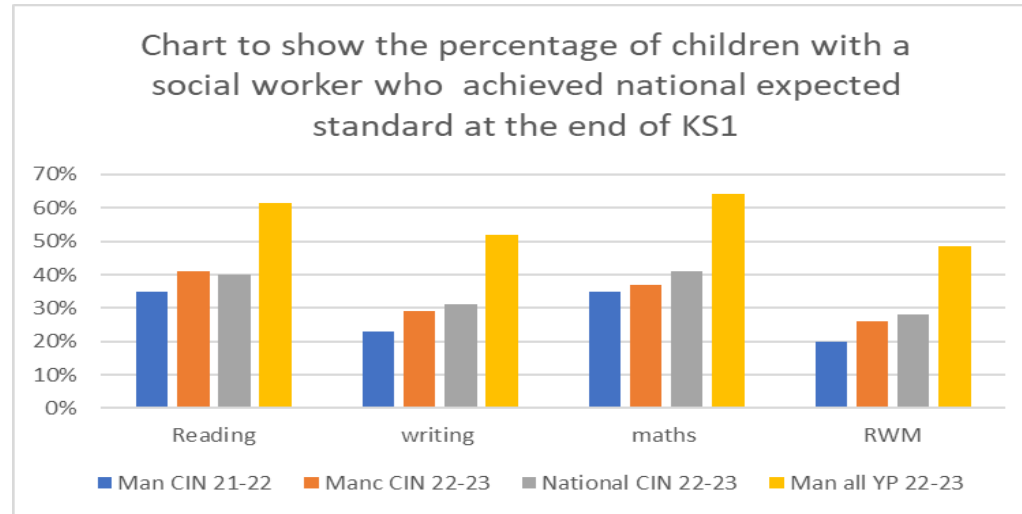
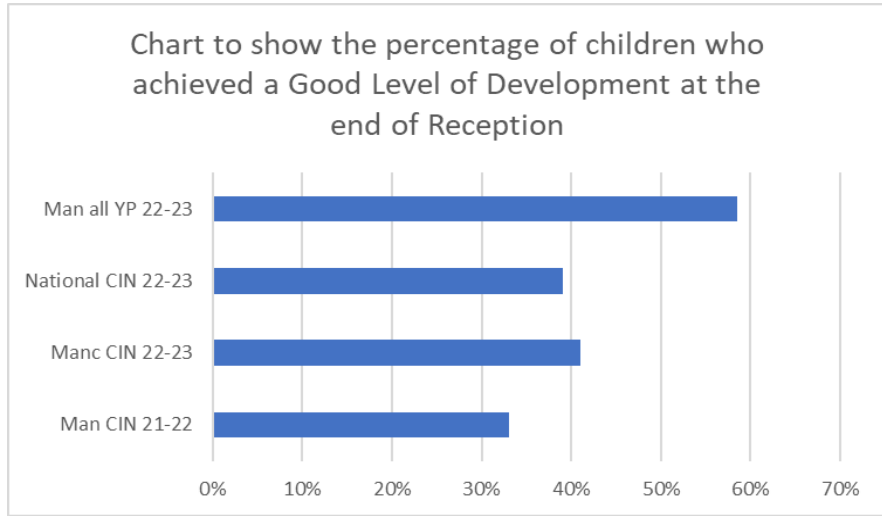
- Work with other Local Authority Teams to further develop the range of reporting on the education of children with a social worker.
- Continue to work with education and social care service managers to ensure the education and attendance of children with a social worker is embedded in all service planning and supervision discussions.
- Contribute to the development of the Thriving Families model, helping to ensure that the education of children with a social worker is a key consideration.
- Complete a further dip sampling exercise with social care colleagues focussing on education and attendance within Child in Need & Child Protection Plans
- Support, multi-agency, strength-based conversations about promoting the education of children with a social worker.
- Continue to provide advice, guidance and training to education settings and social care colleagues on promoting the education and attendance of children with a social worker.

Outcomes of Children & Young People with a Social Worker 2022-23



- 41% of children on a Child in Need Plan in Reception achieved a good level of development which is higher than previous year and higher than 40% of Our Children and Young People who achieved this measure but lower than for all children in Manchester 58.5%
- 41% of children on a Child in Need Plan in Year 2 were assessed to achieving the national standard in reading, 29% in writing, 37% in maths and 26% in Reading, Writing and Maths. All these percentages are up on the previous year. All these percentages are higher than the outcomes achieved by Our Children and Young People.
- 44% of young people on a Child in Need Plan in Year 6 were assessed to have achieved the national standard in reading, 35% in writing, 44% in maths, 43% in Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling and 28% in Reading, Writing & Maths. All these percentages are lower than Our Children and Young People with 51% being assessed to have achieved the national standard in reading, 42.5% in writing, 51.2% in maths, 53.7% in Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling and 32.5% in Reading, Writing & Maths.
- Unlike young people in Local Authority care, data is nationally not available for those young people on a Child in Need Plan who achieved Level 4+ in English and maths. 13% of young people on a Child In Need Plan in Year 11 achieved level 5+ in both English and maths. This is a lower percentage than the provisional level 5+ outcomes achieved by Our Children and Young People with 17% achieving Level 5+ in English and maths.

