

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



London Mini Marathon



Petting zoo at summer fun day

TO OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE,

We would like to make you aware of some great things that happened last year to support your education:

We worked really hard with all the adults who support your learning, to help you go to school more regularly. We have helped your teachers understand how you learn so that you get the most out of your lessons.

We have taken groups of children on really exciting enrichment trips, where we all enjoyed learning new skills including axe throwing and running the Mini London Marathon!

We have ensured that any difficulties you have with speech and communication are identified early and support is put in place quickly.

We are working hard to make improvements in the following areas:

We want all of our children to achieve even better grades at school in all age groups as this will help you get the best jobs in the future.

We want all schools to understand how early life experiences affect children and how this affects their learning. We are working with Headteachers in 22 Sutton schools who are fully supportive of making the changes needed.

If you would like to speak to someone at Sutton Virtual School regarding your education please contact us and we will be happy to help.

kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk

KATE LEYSHON

HEADTEACHER, SUTTON VIRTUAL
SCHOOL

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIORITIES

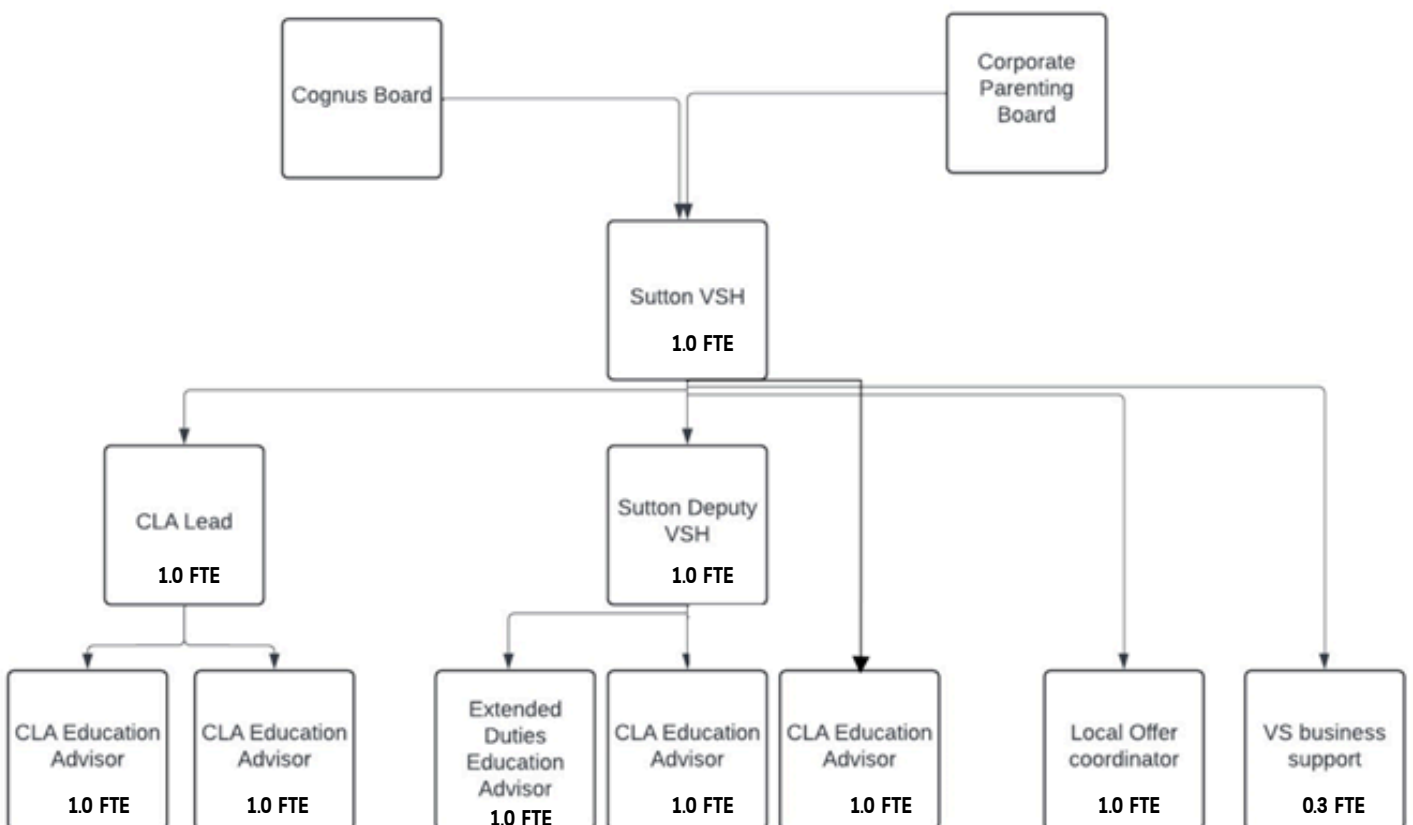
The key areas of responsibility for Sutton Virtual School are:

1	To promote the Education of Children Looked After (CLA)
1a	All Sutton CLA are accessing appropriate and high-quality education provision that meets their needs.
1b	All Sutton CLA 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
2	To carry out local authority Children Looked After education monitoring functions and statutory returns (including Ofsted)
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
3	Ensuring that 100% of Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is deployed in line with the conditions of the grant and for the benefit of CLA
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.
4	To promote the education of children with a social worker, children previously looked after and formal kinship arrangements.
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 (SGO) parents, schools, and other professionals in relation to the education of Children Previously Looked After (PCLA).

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL STRUCTURE



Sutton Virtual School – Cognus



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Sutton Virtual School is committed to improving educational planning and outcomes for Sutton's children. We continue to work collaboratively with many services including:

- Social Care teams across Children's Services
- Sutton Foster Carers Association and Foster Forum
- Sutton Therapeutic Hub
- CLA Nurses
- Youth Offending Team
- Advocacy and mentoring with MAPS
- Cognus Educational Services
- Sutton Designated Teacher Network / Designated Safeguarding Lead Network
- Sutton Headteacher networks (Secondary, Primary and Special Schools)
- Children in Care Council
- Pan London Virtual School Headteacher and CWSW Networks & National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH)
- Adopt London South and Kinship



CLA Nursing team



100%

of VS conference attendees rated the overall conference experience as good or excellent

83%

of Sutton schools on Building Stronger Foundations 'strongly agree' that they have an increased knowledge of the impact of trauma on young people and stated that they have increasingly embedded trauma-informed approaches within their practice



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Educational Psychology partnership

For many years we have worked closely with Cognus EP service and in 2023/24 we introduced an Assistant EP to work alongside both services. This role enabled us to provide direct support for individual CLA and CWSW, meaning that families have had intervention that removed barriers to education.

