



Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

September 2020-August 2021





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1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the work of the Corporate Parenting Board during the academic year September 2020 – August 2021. The report will go on to identify feedback from young people.
- 1.2 Sandwell's Corporate Parenting Strategy (2020-23) identifies the commitment made by Corporate Parenting Board and key partners to create opportunities that ensure that the children and young people in our care are encouraged to reach their full potential by empowering them and promoting positive outcomes. It sets out how we plan to further improve the services offered within Sandwell for our children in care and care experienced young people.
- 1.3 The strategy introduces the Corporate Parenting Pledge, agreed by Corporate Parenting Board in November 2019. The Pledge steers the work of Corporate Parenting Board and was adopted based on the messages delivered by more than 150 care experienced people at the National Care Experienced Conference 2019.

The 10 messages are:

1. We need more love in the system, including displays of positive physical affection
2. We want to be seen as individuals worthy of respect much more than we are
3. Relationships are critically important to us
4. Instability and loss of continuity in our lives is made worse through no fault of ours by pressure in the care system
5. Mental health and wellbeing are our biggest worries and the most important and urgent things that have to improve
6. The impacts of the care experience do not end at 18, or 21, or even 25
7. Our sense of who we are is important, our family heritage and history are uniquely ours and must be protected
8. Having our say is essential
9. We have legal rights and entitlements and we are not always being told what they are
10. Nobody knows more about what it means to be in care than we do.

- 1.4 Members of Corporate Parenting Board and key partners are encouraged to sign up to the Pledge and to actively consider these messages within all parts of future service planning and delivery. Along with this we have committed to use our position as local system leaders for children to change things for the better, using these messages to drive improvement in our local arrangements and furthermore encouraging all of our children in care and care experienced young people to tell us how well the Pledge is being upheld.
- 1.5 This year the Board has completed a digital refresh of the Corporate Parenting pledge and has asked for the message to be shared as broadly as possible amongst partners for these commitments to be made by any professional who will work with our children in care and care leavers. This move to a digital version has happened in light of the move to a more digital working practice

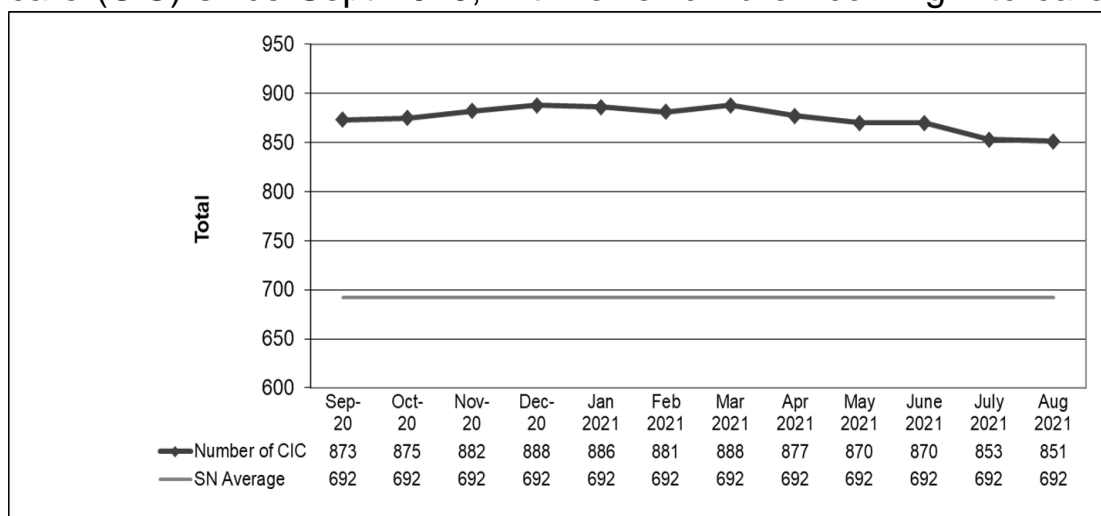
2. Context

- 2.1 The period that this report covers falls during the global pandemic. However, despite the pandemic the Council, Sandwell Children's Trust, Health, Education and other partners have continued to support vulnerable children and families and where necessary take the appropriate safeguarding actions.

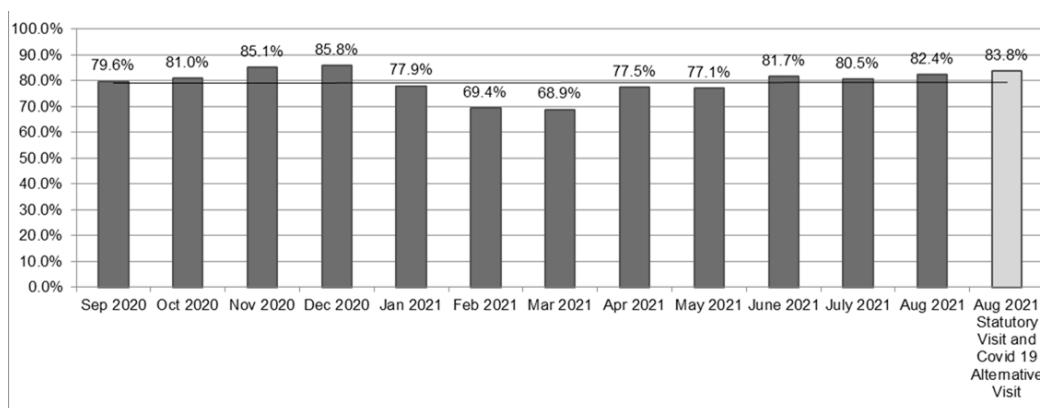
3. Service Performance – Social Care

- 3.1 Children's social care has continued to support families and safeguard children during the pandemic, with Ofsted reporting positively on how Sandwell Children's Trust has responded to the challenges it has raised.

