DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL			
SUBJECT:	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN			
DATE OF DECISION:	5 JANUARY 2017			
REPORT OF:	SERVICE LEAD – EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP			

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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

At the September 2016 meeting the Panel discussed educational attainment and school standards in Southampton. The Panel highlighted the Key Stage 4 attainment of Looked After Children as an area of concern and requested further information on this issue at the January 2017 meeting.

This report acknowledges that outcomes for young people in care in Southampton are unsatisfactory at the end of Year 11 and identifies the following:

- • The key factors that can impact on young people's achievement
- • Actions taken in the previous academic year to address these issues
- • Actions to be taken this academic year to directly address them in schools across professional teams at Southampton City Council and at the Virtual school
- • Future developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	That the Panel considers and challenges the information provided on educational attainment for Looked After Children in Southampton.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	To enable a discussion with the Cabinet Member and officers on educational attainment for Looked After Children in Southampton.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2.	None.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

	Virtual School
3.	The Virtual School (VS) is a core statutory service within Children's Services comprising a Headteacher (0.8FTE) paid for from general fund and 3.54 FTE staff paid by ring-fenced funds from DfE. The school provides advice and support to a number of people including children and young people (yp) aged 3-19 years who are Looked After, teachers, school governors, support

	services, social workers, parents and carers.
4.	The school monitors the educational provision, attendance, progress and attainment of all Southampton Looked After Children (LAC), irrespective of where they are placed. The aims of the Virtual School are to promote achievement, raise attainment and ensure equality of opportunity to enhance the life chances of all Looked After Children and enable them to achieve their full potential. The Virtual School plays a strategic role in ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the Local Authority, with regard to the education of Children Looked After, are met.
5.	The Virtual School is not a teaching tool or environment. It does not replace the school or educational provision of children in care. The focus is on raising the aspirations of the young people, their carers, and all the professionals involved with them so they can reach their full potential and progress into further and higher education and move into fulfilling and gainful employment.
6.	The school plays a key role in developing collaborative working with colleagues locally, together with Virtual Schools and local authorities across the country to ensure swift communication and prompt action to support our young people.
7.	All schools must have Designated Teachers with responsibility to promote the educational achievement of LAC. An annual report on pupil number and pupil progress should be presented to governors. Schools should also have a named governor whose responsibility it is to hold an overview of issues relating to Looked After Children.
8.	Nationally, the attainment for this group have risen over time but the gap between themselves and their peers is not closing as there has been a commensurate rise in the attainment of their peer group.
9.	Locally there has been a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs including English and maths over the last three years.
	Contextual Information
10.	At the September 2016 Panel meeting the following provisional 2016 headline Key Stage 4 GCSE results for LAC pupils (looked after continuously for a year as at the 31st March 2016) were presented to the Panel: • Southampton's average Attainment 8 outcome for children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months was 25.0 (equivalent of a grade F across eight subjects). • 2 out of Southampton's 26 looked after pupils continuously for at least 12 months (7.7%) achieved an A*-C in English and Maths, the National average comparator in 2015 was 15.9%. The briefing paper presented to the Panel in September on provisional headline KS4 GCSE results 2016 for LAC pupils looked after continuously for a year as at the 31st March 2016 is attached as Appendix 1.
11.	Following the discussion on the Key Stage 4 educational attainment of LAC the Panel made a request for contextual information. The information below has been drawn from a range of sources including social worker PARIS records, the education ONE system, individual pupil records, Welfare call and Target tracker by members of the Virtual School Team.

12.	At the time of the writing of this report national outcomes data for LAC had not been confirmed.

Y11	Academic Year 2015/2016 (3 terms)	Academic Year 2016/17 (1 term)
Pupil number	35	34
Number of local authorities where young people resided	10	10
Ofsted categories of school NB Of the schools judged to be below Good, 80% had follow up reports demonstrating good progress.	Outstanding - 7 Good - 17 Requires Improvement - 6 Inadequate - 3	Outstanding - 2 Good - 18 Requires Improvement -1 Inadequate - 7
Placed at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	1	0
Number of pupils who experienced any part of their schooling at a PRU	18	15
Pupils educated at special schools	5	9
Number of care placement moves	16	13 There were 31 care moves (ranging from 6 to 1 move ,average 2+)
School moves	8	13 (of which 3 moved school twice)
Periods out of school/ Education Otherwise Than At School	3	3
Periods in secure accommodation	7	1
Special School Places	0	9
Percentage of pupils with EHC plans.	0	29
Unaccompanied Asylum seekers	0	8%

Actions taken by the Virtual School Team to support the 2015/2016 cohort to achieve their potential in KS4 examinations

13.	Key actions undertaken by the VS Team and impact are identified below: • Finding school places for young people requiring a move of school, supporting the admission with transition work and where possible admitting only to good or better schools. Impact: Young people admitted within 20 day statutory guidelines. They were in school, receiving education and safeguarded during the school day.