Outcomes for Young people with a Social Worker



High quality inclusion at every age and stage

**Manchester Inclusion Strategy
2022-2025**

Building a safe, happy, healthy, successful and independent future for children and young people



Our Inclusion Statement:

We believe it is important that every child and young person in our early years settings, schools and post-16 provisions, whatever their age, identity, circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and is valued for who they are.

Our Priorities

- Work in partnership in strength-based ways to support inclusive practice
- Listen and respond to children, young people and their families
- Promote equality and diversity with a particular focus on race, LGBTQ+ and disability (SEND)
- Reduce health inequalities
- Develop the aspirations and skills of children and young people
- Improve social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- Positive transitions between settings, schools and post-16 provisions
- Identify needs early and protect vulnerable children and young people
- Maintain a highly skilled and well-supported workforce
- High-quality continuum of intervention, use of alternative provision and specialist support
- Promote good attendance
- Exclusion as a last resort.

Guiding Principles for Inclusion. We believe:

- Relationships lie at the heart of inclusive practice. We put relationships first, working with an ethos across all education settings that promotes strong relationships with all parties.
- It is important to take a non-judgemental, curious and empathetic attitude towards behaviour and learning, regarding children and young people presenting with additional needs as vulnerable and not troublesome.
- We all have a duty to explore children and young people's needs and provide appropriate support.
- Finding solutions is often a complex process. It is important we are open to learning and willing to share knowledge and effective practice.
- Being fair is not about everyone getting the same (equality), but about everyone getting what they need (equity).
- Exclusion should be the absolute last resort.

1. Inclusive Universal Provision
We will:

- Improve approaches to listening and responding to children and young people.
- Deliver the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit, providing a cycle of thematic training.
- Promote whole-setting nurturing principles and trauma-informed approaches.
- Develop model relationship-based behaviour policies.
- Promote equality and diversity, particularly in relation to race, gender, sexual orientation and disability.
- Implement virtual school duties for the education of children and young people with a social worker.
- Relaunch our approach to school attendance.
- Further promote good-quality assessment and planning for children with disabilities and physical and mental health needs.
- Continue to expand our SEND community offer.
- Clarify the ordinarily available provision in school for children with additional needs.
- Develop a co-ordinated response and support for refugee children.
- Further promote approaches to address poverty and health inequalities.
- Implement statutory changes to elective home education.
- Consolidate the multi-agency THRIVE Framework to promote emotional health and mental wellbeing.
- Develop a head teacher wellbeing offer with the Manchester Schools Alliance.
- Further reduce the number of young people not in education, employment, or training.
- Ensure high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- Embed citywide approaches to support transitions at every stage.
- Relaunch Skills for Life.
- Become a UNICEF Child-Friendly City and promote schools and settings becoming Rights Respecting Schools.
- Enhance good-practice guidance for the use of the internet and social media.

2. Early Intervention – identify needs and protect vulnerable children and young people
We will:

- Promote timely conversations and effective partnerships with parents and carers.
- Embed the All About Me conversation to ensure children, young people and families only tell their story once.
- Promote and monitor the new Alternative Provision Framework.
- Commission and implement the SAFE Taskforce interventions.
- Develop good practice guidance and quality assurance for on-site alternative provision and inclusion spaces.
- Review practice guidance on the use of managed moves.
- Monitor use of reduced timetables and share good practice.
- Promote multi-agency approaches to reduce persistent school absence.
- Review school cluster arrangements to strengthen links to social care and early help.
- Embed multi-agency approaches to promote the education, employment and training of young people supported by the youth justice Service.
- Embed Mental Health in School Support Teams model and promote the M-Thrive approach.
- Embed the Team Around the School approach.
- Monitor Section 19 medical offer and pilot other approaches.
- Continue supervision for Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Review specialist outreach offer, targeting where it is most needed, eg. at transition points.

3. High-quality continuum of provision and specialist support
We will:

- Implement the PRU restructure, repurposing and accommodation plan.
- Implement Phase 2 of special school places expansion.
- Define continuum of provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Improve commissioning of provision for children and young people with a high level of need.
- Implement with social care a specialist locality offer for children with SEND.
- Review and commission our specialist short breaks offer.
- Deliver a citywide positive behaviour support approach.
- Commission and grow the post-16 and post-19 specialist offer.



