

Peterborough Virtual School - Annual Report 2023/24



PROMOTING ASPIRATIONAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE KNOWN TO SOCIAL CARE



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Purpose of The Report

The purpose of this report is to detail and evaluate the work undertaken by Peterborough Virtual School during the academic year 2023-2024. It includes information regarding the characteristics, attainment and attendance of the children supported by the Virtual School and summarises work undertaken by Peterborough Virtual School to promote educational outcomes.

Our Virtual School

All local authorities in England have a statutory duty to promote the educational outcomes for children in its care wherever they live or are educated; the Virtual School Head Teacher is the lead officer in fulfilling these responsibilities. In Peterborough there is a team of education professionals who support the Virtual School Head Teacher. The Virtual School's statutory remit includes the promotion of educational outcomes for children and young people in care between the ages of 2 and 18, this includes the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) which form a key part of the overall care planning. Additionally, the Virtual School provides information and advice for children previously in care including those who have been adopted from care and those under special guardianship and child arrangement orders. The Virtual School has a non-statutory strategic leadership role for children who have or have had a social worker (in the last 6 years) aged 0-18. In September 2024, the remit of Virtual School's will extend further to support children living in kinship care arrangements.

- Peterborough Virtual School sits within Children's Services. The Virtual School Head reports to the Service Director for Education and is a member of the Education Leadership Team and Extended Children's Services Leadership Team. Peterborough Virtual School reports to the Education Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board.
- A Management Board has been established to provide a platform for experienced professionals and stakeholders to offer support and challenge to the Virtual School Head and other officers. This collaborative approach will help in fostering innovation, sharing best practices, and driving continuous improvement within the Virtual School. The board will monitor the Virtual School's performance, review data on educational outcomes, and ensure compliance with statutory guidance and regulations.
- An inspection of Peterborough local authority children's services took place 27th November to 8th December 2023. Verbal feedback acknowledged the renewed vision and strategic direction of the Virtual School and the development planning in place for a rapid journey of improvement. Following the inspection, the decision was made to extend the remit of Peterborough Virtual School to include Education, Employment and Training (EET) support for Care Leavers.

24. A well-resourced virtual school provides good-quality support and training for designated teachers and has improved the process for devising personal education plans so that children can better access resources to support their educational progress.



Our Offer

The Virtual School offer has been revised in line with the renewed vision and strategic direction.

This goes beyond statutory duties and now includes advisory work with educational settings, training for a range of stakeholders and intensive support for children and young people where need is identified through data or referral pathways.

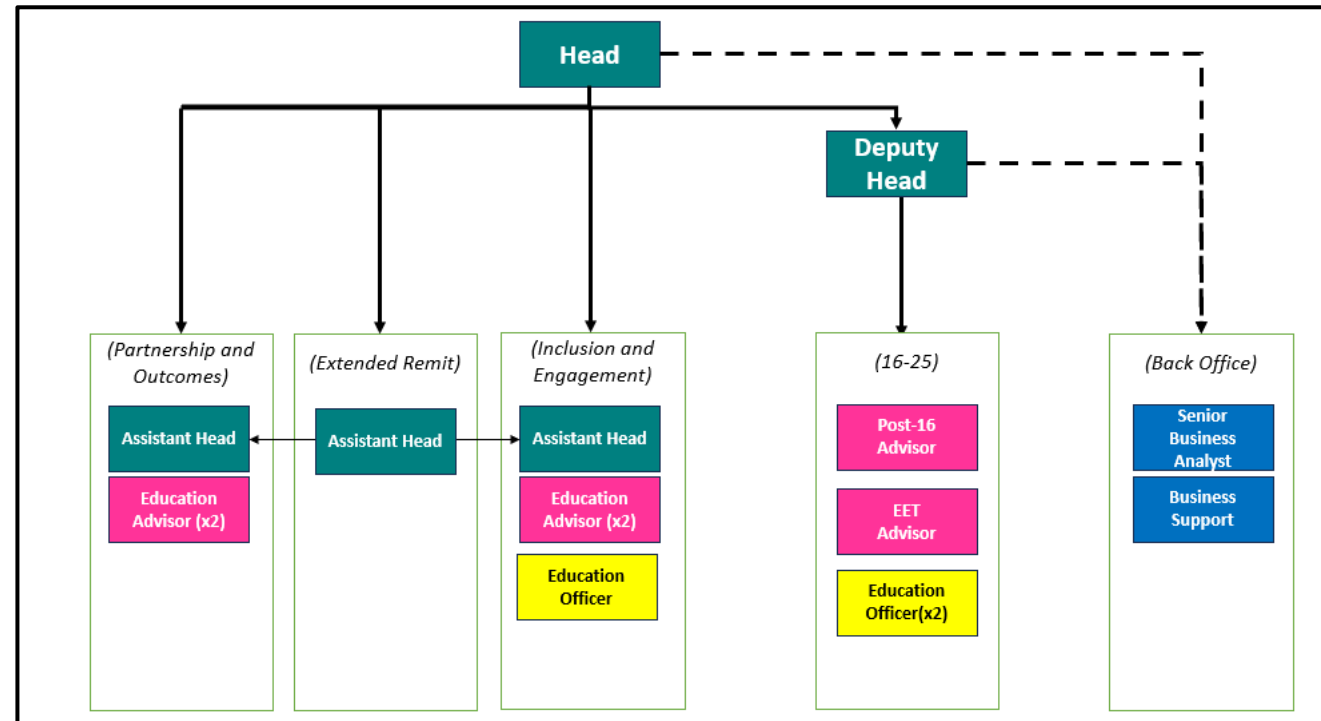
Our website has been updated and redesigned to promote a diverse range of advice, information and resources, providing instant access to queries and strengthening of knowledge. This has been guided by themes and informal conversations with stakeholders.

[Peterborough Virtual School](https://www.peterboroughvirtualschool.org.uk/)

Our Team

To support the implementation of the revised offer, the team structure of Peterborough Virtual School has been reviewed and extended. This has ensured that there is sufficient capacity to provide the breadth of the service's wider statutory (Children in Care & Children Previously in Care) and non-statutory (Children who have or have had a social worker) remits as well as the incoming extended duties which include kinship and care-leavers.

- Leadership capacity has increased, and three Assistant Head Teachers have been appointed to lead specific strategic and operational functions.
- The 16-25 team will be led by the Deputy Head Teacher; a specific implementation plan has been created for this and there is a high level of joined up working with partners across Children's Services and beyond.
- A senior business analyst is supporting the journey to a data-informed service. This will ensure that the service is responsive to the needs of individual children and cohorts in a timely manner.
- Job descriptions have been rewritten to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and experience. This includes the requirement for Qualified Teacher Status for all Education Advisors.
- Early Years work, which has previously been out-sourced to the Local Authority Early Years team, will be fully integrated from September 2024.
- Current vacancies are expected to be filled in the forthcoming term.



Continued Professional Development has been prioritised for the full team to ensure a robust knowledge and understanding of statutory duties and guidance; this includes familiarisation with toolkits including the EEF (Education Endowment Foundation). Additional training has been provided around thematic issues including relational practice, equality, diversity and inclusion and emotionally based school avoidance.

Cohort Characteristics

There is a high level of fluidity within the children in care cohort. The data below is a 'snapshot' in time (31st March 2024) and totals 388 on the roll of the Virtual School.

Academic Year	Number	%
Pre-school	21	5%
Reception	8	2%
Year 1	7	2%
Year 2	8	2%
Year 3	7	2%
Year 4	20	5%
Year 5	14	4%
Year 6	22	6%
Year 7	25	5%
Year 8	25	6%
Year 9	32	8%
Year 10	36	9%
Year 11	54	14%
Year 12	64	16%
Year 13	45	12%

Children In Care	Number	%
Male	236	61%
Female	151	39%
Other	1	1%

Ethnicity - White British	220	57%
Ethnicity - Not White British	168	43%

Separated Migrant Children (SMC)	53	14%
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Peterborough is a diverse city; this is reflected within the Virtual School roll. There are 15 first languages spoken.



