

To create a framework which provides high quality, timely support to enable looked after children to achieve their full potential educationally – the key driver for social mobility

Why?

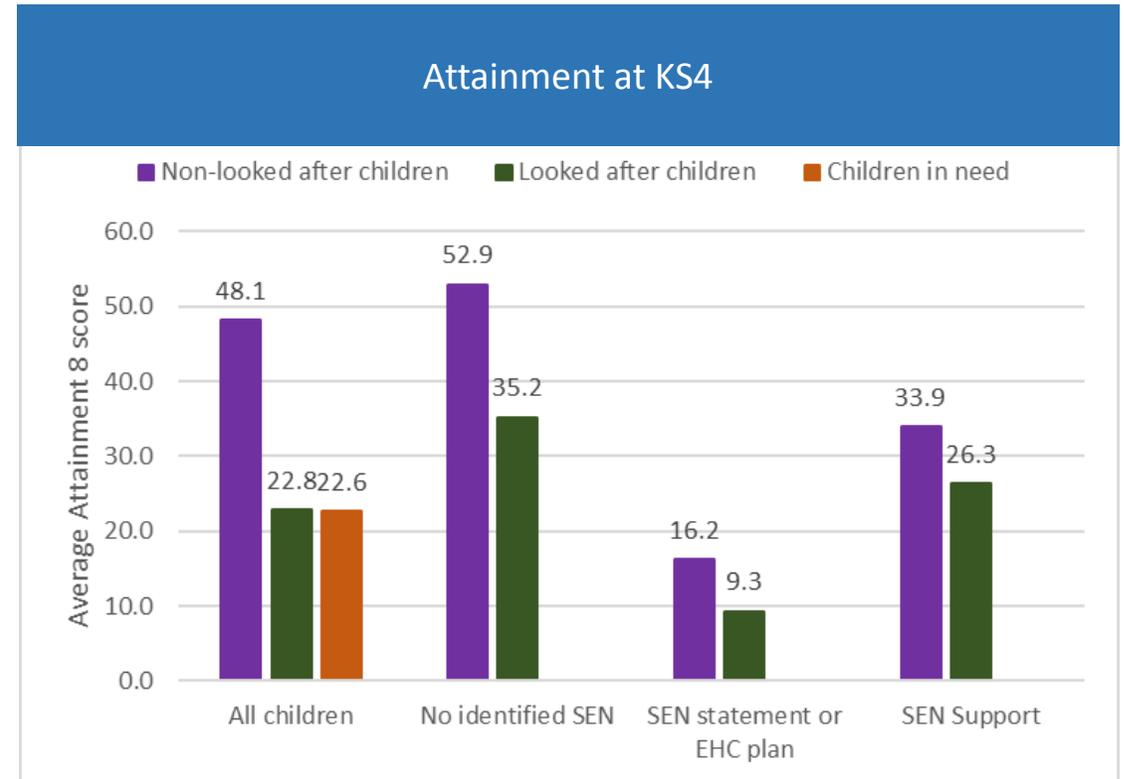
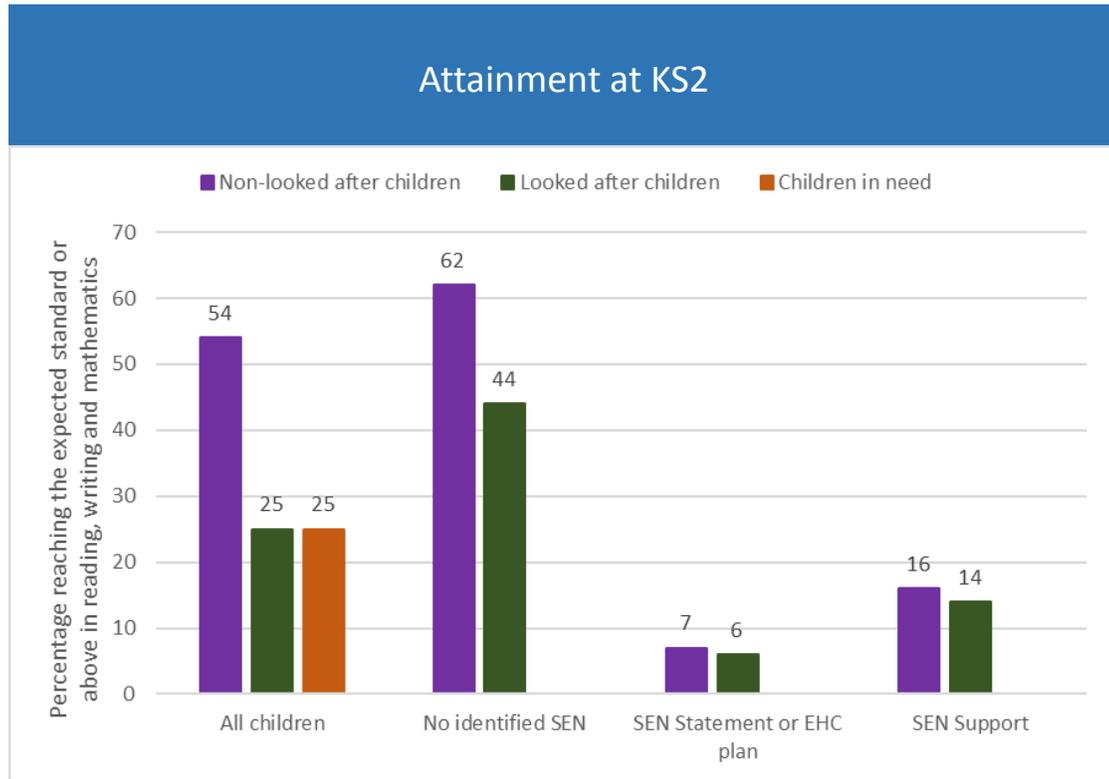
- Because positive educational outcomes are a key driver of social mobility and enabling children to make a successful transition to adulthood. It's the route to employment that enables LACs social mobility.
- Because as corporate parents supporting “our” children to fulfil their educational potential is one of our key strategic drivers, as it is for any good parent.
- Because supportive education placements help: 1) support stable care placements and 2) avoid young people being drawn in to the criminal justice system.

