

<b>Report to:</b>	Corporate Parenting Forum, LB Sutton	<b>Date:</b>	December 2021
<b>Report title:</b>	<i>Sutton Virtual School Annual Report 2021</i>		
<b>Report from:</b>	Kate Leyshon, Headteacher, Sutton Virtual School		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough-wide		
<b>Chair of Board:</b> <b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Marian James		
<b>Author/Contact Number:</b>	Kate Leyshon, Headteacher, Sutton Virtual School 07515137705		
<b>Company Values:</b> <b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	Ambitious for Sutton 1. Being active citizens 2. Making informed choices 3. Living well independently 4. Keeping people safe 5. Smarter ways of working		
<b>Background Documents:</b>	<a href="#"><u>'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children'</u></a> (February 2018) <a href="#"><u>Promoting the education of children with a social worker (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u></a> (September 2021)		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	26 November 2021

This report comprises three parts, detailing the key areas of responsibility and work of the Sutton Virtual School over the last academic year and demonstrating impact on educational planning, achievement, and progress. The *Sutton Virtual School Annual Report*, alongside the *Sutton Virtual School Education Improvement Plan*, highlights recent achievements and priorities for the 2021-22 Academic Year.



Sutton Virtual School is part of Cognus Ltd, who are commissioned by London Borough Sutton to deliver educational services.

## Summary Sutton Virtual School Annual Report to Children in Care Council



### To Sutton Children in Care Council: Tribe & Unite

Dear Sutton children,

This report describes how Sutton Virtual School works closely with foster carers, social workers, and schools to help support your education.

We do this by:

- ensuring we are there to support you, your social worker, carer, and teachers whenever educational support is needed
  - ensuring that you are placed in Good and Outstanding schools
  - ensuring the spending of the Pupil Premium Grant supports your learning
  - ensuring that you are quickly admitted to new a school or college, when needed
- helping you develop the highest aspirations, skills, and knowledge to prepare you for your future career and adulthood

### What is working well?

Sutton Children Looked After continue to achieve improved GCSE results in many measures

We have provided more training and networking opportunities for your teachers to learn more about how to support you well

We have started working with a second university, who will invite you to visit them early next year so that you can see what it is like to attend university

Sutton care leavers have chosen to work with us to show you how possible it is to achieve well in education if you are care experienced

We have continued to develop our website for families and schools to gain more information to support your education

We have provided more trauma and attachment support in schools than ever before to help teachers to develop further knowledge

We ran our first face to face enrichment activities, including a residential writing course in Yorkshire

We continued to ensure that you have high quality access to technology to support your learning

**What can be improved?**

We want all children to make good progress in their learning to reach their academic potential.

To help achieve this will:

Introduce early learning play-based learning activities for our youngest children

Continue to invest in reading materials for you to read at home

Continue to use tuition to support learning beyond school if you need support

Continue to provide training and networking opportunities to your teachers so they can support your learning better

We would love to hear your thoughts on how we can better help you, so please send us a message us on the contact details below and we will ensure that you are listened to. We will then write back to you to tell you how we are going to respond.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Leyshon, Headteacher, Sutton Virtual School

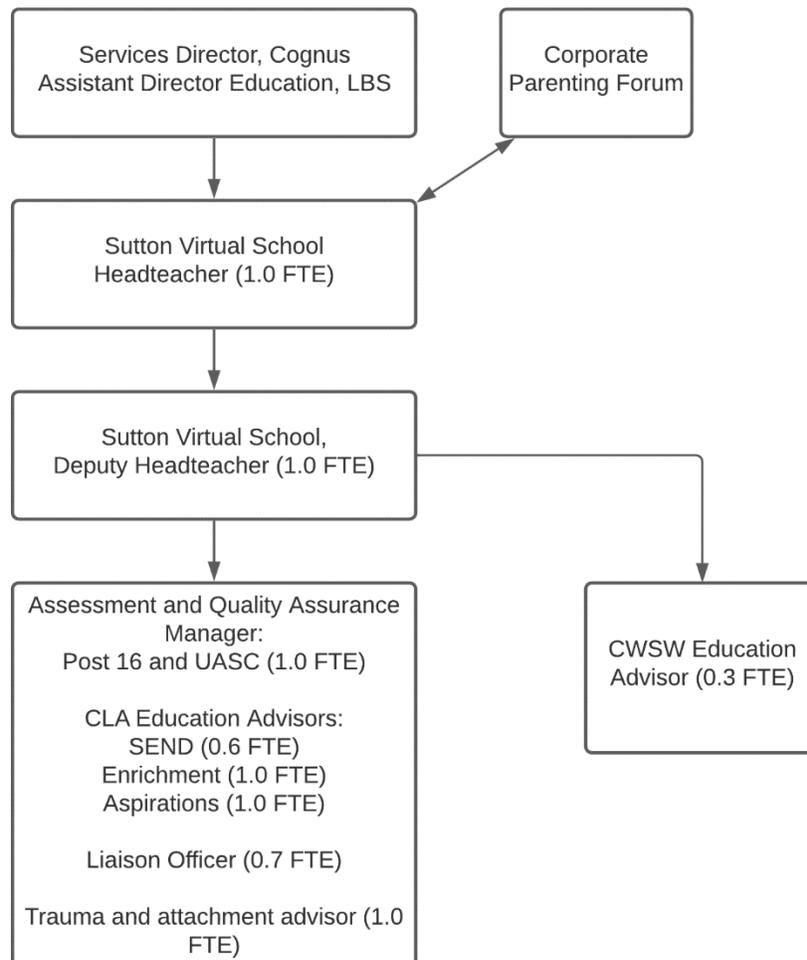
[Kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk](mailto:Kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk), 07515137705

## Part 1: Responsibilities & Priorities

The key areas of responsibility for Sutton Virtual School are:

<b>1</b>	<b>To promote the Education of Children Looked After</b>
1a	All Sutton CLA are accessing appropriate and high-quality education provision that meets their needs.
1b	All Sutton CLA of Statutory School age have a high quality and up to date PEP, which is reviewed termly (i.e., three PEPs per year).
1c	Early Years CLA are supported appropriately through the Early Years PEP and Early Years Foundation Stage Premium
1d	Post 16 CLA are supported through their transition to Leaving Care and into gainful EET (education, employment, training) through access to termly PEPs, careers guidance and structured support
<b>2</b>	<b>To carry out local authority Children Looked After education monitoring functions and statutory returns (including Ofsted)</b>
2a	Robust procedures in place to monitor attendance, exclusions, attainment, and progress for all Sutton CLA, placed in and out of borough.
2b	Tracking of a range of data parameters to inform monthly reporting against Key Performance Indicators and analysis through interim and annual reports to the local authority, Cognus Board of Directors, the DfE and Ofsted.
2c	Regular monitoring of children who are 'Children Missing Education' or with alternative timetables
<b>3</b>	<b>Ensuring that 100% of Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is deployed in line with the conditions of the grant and for the benefit of CLA</b>
3a	The PEP process demonstrates personalised PPP spend on targeted support to meet learner needs, enable progress, and improve attainment and impact is measured through subsequent review.
3b	Sutton Virtual School commissioning activity is evaluated annually; spot purchasing, and high value contracts are all conducted and monitored in line with safeguarding and commissioning requirements.
<b>4</b>	<b>To promote the education of children with a social worker and children previously looked after</b>
4a	Provide strategic leadership to schools, social care, and other professionals to promote the education of Children with a Social Worker (Child in Need, Child Protection, Children with Disabilities)
4b	Provide advice and guidance to adoptive and Special Guardianship Order parents, schools, and other professionals in relation to the education of Children Previously Looked After.