Through this role, we have also been provide support for Building Stronger Foundations schools as well as strengthening the joint working between the services in Cognus. In September 2024, we have commissioned Senior EP Dr Kate Payne to work alongside Sutton VS two days per week as we expand Building Stronger Foundations to more schools and deliver more trauma training to settings.

Youth Justice Service

We have continued to work closely with the Youth Offending Team in Sutton to support children who have had involvement with the Youth Justice Service. We have introduced a Youth Justice section of the PEP, which is updated by the YOT service so that schools have greater information to support educational planning.

We have worked with Youth Offending Institutions where children are placed on remand, ensuring that PEP meetings take place and educational qualifications are in place. We have also planned for transition to education or other EET pathways at end of remand or sentences.

Carer coffee mornings

Sutton Virtual School have partnered with Sutton therapeutic hub to offer face to face coffee mornings throughout 2024/25 for carers and parents for all the children we support, including CLA, Previously CLA, children with a social worker and kinship.

There will be a range of training on offer from both services and a range of professionals will be present to provide support that has been requested by families through feedback.



Shining Stars Awards



Games Wagon

ENRICHMENT

100+

children attended the Summer fun day at the Quad with their families. Activities included arts and crafts, petting zoo, gaming wagon, face painting, inflatables and football goal, pizza and ice cream.



7

children looked after visited Coffley Outdoor Activity Centre for a day of activities including archery, climbing, axe throwing and shelter building.



15

children looked after attended Operation Elf in Cognus to receive a gift from Santa and take part in fun Christmas activities



25

children (as well as staff and carers) completed the London Mini Marathon, the first Pan London Virtual School entry to this event

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Enrichment and participation

Sutton Virtual School have partnered with Child Looked After / Leaving Care Team to offer a range of enrichment and participation opportunities for our children. Sutton Virtual School have attended Children in Care Council meetings and the children's voice shaped the offer of enrichment activities for 2024/5.

Children have attended trips to an outdoor activity centre, where they took part in activities including climbing, axe throwing and archery. The summer fun day at the Quad was a huge success with over 100 children and families attending. There were activities such as a reptile zoo, inflatable games, a professional artist, face painting, games wagon as well as a pizza and ice cream van. Cognus hosted the annual Operation Elf Christmas fun day in Wallington, which was attended by some Sutton CLA and CWSW. All children received a gift from Santa and took part in a range of Christmas activities. We took the first ever Virtual School group of children to run the London Mini Marathon. Three Virtual School Heads and two foster carers took part with the children and all children happily received their medals. A small group of ESOL learners booked into summer school activities in the school holiday period. A cooking workshop took place at the Quad, where a three course meal was created by Sutton CLA. All primary age children received age appropriate reading materials to their homes through Letterbox. Sutton Virtual School worked closely with the LBS Participation Officer and attended CiCC meetings.

Attendance audit and support for residential care homes

We recognise that some young people have had increased challenges around attendance since Covid. To ensure that we are providing a consistently high level of support around attendance for all children we support, we commissioned the Cognus attendance service to carry out a Virtual School attendance audit and make recommendations to strengthen our work for families.

We have linked up the attendance service with Sutton residential care homes, including Treehouse, Willow Rise, Cedar House, Oak House and semi independent providers looking at barriers and solutions to school among the CLA cohort.



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Support for entrepreneurs

Three young people joined the Government grant funded EPIC small business entrepreneur scheme, where young people who wish to develop a small business idea are taught small business basics and given mentoring and funding support to plan and launch their small business. One young person with an idea related to the beauty/message industry attended the EPIC Graduation ceremony in Birmingham and gave really positive feedback on how helpful the course was in supporting their small business curiosity.

We also engaged the mentoring support of a small business leader to work with Sutton Virtual School and one young person who had already started a small clothing business alongside his studies. The young person engaged really well with the sessions and reported that he felt he had a much better idea on how to make decisions that will lead to the growth of the business and avoid making unnecessary losses.

i-CAN NHS traineeships

We had one Sutton care leaver complete the 8 week i-CAN traineeship to help secure employment within an NHS career. One other young person is enrolled to start in January 2025.

Cognus Board mentoring offer

The Cognus Board have offered mentoring support to Sutton CLA. So far one young person has taken up this offer and we are actively encouraging other young people to strongly consider this offer as the Board seek to offer their skills, network connections and experiences as Corporate Parents to the young people.



Bubbles at summer fun day

SHINING STAR AWARDS

Two of Sutton's Children Looked After were invited to receive special awards on the 22nd July 2024 at the Shining Stars Awards Ceremony held at Guildhall, London. This wonderful event was hosted by the City of London, the Network of Virtual Head Teachers and the Pan London Children in Care Council. It was sponsored by the City of London Corporation and prizes were provided by TLC (specialist tuition providers). Our two winners were accompanied by Sara and Moira from Sutton Virtual School, Laura Toal from Social Care and friends and carers of the winners.

This awards ceremony was another fantastic evening celebrating our amazing young people! It was such a special evening and we felt so proud to not only be celebrating E and K's achievements, but to have had the privilege of supporting them on their educational journey. They were both so happy to get their awards and judging by their reactions when they were receiving their awards on stage, it was also a very special moment for them and their supporting friends and carers.

It was a wonderful evening!

"A wonderful opportunity to showcase the work of Virtual Schools across London and celebrate the successes of our many Shining Stars!"

Debby Rigby Virtual Headteacher for The City of London

"The talent and potential of care experienced young people is immense and should, as this event will, be showcased and celebrated".

Ruby Sayed, Chairman Community and Children's Services, City of London Corporation



"An evening to embrace and uplift all care experienced young people for their amazing accomplishments and strengths".

