

# Broadening Educational Pathways for looked after & vulnerable children

Results from the first 3 years of  
implementation and evaluation of the  
potential for the scheme's long-term impact



The University of  
**Nottingham**

Supported by



Department  
for Education

BEP scheme's Theory of Change	Data/Evidence point	Research inputs
<b>By...</b>		
...identifying care-experienced children who could benefit from a placement in a state boarding or independent school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of local authorities engaged in referring children for placements</li> <li>Number of children securing new school places</li> </ul>	RNCSF impact evidence
<b>And then...</b>		
... brokering a suitable school placement and providing effective support and guidance to ensure success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of schools engaged</li> <li>Insights from key informants on transition support approaches</li> </ul>	RNCSF impact evidence University of Nottingham
<b>It is possible to achieve...</b>		
...life transforming outcomes for children in and on the 'edge of' care as measured by:		
1. stability of placement including impact on school attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care arrangement stability</li> <li>School attendance data</li> <li>Retention rate</li> <li>Pupil survey &amp; interview feedback</li> </ul>	RNCSF impact evidence
2. social and emotional mental health (SEMH) and wellbeing of participant children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEMH monitoring data</li> <li>Survey feedback</li> <li>Life grid interviews with a randomly selected sample of participant pupils</li> </ul>	RNCSF impact evidence University of Nottingham
3. academic progress and attainment linked to enhanced employability prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KS4 outcomes of historic data set compared to matched control group to understand value-add</li> <li>KS5 &amp; University/HE progression outcomes (no matched control possible given limitations of ONS comparison data)</li> </ul>	University of Nottingham RNCSF impact evidence
<b>Impact</b>		
4. building understanding of the value of the widespread use of boarding and independent day school places for care-experienced children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic value (cost-benefits) associated with historic data set outcomes</li> <li>Survey feedback – pupil, school and local authority engagement</li> </ul>	University of Nottingham

# Broadening Educational Pathways for looked after & vulnerable children

## Independent and boarding school places for children in and on the 'edge of' care\*

In 2020, Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF) were awarded funding from the Department for Education to deliver the Broadening Educational Pathways programme for looked after & vulnerable children ('BEP'). The aim of the BEP programme is to deliver a blueprint for a scalable model for the use of state boarding or independent school places for children who are looked after, and children with significant social care involvement.

This report details the evaluation of the first three years of the scheme's delivery. The scheme's theory of change provides the framework for data collection and research inputs. The impact assessment framework draws on analysis by RNCSF's Impact & Evidence Manager and the external research partner (School of Education & School of Economics at the University of Nottingham, UK).

The evaluation seeks to assess:

- the outcomes achieved by children in, and on the 'edge of' care, who have been supported by RNCSF to access a boarding school placement to date (outcomes data for independent day school places is not yet available, since RNCSF's work to widen access for looked after children to independent day schools began only in 2021),
- the relevance and effectiveness of boarding and independent school placements for children in, and on the 'edge of' care in the context of the children's social care commissioning landscape in England and Wales and its' potential to offer both improved outcomes and value for money

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### Key Reviews, Reports and Sources

**Independent Review into Children's Social Care:**  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308122449/https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>

**An independent evaluation of the outcomes for looked after and vulnerable children attending boarding schools:**  
[www.royalspringboard.org.uk/\\_files/ugd/9d6b54\\_ebc23406d4f54ffb8d9378972bb0621f.pdf](http://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/_files/ugd/9d6b54_ebc23406d4f54ffb8d9378972bb0621f.pdf)

**Rachel de Souza, Children's commissioner interview:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0H47jP8PtQ>

\* in scope are children looked after (CLA), including children looked after by kinship carers and/or other special guardianships arrangements (SGO, children who have had significant social services involvement characterised by Child Protection Plans and/or Child in Need Plans (CIN/ CPP), unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and children registered with their local authorities as Young Carers (YC)

# Headlines – In the past three years...

**150 children** in care and other vulnerable children have secured a new state boarding or independent (day or boarding) school place through the scheme

**£20 million+** - these 150 school places represent a total subsidy of £20m in fee assistance commitments by independent schools

**>200 schools** signed up to a 'pledge of priority access' for care-experienced children to their fee assistance (sometimes called 'transformational bursary') award schemes\*

**30 local authorities** actively engaged in considering referrals of young people for whom they have corporate parental responsibility

... building the evidence of the educational impact of placements for vulnerable children ...

... in providing stability and trusting relationships

**£37k**

Evidence shows that the BEP placements so far have helped to preserve care arrangements - preventing the escalation of risk and securing improvements to school attendance and engagement. Each child that can remain in kinship care rather than becoming a looked after child, saves around £37k a year<sup>1</sup>.

... on academic outcomes

at Key Stage 4 (GCSEs)

- **+5 months of progress**  
children in care and vulnerable children in school placements gained the equivalent of +5 months of progress (Attainment 8) (+3 months GCSE Maths and +7 months GCSE English), when compared to pupils sharing similar characteristics<sup>2</sup>.
- **4 x more likely to achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths**  
54% of the 110 SpringBoarders included in a matched control group analysis achieved 5 good GCSEs (grades 9-5) including English and mathematics, compared to 13% of the comparator group sharing the same, or very similar, characteristics. That is a potential 40% improvement as a result of attending a boarding school.

Recently published research by the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford highlights the crucial link between attainment in GCSE English and maths and care leavers' ensuing participation in education, employment and training. Citing extensive evidence of the close causal relationship between securing key stage 5 qualifications and positive employment outcomes.

Those that secure A-levels or equivalent are much less likely to be out of education, employment or training at the age of 20 1/2 years old<sup>3</sup>.

**At Key Stage 5 (A-levels or equivalent)<sup>4</sup>**

- 94% of children in care and vulnerable children in RNCSEF's boarding school placements secured 2 or more A-levels (compared to 82% of disadvantaged pupils nationwide)
- 25% of children in care and vulnerable children in RNCSEF's boarding school placements secured the higher benchmark of AAB or higher (compared to 20% of disadvantaged pupils nationwide - no comparable data available for LAC/CIN)
- 63% of children in care and vulnerable children in RNCSEF's boarding school placements achieved higher Average Point Scores than disadvantaged pupils (nationally) in the same exam year

... and on employability and careers

**University places<sup>5</sup>**

75% of children in care and vulnerable children in RNCSEF boarding school placements secured a place in a higher education institution, compared to just 13% of Children in Need/Children Looked After

31% of children in care and vulnerable children in RNCSEF boarding school placements secured a place at a high-tariff university, compared to just 2% of Children in Need/Children Looked After

**Lifetime earnings**

Gaining a degree is a significant leading factor in securing lifetime earnings advantage. After taking factors like tax and student loan repayments into account, average overall lifetime returns are around £100,000 for women and £130,000 for men<sup>6</sup>

... transforming education and social care practices

**£2.75 million**

the projected saving to HM Treasury associated with the reduction in social care costs, and likely gain in potential lifetime earnings (and savings in associated welfare payments and public services) of every 100 vulnerable children able to attend a state boarding or independent school<sup>7</sup>.

**£3.2 million**

the saving to HM Treasury associated with the young people who have secured independent (not state boarding) places whose state-per pupil spend (GAG equivalent of (c.£5700 p/a) no longer falls to the state to meet.

## Independent Review into Children's Social Care

Noting the positive results thus far of the BEP scheme, the 2022 Independent Review into Children's Social Care recommended that the Government should "increase the number of children in care benefitting from a place at a state boarding or independent school ... and create a new wave of state boarding capacity led by the best existing schools".

The Government, in their Social Care Reform implementation strategy and consultation response agree - aiming to "extend the Broadening Educational Pathways Programme to increase the number of children in care in independent and state boarding schools (and) use the evidence generated from this to inform long-term ambitions for this programme."

Read the full report online [here](#)



See page 3 for full link url details

“ ”

The cumulative effects of poor outcomes for children in care cost the government an average of £720k across over their lifetime, with an annual bill of £23billion.

## The challenge

There are currently around 80,000 young people in local authority care in England, representing 0.7% of the total population of children aged under 18 years old

Many face considerable challenges in establishing positive education and employment pathways, with gaps in attainment and in access to, and participation in, post-16 opportunities persisting between those with and without experience of care<sup>8</sup>.

Children in the key social care groups (children in need (CIN), children on a child protection plan (CPP) and children looked after (CLA) by local authorities) perform less well than their peers across all Key Stage 4 measures, with their overall average Attainment 8 score being broadly less than half of that of the overall pupil population<sup>9</sup>.

Young people leaving care meet with less opportunity, with just 13% of young care leavers progressing to sustained higher education placements, and 4 in 10 (41%) not in education, employment or training by the age of 21 years old, compared to 12% of other young people of the same age<sup>10</sup>.

**As the independent review into children's social care testified:**

'Outcomes for children in care continue to be unacceptably poor, (and with) costs that continue to rise, a radical reset (should) now be unavoidable. Without a dramatic whole system reset... by this time next decade there will be approaching 100,000 children in care (up from 80,000 today) and a flawed system will cost over £15 billion per year (up from £10 billion now)'

That independent review, and the subsequent Government response, set out five 'missions' for care-experienced people: Loving relationships; Quality education; A decent home; Fulfilling work and Good health.