4. Exclusion as a last resort
We will:

- Share school exclusion data and monitor use of suspension and exclusion.
- Monitor the number of children returning to school from Pupil Referral Units following exclusion.
- Utilise the learning from the AP Taskforce.
- Review the use of Inclusion Panels.
- Review exclusion training for governors.
- Work with parent/carer champions to develop an exclusions advocacy offer for other parents/carers.
- Develop best practice in the prevention of post-16 exclusion and withdrawal.



Our Manchester Behaviours
in everything we do we'll make sure that...

➤ We work together and trust each other

➤ We're proud and passionate about Manchester

➤ We take time to listen and understand

➤ We 'own' it and aren't afraid to try new things

➤ We show that we value our differences and treat people fairly

We reviewed and refreshed Manchester's Inclusion Strategy for all Children and Young People for 2022-2025.

Our Inclusion Statement
We believe it is important that every child and young person in our early years' settings, schools and post 16 provisions, whatever their age, identity, circumstances or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and is valued for who they are.

PROMOTING THE USE OF THE
MANCHESTER INCLUSION

STRATEGY TOOLKIT

Download it!



Educational Psychology

Manchester
Inclusion
Strategy Toolkit

Written by the inspirational Educational Psychology team, find out how the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit has helped schools and other settings to promote inclusion in all its forms.



Inclusion at every age and stage



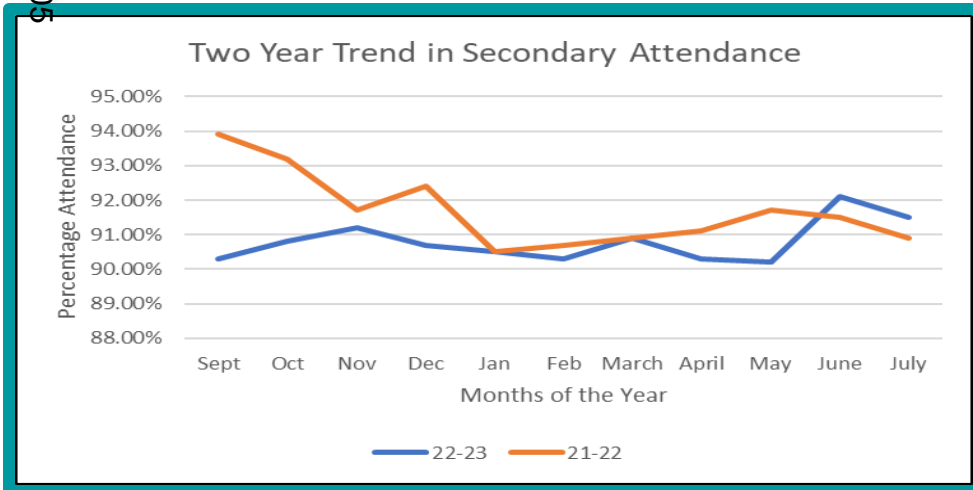
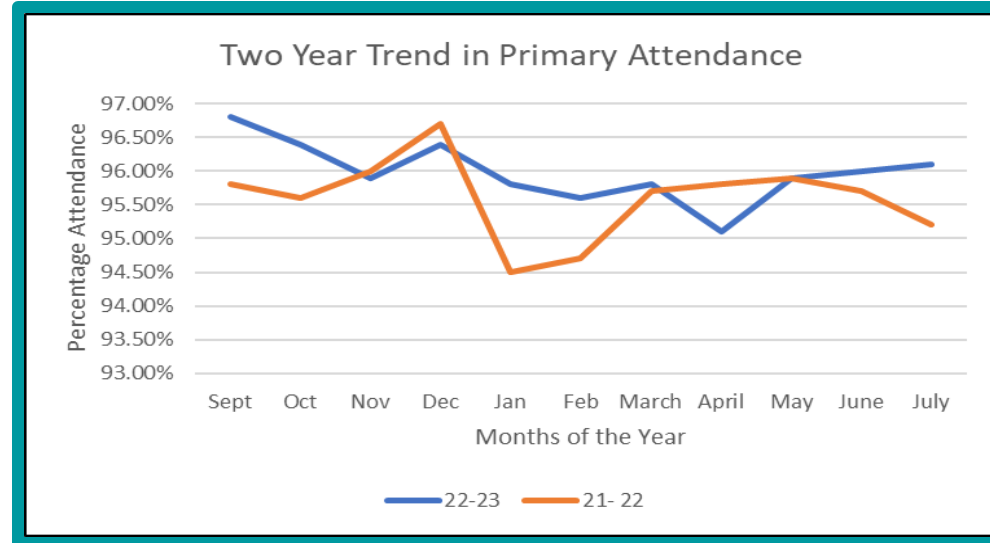
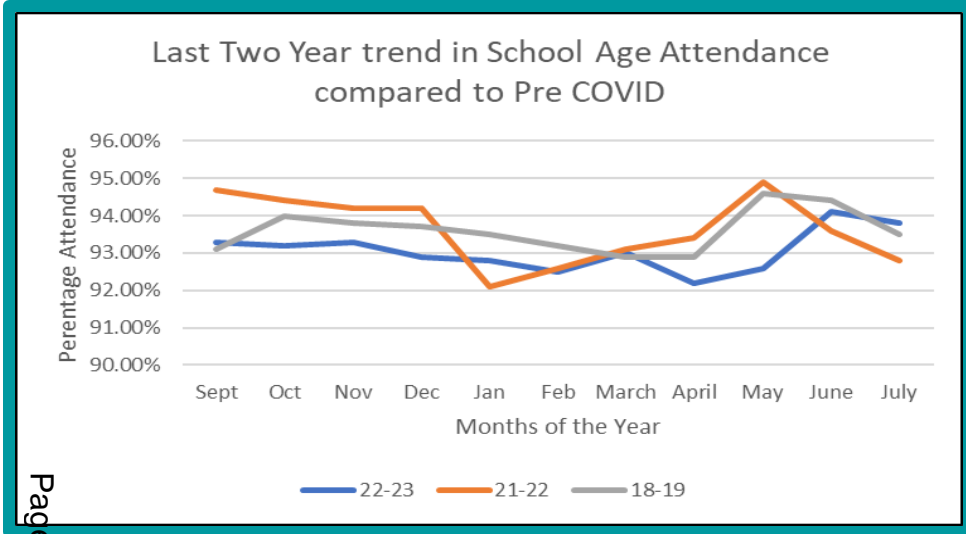
What's been achieved.