## The structure of the Sutton Virtual School Service:



Sutton Virtual School is committed to partnership working to improve educational planning and outcomes for Sutton Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, and now additionally Children with a Social Worker. We continue to work collaboratively with many services including:

- Social Care teams across Children’s Services, including CLA, Fostering, Children with Disabilities, Leaving Care, Court, Family Support and Care Planning, Early Help and Integrated Support, Referral and Assessment Service, Adoption, and Independent Reviewing Officer teams
- Sutton Foster Carers Association and Foster Forum
- CLA Psychology and CLA Health teams
- Advocacy and mentoring with MAPS
- Cognus Educational Services including SEND, Inclusion, Therapies, Education Psychology; Safeguarding and Admissions
- Sutton Designated Teacher Network

- Sutton Headteacher networks (Secondary, Primary and Special School)
- Children in Care Council (collaboratively delivering a programme of enrichment activities)
- Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation
- Rees Centre, Oxford University
- Pan London Virtual School Headteacher Network & National Association of Virtual School Headteachers

## **Part 2: Local and National Updates**

### **Local Developments**

#### ***Developments in Sutton Virtual School***

This year we have focused on:

- Ensuring our children recover from any lost learning and educational opportunities resulting from COVID.
- Embedding a new ePEP system to support improved outcomes for young people through better data management systems
- Increasing our young people's access to authentic care leaver advice to promote higher educational aspirations
- Increasing opportunities for our young people to build an educational community of support with care experienced peers
- Increasing support for professionals to increasingly meet learning and trauma and attachment needs
- Developing the strategic direction for the new Children with Social Worker responsibilities to ensure that the future pathway of development is clearly mapped out and that professionals working with Sutton are better informed in how they can support the education of this cohort of children.

#### ***COVID Recovery***

Two years on from the emergence of COVID-19, we have been working hard to ensure that all children receive appropriate support to catch up on any missed learning experiences. We have used the principles of Levers of Recovery (Professor Barry Carpenter, Oxford Brookes University) to help us devise our COVID Recovery Plans, considering each of the following strands:

- Relationships
- Community
- Transparent curriculum
- Metacognition
- Space

#### Relationships:

We have supported schools and foster carers as children transitioned back to school. We have continued to provide laptops for children, when required, to enable children to learn effectively during periods of COVID isolation and enabling children to access home based learning with carers more effectively. The introduction of ePEP has also supported the development of a single electronic space for recording of data related to the child's education; this will support ongoing multi-agency relationships and improved data quality.

#### Community:

To support the post COVID social and emotional development of our children we have introduced face to face enrichment activities throughout the summer to support wider enrichment activities linked to learning and social, emotional, mental health development. The introduction of Early Years play-based learning activities was also developed as part of our COVID recovery planning, and we have encouraged our carer community to support these initiatives wherever possible.

#### Transparent Curriculum:

Schools have been encouraged to use the National Tutoring Programme funding to provide tuition where appropriate and Sutton Virtual School have used the DfE tuition funding to additionally support our children's learning, ensuring that tuition is in place wherever it is required through PEP meetings.

#### Metacognition:

We have used the COVID Recovery Premium to purchase Educational Psychology and Speech and Language support, which has been used to support young people and professionals to ensure that appropriate learning strategies are being employed within the classroom and support the child to have an increased awareness of their own needs and build self-help strategies.

#### Space:

We have developed "trauma surgeries" to support professionals including Trauma Champions and Designated Teachers and launched supporting training videos around Executive Functioning and Trauma Informed Transition. We have created a virtual learning space through a podcast community and Sutton Virtual School website pages.

#### ***ESOL School***

During the COVID lockdown period many colleges with ESOL courses stopped taking new admissions, which impacted new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) arrivals as there were few ESOL learning places available. In response to having five young people who could not find a suitable college place during the summer term, we put in place temporary educational provision at Just Learn in Mitcham so that the young people could receive full time daily ESOL learning and gain their initial ESOL

qualifications. This action had the **impact of ensuring that UASC arrivals were quickly engaged in education, increasing their language skills, and ensuring they had their first formal learning qualification before starting the ESOL summer school.** All five young people were able to start appropriate ESOL college places in September as ESOL admissions returned to normal and no young person was educationally disadvantaged because of COVID.

### ***ePEP launch***

We launched the new ePEP in September 2021, after 6 months of preparation work behind the scenes developing the system and training professionals. We are now using the ePEP for all PEP meetings and have ceased sending Word based documents. All data and information are now held within the ePEP system, and the child will have access to their educational records at any point in the future. The IRO has been linked to the ePEP system and they are able to access, review and make timely comments on PEPs as they feel appropriate. Social workers have a role in adding the most up to date care information and can input their educational view. Foster carers also have access to a Foster Carer view section so they can register their view in advance of the PEP and can download the PEP to share with supervising social workers, as appropriate. The launch has gone well, and PEPs have been taking place for all young people throughout the Autumn term.

### ***Enrichment programme***

We were able to launch our enrichment programme, aimed at providing a range of educationally linked activities and opportunities for our young people to broaden their educational experiences and raise their educational aspirations.

### ***Soundtrap music technology course***

The first activity was music technology online and the group of young people who took part created some fantastic music, explaining in their [podcast episode](#) how much they enjoyed the experience. The young people were able to produce a [range of music tracks](#) to showcase their talents.

### ***CLA Fun Day***

We jointly hosted the Fun Day at the Quad with the Children in Care Council. A beautiful sunny day saw many children playing sports, creating art, learning circus skills, and enjoying an ice cream whilst foster carers, professionals and Counsellors were able to build relationships with each other. The day was a fantastic way to finally host our first face to face enrichment activity and feedback was strongly in support of future events like this to build care experienced community support in Sutton.



### ***Arvon Writing Residential***

At the end of August, the first Arvon writing residential trip took eight young people to Yorkshire for a magical week of outstanding natural environment and comradeship, as well as excellent tutelage to support them to create inspiring poetry that they performed with pride. The young people worked daily on writing skills, and each completed a final piece of writing that they narrated to the whole group at the end of the week. The young people reported that they hugely valued the opportunity to gain additional educational support in the company of care experienced peers and many reported having established long lasting friendships.



### ***Black History Month literacy initiative and beyond***

For the second year in a row, we were able to provide books to our statutory school age Children Looked After in October during Black History Month. We selected texts that were age / ability specific for the children and worked with foster carers to ensure that books were read together to support cultural learning. We will be sending out books that have a focus on disability during December to coincide with International Day of Person's with a Disability to ensure that our children continue to have a broad literacy learning experience that supports learning around diversity and inclusion.

### ***ESOL summer school***

We ran our second ESOL summer school during the summer holidays for 20 ESOL learners who had recently arrived in the UK as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). The immediate educational need for these learners is to gain English language skills, so the daily sessions were invaluable in providing them the opportunity to study for ESOL English and Math's qualifications outside term time. The young people were also able to take part in a programme of broader learning in the afternoon sessions and proudly created a music video when taking part in a music technology session.

### ***Aspiration Library***

We have continued to engage our young people in a range of aspiration supporting activities including Money Ready and have extended our provision further to introduce an Aspiration Library, which will feature care leavers telling their inspiring educational stories. We have featured [Mushari Muzel](#) who has progressed to university after arriving in the UK with little English only a few years before. We also ran a virtual session with [Isabelle Kirkham](#), a care experienced young person willing to speak to our young people considering applying for university. This session was well attended and is promoted on our website to continue to enable our young people to see that these pathways are realistically available to them. We have recently recruited three more Sutton Care Leavers who are willing to support the Aspiration Library and hope to feature their stories during the coming year.

### ***Widening Participation links expanded***

We have [continued to our relationship with Solent University](#) (a university in Southampton with a wide range of courses from engineering, maritime studies, media, music and social work) to support our children prepare for university attendance. We have jointly hosted online webinars and shared materials via our website and Twitter. We have also developed a link with a contrasting university, St George's University, London that has a medical focus for many of its courses. In February, we are taking our first cohort of young people to visit a university for the day as part of our Enrichment programme and will be met by Mushari Muzel, a Sutton Care Leaver who is currently studying Radiotherapy at St Georges University.

### ***Early years learning resources and guidance***

Following up on the success of continuing to provide each of our youngest children with a Cubbie Bear to promote aspirations, education and the role of the Virtual School, we have expanded our support for early years children by [introducing half termly learning packages for our 2-4 year olds](#) to help carers promote learning through play and discovery in the home and natural environment. Each package is accompanied by learning resource guidance. We consider the development of a strong home learning environment to be a key foundation to building a solid educational platform for our children and foster carers have engaged well with us with this initiative.

**Executive Functioning videos and Trauma Informed Transition Training**

We have continued to provide training to foster carers and professionals through online meetings and training videos. We launched the series of [six Executive Functioning videos](#) early in the year, and have added two [Trauma Informed Transition videos](#) more recently. We have worked with Designated Teachers and Trauma Champions at six-weekly online network meetings, with care experienced keynote speakers, as well as Educational Psychology professionals. We have created a '[New to Designated Teacher](#)' training video to ensure that onboarding can take place at any point in the year. There has also been an [ePEP training section](#) created on the website to support professionals and foster carers accessing the new ePEP system.