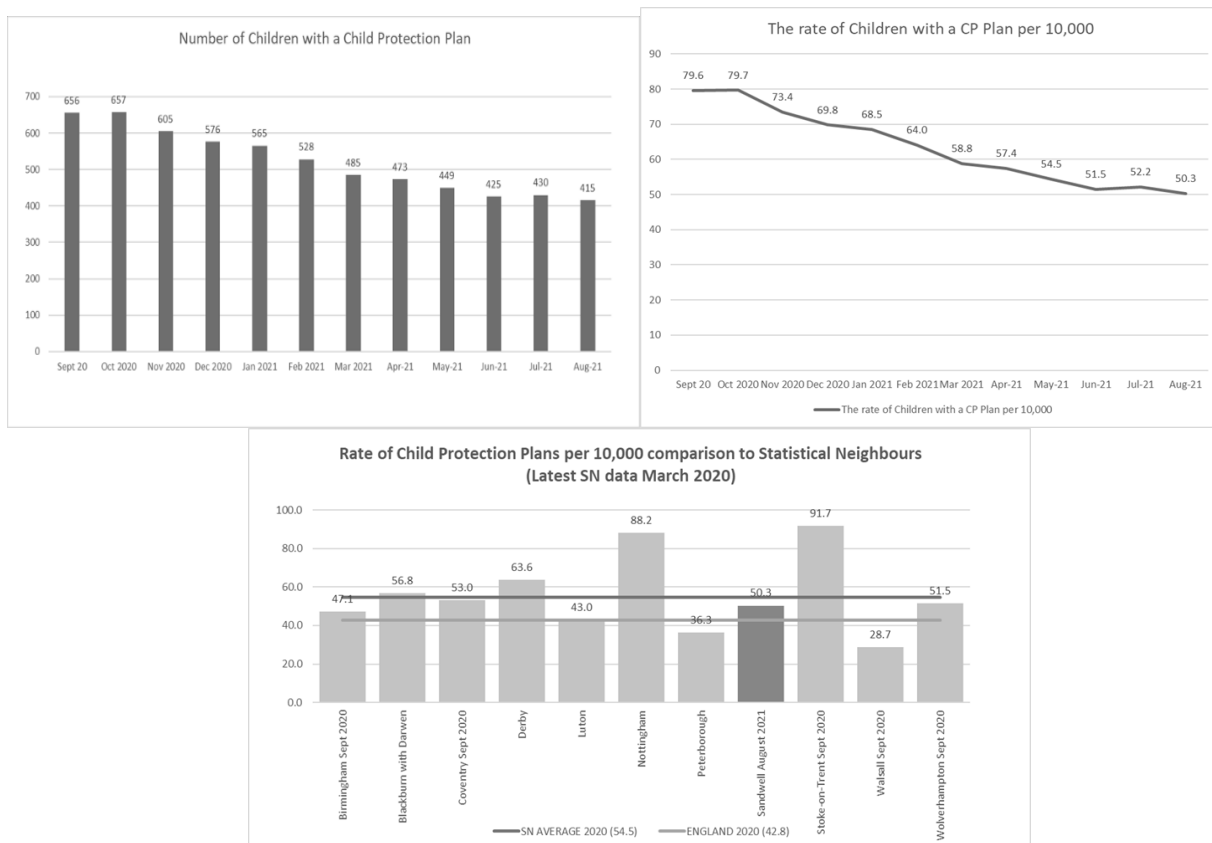
- 3.2 There has been an overall reduction in the number of children in care (CiC) since Sept 2020, with fewer children coming into care.



- 3.3 Throughout the pandemic, the approach has been to visit children and young people face to face, based upon presenting needs of children, and staff safety, utilising PPE. It can be seen that good levels of visiting have been maintained both virtually and face to face, the new DfE return evidences that the Trust is doing well, when compared to statistical neighbours, and regionally and nationally, in relation to children being seen or contacted by their Social Worker within a 4-week period.

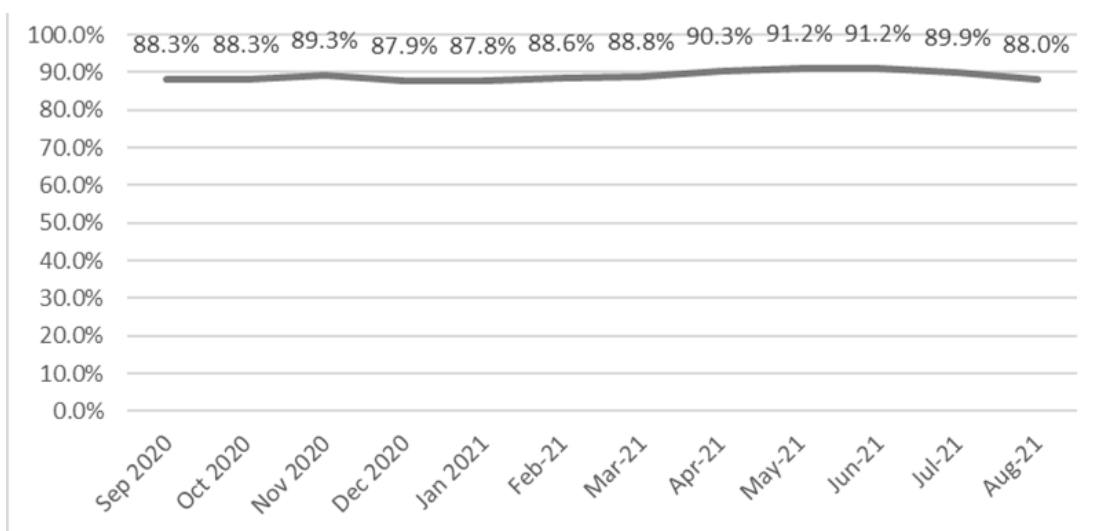


- 3.4 The number of children that are subject of a child protection plan, as well as the rate per 10,000 have been steadily declining over the period. Throughout the year work has taken place to ensure that the threshold for child protection is consistent, and this is now more in line with our Statistical Neighbour average, and positively at the lowest rate for 2 years.



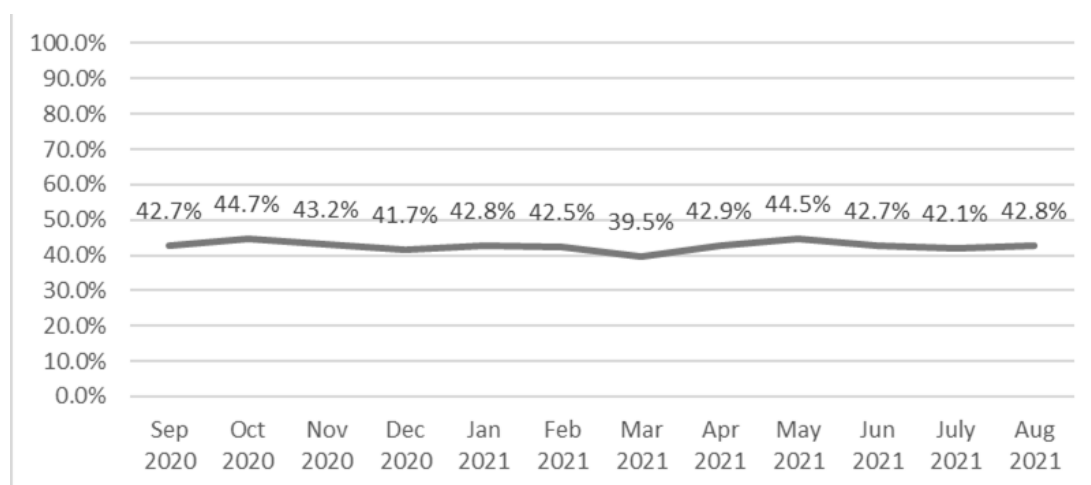
3.5 The Council and Sandwell Children’s Trust continue to work closely to ensure that the accommodation offer for care leavers is strong. The 12% of care leavers that are not in suitable accommodation will include young people that are in custody.