53 children are Separated Migrant Children. Separated Migrant Children have no responsible adult and therefore have child in care status. Peterborough participates in the National Transfer Scheme which means children and young people may be taken into care as:

- Spontaneous arrivals within the city authority
- Transfers in from other local authorities

SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities)

Numbers of Peterborough Children in Care with an EHCP have dropped in the past academic year from 31% to 23%. This is lower than the national figure and statistical neighbours. Numbers of children with SEN support in schools has remained constant at 22%.

SEND (Education, Health and Care Plans)	Pupils	% of Total Cohort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 are on the roll of mainstream settings • 2/62 have a bespoke package in place • 28 attend special schools • 1 is employed • 4 are (Not in Education, Employment or Training) NEET 	90	23%

Academic Year Groups of EHCP Cohort	Pupils	% of SEN Cohort
Reception	0	0%
Year 1	2	2%
Year 2	1	1%
Year 3	2	2%
Year 4	3	3%
Year 5	0	0%
Year 6	8	9%
Year 7	8	9%
Year 8	6	7%
Year 9	14	16%
Year 10	8	9%
Year 11	20	22%
Year 12	13	14%
Year 13	5	6%

School Details

42% of children in care are educated outside of Peterborough; Peterborough Virtual School therefore work with education settings both within the city and beyond. This academic year we have supported children in 24 local authorities including children educated outside of England in both Scotland and Wales. This currently includes 55 in city settings and 115 out of city settings across the Early Years, Statutory School Age and Post-16 cohorts.

Peterborough Virtual School (March 31st, 2024)	Pupils	% of Total
Total number on school roll (pre-school to Year 13)	388	100%

Peterborough CiC - in Peterborough schools or education settings	178	46%
Peterborough CiC - in Out of Peterborough Schools or Education Settings	165	42%
Peterborough CiC - (with setting unmatched)	45	12%

The children and young people with unmatched settings include:

- 8 pre-school children (2-year-olds)
- 2 children with EHCPs awaiting specialist placements (statutory school age)
- 6 separated migrant children (statutory school age)
- 23 young people who are NEET (including 13 separated migrant children)

Ofsted Ratings

At the point of school admission, the Virtual School promote admission to a school that is good or better.

Some children enter care whilst on roll at a requires improvement or inadequate rated school or the rating changes whilst the child is in attendance. In these situations, there is a process to decide whether it is in the child's best interests to move schools or remain where they are.

Where a child attends a school judged as requires improvement or inadequate, their progress is monitored closely and there is an enhanced school level offer.

Peterborough Ofsted Ratings (March 31st, 2024)	Total Settings	% of Total
Total number of Settings (pre-school to Year 13) with a CiC	55	100%

Setting with Outstanding ratings	4	7.3%
Setting with Good ratings	34	61.8%
Setting with Requires Improvement ratings	7	12.7%
Setting with Inadequate ratings	1	1.8%
Setting with no ratings	5	9.1%

Children Previously in Care (CPiC)

Children Previously in Care (CPiC)	Pupils	% of Total
Total number in Peterborough schools	262	100%

Primary School (including LA Maintained Nursery School) – Total 60	175	67%
Secondary School – Total 12	44	17%
All-through School – Total 3	27	10%
Special School – Total 9	16	6%

Source: Peterborough School Census Pupil Summary – October 2023

In Peterborough schools, there are 262 children recorded on the school census as Children Previously in Care. These include children who are no longer in care because of adoption orders (38%), special guardianship orders (51%) and child arrangement orders (11%). These children are all entitled to the Pupil Premium Plus grant due to their care-experience.

Informal conversations with senior leaders in schools suggest that there are children in Peterborough schools who are not recorded as previously in care on the census but should be. This suggests that they may not be accessing support which they are entitled to. It is a priority of the Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility in this area to address this ahead of the October 2024 census deadline.



Children who have had a child in need plan (CiN) or child protection plan (CP)

The role of the Virtual School for children with a social worker pertains to children who, (for safeguarding or welfare reasons) have a child in need plan (CiN) or a child protection plan (CP) or have had within the last 6 years. It is a strategic leadership role at a cohort level. On 31st March 2024, there were 423 children known to social care living in Peterborough. Most of these children attend Peterborough schools, although some attend schools across the border in neighbouring authorities including Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.



Children who have had a child in need plan (CiN) or child protection plan (CP)				
	Child in Need (CiN)		Child Protection (CP)	
	Cohort	% or cohort	Cohort	% or cohort
Total Cohort	432	100%	182	100%

Female	183	42.0%	101	55.0%
Male	249	58.0%	79	44.0%
To be confirmed	0	0.0%	2	1.0%

Babies 0 to 2	49	11.3%	32	18.1%
Nursery/Preschool	35	8.1%	23	12.6%
Reception to Year 11	268	62.0%	124	68.1%
Post 16	80	18.5%	3	1.6%

Source: Children's Social Care – Liquid Logic - 31st March 2024

Partnerships and Outcomes

The Partnerships and Outcomes team work with all stakeholders to ensure that all children known to social care are well supported in their education to achieve aspirational outcomes through:

- Advisory work
- Delivery of engaging training which meets the needs of our stakeholders
- Quality assurance of all Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- Effective allocation of PP+
- Scrutiny of attainment and progress data



Advisory Work

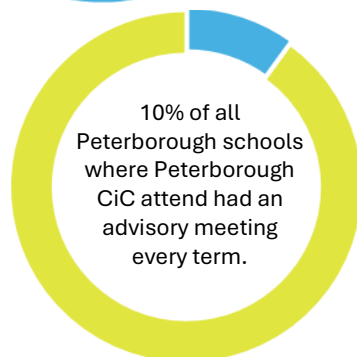
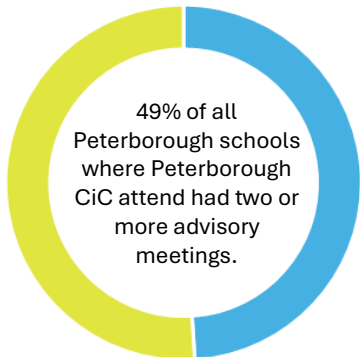
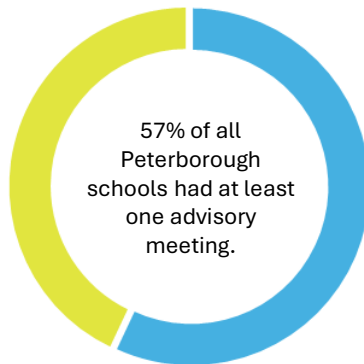
In Spring 2024, the Indicators of Good Practice tool was developed using an evidence-based approach. This included consideration of best practice from other Virtual Schools, reference to published research and adherence to DfE guidance. This tool was piloted with schools during the Spring and Summer terms and forms the foundation of our advisory meeting agenda. It has enabled more strategic and focused discussion which has whole school implications, supports the educational outcomes of our children in care and extends to our wider cohort.

Schools have been empowered to self-evaluate their policy, practice and culture and identify next steps for development. Examples of identified focus have included developing the skills and expertise of governors to enable them to hold senior leaders to account and the exploration of curriculum considerations to promote positive examples of care-experience.

As we further embed the tool in our work, it is our aspiration for:

- All schools in city to have one advisory meeting per academic year.
- All in city schools, which have our children in care on roll, to have one advisory meeting per term.
- Out of city schools, which have our children in care on roll and who are not supported by their home Virtual School, to be supported with advisory meetings in response to need.
- To offer an enhanced level of support to schools rated as requiring improvement or inadequate by Ofsted.