- Ensuring all Y11 pupils had termly up to date, well focussed and high quality Personal Education Plans that were focussed on pupil need, progress towards GCSE attainment and identified appropriate interventions.
  Impact: Targets and intervention in place to raise attainment.

- Attendance was robustly monitored and followed up for pupils living both in and outside the city.
  Impact: Attendance improved with some exceptions. For example in 2014 LAC overall absence was 5%, in 2015 this was reduced to 4%.

- Periods of fixed term exclusion were followed up. Reintegration meetings supported and a focus on maintaining the school place was established. Where placements broke down the young people were supported into their next school.
  Impact: Reduction in periods out of school. One permanent exclusion challenged and moves to alternative schools supported. Absence due to exclusion fell from 13% in 2013 to 7% in 2014/15.

- Termly training and information sessions held for Designated Teachers.
  Impact: Staff better able to understand the needs of the cohort, meet these needs and discharge their statutory duty.

- Attachment Awareness Training course offered to all schools. The course was particularly focussed on helping schools understand the social, emotional and mental health problems that can be encountered by young people in care.
  Impact: Schools better prepared to support young people's social, emotional and mental appropriately which in turn leads to better attendance at school and higher attainment.

- Training for social workers on their roles in completing PEPs, influencing target setting and monitoring progress.
  Impact: Improved quality and completion rates of Personal Education Plans.

- Targeted introduction of mobile learning for Y11 pupils. The programme presented audio lessons that supported homework, revision and assessment.
  Impact: this proved useful for some pupils but it was recognised that the programme would need better support to impact in the future.

- Additional small grant funding to schools. Schools applied to fund specific pieces of work/ interventions to increase attendance and attainment of young people.
  Impact: Schools able to provide highly specific interventions tailored to pupil need.

		Projected outcomes for the current Year 11 (Academic Year 2016/17)
14.		The projected outcomes are based on data provided by the individual schools (we have not had 100% returns yet but are chasing). Of the information we have received, 32% of LAC are predicated to gain GCSEs.
15.		There are currently no published national expectations but a recently developed national research group is investigating GCSE predictions based on past achievements matched to experiences of care and education. This will support the Virtual School to challenge targets set by all schools where young people looked after attend.
16.		The 2017 attainment data will include the new measure, Progress 8, which will credit young people with the progress they have made since entering secondary education and hold each school to account for that progress.
		Interventions/ actions taken to promote the achievements of young people in Y10 and Y11 in the academic year 2016/2017.
17.		Indicative data from schools suggests that the current Y11 cohort do not look set to make an improvement on last year's outcomes. The VS has established firm foundations for future development through a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils in good or better schools, a better trained workforce, improvements in attendance, a higher percentage of personal education plans being quality assured as good and an improvement in the number of personal education plans being completed within timescales.
18.		Interventions / actions taken to promote the achievements of young people in Y10 and Y11 in the academic year 2016/2017: • Advisory visits to all secondary schools The Head of the Virtual School has met the Designated Teacher and performance manager to discuss all LAC at the school to scrutinise all Y10 & 11 progress data, PEP quality and spend, how pupil premium is being used to raise attainment, discuss concerns about individual pupils, identify issues the VS needs to address and respond to school concerns. This has led to clarity of practice in schools and tailored advice provided to schools about how to improve outcomes for LAC Following visits reports are to be sent to schools and overview and recommendations to be shared with Secondary Heads Forum, Education Leadership Team, senior social work managers and Corporate Parenting. A Development Plan will be created with the school to support in-school practice. • Mobile Learning using interactive resources Pupils identified as 'within sight' of GCSE achievement and those on track in Y10 and Y11 to be provided with tablets loaded with KS4 interactive subject software. This is an additional way to engage young people and to support learning, revision and progress. Training for schools has been provided to ensure sufficient use of the tablets and processes have been set up with schools to monitor