- Members of the team are based in each of the social work locality offices, the Youth Justice Offices and the Beehive on a weekly basis to provide information, advice, guidance and training.
- Prevented over 50 potential permanent exclusions through close work with school colleagues and social workers.
- Attended over 50 attendance and disciplinary meetings at Post 16 settings to ensure young people's needs are understood, that they are accessing the support they need and to prevent the risk of exclusion.
- PEP Quality Assurance Teachers and the Virtual School Inclusion Advisers have worked closely with social workers and education colleagues in Manchester and across different Local Authorities to develop and implement bespoke educational offers for some of our children with the most complex needs.
- Provided Educational Psychology telephone consultations to designated teachers and social workers to support the early identification of need and to ensure young people access the provision and support they need.
- Provided laptops and interim tuition for over 50 children whilst they have been waiting to access a new school place.
- 10 school directions were initiated when schools had refused to offer a school place. All 10 children were allocated a school place and started to attend their preferred school provision.
- Commissioned work with Agent Ltd and Agent Academy to develop coproduced resources to support young people to be heard by professionals and to access diverse career role models. The resources will be finalised and launched during 2023-24
- Delivered phase 2 of the Emotional Trauma and Support Pilot for unaccompanied young people aged 16 plus commissioned from One Education.
- Provided Recovery Funding and School Led Tuition funding to schools to support children and young people to catch up on lost learning in Literacy and other core subjects post pandemic.

What the challenges have been.

- Supporting children and young people as they continue to readjust to attending full time, face-to-face education post pandemic.
- Working closely with schools and colleges to fully understand and meet the needs of children and young people who are at risk of exclusion.
- Identifying appropriately personalised educational provision for children and young people with the most complex need when they move to a new home.
- Supporting children into new school places when schools have refused to offer a school place.