In collaboration with our colleagues in the Eastern Region, Peterborough Virtual School is progressing an Eastern Region MAT approach which will be underpinned by shared data and the initiation of an Eastern Region Power BI dashboard.



Attainment Data

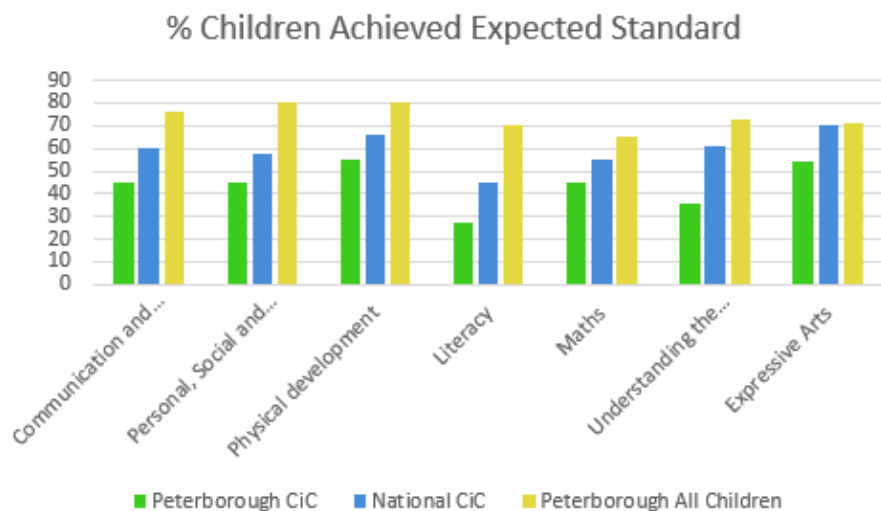
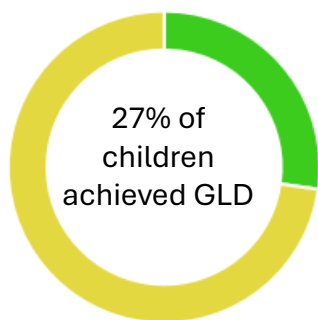
Attainment and progress data is currently unvalidated and should be treated with caution. There is no current reliable data on outcomes for children in care nationally or for statistical neighbours. The report will be updated in March 2025 once the validated data is available.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved the expected level for the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Full cohort: 11

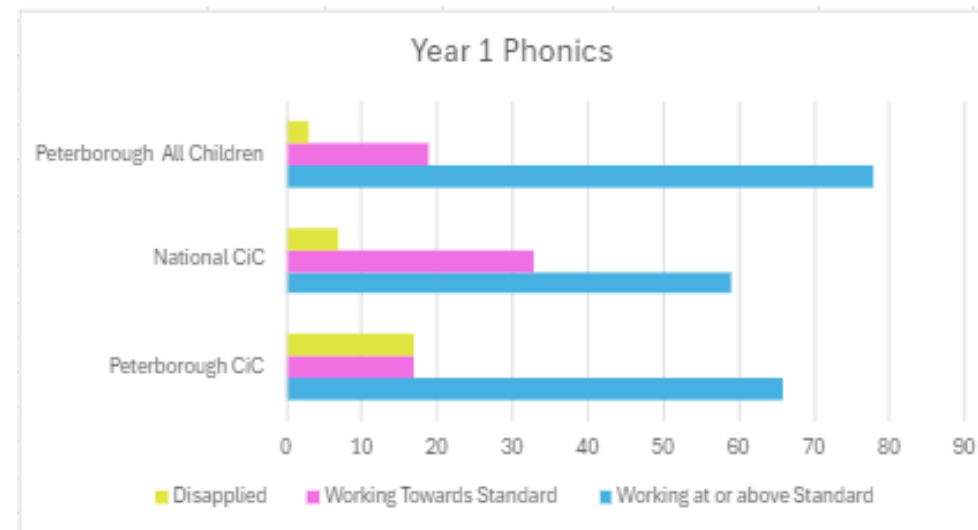
Eligible cohort: 1 (did not achieve GLD)



National Phonics Screening

Full cohort: 9

Eligible cohort: 2 (1 achieved the standard)



Neither of the two children who did not achieve the phonics standard achieved GLD in EYFS. Both had desirable outcomes related to phonics on their Year 1 PEPs. One has had targeted support from the virtual school inclusion and engagement team.

Both children in Year 2 who re-sat their phonics screening achieved the standard this academic year.

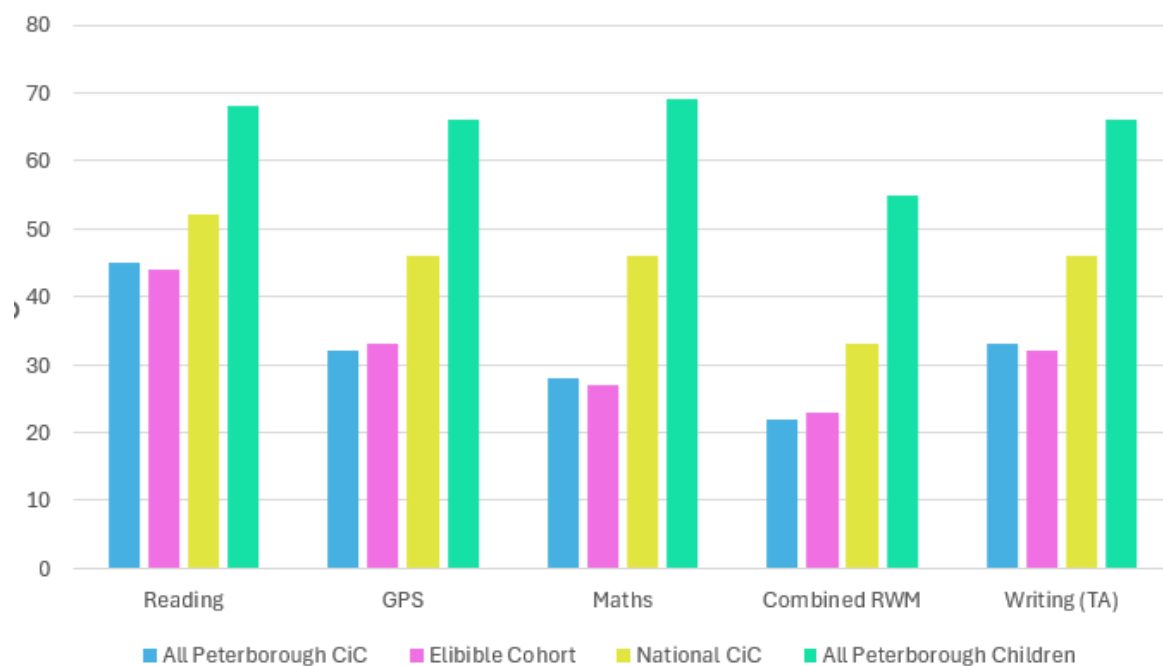
Key Stage 2

Full Year 6 cohort: 22

Eligible cohort: 18

36% of this cohort have an EHCP

% KS2 Children ≥ Expected



Six children (27% of the cohort) were disapplied from the key stage 2 tests, five of them are on non-subject specific pathways and attend a special school.

Two children do not have any key stage 2 data as they attend a school in Wales.