Percentage of all Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation:



- 3.6 While it is the aspiration that all care leavers are accessing employment, education or Training this is not always possible for all young people.
- 3.7 There are some young people who fall in to the not in employment, education or training category by default:
- 6% young parents who are taking time off to be young parents and care for their children.
 - 8% young people who are deemed medically unfit to enter education/ employment or unable to access training due to ill health.
- 3.8 A number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) were unable to access education through college English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses due to the pandemic.
- 3.9 We have 6% UASC young people who either did not want to access education or are restricted to what education they can access and how they are supported due to their current immigration status and ages. There is an ongoing review into what alternative services can provide to these young people when they are not entitled to access public funds post 19th birthday.
- 3.10 The NEET Panel is a partnership space working with young people on a case by case basis to reduce NEET's. It aims to remove duplication in the system by tailoring the offer/provision to meet local/individual circumstances. Each Panel session discusses the young person's education/employment circumstances and aims to reach a common understanding of the issues and to agree a way forward with specific actions.
- 3.11 The Panel has been really powerful in moving some of our hard to reach young people forward with opportunities of bitesize courses to build up confidence of those that have not engaged in education for a period of time and to allow them to start to understand their own needs.

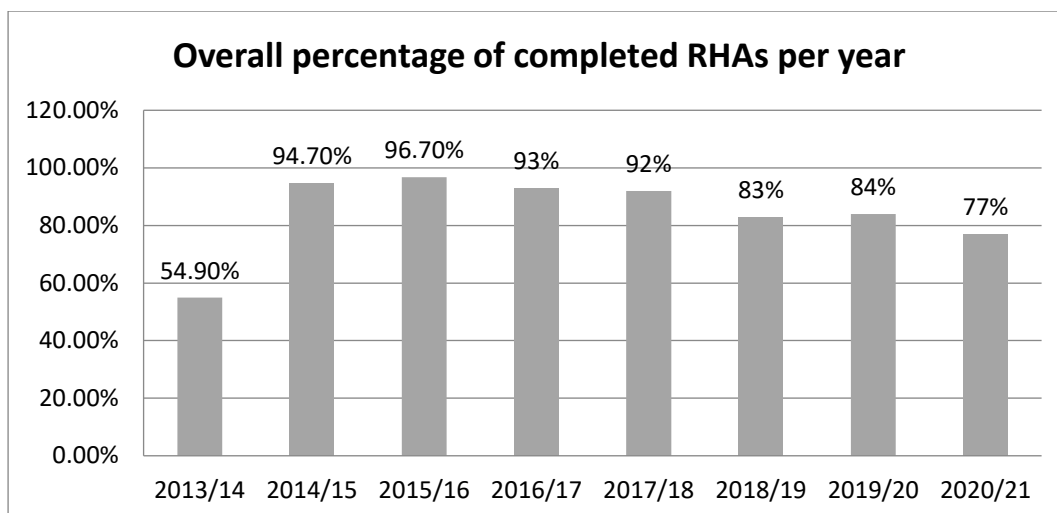
Percentage of Care Leavers Engaged in Employment, Education and Training:



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING	Comparators March 2020
Total Number of Care Leavers aged 17 -18	
Care Leavers Aged 17-18 Engaged in Employment, Education and Training	
% Care Leavers Aged 17-18 Engaged in Employment, Education and Training	52.0%
West Midlands 2020	64.0%
Statistical Neighbour 2020	62.0%
England 2020	64.0%
Total Number of Care Leavers aged 19-21	
Care Leavers Aged 19-21 Engaged in Employment, Education and Training	
% Care Leavers Aged 17-18 Engaged in Employment, Education and Training	49%
West Midlands 2020	50%
Statistical Neighbour 2020	49%
England 2020	53%

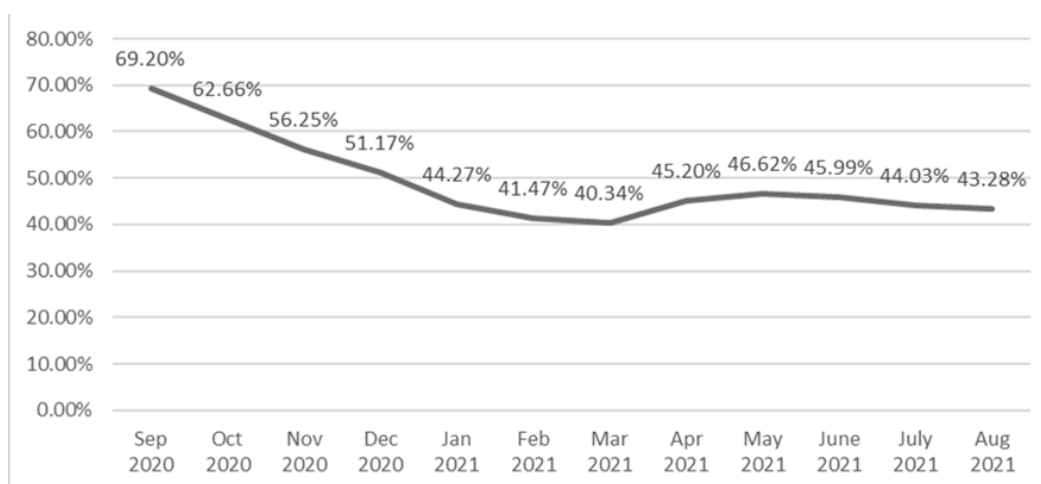
4. Service Performance – Health

- 4.1 Completion of health assessments for children in care in Sandwell is monitored by the Designated Nurse through a range of mechanisms. Quarterly auditing is undertaken with regard to initial and review health assessments to examine timescales of completion, communication and quality compliance. Continuous improvement is achieved through considered feedback and education.
- 4.2 During the reporting period 77% of review health assessments (RHAs) have been completed. The overall completion rates for the year still demonstrate a positive picture, despite the restrictions of the pandemic and staff shortages in the provider team. Two new nurses have been recruited to the provider team and an action plan is in place to address the 23% of assessments that were not completed.