Outcomes for young people leaving care

41%

of care leavers aged 19–21 are not in education, employment or training<sup>11</sup>

only 22%

of care leavers are in employment at age 27 compared to 57% of others.

\* For list of schools see page 26

1. Children's commissioner. Estimating Children's Services spending on vulnerable children. July 2019. Available at: [cco-vulnerability-2019-spend-report.pdf](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/reports-and-publications/cco-vulnerability-2019-spend-report.pdf) (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

2. University of Nottingham. An Independent Evaluation of the Outcomes For Looked After and Vulnerable Children Attending Boarding Schools. Nottingham: University of Nottingham; 2023. Available at: [tinyurl.com/universityofnottinghambep](https://tinyurl.com/universityofnottinghambep)

3. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker, Rees Centre, 'Care leavers' transition into the labour market in England' University of York, University of Exeter, January 2023. Available at: [tinyurl.com/careleaverslabourmarket](https://tinyurl.com/careleaverslabourmarket)

4. No data available for comparison with national averages of children in care, identified as being 'in need' by local authorities and/or young carers, so comparisons are made with children eligible for Free School Meals. UK Government. 'A level and other 16 to 18 results, academic year 2021/22' Web resource; March 2023. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results>

5. UK Government. 'Widening participation in higher education' Web resource; July 2022. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education>

6. UK Government. Labour market value of higher and further education qualifications: a summary report. Available at: Labour market value of higher and further education qualifications: a summary report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

7. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.

8. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker, 'Care leavers' transition into the labour market in England' ibid

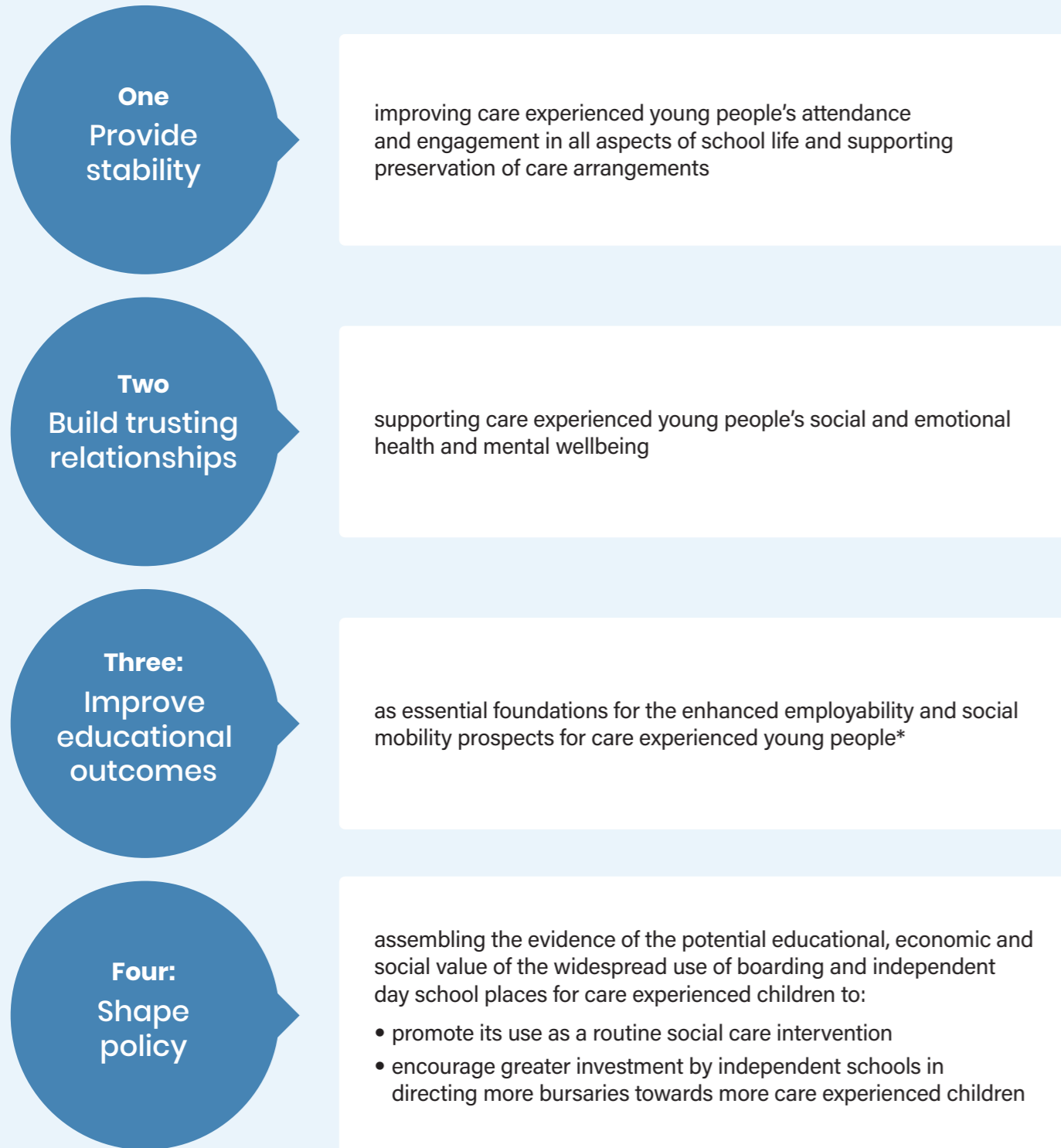
9. UK Government. Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England. 2022. Available at <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england>

10. UK Government. Widening participation in higher education. 2022. ibid

11. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker, 'Care leavers' transition into the labour market in England' ibid

# Outcomes framework

The intended outcomes of the scheme are to:



## Providing stability

For children with care experience, a boarding or independent day school placement can support stability in education and beyond, from school attendance, to engagement in all aspects of school life, to helping preserve family or kinship care arrangements or secure continuity of foster care.

### Stability and attendance

To date:

- All care-experienced children who have embarked on their state boarding and independent school place under the scheme have remained in stable care arrangements
  - Against a backdrop where nearly one in five care-experienced children aged 12 to 15 face two or more home moves in a year – that means packing up their whole lives and getting to know a new set of carers every few months<sup>12</sup>
- None of the participant children who were children in need (CIN), or children on a child protection plan (CPP) have faced an escalation of risk to become children looked after in the period since their placement started
  - Compared to around 7,000 young people aged 11-15yrs known to children's services who last year became 'looked after' - which is 27% of all care entrants.
- Fewer than 2% of children supported through the scheme have been absent from school for a prolonged period
  - Compared to 44% of those with a Child in Need Plan and almost 20% of children in care demonstrating persistent absenteeism<sup>13</sup>

RNCSF has developed an approach that supports each child, and their carers, to prepare and adjust to what they might expect in their new boarding school placements. The charity works with Virtual School Headteachers to identify students and then recommend which schools might suit them. This careful partnership approach has strengthened with each year of operation, improving the student experience and reducing the risk of unsuccessful placements.

The scheme's retention rate, **which monitors the stability of the educational placement**, is a crucial measure of success.

**In the first 3 years of the scheme's delivery, 91% of the young people supported to secure a boarding or independent school place have remained in their placements.**

### Independent Review into Children's Social Care

'As well as full time care, both state and independent boarding schools can also offer models of shared care, where children continue to live part time with their family whilst accessing excellent education and residing in the school for part of the week or school year.'



### Engagement in all aspects of school life

Each year participant pupils complete an anonymised survey to reflect on their experiences so far. In the 2022 survey, the percentage of pupil's stating that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the statements:

I am part of my school community

96%

I feel happy and comfortable at school

94%

I am either relatively or significantly engaged in my school communities.

100%

“ ”

a growing body of evidence is emerging that supports the work undertaken by RNCSF in the implementation of their bursary placements for children in care scheme. ... the close and deeply relational approach that RNCSF brings to this work is significant in the success reported by participants

\* Educational outcomes data summarised in this report relates only to the public exam performance of vulnerable children supported in boarding school placements. Data is not yet available for the independent day-school placements, the first of which commenced through the scheme in September 2021.

12. Children's Commissioner. Stability Index: Technical report. London: Children's Commissioner for England, 2020. Available at: <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2020/11/cco-stability-index-2020.pdf>

13. Children's commissioner. Characteristics of children entering care for the first time as teenagers. February 2021



## Building trust and resilience

The nature of a boarding school's close-knit, round-the-clock community, with the house system at their heart, and the enrichment activities that many boarding and independent schools offer outside of the classroom, provide their pupils with the opportunities to explore their strengths and build trusting relationships.

To understand the impact of independent and state boarding school places on young people's social, emotional and mental health the research framework uses:

**Quantitative** evidence collected through the STEER platform (see page 9 for more detail)

**Qualitative** evidence gained through annual school, local authority and pupil surveys, enhanced with key informant and life grid interviews conducted through the scheme's independent research partnership with the University of Nottingham

### Learning for the whole person

The boarding pupils interviewed by the University of Nottingham research team talk of the value they place on their chances to learn about and develop aspects of themselves that they otherwise would not have - attributing boarding to a growing sense of 'realising and connecting with their autonomy and became leaders amongst other young people'<sup>15</sup>.