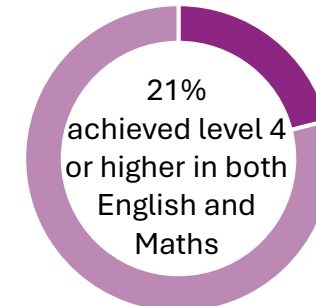
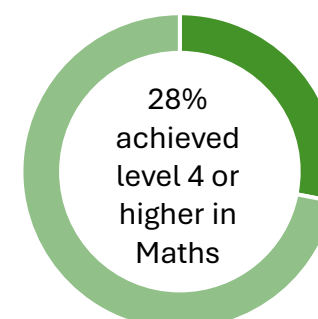
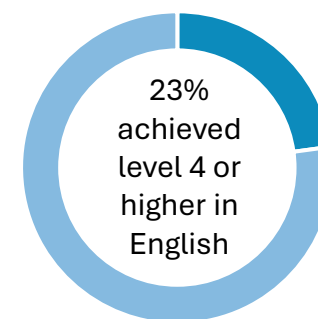
Five children (22%) of the cohort achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined.

Key Stage 4

Full Year 11 cohort: 57

Eligible cohort: 46

22% of this cohort have an EHCP



Notable Achievements for individual young people include:

- One young person who achieved an attainment 8 score of 77.
- Two children achieving grade 9s in their maths GCSE.
- A young person who achieved grade 8 in her Polish GCSE.

18 young people did not sit a full set of GCSEs for reasons including complex SEND and newly arrived separated migrant children. Some of the fantastic achievements of this group include:

- A separated migrant young person who achieved grade 7 in his Arabic GCSE.
- Level 1 qualifications in sport's leadership
- Trinity London Arts Award (Bronze)
- Skills certificate in small animal care
- Skills certificate in first aid

Key Stage 5

Two Year 13 students completed level 3 pathways. Both are expected to transition to university, one in September 2024 and one following a gap year in September 2025.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The PEP is a statutory document for all children in care and forms an important part of their care planning.

This academic year, careful consideration has been given to this document and September 2024 will see our new, completely overhauled design roll out. An extensive package of training and suite of high-quality support resources will be available to all professionals. The new template will:

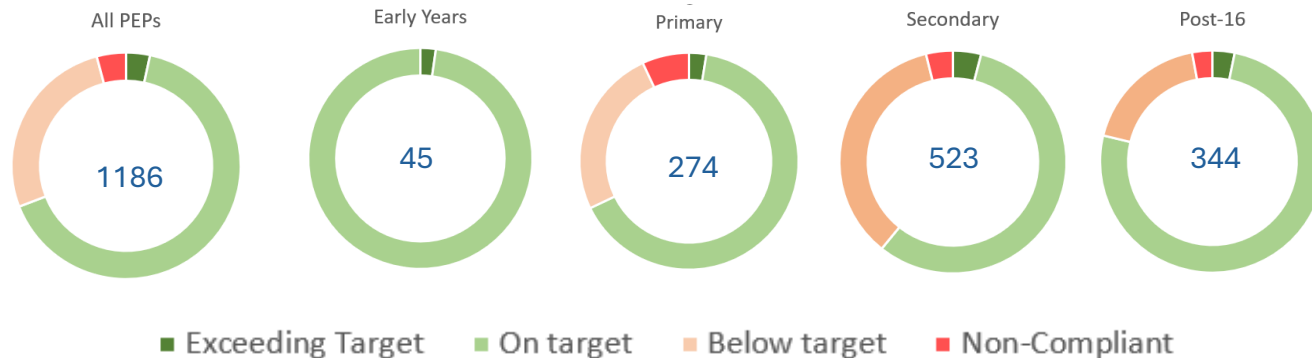
- Better scaffold the desirable outcomes to meet the needs of every child.
- Extend the range and scope of data drawn from the PEP increasing our ability to intervene at individual and cohort level.
- Reduce variability in “on-target” PEP and allow us to give more detailed feedback to professionals on the PEP quality and implement more targeted support to professionals.
- Better support our young people who are NEET with a PEP suited to their needs.
- Reduce variability in the requests for PP+ and promote evidence-based interventions which are more directly linked to raising academic achievement.

1186
The number of PEPs completed
this academic year

37% of children
and young
people in Y1-13
attended their
last PEP
meeting.

Our social
workers
attended 84%
of our PEP
meetings this
year ★

PEP Quality (DT) 2023-2024



This academic year VS staff have not routinely attended PEP meetings. They have only attended in a small number of cases where intensive support from the inclusion and engagement team has been necessary. Designated teachers and social workers know our children best and are best placed to act as lead professionals in the PEP process. However, we still do quality assure every PEP and maintain oversight of the key performance indicators and needs of all our children and young people. This has given us extra capacity across the team to work in a more strategic way to influence policy and practice, drive progress and improve outcomes for our children and young people.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

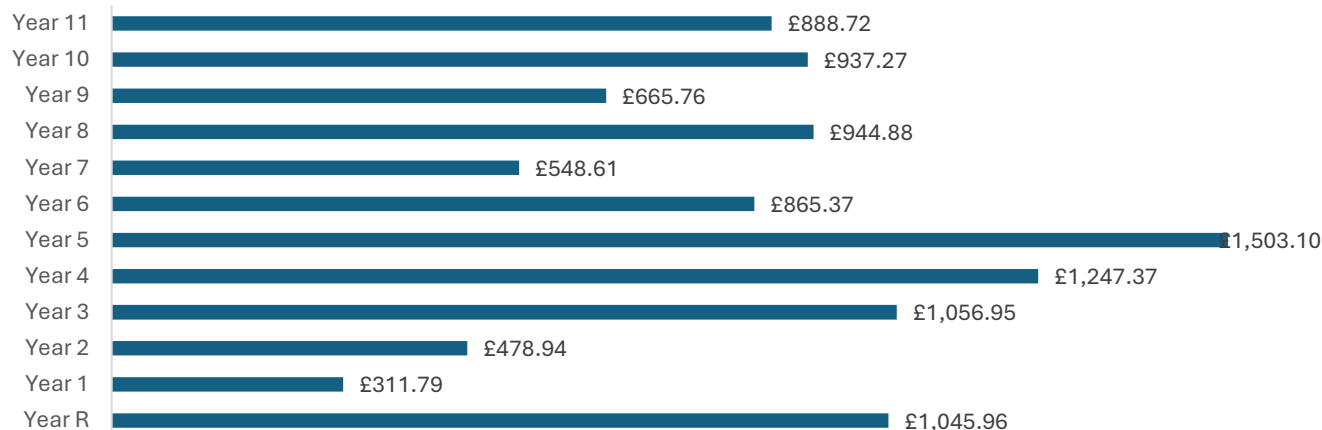
Peterborough Virtual School retains approximately 50% of the grant to benefit our full cohort. It is used to fund VS staff who provide specialist inclusion and engagement support, strategic support to all settings to develop best practice in meeting the needs of our children in care and wider cohort, support targeted projects for specific groups and fund training opportunities for stakeholders delivered at no charge. Every request for PP+ is considered on an individual basis during the PEP QA process. This year we have worked with key partners to shift funding allocation to focus more on evidence-based interventions which support educational outcomes. Our PP+ policy has been developed to better support and build confidence in our DTs and social workers.



