

**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Harrow Virtual School Attendance Report December 2015
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chris Spencer Corporate Director People
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Simon Brown Children, Schools and Young People
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	No
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Enclosures:</b>	None

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out:

- A summary of attendance figures in Autumn 2015 for Children Looked After
- An analysis of DfE National Data over the last 3 years

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet members are requested to:

- Note the performance of our CLA in relation to their attendance.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **2. Introduction**

Virtual Schools nationally have a pivotal role in improving the educational outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA). The role of the Harrow Virtual School is to:

- champion the educational needs of CLA, wherever they are being educated by supporting, scrutinising and challenging key partners in their education
- drive up standards of CLA educational achievement in order to improve their life chances and overall outcomes
- ensure high quality and timely Personal Education and Pathway Plans (PEPs and PPs)
- monitor and track the attainment, progress, attendance and engagement of every pupil in the school
- develop strategies and approaches that accelerate the progress of CLA, raising their standards of attainment and thereby closing the achievement gap between them and their peers
- disseminate good practice, by raising the level of awareness amongst schools, social work teams and carers regarding the importance of good attendance, potential barriers to learning and pupil engagement with the wider curriculum
- raise aspirations for all CLA and Care Leavers; so they are aware of their choices regarding further and higher education, apprenticeship opportunities and routes to gainful employment

### **3. Attendance**

3.1 Harrow Virtual School (HVS) commissions a company, Welfare Call, to monitor the attendance and exclusions of CLA students. Welfare Call contacts schools daily to ensure that student attendance is tracked closely. The Virtual School Education Welfare Officer (EWO) receives and responds to this information and provides early intervention to prevent situations escalating.

3.2 At the time of this report there were 90 pupils of Statutory School Age in HVS. 21 students (23.3%) have been identified as having absences causing concern, that is an absence percentage figure of 90% or lower. See Section 3.5

3.3 67% (14 out of 21) pupils with poor attendance are educated outside of Harrow LA. This is too high and actions are in place to address this. See section 5.

3.4 All pupils are monitored by HVS from point of entry into care, which will inflate the percentage of pupils with poor attendance. The Department of Education (DfE), only monitors pupils who are on a school roll and have been in care 1 year or longer. (See Section 4). The published DfE figures will therefore be much lower, thus giving the authority a much healthier data set.

### 3.5 HVS Attendance Monitoring for Autumn 2015

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Local Authority where young person attends school</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Education Synopsis and Virtual School Intervention</b>
10	Hounslow	9%	X was in a specialist provision but this broke down due to X's behaviour and absconding. X is due to begin at an alternative provision through a pupil referral unit. X subsequently meant missing which delayed starting at the provision. X has now returned home and is now on roll. Action: To attend Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting to review current plan.
11	Cambridgeshire	9%	X was permanently excluded from an out of borough school in the Summer term. This has been challenged by the Virtual Head teacher (VHT) but the school governors upheld their decision. X has recently started at an education provision linked to the care placement. Attendance since starting at this school is 50%. Action: To contact school re: attendance problems and to attend the next PEP.
11	Harrow	22%	This young person has been refusing to attend school for over a year. All viable options have been exhausted. X has recently attended a careers interview which was positively received. X has 25 hours of education on offer via 1:1 tuition at an independent college and the local PRU.  Action: To monitor attendance closely with both provisions.

11	Harrow	29%	<p>This pupil was 'managed moved' to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) from a mainstream school. Alternative provision was set up by the PRU for X but this was not successful. A new plan has been set up with X using an independent college and 1:1 at the PRU. This is currently going well.</p> <p>Action: Follow up outcome of careers interview and to attend the next education review meeting.</p>
11	Wigan	30.20%	<p>This term this child has had 29 days of unauthorised absence from school. The school has offered to come to the placement to deliver an education programme. This is proving successful. Attendance however remains low.</p> <p>Action: To be discussed at the next progress meeting. Virtual School Headteacher has visited the school with the Social Worker.</p>
10	Harrow	38.20%	<p>This young person is having 'lates' after the register closes which is affecting overall attendance. X is attending a PRU but is living out of borough to where the school is.</p> <p>Action: To arrange a meeting at school with her Social Worker to discuss the situation.</p>