- 4.3 Initial health assessments have also been closely monitored throughout the year. 86.6% of children entering care were seen within 20 working days; from receipt of notification from the Children's Trust. The COVID pandemic and social distancing has meant that children entering care were seen virtually, and then had a follow up face to face appointment for their initial health assessment. This did not impact on the quality of their health assessment, as a quality audit in December found.

Percentage of Combined Health and Dentals (DfE indicator) – rolling 12 months:



- 4.4 Modifications within the health assessment tool now ensure that the child's voice is captured within the completed Review Health Assessments. Practitioners discuss the wishes and feelings of the child during the assessment and they are clearly documented. By capturing the voice of the child within the assessment

documentation there will be a coherent 'journey' available for the child. It will evidence those professionals undertaking the assessments are able to analyse attitudes and behaviour in order to make necessary referrals and engage appropriate support for the child.

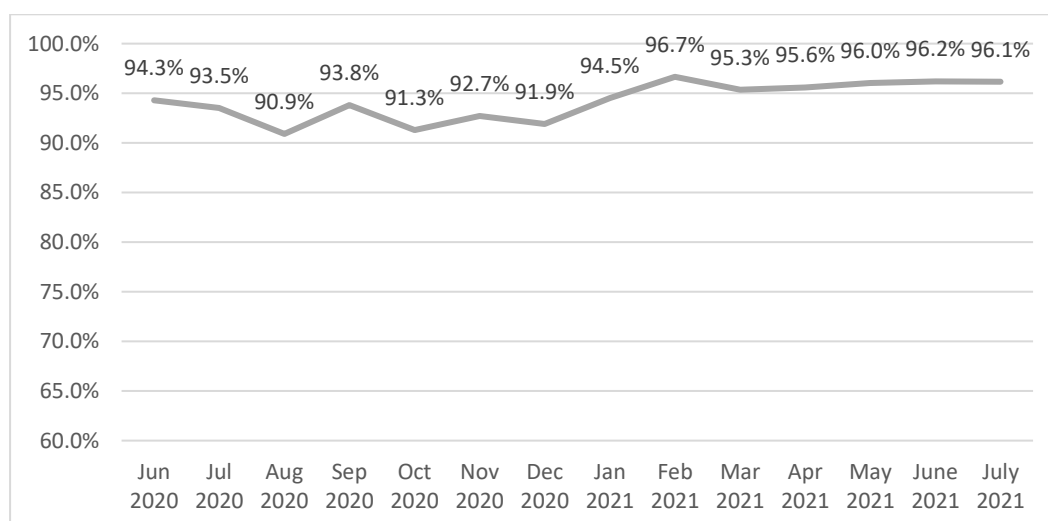
- 4.5 The inclusion of discussions regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and sexual health also helps to identify children that may be at risk or are possible victims of Child Sexual Exploitation. The process supports the delivery of the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) CSE Strategy.
- 4.6 A child friendly version of the annual report has been reported at the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 4.7 Children in care in Sandwell have a Facebook page, which is closely monitored by the Children's Trust. The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regularly contribute to the Children's Trust twitter page to highlight some of the partnership working. The health team regularly have posts on the Sandwell Children's Trust Instagram page, including promotion of the Care Leavers Passport App and most recently a reminder for young people to get their COVID vaccination.
- 4.8 The Care Leavers Passport App was launched as a pilot on 16th January 2020 and has evaluated well. There were initially some delays in the roll out due to the COVID pandemic.
- 4.9 The Care Leavers App is a user-friendly health information store for care leavers which enables the user to keep important information about health, appointments, health history, medications, allergies and all immunisations (including childhood immunisations) in one secure place, making it easily accessible at the click of a button. The App has been created and designed by young people leaving care. Security within the App ensures that the information is user entry only and password protected.
- 4.10 All health information is accessible and to hand, keeping all of the information in one place with instant access. It is a useful tool if the user is visiting the doctor and wants access to information quickly. The App has the NHS App embedded within it and within the NHS App the user can check symptoms, book and cancel appointments,

order repeat prescriptions, view medical record and secure access to GP medical record. The user can choose how the NHS uses data, the App registers the users' decision on whether their data can be used for research and planning.

- 4.11 During the reporting period, several short audits have been undertaken by the Designated Nurse to assure the quality of initial health assessments; and review health assessments for children in care placed out of borough. The outcome evidenced a consistent high quality of health assessments.