They also talk about how the environment offered by a boarding or independent day school place enables them to learn so much more than their subjects; that they 'develop better social and communication skills, character strengths and personal values.'

'The ability to communicate well is important for becoming more autonomous in life and in their boarding school placements SpringBoarders describe how they develop these abilities.' In particular, they are often able to be autonomous and self-directing: 'taking responsibility for setting their own goals and learning about themselves'<sup>16</sup>.

'Children learn how to take responsibility, work within the boundaries of a structured day, take up new hobbies and learn the qualities of discipline in applying themselves to learning instruments, playing different sports. Staff in the schools report that the children learn to be themselves and develop their potential'<sup>17</sup>. Pupils report, for example:

"I've started debate club to help me with my public speaking which is helping me become more comfortable with talking in front of other people. I'm on the student council and learning how to properly talk with people older than me, people in positions of power and not being really, really nervous. Being socially skilled and able to relate to a wide range of people is something I have developed through boarding"

"At my school, there were students from all over the world and effectively growing up with people from all different continents I think is probably one of the most valuable things because it really teaches you perspective; and how everyone has their own sort of cultural views."

"One thing that kept me resilient in the first week of boarding was mindset. I imagined what my future self would become and if my past self would look up to him"

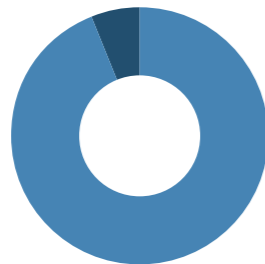
### Qualitative insights

The survey framework used to gain pupil, school and local authority perspectives is based on recommendations from the National Foundation for Educational Research<sup>14</sup>. In their responses, SpringBoarders speak of the independence and resilience they gain in being away from home, their growing confidence to explore new things outside of their comfort zones, and the opportunity to communicate with people from different backgrounds, to make connections and friendships.

Percentage of pupils that agree

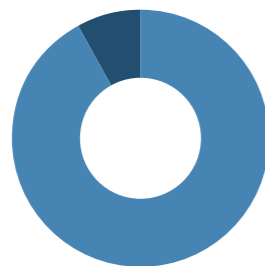
94%

My school has opened up opportunities would not have had before



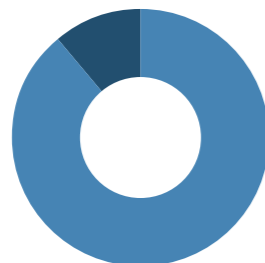
92%

I am gaining a broader outlook on life



89%

I have more chances to excel in something I am good at



## Quantitative evidence-based tracking – The STEER platform

The STEER platform<sup>18</sup> provides data to measure, track and improve young people's social, emotional and mental health. It enables staff to give personalised support and to evidence the impact of this on pupil's wellbeing term by term.

Pupils participate in a twice-yearly assessment that helps identify whether they are exhibiting patterns of behaviour that might represent a risk to their emotional health and wellbeing.



### What we learn

Of a historic sample of children in and on the 'edge of' care supported by RNCSF to attend a boarding school prior to the BEP scheme's launch (2017-20), broadly 1 in 5 demonstrated behaviours suggesting issues connected to their ability to regulate their emotional wellbeing when they started in their school placements.

The STEER data for that period shows that within the first six months of their placements, this ongoing bias dropped (by between one third and one half). Suggesting that through the influences and environment they experience in their boarding school placements, young people supported to attend a boarding school start to gain in their ability to self-regulate.

This shift in core foundations for trusting relationships and self-efficacy happens across a range of the dimensions monitored by STEER:

- RNCSF pupils 'trust of self' is healthier in school than outside of school - highlighting the positives of a stable influence.
- RNCSF pupils 'trust of others' is healthier than the average for all pupils participating in the STEER data collection process nationally

In terms of self-disclosure (where there are risks of young people masking what they are really thinking and feeling, or conversely, being impetuous or impulsive over-sharers), STEER shows that overall, SpringBoarders have gravitated towards 'healthier' scores as they progress through their time in school

STEER also monitors any tendencies towards 'seeking change' (whether relating to concerns about perfectionism, unhealthy levels of control, fixed ideas and opinions, or limited perseverance, focus, and commitment). Here, scores for SpringBoarders tend towards 'seeking change' which can be associated with unsustainable pace and goal setting and the risk of burnout. Knowing this enables boarding house staff and others to put in place support specifically to address those risks.

### STEER – a school's perspective

"The second STEER assessment (of one of our SpringBoarders) flagged that they were experiencing a change in their ability to regulate their trust of self (their confidence in trusting or questioning their own qualities, skills, ideas, and opinions).

By helping us to identify this as an issue, the assessment allowed us to open up conversations with the pupil about what might be behind some of the behaviours they were exhibiting.

STEER provided us with advice on targeted actions for how to work with the pupil to address behaviours. We were able to build trust in conversations about the challenges the pupil experienced in sharing their opinions and ideas in school settings. This allowed one of their teachers to work with them to explore different ideas for things that would help.

One of the ideas that emerged was to involve the pupil in a design project, which ultimately led to them approaching a climbing company to make a helmet size suitable to accommodate braided hair. In their assessment 6-months later we could see measurable improvements in their confidence, self-esteem and self-belief"

“ ”  
After completing my assessment, I was fascinated as to how accurate and revealing the data could be.

SpringBoarder in her second year of a boarding placement

14. Straw S. The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 4. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research; 2018. Available at: [www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2155/sbbf04.pdf](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2155/sbbf04.pdf)

15. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.

16. ibid

17. ibid

18. Steer tracking'. Web resource. Available at: <https://steer.education/steer-tracking>

## Improving educational outcomes

The nature of the academic offerings in many state boarding and independent schools, often smaller class sizes, specialisms in both SEN and minority subjects as well as high expectations and academic support available can enable pupils to make significant progress – and in many cases, to surpass academic expectations.

### Key Stage 4 outcomes

For children in care and children on the 'edge of' care supported by RNCSF to attend a boarding school in period 2013-22:

- 54% of the 110 SpringBoarders included in the sample for the matched control group analysis achieved strong GCSEs (grades 9-5) in maths and english, compared to 13% of the comparator group sharing the same, or very similar, characteristics<sup>19</sup>
- this differential is equivalent to a gain of +5 months in educational progress at Attainment 8 when analysing progression from KS2 to KS4 (+3 months in GCSE maths, +7 months in GCSE english)<sup>20</sup>
- The average GCSE Attainment 8 score for RNCSF's vulnerable boarders in the period 2015-2022 was 54.4, compared to an average GCSE Attainment 8 scores in 2022 for children looked after of 20.2 (20.6 for children identified as being 'in need')<sup>21</sup>

### Key Stage 5 outcomes

For children in care and children on the 'edge of' care supported by RNCSF to attend a boarding school in period 2013-22:

- 94% secured at least 2 A-levels, against the backdrop of only 16% of disadvantaged pupils choosing to take A-levels (comparison data for KS5 outcomes of LAC/CIN not available)
- 25% achieved the higher benchmark of 3 A-levels graded AAB or higher - no comparable data available for LAC/CIN nationwide
- 55% secured a higher Average Point Score than the national average for disadvantaged children (who completed A levels)

#### A matched control group analysis approach

To test whether the participants had gained significantly in their academic progress over the duration of their boarding school placements, the University of Nottingham research team created a matched control group using data from the Office for National Statistics database.

The study found positive effects in terms of progress in both GCSE English and mathematics equating to an average of **+5 months equivalent educational progress in terms of overall Attainment 8 scores (approximately +3 months for GCSE mathematics, and +7 months for GCSE English).**

Read the full research report online [here](#)



See page 3 for full link url details

## 54% vs 13%

Using a matched control group, the University of Nottingham found that children supported by RNCSF to attend a boarding school were 41% more likely to secure grades 9-5 in GCSE maths and english.