11	Kensington and Chelsea	42.50%	<p>X has had 17 ½ days unauthorised absence. 2 days of exclusions and 2 days of other authorised circumstances. The placement has recently broken down because of X's behaviour and had to subsequently move. X has a secondary school history of not engaging with education and attended 5 different education provisions. X participated in the recent PEP meeting and engaged positively in discussions.</p> <p>Action: To monitor closely and attend subsequent PEP meetings.</p>
10	Essex	51%	<p>This young person was excluded for 3 days which was followed by a day's illness. Subsequently, X absconded with another family member which lead to the breakdown of the placement. X has now returned to the local area and a new school has been applied for.</p> <p>Action: To follow up the application to school.</p>
10	Harrow	55.80%	<p>This young person was permanently excluded in the Summer term, then attended an out of borough PRU where X was living. School reports were good. The placement ended and X returned to Harrow and has been attending a PRU. At the beginning of term X was refusing to attend and wants to return to mainstream school. X's attendance is now improving.</p> <p>Action: Alternative Provisions have be explored. At present X is not mainstream ready.</p>

11	Essex	58.80%	<p>This young person absconded with another family member and this led to the breakdown of the placement. X has now returned to the local area and a new school has been applied for.</p> <p>Action: To follow up the application to school.</p>
10	Harrow	69.80%	<p>This student has missed 4 ½ days for medical reasons and 2 days for illness. There has also been 1 day missed for unauthorised absence. X remains on roll at the mainstream school but is now attending an alternative provision where it is felt that X can cope better with the smaller classes. This ½ term X has had 3 days fixed-term exclusion and some 'lates' after the register closed which counts as unauthorised absence.</p> <p>Action: To monitor attendance closely with regular updates from the social worker.</p>
11	Harrow	69.80%	<p>This young person is a UASC and was not on roll at the beginning of term. X was put on roll on the 23rd September, since then attendance has not been a cause for concern.</p> <p>Action: To monitor attendance closely.</p>

10	Hampshire	73.10%	<p>This term this student has had 4 days of unauthorised absence. X has also had 3 days due to illness. Attendance has remained static and there has been a number of 'lates' recorded. This young person has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). X has transferred to a mainstream school from a specialist provision last Summer Term.</p> <p>Action: To continue to monitor and Virtual School to attend the next PEP and CLA review. Discuss concerns with the Social Worker.</p>
5	Harrow	74.10%	<p>This young person has been looked after since the 15th September. There has been authorised illness and 1 unauthorised absence. Contact has been made with the social worker to raise our concerns..</p> <p>Action: To arrange a meeting at school if attendance does not improve.</p>
1	Enfield	76.70%	<p>This child has a serious life limiting illness and therefore is often absent for illness or medical appointments. X has an EHCP and attends a special school.</p> <p>Action: Track attendance through Welfare Call and regular communication with the social worker.</p>
R	Suffolk	76.80%	<p>X has had 2 weeks absence with illness and a ½ day absence for a medical appointment.</p> <p>Action: Monitor attendance through Welfare Call.</p>

11	Brent	77.80%	<p>The first week is recorded as unauthorised absence. When the school was contacted in September about this they informed HVS that they had not organised work experience. X has also had 2 days absence for religious observance. The attendance percentage should now improve.</p> <p>Action: To query the recording of the coding and monitor.</p>
11	Herts	87.80%	<p>This young person absconded for 2 days in the aftermath of his long term placement break down. X also has had a 2 day absence for a holiday.</p> <p>Action: To engage pupil with extra-curricular activities and to attend the next PEP. To inform social care regarding pupils taking holidays during term time.</p>
3	Essex	75.6%	<p>This child was not on roll for the first 2 weeks of the academic year because of a move to another area, which accounts for the low attendance.</p> <p>Action: To monitor attendance through school.</p>
7	Essex	81.6%	<p>This child has recently moved and was not on roll for the first 2 weeks of the academic year.</p> <p>Action: To closely monitor attendance.</p>
11	Brent	88.9%	<p>This young person was not on roll for the first 2 days of term, and has since had 1 day's absence for religious observance. The school register will be showing attendance of above 90% and he should be above 90% by the end of term.</p> <p>Action: To continue to monitor attendance that it continues to rise.</p>

3.6 The percent figures in table 3.4 is across 1 term. It is anticipated that these percentages



will improve over time, provided pupils maintain a good level of attendance across the remainder of the school year.