	impact. No tablet can be used to access any functions save the learning apps.
	• Personal Education Plans A close monitoring process is in place to ensure timely completion of PEPs; a quality assured process is in place via audits and appropriate targets are embedded. All Year 10 and Year 11 plans are read and responded to within 2 working days. Specific targets focusing on GCSE and Progress 8 are included in all Year 10 and 11 PEPs. If a YP is significantly below expected progress an action plan is drawn up to address these needs, with an identified member of the Virtual School monitoring the action plan. If a YP is on the cusp of a Number Grade (i.e. expected 7 potential 8) discussion takes place to consider whether to engage an additional tutor to support the YP to achieve a higher grade • Attendance All attendance is closely monitored and absence within Year 10 or 11 is interrogated and challenged by the VS on a weekly basis • Pupils at risk of exclusion The Virtual School challenges schools which exclude any Year 10 or 11 LAC and expect schools to draw up a robust Pastoral Support Package/Behaviour Plan to help meet the needs of these YP, allowing them to have full access to school. If it is not possible to return the YP to school within 5 days, alternative plans are to be drawn up quickly address how to access appropriate education for the YP.
	Future Proposals
19.	It is important to recognise that early intervention will lead to better outcomes for our YP. It is not always possible to know who will be in care by the time the YP reaches Year 10 or 11, however we need to establish more robust data around our younger students and begin targeting GCSE support from Year 7 onwards.
20.	The table below (based on work published by Oxford University and 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England 'published by Bristol University and the Rees Centre for Fostering and Education, 2015) illustrates the Virtual School's strategic priorities to improve the outcomes of the city's LAC.

	Key factor	Significance	Focused activities to address this by VS
	Young people who have been in long term care	Do better than those 'in need' but not in care. Do better than those	Year 6 SATs results will be analysed on an individual basis and discussions held with schools on how best

			who have been in short term care.	to ensure successful GCSE outcomes for these LAC. If a YP has not made expected progress it may be necessary to consider special educational needs support.
		Care placement changes	Each additional care placement after age 11 is associated with 1/3 grade less at GCSE	MARP (Multi agency resource panel) has been re-established, which plays a key role in returning YP to city placements, monitoring the quality of residential placements and ensuring yp are appropriately placed.
		Feeling secure or cared for	Young people can engage with learning better when they feel secure and cared for in a placement	Continued training provided for foster carers on attachment and developing resilience
		Birth family issues	Young people can engage with education better when their birth family issues are also being addressed	The VS will attend therapeutic panel and make referrals on behalf of schools when they feel a LAC is presenting with possible mental health issues.
		Social worker's understanding	Social workers need better understanding of the education system	A more robust training offer is being developed for social workers and independent reviewing officers. This will focus on; • Impact of care and school moves • Tracking and predicting progress • Key legislation that underpins education • Attendance and exclusions
		School changes	Young people who changed schools in years 10 and 11 scored over 5 grades less than those who did not	Close working with social care managers to maintain the maximum numbers of students in their current care place. Any school moves in Year 10 and 11 have to be done with the agreement of the Director of Children's Services and

				the Virtual Head.
	School absence	For every possible school session missed due to unauthorised absence , young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE	Analysis of attendance data on a termly basis. If attendance levels are dropping, the Virtual School will contact the designated school to discuss and draw up an action plan if necessary.	
			All absence in Year 10 and 11 will be challenged within 2 days of the start of that absence. The LA will use its power of direction to ensure that any YP who moves care placement secures a school placement within 20 days, where needed.	
	School exclusions. Young people in care are 5 times more at risk of fixed term exclusions than their peers.	For every additional day missed due to fixed term exclusions , young people in care scored over 2 grades less at GCSE	All exclusions will be challenged by the VS. The VS will appeal all permanent exclusions through the independent review panel	
	Educational support	Young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support for them but teachers suggest they need more training to do this effectively	Yearly progress data will be discussed at PEP meeting. Any concerns expressed will require the school to draw up an action plan detailing how to improve expected outcomes for the YP, which will be monitored and reviewed by the Virtual school.	
			Termly training for all Designated Teachers aimed at embedding proven and effective responses to attachment issues within school.	

	Teacher's understanding	Teachers need better understanding of children's social, emotional and mental health problems	Annual Attachment, Trauma and Resiliency training provided by EP service. Targeted schools being provided with Theraplay training

	Summary
21.	GCSE results for our LAC are currently not in line with where we want them to be, there are a number of factors that influence this which we now understand better. The VS will undergo a restructure in Phase 3 in order to be better able to address these factors. A priority is the collation and integration of more reliable data which will be supported by the development of more robust IT and data collection systems to will enable the VS to target specific pupils, schools and residential placements.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

22.	None.

Property/Other

23.	None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

24.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Other Legal Implications:

25.	None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

26.	None

KEY DECISION	No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None directly as a result of this report

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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Appendices	
1.	Briefing Paper - Provisional Headline KS4 GCSE results 2016 for LAC pupils looked after continuously for a year as at the 31st March 2016 (25/08/2016).
2	Headline 2016 LAC KS4 attainment
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out.	No
Privacy Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents **Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:**	

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1. None	