



## Bury Virtual School

# Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher, 2022 - 2023



*Artwork from the GCSE Art portfolio  
of a Bury young person in care*



Report prepared by Gemma  
Parkes, Virtual School Headteacher  
November 2023

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report details and evaluates the work of Bury Virtual School from September 2022 to August 2024 and to set out our key priorities for the academic year 2023-24. We also share the educational outcomes of the cohort.

All local authorities in England must appoint a Virtual School Headteacher. This person's statutory duties are set out in the 2018 legislation "Promoting the Education of Looked-after Children and Previously Looked-after Children". The Virtual School Headteacher works to promote the educational achievement of the children in care to that local authority, wherever they live or are educated. In Bury, we have a Virtual School team who support the Headteacher in fulfilling these duties.

Bury Virtual School supports children and young people in care between the ages of 2 and 18. We monitor them as if they are a single cohort of children – a "virtual school."

We also provide advice, guidance and support to professionals and parents/guardians of previously looked-after children, such as those who are adopted or on Special Guardianship Orders. In addition, we have a non-statutory duty to oversee the education of children who have a social worker (Child in Need/Child Protection) or have had one in the previous six years. This extended duty came in force in September 2021.

We have a clear focus on raising educational aspirations, closing the attainment gap between our children and their peers and being ambitious, proactive corporate parents. We do not replace the schools which our children attend and they are responsible for improving the rates of progress and educational outcomes of children in care

on their roll, but via the effective use of data, targeting of advice and guidance and monitoring of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process, the Virtual School holds schools to account in relation to the following:

- the educational provision in place for our children
- aspirations for their outcomes
- setting and reviewing of high-quality SMART targets on their Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- use of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant
- attendance
- reduction of suspensions and the need to find alternatives to permanent exclusions

The Virtual School sits within the Bury Education Directorate. The Virtual School Head is line-managed by the Director of Education and Skills. We are accountable to the Corporate Parenting Board and in addition, we have established a Virtual School Governing Board to provide additional support and challenge to our work.

## **2. Introduction from the Virtual School Headteacher**

September 2022 saw increased hope of a return to normality for our children, following two years of disrupted education as a result of the pandemic. For the Virtual School team, it was a time of excitement for us as our team expanded to include new roles: our SEND Lead, Joanne Foster, and PEP Officer, Jamila Shahzad, both joined us, followed by Lead for Children with a Social Worker (CP/CIN) Catherine Riley, Inclusion Advisor Lauren Warburton and part-time Speech and Language Therapist Sarah-Jayne Smith in January 2023. The expanded team has given us much more capacity to support our children and young people's education as well as the professionals we work with, and 2022-23 saw several "firsts" for the Virtual School, including individual quality assurance feedback for every PEP, quality assurance visits to special schools and alternative provisions and an expanded training and development offer, culminating in our first-ever Virtual School Conference in July 2023, attended by over 120 school and social care colleagues across the local authority.

We have made good progress in many areas in achieving what we said we would in our Virtual School Development Plan for 2022-23:

- Our PEPs are now individually Quality Assured and compliance has improved to 98% overall
- Our GCSE outcomes exceeded 2019 national pass rates for CLA
- 17% of young people are accessing Level 3 courses, above our target of 15%
- 87% of our 16-17 year olds are in education, employment or training as of September 2023, our best-ever rate of EET for the cohort
- Our Alternative Provision Quality Assurance processes have now been embedded
- Our KS1 and Phonics outcomes are strong

Attendance remains an ongoing priority for the Virtual School; rates for our cohort have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, which reflects the national picture for school attendance. Our focus in 2023 – 24 is on multi-agency working with our colleagues in the LA Attendance Service, Children's Social Care, SEND teams, schools, foster carers and residential placements to address this, based on the principles set out in the Department for Education guidance "Working together to improve school attendance" that attendance is a shared responsibility.

The new duty for Virtual Schools to promote the education of children who have, or have previously had, a social worker was introduced from September 2021 and 2022-23 saw us make real progress in this area, once Catherine and Lauren joined our team. Using our experience of knowing what works in education for children in care, and our existing strong relationships with social care and schools, we have begun to make real strides in driving this cultural change that will in time have a positive impact on education outcomes for this very vulnerable group of learners.

Updated Department for Education guidance relating to school attendance, suspensions and exclusions has raised the profile of the Virtual School and had a positive impact in terms of joint working to promote positive outcomes

for our children. We were able to work closely with schools to avoid any Bury child in care from being permanently excluded in 2022-23, with 14 children and schools receiving intensive support from the Virtual School to avoid a permanent exclusion for a Bury CLA. There is still work to be done to reduce the rate of suspensions for our cohort, but it is extremely encouraging that 84% of all Bury's maintained schools and academies have accessed the Virtual School training offer. 87% of our secondary schools and 49% of our primaries have now completed additional CPD and have a trauma-informed specialist holding practitioner status on their staff as part of our trauma-informed training programme. Our aspiration is for all our schools to be attachment-aware and trauma informed to help them meet the needs of all children who have had a social worker.

2023 saw some fantastic academic results for many of our children and there are some wonderful success stories. We fully utilised the National Tutoring Programme's school-led tutoring grant, and can see the impact in the progress many of our children made this year. We are not yet fully back on track post-pandemic, as is reflected in our attendance and persistent absence statistics. However, we are making good progress with an expanded team, forensic use of attainment and attendance data to inform priorities, and relentless commitment to securing excellence in education for all our children and young people. We want them to be supported to progress on to the academic or vocational pathway that's right for them when they leave school, and we aspire to be the best corporate parents we can. Our key question we always ask ourselves is, "would this be good enough for my own child?" We want the very best for our young people, and we want them to tell us we are doing a good job and they can see the impact of our work. With those key principles held firmly at the forefront of our work, we look forward to another exciting year in 2023-24.

Throughout this report, you will read examples of good practice to illustrate the work we have done with our children and young people. All names have been changed, but the details of their stories have not been altered.

**Gemma Parkes**

**Bury Virtual School Headteacher  
November 2023**

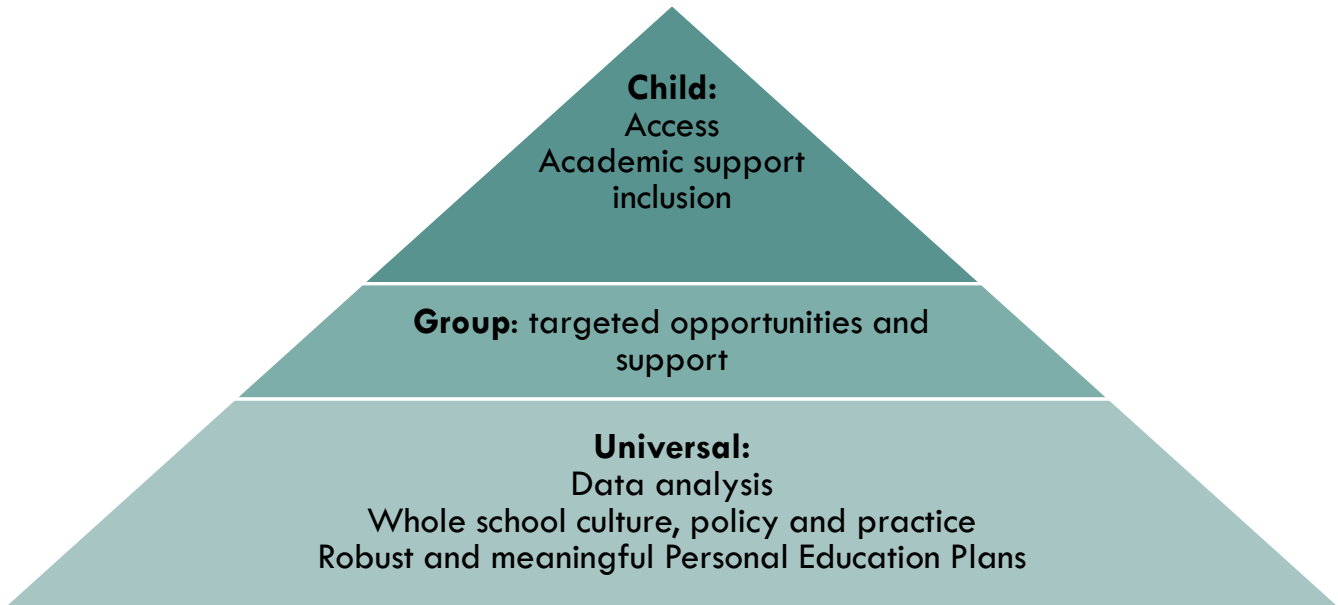
### 3. 2022-23 at a Glance

Good	Improving	Not yet good enough
<p>No permanent exclusions for children in care for the second consecutive year</p> <p>75% of Bury's children in care now attend schools rated Good or better by Ofsted, an increase from 61% in 2021-22</p> <p>PEP completion rate was 98% in 2022-23 (up from 96% in 2021-22)</p> <p>Young people (school leavers) in education, training or employment aged 16 in September 2023: 87%</p> <p>Young people progressing into further education at college aged 16: 72%</p> <p>Children missing in education in 2022-23: 0</p> <p>GCSE outcomes are above national for CLA</p> <p>Children working at Age-Related Expectations in Phonics and KS1</p> <p>Support provided for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs via the dedicated VS Speech and Language Therapist</p> <p>Access to Educational Psychology services via VS commissioning</p>	<p>Bury schools' uptake of our training offer</p> <p>Achievement at Key Stage 4</p> <p>PEP quality over time</p> <p>Analysis of attainment and progress data for all children Reception -Y11, every term</p>	<p>Overall school absence rates</p> <p>Persistent absence rates</p> <p>11% of children attend schools which are rated Requires Improvement by Ofsted</p> <p>11% of children had a school move in academic year 2022-23</p> <p>Number of PEPs quality assured as Good/Green</p> <p>Number of children who were suspended from school</p> <p>Outcomes for children at KS2</p>