**Development of the Trauma and Attachment role**

We have continued to develop trauma and attachment provision in Sutton as we recognise that post-COVID there is an even greater need for this support. We have ensured that every primary school in Sutton has committed to whole-school training by April 2022 and have undertaken training with the first secondary schools. Trauma Champions have been recruited for each school that has received training and they benefit from network meetings hosted by Sasha-Gay Brown to ensure ongoing growth and development around trauma in schools. The Trauma Champion sessions to date have featured the showing of the film *Be-longing*, which highlights the experiences of a child in care as well as speaker Saira-Jayne Jones as a prominent care experienced professional and artist who speaks openly about her care journey and provides professionals guidance. We have also held sessions with Kate Payne, CLA Educational Psychologist who has been able to offer anonymised surgery style sessions to support professionals.

[We have expanded our trauma and attachment targeted offer](#) so that more young people can access this support within schools and have completed the first VIG (Video Interaction Guidance) programme with Muschamp’s School.

*“The VIG Therapy has really helped me to focus on the relationship I have with my pupil and a great opportunity to reflect on my practise. It has helped reassure me that what I do instinctually is the right thing to do and made me more aware about how I can do some of these things more deliberately to help regulate my pupil. It has also helped me understand my pupil more and I have been sharing my learning with colleagues, so we have a greater understanding of trauma and attachment as a school. Sasha-Gay has been a great support to me as a colleague during this therapy making this an empowering experience.” LS - Muschamp’s*

**Progress report from school:**

<b>Initial goals of client:</b>	<b>Building communication</b>
<b>Client’s rating: where they are at <b>start</b> &amp; where they <b>hope to be</b></b>	<b>A</b> Not there 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 5 6 7 <b>8</b> 9 10 Brilliant

<b>Client's rating: where they are at the end of the intervention</b>	<b>A</b> Not there 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 <b>10</b> Brilliant
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<b>Initial goals of client:</b>	<b>Managing conflict when dysregulated</b>
<b>Client's rating: where they are at start &amp; where they hope to be</b>	<b>B</b> Not there 1 2 3 <b>4</b> 5 6 7 <b>8</b> 9 10 Brilliant
<b>Client's rating: where they are at the end of the intervention</b>	<b>A</b> Not there 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 <b>10</b> Brilliant

**Education Untapped podcast features Sutton's children**

Cognus' [Education Untapped podcast](#) series has gone from strength to strength year, receiving more than 1500 downloads with several episodes featuring Sutton's children looked after. It was great to hear how much a group of young people that took part in music technology enrichment sessions valued the experience and to hear the story of a care leaver who returned to education after a difficult period where she was NEET. We hope to feature an episode on the extension of Virtual School responsibilities in the new year with other VSH supporting.



this

**Virtual Voice newsletter**

We have continued to publish our termly newsletter, [The Virtual Voice](#), to keep our foster carers and wider Corporate Parenting stakeholders updated with the latest activities and focuses within Sutton Virtual School. We feature upcoming events, opportunities for foster carer/young people engagement, key resources and website links, as well success stories from within the Virtual School community.

**Website and communication**

We have continued to develop our website pages, ensuring there is an increasing amount of support, advice and guidance for families, schools, and professionals. We have added a care leaver section and have received contact from care leavers across the UK who have found our website helpful when seeking support. We continue to publicise the apprenticeship, traineeship, and internship opportunities, such as the Prince's Trust, that are available for post 16 young people on our website and Twitter, and these are regularly shared by other Virtual Schools. We have introduced an ePEP section of the website with training and support videos to ensure professionals can access PEPs appropriately and have added a section to support the [new duties that relate to children with a social worker](#).

## **Impact of the Graduated Response for Preventing Exclusions**

The [Graduated Response for Preventing Exclusions](#), which was co-ordinated by Sutton Virtual School, in partnership with local schools and LBS has helped promote a partnership approach and greater inclusion in Sutton schools. **Wallington County Grammar School have fully integrated the principle underpinning the Graduated Response into their Behaviour Policy** and now actively use this to ensure that SEMH needs are well supported from an early stage to reduce the need to issue an exclusion. There was a fantastic success story for one of our young people attending Wallington County Grammar School who was well managed with interventions reflecting the needs of the young person and exclusion was prevented at key points along the educational journey. **As a result, the young person successfully completed their post 16 education, achieving three A\* at A Level and taking up a place at Cambridge University to study Physics.** This is a great example of how the partnership working around a young person can stabilise an educational situation and lead to strong educational outcomes longer term.

## **National Developments**

### **Children with a Social Worker responsibilities**

In September, new responsibilities for Virtual School Headteachers were introduced by the DfE to include [strategic leadership for Children with a Social Worker](#). Cognus recruited Sara Martin to the role of Deputy Headteacher for the Virtual School to lead this strategic development and have put in place an initial action plan to support the early stages of development. We have identified four key objectives:

- To begin to enhance partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together to support Children with a Social Worker
- To identify the needs of the cohort
- To begin to address barriers to poor educational outcomes and promote educational progress
- To offer advice and support to key professionals to help children make progress

We have launched a consultation with local schools and partners and have received many responses that have helped us begin to shape our offer. We have set up an initial website area that we will continue to develop as we progress and have recruited a social worker on an initial fixed term contract until July 2022 to Sutton Virtual School for 1.5 days a week to develop change in relation to education within the social care system and to link with the social workers in schools project currently running in Sutton's schools. We have worked with Children's Social Care to further develop the Mosaic recording system so that school attendance data can be captured by social workers through their Team Around the Child meetings. We have begun to develop plans with the Social Care Therapeutic Hub to introduce Educational Psychology and Speech and

Language Therapy credits that can be used to support direct work with children and have gained support from Cognus services that CWSW will be prioritised for educational service support.

## Part 3: Children Looked After

### Profile of Sutton CLA, 31 March 2021

Local and national outcome measures and statistics for Children Looked After in England are based on those that have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31 March of the academic year. For the purposes of this report, profile data and performance analysis of 2012-21 is therefore restricted to include only those Sutton Children Looked After who were continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31 March 2021.

#### Number of Children Looked After *(in care on 31 March 2021)*

Total CLA	2-4	Reception	Primary	Primary <i>(% out of borough)</i>	Secondary	Secondary <i>(% out of borough)</i>	16-18
235	16	5	39	59%	91	75%	84

The numbers of Children Looked After in Sutton reduced slightly compared to the previous two years. There has been no additional increase in the number of Post 16 CLA. The number of primary and secondary students have stayed broadly the same this year. The number of primary and secondary Children Looked After educated out of Borough has remained broadly the same as last year.

#### CLA by Gender, Ethnicity, Special Needs *(in care on 31 March 2021)*

% Female	% Male	Predominant Ethnic Group White British	2 <sup>nd</sup> Predominant Ethnic Group Black British / African	EHCP	SEND Support
45%	55%	51%	7%	19%	23%

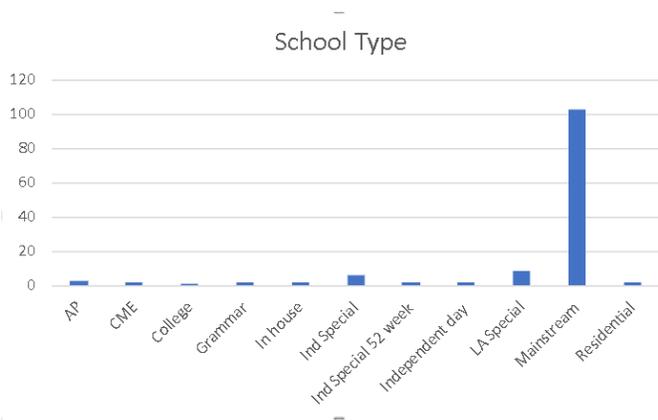
There is a little change in the percentage of males and female. There is little change in the percentage of the White British ethnic group and a Black British / African becomes the second largest ethnic group.

#### Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

The SEND Code of Practice suggests that a high proportion of Children Looked After have some form of special educational need, and in Sutton this is 42% of statutory school age CLA, which is less than last year. There has been a 2% increase in the percentage of CLA with an EHCP and 4% decrease in CLA SEND Support needs.