Louisa Foyle and Zhane Decembre Pan London Children in Care Council, Partnership for Young London

Shining Star Award winners at London Guildhall

SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONALS

Cognus therapies partnership

In 2023 we strengthened our SALT support for CLA through the introduction of SALT screeners in the therapeutic hub and follow up actions funded by Pupil Premium Plus. In 2024 we have commissioned the therapies service to audit our approach to SALT and OT support to ensure the highest level of support from Sutton Virtual School.

A report has been published with recommendations, which are being embedded in to our practice and future development plans.

We have also introduced SALT screeners for CWSW through the Building Stronger Foundations programme and hope to be able to expand this offer further as this programme continues to grow into the future.

Building Stronger Foundations

We launched Building Stronger Foundations as a pilot in 2023 to six school in partnership with Limes College. With the additional support from an Assistant EP for one year, the therapeutic hub, Trauma Informed Schools and the Attachment Research Community, we have grown wave 2 to include 22 Sutton schools with many more on the waiting list for wave 3 next year. The wave 1 report is published later in this report and we are excited at early signs of impact from this programme.

The Royal National Springboard Foundation

We have worked closely with Springboard for many years, having a small number of CLA take up school places at independent day and boarding schools. We have now started to work with Springboard around placements for kinship, CIN, CP and PCLA families, with one placement already being considered for September 2025 start. This gives a further option to stabilise family units and prevent children coming into care.

StudyBugs attendance tracking

At the start of 2024, Sutton introduced Studybugs attendance tracking to the local authority as part of the attendance strategy. Sutton Virtual School have worked closely with the attendance service throughout, filming an [attendance video](#) with young people and working with social care leaders to enable children with social worker attendance data to be tracked through StudyBugs.

Educational services are widely using Studybugs to support around areas such as safeguarding, attendance and transport with really positive feedback received.

CPD for professionals

We ran the biggest Sutton Virtual School conference to date, with over 100 attendees from schools, education services and social care. The speakers included Luke Rogers, a nationally recognised care experienced speaker and Tony Sammon from Trauma Informed Schools.

We provided ARC memberships to Building Stronger Foundation programme schools as well as enabling them to attend the ARC conference.

VS staff attended NAVSH conference either in person or virtually, ensuring the team have up to date knowledge of best practice across the sector.

Three Sutton Virtual School staff completed the Trauma Informed Schools diploma qualification along with 6 other staff across the local authority. They will now support Building Stronger Foundations work in schools as we move towards our goal of becoming a trauma informed Borough.

We have run new to role training for Designated Teachers as well as network sessions for all Designated Teachers/Designated Safeguarding Leads.

We have led social care Practice and Performance & CLA Masterclass sessions and delivered sessions on attendance, CLA and CWSW.

CLA LEAD



NEW ROLES

In recognition of our expanding duties, we appointed a Child Looked After Lead to Sutton Virtual School in September 2024.

Georgia Doncaster, who is herself care experienced, will have oversight of Sutton Children Looked After education outcomes. Georgia has already introduced a Statutory Designated Teacher training programme for 2024/25 and will support training for social workers and carers.

Georgia works closely with the fostering service and is a member of the fostering panel.

KINSHIP DUTIES



In September 2024, new duties for Sutton Virtual School were introduced around formal kinship arrangements.

We welcomed Extended Duties Education Advisor Hannah Miles to the team, who will oversee our responsibilities related to families and professionals supporting kinship, previously looked after children.

Hannah will provide educational advice and guidance as well as supporting schools through the Building Stronger Foundations Programme.

Sutton Virtual School has contributed to the development of the Sutton Kinship strategy.

£35K

We have successfully secured funding from the Turing Scheme to take 10 children looked after on an trip to Canada in summer 2025

3

The number of Sutton Building Stronger Foundations schools that ran a workshop at the Regional ARC conference



As 31st March 2024

PROFILE OF SUTTON CLA

Number of Children Looked After (in care on 31 March 2024)

Total CLA	2-4	Reception	Primary	Primary (% out of borough)	Secondary	Secondary (% out of borough)	16-18
244	12	5	49	61%	94	64%	84

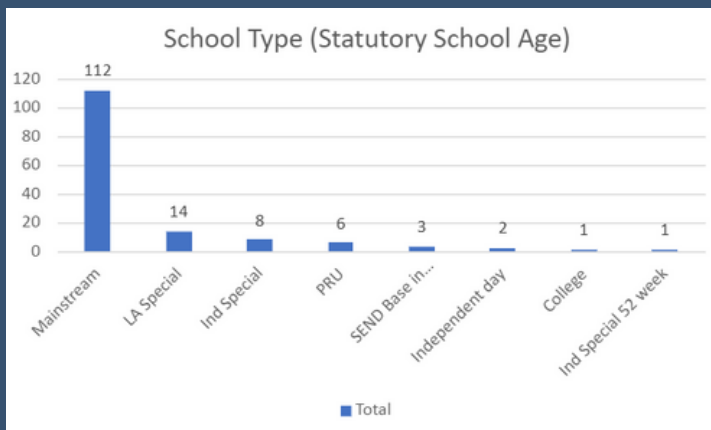
The number of Children Looked After in Sutton has remained similar over the past few years. The number of children aged 2-4 year old in early years has reduced slightly and the number of children in primary has increased. The number of reception age children has reduced and secondary age and post 16 young people has remained constant. The percentage of primary and secondary Children Looked After attending school out of Borough has increased from last year.