#### 4. National Data

4.1 The DfE defines percentage absence of 90% or less as persistent absence (PA). This is measured across an academic year. The table below (Section 4.4) shows Harrow data for 'Missed Sessions' and PA from 2012 to 2014. Comparisons are made, where data exists, with Statistical Neighbours (SN) and England.

4.2 The data represents CLA who have in care after 1 year plus at 31<sup>st</sup> March and who are enrolled at a school. Harrow has maintained a steady improvement in attendance for 'sessions missed' over the past 3 years. However, we are still slightly above the England Average and our SN.

4.3 PA for Harrow CLA is suppressed. Our data represented by the letter 'X' for cohort numbers less than or equal to 5 or percentages where the numerator is less than or equal to 5 or the denominator is less than or equal to 10.

4.4

	Harrow 2012	England Average	SN Average	Harrow 2013	England Average 2013	SN Average 2013	Harrow 2014	England Average 2014	SN Average 2014
Percentage of sessions missed. (CLA 1 year+)	7.8	4.7	5.01	4.4	4.4	4.18	4.3	3.9	4.28
Percentage classed as persistent absentees (CLA 1 year+)	x	6	8.7	x	5	6.10	x	4.7	8.13

## 5. Development Priorities for Attendance

- EWO will
  - meet with other Virtual Schools to share good practice in terms of new approaches and strategies to support good attendance
  - set-up a rewards system for those pupils with attendance percentages of 90% or higher
  - EWO , supported by the VHT will set up multi-professional groups within the Local Authority looking specifically at school attendance
- Virtual School Team members will prioritise pupils with poor school attendance educated outside of Harrow LA
- The Virtual School will work with key stakeholders, to avoid, where necessary time taken out of the school term for medical appointments and holidays
- To continue to work closely with our local school admission's team to ensure school moves are actioned promptly avoiding any unnecessary drift or delay

## Legal Implications

The Virtual School Headteacher has a statutory responsibility to the LA Authority and the DfE for monitoring all the education of CLA and Care Leavers regardless of where they are placed. Schools leading on their education may be scrutinised, challenged and supported to improve outcomes, including attendance for this vulnerable group.

## Financial Implications

The budget for the Virtual School in 2015-16 is £196k. In addition the Virtual School Headteacher is accountable for the spend of the Pupil Premium Grant and has a statutory responsibility to ensure that it is used to improve educational outcomes for CLA. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The weak performance of particular underachieving groups is a concern and the Local Authority through the Harrow School Improvement Partnership has established a 'Closing the Gap' strategy to ensure that all groups achieve in line with the high standards of achievement in Harrow. The strategy is focussed on supporting and challenging individual schools to improve the quality of their provision, so that all groups achieve well against their peers.

## Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

## Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

This report provides information on the performance of underachieving groups, and as such is focused on making a difference for the vulnerable. Educational performance and standards are critical in making a difference to the life chances and aspirations of families and communities. A well educated and skilled workforce secured through quality educational provision in Harrow, contributes significantly to local businesses and industry, within and beyond Harrow.

### Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 11 January 2016		

<b>Ward Councillors notified:</b>	<b>NO,</b> The information contained in this report affect all Wards
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<b>EqIA carried out:</b>	<b>NO</b> This report is for information only. There is no decision to be made which would have an impact on the Council's Equality, Policies and Procedures. There are however, equality implications in respect of raising achievement of some ethnic minority groups, for children with SEND and those on free school meals.
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## Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

**Contact:** *Nasim Butt, Head of Service, School Improvement*  
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### Background Papers:

**Call-In Waived by the  
Chairman of Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**

**NOT APPLICABLE**