

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Post-16 Provision and Youth Offer – to include apprenticeship programme and provision for those without good GCSE
Meeting date	22 March 2022
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	To advise members of the work that has taken place to increase the number of children in care accessing apprenticeships and how the Virtual School have supported those young people who have not achieved GCSE results at a high enough grade to access an apprenticeship.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Members note the content of the report as an update regarding the work that the Virtual school have undertaken to increase the number of children in care accessing apprenticeships.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To enable the Committee to maintain oversight of the education and training provision for children in care and the work of the Virtual School and College to support apprenticeships, with a specific focus on those who do not achieve outcomes at the end of Year 11 that will allow them to move straight into an apprenticeship in Year 12.

Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for Council Priorities and Delivery</p> <p>Councillor Mike White, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People</p>
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley - Director of Children's Services
Report Author	Kelly Twitchen, Head of Virtual School
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Update and Information

Background

1. This report provides an update of the work that has taken place by the Virtual School and College to ensure that more care experienced young people have the requirements necessary to access apprenticeships in BCP.

Apprenticeships for Care Experienced Young People

2. Currently ten young people are undertaking an apprenticeship compared to four last academic year. The Virtual School and College have put a number of processes and interventions in place to achieve this. During August 2021 all young people in Year 11 and 12 and those in older year groups still accessing education were contacted by a member of the team to discuss the start of the new academic year and to ensure the young people were prepared. This resulted in much fewer young people becoming NEET during the first few months of the academic year and allowed the team to target those young people who they knew needed additional support.
 3. This 'Summer Holiday Check In' will now be timetabled for each year and promoted with young people, social workers and carers with an opportunity to meet with the Virtual School and College team face to face or over the phone. Officers will also ensure that carers and social workers have the information they need to support the young person with their education or training.
 4. September 2021 saw a dedicated team within the Virtual School – The Virtual College with a team of four Education Officers and a lead teacher. The Officers all have experience in working with post 16 young people, allowing them to focus on this cohort of young people rather than a mixture of statutory school age and post 16 as had been the case in previous years. Officers are now able to explore all suitable opportunities available to the young people and support them appropriately. The team have been successful in turning employment opportunities into apprenticeships by closely monitoring the cohort of young people and working closely with them and supporting employers. Having a qualification will give greater opportunity for the young person to secure employment in the given field.
 5. Officers are also working closely with MPCT (Military Prep College Totton) to hold an Emerson Day for young people in Years 11,12 and 13 as many of our young people are interested in uniformed services. This will allow them the opportunity to experience which areas are available to them and an opportunity to gain an insight into what the role will be like.
 6. The Virtual College has begun to work with Bournemouth and Poole College to create a course that could support young people who have not achieved GCSEs at level 4 in Maths and English to access apprenticeships. The team had identified that although there were many apprenticeships available both within BCP Council and in the local business sector, children in care were not accessing them due to either not being 'work ready' or not having the relevant qualifications. This college course would not only
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focus on the academic qualifications but also employability skills, providing mentoring and life skills. The Virtual College were approached by The Dorset Chamber of Local Businesses who wanted to support by providing Business Mentors. These mentors would be used as part of the course but also for other young people in the Virtual College who might benefit. Dorset Skills and Learning were able to provide BKSB (Basic Key Skills Builder) assessments that would allow College tutors to see what gaps there might be in Maths and English so that they could quickly begin to prepare the young people for functional skills assessments at level 2 (the equivalent to GCSE level 4). Unfortunately, Bournemouth and Poole College have not been able to secure funding for the course to begin this academic year and our aim is for it to begin in September 2022.

7. The Virtual College have however been successful in creating a bespoke course similar to the course that will be provided by the college using Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA). The course is aimed at some of our hardest to reach young people and works on the model of bringing young people together as a group. The course consists of the following modules: Employability, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Life Skills and Horticulture. Pupil Premium will be used to provide tuition for Functional Skills English and Maths after the BKSB assessment has taken place.
8. The Quality Assurance of our Post 16 cohort is through Personal Education Plans, supervisions and also the introduction of an Education Panel chaired by the Virtual School and College Headteacher. This panel meets each week to discuss 6 young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or are at risk of becoming NEET. Both the Education Officer and Personal Advisor attend the panel to update and give a clear plan of what is in place to either prevent the young person becoming NEET or to become EET (those that are in education, employment or training). The panel is divided into Year 12 and 13 and then Year 14+.

Options Appraisal

9. N/A

Summary of financial implications

10. The Virtual School and College successfully applied for the Pilot of Post 16 Pupil Premium and this grant of **£146,700** is being used to fund any education or training needed to support young people to access apprenticeships or full-time college course.

Summary of legal implications

11. N/A

Summary of human resources implications

12. In September 2021 the Virtual School and College created a dedicated team for those children in care who are post 16 and care leavers. The team consists of four Education officers, the Virtual School and College Deputy Headteacher is the lead teacher for this team. The increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in BCP has meant that the caseloads for Education Officers have increased and a request to recruit an additional officer to work specifically with this cohort of young people has been
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requested.

Summary of sustainability impact

13. N/A

Summary of public health implications

14. The long-term health implications for young people are vastly improved when they are better equipped to undertake a career pathway. Therefore, with good qualifications they are in a better position to successfully apply for future employment opportunities thus giving them a better quality of life.

Summary of equality implications

15. Care experienced young people often underachieve compared to their peers. The trauma they experience impacts greatly on their education in several ways, preventing them from learning for periods of time during their education. This can often result in care experienced young people not being ready to take GCSEs at the same point as their peers and therefore achieving below expected expectations. This does not necessarily mean that these young people are not capable of achieving a higher level but that the missed periods of education have disadvantaged them when taking the exam. Therefore, in order to create equality for care experienced young people, the Virtual School and College have looked at ways to ensure that our young people can access apprenticeships and college courses despite not achieving the outcomes they need at the same time as their peers.

Summary of risk assessment

16. N/A

Background papers

17. None

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.