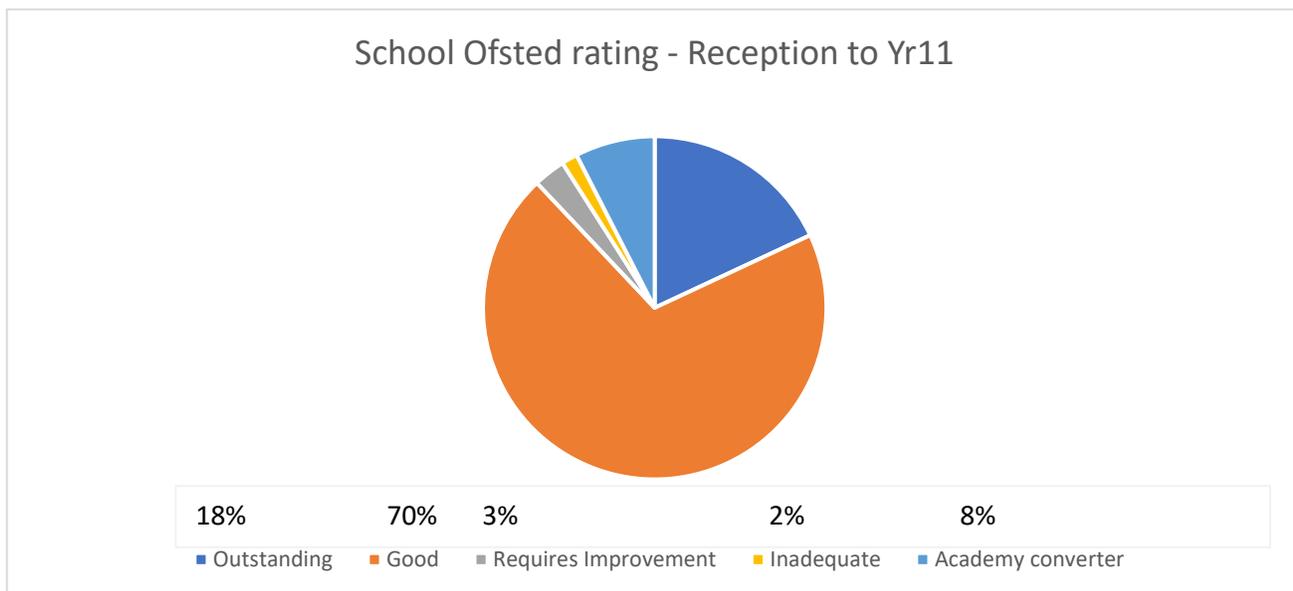
**Range of education provision by type** (School age CLA in care 12 months or more on 31 March 2021)

The vast majority of Sutton CLA are in mainstream school, although 15% have their educational needs met in either a special education setting, pupil referral unit, alternative provision, or secure setting, which is 5% lower than last year.



There are 10 young people with EHCPs who have their needs met at mainstream school (2 more than last year) and 18 young people with EHCPs who are educated in either a special education, pupil referral unit, alternative provision, or secure setting.

**Quality of Educational Placement** (School age CLA in care 12 months or more on 31 March 2021)



Placing Children Looked After in high quality schools is a key priority for Sutton. Where it is necessary to for a child to change school, the school’s OFSTED rating will be one of the main considerations in making that decision as this helps us know about the quality of teaching and learning. Analysis of the schools our children attend shows an increase in percentage of pupils attending a school that is rated

'Good' or 'Outstanding' at 88%. An analysis of all school admissions this year showed **100% children being admitted to good or outstanding schools during this year**. There was 1 pupil out of education due to difficulty getting an appropriate specialist SEND setting to meet their needs, the child was temporarily receiving tuition until a place became available. 10 schools have not yet received an Ofsted rating (due to being an academy converter). There are 2 Sutton CLA in a provision that has been rated as inadequate and 4 in provision rated as Requires Improvement; at the time of admission, the schools were rated good or outstanding and their Ofsted grading has subsequently changed after the child was admitted to the school. We maintain a risk assessment for each child who is being educated in a school that is Ofsted rated less than good and intervene if we consider there are any concerns related to the children, and will change their school we feel it is required.

## **Part 4: Children with a social worker (CWSW)**

### **Profile of Sutton CWSW, 31 March 2021**

The responsibilities for CWSW commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and therefore it is not possible to report data on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, as this was not known. In future years, we will begin to report on the number of Child Protection, Children in Need and Children with Disabilities in Sutton and any early educational data that we are able to access.

## **Part 5: Sutton Virtual School funding 2020-21**

### **Service Funding**

Sutton Virtual School fund most staffing and operational costs through Designated School Grant (DSG) funding. However, the DSG does not meet the full costs of staffing and operating costs, therefore 20% of the Pupil Premium Grant is used to secure additional staffing capacity to provide a more flexible, responsive, and impactful service. This additional capacity has provided support over and above the statutory minimum for Sutton Children Looked After, professionals and foster carers.

Sutton Virtual School uses the Previously Looked After Children Grant to contribute towards the funding of the role of Trauma and Attachment Advisor, which ensures that there is ongoing training, support and intervention for all children affected by trauma and attachment in Sutton, including those previously in care. The funding also contributes towards the costs of the Sutton Virtual School staffing to ensure there is capacity to provide advice and guidance in relation to Children Previously Looked After and provide capacity to develop website resources for families and professionals.

Sutton Virtual School received the first instalment of the grant related to the new responsibilities for Children with a Social Worker in Autumn 2021. The grant has only been confirmed at this stage until

March 2022 and therefore appointments have been made on an interim basis at this time. The grant will be used to fund an interim Virtual School Deputy Headteacher position, and a social worker in the role of Education Advisor for Children with a Social Worker. As the consultation phase of the CWSW strategy progresses we are exploring the best use of any remaining funding to support the new Virtual School responsibilities.

## **Pupil Premium Plus**

Sutton Virtual School receives £2345 Pupil Premium Plus for each statutory school age Sutton Child Looked After and a total Pupil Premium Grant of £391,615 was received in 2020-21. The Pupil Premium Plus Grant is managed by the Sutton Virtual School Headteacher through a centrally held local authority budget and deployed on a 'needs' led basis in consultation with link professionals and in line with conditions of the grant.

Below is a breakdown of how the Pupil Premium Plus was distributed in 2020-21 to support the education of our children.

### Pupil Premium Impact Statement for 2020-21 Financial Year

Provision	Pupil Premium	Impact
<p><b>CLA Education Budget</b></p> <p>Support commissioned by Sutton Virtual School</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tuition</li> <li>- educational assessments</li> <li>- educational clubs and activities</li> <li>- holiday clubs and summer schools</li> <li>- educational visits or residential trips</li> <li>- therapeutic support</li> <li>- educational psychology</li> <li>- mentoring</li> </ul>	<p>£102,915</p>	<p>Tuition £38,714</p> <p>An analysis of the impact of tuition in 2020-21 shows that of our 68 young people who received tuition, <b>69% achieved the expected outcome by the end of the period of tuition. 44% young people showed an improvement in academic progress in their end of year examination.</b></p> <p>Educational Psychology £8,775</p> <p>An analysis of the impact of Cognus Educational Psychology work with our young people shows that in 2020-21, of the 16 young people receiving support or assessment, <b>100% have had barriers to learning identified and for all young people the next steps of planning have been informed by the support.</b></p> <p>Cognus Therapies £3,340</p> <p>An analysis of the impact of Cognus Therapies work with our young people shows that of the 11 young people receiving support or assessment, <b>100% have had barriers to learning identified and for all young people the next steps of planning have been informed by the support.</b></p> <p>Extra-curricular learning £3,434</p> <p>One young person completed AAT online accountancy qualification, one young person completed Level 2 customer service qualification, 6 young people received music lessons outside of school.</p> <p>Flash Academy £2,000</p> <p>Flash Academy ESOL, which can be accessed via an app on a smart phone or online on a laptop, brings together a familiar game driven interface which young people find easy to use, with powerful learning content. The fact that it teaches our ESOL students using instructions in their own home language is quite unique among ESOL teaching software.</p>