2 - The Gap between LAC and non LAC

KS1	KS2	KS4	Higher Education	NEET	Criminalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 29% gap in writing• 27% gap in maths• 24% gap in reading• (reaching expected standard or above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28% gap in writing• 30% gap in maths• 25% gap in reading• (reaching expected standard or above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 41% gap (Achieving A*-C in Eng and Maths)• 25% gap in average Attainment 8 Scores• -1.06 gap in Progress 8 scores (-0.08 compared to -1.14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 43% gap• (7% of care leavers vs 50% of the general population progressed to HE - 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26% gap• (19-21 year olds not in employment, education or training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looked after children 5x more likely to offend than all children. (5% of LAC for year ending March 2015 compared to 1% of all children)

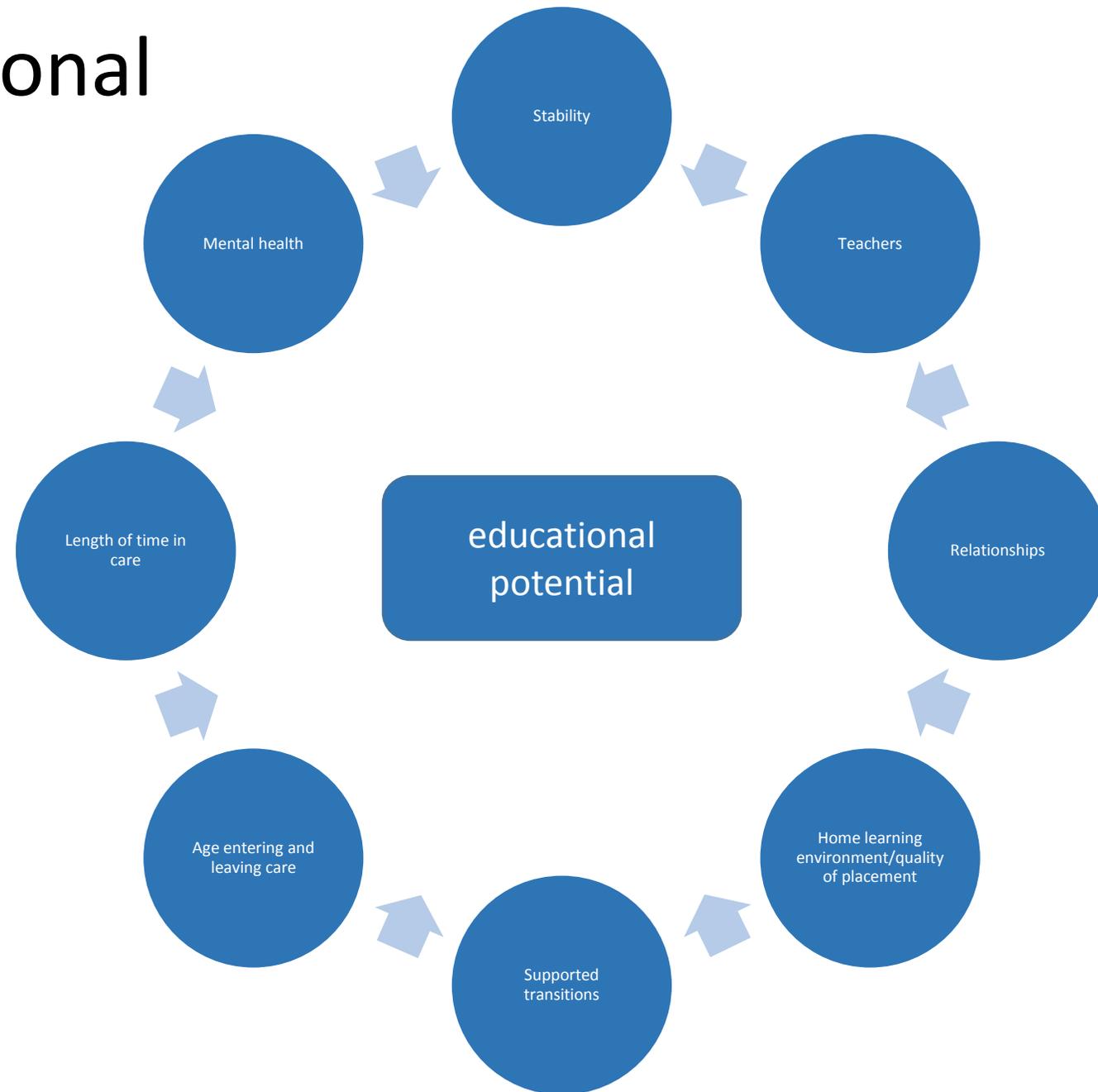
Looked after children are almost twice as likely to be permanently excluded as their non-looked after peers, 0.14 per cent compared to 0.07 per cent of non-looked after children.

3 - Special Educational Needs



However, it's important to keep in mind that 60% of children enter the care system due to abuse or neglect and that 61% of LAC have a special educational need, compared to 15% of all children.

4 – Educational potential



5 - Stability

Both school changes and placement changes are risk factors for looked after children's educational outcomes

Children with three or more placements within a year are more likely to have lower school performance.

Stable placements support development of stable relationships, which make it more likely that the child will have a stable education, better health care access, maintain friendships and develop skills/hobbies.

Children who had an unstable experience of care do worse than children in stable placements on all measures of educational participation, including truanting behaviour and exclusions, and they were making less educational progress.

Being able to stay at the same school and avoid disruption to their education has a strong association with educational attainment for looked-after children.

Care leavers who go on to higher education are more likely to have had stable care experiences, continuity in their schooling, to have been encouraged by their birth parents, and to have been assisted by their foster carers in their schooling.

Stability Index Findings (OCC): school moves, placement moves, social worker changes.

- School moves and placement moves do not always happen together - of the LAC who moved schools mid-year, 55% did not also experience a placement move.