CLA by Gender, Ethnicity, Special Needs (in care on 31 March 2024)

% Female	% Male	Predominant Ethnic Group White British	2 nd Ethnic Group Asian / Asian British / other Asian	EHCP	SEND Support
96 (39%)	148 (61%)	123 (50%)	9 (4%)	56 (23%)	45 (18%)

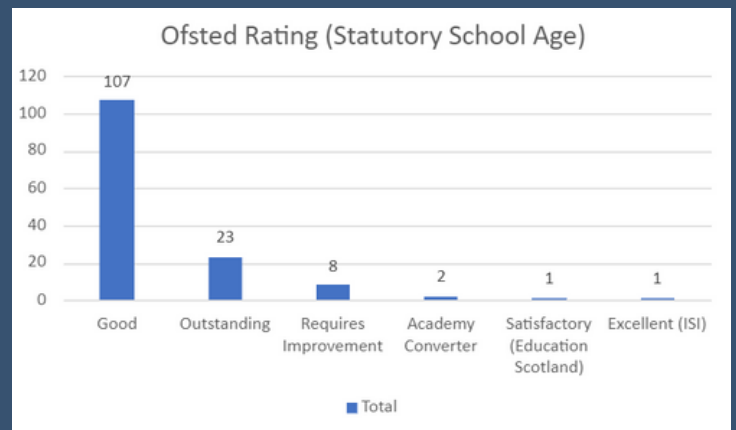
The percentage of male and female CLA has stayed similar to last year. There is a small increase in percentage of White British ethnic group, and Asian / British Asian / Other Asian continues to be the 2nd predominant ethnic group.

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 41%. There has been an increase in the number of children with EHCP and with SEND Support needs compared to last year.



76% of Sutton CLA attend a mainstream school, 17% have their educational needs met in a special education setting and 4% attend a PRU.

100% children who required a new school place were admitted to a good/outstanding school or academy converter. Some school Ofsted ratings changed following inspection or the child came into care already settled in a requires improvement school and the decision was made not to disrupt their education by moving them.



93% of Sutton CLA attend a school that is rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, which is a further increase from last year.

Single Ofsted inspections gradings have been removed from September 2024 and moving forward the Virtual School Head will make placement decisions based on the four inspection categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management

SUTTON CLA PERFORMANCE

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 2023-24 is therefore restricted to include only those Sutton Children Looked After who were continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31 March 2024.

Early Years Foundation Stage

There were 8 young people in reception taking end of early years key stage assessments. 37.5% Sutton CLA achieved a Good Level of Development, which was broadly in line with National CLA (41.0% GLD). There were two Sutton CLA with EHCP in early years who are working below expected levels and 60% of Sutton CLA without SEND (EHCP and SEND Support) achieved GLD compared to 55% National CLA with SEND.

Year 1 Phonics

There were 8 children who took year 1 phonics tests. These children achieved well with 62.5% working at age related expectations, compared to 60% National CLA, 59% Regional CLA and 83.8% for all children in Sutton.

Key Stage 1

There were 3 Sutton CLA taking end of KS1 assessments and one achieved or exceeded age related expectations in all areas (reading, writing, maths and science). Results were broadly in line with and above National CLA for all measures. Schools no longer have to report on KS1 Statutorily to the Local Authority

KS1	2022-23				2023-24			
	Reading	Writing	Maths	RMW	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM
Sutton CLA expected	50	33	50	33	66	33	66	33
National CLA expected	45	45	45	45	50	38	50	34
Sutton (all) expected	75	75	75	75	71	63	72	58

Key Stage 2

There were 7 Sutton CLA, five with EHCP and one with SEND Support needs taking end of key stage 2 assessments. Age related expectations were achieved for 14% in reading, maths and GPS, which was lower than National CLA although reflective of the SEND needs of this cohort.

KS2	2022-23					2023-24				
	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM	GPS	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM	GPS
Sutton CLA expected	75	50	50	50	50	14	14	14	0	14
National CLA expected	52	45	48	34	48	52	46	46	34	46

Key Stage 4

We had twenty three year 11 young people in care for more than 1 year. 30% of the cohort achieved 5 or more GCSEs and 13% achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade 4 or above. There was a 0.30 increase in Progress 8 from 2022/23 for Sutton CLA. 96% of young people identified and applied for an education, training, employment (EET) post 16 destination for September 2024 start. Post 16 students have registered for courses across the range from ESOL entry level 2 through to level 3 A-Levels.

	KS4			
	2022-23		2023-24	
	Att. 8	Prog. 8	Att. 8	Prog. 8
Sutton CLA	22.2	-1.99	7.4	-1.69
National CLA	19.9	-1.24	11.8	-1.39

CLA PERFORMANCE DATA

Key Stage 5

33 young people started Year 12 in September 2024 and 94% started in education, employment, or training (EET) in September.

50 young people were in care at the end of year 13 and 72% were in education, employment, or training (EET) in September 2024, which continues to be above the National average of 70% of 18-year-old care leavers in EET destinations.

Post 18 Destination	No of young people
College	19
Employment	9
University	3
SEND school	1
NEET	14
Apprenticeship	2
Custody	1
Gap year	1
Total	50

Not in Education, Employment or Training

Support is in place for each young person Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) from Sutton Virtual School, Integrated Youth Service and Leaving Care Team; all NEET CLA have had a termly PEP and each young person is monitored through the VS / LCT NEET panel as well.

The work with all young people was monitored across the year in relation to steps of progress. The young people made an average of 2.9 steps of progress each.

Young person	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Steps of progress	Outcome
A	0	3	2	+2	Started to engage in options
B	0	0	0	0	NEET
C	0	3	5	+5	Employed
D	0	3	3	+3	Engaging in options
E	0	1	3	+3	Engaging in options
F	0	3	1	+1	Considering options
G	0	0	3	+3	Provision contacted
H	0	1	-	+1	Considering options
I	0	2	1	+1	Considering courses
J	0	2	3	+3	Considering work experience
K	0	2	4	+4	On role on a course / became a parent
L	0	3	5	+5	Secured apprenticeship
M	-	1	3	+3	Engaged with education offers
N	-	0	1	+1	Considering work
O	-	0	1	+1	Considering work
P	-	0	5	+5	Secured work
Q	0	3	3	+3	Engaging in options
R	-	0	5	+5	Secured college course
S	-	0	5	+5	Secured apprenticeship
T	-	0	4	+4	Secured course
Total				+58	

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Considering options	Beginning to investigate education, employment, or training.	Started to engage.	Settled to Education, Employment and Training. (EET)	Committed to Education, Employment and Training. (EET)

CLA PERFORMANCE DATA

Higher Education Destinations for Sutton care leavers

Four care leavers took up a university place in September 2024 with a further one due to start in January. All university applicants are offered support with their UCAS and finance applications, through the Leaving Care Team and Sutton Virtual School. There are currently 13 Sutton Care Leavers age 18-25 enrolled on a Higher Education pathway. There were two Sutton care leaver graduates this year, achieving a 2:2 degree in Computer Science at the University of Greenwich and a 2:1 in Radiography at St. George's University. This young person has since successfully gained employment, working as a Therapeutic Radiographer within the NHS trust.