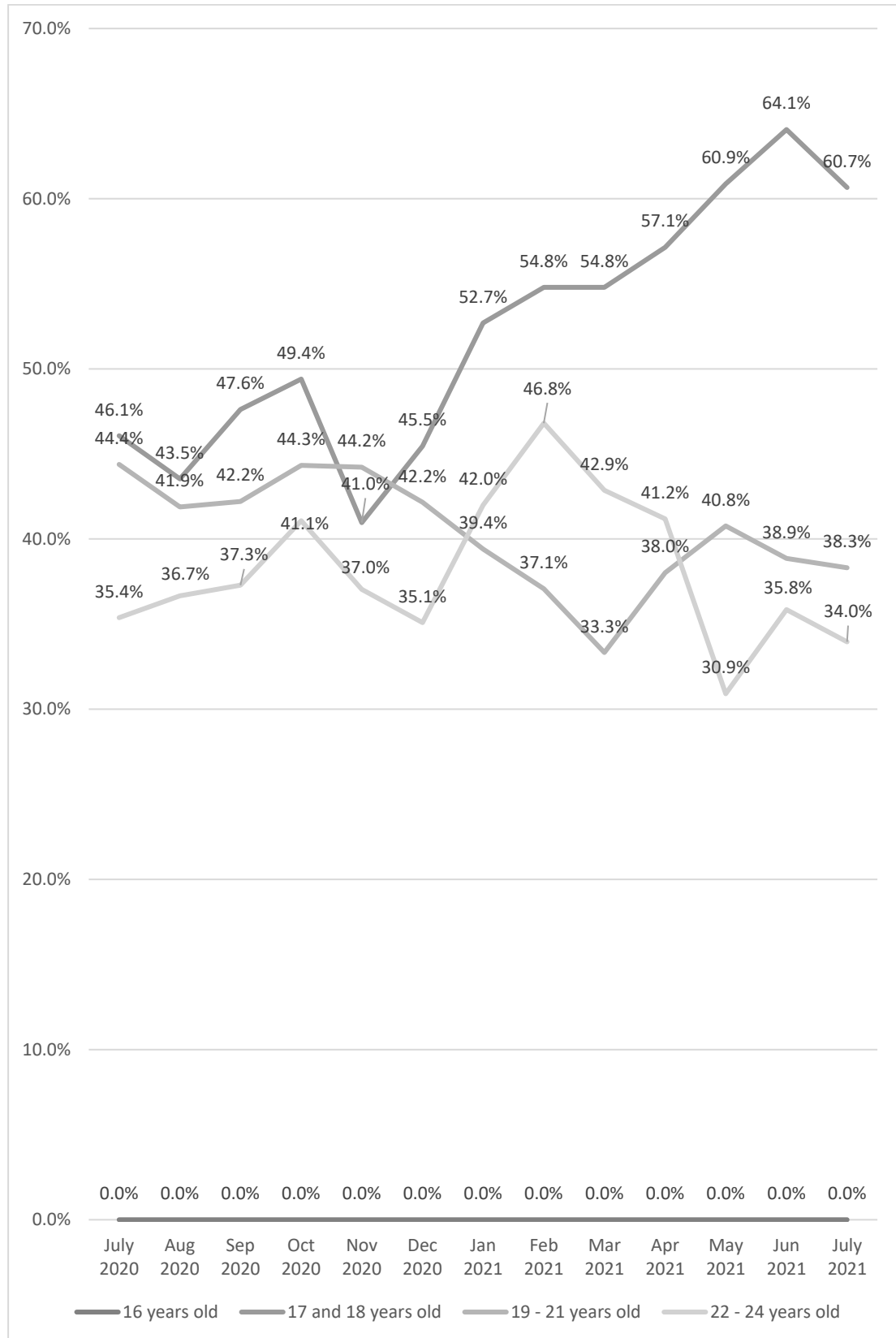
5. Service Performance – Education

Percentage of Children in Care of school age with a Personal Education Plan:



- 5.1 The completion rate of Personal Education Plans continues to increase as a result of high quality collaborative work between Social Workers, Designated Teachers and Sandwell Virtual School Education Development Officers. Annual training has been delivered to support colleagues with the continuous development of the ePEP system.

Percentage of Care Leavers Engaged in Employment, Education or Training – by age:



- 5.2 Although substantial progress has been made to ensure that children aged 16 are in employment, training or work (through raising aspirations) we continue to face the challenge of care leavers becoming NEET as they move into their independence.
- 5.3 We will not hold schools and colleges to account on the basis of exams and assessment data from Summer 2020 and 2021 and that data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted, Local Authorities, to hold schools and colleges to account. Coronavirus (Covid:19): DfE School and College Accountability 28-09-2020.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability>
- 5.4 The outcomes for children in care of Sandwell Council continue to show an upward trend.

Key Stage 1:

Year							Reading			Writing			Maths		
	No. of pupils			% of pupils			Expected+			Expected+			Expected+		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Sandwell Children in Care	27	32	30	-	-	-	44	56	40	39	44	30	52	53	37
Sandwell All	-	-	-	-	-	-	71	70	59	66	66	49	74	72	59
SEN EHCP	0	2	1	0	6	3	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
SEN Support	9	12	11	33	38	37	22	33	18	11	17	9	56	33	18
No SEN	18	18	18	67	56	60	57	72	56	57	61	44	50	67	50
In Foster Care	27	0	0	100	0	0	44	-	-	41	-	-	52	-	-

Boys	13	18	10	48	56	33	27	50	30	18	39	10	46	50	30
Girls	14	14	20	52	44	67	58	64	45	58	50	40	58	57	40
Ed. in borough	18	16	14	67	50	47	47	63	36	41	50	21	53	63	29
Ed. out of borough	9	16	16	33	50	53	33	50	44	33	38	38	50	44	44
BME	8	16	15	30	50	50	50	56	40	33	44	33	67	56	33
>1 Placement Moves	6	0	0	22	0	0									

- 5.5 It is worth recognising that this cohort has had 2 years of disruption to their education and schools were lacking in the evidence to provide accurate assessments.
- 5.6 In KS1 attainment the evidence suggests that this cohorts educational progress has been adversely impacted on the most, both for children in care and Sandwell all.
- 5.7 From an unexpected rise in 2020 in Reading, Writing and Maths, this year's cohorts attainment fell in line with all children's in Sandwell.

Key Stage 2:

5.8 In 2020/21 there were 44 children in this cohort; 25 attending schools in Sandwell and 19 out of borough. Of this cohort 22 (50%) children had a SEN EHCP/Statement or SEN support.

Year							Reading			Writing			Maths			RWM			GPS		
	No. of pupils			% of pupils			Expected+			Expected+			Expected+			Expected +			AS		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Sandwell Children in Care	40	44	44	-	-	-	61	41	52	66	41	39	55	43	41	45	34	36	61	-	-
Sandwell All	-	-	-	-	-	-	71	77	70	77	74	62	78	77	65	62	69	55	78	-	-
SEN EHCP	4	6	7	10	14	16	25	0	14	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	-	-
SEN Support	19	18	15	48	41	34	63	28	47	53	33	40	53	28	33	47	22	33	63	-	-
No SEN	16	20	22	40	45	50	67	65	68	93	60	50	73	70	59	53	55	50	67	-	-

In Foster Care	36	0	43	90	0	98	58	0	53	67	0	40	53	0	42	42	0	37	61	-	-
Boys	22	22	26	55	50	59	43	32	50	48	32	35	48	41	42	29	32	35	48	-	-
Girls	18	22	18	45	50	41	82	50	56	88	50	44	65	45	39	65	36	39	77	-	-
Ed. in borough	23	24	25	58	55	57	57	50	48	60	46	32	48	54	36	35	42	32	57	-	-
Ed. out of borough	17	20	19	43	45	43	67	30	58	60	35	47	67	30	47	60	25	42	67	-	-
BME	14	14	27	35	32	61	75	50	52	67	57	37	75	43	41	58	36	33	75	-	-
1+ Placement Moves	9	0	0	23	0	0															

5.9 Attainment outcomes, Reading, Writing and Maths for Sandwell children in care KS2 have risen from the previous year (+2%RWM) while attainment of all Sandwell children has fallen by -19%. The gap between Sandwell all children has reduced from 35% to only 19%.