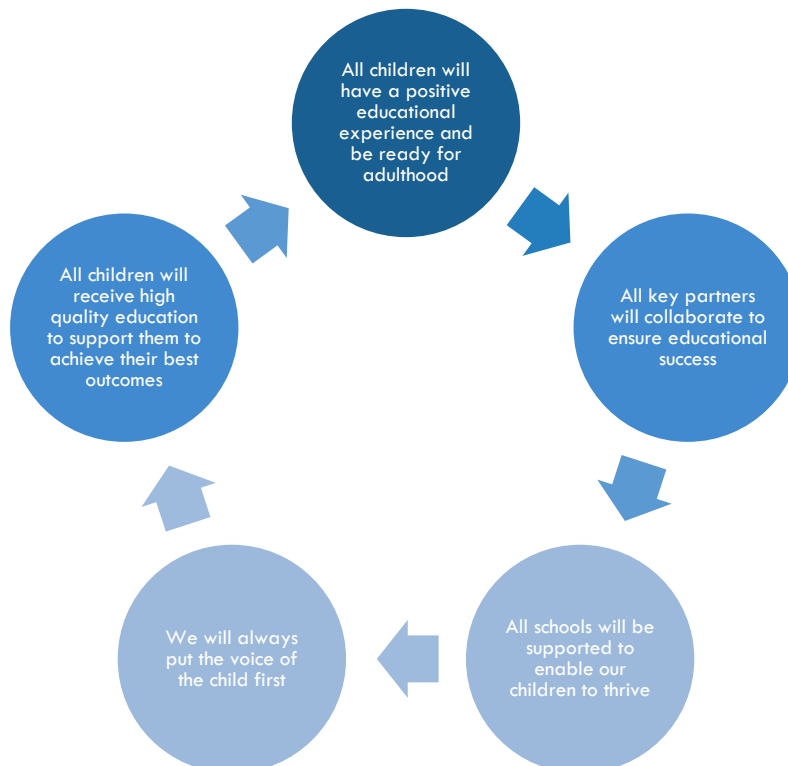
## 4. The Virtual School Model

All schools in Bury, whether or not they have CLA currently on roll, can access our training offer to support attachment-aware and trauma-informed practice. All CLA are closely monitored in terms of attendance, exclusions, attainment and progress.

This analysis informs targeted opportunities for support for some of our children. At an individual level, we put in a very high level of support for children in crisis, without a school place or where there is other significant need.

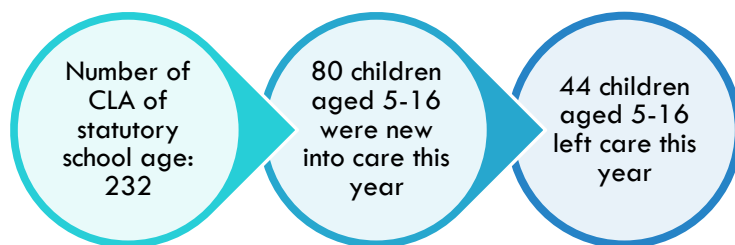


### Our Guiding Principles

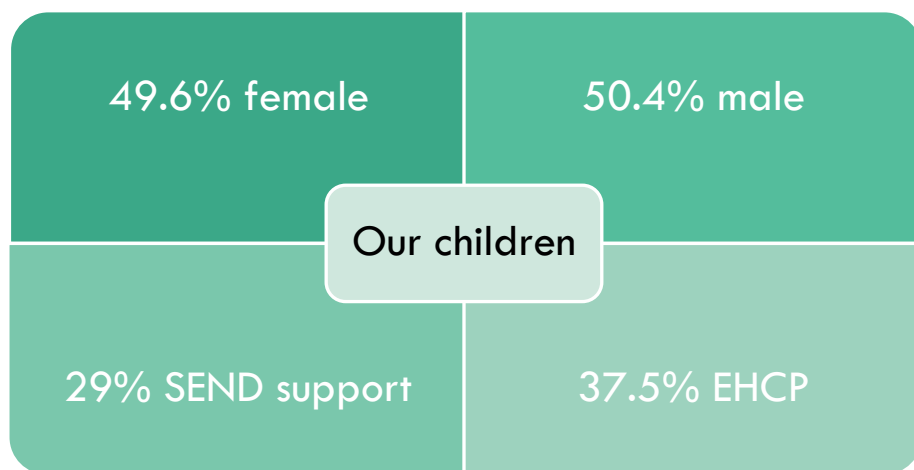


## 5. Children in Care Characteristics

Pupil characteristics of the children aged 5 – 16 years in Bury's Virtual School as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

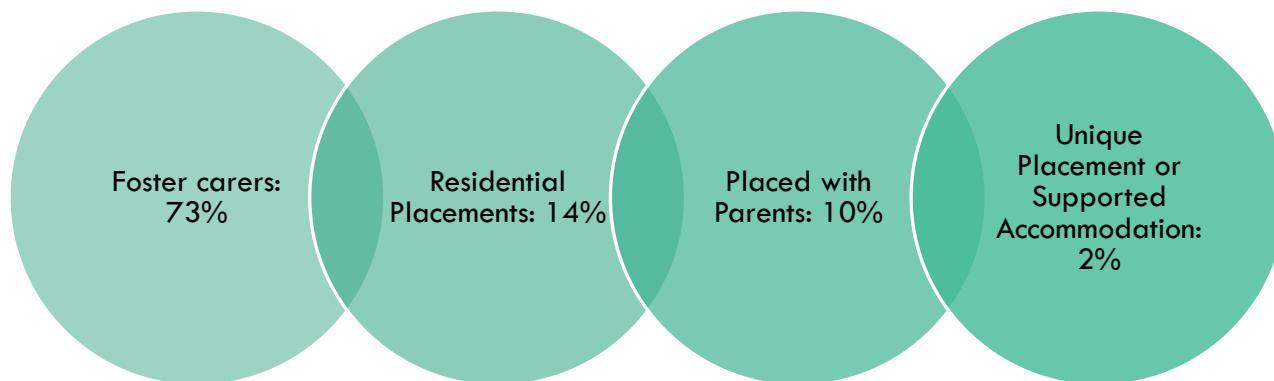


There is a high level of fluidity within our cohort, with children coming into care and leaving care throughout the year. All Virtual School officers receive this information via Children's Social Care to enable prompt education planning for children as soon as they come into care.