		<p>Sutton Virtual School offers a free account to every CLA whose first language is not English, to support them alongside their school or college ESOL course. <b>We currently have 30 students using the app regularly and between them they have completed thousands of lessons over the past year.</b></p> <p>Our Autumn term incentive scheme, which asks users to complete 100 lessons each, before the end of term, is already proving successful with an <b>almost 10-fold increase in logins since the start of the scheme.</b></p> <p><b>Statistics: 30 current users, 2,000 lessons completed, and 10,000 new words learnt in the last 3 months</b></p> <p>Laptops £38,714</p> <p>During COVID we ensured that all CLA had <b>laptops to support them learning at home during the lockdown.</b> We put this support in place within days of the COVID lockdown starting and in advance of the Government announcement around laptop availability for CLA. We chose to purchase good quality laptops that were set up with Microsoft software and enabled them to work on both Office 365 and Google Classroom school learning systems. We were able to provide 55 young people with laptops, software licenses and online safety settings.</p> <p>Miscellaneous educational support / resources £9,938</p> <p>To support the achievement of educational SMART targets in PEPs, there is a requirement to spot purchase educational resources to support the achievement of this target. These requests are wide ranging but can include but are not limited to language learning resources, photo dictionaries, handwriting support materials, art materials, extended enquiry materials, learning games, and revision guides.</p>
<p><b>Payments to schools</b></p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1:1 support</li> </ul>	<p>£90,682</p>	<p>PPP is allocated to schools through the PEP process after careful identification of individual needs to promote educational progress. The school are required to set SMART targets for the young person, monitor their progress and report back at the next PEP. Through this process of working with our schools, we have been able to see a wide range of positive impacts in addition to the published academic results that are captured in PEP documents.</p>



		<p>who, owing to their CLA, PCLA, SGO or CAO status, receive additional academic mentoring from the CLA teacher.</p> <p><b>The attendance of students who are currently CLA for the 2021-2022 academic year to date is 99.5%.</b> Each CLA student receives weekly, highly tailored, one-to-one academic mentoring sessions with the focus being on improving attainment in English and Mathematics. Working one-to-one with their teacher in these regular sessions also allows students to develop a relationship of trust with a key adult, established in the school, who can be responsive to needs in other areas as well. The CLA teacher is someone who students, and their carers turn to for support in a range of situations, from missing PE kits to feeling in need of support at break or lunch times.</p> <p>Having one adult who can respond in a sympathetic and flexible way has contributed to the excellent attendance figure of the <b>CLA students this year: one student’s attendance has jumped from 74.5% (2020-21) to 100% to date (2021-2022) since starting academic mentoring sessions in September.</b> Qualitative feedback, provided at termly PEP meetings, also suggests that <b>school is a place where our students feel safe and happy and all CLA students name the CLA teacher as an adult who they would turn to if they ever experienced difficulty.</b> Currently, with this valued academic support, <b>all but one of our CLA students are making expected progress or greater in English and Mathematics.</b> The one student who is not making expected progress in English and Mathematics (relative to their KS2 results), has been predicted a grade 7 in GCSE Math’s and a grade 5 in GCSE English Literature and is on course to achieve an attainment 8 score of 63, allowing them to access a range of post-16 pathways which are currently of interest to them.</p>
<p><b>Attendance monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welfare Call</li> </ul>	<p>£19,635</p>	<p>Welfare Call are commissioned to collect attendance data for our CLA cohort. We have been able to maintain detailed attendance data for each of our young people and ensure that where attendance is identified as a concern, this is discussed in PEP meetings so that interventions can be put in place.</p>
<p><b>Literacy development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letterbox (6-12 years)</li> </ul>	<p>£19,781</p>	<p>We have continued to expand our literacy strategy in 2020-21 to include the distribution of more books to our young people through the Letterbox scheme, Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and more targeted texts to supplement and extend school/college studies and promote a wider interest in reading in the home. This was particularly important during lockdown where children didn’t have access to school libraries in the usual way to access reading materials.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dolly Parton Imagination library (2-5 years)</li> <li>- Book tokens (12-18 years)</li> <li>- Black History Month books</li> <li>- Early Years learning resources</li> <li>- COVID home learning resources</li> </ul>		<p>The half termly Letter Box programme continues to promote literacy, numeracy and reading for pleasure and to support foster carers to develop good routines for home learning. Work has taken place with the LBS fostering team to ensure that Supervising Social Workers oversee carer involvement in promoting good literacy routines for CLA in Sutton.</p> <p>We have been able to continue the use of Dolly Parton Imagination Library for CLA aged 2-5 years, who receive an age-appropriate book parcel each month. This more frequent book delivery is helping to promote the importance of home reading even more strongly with our carers.</p> <p>Book tokens have replaced Letterbox from age 12-14 years as we wanted to promote independent reading choice as a way of preparing students for life-long reading enjoyment. We also use book tokens as rewards for young people demonstrating the four Sutton Virtual School values.</p> <p>During Black History Month, we distributed books to all CLA aged 2-18 that were age/ability specific to increase their cultural learning as well as giving them further opportunities to develop their literacy. Foster Carers were engaged to support this initiative and promote the use of the reading material in the home.</p> <p>During COVID we send learning resource packages to home that were age / ability specific to ensure that there was a continued focus on learning in the home at all times.</p>
<p>Training related costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online training development with other services</li> <li>- Podcast development</li> <li>- MA module</li> <li>- NAVSH conference</li> <li>- NAVSH membership</li> </ul>	<p>£ 7,895</p>	<p>Sutton Virtual School training for designated teachers, social workers and Governors continues to inform standards of support for CLA and Post CLA in schools. Basic costs for hosting were funded through Pupil Premium Plus so that sessions can be offered free of charge to all participants, in and out of borough, to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation. Sessions have been well attended by Sutton schools as well as out of Borough settings.</p> <p>We have commissioned the development of online training with the collaboration of Educational Psychologists with Sutton Virtual School. We have also engaged with care experienced consultants to develop both live virtual delivery of sessions as well as ‘evergreen’ podcast content that has not only supported professionals within our direct networks and local area but has also reached a national and worldwide audience.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guest speakers for trauma champion/designated teacher network meetings</li> <li>- Video Interaction Guidance supervision</li> <li>- Careers / NEET training</li> </ul>		<p>All Sutton Virtual School staff have maintained their continued professional development, including two team members undertaking a Masters module on Children Looked After and Trauma through Bath Spa University / NAVSH. We have invested in training and ongoing supervision for VIG trauma training, and the first complete programme has been delivered in a Sutton school.</p> <p>A professional membership to NAVSH has been maintained and attendance at the National Conference included.</p>
<p><b>Total Pupil Premium</b></p>	<p><b>£391,615</b></p>	

## **Pupil Premium Strategy 2021-22**

We will be continuing to prioritise funding for schools to support the achievement of individual SMART targets through PEP meetings and will ensure that where need for additional targeted intervention is identified, these are funded. We are continuing to ensure there is educational psychology and therapeutic support and will be expanding the use of funding in this area, not just to provide direct work with individual children but also to provide additional training and guidance for teachers and other professionals. We are promoting broader curriculum engagement through the enrichment programme and will be funding some larger projects to engage our children.

We will continue to ensure that all young people have good access to technology to support their wider learning including our Aspire Life Skills Programme. There will be ongoing investment in a CLA tutor in Greenshaw High School, as they continue to have high numbers of care experienced young people and are able to demonstrate strong impact for the children.

The promotion of literacy will remain a high priority and the children will continue to receive regular age-appropriate reading materials. We will continue to promote the importance of play-based learning in the home for the youngest children, with funding directed towards innovative and engaging initiatives.

We will be ending the commissioning agreement with Welfare Call and moving fully to eGOV for both our PEPs and attendance, creating an efficiency saving both in terms of money and time. Using ePEP, we will be able to track the impact of Pupil Premium Plus spend more effectively against SMART targets.

We will continue to support young people to access additional out of school tuition to support their learning and close gaps in learning. The impact of tuition will be more easily measured through ePEP tracking.

We will continue to invest in trauma and attachment support for Sutton schools and will ensure that Sutton becomes increasingly trauma informed and responsive.

## Appendix A: CLA Performance Report 2021

For the purposes of this report, profile data and performance analysis for 2021 is restricted to include only those Sutton Children Looked After who were continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31 March 2021, in keeping with criteria for local and national statistics. Internal monitoring and interim reports provide an alternate snapshot of outcomes for all Children Looked After at the point of examination, regardless of the length of time in care.

### Early Years Foundation Stage: No formal assessments this year

There were no formal assessments this year for EYFS due to COVID and therefore we are unable to include formal results in this report.

There were four young people in Reception Year in 2020-21, and two of these had been in care for more than a year. The information reported in the children's PEPs states that one child (who had been in care more than a year) was expected to reach a good level of development. The other child who had been in care more than a year, had made significant improvements from their starting point, demonstrating much fewer angry or withdrawn behaviour symptoms. One child, who was very new to care had significant gaps in their learning but showed considerable improvements in attendance since coming into care. A further child, also new to care had made strong improvements in attendance and was receiving SENCO input to support with identified learning needs.