5.10 Attainment (teacher assessment) shows a rise in outcomes in Reading (+11%) from the teacher assessment outcomes in 2020; with a slight drop in Writing (-2%) and Maths (-2%).

5.11 Boys made progress in all areas and all cohorts (except girls -2%) are making progress in Reading.

2018-19 Validated Outcomes:

- 5.12 In 2018/19 significant percentage rises are noticeable in all elements – Reading (+11%), Writing (+23%) and Maths (+16%) from the previous year.
- 5.13 This demonstrates that the significant contributor of the rise in attainment for in borough children was the Sandwell Virtual School Y6 Strive Intervention Programme (enrolment at a tuition centre, tuition and psychological/ emotional support). If you analyse the 2018/19 programme; 7 children identified as ‘working towards’ in a total of 20 elements (Reading, Writing, Spelling Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG), Maths). Following the programme this was reduced to 6, with 4 of the children achieving their GLD’s.

Case Study:

- 5.14 K, Year 6 student fostered by paternal uncle and aunt along with his 3 siblings. Foster carer requested additional support from social worker for K’s behaviours were becoming challenging and causing disruption. Social worker referred to Sandwell Virtual School for support; who arranged for K to start work with a REACH Psychology counsellor in the lead up to SATS. K had begun to build on the relationship he had with the counsellor so MF (Sandwell Virtual School Education Development Officer) utilised this opportunity for her to reconvene virtual meetings with him weekly during the COVID:19 lockdown. These continued as he returned to school after the Easter break.
- 5.15 K has had the opportunity to talk honestly about his thoughts and feelings, thereby reducing his pent-up frustrations. D.O, the counsellor, emailed to say ‘it appeared to go very well, and he engaged brilliantly. He is happy to arrange a session for next week.’

Key Stage 4:

	No. of pupils			% of pupils			4+ English & Maths			Attainment 8			Progress 8		
Year	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Sandwell Children in Care	50	52	39	-	-	-	16	25	21	24.5	0.0	32.9	-0.7	0.0	0.1
Sandwell All	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	61	62	42.1	46.1	44.0	-0.2	-	0.0
SEN EHCP	7	8	3	14	15	8	0	0	0	11.2	0.0	0.0	-0.7	0.0	0.0
SEN Support	13	10	12	26	19	31	15	0	0	29.9	0.0	29.3	-0.1	0.0	0.3
No SEN	30	34	24	60	65	62	17	38	33	37.7	0.0	40.8	-0.2	0.0	0.0
In Foster Care	37	0	0	74	0	0	19	-	-	32.5	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Boys	25	28	18	50	54	46	8	11	22	25.4	0.0	28.7	-0.9	0.0	-0.3
Girls	25	24	21	50	46	54	20	42	19	32.8	0.0	36.3	0.1	0.0	0.3
Ed. in borough	25	22	15	50	42	38	16	32	33	29.6	0.0	32.9	-0.2	0.0	0.1
Ed. out of borough	21	28	22	42	54	56	14	21	14	30.0	0.0	0.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0

BME	18	23	19	36	44	49	22	26	32	36.8	0.0	35.5	-0.1	0.0	1.2
>1 Placement Moves	38	0	0	76	0	0									

5.16 There were 39 students in the cohort in 2020/21, with 39% having a SEN EHCP/ Statement or SEN support.

5.17 Attainment 8 – The average grade achieved per child has gone from a 'E+' to 'D+' since 2019.

5.18 Progress 8 – at -0.1 Sandwell children in care progress is what is expected of the cohort.

5.19 Of the 36 children in this cohort none experiences one or more placement moves. This has reduced significantly from 2019.

5.20 In 2020/21 89.5% of the cohort achieved one or more qualifications, this is +11.5% rise from 2018/19.

Post-16:

Not in Education, Employment or Training				
	Cohort (12 Months +)	September (End of Year 11)	Year 12	Year 13
2017	42	24%	21%	36%
2018	49	12%	37%	31%
2019	50	14%	12% (2 awaiting start dates for college and training so the actual figure is 8%)	
2020	63	6% (4 children)		
2021	38	8% (2 children)		

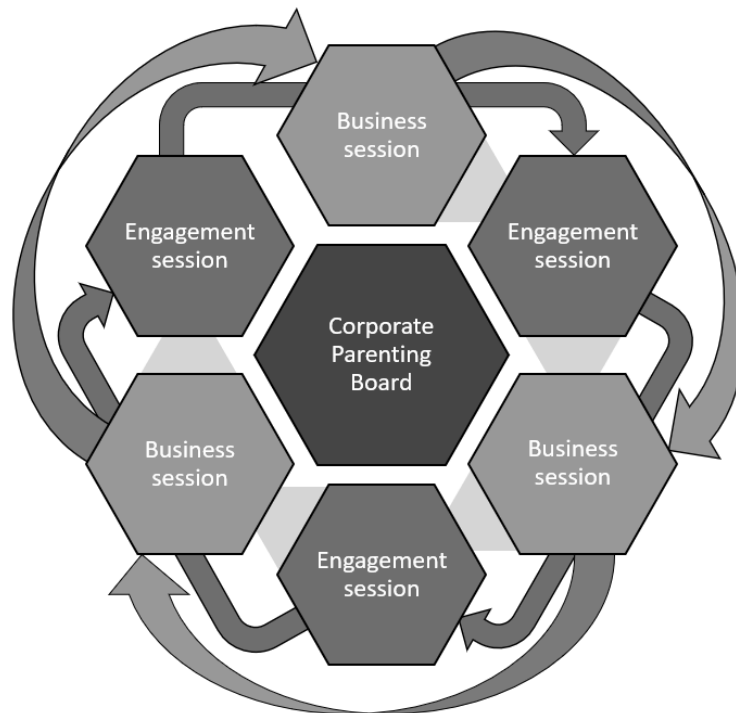
5.21 The Virtual School in partnership with the careers team have co-ordinated and delivered 'The Sandwell Careers Guarantee' for 4 years. This means that every Sandwell child in care, year 9 (year 8 if they are doing 3-year GCSE's) onwards is guaranteed a careers interview. The arrangement meant co-ordination between the two teams and a careers advisor seconded to the Virtual School. Evidence demonstrates that due to the early interventions and the intervention/ perseverance of the year-11 Education Development Officer, the percentage of students not in education, employment or training at the end of year-11 has reduced over the 3-year period from 24% in 2017 to 6% in 2020. The success of this programme (reduced children in care NEETs) was nationally recognised as winners at the Children and Young People Now – Children in Care Award 2020.