54% of the SpringBoarders in the sample group achieved this benchmark, against 13% of the matched controls of vulnerable pupils sharing similar characteristics to the RNCSF pupils<sup>22</sup>

## 94% vs 16%

94% secured at least 2 A levels, compared to only 16% of disadvantaged pupils choosing to take A-levels (data for KS5 outcomes of LAC/CIN nationwide not available for comparison)<sup>23</sup>

“ ”

Care leavers who achieved Level 3 qualifications (A levels) had a lower likelihood of not being in employment than those with lower qualifications. In turn, their participation in post-16 education was strongly associated with their attainment at KS4.... attainment in GCSE English and mathematics was particularly important in this respect, as these subjects were often required for access to Level 3 courses.<sup>24</sup>

Figure 1

GCSE Attainment 8 scores achieved by LAVC supported to attend a boarding school through RNCSF's programmes in the period 2013-2021

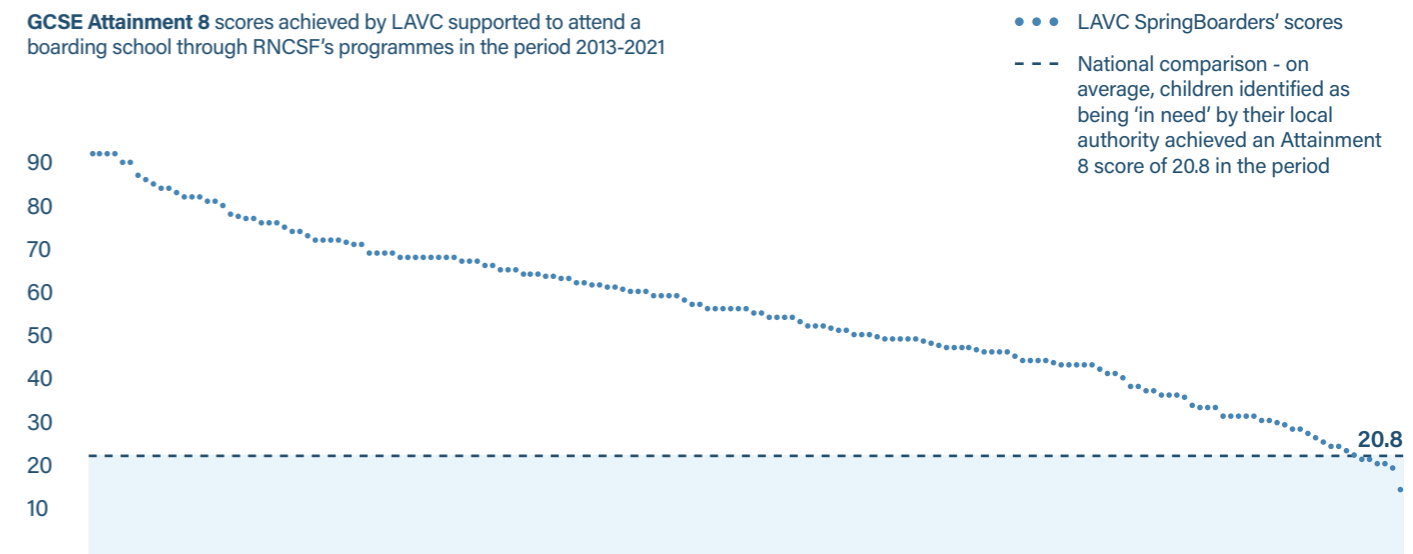
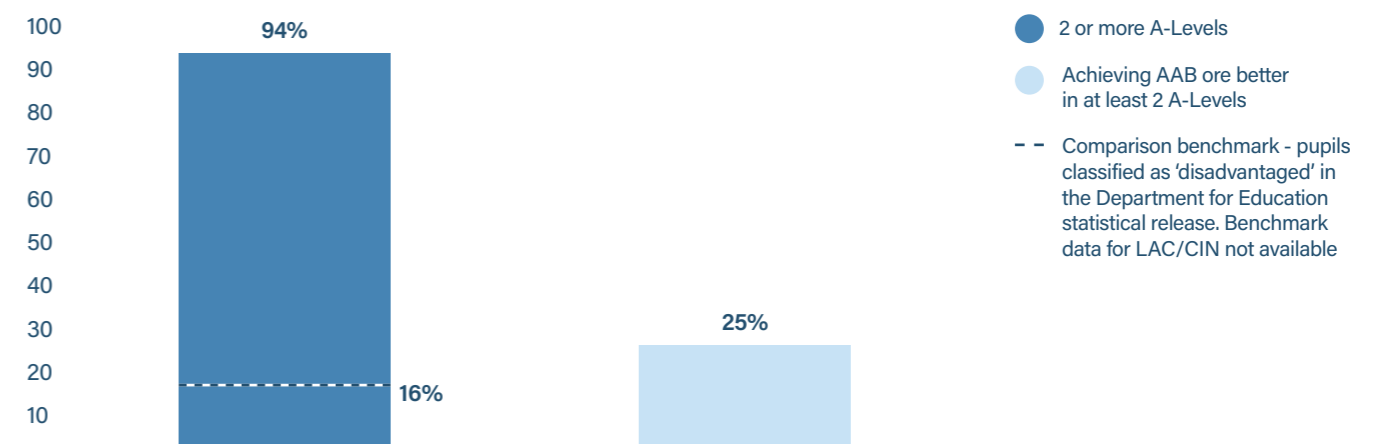


Figure 2

A-level (or equivalent - scores for BTEC, Pre-U and International Baccalaureate have been equated), attainment of LAVC supported to attend a boarding school through RNCSF's programmes in the period 2013-2021



19. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.

20. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.

21. UK Government. 'Outcomes for children in need and children looked after, academic year 2021/22' Web resource; October 2022. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england>

22. University of Nottingham. Op. cit.

23. FFT Education Datalab. 'Do disadvantaged students choose different subjects from their peers at Key Stage 5?' Web resource; 2022. Available at: <https://fft.educationdatalab.org.uk/2022/04/do-disadvantaged-students-choose-different-subjects-from-their-peers-at-key-stage-5>

24. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker Rees Centre, University of York, University of Exeter, January 2023 'Care leavers' transition into the labour market in England' <https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CareLeaversLabourMarket.pdf>

## Progression to higher education

With the focus of many state boarding and independent schools on supporting young people to consider university, and high-tariff university routes in particular, the scheme has the potential to significantly increase the number of care leavers to both secure and sustain higher education placements.

Historic outcomes data from the period 2013-21 of vulnerable children supported by RNCSF to attend a boarding school demonstrates:

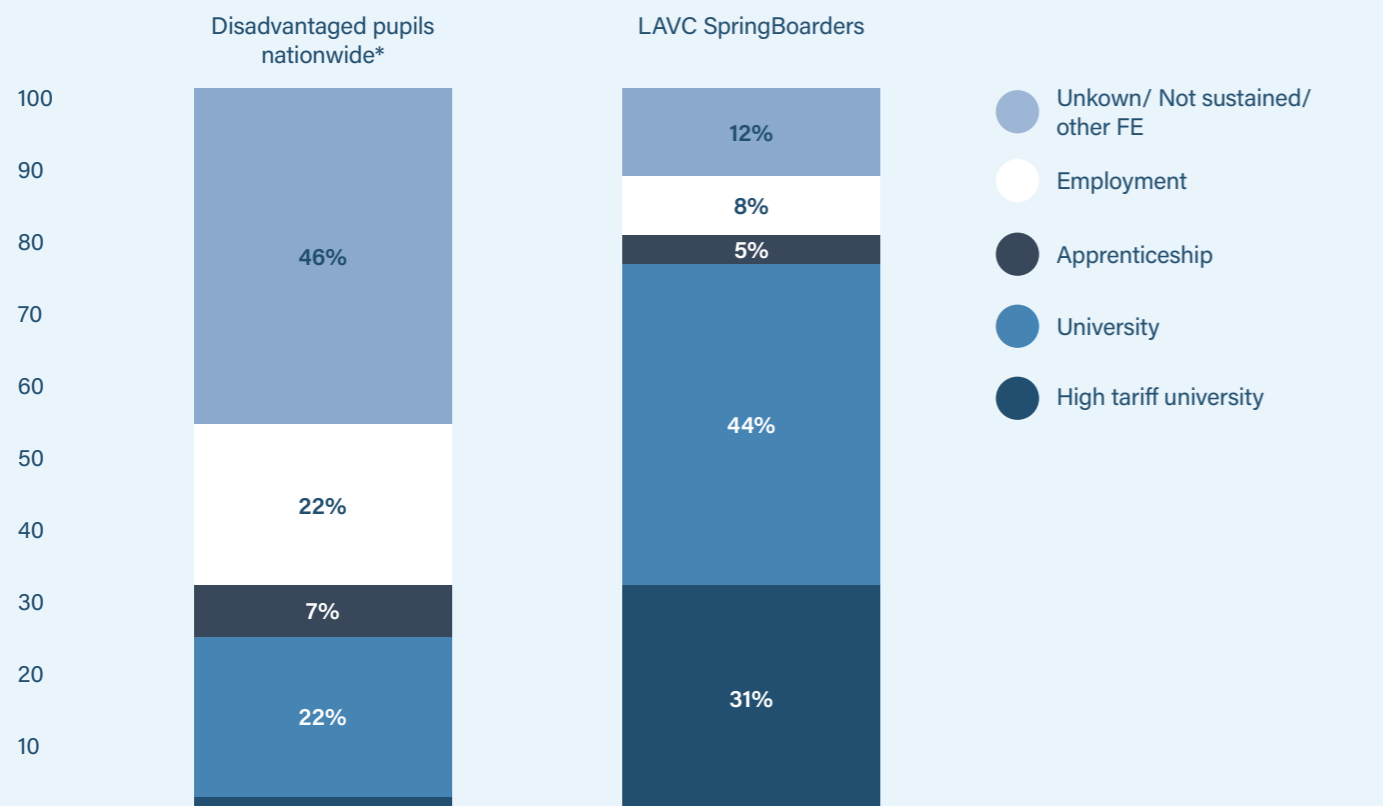
- 75% progressed directly to higher education on completing their bursary placements, compared to 26% for disadvantaged students nationally and 13% for care leavers<sup>25</sup>
- 31% secured places at a high tariff university, compared to 2% of vulnerable students nationally<sup>26</sup>
- And just 12% have not yet secured continuous employment or education, compared to 41% of care leavers nationally (known but not shown on graph)<sup>27</sup>

There is a large, and growing, body of evidence that links higher education and lifetime outcomes. As the trajectory of SpringBoarders continues through their university and other post-school journeys, we will continue to measure these other gains.