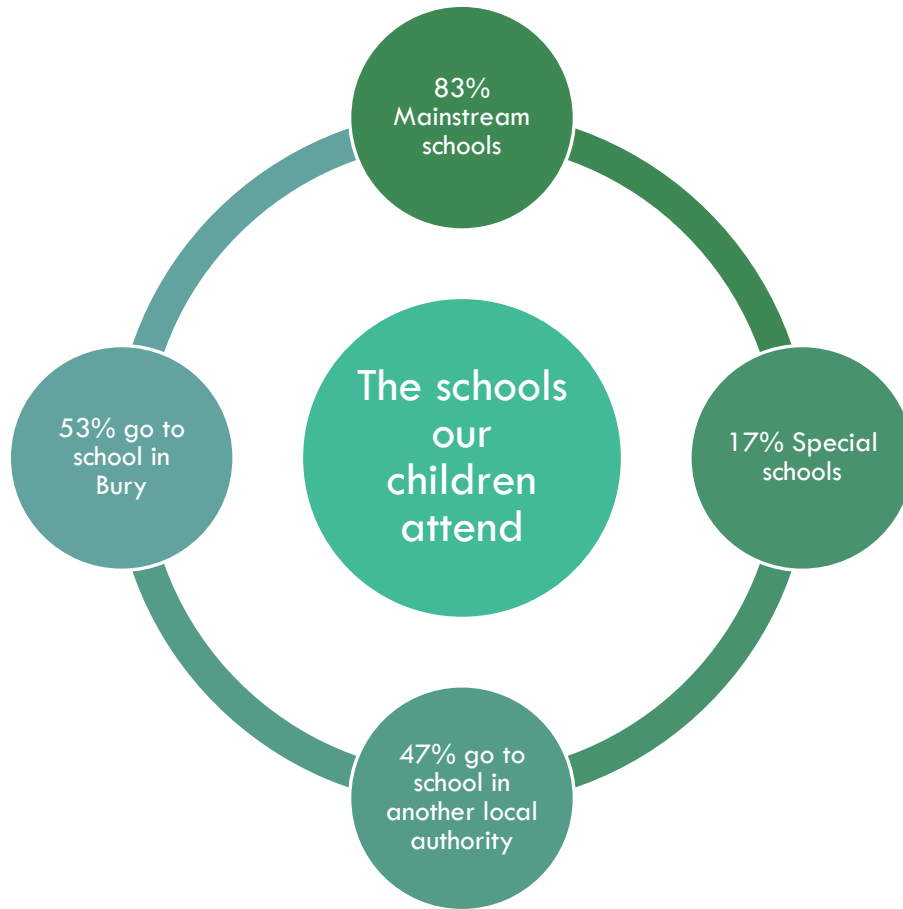


66.5% of our children overall have SEND. Nationally, 27.2% of CLA who have been in care for more than 12 months are at SEN support level, and 30.2% of CLA in care for more than 12 months have an EHCP. The most common Special Educational Need for our children is Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

### The homes our children live in:



Children who live in residential placements or who are placed at home with their parents are at higher risk of persistent absence from school, so we monitor these cohorts particularly closely and they are prioritised for Virtual School Officer attendance at PEPs.



**Year group breakdown as of 31.08.23**

Year Group	Number of children
Reception	15
Year 1	12
Year 2	8
Year 3	12
Year 4	23
Year 5	16
Year 6	19
Year 7	15
Year 8	22
Year 9	28
Year 10	26
Year 11	36
Total	232



55% of our cohort are secondary-aged, and 45% are primary-aged. This reflects young people who come into care as older children and teenagers, and others who leave care at a younger age.

16-17 year olds as of September 2023:	Year 12:	Year 13:
81	40	41

**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC):** we have 13 UASC in Bury. Typically UASC are 15-17 years old when they arrive with us. If they are statutory school age, we support them into education by ensuring they are on a school roll and offering additional English tuition. If they are post-16, they typically enrol on an ESOL course at college.

#### Ofsted ratings of schools our children attend

Good or better	75%
Requires Improvement	11%
Inadequate or no rating	14%

The majority of the schools with inadequate/no rating have no rating due to academy conversion status. We never place children in care in schools rated Inadequate; last year a very small number of children were in 2 schools which went from a historic Good or Outstanding judgement to Inadequate. These were evaluated on a case-by-case basis and due to the children being happy and settled in school we did not automatically move them solely due to their school's change in Ofsted status. The Virtual School attends all PEPs for these children to provide additional scrutiny and undertakes an additional visit to the school throughout the academic year.

## 6. Supporting Teaching and Learning

Please see Appendix 1 for detailed information for all our 2023 attainment outcomes.

We are very proud corporate parents for our children and we have some wonderful success stories this year in terms of their individual outcomes and progression to the next phase of their education or training. Due to the alteration in grade boundaries in 2023 to pre-pandemic levels, pass rates should be compared to 2019 national data. In 2023, 23% of our qualifying cohort passed English and Maths at grade 4 and above, considerably above the 2019 national rate for CLA of 18%; 10% achieved 5 and above in both subjects, again above the 2019 national CLA rate of 7%. Our provisional Progress 8 score is -1.24 for the qualifying cohort; the 2022 national Progress 8 score for CLA in care for more than 12 months was -1.3, so we have exceeded this.

We also saw some pleasing results in our primary cohort, with 35% of our children in Reception achieving a Good Level of Development, 67% of our qualifying cohort in Year 1 working at age-related expectations in Phonics and 57% of our children in Year 2 working at age-related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. We saw a dip in performance in the KS2 tests taken by our Year 6, with 18% of the cohort working at age-related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. However, this was a year group with a particularly large number of children with SEND, which has affected the results. 71% of the cohort have SEND, with 60% in total having EHCPs. 30% of the cohort are on roll at special schools. Not all our children were entered for the tests as it was not appropriate for their individual needs; of those who did sit the tests, 23% achieved age-related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. 67% of our children with no SEND achieved this measure.

We fully utilised the National Tutoring Programme’s school-led tutoring funding in 2022-23 to support our children’s learning, and we also worked with other agencies to raise their aspirations; projects such as Success4Life and First Star Scholars which encourage care-experienced young people to aspire to Higher Education, and agencies such as Power2, who provide specialist mentoring for disadvantaged young people to raise their aspirations and promote positive attendance and engagement with school.

We continued our programme of visits to universities with our young people, offering these to Year 10 and above. Our Learning Mentor and Post-16 EET Lead accompanied them on bespoke visits to tour campuses, find out about particular courses they are interested in and meet university staff who could inform them about financial and pastoral support available to them. The destinations of our school leavers into further education demonstrates that we are providing good support to ensure appropriate pathways are in place for our post-16 young people.

The Virtual School team reviews attainment and progress data for the whole cohort of school-aged children from Reception – Year 11, every term. This analysis is used to prioritise children for interventions and targeted use of PPG, as well as to prioritise Virtual School officer attendance at PEP meetings. We also track all use of part-time timetables and Alternative Provision and this is reviewed and monitored regularly.

**Working with agencies to promote aspiration:** Louis is in Year 11 and has been supported by the Virtual School to take part in the First Star Scholars and Youth Leads programmes, both national schemes to promote aspiration in care-experienced young people and encourage them to apply to Higher Education in future. Louis has really enjoyed the programmes and they have hugely helped his confidence; he intends to apply to Oxbridge and aspires to complete a PhD in Astrophysics.

## 7. Supporting Children and Young People with SEND: Joanne Foster, Virtual School SEND Lead

I am responsible for overseeing the children with SEND within our cohort. I support and challenge schools to be proactive using Bury’s Graduated Approach and completing Assess Plan Do Review cycles to ensure that children with SEND are receiving their entitlement for education, alongside reasonable adjustments set out in the guidance of the SEN Code of Practice. I support schools and social workers with EHCP needs assessments and have very close oversight of our children who are placed out-of-borough, working with SEND teams in the LAs they are placed in to avoid drift and delay in securing them education.

I am very proud of a particular case I worked on last year for a Year 3 boy who was in a mainstream setting but hadn’t actually had a full time educational offer for over two years! The primary school were doing everything in their power to keep him at the school but his needs were too complex. I called an interim annual review with the LA, and all parties agreed that a specialist provision would be better for him. He is now in a specialist provision and he has attended every day, all day for the first time in 2 years! He is happy and he has friends (something he never had in mainstream). He has already improved his attainment outcomes in 5 weeks of being at the new school, and the staff sing his praises daily. A real success story for the child!

I am proud of my achievements over the last year, including completing my Trauma Informed Schools’ UK Diploma with a Distinction. I am proud of the Educational Psychologist strategy I have implemented as we are working really closely with an excellent provider; the reports are some of the best reports I have seen in my 22 years in education. I am proud of all the training I have delivered and received amazing feedback, so much so schools and parents want me back for more!

A summary of my main duties:

- Creating and updating the SEND Register for the Virtual School.

- Creating and updating the Alternative Provision Register
- Assisting schools and social workers with EHCP applications
- Supporting EHCP Annual Reviews
- Meeting fortnightly with the SEN team manager to ensure the right provision is in place for our young people and avoid drift and delay in their education.
- Help find specialist provisions for children who are not in mainstream schools.
- Quality Assure the Alternative Provisions that our children attend and ensure this intervention is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure school attendance of children with SEND is monitored and evaluated and appropriate interventions are in place.
- Ensure progress of children with SEND is as good as it can possibly be for the individual child.
- Delivering a wide range of SEND training to colleagues, schools, parents and other stakeholders.
- Completing the SEND information report each year.
- Commissioning and facilitating Educational Psychology consultations for our children
- Working with the Bury Educational Psychology Service to provide training/1:1 work with children.
- Attend and deliver at the SENCO 2 SENCO networking meetings at Elms Bank special school
- Providing xeam concessions/invigilation training to all stakeholders.
- Ensuring we have close working relationships with the SEND teams in our neighbouring LAs such as Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton and Lancashire.
- 1:1 assessments to help identify areas of need for SEND with our children, such as processing speeds.
- Participation in the North West Cluster of SEND Virtual Schools group.
- Helping children with SEND who are NEET post-16 to secure appropriate provision.
- Attend the Partnership meetings for both primary and secondary schools within the LA.