Attendance

Overall average attendance for Sutton CLA in 2023-2024 was 87%, which is slightly lower than the last published National CLA attendance (2022/23), which was 90%. The introduction of StudyBugs attendance platform within some social care teams, live attendance tracking within ePEP, combined with the implementation of the VS attendance audit recommendations and an attendance support template in PEPs has already led to attendance improvements in 2024, including the return to school of two school refusing children.

Suspensions and exclusions

The suspension rate for Sutton CLA was 7.14 in Autumn 2023/24, which was significantly lower than 2022/23 (36.59) and National CLA (25.57).

No CLA children were permanently excluded this year. There have been 8 Sutton CLA identified by schools as at some risk of permanent exclusion at different points in the year and Sutton Virtual School have worked with the partnership to ensure use of stabilizing interventions including short term use of Alternative Provision placements, use of music therapy in school, training of staff on how to deescalate situations in a trauma informed way, use of safe spaces and development of stronger relationships with key staff.

Child A attended the Limes turnaround programme for the summer term and is now back at mainstream school. School have created a specialist provision to support his behaviour and regulation that is working well. An application for an EHCP has been accepted. Since he has started back this academic year, he has not had any exclusions.

Child B is doing really well this year, and attendance and punctuality has improved. VS arranged a mentor, who he is able to relate to and music therapy, which he loves. This has positively impacted his focus in school and his attitude.

Due to regular lesson avoidance, confrontations with staff and going missing in school, Child C was excluded several times. VS and SC worked with the school and supportive FC to ensure PEX did not happen. Accesses a place at local AP as soon as excluded from school so that there is no break in education and consistent relationships established and has resulted in improved behaviour back in mainstream school.

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

FUNDING 2023-24

Service Funding

Sutton Virtual School continues to fund most staffing and operational costs through Designated School Grant (DSG) funding. However, the DSG does not meet the full costs of staffing and further Pupil Premium Plus Grant funding is used to cover staffing costs. The percentage of Pupil Premium Plus funding that is used in addition to the DSG funding provide the staffing required to meet the increasing breadth of Statutory duties of the Virtual School (CLA, PCLA, kinship, CWSW and post 16) has increased to 34% compared to 26% last year.

Sutton Virtual School uses the Previously Looked After Children Grant and kinship Grant to fund the new Extended Duties Education Advisor who works to deliver advice and guidance to adoptive, Special Guardianship Order and kinship families.

Sutton Virtual School received the Children with a Social Worker Grant in 2023/4 and continues to fund the 1.0FTE interim Virtual School Deputy Headteacher position, two days a week of Educational Psychology staffing within the Virtual School to deliver the Building Stronger Foundations programme to twenty-two schools and Virtual School Education Consultations continue to be provided for the Children with a Social Worker cohort.

Pupil Premium Plus Strategy

Sutton Virtual School receives £2570 Pupil Premium Plus for each statutory school age Sutton Child Looked After. 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. We have increased the amount of PPP we allocated schools each term to at least £700 per child to support the learning of individual children through the PEP.

We have commissioned audits for both attendance and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) to ensure that we have both effective and consistent approaches to supporting children with these areas but also strength partnership working.

We have continued to fund laptops for children where they require higher specification devices linked to GCSE and A Level courses. We have continued to fund training for use of the laptop provided by the Local Authority to ESOL CLA.

Literacy continues to be prioritised in our strategy, with Wreck It journals being provided to all children during the summer term to promote writing about their holiday period. Letterbox and Dolly Parton books continue to be provided for the children, and we promote the setting of a literacy SMART target in the PEP. A section of the PEP has been added for foster carers to reflect on how much reading is taking place at home and consider strategies to increase this. We continue to focus on end of KS outcomes and have continued to use after school tuition to support children's progress.

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

FUNDING 2023-24

Provision	Impact
CLA Education £185,723	<p>Individual learning support (supported learning/courses/resources) (£14,497) Our children have a variety of individual learning support needs, and we have provided funding for these on an individual basis as required. Examples include providing a week-long A-level preparation course, funding an eyelash qualification, play therapy sessions, a digital camera for a photography qualification, revision guides and textbooks/learning subscriptions and occasionally a laptop where course requirements are specialist. We have seen a positive impact of the Pupil Premium Plus we have directly spent on CLA with 91% of SMART targets being achieved.</p> <p>Tuition (£53,205) We used Pupil Premium Plus as a top up to School Led Tuition Grant. An analysis of the impact of tuition in 2023-24 shows that 89% of the young people who had tuition achieved their related SMART target by the end of the period of tuition. Young people also received mentoring support as appropriate.</p> <p>Educational and Clinical Psychology (£53,480) We have increased our use of Educational Psychology service this year as there has been a clear increase in needs across the CLA cohort. We have commissioned direct delivery of work for individual young people and CPD and supervision for school staff who work to support with young people. We have continued to provide professionals with weekly VS Educational Consultation sessions with an EP. We have introduced the use of Clinical Psychologist to carry out seven ASD assessments for CLA in LAs where the waiting list for assessment is up to three years. Whilst this is a costly approach, we have ensured that Sutton CLA have the right support promptly to support educational planning.</p> <p>Since January 2024, twenty Sutton CLA benefited from 131 hours of direct EP work. This has involved a wide range of involvement from assessment to identify barriers to learning and develop recommendations for school and wider professional network; intervention to support a YP in understanding their recent Autism and ADHD diagnoses and compensatory strategies to support them in their learning and independence; therapeutic intervention to improve wellbeing, and trauma training for school staff so they have an increased understanding of the impact of trauma in the classroom and how to embed trauma-informed and relational approaches.</p> <p>Cognus Therapies (£14,767) Since January 2024, twelve Sutton CLA benefited from 105 hours of Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy support. This has involved a wide range of interventions including the completion of assessments to identify barriers to learning and develop recommendations for school and the wider professional network. Following the initial assessments additional support has been provided through for example, the delivery of therapy support, training of school staff and the development of strategies and resources for the children and young people to use. We have increased our use of SALT and OT therapy hours as more intervention is undertaken for CLA around the needs identified in the therapy screeners. We commissioned a SALT audit to review and further improve VS processes. We are currently commissioning a SALT audit to measure the impact of our SALT intervention and will report this in 2025.</p> <p>Creative therapist (£1,729) We commissioned the use of a creative therapist to work with three Sutton children looked after in Sutton schools. A mix of drama and art based approaches have been used to help primary age children around their social, emotional and mental health. Whilst the therapy is always an individualised approach, all three young people have shared themes and difficulties, and the therapy space and relationship has proved a valuable resource in providing a safe, constant environment in which to freely and creatively express all aspects of the self and the worries and fears of the challenges they are currently facing. As well as the one-to-one work, support has been given to carers, and school staff, aiming to provide a holistic approach to the young person and carer(s) wellbeing, with psychoeducation, theoretical understanding, relational approaches and supporting resources.</p> <p>One young person has significantly improved their self-expression, understanding of their living situation and their past relational experiences, using the therapy as a valuable space in which to safely explore difficult feelings and make sense of previous experiences. Another young person has found the therapy space valuable in expressing and exploring possibilities creatively and playfully and offering a valuable space of their own. Both home and school have reported significant improvement in the young person's expression of needs and wants and the young person displays more autonomy. One young person has used the space in which to express things they feel unable to express in other environments, due to a fear of judgment and mistrust. Both school and home have reported significant improvement in the young person's relationships and emotional regulation.</p>