# 31% vs 2%

31% secured places at a high tariff university, compared to 2% of vulnerable students nationally

Figure 3: Post-KS5 destinations for LAVC boarders



\*comparable data for LAC/CIN nationwide not available for comparison purposes

25. UK Government. '16-18 destination measures.' Web resource; 2022. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/16-18-destination-measures/2020-21#releaseHeadlines-tables>  
 26. UK Government. '16-18 destination measures 2022.' Op. cit

27. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker Rees Centre, University of York, University of Exeter, January 2023 'Care leavers' transition into the labour market in England' <https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CareLeaversLabourMarket.pdf>

## Driving improvements in Social Care Outcomes and Social Mobility

The scheme aims to understand the potential benefit of the widespread use of state boarding and independent school places for children in and on the edge of care as an intervention that can secure improvements in both educational and a social care outcomes.

The experiences of the individual young people supported to date suggest there are both significant educational as well as economic gains from a significantly scaled, routine, use of state boarding and independent school places for children in care.

### Securing better outcomes for care experienced young people and addressing spiralling costs of children's social care

Based on the understanding of the academic progression of care-experienced SpringBoarders, and comparing these to the matched control group of young people with very similar early years experiences who had not had access to the boarding intervention, the University of Nottingham<sup>28</sup> research found that:

- For every 100 care-experienced children able to access a boarding placement, the programme can be considered to provide immediate cost savings potential of c.£2.13 million
- And longer-term, for every 100 care-experienced children able to access a boarding placement, the programme can be considered to offer a potential net benefit in the ensuing impact on potential for improved lifetime earnings of c.£650,000

These lifetime net benefit estimates are very conservative, given data limitations only allowed for the control group analysis to compare GCSE performance, and thus ignore the potential effect of educational outcomes subsequently achieved by the majority of SpringBoarders at Key Stage 5 (A-level or equivalent).

Moreover, those that secure A-levels or equivalent are much less likely to be out of education, employment or training at the age of 20 1/2 years old.<sup>29</sup>

Given this, and the significant positive variation against available benchmarks of the children from the key social care groups supported to attend a boarding school by RNCSF to date who have progressed to university, this suggests that there could be a much stronger argument for the scheme's potential economic gains than these lifetime net benefit estimates based on progression achieved at Key Stage 4 alone.

Taking the likely attainment gains achieved by care-experienced children able to attend a boarding or independent day school at A-level (or equivalent) and in securing ambitious higher education routes, it could be expected that average overall lifetime returns for each child accessing a bursary placement could equate to at least £100,000 for women, and £130,000 for men.<sup>30</sup>

### Placements can yield substantial returns in three key ways

#### 1. By preventing a looked-after child from needing expensive residential or foster care for significant periods.

A place in a state or independent boarding school compares incredibly favourably to the significant cost associated with residential care (up to £200k p/a<sup>31</sup>). Boarding can be used as an alternative to foster care placements in term-time, with the added benefit of delivering cost savings when compared to fostering.

#### 2. By de-escalating the risk of children identified as being 'in need' of social care intervention from entering in to care arrangements.

Analysis by the Children's Commissioner's office<sup>32</sup> highlights that every rung of escalation into Children's Services carries disruption to the young person and high costs, so reducing this risk is paramount. Boarding can help form part of the puzzle, alongside kinship carers in school holidays. At day placements, the longer school days and bespoke pastoral support can reduce the burden on carers, enabling them to continue existing arrangements. For each child that can remain in kinship care or under Special Guardianship Order rather than becoming a looked after child, saves around £37k a year.

#### 3. It can prevent lifelong costs associated with experience of care.

The cumulative effects of poor outcomes for children in care cost the government an average of £720k across over their lifetime, with an annual bill of £23bn. Better educational outcomes lead to better health and earnings, resulting in long-term savings.<sup>33</sup>

28. University of Nottingham. Op. cit

29. Harrison, Dixon, Sanders-Ellis, Ward and Asker. Op. cit

30. UK Government. Labour market value of higher and further education qualifications. Op. cit

31. MacAlister J. Op. cit.

32. Children's commissioner, Estimating Children's Services spending on vulnerable children. July 2019 Available at [cco-vulnerability-2019-spend-report.pdf](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/cco-vulnerability-2019-spend-report.pdf) (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

33. MacAlister J. Op. cit.



# How the scheme works

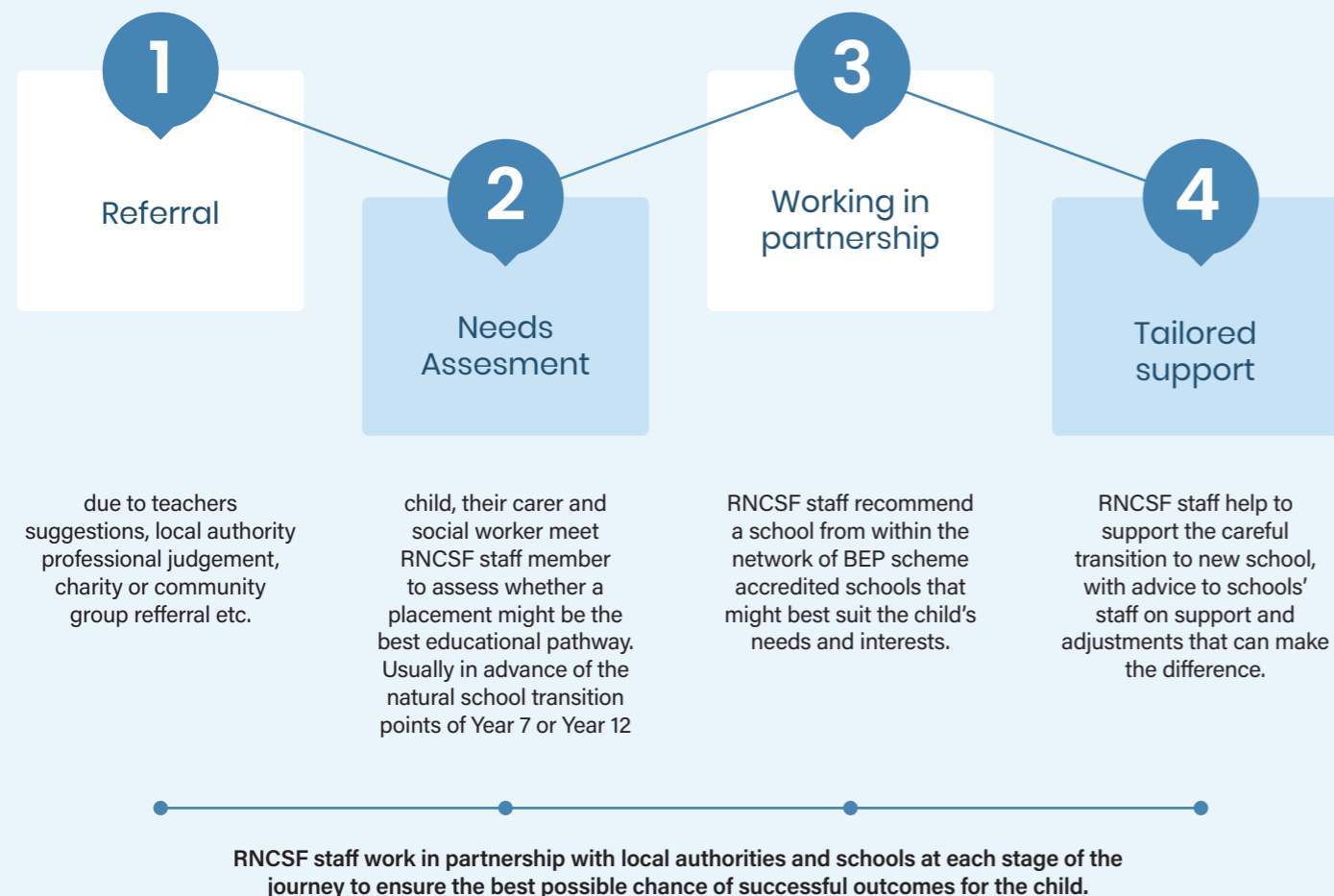
## The objectives of the scheme are to:

- Equip local authorities with an understanding of the potentially available places and varied environments that different state boarding and independent day and boarding schools might offer for children in and “on the edge of” care
- Quality assure the boarding or independent day schools to ensure that children who are looked after or from the key social care groups of child ‘in need’ (CIN), child with a protection plan (CPP), unaccompanied asylum seeking minors (UASM) and young carers can thrive in their settings
- Facilitate careful preparation, transition planning and ongoing monitoring arrangements to allow for each young person to secure and sustain a state boarding or independent school place
- Develop the funding model that allows for scalability and sustainability of future placements; and
- Assess the impact of those placements in order to understand the potential educational, economic and social value of a scaled scheme

“ ”

Independent schools have on offer many of the things Virtual School headteachers are seeking for Looked After Children – a strengths-based curriculum, a flexible offer, enrichment opportunities and a focus on relationship building and building social networks whilst also providing challenge to meet demanding academic targets

**Calvin Kipling, Virtual School Headteacher for Darlington Council**



# Working with schools

Central to the scheme's delivery is an approach to 'accreditation' of participating state boarding or independent schools. There are 170 state boarding and independent (day and boarding) schools that have been accredited in readiness to be suggested as potential placements of vulnerable children under the BEP scheme.