Key priorities for this year:

- Continue with the Educational Psychology strategy.
- Continue to reach more Stakeholders with our training and CPD offer.
- Embed the Quality Assurance strategy for Alternative Provision.

**Securing the right provision:** Beth was in a mainstream school which couldn't meet her needs and she was frequently suspended. The Virtual School worked with the school to implement the Graduated Approach, using Pupil Premium funding to increase the support for Beth via mentoring, counselling and tuition. While this helped to prevent Beth from being permanently excluded, it was clear that she needed more intensive support than a mainstream school could provide. The Virtual School worked with her school and social worker to secure an EHCP for Beth and ensured that consultations were sent to special schools which could meet her needs. Beth is now in an specialist SEMH school where she is thriving, making good progress and has had no suspensions. She reports how much she loves school.

### **Focus on Speech and Language Therapy: Sarah-Jayne Smith, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)**

I have been part of the Virtual School team since January 2023. This role was a new and exciting addition to the team. Processes needed to be rapidly established for the role of SALT to work effectively, efficiently, and ethically.

I devised a process for consent and established a process for prioritising children/young people to be seen for assessment. A lot of work went in to organizing and planning whilst establishing relationships with the VS Team and

the schools I was working with. There was a lot of learning, adapting, and changing of the processes to ensure the service provided was equitable and efficient.

Starting with a blank page was both exciting and scary. I'm proud that the SALT addition to the Virtual School has been successful. I'm looking forward to auditing the year 23-24 to establish the impact of SALT as part of the Virtual School.

Feedback from the schools I have worked with has been good. They have embraced SALT diagnosis and actively contributed to discussions around Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and have valued the input from SALT to support the needs of the children/young people they support.

### **Priorities for 2023 - 24**

Most of the processes are in place now for my role to work effectively within the team. The vision for this next school year is to work collaboratively with the children/young people, their families, SENCOs, Social Workers, Schools, and Medical Professionals to support the Virtual School cohort to access education at an appropriate level whilst supporting them to work towards their own aspirations.

I will administer assessments and provided diagnosis for speech, language, communication and SEMH where appropriate.

I will provide care plans and review progress in collaboration with key workers and communication partners.

I will attend PEP meetings and provide reports to support individual needs for the child/young person, their family, and the school/setting.

I will liaise with medical teams as part of an MDT approach to support differential diagnosis including ASC, ADHD and FASD where appropriate.

Throughout this academic year I am hoping to attend further training that will contribute toward me becoming an Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) accredited practitioner. This will positively impact on the work that I currently do, and support onward referrals required for some of the children/young people that we support.

## **8. Personal Education Plans: Jamila Shahzad, Virtual School PEP Officer**

I started in post as the Virtual School's PEP Officer in September 2022. My role oversees the administration of PEPs, their Quality Assurance and liaising with the Finance team to ensure prompt payments of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) to schools following a satisfactory PEP for the child.

In 2022-23 we revised and updated our Personal Education Plan (PEP) document, expanding the section for our children and young people to share their wishes and feelings and improving the Targets section to ensure that all targets set the previous term are reviewed to assess progress. Our PEP completion rate was excellent, with 98% of PEPs completed each term.

I am proud that since coming into post I have put systems in place to collate all PEP data, tracking which PEPs have been held, who attended the PEPs, which schools consistently have good or poor PEPs and PPG spend. This system identifies which schools need further training on submitting a good PEP. We can also track children who are attending Alternative Provision via their PEPs to ensure our records are accurate.

We have also set up a system of individual Quality Assurance so that every PEP is now rated using a traffic light system of Red, Amber or Green, and we award a Gold rating to exceptional PEPs. Schools and social workers

receive individual feedback following QA, to identify how they need to improve PEPs if they have been rated Amber or Red. If a PEP is Red, it is sent back to the school and they are asked to improve it, with appropriate support from the Virtual School. In the Summer term when this scheme was embedded, 55% of PEPs were rated Green, 38% Amber and 7% were Red. The most usual reason for Red PEPs is missing voice of the young person or lack of attendance by the social worker; either of these will result in an automatic Red status for a PEP.

Our priorities for 2023-24 are to further streamline our QA process and to ensure compliance with Virtual School and statutory timescales. I also plan to hold termly PEP training sessions for social workers and schools so we can have consistently high quality PEPs in place for our children.

**Improving practice:** a school submitted a PEP with targets which were not detailed or SMART, including one which stated “improve reading age”. Following feedback and support from the Virtual School, the school improved the PEP so that the target was written in a SMART way: “Kirsty’s reading age will improve from 6 years to 7 years 4 months by her next PEP, via 1:1 literacy intervention.” The PEP gave further details about the interventions and PPG costings, allowing all professionals to be able to accurately assess Kirsty’s progress over time.

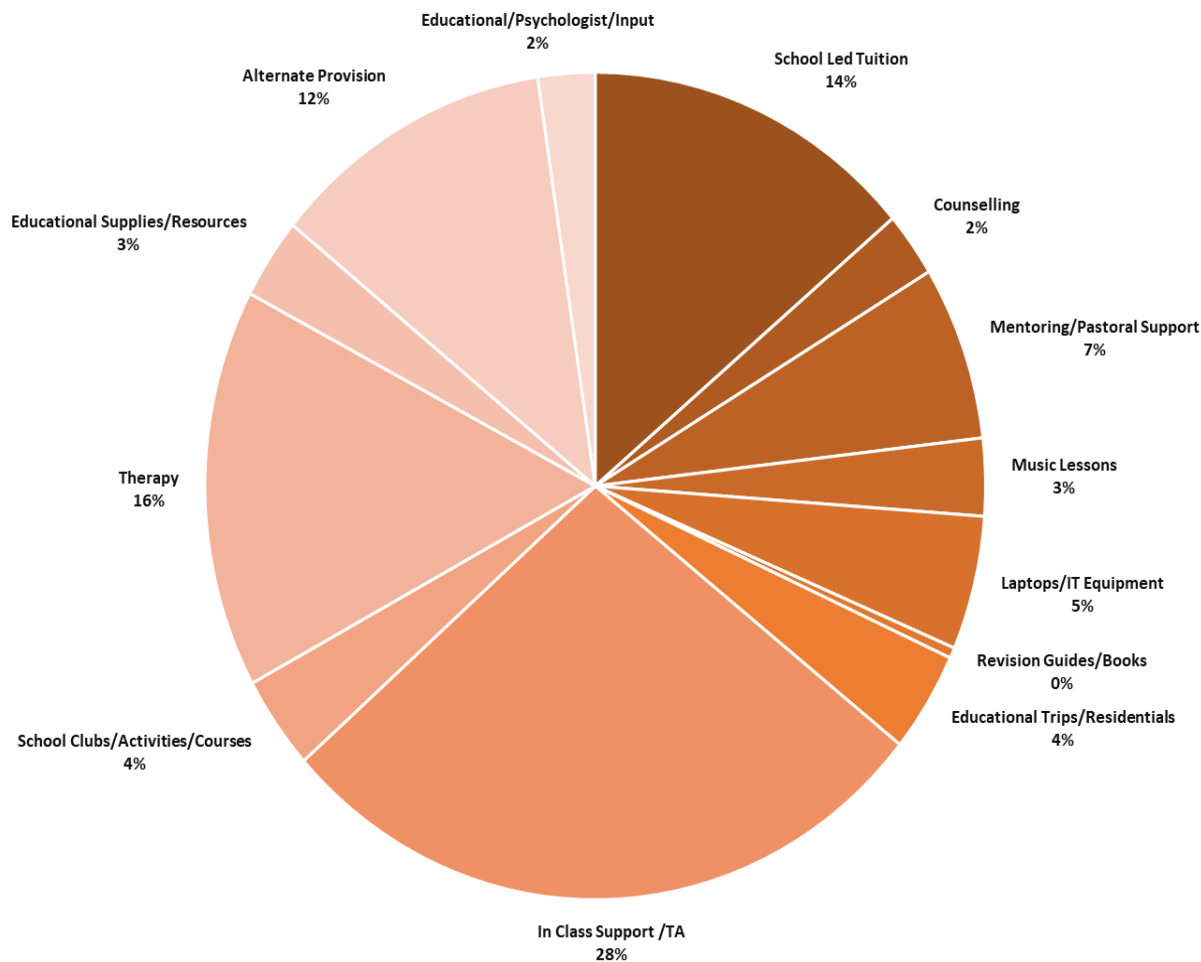
## 9. Pupil Premium Plus strategy statement 2023

The Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPG) is allocated to the Virtual School Headteacher in each financial year, to be spent to improve the educational progress and outcomes for children in care in the local authority. In financial year 2022-23 the amount of PPG we received per child in care was £2410 per child of statutory school age.