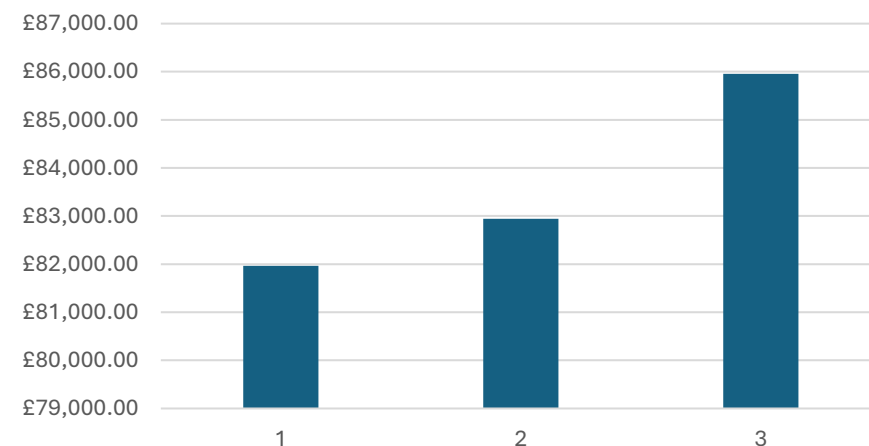
- Development of VR headset Training and purchase of headsets
- OWN Trust: To explore and develop the curriculum so that it best supports the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children known to social care
- Thomas Deacon: To explore, develop and promote best practice in enrichment activities to boost cultural capital for children known to social care
- Peterborough College: Care Leaver support and mentoring
- City College Peterborough: Translation services to improve access to enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- Spirit Federation: Production of a tailored curriculum to meet identified needs of children with SEMH

These projects are still in their planning stage and run over either one or two academic years. The Virtual School provides a link Education Advisor to work alongside the school. The school has intent to provide evidence towards a case study at the end of the project, detailing actions, impact and future priorities.

Average PP+ per child allocated 2023-2024



Total PP+ Requested by School Term



Inclusion and Engagement

The Inclusion and Engagement team has been developed this academic year to ensure that all children in care attend a well-matched educational setting full-time. Where there are barriers to this, the team work intensively to empower the network around the child and drive progress. Typically, children are referred to the Inclusion and Engagement team in one of three ways:

- Analysis of attendance data, including suspensions and reduced timetables
- Referrals from other professionals including schools and social care
- Response to changes in social care provision, for example home placement moves

A tracker has been established to minimise drift and provide oversight of the cohort requiring this intensive level of support. Early analysis shows that risk factors and commonalities of this cohort include multiple home placement moves, risk of permanent exclusion, risk of exploitation and mental health difficulties. Anecdotally, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) has been of increasing key concern this academic year. Social, Emotional and Mental health is the most likely area of need for children with an EHCP

Across the academic year:

- 77 children of statutory school age (SSA) pupils have received intensive support
- 31 young people in Years 12 and 13 have also been supported.

Forecasting for September 2024 suggests that 28 pupils of statutory school age will require support from September 2024

Children Not Educated In School

There may be occasions where a small proportion of our Children in Care are not educated in school. Where it meets the needs of individual children, alternative provision (including tuition) has supplemented their education offer. This provision may be offered in a variety of circumstances including new to care, unplanned placement moves and children who were not managing the 'typical' education on offer to them.

The Virtual School works closely with social care, settings and carers to ensure that any bespoke package is built in a timely manner. This is of particular focus for any child with an EHCP who moves to live in a different authority due to the complexities of the belonging regulations. Bespoke packages are carefully monitored to ensure that academic progress remains high priority and reintegration continues to be worked towards. Our aim is to have all our children accessing full-time education in an educational setting which fully meets their needs.



Attendance

- Attendance for children in care (reception to year 11) is monitored daily.
- Except for our Year 5 cohort, attendance for primary aged pupils is above 95%.
- Year 11 data should be interpreted with caution due to study leave in the summer term. Data at the end of Spring term showed it at 77.3%.

- 55.17% of our children in care have good attendance (>95%)
- 11.11% of our children in care have concerning attendance (90-95%+)
- 33.72% of our children in care have poor attendance (<90%)

Year Group	Out of City	In City	Overall
Reception	96.37	97.11	96.76
Year 1	93.26	97.89	96.34
Year 2	100	98.18	98.9
Year 3	100	98.68	98.91
Year 4	97.08	97.66	97.33
Year 5	97.72	88.58	91.17
Year 6	97.52	94.95	96
Year 7	85.17	94.36	88.36
Year 8	77.2	75.93	77.27
Year 9	95.67	81.04	90.29
Year 10	96.42	77.72	85.79
Year 11	70.83	58.11	63.03

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

Internal data shows that there has been an increase in the number of suspensions issued this academic year. This mirrors the picture within the local authority and nationally for all children.

Key Stage	Number of Children	% of Children	Number of Sessions
Key Stage 1	-	-	-
Key Stage 2	8	12.6%	44
Key Stage 3	18	22%	312
Key Stage 4	15	13.8%	204

When a suspension is issued, the Inclusion and Engagement team will follow this up to hold schools accountable against the statutory guidance and to support specific needs and reduce the risk of further suspensions or permanent exclusion. For some children and young people, this has involved the Virtual School supporting a transition into well-matched provision as their school were not able to meet need.

Two permanent exclusions were issued this academic year, both to Year 8 students. Following challenges from Virtual School, one was rescinded by the Headteacher after issue, and one was quashed by an Independent Review Panel and the child reinstated at the school.

In both cases, the Virtual School worked closely with the LA's Behaviour and Inclusion team and provided ongoing support to the schools to ensure the risk of further suspensions permanent exclusions was lowered. Since reinstatement, neither child has received further suspensions.

Education, Employment and Training

The Inclusion and Engagement team has worked at an intensive support level to ensure the engagement in education, employment or training of 61 young people in Years 12 and 13 this academic year. The most common requirement for support is to re-engage a young person who is not in education, employment or training (NEET). This is 57% of all support. The cohort of NEET young people fluctuates across the academic year. Specific trigger points include the end of October which is the point at which colleges review engagement and officially enrolls the young person, and a second trigger point is Christmas.

To re-engage a young person, the Inclusion and Engagement team liaise closely with the Local Authority NEET team, the young person's social worker and carer. Together, the young person's strengths, interests and career ambitions are considered and a bespoke action plan created. The young person's voice is also central to this process. Twenty-two young people have successfully been supported to re-engage in EET opportunities this academic year.

33% of work focussed on ensuring a young person's attendance at their education setting improved to remove the risk of disciplinary action from their Further Education setting. This involves problem solving to identify the cause of the attendance issues and developing an action plan, in collaboration with other professionals, to improve attendance. 10% of support (6 young people) was focussed on working with education settings due to the young person facing disciplinary processes. Two Stage 4 disciplinary processes were overturned to ensure the young person was able to remain on their course.

YEAR 12 & 13	Total in Cohort	Number NEET	% of Cohort NEET
End Of Autumn Term	118	17	14%
End Of Spring Term	110	23	21%
End Of Summer Term	115	25	22%



In response to the November ILACS inspection, the Virtual School will support young people in education through to age 25. An EET Advisor role has been approved; this will include developing a meaningful careers pathway from primary school onwards. It will also include a proposal to create meaningful work experience and employment opportunities within the local authority further evolving the role of the corporate parent. A grant of £10,000 from the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation was awarded to fund short courses and training opportunities for around 20 care leavers.

Summer Activities

Alongside peers from Lincolnshire Virtual School, 10 Separated Migrant Children (aged 16-18) participated in sports summer activities including football, rugby and cricket.



Training

The virtual school offers training at no charge to all our education settings in supporting the needs of our children and young people and in promoting high aspirations and improving outcomes.

Course	Number of Attendees
The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care	51
High Quality Personal Education Plans	101
Network Meeting	7
The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Person for Children Previously in Care	17
Relational Practice (Power of Connection)	52
Relational Practice (Emotion Coaching)	10

Only one DT network meeting was held this year. Two were postponed to next academic year to allow for development of the PEP and PP+ policy.

An Introduction to Development Trauma: Virtual Reality Headset training

In May 2024 we launched this pilot training course which utilises VR technology to share the lived experience of a child in care. This training is designed to develop adults' understanding of the effects of relational and developmental trauma and loss on children and young people. This pilot scheme has been delivered to 4 primary schools, 2 colleges and the PCC SEND and Transport services and received excellent feedback. Bookings have already been secured across 16 settings for the new academic year.

"A pilot to be proud of, I hope it continues!"