There are a further +30 schools that have expressed interest and signed a pledge that they will prioritise children in care in their bursary award scheme criteria. It has been critical to ensure a wide diversity of schools – small, large, academically selective and non-selective, rural and urban, boarding and day, state and independent.

Accreditation provides a kitemark standard of assurance in three vital areas:

## Pastoral care

through the accreditation process RNCSF seeks to understand each school's approach and pastoral care provision, in order to ensure that young people who may have experienced trauma or adverse events in childhood can access the highest standards of appropriate care in their school environment. This includes assessing schools' attachment and trauma-informed practices.

## Financial commitment

the underpinning of transformational full-fee-assistance bursary schemes, with the majority of associated costs being met by the schools themselves. Participating schools are assessed for their ability to meet, on a long-term and sustained basis, the funding commitment required. For more information on the funding model see page 20.

## Training and development

by joining the accredited schools network, schools staff gain access to ongoing professional development opportunities, the sharing of resources and guidance, peer-to-peer support, and evaluation and monitoring. A community of practice in the latest relevant pedagogy and training in areas such as attachment awareness

## Working with both boarding and day schools

Boarding is not the environment that suits all children. The scheme recognises that for some care-experienced children, the right school pathway could be an independent day school. Some of the benefits that an independent day school can offer to encourage placement stability and improved outcomes include:

- longer school days,
- smaller class sizes,
- specialisms in SEN provision and non-core subjects,
- broad extra-curriculum offerings and
- focus on progression to higher education and tailored career pathway planning.

# 170

There are 170 state boarding and independent (day and boarding) schools that have been accredited in readiness to be suggested as potential placements of vulnerable children under the BEP scheme

# 30 schools

a further +30 schools have expressed interest in accreditation in the coming years, with a pledge to prioritise children in care within their bursary schemes' criteria

## Reeds School

In partnership with RNCSF, the Reeds School Foundation has supported 32 SpringBoarders in boarding placements over the last ten years – all young people who have lost the support of one or both parents and who face complex challenges from issues such as bereavement, domestic abuse, or abandonment.

At the core of Reeds' approach is the pastoral structure in place across the school providing tailored support to vulnerable children.

While every boarding school offers pastoral care, Reed's distinctive 'circle of support' approach ensures that Foundation pupils are able to integrate into everyday school life and that they have opportunities to shine and flourish. This is rooted in a deep commitment to ensuring that no child ever falls through the net and every staff member is empowered to take on a duty of care, whether inside or outside of the classroom.

With over 200 years of experience in supporting vulnerable children to draw on, Reed's has played a crucial role in sharing best practice among other schools in RNCSF's network; schools that are similarly keen to adapt pastoral structures to ensure all young people can thrive in their school placements.



# Schools' experiences in more detail

## Cheadle Hulme School

Cheadle Hulme School in Greater Manchester has long held a commitment to prioritising its' full-fee assistance places for children in care.

Through a partnership with Stockport Local Authority, this has allowed 6 looked after children to study at Cheadle Hulme over the last 5 years.

Following the launch of the Broadening Educational Pathways scheme, Cheadle Hulme came on board as an 'early adopter.' Their existing relationships with the local authority and experience of liaising with them through their pastoral and admissions teams offered vital learnings to other early-adopter day schools taking their first LAC SpringBoarders in 2021.

**"Our partnership with RNCSF has been really essential, so that we can extend the opportunities we can offer to a wider range of children from different authority areas across the Greater Manchester area and ensure that we create the conditions for our priority access scheme to be sustainable long into the future. It means we are no longer dependent on changes in staff at the school or in one authority, but can make strides towards independent school places being part of the rubric of the commissioning landscape for supporting the ambitions of care-experienced children across Manchester".**

**Neil Smith, Headmaster, Cheadle Hulme School**

## Wymondham College

Wymondham - the largest co-educational state boarding school in the UK - was the first state boarding school to work with RNCSF to ensure that its opportunities are available for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.

With academic outcomes among the very highest nationally, and a wide-ranging enrichment programme, Wymondham reflects the excellent education available in many state boarding schools. It offers a much lower-cost boarding model (at around £12,000 - £15,000 p/a) compared to the independent boarding sector (where fees range from £25,000 - £50,000 p/a).

**"The College has very strong links with our local authority – Norfolk County Council – and a great deal of experience in working with them to support children in care and vulnerable children. The value of our joining the RNCSF accredited schools network has been to be able to get to know young people from a much wider demographic. Many of our SpringBoarders have been young people from London boroughs who have really thrived in the very different environment of rural East Anglia. They have brought a great diversity to the school and often develop into real leaders in their year groups."**

**Zoe Fisher, Principal, Wymondham College**

The camaraderie of the boarding house system, each with its own character and friendly competitive loyalty, has provided the foundation for many happy relationships - with one SpringBoarder describing it as 'a lifeline for a lifetime.'

## Bede's School, Sussex

### Enabling pupils to thrive in school

Bede's School, an independent boarding and day school on the Sussex coast, has committed to setting aside three new places per year – two for pupils joining the Senior School, and one for pupils joining the Prep school for care-experienced children. This allows East Sussex Council's 'Virtual School' to recommend young people in its care when that would suit them best.

By working closely with social workers, foster carers, and the Virtual School, Bede's and RNCSF have together ensured that each young person receives the support they need to prepare for and make the most of their time at the school.

In the last decade this partnership has enabled 22 care-experienced children, like Kyle (see page 23), to gain from the support and stability offered by their place at Bede's, and to thrive in an environment which has a strong focus on their holistic personal and social development.

### Delivering benefits and lifting outcomes

The impact of the scheme has led to excellent outcomes for the young people in terms of exam results, social development, and stability of foster placements. Of particular note is that for some who have been boarders at Bede's, this has enabled them to leave their foster placements and live with family members, while for others it has supported them in a move to more independent living, such as supported lodgings.

The direct benefits are access to the vast array of extra-curricular activities, which enable young people to discover their own strengths. There is naturally a focus on education and the expectation of the school, which becomes the aspiration of the young person, is that they gain three A levels (or equivalent) and secure a place at university or follow another appropriate pathway.

Of the young people who have been involved to date, 14 have completed their studies gaining three A levels (or equivalent) with the average grades BBB. University destinations include Exeter, York and Sussex, with one alumni now studying for a PhD abroad. One young person left in Year 12 (after securing 10 GCSEs) to study at a local 6th Form college. Seven are still at Bede's, with two about to sit their A levels.

An important aspect of the programme is to provide opportunities for social development, with staff championing each young person and supporting them to take on leadership roles in school.

The 14 alumni to date include a number who were House Prefects, Heads of House and one who was Deputy Head of School.

All of the young people are supported to explore their interests outside the classroom, via a diverse activities programme offering everything from Animal Management to Rock Climbing; from Horse Riding to mastering a musical instrument. The young people themselves identify this as a factor in creating a sense of belonging for them, as they are able to build relationships with other pupils from different houses and year groups.

### Extending the benefits to a wider audience

Wider impacts and benefits of the programme within the school have been the effect on staff awareness and understanding of the needs of children who have faced adverse experiences and trauma. Ongoing conversations about attachment awareness have helped to promote a culture of inclusivity and kindness and have equipped teachers with the tools to support a range of young people with issues associated with trauma and attachment – not only those who are care-experienced.

All of the looked-after children accessing a place at Bede's do so on the basis of a three-way co-funding arrangement, which has been used by RNCSF as a blueprint to encourage many more partnerships between independent schools and local authorities across the UK:

The school – Bede's meets the majority of the associated school fees via funds awarded through the school's transformational bursary award scheme

The local authority – East Sussex Council part-subsidises the remainder, with a grant towards the boarding fees in the region of £13,000 per pupil, per year. This is a cost-neutral model for the authority, as it represents reduced fees paid to foster carers during term time

RNCSF donate a further amount to meet the shortfall, with a small grant of £5,000 per pupil, per year. This RNCSF grant is funded through the BEP Challenge Fund (see page 20) with the amount determined by being broadly equivalent to the costs that the government would otherwise incur by that young person being educated in a mainstream state school. This is known as the General Annual Grant per pupil (GAG), or Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)

### What we have learned

Early on, Bede's appointed a designated teacher to coordinate the programme and ensure that the school could develop its work, both within the school and with the local authority. This role has been crucial to liaise effectively, and work with pastoral, educational, and council staff to advocate on behalf of the children.