The Conditions of Grant for Pupil Premium state that funding for CLA should be managed by the Virtual School Head. This means that Bury Virtual School is responsible for monitoring the use of this funding and ensuring that the money makes a real difference to the individual children looked after by Bury Local Authority. PPG for CLA cannot be carried forward into a new financial year and must be spent before the end of March or returned to the Department for Education. Therefore, this budget requires careful management.

In common with many other Virtual Schools, we top-slice our PPG and retain £610 per child centrally. The rest is reserved for schools, who can request up to £600 per term (£1800 per year) to support the education progress and attainment of their children. Specific needs might be additional tuition, music lessons, participation in a school residential trip or they might need access to the support of a Teaching Assistant. Funding which is devolved to schools should provide “over and above” their standard offer to all children. Schools must cost the interventions and resources they wish to purchase with PPG on the child’s PEP document, linked to a target which is SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely). The funding is only released on receipt of a good quality PEP, completed within expected timescales with clear details of use and impact of PPG funding linked to identified needs and subsequent interventions. Schools must cost the required interventions and they must be linked to the child’s targets.

The pie chart below shows what schools spent their PPG on in academic year 2022 – 23:



This does not include tuition which the Virtual School commissioned directly for our children.

The PPG which the Virtual School holds centrally is spent on the following:

- Alternative Provision and tuition to support children temporarily without a school place (eg following a placement move) or who are at risk of exclusion
- Educational Psychology and Speech and Language Therapy for our children
- IT equipment such as laptops
- Literacy resources such as the Booktrust Letterbox Club scheme
- Holiday activities such as Art Workshops
- A contribution towards the staffing costs of the Virtual School team

In addition, during the 2022-23 academic year, the following grants were received from the Department for Education and devolved to the schools and accounted for by the schools, through the PEPs:

- Recovery Premium Grant, to be used for the benefit of our children’s educational needs as described in their PEP
- The National Tutoring Programme’s School-Led Tutoring Grant, to help close the education gap which widened as a result of COVID-19. The grant provided was calculated to cover 60% of the cost of tuition and the Virtual School was required to contribute the remaining 40% from the Pupil Premium Plus funding. We fully utilised this grant and funded 1:1 tuition for over 120 of our children.

## Examples of impact of spend of PPG

Year group	Target on PEP	PPG spend	Impact when target was reviewed
Reception	Harry will be able to blend 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and CVC words accurately	Daily 10 minute intervention plus additional phonics resources to use at home	This has been achieved as evidenced by Harry's latest reading assessment
Year 4	To be able to accurately recall times tables to 12.	1:1 Maths intervention, 10 mins daily, plus use of TT Rockstars	Rebecca's speed with her times tables has increased and she is much more confident with basic multiplication decimals. These skills are not yet embedded so this intervention will continue.
Year 7	Rachel's reading age to improve from 8 years and 4 months to at least 9 years by her next PEP	Literacy intervention in school: 20 mins x 3 times per week. Additional reading books to read at home with a reading age of 9 and above, chosen to match Rachel's interests with her input	Improved reading age by 13 months from September 2022 to May 2023
Year 11	Lucy's English grade is currently a 3. It will improve by at least 1 grade by her next PEP	1:1 tuition in English, 1 hour per week for 12 weeks	Lucy has made excellent progress as shown in her recent mock and is now working at grade 4

**Use of National Tutoring Programme funding:** Rosie was in Y11 at an out-of-borough school. Her GCSE target grades were 4s for English and Maths, but school identified that she was working at grade 3 for both subjects. The Virtual School used a combination of National Teaching Programme and Pupil Premium funding to identify appropriate tutors for Rosie and she had weekly 1:1 lessons. Rosie's feedback in her final school PEP was that this was really beneficial for her and she went on to achieve a grade 4 in Maths and a grade 5 in English and successfully progress to college.

## 10. Supporting Stability for our Children and Young People

Our mission is to improve stability in school places. Children in care have all experienced trauma; separation from birth family, experience of abuse or neglect and attachment disorders can all mean that they feel an internalised sense of rejection and shame which can result in an inability to self-regulate or to feel safe in school. Being in a constant state of fight-flight-freeze is all too often the reality for our children, and this can lead to them showing their trauma via extremely challenging behaviour. This puts them at risk of poor attendance, suspension and even permanent exclusion – all of which further increase their feelings of rejection. The more we can do to stabilise their education placements, the better their outcomes.

The Virtual School is involved in the local authorities' strategic planning for permanence and stability for our children and members of the team sit on the following Panels:

- Fostering Panel
- Adoption Panel

- Long-term Permanence Panel
- Legal Gateway Planning

We ensure that educational stability is a key part of permanence planning for children. 35 of our children had in-year school moves last year; this number is still too high. In some cases it is unavoidable, for example if a child moves a substantial distance away and would not be able to travel to school, or if they need to move to a special school which can better meet their needs. However, there were some heroic efforts to keep school stability for our children, such as a Year 11 who moved 70 miles away – her placement made the 90 minute journey with her to school every day in order to avoid disruption to her education at that crucial stage.

### **Focus on Learning Mentor Support: Deb Vine**

I have been part of the Virtual School team since July 2012. My previous experience includes working in a high school in learning support and mentoring roles. I support our children and young people to overcome their barriers to learning and provide 1:1 support to help raise their academic attainment and achievement, particularly by promoting effective transition at KS2 and KS4.

In 2022 – 23, I offered enhanced transition support – during Year 6 and continued throughout the children’s transition to Year 7. The Year 6 children all received a transition pack with everything they needed to start at secondary school. Our Reception children also received a reading cushion and activity books as they started school in September. I oversee our praise and recognition scheme for our children and young people and send termly certificates to children who have made progress or achieved good attendance in school.

I support young people in Year 11 to prepare for their GCSE exams, often helping them to catch up with coursework and providing revision support sessions to teach strategies and help them plan their revision time, I often visit them in school and advocate for them where required, for example by working with teachers to ensure the right support is in place in lessons. Part of my role is taking our Y11s for visits to college and helping them to apply for places. I also support with bespoke university visits for our young people.

Since being awarded the Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health in 2022 I have improved my practice and been able to support schools in their approach in supporting our children. I have also completed training in Lego play and have put this into practice with 1:1 work with our children; it has proved to be a valuable resource in preparing our children for high school by enabling them to share their worries and concerns in a creative way. I am currently working with my colleague to expand our offer of Lego play sessions to our schools. We are hoping to start offering small-group sessions for children in care and children with a social worker from January 2024

**Supporting school transitions:** Will was in Y6 and had an EHCP. He was looking forward to moving to secondary school, but also nervous. Our Learning Mentor Deb did several 1:1 sessions with him, using Lego in a therapeutic way to explore his wishes, feelings and worries about moving to secondary school. Will used Lego to show what his hopes were for secondary school and also to explore his worries. Deb shared Will’s feedback with the Designated Teacher at his new secondary school so they could plan proactively for his transition. Deb then accompanied Will on several visits to his new school to meet key staff and visit his classrooms, and she continued to visit him in September to ensure he was settled. Will’s attendance in his first half term at secondary school was 98% and he voiced in his PEP meeting how much he was enjoying it, following his successful transition.

## **11. Training in 2022-23**

We continued to deliver termly Designated Teacher forums this year, with guest speakers including Social Care Managers, colleagues from the Youth Service and our Educational Psychology team. In addition, we offered whole-school training for Bury schools on topics such as attachment, trauma, ADHD, autism and emotion coaching, and we



were also requested by schools to deliver training for parents and carers. We regularly attend LA SENCO networks and give advice regarding inclusive classrooms.

As part of our commitment to trauma-informed practice, we offered funded places on the 11-Day Level 5 Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health-informed Schools and Communities provided by Trauma-Informed Schools UK, for the second year. Feedback from delegates is hugely positive and we know that the skills they learn while completing this qualification are transformative in terms of the impact on children. We also funded training in use of Lego as a therapeutic intervention.

We provided training for Bury school governors on the role of the Virtual School and schools' statutory duties towards children in care and previously looked-after children, and we also provided training for Elected Members in the Council on inclusive practice in schools as part of our commitment to corporate parenting.

In 2023 - 24 we are continuing with the Diploma and have expanded our virtual training offer in conjunction with AC Education, who we have commissioned to offer a range of training sessions on topics including supporting children with unmet attachment needs, supporting previously looked-after children, creative spend of the Pupil Premium Grant and managing challenging behaviour. We are also funding ELKLAN training for schools to support children with speech, language and communication needs.