### Key Stage 1 Phonics: No formal assessments this year

All phonics tests were cancelled this year due to COVID

### Key Stage 1: Tests cancelled due to COVID

All data is in % for CLA in care more than 12 months	2016-17 Cohort: 5				2017-18 Cohort: 4				2018-19 Cohort: 7				2019-20 Cohort: 5				2020-21 Cohort:			
	R	W	M	S	R	W	M	S	R	W	M	S	R	W	M	S	R	W	M	S
Sutton CLA Expected	40	20	60	60	33	33	67	100	57	43	71	71								
National CLA Expected	51	39	46	59	51	42	49	58	52	42	49	59								
Sutton CLA Greater Depth	0	0	0		0	0	0		14	14	14									
National CLA Greater Depth	9	4	6		9	4	6		11	6	8									

R (Reading), W (Writing), M (Math's), S (Science)

Key Stage 1 tests did not take place this year due to COVID and therefore we are unable to report formal results this year.

There were seven children in Year 2 in 2020-21 and five of those had been in care for more than a year. It was reported in PEPs that all children were making good progress in their learning relative to their starting point. In PEPs, two children were reported as being on track to meet expected standards in reading, one child was reported as being on track to meet expected standards in writing and one child on track to meet expected standards in Math’s. Three children have EHCP with learning needs that significantly impact their ability to reach expected levels of attainment.

**Key Stage 2: Tests cancelled due to COVID**

All data is in % for CLA in care more than 12 months	2016-17 Cohort: 10					2017-18 Cohort: 10					2018-19 Cohort: 7					2019-20 Tests cancelled Cohort: 14					2020-21 Tests cancelled Cohort:				
	R	W	M	R W M	G	R	W	M	R W M	G	R	W	M	R W M	G	R	W	M	R W M	G	R	W	M	R W M	G
Year 6																									
Sutton CLA Expected	60	80	90	50	90	80	70	70	60	80	57	43	57	43	57										
National CLA Expected	45	48	46	32	50	51	50	47	35	50	49	51	51	37	53										
National (All) Expected	72	76	75	61	77	75	78	76	64	78	73	79	79	65	78										
Sutton (All) Expected	80	83	83	72	84	83	84	83	74	85	79	83	84	72	84										
Sutton CLA Exceeding	20	20	10	0	10	40	10	30	10	30	0	0	0	0	15										
National CLA Exceeding	9	6	7	1	12	14	6	8	2	14	12	6	9	2	15										
National (All) Exceeding	25	18	23	9	31	28	20	24	10	35	26	20	27	11	36										
Sutton (All) Exceeding	33	25	36	15	44	38	28	37	18	52	35	26	41	18	48										

R (Reading), W (Writing), M (Math’s), RWM (Reading, Writing, Math’s combined), G (Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling)

Key Stage 2 tests did not take place this year due to COVID and therefore we are unable to report formal results this year.

There were seven children in Year 2 in 2020-21 all of whom had been in care for more than a year. It was reported in PEPs that all children were making good progress in their learning relative to their starting point. In PEPs, 3 children (43%) were reported as being on track to meet expected standards in reading and 1 of those children was reported as working at greater level of depth for reading. 2 children (29%) were reported as being on track to meet expected standards in writing. 2 children (29%) were reported as being on track to meet expected standards in Math’s and 1 of those children was reported as working at greater level of depth.

**Key Stage 1 to 2 Progress: Data not available due to tests being cancelled**

All data is in % for CLA in care more than 12	2016-17 Cohort: 10						2017-18 Cohort: 10						2018-19 Cohort: 7						2019-20 Cohort: 15			2020-21 Cohort:		
	R Exp Prog.	R Av Prog. Score	W Exp Prog.	W Av Prog. Score	M Exp Prog.	M Av Prog. Score	R Exp Prog.	R Av Prog. Score	W Exp Prog.	W Av Prog. Score	M Exp Prog.	M Av Prog. Score	R Exp Prog.	R Av Prog. Score	W Exp Prog.	W Av Prog. Score	M Exp Prog.	M Av Prog. Score	No tests due to COVID			No tests due to COVID		
Sutton CLA	60%	+2.69	60%	+3.28	60%	+2.38	70%	+4.17	70%	-0.07	70%	+3.08	40%	+1.60	33%	-0.36	40%	+1.77						
National CLA	46%	-0.69	49%	-0.93	45%	-1.10	50%	-0.15	49%	-0.81	47%	-0.78	49%	-0.23	47%	-0.87	46%	-0.97						
National (All)	51%	+0.00	52%	+0.00	50%	+0.00	52%	+0.03	54%	+0.03	51%	+0.03	52%	+0.01	52%	+0.02	52%	+0.02						
Sutton (All)	57%	+0.81	55%	+0.70	60%	+1.40	57%	+0.68	55%	+0.33	60%	+1.25	59%	+1.01	55%	+0.42	62%	+1.51						

R (Reading), W (Writing), M (Math's)

Tests were cancelled due to COVID at KS2 so there is no data available to show progress from KS1 to KS2 for this cohort.

**Key Stage 4:**

Key Stage 4 tests did not take place this year due to COVID and teacher assessments were used to generate grades for our children.

There were 30 children in Year 11 in 2020-21 and 22 of those had been in care for more than a year. At the time of writing this report the official examination statistics had not been released by the DfE and therefore we are only able to use the \*grade data we collected from schools and carers after the examination results were released at this time.

All data is in % for CLA in care more than 12	2017-18 Cohort: 16							2018-19 Cohort: 8							2019-20 Cohort: 21							
	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	
Sutton CLA	19.4	-1.57	19%	6%	6%	0%	0%	26.3	-1.39	25%	13%	13%	25%	13%			25%	17%	9%			
National CLA	18.8	-1.24	16%	12%	8%	5%	1%	25.1	-0.97	22%	14%	10%	7%	1%								
National (All)	44.6	-0.08	57%	46%	40%	26%	4%	46.7	-0.02	61%	49%	43%	27%	3%								
Sutton (All)	55.9	+0.32	73%	6%	60%	46%	9%	58.5	+0.38	78%	68%	64%	53%	8%								
All data is in % for CLA in care more than 12	2020-21 Cohort:																					
	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	Att. 8	Prog. 8	9-5 Eng. LL	9-5 Math	9-5 E&M	Tripl e sc. entry	+2 Lang entry	

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Sutton CLA			*27%	*23%	*9%														
National CLA																			
National (All)																			
Sutton (All)																			

- Based on our internal data, our Year 11 cohort achieved higher percentage of 9-5 grades in English and Math’s than previous years and the gap between English and Math’s results has continued to close.
- 32% young people achieved a grade 4 or above in English and Math’s
- 32% of young people achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade 4 or above including EM
- 50% of young people achieved 5 or more GCSE grades
- 86% achieved at least one qualification
- Last year, the Year 11 cohort had two (6% of cohort) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking students included and this year this increased to six (20% of cohort). This is significant as these students are working towards ESOL qualifications and not GCSE level. If the results are analysed without the UASC data, the GCSE examination results are significantly higher than last year in many areas as shown in green below.

**GCSE Results analysis (care for more than one year)**

	% without UASC	
	2019/20	2020/21
% 5+ in EM	13%	12%
% 4+ EM	30%	41%
%5+ English	26%	35%
% 4+ English	43%	53%
% 5+ Maths	17%	29%
% 4+ Maths	35%	41%
% with at least one GCSE	74%	76%
% with 5+ GCSE	61%	65%
% with 5 or more 4+ GCSE	35%	41%

**Key Stage 4: Successes and Challenges**

The GCSE results achieved this year continue to build on the successes of last year as we again recorded our strongest results, which is especially highlighted when UASC data is removed and illustrates the improvements that non ESOL young people are making at Key Stage 4.

Six (20%) Year 11 leavers have progressed to **study Level 3 qualifications, such as A-Levels**, which represents a pathway to university entry.

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Of the 30 Children Looked After that finished Year 11 and statutory schooling in July 2021; six had an Education Health and Care Plan, and an additional five received SEND Support interventions; five Year 11 students with an EHCP attended specialist provision. Three young people with EHCP achieved GCSE grades (two GCSEs grade 4, one GCSE grade 3, two GCSE grade 2; 5 GCSEs grade 1) as well as entry level 2 English and entry level 3 math's, entry level 3 Personal Development and Employability, and Functional Skills Hospitality & Catering Level 1 & 2. Five young people with an EHCP started in a post 16 educational destination.