2022-23 School Attendance of our Children and Young People

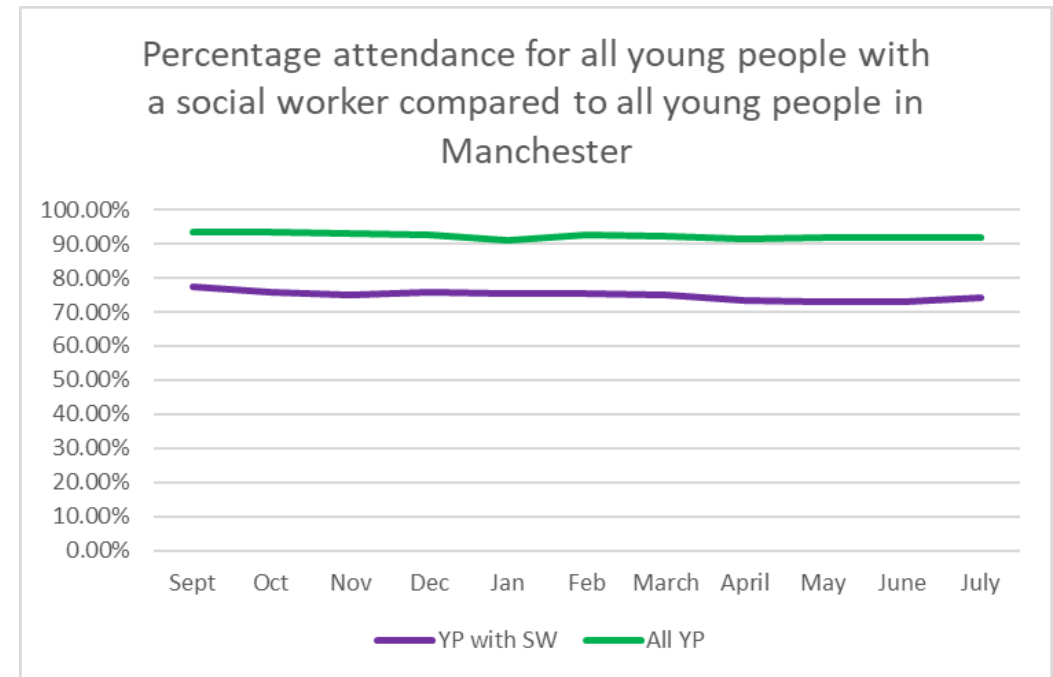
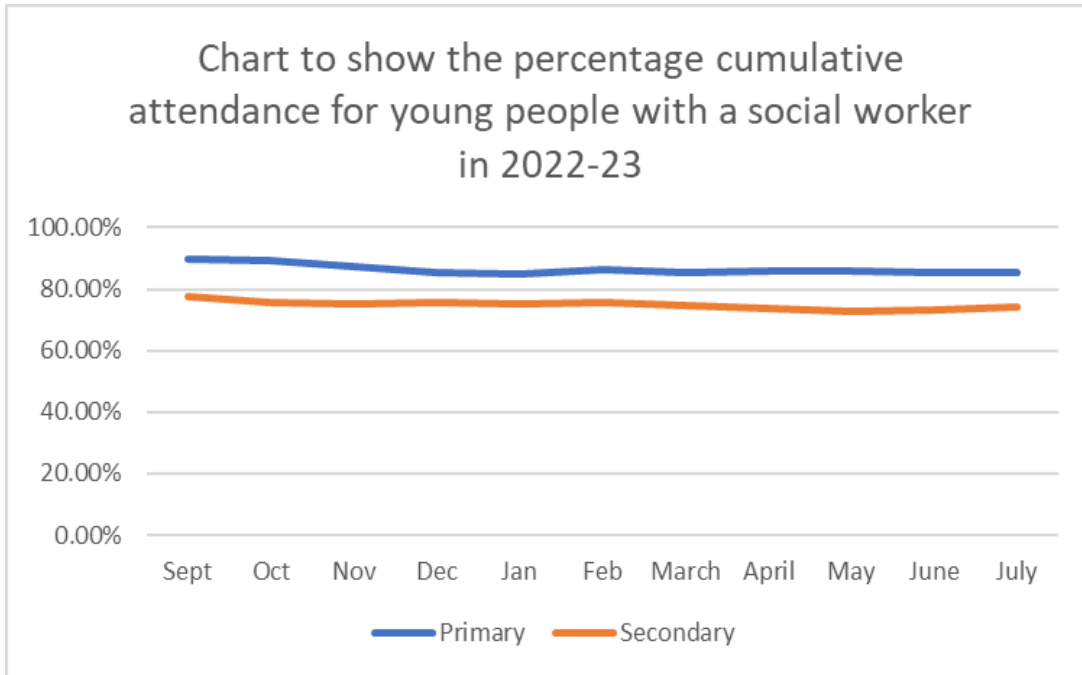


By the end of July 2023:

- 2022-23 mainstream school attendance for all children was at 93.8% at least in-line with the pre-covid attendance of 93.1%
- Primary mainstream school attendance at 96.1% was well above the 2021-22 attendance
- Secondary mainstream school attendance at 91.5% was also above the 2021-22 attendance.
- Special school attendance at 83.9% is in line with the 2021-22 attendance of 83.6% and continues to be lower than children in mainstream schools.

Challenges during the year included school strike days and public health episodes of scarlet fever.