July 2023 saw our first-ever Virtual School Conference. Entitled ***Our Work Changes Lives: Supporting Children with Social Workers to Thrive in School*** we hosted a full day of guest speakers and workshops. Colleagues from East Ward Primary School and Parrenthorn Secondary School shared good practice to support children who have experienced trauma, our educational psychology team provided a workshop on supporting children with emotionally-based school avoidance and other workshops offered leadership coaching and restorative practice following suspension. Our keynote speaker was Jaz Ampaw-Farr, who is care-experienced and shared her incredibly powerful story of how her teacher and social worker changed her life for the better. It was a hugely successful day and we look forward to hosting our next large-scale event.

### **Delegate feedback from the Virtual School Conference 2023**

*“Jaz was a brilliant speaker, brought it back to the WHY of it all. Child-centred every step of the way. The speakers from schools had some useful tidbits that we can bring back to school. A really well rounded event.”*

*“Jaz really took our thoughts back to what we do, why we do it. She made me reflect on my own practice but also on my own wellbeing and home life - she really has impacted me - that's from her speech and also from her group session in the afternoon. I have put some changes in already – it's day one!”*

*“It was so nice to see so many familiar faces sharing common ground and sharing their passion for getting the best possible outcomes for our children. Jaz was amazing!”*

*“Great opportunity to hear and share great practice. Good to have the opportunity to engage with colleagues from a diverse range of services- social care, health, education. I have come away from the conference reinvigorated and feeling completely inspired by the work happening in our LA.”*

*“Thanks for such an amazing conference with confident and knowledgeable speakers. I particularly enjoyed the speakers using case studies within their presentations; these totally highlighted the passion and tenacity to safeguard our children and young people and made it real. I would like to highlight how much I enjoyed the input from the Virtual School team and the importance of monitoring attendance, being trauma informed and supporting vulnerable children. Jaz was amazing and in the light of what appears to be challenging times it was also very good to have humour injected into the day too, re-emphasizing why we do what we do!”*

*“I took something useful and inspiring from every speaker today. I came away feeling more knowledgeable about key statistics of children in local authority care, and I felt empowered hearing the success stories of exemplar practitioners locally. I shall be reaching out to Parrenthorn in the Autumn to find out more!”*

*“The best conference of the year!”*

## **12. Pupil Voice**

We are committed to ensuring that our children's voices are heard and respected when planning for their education. In 2022 – 23 we improved the Pupil Voice section of our PEP document to give greater emphasis to the views of our children. We also conducted focused visits to schools to survey our children about our work. Of the children we surveyed:

- 75% knew what their PEP is
- 40% like to attend their PEP – the rest prefer to get feedback separately from their teacher or carer
- 90% were confident they could share their views before their PEP
- 70% could identify something positive that happened because of their PEP; examples they gave included tuition being arranged, Drama Therapy, laptops being provided, mentoring, being supported to get a place in college and being supported on transition visits to secondary school.
- 100% of our children surveyed could name a key adult in school who supports them

As part of the survey, we asked our children and young people to tell us what wider support or activities they would like the Virtual School to offer. They suggested theatre visits, Art classes, a residential trip and sports activities. We have implemented the sports and Art activities and are planning theatre trips this year.

### **You said, we did: examples of work completed in response to the wishes and feelings of our children**

**Pupil said:** Hannah wanted to do some work experience which would support her aspirations to work in a nursery.

**We did:** We arranged for Hannah to take part in the Teens and Toddlers programme, which gave her 12 weeks of structured work experience in a nursery plus a Level 1 Employability qualification.

**Pupil said:** Michael wanted to know more about higher education options and the support available.

**We did:** we took Michael on a visit to a local university, where he had a tour and met student support officers who explained how care-experienced young people are supported. Michael felt really positive about higher education following this visit and is now studying A levels with aspirations to progress to university.

**Pupil said:** Jodie was really nervous about her GCSEs and worried about how she would manage her anxiety in the exam room.

**We did:** we worked with Jodie's school to put a support plan in place and ensure that she would be sitting in a separate room for her exams, staffed by key staff in school who she knew. Our Learning Mentor visited her regularly to provide additional revision support and guidance.

**Pupil said:** Mohammed arrived from overseas as an unaccompanied asylum seeker child. He aspired to be a doctor and wished to study appropriate qualifications at college, but college felt he needed to begin at Entry Level as he had no proof of prior qualifications from his home country.

**We did:** we obtained 1:1 tuition for Mohammed and fast-tracked him to sit Functional Skills as a private candidate. This allowed him to start college on a higher pathway.

**Pupil said:** Ryan expressed in his PEP that he would like to work with animals in the future.

**We did:** we funded a place for Ryan on the Animal Care Masterclass offered by a local Further Education college in October half term. Ryan learnt how to care for lots of different species and completed extension work which linked to his school's Science curriculum.

## **13. Supporting Education, Employment and Training for our Post-16 young people: Marion Düzgün, Virtual School Post-16 EET Lead**

I have been in post since November 2021. The last 2 years have been very challenging but rewarding as this was a brand-new role for the Virtual School. I caseload approximately 80 young people aged 16- & 17-year-olds in years 12 and 13 and support with transition for our Year 11s.

Key duties:

- Work to reduce NEET figures, by offering 1:1 support to our young people with information, advice and guidance to access further education, employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities that meet their interests, aspirations and needs. Where needed I will support with visits to colleges, training

providers, universities and provide practical help such as writing CVs, helping with job applications and supporting with interview preparation

- Attend PEPs to support social workers, colleges and training providers with advice and guidance to ensure our young people are being supported to achieve qualifications, skills and to encourage their aspirations.
- Oversee the transition for our Year 11 into Post 16 education, employment and training options to ensure they have an offer of education or training for Year 12. I liaise with colleges, Designated Teachers and providers of careers advice and guidance in schools.
- Oversee spending of Post-16 PPG funding and ensure it is in line with the conditions of grant from the DfE.
- Attend the monthly NEET Forum meeting with Leaving Care Team
- Attend regular Strategy meeting and Care Planning meetings for our post-16 cohort.
- Attend the half-termly Bury Foundation Operational Group with the LA 14-19 Team and local training providers to look at local provision.
- Attend the termly GM Care Experienced Education Network termly meeting.
- Attend the termly NW Post 16 Virtual School Subgroup.
- Attend monthly NAVSH UASC Focus Group meetings

### What's Working Well:

- Use of RAG traffic light system for the cohort to identify who is a priority for intervention
- NEET figures for 16-17yrs olds are the lowest-ever achieved (September 2023)
- I deploy a trauma-informed approach with our young people following completion of the Trauma Informed Diploma in 2022.
- Post-16 PPG funding has been excellent in supporting our young people individually, for example with tuition or mentoring.
- Good working relationships with Connexions careers service in Bury.
- Improving relationships with Designated Teachers, Pastoral Staff and PEP mentors at colleges. I have regular termly meeting with Bury and Bolton College to identify if any of our young people are struggling with attendance, attainment and behaviour and explore what support could be offered.
- Aspirational university visits for Yr11 & 12.
- Positive connections with lots of training providers and alternative provisions in the areas.

### Next steps and key priorities for 2023 – 24:

- Improvement to post-16 PEP quality, in particular with regard to SMART targets
- Increased usage of national programmes such as Youth Leads UK
- Working with the newly-appointed Post-18 EET Lead for Care Leavers to ensure effective transition for our young people once they turn 18

### Destinations of our young people, September 2023

Number of young people	College	Apprenticeship or Training Provider	Tuition as preparation for entry into college/ Apprenticeship	Employment	In custody	NEET seeking specific course	NEET other reason
81	52	8	3	7	1	6	4

## Courses our young people are studying at College

**Entry Level:** 17 young people. Most of these are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children who are enrolled on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses upon arrival into the UK. A small number are young people with SEND who are enrolled on courses including Entry Level Motor Vehicles and Construction.

Level 1: 11 young people. Courses include Digital Media, Business, Art, ESOL and Construction.

Level 7: 8 young people. Courses include Childcare, Beauty Therapy, ICT, Culinary Skills, Health and Social Care, Art and Design and English and Maths GCSE resits.

Level 3: 17 young people. Courses include A levels (subjects including Psychology, Economics, Drama, Music, Geography, Theology, Business Studies, Biology, Criminology and Combined Science), BTECs in subjects such as Business Studies and Health and Social Care and Level 3 Diploma courses in subjects as varied as Game Design, Music Production, Equine Studies, Public Services, Travel and Tourism and Performing Arts, among others.

A number of our Care Leavers have progressed to university colleges this year, with courses including Fine Arts, Criminology and Professional Marketing and Business Development.

We are incredibly proud of our post-16 cohort, who are fulfilling their aspirations and looking forward to successful futures.