"Education was my stability; the only thing that was normal was my school. It was the only thing that stayed the same when I became looked after"

6 - Age

Care generally provides a protective factor, with early admission into care being associated with consistently better outcomes than those entering care later

Before care

The gap between LAC and non-LAC begins before school in relation to attachment, socio-emotional skills, self-regulation, language development and health and physical needs. There is a strong case for early intervention. (1)

Entering care

The earlier the young person enters foster or kinship care, the better their progress, provided that they do not experience many short care periods or many placement and/or school changes (2)

Leaving care

Children who enter the care system as adolescents are less likely to reach educational targets (and are more likely to be in the criminal justice system and less likely to have a smooth transition to adulthood)(3)

LAC who leave care early, for example at 16, tend to do less well than those who leave care later. Evidence suggests they have a higher instance of substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment and poorer educational outcomes. (4)

7 - Home learning environment

Carers need to be able to provide appropriate educational support to the children they care for

“I am helped and supported to do well in my education by my carers”:

	Residential Home	Fostering
All the time	72%	81%
Most of the time	19%	12%
Sometimes	6%	2%
Rarely	1%	0%
Never	2%	1%

Ofsted's questionnaire for children and young people 2016

A child is more likely to achieve educational attainment when they are supported by carers to do so

The quality of the home learning environment is a strong predictor of children's developmental progress.

Chaotic home environments during early years have been associated with poorer cognitive and social outcomes at age five

Home learning environment includes the extent to which carers read with children, sing songs/rhymes, take children to library, help with homework, understand the school system

IMPACT: carers need to be well prepared for their role and aware of the need to support learning as well as caring for their child. This links to the **quality of placement.**

8 - What we've done

Local authorities have a **statutory duty** to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after, wherever they are placed.

All looked-after children should have a **personal education plan** (PEP) setting out what their educational needs are and how those needs will be met.

Every council has to appoint a **Virtual School Head**, who will ensure all children in care get the support they need to succeed at school.

All maintained schools and, through their funding agreement, academies, must appoint a **designated teacher** for looked after children. They act as a source of advice and expertise about the needs of looked-after children on the school's role.

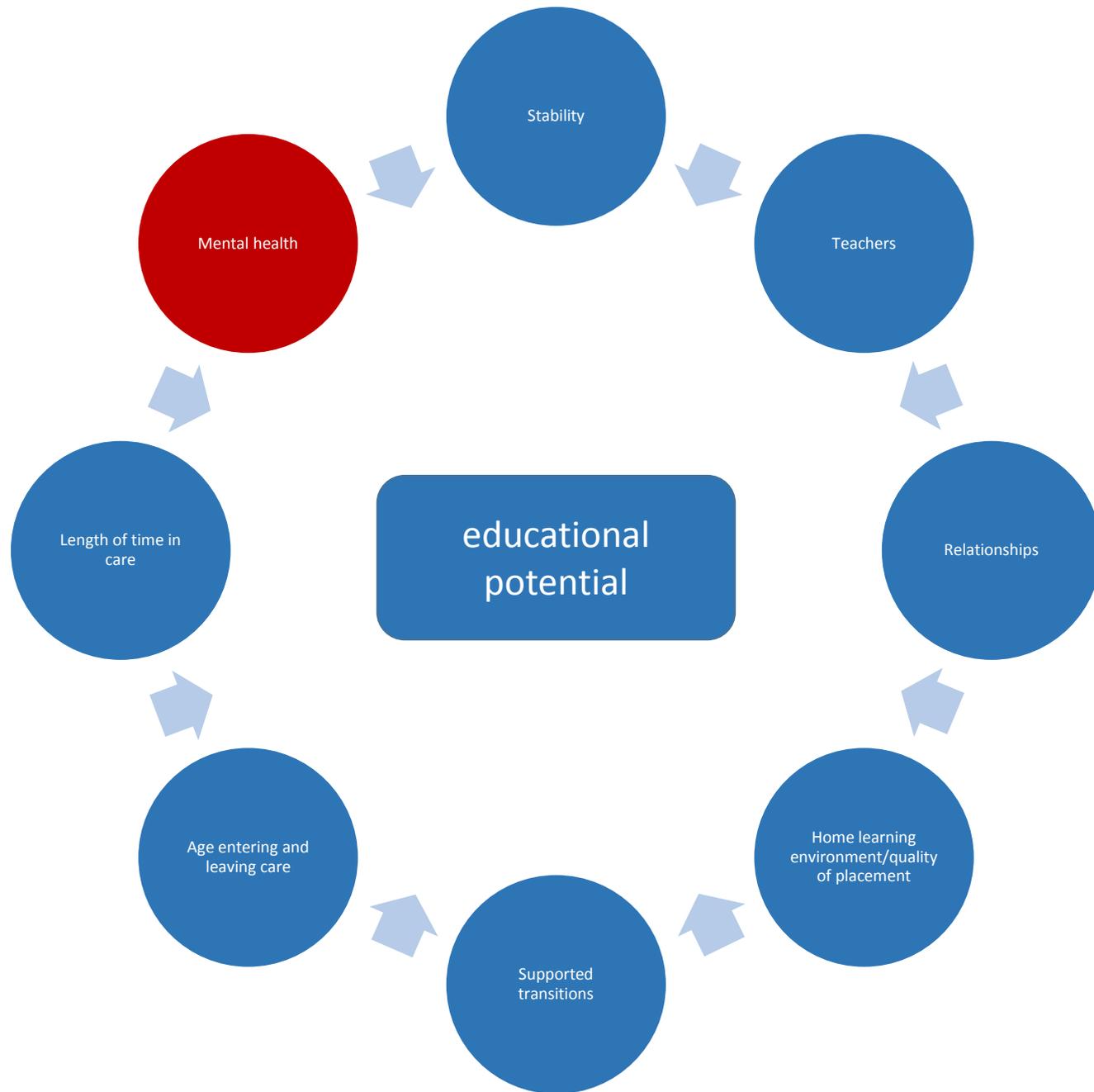
Looked-after children, with limited exceptions, have **top priority in school admissions**.