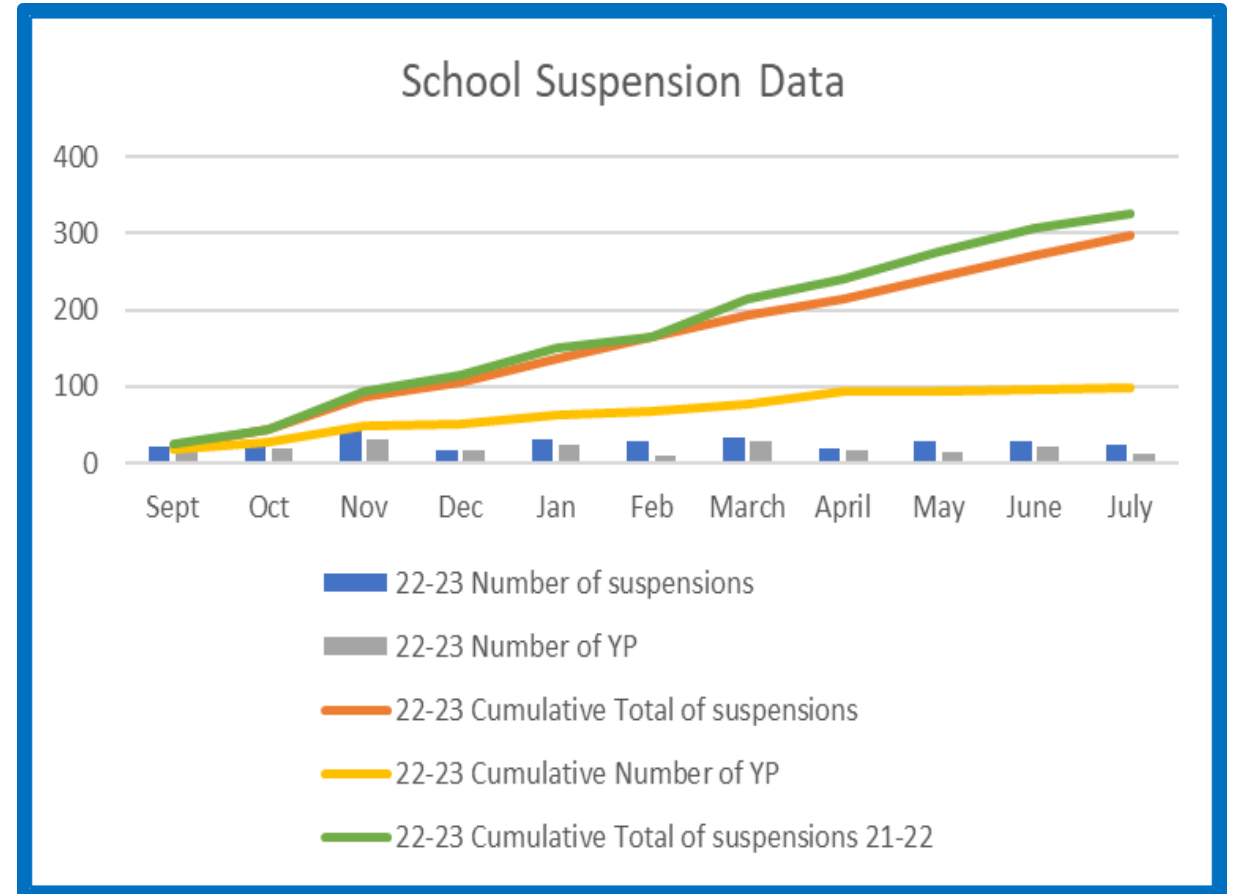
School Attendance for Young People with a social Worker



Exclusions and suspensions – Our Children and Young People

Commentary

- 98 young people had at least one suspension during 2022-23
- Our provisional data shows that during 2022-23 there has been a reduction in the percentage of young people with one of more incident of suspension from 13.2% in 2018-19 11.1% .
- The main reason given for suspensions continues to be persistent disruptive behaviour followed by verbal aggression against adults.
- Two young people were permanently excluded during 2022-23. The Virtual School worked closely with each school to explore how the permanent exclusions could be prevented and attended each of the governing body exclusion meetings. The team continues to monitor the progress and attendance of each young person to ensure they are accessing the support they need.



Workforce development

- 11 Team Members undertaking a Level 4 Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) qualification to support high quality oversight and delivery of vital Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) for Our Children and young people.
- Developing cross directorate opportunities for enhanced joint support and delivery of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.
- Educational Psychology support and group/individual supervision for all Virtual School Team Members.
- Team members to participate in UNICEF Children's Rights Training.
- Virtual School Finance Lead graduated from the LeadHERship Programme in September 2022.
- Virtual School Head successfully completed Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Skills in March 2023.
- Virtual School Deputy Head graduated with a Merit MA in Education from Manchester Metropolitan University in July 2023, and is now a Fellow of the Society for Education and Training, and afforded the opportunity to participate in research to shape national initiatives and policy for staff across the country involved in the delivery of Post 16 education and training.
- Team members invited to identify further opportunities to develop thematic interests in line with the needs of service delivery and career progression via the "About You" (Our Conversation) model and through participation in CPD during Team Meeting.
- Team participated in the first North West Virtual School Staff Conference in June 2023
- Team hosted and participated in the Northwest Virtual School Head's Post 16 Sub-Group Conference in June 2023
- Training for Foster Carers and increased breadth of offer designed and co-delivered in partnership with Educational Psychology team from One Education - Early Years/ Early Development; SEND Processes; Post-16 Options and Preparation for Adulthood; The Voice of the Child, the Role of the Foster Carer in Contributing to PEPs and other Meetings; Anxiety Based School Avoidance (ABSA); Attachment and Trauma; Transitions and Change; Supporting Children to Recognise and Respond to their Emotions
- Continuing roll out and signposting to Inclusion Strategy Toolkit
- Individual support via 1 – 1 surgeries to support promotion of Education, Employment and Training with Personal Advisors from the Care Leaver Service
- Work to support individual Case Managers within the Youth Justice service in order to promote the education and attendance of children supported by Youth Justice – particularly dovetailing with work from the Statutory Attendance Team and in line with the remit of the Virtual School Lead for Children with a Social Worker

Virtual School Team - Learning with and from each other.