6. Corporate Parenting Board

- 6.1 Corporate Parenting Board is accountable to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and is strategically placed to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all the children and young people in its care and those aged 18-25 who were previously in the Council's care. The Board is co-chaired by the Council's Lead Member for Children's Services (the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life) and the Chair of the Care Leavers' Forum.
- 6.2 The Board is made up of:
- Chair and Co-Chair of the Voices of Sandwell Board
 - Chair and Co-Chair of the Care Leavers' Forum
 - Six elected Members of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, including the Lead Member for Children's Services
 - Official Observer – Leader of the Council
 - Participant Observer – Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board
 - Participant Observer – Vice Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board
 - Advisors to the Board – Sandwell Council Officers, Sandwell Children's Trust Officers, Relevant Partner Agencies.
- 6.3 The role of the Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure the delivery of the seven Corporate Parenting Principles (2018). The principles are underpinned by the following Workstreams within the Corporate Parenting Board structure:
- Access to Services
 - Child's Voice
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Educational Achievement and Attainment
 - Safeguarding and Stability
 - Preparation for Adulthood
- 6.4 In August 2021 Corporate Parenting Board initiated the establishment of the Corporate Parenting Partnership Group. This group aims to provide the space for partners to come together to discuss Corporate Parenting activity and to monitor the above

workstreams to feed back into Corporate Parenting Board. The Partnership Group will be attended by the lead Corporate Parenting Board members for each of the workstreams who will strive to deliver clear progress against Corporate Parenting Board actions.

6.5 Corporate Parenting Board Meeting Structure:



6.6 Corporate Parenting Board meets on a bi-monthly basis with a combination of Business and Engagement sessions. All sessions are attended by key partners, including our young people. Sessions run for between 1.5 and 2 hours.

6.7 Sessions alternate between: business sessions, which are our formal platform, and engagement sessions, which are our young people's platform to facilitate discussions about the things that are important to them with the key people who can commit to actions moving forward.

6.8 For business sessions, key partners are invited to share good news and bring items for discussions by contacting the Corporate Parenting Co-ordinator to locate a time on the agenda. Each agenda item will have a maximum of 15 minutes unless there is a specific need for more time.

6.9 For engagement sessions, with the support of Corporate Parenting Board and Sandwell Children's Trust Participation Team, our young

people control the agenda to facilitate important discussions regarding the topics that are important to them.

- 6.10 Action logs are maintained for each session type, updates for which are a standard item at the beginning of each relevant session.
- 6.11 Corporate Parenting Board has made a commitment to be a jargon-free zone.

7. Corporate Parenting Board Engagement

Lockdown Learning

- 7.1 Our young people discussed with their Corporate Parents what they had been doing during the lockdown period. Young people fed back on what they felt had gone well and what they felt could have been improved. Our young people then went on to ask their Corporate Parents to give feedback on what they felt their next steps should be backed on the feedback received so far. Partners including Sandwell Children's Trust, Virtual School and Health Colleagues discussed their thoughts and what they would take from the session.

Raising Aspirations Panel Feedback and Action Plan Development

- 7.2 Our young people had recently held a Raising Aspirations Panel with key partners as part of Care Leavers Week 2020, they provided us with feedback and asked that the following actions be added to the Corporate Parenting Board Action Log:
 - Apprenticeship programme – support from employers and financial assistance is needed as care leavers are worse off
 - Experience in the family business – work experience opportunities in the Council, Trust and other agencies
 - Formalise work experience is needed
 - Bespoke careers advice and guidance for care leavers
 - Childcare issues for young parents to access education
 - A web portal to access jobs, advice and guidance, a one stop shop
 - Break the stigma attached around care leavers with employers and workers
 - Access to certificates which has been lost

- Boost care leavers confidence to raise aspirations and aspire for them to achieve big goals

Equality and Diversity

7.3 Our young people had held discussions surrounding equality and diversity and gave their Corporate Parents some feedback on what they feel still needs to be improved:

- Everyone should have the opportunity to have a voice regardless of their background and ability
- Everyone should have the tools to have their voice heard (sign language, Makaton, braille)
- Terminology/ jargon in titles should be avoided
- Religion, culture, identity and language should be catered for. What support is available for children and young people to explore their religion, culture, identity and language?
- Young people need to be supported to talk about their culture, identity, wishes and feelings and if it triggers any trauma
- How are staff going to work with young people and identify what is best for them and what is in their best interests?

Independence and Affordability for Care Leavers

7.4 Our young people led discussions surrounding independence for young people, they discussed some of the facts, what young people spend their money on and shared an example monthly budget. They extended the 'reality cheque' challenge to their Corporate Parents which included Corporate Parents living on an average weekly budget for care leavers - £35 for 7 days.

Corporate Parenting Board Priorities

7.5 Our young people led a session revisiting their priorities for Corporate Parenting Board from 2020, to discuss progress and to ensure clear priorities are in place for the next year. Young people discussed the progress they felt had been made throughout the year and asked Corporate Parenting Board to share their thoughts on how this work could be enhanced.

7.6 The following were recognised as additional priorities for Corporate Parenting Board and partners:

- Free prescriptions for care leavers.
- Development of a Corporate Parenting Partnership Group to monitor progress and to feed back into Corporate Parenting Board.
- Police advice link to be incorporated into the Local Offer for care leavers.
- Family link to be incorporated into the Local Offer for care leavers.
- Citizens Advice and Money Matters link to be incorporated into the Local Offer for care leavers.

8. Participation

8.1 At each business session throughout the year, our young people share a report through Voices of Sandwell Board and Care Leavers Forum including examples of their participation with their Corporate Parents. Below are some examples of the work completed by our young people throughout the year.