The **Pupil Premium Plus** means all children in care receive an additional £1,900 per year whilst looked after. This is managed by the Virtual School Head who works with the child's education setting to use pupil premium funding to help meet the needs identified in his/her PEP.

Looked-after children are eligible for **16-19 bursary** funding of £1200. If care leavers are following a recognised course of **higher education** the local authority that formerly looked-after them must pay them a one-off **HE bursary** of £2,000.

Set up a **Looked after children education working group**, co-chaired with ADCS to help inform policy on LAC education.

Provided seed funding for the development of an information management tool enabling Virtual School Heads to see the data on individual looked after children and compare their performance to local authority and national figures so they can challenge schools and set appropriate educational targets (NCER grant). This went live in March 2017



Of children in care, 62% are there because of abuse or neglect. This can have a significant and lasting impact on their mental health and emotional well-being – far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives with long term impacts on future life chances

In 2012, the Department of Health reported that looked-after children and care leavers were between four and five times more likely to self-harm in adulthood

Almost half of looked-after children meeting the criteria for a psychiatric disorder in comparison to 1 in 10 non-looked-after children

Based on 2016 data, of the 26,340 former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years old, 10,460 (40%) were NEET, compared with 14% of all 19-21 year olds

Looked after Children are five times more likely to offend than the wider population

Only 7% of 19-21 year old care leavers in higher education

Initial mental health assessment of looked-after children on entry to care is too often of poor quality, approached inconsistently, fails to effectively identify needs common in looked-after children and is not carried out by an appropriately qualified mental health practitioner. The SDQ is rarely used to maximum effect and under-identifies attachment disorder and the impact of trauma – with resultant failure to commission the right types of interventions. EWG has highlighted the lack of sensitivity by professionals, when interacting with the child/young person, during the assessment process and the fact that the child/young person is having to relive an often traumatic history repeatedly to different individuals with no control of the process.

New pilots to look at the health assessment looked after children receive on entry to care. Comprehensive mental health assessments that are:

Timely: always take place as part of the initial health assessment



Enable settling in and establish a true picture of mental and emotional state

Good quality, providing accurate and thorough understanding of need (and outcomes?)



Provides for a response that is tailored to those needs.
Carried out by practitioner with appropriate experience of LAC therapeutic needs
Drives commissioning of local services

Person Centred: Young person has control over a process focussing on the needs and wishes of the individual



Young person is included in key decisions made as a result of the assessment.
Understands why it is happening and is treated sensitively and with respect.

Can we apply the tools for change to this work?