Collaborative learning as a team...



...and individual achievements

Virtual School Team – learning with others



Attending the 2023 annual National Virtual School Heads' conference



Attending and contributing to the first Northwest Virtual School Teams' conference

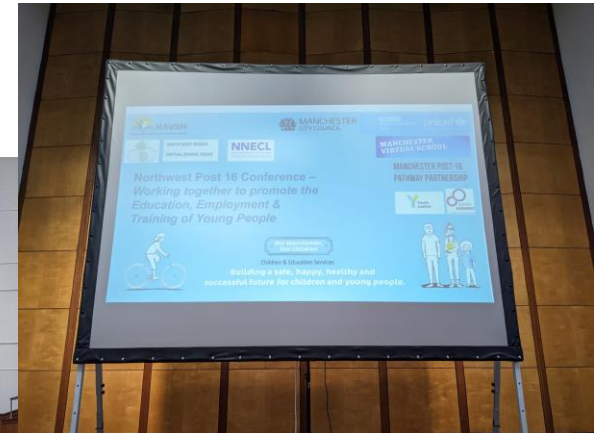
Travelling to learn from other Virtual School teams



Virtual School Team – facilitating learning



Contributing to our Directorate Staff networks



Leading the Northwest Virtual Schools' Post 16 network



Participating in Head Teacher Briefings



Delivering Designated Teacher Training

Speaking at the annual Association of Directors of Children's Services' Conference



Virtual School Team – Supporting Young People and celebrating their successes



Working with colleagues to support young people to go to Ghyll Head

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Participating in the Annual Foster Carer Celebration



Running our Annual Achievement Awards for Our Children and Young People



Appendix 1 - Item 7



Looking Ahead - 2023-24 priorities



During 2023-24 the key high-level priorities for the Virtual School are to:

- Continue to promote the use of the Manchester Inclusion Toolkit and attendance at the thematic training linked to the toolkit with education settings and partners. In this way we will enhance inclusive practice across the system which supports young people of all ages to attend well, make good to progress and to experience a sense of belonging and of being valued and respected for who they are.
- Continue to promote the good attendance and reduce the persistent and severe absence of Our Children and Young People, especially those in specialist provisions, young people with a social worker and those supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Ensure a strong focus on supporting children in the early years and primary aged children to make good progress and to address any gaps in learning.
- Continue to work with social workers and designated safeguarding leads to ensure a more robust focus on attendance, progress and education transitions in supervision discussions and Child in Need and Child Protection plans.
- Work with the Care Consultants, Designated Teachers and Social Workers to ensure PEP meetings are child and young person centred and wherever possible, taking place face-to-face.
- Continue to work with the Social Workers and the Leaving Care Service to strengthen the focus on Education, Employment and Training and aspirations in Pathway Plans with reference to young people's most recent PEPs.
- Continue to work with Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Leads, Social Workers and Youth Justice Workers to strengthen the CEIAG work being undertaken with children and young people in our care, with a social worker and those supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Continue to strengthen work with Career Connect and Employers to create, promote and match young people to opportunities and to enhance the focus on promoting equality & diversity in the workplace..
- Continue our work with the Speech and Language Service to further develop and embed the use of advice, guidance and training specifically for Designated Teachers pre-school to Post 16.
- Maintain and continue to strengthen the focus on our young people with the most complex needs to ensure early identification of needs and the appropriate and effective personalisation of educational provision with a continued focus on high aspirations.
- Expand the delivery and the evaluation of the Emotional & Trauma Support pilot for Unaccompanied Young People.
- Finalise and launch the resources that have been coproduced with young people to support professionals in their conversations with young people and Agent Ltd about their lives, identities and aspirations.
- Finalise and launch the resources which have been developed with young people, Agent Academy and the Northwest Business Leadership Team's Diversity Drivers to enable young people to access a broad range of diverse role models to support their plans for their career aspirations.
- Implement the revised plan for Year 3 of Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus Pilot plan – taking into consideration the implications for the reduction in funding and increased numbers of young people in the cohort and learning from phases 1 and 2.