"Very informative and the use of the head set to see the impact of the trauma from the child's perspective was powerful"

"A good balance of theories and research-based evidence and the VR experience"

"This was fascinating. We are a trauma informed setting so you could have been preaching to the converted, but it was really interesting and very informative."

"It was one of the best training courses I've done, the immersion was incredible and whilst I've experienced VR before, particularly the first clip was quite harrowing and really helped the learning experience. A fantastic session!"



86% of the delegates rated this training 5 stars when asked "How relevant and useful did you find it?"

Future Developments

Training resources for social workers, carers and governors will be developed over the next academic year in the form of e-learning and a series of podcasts.

Virtual School Conference 2024

26th September 2024 will see our **FIRST** Peterborough Virtual School Conference. **"Education Matters: Inspiring Ambition and Aspiration for Children in Care"**. Over 130 delegates have already signed up from across services in Peterborough City Council, schools, FE colleges, residential care placements and foster carers to attend workshops on a range of topics including Post-16 education, employment and training options, careers aspiration and ambition, effective use of PP+ and promoting good attendance.



Enrichment

Firebreak

In partnership with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Peterborough Virtual School commissioned a five-day firebreak course in February half-term. Ten Year 8 & 9 students participated as an introduction to uniformed service; they each earned AQA awards in Community Firefighting Skills and First Aid.

Dolly Parton Foundation

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program for children from birth to age five focussed on inspiring a love of books and reading for all pre-school children. All Peterborough Children in Care are now registered for the program and receive monthly books direct to their home addresses.

Outdoor Learning Adventure (OLA)

In partnership with Ravensthorpe Primary School, Peterborough Virtual School offered weekly sessions to primary aged children at their Forest School site. Activities promoted key skills including resilience, problem solving and team-work.

Due to unsustainable transport costs and staff turnover, the sessions ceased in the summer term 2024. Moving forward, there is now scope within the PEP to request funding for participation at an alternative site including Nene Park in Peterborough or at a different location close to the child's home or school. This will ensure continuity of offer for all children living outside of the city.



"I wanted to let you know what a huge success this was for (my child). He really loved it. I've never seen him so confident and happy. He was devastated when it all ended, lots of tears, but it will be a really happy memory for him. I hope that this will run again. My other children were really impressed and I think that it would do them so much good, increase their confidence and they achieve so much in those few short days." (Foster Parent)

Our Extended Remit

Peterborough Virtual School is not the corporate parent for the children supported within the wider remit. Instead, the work in this area includes cohort level oversight, the raising of awareness of the specific educational needs and barriers for the group and the offer of advice and guidance. Approximately 15% of children educated in Peterborough schools have been known to social care in the previous 6 years. In recognition of this scale and the potential to impact children's lives, an Assistant Headteacher to lead strategic work in this area has been appointed. Additional resourcing will be considered in the forthcoming academic year.



Our Offer



During the summer term, research was conducted regarding best practice in other Virtual Schools, available intelligence was analysed, and a range of key partners and stakeholders were consulted with.

A revised 'Advice and Guidance' tiered offer has been published for Children Previously in Care. This has been extended to include advice and guidance for families with kinship arrangements to ensure that we are in a strong position to effectively offer support to families and professionals from September 2024. A communication strategy has been devised to ensure that the offer is effectively shared.

Stakeholder networking opportunities have been established and will continue to evolve over the next year. These include attendance at Social Care team meetings, DT network meetings and a minimum of one termly parent/carer opportunity. Networking provides opportunity for information sharing and gathering, which inform next steps for our strategic development.

Children subject to a Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP) Plan

Headline data demonstrates poorer outcomes for children subject to CiN and CP plans than for children in care. Alongside the transformation and business intelligence teams, the Virtual School has started work to improve operational data (including attendance collection).

Requests for Involvement (RFI)

Requests for Involvement from families and supporting professionals continue to form part of our targeted offer.

During the academic year, a total of 23 RFIs were received in addition to informal queries. The number of RFI are low for the size of our extended cohort. Revised online forms have been published and these have been a focus of recent communications and promotion. RFIs will be monitored during the autumn term and further consideration to promoting this resource will be considered, if needed.

- 61% of RFIs request support around SEND and developmental trauma.
- 22% of RFIs request strategies to better improve communication with school.

Of the 23 requests:

- 11 were made by families, 4 by social care and 8 by education settings
- 12 were for Special Guardianship Orders and 11 were for adoption
- The requests were spread from reception through to Year 9.

As a result of RFI trends, the Assistant Headteacher will be working alongside the LA Area SENCo to develop an 'Ordinarily Available Provision' document, with PVS' section focusing on environmental and situational provision and considerations. This work is currently exploratory and will evolve over the next year, with a view to this resource forming part of our universal offer moving forward.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Attainment 8	The Attainment 8 score is a measure that ensures all students are compared rather than those on the cusp of grade boundaries
CiC	Children in Care
CiN	Children in Need
CP	Child Protection
CPiC	Children Previously in Care
DfE	Department for Education
DP	Designated Person
DT	Designated Teacher
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
Eligible Cohort	Children in Care for a year or more (March 31 st)
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GIAP	Get Information About Pupils
GLD	Good Level of Development
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
PCC	Peterborough City Council
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PP+	Pupil Premium Plus
RFI	Requests for Involvement
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SMC	Separated Migrant Child

Peterborough Virtual School Vision

“All Children Known to Social Care will achieve educational outcomes enabling them to lead healthy, happy and fulfilled lives.”

This document is the 3-year strategic plan (2024-2027) for Peterborough Virtual School.

- It includes how this fits with the existing city priorities and the corporate strategy.
- It considers the specific priorities of the Education Service.
- It details annual implementation planning for the academic year 2024/25.

Our City Priorities

Education Services focus on the City Council priorities of:

- Ensuring every Child gets the best start in life
- Providing education and skills for all
- Safeguarding of our most vulnerable residents as a priority
- We will support individuals and families during the cost-of-living crisis

And deliver on the City’s Priority Outcomes of:

- Children and young people being safe from harm and leading healthy lives
- Children and young people are confident, resilient, thrive in their learning and engage positively and actively in their communities
- All young care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing and employment needs
- Narrow the productivity gap within our future City workforce through an education strategy and plan for early and secondary years
- An adult skills offering that meets the needs of our residents and existing and future employers.



Education Services, as part of Children's Services, are particularly focused on the following, to support the City Priorities and Corporate Strategy:

1. Early years and childcare expansion of places and take up, including meeting the needs of SEND children early and delivering the Government's agenda on 2-year-old take up and Wraparound provision.
2. Increasing the availability of school places to meet demand, including migration into Peterborough over the summer.
3. Developing education capital projects and delivering new schools, with Corporate Services.
4. Attendance, particularly persistent absence, and delivering the new statutory requirements.
5. Meeting the requirement from the ILACS November 2023 for Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education.
6. Reducing Exclusions and the use of Alternative Provision.
7. Developing preventative approaches that meet the needs of SEND children, what is ordinarily available, the graduated response, at SEN Support and also within City provision (including Special Schools), reducing the pressure on the High Needs Block.
8. Supporting the work of schools and settings to significantly improve attainment, as well as narrowing the gap for groups of children vulnerable to poor outcomes.
9. Increasing the number of children and young people with well-matched Education, Employment and Training opportunities to enable positive transition to adulthood.
10. Further developing Transport commissioning and delivery to ensure best value is achieved.

PETERBOROUGH VIRTUAL SCHOOL

3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2027)

Our PEPs are robust and meaningful documents and serve as an effective tool for promoting educational outcomes.

So that...

The PEP provides a robust narrative of the child's educational journey over time detailing impact of interventions and progress towards aspirations.

Our tiered offer is established and embedded, empowering all stakeholders to meet the evolving needs of our cohort.

So that...

Well-matched educational provision effectively meets the needs of the full cohort leading to improved outcomes.