Bede's is also represented on the Governing body of the East Sussex Virtual School for Children in Care, which has provided the opportunity for them to develop a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the wider community involved with care-experienced children in East Sussex.

This has led to further activities, such as Bede's hosting the annual East Sussex Children in Care Awards; an activity programme for groups of children invited by Foster Placement Support workers; sports days during school holidays and more.

## Working with local authorities and charities

The model that has been developed focuses on the crucial role of careful partnership between the charity, local authorities, groups working with care-experienced young people and schools.

Both to ensure that there is care taken in which young people are most in need of, and most likely to benefit from, the opportunities offered by a full-fee assistance bursary placement within a boarding or independent day school.

But as crucially, to ensure that the preparation, transition planning and ongoing monitoring arrangements allow for each young person to secure and sustain a state boarding or independent school place.

This partnership approach was highlighted as a particular strength to the model in the interim evaluation of the first three years of the scheme's delivery conducted by the University of Nottingham<sup>34</sup>

"The careful partnership working between local authorities, community groups, schools, and RNCSF staff was essential to securing the support that vulnerable children need in boarding environments... Schools highlighted the importance of the charity's strong connections with local authorities, charities, and social workers and especially valued being able to seek information that 'alleviated emotional concerns amongst school staff'.

### Young Carers Development Trust

Since 2021 the Young Carers Development Trust (YCDT) has worked through the BEP scheme to support 5 young carers from the South West of England to secure a boarding school place.

Boarding placements for young carers offer much needed respite and range of pastoral care to support young carer's emotional and social development. But the right support is key, as Service Manager, Melanie Rees explains:

"All the amazing young people that we have been able to support through this partnership to date have benefited from the careful transition planning by YCDT and RNCSF staff, including ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for their caring responsibilities to be met in other ways before any placement is confirmed. During their school placement, we work together to ensure their time is happy and fulfilling"

Figure 4: Local Authority data

### In 2020

we were aware of only 3 local authorities consistently referring children in care for independent or boarding school places...

### ...by 2021

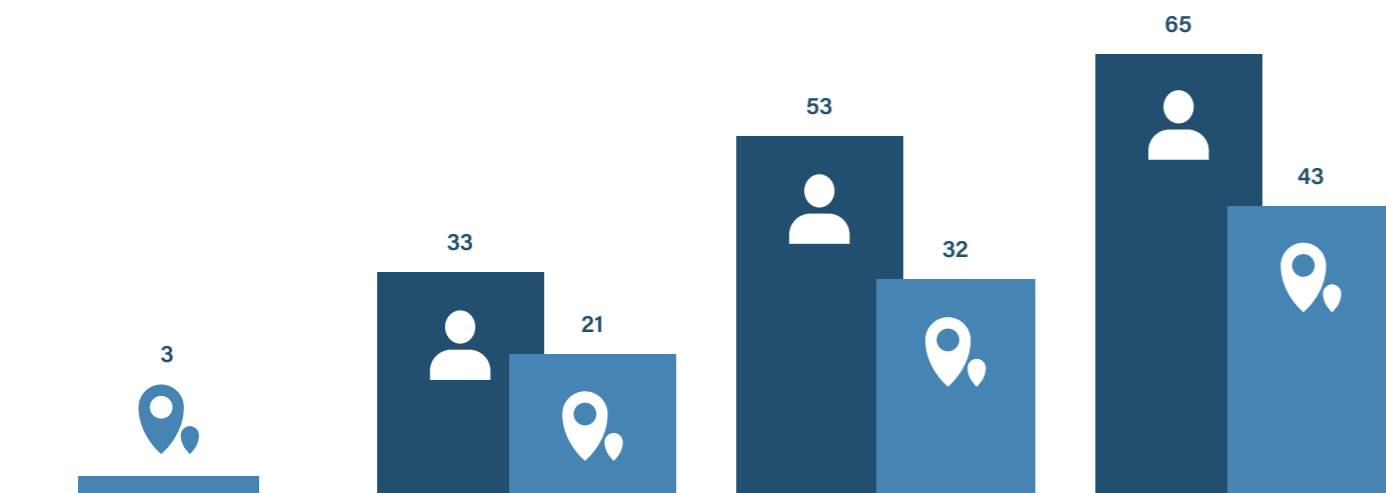
in the first year of the BEP scheme delivery 33 LAC & CIN pupils from 21 local authority areas secure places at a state boarding or independent school

### ...in 2022

a further 53 young people start in new boarding or independent school places through the scheme in September 2022, representing referrals from 32 local authorities

### ...by 2023

a further 65 young people start in new boarding or independent school places through the scheme in September 2023, representing referrals from 43 local authorities



34. University of Nottingham. An Independent Evaluation of the Outcomes For Looked After and Vulnerable Children Attending Boarding Schools. Nottingham: University of Nottingham; 2023. Available at: [www.royalspringboard.org.uk/\\_files/ugd/9d6b54\\_etc23406d4f54ffb8d9378972bb0621f.pdf](http://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/_files/ugd/9d6b54_etc23406d4f54ffb8d9378972bb0621f.pdf)

### Pupil case study

## Lucianelle

**School**  
King Edwards School Witley

Lucianelle attended an independent boarding school in Surrey - King Edward's School, Witley - for her secondary school years. She is now in her first year at the University of Birmingham studying Law, a profession she was keen to pursue from an early age.

"As a young carer for my mum, it was very challenging. I always had to think about looking after her, and my younger sister, who has always looked up to me. ...I was able to start over somewhere fresh. For the first time, I was able to concentrate on me as I look to build a brighter future. I couldn't have been more ready for that opportunity."

"It was amazing to have people around me that I could talk to freely. I had never had that before, and always had to fall back on myself. So having that new community was so important. ...I felt like we did something different every week. I had only ever done dodgeball before - so to do rock climbing, horse riding and new sports like swimming, hockey and netball was incredible. I also realised for the first time the role that extra-curriculars play in keeping you healthy and happy."

"Through my extra drama classes and learning how to play violin I became much more confident. I was starting conversations with people and finding a real love in learning about others... They inspired me to want to reach my full potential. To aspire to a career in Law and give me the tools and advice on how best to go about that."

"The dream had always been law, but they gave me the chance to confirm that. They taught me to think for myself, and not just go down one route straight away. I explored commercial opportunities; financial equity and it forced me to really think about what I want."

"I chose the University of Birmingham because it's a campus university and provides a high level of welfare for its students. My boarding experience has given me hope that I can break away from the limitations of my background. There is a huge difference to what I have been exposed to and the experiences of my school friends"

"I now see fear, or nerves as just a signal to make us more aware ...I am more adaptable than ever before to change."



“ ”

It was amazing to have people around me that I could talk to freely... having that new community was so important.

## The funding model

When a care-experienced young person starts at their new school, it is essential that they can embrace every aspect of school life. For this reason, the funding model needs to ensure sufficient budget is set aside to cover all school fees as well as all the extras, such as trips, sports, music, drama, arts and uniforms etc.

Many independent boarding and day schools fund the places entirely through their fee remission schemes

Some independent schools with tighter operating margins can apply for an annual grant of around £5000 per pupil p/a to subsidise some of the marginal costs and unlock match funds to meet the overall budget need. This comes from the BEP Challenge Fund – a budget secured by RNCSF from philanthropy and charity sources.

State boarding schools can apply to the BEP Challenge Fund for a much higher proportion of the fee profile. This is because there are complexities around fundraising and funding in the state boarding sector.

**In the 3 year period since the BEP scheme was launched, this funding model has led to:**

**>£20 million**

in funding commitments from independent schools towards the placement of the first 150 children who have secured bursary placements

**£1.7 million**

distributed under the BEP Challenge Fund in small grants of £5k or £8k used to subsidise marginal costs and unlock schools' support

**£0.7 million**

secured in local authority contributions towards the residential aspects of boarding placements

### BEP Challenge Fund

The success of the Broadening Educational Pathways for Looked After & Vulnerable Children (BEP) scheme to date has depended on making the case to local authorities and the government of the long-term value of using their commissioning power to these placements. Recognising this challenge RNCSF set up a Challenge Fund - a £1.7 million fund with contributions from a small group of individual donors and two Trusts - Buttle UK and Dulverton - that RNCSF has distributed in small grants of £5k or £8k to subsidise a proportion of the costs associated with each of the pupils' school places and unlock the much larger financial commitment in the form of fee remission ("bursary funds") from schools.

The BEP Challenge Fund has allowed RNCSF to replicate on a national scale a funding model for placements that was initially tested and proved in the partnership between RNCSF, East Sussex and Bede's School (see page 17). The model demonstrates that if each looked-after child's equivalent educational allowance (the per-pupil GAG allocation) can follow them to their school of choice, there are hundreds of independent schools committed to meeting the remaining shortfall. For boarding placements, the addition of the equivalent foster care allowance is allocated by the local authority to cover a proportion of the residential costs associated with their placement.

This funding model demonstrates how redirection of the per-pupil GAG allocation, Pupil Premium funding and/or other sources of local authority and government budgets for the education of looked-after children can be used to leverage private school places worth 6 to 7 times the amount needed to unlock the commitment.