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**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2024

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Items for information
- Work Programme

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

Name: Rachel McKeon
Position: Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer
Tel: 0161 234 4997
Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee, responses to them, if they will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
9 October 2019	CYP/19/39 Skills for Life	To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
6 November 2019	CYP/19/48 Youth and Play Services - Young Manchester	To request that clear information on the availability of toilet facilities, for example, in park cafes, be included on signage in parks.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
4 March 2020	CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and Working in Partnership in a Locality	To request further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is dealing with smoking around its hospital sites and to note that the Executive Member for Children and Schools will circulate a briefing note on work that is already taking place to address	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
		smoking in pregnancy.		
22 July 2020	CYP/20/26 Manchester's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To request that school governors be included in the plans for schools and that CAMHS and the support on offer be included on the agenda of a future Chair of Governors briefing.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To ask officers to consider how Councillors could help with this work and to circulate a note to the Committee Members on this.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Julie Heslop, Strategic Head of Early Help
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To request that the Early Help Project Manager provide information on the number of families, in relation to the presentation slides on areas of the city and the sustainability of impacts.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Ed Haygarth, Early Help Project Manager
20 July 2022	CYP/22/36 The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being	To request data on the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, in order to be able to identify any gaps.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Al Ford, Director of CAMHS/Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer
21 June 2023	CYP/23/25 Update:	To recommend that consideration be given to	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported	Amanda Corcoran, Director of

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
	Education Climate Change Action Plan 2022-24	partnering schools with allotments and parks.	back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Education

2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions published on **29 December 2023** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Register of Key Decisions:

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
<p>Take a breath - Residential accommodation (2023/07/06A)</p> <p>To implement a residential accommodation model to support hospital discharge and prevent hospital admission for children and young people.</p>	Strategic Director - Children and Education Services	Not before 6th Aug 2023		Report and Recommendations	Sarah Austin, Strategic Lead - Commissioning sarah.austin@manchester.gov.uk
<p>The Provision of a Manchester Sensory Support Service (2023/07/03A)</p> <p>The appointment of Provider for the Provision of a Manchester Sensory Support Service</p>	Strategic Director - Children and Education Services	Not before 3rd Aug 2023		Report and Recommendation	Mike Worsley, Procurement Manager mike.worsley@manchester.gov.uk
<p>The provision of a contraception & sexual health service for young people (2023/09/27A)</p> <p>To award a contract to a provider to deliver a contraception & sexual health service for young people.</p>	Director of Public Health	Not before 27th Oct 2023		Contract Report	Marie Earle, Strategic Commissioning Manager marie.earle@manchester.gov.uk

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme – January 2024**

Wednesday 10 January 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Thursday 28 December 2023)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Annual Adoption Report	To receive the annual adoption report.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Annual Fostering Report	To receive the annual fostering report.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Virtual School Report	To receive a report on the Virtual School.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran/ Jane Johnson	
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.	-	Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 7 February 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Friday 26 January 2024)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Revenue Budget Update	To receive a report on the financial challenge facing the Council, the latest forecast position, and the next steps.	Cllr Akbar (Finance and	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson	

		Resources)		
Children and Education Services 2024/25	Consideration of the final 2024/25 budget proposals that will go onto February Budget Executive and Scrutiny and March Council.	Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson Paul Marshall	
Leaving Care Provision	To receive a report focusing on capacity and responding to the needs of care leavers.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Overview Report		-	Rachel McKeon	

Items To Be Scheduled

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Manchester Sensory Support Service Commission	To receive an update report at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See March 2022 minutes.
Adoption	To receive a report on adoption which includes what difference the move to Adoption Counts has made in providing stable adoption placements for Our Children and what happens when an adoption breaks down.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2021 minutes
School Streets	To receive a report on School Streets.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Rawlins	Amanda Corcoran	Invite Chair of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods

				Scrutiny Committee
Independent Review of Children's Social Care	To receive a report on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Domestic Abuse and Children	To receive a report on the impact of domestic abuse on children and the Safe and Together programme.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See March 2023 minutes
Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024	To receive an annual report on the progress of this work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2020 minutes
Elective Home Education (EHE)	To receive a report on EHE. To include up-to-date figures on children who are not in school, including those whose parents have chosen EHE, with a breakdown by areas of the city.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See January 2022 and October 2022 minutes
School Attendance and Attainment	To receive regular reports regarding attainment and attendance.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) Education	To receive a report on PSHE education in schools.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Road Safety Around Schools	To consider a report on road safety around schools.	Councillor Rawlins Councillor Bridges	Kevin Gillham Amanda Corcoran	To be confirmed See January 2023 minutes.
Early Years and Health Visiting	To receive a further report at an appropriate time.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See May 2023 minutes.

Service				
Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Schools	To receive an update at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See September 2023 minutes
Youth Justice	To receive a further report on Youth Justice.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022- 25 - Progress Update	To receive a further update and to invite a representative of Career Connect to attend the meeting.	Councillor Hacking	Amanda Corcoran	See December 2023 minutes.

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