8.2 Voices of Sandwell Board:

- Recruitment training.
- Virtual School meeting.
- Consultation on SMBC Mentoring Programme.
- Recorded voices in a series of short films by SCT.
- Involved in the young people's panel to choose the Chief Executive for the Trust.
- Consulted with the customer feedback team in SCT on how we can improve the Social Worker leaving and changing.
- The Fostering Team are giving certificates to young people who have been matched long term. A sample of these were shown to us and we chose the best ones and the ones that are suitable for different ages. These certificates will be used when young people find a long-term foster placement.
- Voices Heard Virtual Event took place on Teams. There were loads of things to do.

8.3 Care Leavers Forum:

- Represented Sandwell at the Young People's Benchmarking Forum.

- Involved in the West Midlands Regional Participation Group.
- 3 members of the Forum took part in the British Youth Council Leadership and Development Training.
- Virtual Lockdown Heroes event.
- Discussed and evaluated the Health Passport App.
- Supported on the development of a newsletter for young people.
- Involved in delivering induction sessions to new starters at Sandwell Children's Trust.
- Conducted interviews for team manager and service manager roles.
- Supported with the development of the Baby Box Project development.
- Some members of the Forum completed Mental Health First Aid course delivered by trained professionals funded by Health Watch Sandwell.
- Consulted with Sandwell Children's Partnership Board on the development of the Neglect Strategy.
- Met with Ofsted to discuss the services that can be accessed, and the support received during the pandemic.

9. Achievements

Educational Achievement and Attainment

- Confident that all children in care now have access to a device to learn with,
- Care leavers aged between 16-25 without access to a laptop or tablet received devices.
- Care leavers Education, Employment and Training Strategic group has been re-established.
- The Albion Foundation have been commissioned by Sandwell Virtual School to engage year 7 to 11 children (Sandwell and other authority) 4.5 days per week; 32 children were supported with a range of academic, social and emotional issues across two secondary schools.
- Every Sandwell child in care received a certificate and £15 voucher for remaining positive and focused on their education during difficult circumstances in 2019/20.
- All year 11 children who graduated GCSE's sent a Corporate Parenting Board letter and cash voucher.
- All year 13 starting university received a certificate and £150 voucher.
- Sandwell Careers Guarantee won the Children in Care Award 2020. Sandwell Virtual School, Connexions and Sandwell Children's Trust have established the Sandwell Careers Interview Guarantee for children in care which ensures that all children in care receive targeted careers advice and guidance, starting in the year in which they decide their GCSE options. Staff also support young people in Year 11 with applications, facilitating college visits, taking young people to interviews, and helping them to develop employability skills.
- MJ Awards – Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Service (STEPS) National Local Authorities Awards – Highly Commended Partnership Working (page 31 CYP Now BOTN Document). (Appendix 1.)
- Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Service (STEPS) National Local Authorities Awards Winners 2020 – Partnership Working (pages 12 and 13 The MJ Newsletter October 2020). (Appendix 2.)
- Bespoke careers guidance for care leavers.

Health and Wellbeing

- Covid support and welfare contact with young people
- Albion Foundation partnership to support care leavers post-lockdown offering food support.
- The Albion Foundation launched the virtual 120 club (forum for children in care to engage with their peers) in November 2020; 5 young people have taken part in these sessions.
- NHS Passport App continues to be promoted, monitored and evaluated. Reviews on App Stores have been positive.
- Gold Standard of professional interventions from the beginning of a child's journey developed.

Safeguarding and Stability

- SMBC approved Foster Carers Leave Policy giving additional leave to SMBC staff who are Foster Carers.
- Corporate Parenting Training delivered to Cllrs.
- Refresh of the SMBC Corporate Parenting Newsletter raising the profile of the Corporate Parenting responsibility amongst SMBC Cllrs and Officers.

Preparation for Adulthood

- Strengthened link with DWP regarding young people's sanctions. There is an escalation mechanism in place where a sanction is the most appropriate option to discuss vulnerabilities and risk with SCT.
- iRise Mentoring Programme piloted with 17/17.5-year olds to support the transition to the Care Leavers Service by providing them with 12 1-2-1 mentoring sessions, building up skills with them. The programme aims to facilitate the successful transition of children in care into independent or supported living, ensuring they have good social connectedness and reduce the potential for homelessness.
- HOME Project – Independence Programme for 17-18-year olds prior to being offered a training flat and also for the young people currently in the training flats. 6-8-week accredited course considering the steps for care leavers to taking on their own tenancy. HOME Personal Advisors have been extended for a further 12 months.

Child's Voice

- Care leavers week 2020. Events hosted included: UASC Youth Group, virtual wellbeing session, virtual preparation for work and jobs, raising aspirations virtual select committee and Care Leavers Lockdown Heroes virtual presentation.
- Christmas 2020: 3,500 gifts donated to SCT, £1,300 e-gift cards for care leavers donated by elected Members, Council Officers and partners. £500 e-gift cards for care leavers were donated by Mind of My Own. Voices of Sandwell Board and Care Leavers Forum both had virtual Christmas parties.
- Baby box project launched as a pilot. Partnership approach between leaving care, health visiting service, children's centres and young parents co-ordinators. Funding has been identified for the value of £60 for the box and will be co-ordinated by the young parents' team at Rowley COG.
- Consultation work on jargon and terminology is ongoing.
 - The 'Contact Centre' is now referred to as the 'Family Centre'
- Acronyms and abbreviations used to describe certain circumstances will no longer be practiced, instead the full terminology is used. E.g. avoiding the use of CiC in place of child(ren) in care.
- Corporate Parenting Board pledged to be a jargon-free space.
- Digital refresh of the Corporate Parenting Pledge and Charter.
- SMBC Mentoring Scheme is ready to launch.

Access to Services

- Care Leavers and Mental Health Review completed considering the current provision in Sandwell, mapping the complex pathways care leavers navigate through, identifying areas of good practice, identifying issues and making recommendations for improving mental health support for care leavers.
- Care Leavers Portal is being developed as a partnership project between SMBC, SCT and key partners.
- The development of the Corporate Parenting Partnership Group has begun.

10. Glossary of Abbreviations

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CIC	Children in Care
CPB	Corporate Parenting Board
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DfE	Department for Education
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
ePEP	Electronic Personal Education Plan
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GLD	Good Level of Development
IHA	Initial Health Assessment
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
KS4	Key Stage 4
LAC	Looked After Children
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
PEP	Personal Education Plan
RHA	Review Health Assessment
RWM	Reading, Writing, Maths
SCT	Sandwell Children's Trust
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SCSP	Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
VOS	Voices of Sandwell
YP	Young People

11. Appendix 1



12. Appendix 2