**Key Stage 5: Destinations for all Year 12 and 13 young people on roll from September 2021**

30 young people started Year 12 and **93% were in education, employment, or training (EET) in September. By the end of November 2021, 90% of Year 12 CLA remained EET**, two were NEET and one in Cookham Wood HMP. The recently released national average for 17-year-old (Year 12) in EET was 76%, showing we have strong post 16 engagement in Sutton.

46 young people started year 13 and **80% were in education, employment, or training (EET) in September 2021, which is strong in comparison to the national average of 70% of 18-year-old care leavers in EET destinations.** Each young person who is NEET receives support to re-engage with education, employment or training from Sutton Virtual School, Integrated Youth Service and Leaving Care Team; they receive regular communication regarding opportunities available and are supported through the application process when they are ready to apply.

**Care Leavers: Achievements and Destinations**

52 Children Looked After became 'Care Leavers\*', of which nine have Education Health and Care Plans, six have received SEND Support interventions and 26 are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. 81% of these young people have positive EET outcomes as Care Leavers, which is **in line with record results from last year** and strong evidence of impact of the work done by Sutton Virtual School to support young people to remain EET.

\*Children leave care at age 18 when they become eligible for Adult Services. Sutton Virtual School typically supports young people who accept our service up until the summer following their 18th birthday.

Destination	Number of CLA	
Apprenticeship	0	42/ 52 (81%) EET
College	29	
Maternity	3	
University	1	
Traineeship	1	
Working	7	
Prison	1	
NEET / Unknown / Undecided	10	

## **Sutton Care Leavers in Higher Education**

One care leaver took up a university place in September 2021 and at least one more Sutton Care Leaver from previous years also took up a place. Post 18, Sutton Virtual School provides a service of advice and guidance, and this has supported young people on their journey towards higher education after leaving Sutton Virtual School. There have been 29 Sutton Care Leavers in attendance at university in the last four years.

## **Attendance & Exclusions for all pupils on roll, 2020-21**

Attendance: the overall average attendance for Sutton Children Looked After was 84.28%. COVID 19 has again had an impact on attendance figures this year with some children not attending during the December 2020 COVID lockdown for individual reasons, school enforced bubble closures and staggered restarts. There was also an increase in the number of illness (I) sessions recorded this year or medical (M), most likely caused by the reopening of medical services that had previously not been able to fulfil appointments.

- Permanent Exclusions: No CLA children were permanently excluded this year.
- Fixed Term Exclusions: 5.96% of eligible Sutton children had at least one fixed term exclusion in 2019-20. **This has reduced from 7.31% last year and 12% the year before.** We believe that this improved pattern is a result of the ongoing high levels of support from Sutton Virtual School staff to families and professionals and effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding to ensure needs are met early. There has also been reported evidence from schools that the 'Graduated Response to Prevent Exclusion' has helped provide alternatives to exclusion. Ongoing use of Pupil Premium Plus to fund Educational Psychology and therapeutic interventions to support professionals more effectively in schools, as well as implementation of trauma informed practice are all having a positive impact on reducing exclusions.

## **Appendix B: Good News Stories and Commendations**

### **A new approach to Governor training proves successful**

This year, we introduced a new approach to Governor training, which was well received by all that attended. We use a short pre-recording 'need to know information video' to concisely summarise all the key pieces of information that a Governor must understand (and made this available on our website) and then was able to open up the remaining part of the training for open Q&A so that Governors were able to build a relationship with the Virtual School Headteacher and ask more specific questions related to their own setting and Governor experience.

#### *What did you find most useful?*

The Q&A part of the training

The succinct presentation

I found both the concise input and discussion useful

All very succinct and relevant

The very focused approach and the simplicity of the material provided.

The use of the chat facility so that pertinent questions were answered by the leaders which gave much better information than participants trying to discuss issues about which they may have little knowledge or experience. I felt very well informed at the end.

#### *What did you find least useful:*

Nothing. I prefer this approach to one where there are numerous break out rooms and group discussions as I think it is very much more productive simply to have someone with experience in charge of a discussion and answering questions directly

#### *Comments on quality:*

Very knowledgeable facilitators who came across as genuinely deeply passionate about their work in this area

The presentation was very clear and useful. I thought the combination of this, and Q and A was well thought through

Very clear presentation. Very knowledgeable presenters.

Very good and clear presentation- liked the 'potted must know' slide presentation and then time for interaction after.

#### *Other comments:*

Thank you for circulating the slides. I have logged onto the Cognus website and found it easy to navigate.

## Sutton Virtual School receives humbling feedback from stakeholders

"Wow! You're just amazing. M and I were just saying we have NEVER!! In 17yrs worked with someone as effective in their role as you. Take the credit!" ZW, FC

"It has been a pleasure to work with Sara, she has been extremely supportive and helpful and has done a lot to ensure that a child received an EHCNA which has later been accepted as requiring an EHCP. She has provided support not just for the school but also for the foster carer when she was struggling and given valuable strategies and support which I will remember if we have further LAC children at our school. Due to the support, we have received, the child has made accelerated progress and is now a happier more confident boy.

I am extremely grateful for all the support and advice Sara provided us with." CH, FC

"X has certainly had the very best help and support from the virtual school" SG, FC

E-safety training course for CLA: "Thank you for sending this to N. We managed to get him to join. N listened and engaged, we then had a good old debate afterwards" MC, FC

"L received the first National Geographic for Kids magazine today. He was absolutely thrilled and immediately got stuck in to read it and do the activities! He says a big "Thank you". MB, FC

"We continued to receive support from the virtual school by way of extra tuition in maths and English in preparation for his GCSE exams. This continued when E's results in Maths & English did not meet the requirements for him to continue with his BTEC course. He persevered and re-sat the two subjects in late November 2020, and ultimately achieving a 4 & 5 respectively in January 2021, to allow him to stay on the course. Moira Adams of the Virtual School deserves commendation for her continuous support and assistance.

"I wanted your team to know how grateful we have been to be included in the foster carers group. Everything you have done for M has been fabulous. We are indebted to you for your kindness and thoughtfulness towards M.

M received a parcel again with some fantastic books. She was delighted as she loves reading.

Thank you, Sara. You are so lovely. All your team are amazing and dedicated to these children in need. You should be proud of yourselves. I cannot praise your work enough." NH, FC

"It has been fantastic working with you and your team. I have always said that you are by far the best LA to work with" EG, DT

"It's clear that the measures that were put in to support both schools have had a great impact on M's academic progress and his social development and it's clear that your support and understanding of his needs has been based on his history and has been insightful not just to us but clearly both schools.

We have always felt that between us and yourself we have been on the same page regarding support, and you have helped with some difficult and challenging conversations that we had with the school specifically around last year and it helped us to maintain a more cordial communication with them.

Thank you also for your guidance around secondary schools where we are having ongoing discussion, but we feel well informed but also of our rights and M's moving forward through the educational system." BW, FC

## **Appendix C: Children with a Social Worker report Sept – Nov 2021**

Promoting the education of children with a social worker through strategic leadership:

A Report summarising actions and impact on outcomes to date

### Context and Key objectives

The Government's Children in Need review (2019) identified that on average, 1 in 10 children needed a social worker between 2012- 2018 and found that this group of children attain lower than their peers at every stage of their education<sup>i</sup>. In the local area, the 'Sutton's Helping Early Strategy' (2020-23) identified key barriers to children's education, including the increasing number of fixed term exclusions, the number of children experiencing speech, language and communication difficulties and impact on their learning from the Early Years onwards, and the prevalence and impact of mental health issues<sup>ii</sup>. Alongside this, it has been widely acknowledged that the impact of the covid pandemic on the education of children with a social worker will have disproportionately affected this cohort and continues to present an emerging need.

National data on attendance rates in Sutton reported for 2018-19 academic year found that the overall absence of those subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan was 17.6%, compared to 13.9% nationally. Although only a small proportion of children on a CP plan were enrolled at a special school, the overall absence of this group was 25% compared to 19.2% nationally, with the persistent absentees' percentage almost three times higher than nationally (81.8% compared to 47.2% respectively) and the percentage of unauthorised absence was also 5.2% higher than the national percentage. The overall absence of pupils enrolled at Pupil Referral Units was also higher than national (52.4% compared to 43.7% respectively), with a higher proportion of authorised absences<sup>iii</sup>. More recently, weekly DfE attendance data indicates that, of the schools providing this DfE attendance data, the proportion of children with a social worker attending on site education is consistently slightly lower than the national percentage<sup>iv</sup>.