Our Peterborough Virtual School identity is recognised and understood by all stakeholders.

So that...

There is a collective responsibility for the education of children known to social care. Stakeholders champion educational outcomes effectively.

Our strategic and operational work is underpinned by and responsive to accurate intelligence.

So that...

Intelligence and a wide evidence base enable preventative work to take place which minimises risk for children.

Self-Evaluation (Why?)

- Our PEP platform is well established and has been evaluated over time. DTs and SWs tell us that it is user-friendly and easy to navigate.
- Our high-quality PEP training is well attended and positively evaluated.
- We are aware of the limitations of our PEP. Extensive improvement work is underway for a new template to be launched in September 2024.
- Our PEP quality assurance process is compliance driven resulting in variability of the quality of 'on-target' PEPs.
- The range and scope of data drawn from the PEP is limited which impacts on our ability to intervene at an individual and cohort level.
- There is a universal PEP template which does not fully meet the needs of young people who are NEET
- There is variability in the requests made for the PP+ grant. Some DTs make effective use of the EEF guidance, but this is not yet consistent. Sometimes the request does not align to needs described in the PEP or the policy.
- Some DTs do not request PP+ .
- In the Spring term 339 PEPs were completed. 67% of these were quality assured as on or exceeding target.

Implementation (What & how?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Publish revised PEP template, including specific formats for NEET and CME
- Develop training for DTs, SWs and carers around the PEP purpose, process and PP+ allocation.
- Publish submission deadlines for PEP completion – support schools to move towards this across the year.
- Publish a revised PP+ policy and supporting further guidance.
- Develop a range of supporting documents and resources to include exemplar PEPs, help sheets, agenda documents...
- Develop a robust quality assurance system and method of feedback around this.
- Undertake ongoing review and evaluation of the quality assurance process to inform next steps.
- Develop follow-up processes for individual children (attainment and progress) after PEPs have been completed.
- Conduct an audit to provide baseline data around the PEP. Repeat this process termly internally.

Outcomes (How will we know?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- The PEP template is fit for purpose and relevant to all children in care
- DTs and SWs feel more confident and understand the purpose in the completion of the PEP document
- Internal Peterborough Virtual School processes around PEP support and quality assurance will be robust, efficient and effectively deployed
- There will be a suite of resources and training to support the completion of high-quality PEPs
- We will hold accurate attainment and progress data
- The PP+ policy will offer clarity in the allocation of the PP+ enabling effective allocation
- Requests for PP+ will be matched to the needs of the child and interventions which are evidence based
- There will be greater consistency in requests made for PP+
- The Peterborough Virtual School team will have a robust understanding of the purpose and impact of effective quality assurance

Impact (So what..?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- The quality and compliance of PEPs improves.
- Targeted advice and support will be offered at an individual level to schools through the advisory meetings and follow up work.

Medium-term (Year 2)

- Responses to data lead to targeted conversations and interventions which directly impact provision and experiences for children

Long-term (Year 3)

- The PEP provides a robust narrative of the child's educational journey over time detailing impact of interventions and progress towards aspirations.

PEP = Personal Education Plan
 PP+ = Pupil Premium Plus
 DT = Designated Teacher
 SW = Social Worker
 EEF = Education Endowment Foundation
 EET = Education, Employment & Training
 NEET = Not in Education, Employment & training
 CME = Child Missing Education

Self-Evaluation (Why?)

- The structure of the Virtual School team has evolved to include staff with specific operational and strategic responsibilities.
- Relationships are established across some settings – these have typically been developed in a responsive manner at a child level and have not influenced wider policy and practice.
- An Indicators of Good Practice (IGP) tool has been trialled and dashboards to support strategic work with schools and trusts are under development.
- There are agreed consistent processes and systems in place to identify and support children where there is a higher level of need.
- Training is well attended by educational settings. There is a strong relational practice offer which continues to evolve in response to national and local best practice.
- Training for key partners is not yet fully embedded.
- Staffing capacity has historically not enabled strategic development of the wider cohort. An assistant head teacher has been appointed to lead this work.
- The Virtual School offer will be extended to include Care Leavers from September 2024.
- Two young people progressed to HE from Year 13 in September 2023.

Implementation (What & how?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Staff and define roles and responsibilities of 16-25 team
- Conduct audit to identify:
 - Intelligence of current CL cohort; EET status of CL; funding opportunities
 - Data held for CL cohort and what platforms are used/capable of
 - Existing PCC offer and national/stat neighbours offers
 - Existing PCC services and partnerships to support EET opportunities (including PAs)
 - Meet with Care Leaders to identify current needs of cohort for engaging in EET
- Publish CL EET offer
- Develop tracking and monitoring systems for EET engagement for Post 16 and CLs to include attendance collection
- Develop inclusion and engagement Post 16 specific processes and tracker
- Develop Broadening Educational Pathways project to identify and support YP wanting to engage in HE and produce a HE access offer
- Develop a CL EET transition pathway
- Develop a wider cohort offer (CPiC & Kinship- child level and CWSW- cohort level up to the age 18)

Outcomes (How will we know?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- The intelligence around the EET engagement of the CL is known and understood to identify strengths, areas for development and gaps
- Services, partnerships and platforms to support CL EET are known and understood to identify strengths, areas for development and gaps
- CL EET offer will provide all stakeholders clarity and knowledge of VS offer to support EET
- A tracking and monitoring system for EET engagement will facilitate identification of trends for future PVS development
- Post 16 inclusion and engagement support will be consistent and efficient
- Monitoring of education attendance intelligence will enable early intervention to minimise attendance declines and disciplinary processes
- The wider cohort offers are established and understood and actively used by PVS staff, and a range of key partners and parents/carers.
- Post 16s will understand HE options and the support available to engage in this pathway
- Post 16s will be aware of Post 18 pathways and undertake relevant EET opportunities

Impact (So what..?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- There is an intelligence led, offer for CL EET engagement
- Early identification of inclusion and engagement concerns minimise risk of NEET
- PAs can effectively advise around EET opportunities

Medium-term (Year 2)

- Trends are identified to facilitate targeted CL EET offer
- There will be an increase in HE participation

Long-term (Year 3)

- There will be an increase in CL re-engagement with education
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance is effective and bespoke enabling effective long-term EET planning

CL = Care Leavers
 EET = Education, Employment & Training
 NEET = Not in Education, Employment & training
 PA = Personal Advisor
 CPiC = Children Previously in Care
 CWSW = Children with a Social Worker
 HE = Higher Education
 IGP = Indicators of Good practice
 PCC = Peterborough City Council

Self-Evaluation (Why?)

- The structure of the Virtual School team has evolved to include staff with specific operational and strategic responsibilities.
- Relationships are established across some settings – these have typically been developed in a responsive manner at a child level and have not influenced wider policy and practice.
- An Indicators of Good Practice tool has been trialled and dashboards to support strategic work with schools and trusts are under development.
- There are agreed consistent processes and systems in place to identify and support children where there is a higher level of need.
- Training is well attended by educational settings. There is a strong relational practice offer which continues to evolve in response to national and local best practice.
- Training for key partners is not yet fully embedded.
- Staffing capacity has historically not enabled strategic development of the wider cohort. An assistant head teacher has been appointed to lead this work.
- The Virtual School offer will be extended to include Care Leavers from September 2024.

Implementation (What & how?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- To build Peterborough Virtual School team, with appropriate qualifications and experience, within each area to ensure there is capacity to fulfil offer.
- To develop awareness of work across teams and share good practice.
- Further develop inclusion and engagement tracking system to support monitoring and oversight.
- Review of inclusion and engagement processes.
- Establish system to maintain oversight of attendance, enabling effective intervention.
- Further develop relationships across all Peterborough schools and consistency in quality of advice and guidance.
- Review the IGP and develop further to encompass CPiC, CWSW and kinship care.
- Develop a school tracker which includes all settings; in and out of city.
- Extend and formalise advisory work to MATs
- To ensure officer tracker is used effectively to enable officers to work more efficiently.
- To review and adjust training offer in response to needs of the settings.
- Publish a wider cohort offer (CPiC & Kinship-child level and CWSW- cohort level).
- Collaborative project work with identified setting linked to CWSW.