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

FUNDING 2023-24

	<p>Preventing permanent exclusion and use of Alternative Provision (£32,697) We have prevented permanent exclusion for a number of CLA who were deemed to be at high risk. We have worked with the child's school and Sutton LA to build jointly funded Alternate Provision packages that have provided the children with timely intervention, specialist support with higher staff to student ratio and enabled children to rebuild relationships within their mainstream school and AP settings.</p> <p>Flash Academy (£3,100) FlashAcademy ESOL, continues to support our new ESOL students to access early language support. We continue to provide every CLA whose first language is not English, a Flash Academy account and they are encouraged to access the programme alongside their school or college ESOL course. We currently have 29 students using the app regularly who have completed a total of almost 800 ESOL units combined.</p> <p>Attendance service support and audit (£7,000) We commissioned a member of the attendance service to complete an audit of CLA attendance support processes and work with the VS staff team, schools and residential care homes to increase attendance for children who are severe or persistent absentees. We have already had two long term school refusers reengage with education as a result of this work.</p> <p>StudyBugs live attendance platform (£5,248) Sutton Virtual School contributed towards the cost of StudyBugs with other partners, including inclusion, Early Help and Youth Justice service. This enables partners across Sutton to access live attendance data for all CLA and CWSW, supporting the Sutton attendance strategy in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance from DfE.</p>
<p>Enrichment activities £14,876</p>	<p>We ran the biggest Summer Fun Day to date at the Quad with over 100 families in attendance. We commissioned spaces at ESOL summer schools, provided activities at Operation Elf Christmas event, took children to an outdoor activity centre, offered sa cooking and flower making workshop as well as an author visit and sending Wreck It journals. Over 130 young people took part in the in-person enrichment events across the full age spectrum, including children with disabilities, and children across a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, which is the largest number to date. We continue to ensure that all activities are accessible to all wherever possible and designed events such as the Summer Fun Day with accessibility in mind.</p>
<p>Payments to schools £91,253</p>	<p>Funding is allocated to schools for a wide variety of in school interventions including 1:1 support, targeted pastoral support, intervention groups, ELSA, play and arts therapies, homework support, after school activities, school based tuition. Pupil Premium Plus is allocated on a need's basis through the PEP process. SMART targets are set for the young person, funding is allocated to support the achievement of the target and then progress is tracked at the next PEP. We have seen a positive impact of the Pupil Premium Plus we allocate to schools with 91% of SMART targets being achieved.</p>
<p>Payments to carers £10,906</p>	<p>Foster carer payments include reimbursements for educational support including paid school clubs, specialist laptops for specific GCSE/A Level courses and day/residential trip costs</p>
<p>Additional Support through Cognus Limited £145,929</p>	<p>Cognus core service costs (£78,000) This covers Cognus core service costs and provides additional staffing capacity to provide a more flexible, responsive, and enduring service for our Children Looked After. This additional capacity enables case managers to provide additional and personalised support over for Sutton Children Looked After.</p> <p>Assistant Educational Psychologist (£43,000) We appointed an assistant education psychologist to support the establishment of wave 1 of the Building Stronger Foundations programme in six Sutton schools. The BSF impact report is shown later in this report.</p> <p>CLA Education Advisor (£18,846) We appointed an additional CLA Education Advisor for part of the year to cover team member absence.</p> <p>Maternity cover (£6,083) We appointed a member of staff to cover a period of maternity leave within the VS team.</p>

SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

FUNDING 2023-24

ePEP attendance £16,000	eGOV are commissioned to run our PEP online portal and to enable collection of 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. All professionals can now contribute to the PEP portal to update their views around education.
Literacy development £11,350	<p>We have continued to provide funding around our literacy priorities have distributed Letterbox books to our young people aged 6-12 years and continued to use Dolly Parton Imagination Library for the youngest children (2-5 years).</p> <p>Reading engagement at home is now monitored through the PEP and we have provided additional reading materials to children as required. Children have a literacy SMART target, which is also reviewed termly.</p>
CPD and membership costs £10,399	<p>We hosted the biggest Sutton Virtual School Conference to date, with over 100 attendees from school leadership roles, educational services and for the first time social workers.</p> <p>We have continued to provide training for designated teachers, social workers and have also developed trauma informed Governor training with the Educational Psychology services.</p> <p>We provided Sutton Virtual School staff the opportunity to attend NAVSH and ARC conferences and maintained Virtual School membership of NAVSH.</p> <p>We provided schools on Building Stronger Foundations programme with ARC membership to support their ongoing trauma informed journeys.</p>
Total <u>£486,436</u>	<p>The following Grants were used to fund the above spending:</p> <p>Pupil Premium Plus £432,630</p> <p>Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus £39,098</p> <p>School led tuition Grant (ended April 2024) £14,708</p>

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

The remit for Virtual Schools has increased to include children in kinship care arrangements, including those living under special guardianship (SGO).

- Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements
- Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education
- Expanding provision of advice and information

We have made strides in developing our Sutton Virtual School strategy in relation to these new duties. We have appointed Hannah Miles, an education advisor, to develop our extended duties support. Hannah provides advice and support to school staff, social workers and wider partners, and works to deliver our strategy and be a key connector for schools and social care. We have extended our strategy and support offer to include kinship carers and special guardians, as well as providing advice and support to professionals working with these children.

In the summer term, we supported 11 Kinship Carers and their families, with queries around SEND processes and admissions relating to carer status and transitions to high school. We supported a young person to get onto a college course to prevent them becoming NEET (not in education or employment). We have connected SGO families to local support groups, in particular for male SGO carers and supported around social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) concerns, signposting to specialist agencies. This included working closely with SGO families to connect to the social worker to obtain therapeutic input for their children. We have also developed a section on our Sutton Virtual School website page to signpost resources and guidance to kinship carers.

We have developed close links with our neighbouring Virtual School (Merton) to jointly support our Kinship families that straddle borough schools and residency. This will ensure united support for these families with fair and easy access to information support and guidance. We are attending Sutton and Merton's SGO social worker's Kinship group, to help carers know where to go to obtain advice and support and to raise the profile of Virtual Schools directly with the kinship carers.

We have collaborated with the Principal Social Worker and Therapeutic Hub to create a programme of free carers' 'coffee and learn' sessions which all include kinship carers. Each session provides a themed session run by therapeutic or education specialists, followed by an opportunity for carers to network with other carers in a supportive and informal space. There are opportunities for carers to seek specialist advice in relation for the child they care for, with both therapeutic and educational representatives on hand in a drop-in surgery style session.

We have forged close links with 'Kinship', the leading Kinship charity and Government contracted provider following the national kinship strategy. They run national and regional peer network sessions for kinship carers and provide a range of support that Sutton kinship carers can access. We have also arranged for the charity to present at a Sutton DSL network so that schools can signpost their support to Sutton kinship carers.

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

We continue to offer a range of advice, guidance and support to a range of professionals working with children who have, or have had, a social worker. We have had an average of over 80 advice requests a term to which we have provided direct, bespoke advice, guidance and support. Advice has been requested in relation to children ranging from Early Years to Year 13. Most requests for advice or support have been from school staff, but we have also supported special guardians under our newly extended duties which include kinship. We also join the Edge of Care panel meetings to provide an educational perspective and offer a connection with schools.

Sutton Virtual School consultations continue to run and provide schools and social workers a forum to discuss the educational difficulties of children they're working with. These sessions invite the key school staff working with the child to meet with the social worker, an Educational Psychologist, Virtual School education advisor, and a member of the Attendance team where attendance has been identified as an issue. Schools or social workers can refer in for a funded consultation in relation to any child aged 0-18 under VS remit: child in need, child protection, looked-after, previously looked-after, previously had a social worker, kinship and SGO.

CWSW data profile, 2023-2024

The data below reports the attainment of Sutton children in the academic year 2023-24, referring to the CIN cohort as Sutton children who were subject to a child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan as recorded on the census. It's important to note that this data does not include the entire cohort of children under Virtual School remit, because it doesn't report on Sutton children attending schools in neighboring boroughs, those in kinship or who previously had a social worker, and it's worth noting that this cohort is quite fluid, with some pupils on plans for only a short period of time.

Attendance

Following the launch of Studybugs, a system that collates children's attendance, we have been able to begin monitoring the attendance of the Children in Need and Child Protection pupil cohort of those in enrolled Sutton schools (and therefore not all Sutton CiN or CP pupils).

As of the end of December 2024, the average year-to-date attendance rate of these cohorts was:

Children in Need (CiN)	Child Protection (CP)	All pupils
79.6%	75.4%	94.3%

This reflects a national picture whereby the attendance of children with a social worker is often significantly lower than their counterparts. We are working to promote improved attendance by providing training to schools and social workers, providing bespoke advice, offering funded consultations with a multi-agency team of specialists, signposting attendance support and resources, working with the Inclusion team and social care colleagues to review the Educational Neglect Toolkit, exploring attendance as a specific area of review, joining the Attendance Panel meetings and raising awareness of the barriers to education and attendance that children with a social worker face and supporting partners to address this.

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

Suspensions

Groups	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Dec 2024*
National CINO	9.40%	9.51%	10.29%	8.94%	8.69%	11.92%	
Sutton CINO	8.47%	7.20%	8.81%	7.32%	6.70%	8.53%	5.35% (29)
London CINO	10.12%	8.06%	6.89%	5.98%	7.53%	9.24%	
National CPO	11.67%	12.12%	12.51%	10.50%	10.74%	13.86%	
Sutton CPO	11.49%	12.99%	22.31%	17.24%	12.73%	21.80%	3.21% (5)
London CPO	10.74%	11.01%	10.88%	9.37%	8.98%	12.91%	
All children	2.40%	2.44%	2.56%	1.97%	2.28%	3.13%	

Attainment data

This is the data reported in relation to those who were subject to a CiN or CP plan when the census data was recorded on 31st March; there will be pupils who were open to children social care before or after who are not included in this data. As is detailed below, Sutton children with a social worker are broadly achieving similarly to the national average for children with a social worker, or just behind, reflecting the continued need to prioritise promoting the education of this cohort.