**Decision making and pathway planning post-16:** Paul left school at 16 with no qualifications and a history of poor attendance and engagement. He hadn't applied for college and was NEET (not in education, training or employment). The Virtual School post-16 EET Lead Marion built a positive relationship with Paul using a trauma-informed approach and obtained his wishes and feelings. Paul voiced that he was interested in exploring a career in the armed forces. Marion supported Paul to write a CV and arranged for some voluntary work for him to build his skills. She accompanied him to visit the Army Careers Service and referred Paul to UK Military Mentors, who worked 1:1 with Paul on mentoring, fitness and employability skills. Paul began to express an interest in wanting to learn new skills, so Marion arranged 1:1 tuition for him to work towards Entry Level qualifications in English and Maths. Paul is now enrolled full-time at a training provider where he is working towards Functional Skills and Employability qualifications and he is considering applying to Army College.

## 14. School Attendance and Exclusions

Locally generated data for 2022-23 shows the overall attendance of Bury CLA as 90.18%, which is an improvement on the previous academic year's figure of 88.17%. This figure is subject to change when reported by the DfE as only the qualifying cohort will be reported.

The attendance data below was supplied by IRIS Looked After Call. It includes children who were only in care for a short time during 2022-23.

**Overall attendance: 90.18%**

Primary: 96.00%

Secondary: 85.26%

### By Year Group:

Reception	94.85
Year 1	96.43
Year 2	91.24
Year 3	96.51
Year 4	97.08
Year 5	95.08
Year 6	94.72
Year 7	91.16
Year 8	86.26
Year 9	85.58
Year 10	81.51
Year 11	84.35

EYFS	94.85
KS1	96.75
KS2	95.79
KS3	87.16
KS4	83.28

### Attendance by cohort

In-borough mainstream	93.23
Out of borough mainstream	92.70
Special/specialist schools	78.91

### Persistent Absence

Persistent Absence is defined by the Department for Education as attendance below 90%. In 2022-23, our persistent absence rate for our qualifying cohort (those in care for 12 months or more as of 31.03.2023) was 22.5%. The national rate of persistent absence for all children in 2022-23 was 22.3% according to the Department for Education's statistics so this is broadly in line with this measure. Our persistent absence rate for all children, including those who were in care for a short time in the year, was 24.3%. This is an improvement on 2021-22 when our overall persistent absence rate was 30%, but it remains too high and is a key priority for the Virtual School team, in conjunction with our colleagues in Children's Social Care and schools.

43% of the children who were persistently absent last year attended special schools or Pupil Referral Units; nationally, rates of persistent absence are much higher in these vulnerable cohorts than for children in mainstream schools. The majority of children and young people who were persistently absent attended PRUs or special schools, and nationally rates of persistent absence in these vulnerable cohorts are much higher than for children who attend mainstream schools. This reflects the complex circumstances and special educational needs of these children, which we certainly see in our own cohort. In addition, 41% of the persistently absent cohort were placed with parents, that is, had Care Orders in place but lived at home with their families, and 26% lived in children's residential homes. Both placed with parents and children's homes are known risk factors for persistent absence from school, as is demonstrated by the fact that 67% of our persistently absent cohort lived in one of these settings.

Attendance for the cohort is reviewed weekly and all children whose attendance is problematic are reviewed, with follow-up action and liaison with social workers and schools as required. The Virtual School Learning Mentor and

Inclusion Advisor provide 1:1 support for some children and PPG is used to commission mentoring, tuition and appropriate Alternative Provision if this is required. In 2023 – 24, we have established a monthly meeting with children’s social care team managers to review children whose attendance is a concern and ensure this is reviewed in social worker supervision. We also plan to commission a dedicated Attendance Officer from the Attendance team who will work with us for two days a week to support CLA with attendance concerns.

## Exclusions

	2021-22	2022-23
Number of children receiving permanent exclusions	0	0
Number of children receiving suspensions	36 (13.5%)	28 (12.6%)

13 of the children who were suspended last year are now in different schools which can better meet their needs. The Virtual School has also worked closely with the SEND team to successfully apply for EHCPs for a number of these children, to further increase the support available to their schools.

## 15. The Virtual School’s Extension to Role: Children with a social worker (new duties)

We know that nationally, children with a social worker are some of the most disadvantaged children in England. They fall behind their peers who have not been known to social care in every educational measure: they have worse attendance, they are more likely to be excluded and their attainment and progress are much lower. Given that approximately 10% of all children in England will have a social worker at some point in their childhood, this is a significant cohort of children who are at huge risk of not fulfilling their potential.

Following the 2019 Children in Need review, in 2021 Virtual School Headteachers were tasked with being the national strategic leads to improve educational outcomes for this cohort. In Bury, this is approximately 700 children. To support this duty, Virtual Schools have been allocated a ring-fenced grant, which we have used to expand the team and give us the capacity to support this much larger cohort of children. In January 2023, we appointed our Lead for Children with a Social Worker, Catherine Riley, and Inclusion Advisor, Lauren Warburton. Catherine’s role is strategic and intended to build on the good practice we have established with regard to the education of our children in care. Lauren’s role involves direct work with this cohort of young people, as well as advice and support for professionals.

Catherine is currently on maternity leave but has already made significant progress in this area since being in post. She has worked to form close working relationships with social care colleagues and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools, both vital partners in improving outcomes for the cohort. Below is a summary of the strategic work she has established in Bury since being in post:

- Establishment of weekly drop-in surgery for social workers to discuss education concerns and queries
- Visits to schools to audit their support for children with a social worker and support with training
- Planning for an audit of CIN/CP plans to review the effectiveness of education planning and prioritisation
- Training delivered to social workers on the importance of school attendance
- Regular attendance and presentations at Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) forums
- Attendance at the North West Virtual School children with a social worker network meetings
- Production of advisory documents for social works and schools

- Attendance at several Panels in the LA, such as Education Access Board, Legal Gateway, Complex Safeguarding Team Partnership Meetings and Family Resource Panel
- Work to improve attendance data collection and analysis for this cohort in the LA

### **Role of the Inclusion Advisor: Lauren Warburton**

I was appointed as the Virtual School Inclusion Advisor in January 2023. My role is to maintain and improve the attendance and attainment of young people in Bury who have a social worker (CIN/CP/CLA). My background has been in helping children and young people manage their emotional health and wellbeing, using mixed disciplines such as mindfulness, CBT, trauma informed practices and talking therapies.

I have used my experience to establish “The Wellbeing Pathway” in Bury, a dedicated pathway for professionals to book on to if they have concerns for a child or young person who has a social worker and who is struggling with their emotional health and wellbeing. They book a 1:1 consultation with me and following that the outcomes can include signposting appropriate services, targeted group work, bespoke recommendations and 1:1 weekly intervention from me for the young person. The feedback from professionals regarding The Wellbeing Pathway has been overwhelmingly positive and the children and young people that have benefitted have also given positive feedback and have demonstrated improved school attendance.

I have had lots of opportunities to join and help to shape different areas across children’s social care. I sit on the newly formed Family Resource Panel in partnership with the Youth Service so that children, young people and their families can access the right service for them. I attend the LA’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Task & Finish group created in response to our young people’s views to help create easier access to Mental Health support in the borough. I have made great connections with schools across the LA and have been asked to deliver training to school staff and share information regarding my role and the Virtual School’s role as a whole.

Key priorities for the next year are to continue to promote the education, attendance, attainment and emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable young people. A main area of focus for me is to develop a range of group interventions such as exam stress, managing anxiety and bereavement and loss with the aim being to offer it to schools so that young people can better manage their emotions and progress.

## **16. Previously looked-after children**

For children who were previously looked-after but left care via a formal route such as adoption or a Special Guardianship Order, the Virtual School’s duty is to provide advice and information to professionals and parents. We do not have corporate parenting responsibility for these children so do not do direct work with them or casehold, but we offer advice and guidance on all aspects of education and specific training for schools on supporting the needs of these children. Our intention in 2023 – 24 and beyond is to increase the training on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder we offer to schools, in recognition of the probability that at least 70% of adopted children had prenatal alcohol exposure. We also want to improve our support to adoptive parents by offering more training via the Regional Adoption Agency.



## 17. What are we going to do next?

Improvement Plan headlines for 2023-24

Improvement Priority	Areas of focus
Improve attendance	Reduce persistent absence by increased multi-agency working Integrated working with the local authority Attendance Service Further training for social care, schools and foster carers Emphasis on school stability within permanence planning
Improved attainment and progress for our children	Focus on SMART, aspirational academic outcomes in PEPs and Quality Assurance of these Reduce suspensions and improve attendance Strategies to accelerate progress: tuition, mentoring, strategic use of PPG Supporting children into independent schools via routes such as the Springboard Foundation More training on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder for schools Work with our Multi-Academy Trusts – establish termly meetings with CEOs to review KPIs for CLA across the Trust Termly meetings focusing on PEP data with Head of Service
Improved PEPs	Termly training offered to all stakeholders Schools with Red or Amber PEPs asked to complete mandatory training Annual quality assurance visits to schools with higher numbers of CLA on roll PEP training to be part of the core training for all new social workers
Improved working with foster carers	Increased training offer Mandatory education training for all newly approved foster carers Regular engagement events such as coffee mornings

## Appendix 1: Glossary of terms used in this report

**CIN:** a child on a Child in Need Plan. A Child in Need is defined by the Children Act 1989 as a child who needs additional help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. These children are supported by social workers.