Outcomes (How will we know?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Peterborough Virtual School will be fully staffed and established with a manageable workload.
- The Peterborough Virtual School team work efficiently and effectively. Collaborative working is visible and reduces duplication of task.
- All Peterborough settings with children in care have one advisory meeting per term.
- Peterborough settings with no children in care will be offered at least one advisory meeting per year.
- All new settings and new DTs will have an introductory meeting.
- Out of city schools with Peterborough children in care who are not supported by their home virtual school will have one advisory meeting per term.
- The schools and officer trackers are effective in monitoring work flow and consolidating information
- The wider cohort offers are established and understood and actively used by PVS staff, and a range of key partners and parents/carers.
- Educational barriers for CWSW are understood more fully and practice within settings is developing.

Impact (So what..?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Advisory work is more preventative than reactive and informs the work of officers.
- New processes, including those around attendance reporting, are written and have been shared amongst the wider PVS team.

Medium-term (Year 2)

- Advisory work is well established across all Peterborough settings resulting in reduced exclusions and suspensions for our children and young people.
- All processes for CYP on PVS cohort have been established and settings are informed on methods of improving attendance and reducing suspensions.

Long-term (Year 3)

- Advisory visits are embedded and provide high quality support, advice and guidance. The DT role in school is high profile and all staff across settings are aware of and respond to the needs of our children in care and wider cohort.
- Attendance of PVS pupils is in-line with National data and schools are fully supported by officers who are empowered with knowledge around attendance, engagement and inclusion.

IGP = Indicators of Good Practice
CPiC = Children Previously in Care
CWSW = Children with a Social Worker
DT = Designated Teacher
PVS = Peterborough Virtual School
CYP= Children and Young People

Self-Evaluation (Why?)

- There is a growing awareness of the role and remit of Peterborough Virtual School within PCC.
- The Virtual School is represented within the Education Leadership Team and Extended Children's Services Leadership Team.
- The Virtual School is a visible presence at the heads and SENCo forums.
- There is strong partnership working with the behaviour and inclusion team and SAMS team in response to the needs of individual children.
- The wider remit of the Virtual School (including the extension to include care leavers) is not yet fully understood by wider stakeholders.
- The current website platform has technical constraints which prevent it from meeting the needs of the service.
- The structure of the team has been revised following a period of significant transition and growth. Further work is needed to ensure all staff members hold a shared understanding of the individual and collective roles within the team.
- Training (face-to-face and virtual) is well attended. Data. Further planned developments include a suite of e-learning modules and podcasts.

Implementation (What & how?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Host conference (26.09.24)
- Website content is developed to support information sharing and access to advice, guidance and information.
- Explore the viability of a standalone website for Peterborough Virtual School.
- Create e-learning and podcast content for key stakeholders
- Develop induction training for social workers to include an offer through the academy and induction for staff new to Peterborough
- Develop governor / trustee training
- Ensure all job descriptions are relevant and fit for purpose
- Establish regular sub-team meetings within the Virtual School
- Print and display promotional merchandise including the infographic
- Develop network links beyond the local authority including those relevant to the wider remit
- All members of Peterborough Virtual School engage in CPD
- Actively participate within Eastern Region sub-groups
- Promote the relational practice offer across the local authority
- Explore feasibility of networking with statistical neighbour sub-groups

Outcomes (How will we know?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- There is an increased understanding of the role and remit of Peterborough Virtual School with key stakeholders within and beyond the local authority
- There is an increase in users accessing the website. Information on the website is useful and relevant.
- Stakeholders can access training via platforms which most suit their needs and ways of learning
- National and regional best practice informs the work and development of Peterborough Virtual School.
- Ways of working match job descriptions and there is clarity for team members around expectations and working practices.
- All Virtual School staff are proactively working towards their own professional development

Impact (So what..?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- Knowledge required to champion educational outcomes is developed for all social workers and carers.
- Peterborough Virtual School team feel valued and are enabled to work efficiently and effectively. There is increased stability within the staff team.

Medium-term (Year 2)

- Education is an integrated part of care planning.
- Accelerated progress is positively influenced by regional and national best practice.

Long-term (Year 3)

- There is a collective responsibility for the education of children known to social care.
- Stakeholders champion educational outcomes effectively.

PCC = Peterborough City Council
 SENCo = Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
 SAMS = Statutory Assessment & Monitoring Service
 CPD = Continued Professional Development

Self-Evaluation (Why?)

- Attendance data is collected daily and linked to the PEP using the Wonde system. Alerts highlight child level need. This ensures timely responses for children requiring intervention.
- Responses to data are currently reactive.
- Some accurate progress of attainment and progress within the PEP is evident
- Staffing capacity has historically not enabled strategic development of data. A senior business analyst has been appointed to lead this work (January 2024). A Power BI workspace has been approved and draft dashboards are under development including:
 - Virtual School roll
 - School on a Page
 - Attendance
 - Attainment and Progress
- Limited data is available for KS5 and beyond – including KS5 results, destination data, NEET/EET data
- Different data systems are used by professionals which make it complex to track and target support for the wider remit
- Advisory meetings are not yet underpinned by data. Some early work has begun in this area including the SOAP and MAT dashboard (Eastern Region collaboration).

Implementation (What & how?) - Year 1

Short-term (Year 1)

- End of Key Stage assessment data is analysed to identify facilitators and barriers to high attainment.
- Data is extracted and analysed from the PEP termly. This includes child level data e.g. SEND and transition as well as quality assurance data and PP+ spend.
- Attainment and Progress data is collected and analysed for individual children and at a cohort level. This is published in a dashboard on a Power BI workspace.
- Attendance data is collected daily and analysed for individual children and at a cohort level.
- Dashboards are developed at pace in response to need.
- Accurate 16-25 EET data is sourced.
- Training is provided for the PVS team to enable confident use of dashboards.
- Communications with schools take place ahead of the October census to ensure CPiC accurately recorded.
- Collect intelligence from a variety of sources (Advisory visits, platforms) to build a picture of the wider cohorts and key education performance indicators which support development of the strategic offer.

Outcomes (How will we know?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- There will be increased knowledge around facilitators and barriers to high attainment.
- Accurate data will be available for reporting purposes on a termly basis.
- Advisory work will be informed by data for individual children, PEPs and at a cohort level.
- Inclusion and engagement work will be informed by data for individual children. Where patterns emerge, this may enable strategic work targeted a specific group.
- Peterborough Virtual School will feel confident in accessing and manipulating information on dashboards.
- Dashboards will be published within the Virtual School workspace.
- There will be an increased understanding of the 16-25 cohort.
- There will be an increased understanding of the wider cohorts.
- Census data for CPiC is accurate.

Impact (So what..?)

Short-term (Year 1)

- There is an increase in the % of CPiC who receive PP+ due to census accuracy.
- Targeted work increases inclusion, engagement and progress of individual children.

Medium-term (Year 2)

- Robust data enables strategic work
- Tracking of data over time informs operational and strategic developments.

Long-term (Year 3)

- Trends and patterns are recognised to enable preventative work to take place which minimise risk for children.

PEP = Personal Education Plan
 Power BI = Interactive data visualisation software
 KS5 = Key Stage 5 (Year Groups 12 & 13)
 SOAP = School of a Page
 MAT = Multi-Academy Trust
 SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 PP+ = Pupil Premium Plus
 PVS = Peterborough Virtual School
 CPiC = Children Previously in Care