The Local Authority and Cognus education services worked to support children, families, and schools during the pandemic and now that the Government has introduced strategic support around this cohort's education, we have been able to design and begin to deliver more cohesive and extended support to promote the education of children with a social worker. In September 2021, new responsibilities for Virtual School Headteachers were introduced to include [strategic leadership for children with a social worker](#). Sara Martin has been appointed to this strategic leadership role at Sutton Virtual School for two days a week, and Beverley Noble, a social worker currently working in the Social Worker in Schools project, has recently been seconded 1.5 days a week, to support the development of partnership working between London Borough of Sutton and Cognus.

We identified the following key objectives to promote the education of children with a social worker:

- working with educational settings and social care leaders to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with social workers to make educational progress
- enhancing the partnerships between education settings and local authorities
- working with agencies to further understand and address the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience
- helping to demonstrate the benefits of attending an education setting
- ensuring there are mechanisms in place to offer advice and support to teachers and social workers

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We gathered information from a wide range of sources to inform action-planning and develop a strategy to promote the cohort's education.

The next section of this report summarises the strategic actions undertaken in the first term of this initiative and key indicators of impact to date.

## Identifying the needs of the cohort and areas to address through strategic leadership

The educational journey of this cohort of children has not been tracked in this way before, so one of the first priorities was to establish the barriers to their education and progress and ascertain existing and emerging areas to address. We opened a consultation, seeking feedback from a wide range of professionals working to support children with a social worker, to better understand the barriers they experience to shape and inform action-planning. We have captured feedback from Headteachers, including from Alternative Provision, DSLs, teachers, Early Years professionals, social workers, team managers in social care, and a range of professionals in Cognus. We held meetings to seek direct consultation feedback from the Head of Sutton SEN, Inclusion, the EP service, Therapies service, the Head of Service for Family Support and Care Planning, and the Head of Service for Targeted Early Help and Integrated Support. Alongside this, we used key documents, data, and research to identify key themes and inform action-planning, including the Sutton Helping Early 2020-23 Strategy, the Children in Need Review (2019), DfE data dashboard, information from the wider school closures during the Covid pandemic and weekly social care data.

The feedback gained across the network has been very informative and provided us a greater insight into the specific, current barriers to education that this cohort are experiencing, which has in turn enabled us to shape the support we offer around these needs and be responsive to the impact of the covid pandemic as this continues to emerge. The key themes identified include low attendance and the need for more support to re-engage young people back into education; accessing educational services in timely way, the need for improved partnership working to champion the cohort's needs and the need for more information about pathways and support that is available.

## Attendance and re-engaging in education

Emotionally based school avoidance and low attendance affects many young people in Sutton, so one of our key priorities is developing partnership working to ensure that young people have the support needed to re-engage in their education. We have set up systems to collect and track the attendance of all children with a social worker, to identify those needing support to re-engage and begin to identify any trends in the data to inform future action-planning.

We have also recently developed links between the social care locality teams and Virtual School so that social workers identify the children they're working with who have low attendance or are not accessing education or employment. The Virtual School will offer the network around every child a consultation to explore how best to address the issues and help the young person to engage in education. We have also

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invested in Educational Psychology support specifically for our children with a social worker and these credits are already being considered to support young people who aren't accessing education (see below for more information).

One of the more vulnerable groups within the cohort are those going through PLO. In meetings with the Head of Family Support & Care Planning, we discussed how these young people's home situation is of significant concern (hence PLO) and that attendance is often low but could act as a protective factor. It is also sometimes the case that safeguarding is such a concern that educational concerns aren't always reflected in care reviews or prioritised. As a result of discussions, all locality social workers will identify any young people where they have concerns about their attendance and/or education, and we will contact every team around the child to offer educational advice and support. We are also exploring how to improve the sharing of educational information when children come into care, as we are aware that the attendance of children coming into care is often low.

### Providing Educational Advice and Support

We have offered drop-in Consultation sessions for schools and social workers who need educational support or advice. There has been good take-up of this service already and providing this advice and bringing professionals together through our strategic role has already had positive outcomes on young people's education, as well as providing support to school leaders and social workers.

We also plan to develop training, guidance, and support for social workers, to make clearer the processes around inclusion, school engagement and possible avenues to explore with families and schools where children aren't accessing education. We have set up a new section of our website, which continues to evolve. Web content is informed by feedback from the survey and dialogue with various professionals, so that it is based on useful information requested.

### Improving the cohort's access to Local Authority education services

One of the key issues that came out of consulting various professionals was that children on a CiN or CP plan aren't always receiving the assessment or support needed, particularly around identifying what their barriers to learning are and around inclusion where a child has been 'off-rolled', had exclusions or needs ongoing support to re-engage in education. Sometimes, this is due to the school's capacity or funding issues; other times they are on a long list of others in need of similar support or the need to develop partnerships between those working to support the child. We also identified that speech, language, and communication needs is a significant barrier to learning: many children do not reach a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) at the end of Reception as a result (17.5% of YR children in 2018 – Sutton Early Help Strategy) and we know that language and communication difficulties can affect other important aspects of development, including social interaction, developing relationships and behaviour.

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The impact of the covid pandemic has further exacerbated the delay/ difficulty in this cohort accessing the support needed. We identified this as a barrier to their education and set out to develop partnerships and work innovatively to address this.

We established and developed links with the new Sutton Therapeutic Hub of CAMHs clinicians, setting up fortnightly consultation meetings. We also funded some Educational Psychology, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy provision through the hub, so that when clinicians recommended such involvement to support the child and the schools weren't facilitating it, we could use the funded 'credits' to ensure that they received the necessary support. The key aims of this project are:

- To promote the education of children with a social worker (CWSW) by extending educational support available for this cohort of children
- To facilitate early intervention and avoid unnecessary delay in children receiving recommended EP involvement, speech, or occupational therapy
- To provide those not accessing education (e.g., on roll but not attending school, or those who are out of education) support and advice to promote their re-engagement into education
- To provide information and advice to those working to support the young person, so that schools and families can support the young person and their education

The initiative has just been launched (November 2021) and we will monitor the use and impact closely in the coming months.

### Enhancing partnerships between education settings and the local authority

We have worked hard to establish an ethos that considers children in care 'our children' – part of the Cognus 'family' who we strive to support – and we have now worked with leaders across Cognus services to extend this ethos to all children with a social worker. This has been important, so we can raise the profile of the needs of children with a social worker and develop understanding about the challenges and barriers they experience.

In practice, this means an agreement across Cognus services that educational referrals for children with a social worker will be prioritised. This is crucial in ensuring that this cohort receive the assessment or support needed in a timely manner, avoiding any unnecessary delay to the help the need to address barriers to their learning. We have worked with the Educational Psychology and Therapies teams to update referral forms so that referrals are expedited and works closely with team managers to support this.

We have also established a PAN London Virtual School network for the strategic leads of CWSW across London Virtual Schools. She chaired the first meeting in November and the group have already started to collaborate to develop a provision map and share best practice.

### Responding to the impact of covid-19 and developing avenues of support for children with a social worker

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We have strengthened links with the Inclusion team, to prioritise referrals they receive for children with a social worker and share key information about children with a social worker who are also CME, EOTAS, being EHE and those open to the Paving the Way team. We are also in the process of jointly funding a new role to work across the Inclusion and Virtual School team, working specifically to promote the education of children with a social worker who need direct support around attendance, inclusion and/or re-engaging in education. This postholder will provide a package of direct 1:1 support, working to establish the specific barriers to the young person's education, designing and delivering bespoke support and working with other professionals and family member to promote their education and engagement.

### Next steps

We have worked hard to raise awareness of the educational difficulties and barriers children with a social worker face and have started strengthening partnerships across the network and local area, to improve collaborative working for these children and young people. We plan to develop these partnerships further, to address the barriers experienced and improve access to the support these young people and their families need. Early intervention is key, and we need to evaluate the systems we are developing to ensure that educational needs are identified, and relevant support is put in place in a timely and supportive way. We plan to develop our links with social care teams and provide social workers more support and guidance so they can advocate and promote children's education. It is hoped that the Government will provide this vulnerable cohort additional funding so that we can extend this initiative in the coming months.

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<sup>i</sup> Children in Need Review: data & analysis (June 2019)

<sup>ii</sup> Sutton's Helping Early Strategy, 2020-2023, LSCP

<sup>iii</sup> DfE LA Absence tables: Sutton, 2018/19

<sup>iv</sup> DfE IDAMS dashboard- weekly returns, 2021