**CLA:** a child who is looked-after by their local authority, who become their corporate parents. The legal term for our children is looked-after child or LAC, but we choose not to use this term in line with the wishes of our children. A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 ours is a looked-after child according to the legal definition.

**CP:** Child Protection. A child is placed on a CP Plan if they are at risk of significant harm, as set out in the Children Act 1989. They are supported by a social worker and a team of professionals.

**DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead. The teacher in a school who takes the lead responsibility for overseeing safeguarding in the school.

**DT:** Designated Teacher for children in care and previously looked-after children. It is statutory for all schools to have a Designated Teacher, whether they currently have children in care on roll or not.

**EYFS:** the Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises the Nursery and Reception years.

**EET:** education, employment and/or training

**EHCP:** education, health and care plan

**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages – courses in ESOL are offered by many colleges

**GLD:** good level of development (outcome measured at the end of the EYFS when children are 5)

**KS:** Key Stage. Key Stages are split as follows:

Key Stage One: Years 1-2 (age 5-7)

Key Stage Two: Years 3-6 (age 7-11)

Key Stage Three: Years 7-9 (age 11-14)

Key Stage Four: Years 10-11 (age 14-16)

Key Stage 5: Years 12-13 (age 16-18)

**NEET:** not in education, employment and/or training

**NAVSH:** National Association of Virtual School Heads

**PEP:** Personal Education Plan. All CLA must have a PEP, which should be reviewed every term (three times per year).

**PPG:** the Pupil Premium Grant. This is a grant allocated to the Virtual School Headteacher to be spent on resources, interventions and support to improve educational attainment and progress for CLA.

**Progress 8:** shows the progress GCSE students have made from KS2, across 8 subjects. The average expected progress score is 0.

**SEND:** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**UASC:** Unaccompanied asylum-seeking child

## Appendix 2: 2023 Attainment Outcomes

Please note that all data used is provisional and unvalidated at this stage. All CLA includes all children in care 2022-23, including those who were in care for a short period of time or left care during the year. The “qualifying cohort” are those children who had been care for 12 months as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. It is the qualifying cohort who are reported on nationally.

National data for 2023 is not yet available, so where appropriate 2022 national data has been included as a guide.

### Primary School Data Headlines

#### Early Years Foundation Stage: children reaching a Good Level of Development

Bury CLA 2023: all	Bury qualifying cohort 2023	Bury CLA with SEND 2023	Bury CLA no SEND 2023	CLA national data 2022
35%	29%	0%	58%	41%

This was a small cohort and 6 children (33%) have SEND, and are not yet working at age related expectations. 3 are at special schools. 4 children with no identified SEND did not reach GLD; we have allocated additional PPG to all of them to support additional intervention.

#### Year One Phonics: children working at Age-Related Expectations

Bury CLA 2023: all	Bury qualifying cohort 2023	Bury CLA with SEND 2023	Bury CLA no SEND 2023	CLA national data 2022
64%	67%	50%	80%	58%

This was a small cohort of children, 11 in total. The children who did not pass the test are all receiving additional Phonics and Literacy support. Children who do not pass the test in Year 1 are entered again in Year 2. We have four CLA who did not pass the test in Year 2, last year. Of these, two have EHCPs and are on roll at special schools so are not working at this level. The two in mainstream are receiving additional literacy support and one has input from Speech and Language Therapy.

### Key Stage One attainment

Children in Year 2 are assessed by their teachers in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science. They are assessed at working at pre-key stage, working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard or working at greater depth for the expected standard.

Cohort	Reading: working at the expected standard	Writing: working at the expected standard	Maths: working at the expected standard	Reading, Writing and Maths at expected standard
Bury CLA 2023: all	75%	75%	63%	63%
Bury CLA 2023: qualifying cohort	71%	71%	57%	57%
Bury CLA with SEND 2023	50%	50%	50%	50%
Bury CLA no SEND 2023	100%	100%	75%	75%
CLA national data 2022	44%	44%	42%	29%

## Key Stage Two attainment

Pupils in Year 6 are assessed in Reading and Maths via externally-marked tests, with an optional externally-marked Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test. Their Writing is assessed via teacher assessment. Pupils are assessed as working towards the expected standard, working at the expected standard or working at greater depth. Some children with SEND are not entered for the tests.

Cohort	Reading: working at the expected standard	Writing: working at the expected standard	Maths: working at the expected standard	Reading, Writing and Maths at expected standard
Bury CLA 2023: all	38% (10% at Greater Depth)	29% (5% at Greater Depth)	29% (5% at Greater Depth)	18% (5% at Greater Depth in all areas)
Bury CLA 2023: qualifying cohort	33% (6% at Greater Depth)	29% (6% at Greater Depth)	29% (6% at Greater Depth)	17% (6% at Greater Depth in all areas)
Bury CLA with SEND 2023	27%	7%	0%	0%
Bury CLA no SEND 2023	67%	83%	100%	67%
CLA national data 2022	52%	42%	44%	32%

This was a cohort where 71% of the children had SEND, and as a result some did not sit the KS2 tests but still appear as working below age-related expectations in the reported data. 30% of these children are at special schools and following different curriculum pathways as appropriate to their needs. We are working closely with the mainstream secondary schools where we have children now in Year 7 who did not reach age-related expectations at KS2 to ensure that additional catch-up support is in place and 1:1 tuition where appropriate.

## Attainment at Key Stage Four

GCSE grades from 2023 should not be compared to 2022, as the grade boundaries saw a return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023. They are more equivalent to 2019 and this measure has therefore been included for contextual information.

There were 36 CLA in Year 11 in 2023, 31 in the qualifying cohort. All of the qualifying cohort achieved at least one recognised qualification in Year 11. 21 young people (74%) were accessing mainstream school.

27 young people were entered for GCSE. 7 others who were at special schools worked towards Entry Level or Functional Skills as appropriate curriculum pathways. 2 young people were UASC, new into the UK; one achieved Entry Level qualifications, but the other was supported in school to learn basic English and numeracy. Both have now progressed on to post-16 ESOL courses at college.

	Average Attainment 8 score	Average Progress 8 score	English average progress score	Maths average progress score
Bury CLA 2023 (qualifying cohort)	21.3	-1.24	-1.50	-1.09
2022 CLA national	20.3	-1.30	Not available	Not available
2019 CLA national	19.1	-1.23	Not available	Not available

## Attainment information

	<b>% grade 9-4 in English</b>	<b>% grade 9-4 in Maths</b>	<b>% grade 9-4 in English and Maths</b>	<b>% 5 or more GCSEs grade 9-4 including English and Maths</b>
2023 Bury: all CLA	31%	22%	19%	19%
2023 Bury: qualifying cohort	32%	26%	23%	23%
2019 Bury CLA	Not available	Not available	21%	Not available
2019 CLA national	Not available	Not available	18%	Not available

	<b>% grade 9-5 in English</b>	<b>% grade 9-5 in Maths</b>	<b>% grade 9-5 in English and Maths</b>
2023 Bury: all CLA	25%	8%	8%
2023 Bury: qualifying cohort	29%	13%	10%
2019 Bury CLA	33%	7%	7%
2019 CLA national	Not available	Not available	7%

We had several CLA with individual high grades; 5 young people achieved at least one GCSE at grade 6 or above.

5 young people in this cohort are NEET as of September 2023, but all are being supported by our post-16 EET Lead and each has an individual plan in place to support them into EET.

### Appendix 3: the Virtual School team

Bury's Virtual School Headteacher is managed through the Education service and line-managed by the Director of Education and Skills. She is also a member of the Senior Leadership Team in Children's Services in the LA and attends the social care Extended Managers' Meetings. Bury's Virtual School is a member of the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH). The Virtual School Headteacher is a member of the Bury Association of Secondary Heads (BASH) and members of the team attend the Primary Inclusion Locality Meetings.

Position	Name
Virtual School Headteacher	Gemma Parkes
Advisory Teacher and PEP co-ordinator	Sarah Metcalfe
Advisory Teacher	Karen Riazzi
SEND Lead	Joanne Foster
Learning Mentor	Deb Vine
Post-16 EET Lead	Marion Duzgun
PEP Officer	Jamila Shahzad
Lead for Children with a Social Worker (CP/CIN)	Catherine Riley
Inclusion Advisor	Lauren Warburton
Speech and Language Therapist (2 days per week, term-time)	Sarah-Jayne Smith