Early Years

2024

	No of children	% Achieved GLD	Average no of Expected ELGs
Sutton CWSW	120	40%	10.4
National CWSW	19,180	43%	11.2
Sutton all pupils	2,273	69.3%	14.3
Sutton CWSW with EHCP	20	0%	1.3
National CWSW with EHCP	1,120	3%	1.6

Three year trend

	% GLD		
	2022	2023	2024
Sutton CWSW	44%	39%	40%

Year 1 Phonics

	No of children	% passed the phonics check	APS
Sutton CWSW	160	51%	26.8
National CWSW	25,460	59%	28.3
Sutton all pupils	2,390	83.7%	34

Three year trend

	% passed phonics check		
	2022	2023	2024
Sutton CWSW	47%	57%	51%

The DfE is no longer collecting KS1 data, which means schools are not required to administer these

CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

Keystage 2

2024	Key Stage 2: % expected or higher (\geq EXS) (Sutton CIN)			
	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM
Sutton CWSW	58%	47%	52%	39%
National CWSW	52%	47%	48%	35%
Sutton (all pupils)	82%	78%	83%	71%
Sutton SEND CWSW	26%	14%	21%	
National SEND CWSW	12%	7%	9%	5%

KS2 Three year trend

	% who achieved Expected standard or higher, end of KS2		
	2022	2023	2024
KS2 Reading	49%	26%	58%
KS2 Writing	36%	14%	47%
KS2 Maths	46%	21%	52%
KS2 SPAG	48%	23.8%	53%
KS2 RWM	33%		39%

Keystage 4

2024	Key Stage 4	
	Progress 8	Attainment 8
Sutton CWSW	-1.53	18.7
National CWSW	-1.42	20.7
Sutton (all pupils)	+0.45	59.1

BUILDING STRONGER FOUNDATIONS

The Building Stronger Foundations programme aims to support school staff to take a consistent, whole-school relational approach that builds strong teacher-pupil relationships. By supporting staff to embed consistent use of this practice and form a good rapport with pupils, it is hoped that pupil engagement improves. Training provided within the programme equips staff with a greater understanding of the impact that trauma can have on a child and provides them with practical strategies to know to best to support pupils experiencing difficulties.

Key aims

1. supporting staff to develop, use and apply a relational, trauma-informed approach
2. supporting schools to embed a consistent, whole-school relational approach
3. equipping staff with strategies to support pupils who exhibit behavioural or regulation difficulties
4. providing staff CPD and reflective spaces to further develop skills and strategies to support all pupils, particularly those that are trauma-experienced
5. promoting trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice across Sutton
6. improving pupil outcomes, including engagement and suspension/exclusion rates
7. developing a support network where schools and settings can share good practice and collaborate

Impact from Wave 1

- Over 250 staff attended training in trauma-informed, relational practice
- Teachers in all schools provided reflective sessions with EP to reflect on practice and using trauma-informed strategies in their role
 - All schools stated that Sutton Virtual School was effective in promoting a relational, trauma informed approach, with 83% of respondents rating us as 'very effective'
 - All schools reported increased knowledge of trauma-informed and relational approaches
 - 83% of respondents 'strongly agree' they have increased knowledge of the impact of trauma on young people and they have increasingly embedded trauma-informed approaches within their practice
 - All schools reported improvements in trauma-informed provision after July 2024 re-audit
 - Half of participating schools used funded support to run student well-being groups for those who have experienced trauma, which is a sustainable model they have now trained staff
- All 6 schools achieved a bronze ARC award, 2 schools achieved silver, The Limes College achieved a gold award
- The John Fisher Boys school and Limes College presented workshops to schools across London at ARC Conference

Wave 2 progress

- We have 22 schools participating in BSF currently – all 6 schools continued to wave 2, with some ongoing support to embed relational practice.
- We have 7/15 secondary schools participating and have a range of primaries, secondaries and special schools
- Approximately 700 staff have already attended trauma training through BSF, highlighting the extensive reach the programme is having in developing consistent trauma-informed practice across Sutton
- Staff feedback from a survey following training indicates that over 90% of respondents report an increased knowledge of the impact of trauma, trauma-informed relational approaches and how it could positively impact on pupils.

GOOD NEWS AND COMMENDATIONS

“J received her books today. She was so excited to get a parcel addressed to her. The books are lovely and I’m sure she will enjoy reading and looking at them over and over again” (Foster carer receiving Letterbox parcel)

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy into making a fabulous but hot afternoon. So many smiling faces including my own grandchildren and pizza AND an ice cream to keep us all cool.
Many Many Thanks (Carer feedback)

“I just wanted to say what a great first impression Hannah is making. I am really impressed to see how proactive she has been introducing herself, her role and the use of PODS. I watched the video on kinship care today, very powerful and really highlights the trauma for the young person and the impact kinship care has on the wider family, so much to unpick. She’s a great asset to the team” (Cognus service lead)

I LOVE Study Bugs.
From a safeguarding point of view it is amazing and I am using it daily and constantly. What a great tool!
(Education Safeguarding Service)

“Hey Moira, I have graduated! Thank you so much for all your help” (Graduate Care leaver)

“Wow thank you so much Moira, I’m really happy how quickly you were able to get this for me. It will be in time for starting uni.” (Care Leaver starting university)

“Hannah was extremely supportive. I felt heard and encouraged to find alternative solutions to my problem”
(VS Consultation feedback)

VS have supported S really well and have really advocated for her. Carers commented on strong communication, being advocates and recognising the young persons voice.
(Carer feedback at fostering panel)

“Laura is amazing at advocating for our young people and a real credit to our team. She’s also a fast worker, and had response plans in mind before you could blink” (Placements team)

Laura has an above and beyond attitude to her role. The girls look up to her so much. They said she is really cool !!
(Carer feedback)

The in-house foster carers and children who attended the Fun Day yesterday have fed back how much they enjoyed the event.

I was able to attend myself for a little while and could see the enormous amount of planning, thought and effort it must have taken to ensure there was varied range of activities for all age-ranges. It really was fun and so glad the weather held up too!

Huge thanks from fostering to you and your teams for organising it (Feedback from fostering team)

Hi Laura, I just wanted to update you with how L is doing. She has settled in so quickly making new friends it’s like she has always been there. The staff are so friendly and have helped us enormously as are the parents I have already met. I can’t explain the difference this has made to not only L but both my husband and I!! We can’t THANK YOU enough and will be forever grateful to you!! (Carer feedback)