THE DULVERTON TRUST

Figure 5: Funding model breakdown

### Independent day school

Fully funded		Part funded	
7 - Sixth Formers	18 - Younger years	2 - Sixth Formers	15 - Younger years
Schools - £2.5m		Schools - £0.06m BEP - £0.01m	Schools - £1.6m BEP - £0.26m

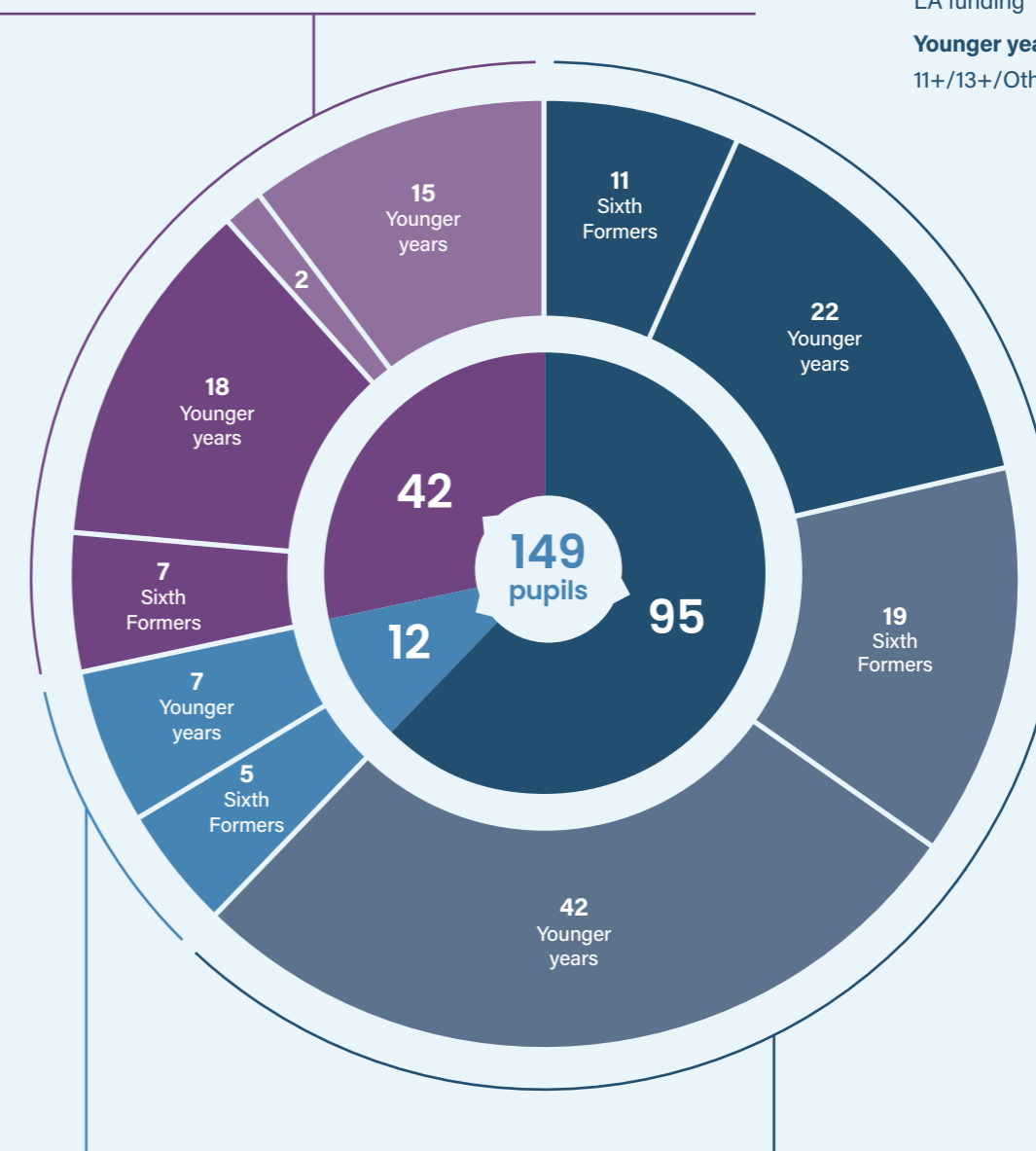
### Key

**Schools:**  
Schools commitments to fund

**BEP:**  
BEP Challenge Fund contributions

**LA:**  
LA funding

**Younger years:**  
11+/13+/Other



### State boarding school

Part funded	
5 - Sixth Formers	7 - Younger years
Schools - £0.03m BEP - £0.09m LA - £0.02m	Schools - £0.22m BEP - £0.39m LA - £0.04m

### Independent boarding school

Fully funded		Part funded	
11 - Sixth Formers	22 - Younger years	19 - Sixth Formers	42 - Younger years
Schools - £6.01m		Schools - £1.14m BEP - £0.19m LA - £0.15m	Schools - £8.54m BEP - £1.23m LA - £0.49m



# What we have learned

Issue	Context	What we learn and what we might do differently going forward
<b>Challenge of securing LA engagement that extends to devoting funds to support placements</b>	There has been very strong interest and engagement from local authorities in referring young people. Yet there has been far less progress in securing long-term commitments to assigning significant funding from local authorities towards either the residential cost of placements, or any associated provisions (e.g. for EHCP SEN adjustments etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BEP Challenge Fund has provided a crucial mechanism to unlock the school fee remission places. It has enabled schools to meet some of the marginal cost of placements with a small (£5,000) grant. Local authorities have not set this aside. Arguably central government could do so more readily as a redirection of the GAG/AWPU</li> </ul>
<b>Recognising that boarding is not right for many care-experienced children, particularly where they have formed strong attachments in their care arrangements (kinship, SGO or foster)</b>	Recognition of this has led to the scheme's broad remit of both independent day and boarding places. Emerging lessons from the experiences of young people starting in day placements show that they can help to preserve care arrangements by offering longer school day and dedicated tutor support offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many independent day schools have very strict entry criteria and timelines, which are less flexible than is often available in the boarding market. Encouraging local authority referrals within the right timeframes is crucial to secure places</li> </ul>
<b>Difficulty adjusting to behavioural expectations and boundaries</b>	Fewer than 10% of placements arranged under the scheme have fallen through so far, but where they have done so a multi-stakeholder review reflects on any lessons. The causes are varied but include behaviour breaches, mental health struggles, a general sense of not adjusting to boarding life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crucial role of transition planning - to prepare children for what to expect</li> <li>Supporting schools to use trauma-informed approaches, through our accreditation and support programme.</li> <li>Role of peer support. We have introduced access to trained SpringBoarder alumni who act as mentors to prospective pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Homesickness</b>	Initial feelings of homesickness are common for all boarding pupils. There is much experience of addressing this in boarding staff approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering overnight tasters</li> <li>Advising pastoral staff on how to support children and families</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges in achieving sense of belonging</b>	Some young people report challenges in achieving a sense of belonging in the new school culture – especially at first.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporating this understanding of authenticity and belonging into our preparation programme</li> <li>Flagging this as a potential issue with pastoral staff</li> </ul>
<b>Feelings of difference or discrimination</b>	Being vigilant to a recognition that SpringBoarders can experience incidents of discrimination, and feelings of difference and cultural dislocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation and transition plan to highlight the schools' own approaches to safeguarding and anti-bullying and discrimination</li> <li>Embedding the RNCSF Anti-Racism Charter commitments in to school accreditation processes. Rolling out of training for participant schools in Attachment and Trauma aware practices and its' focus on inclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>Encouraging pupils to be open and ask for help</b>	Learning how to make the most of the opportunities available, while avoiding the risk of 'burnout', is something that a number of SpringBoarders reflect on. Many highlight that more academic support is available in their new placements than their previous schools, but that learning to identify their needs and ask for help is a life skill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In advising local authorities, children and families on the appropriate school for each young person, levels of academic confidence and additional learning needs are taken into account</li> <li>During their school journeys, insights from pupil's STEER data can provide early warning of when academic pressures are becoming an issue</li> </ul>

## Pupil case study

### Kyle

#### School Bede's

As a care-experienced young person, securing a place at Bede's introduced Kyle to many new opportunities:

"I don't want to sound cliché, but it was literally like Hogwarts. I had never seen a place like that before. I had never had that type of experience before."

"It was so surreal. The facilities, the size, the kids that were there. The type of sports they were playing. It was a once in a life-time opportunity and although my friends were going elsewhere – I was never going to pass it up."

"No one in my family has ever gone to university. Most of them didn't make it to A Levels. All my life, I have been told my ambitions are crazy and they're not going to work."

"Being with others that were focused was important. No one is talking when the teacher is talking, no one is trying to mess around. The funny thing is even if I wanted to chat to others, I would look at the person next to me and they're focused on their work."

"If I had been in a bigger classroom for my secondary school years – I wouldn't be the person that I am now."

Kyle had to adapt to an intense schedule – but he was adept in learning from his peers:

"I was pushed all the time with work, sport, outside trips and trying to make friends. It was a lot to take in. But because I had a couple of years in the prep school to get used to it, I was able to learn to thrive in that environment."

"I became very observant. I would watch what my friends were doing and learn from that. I would try to identify what they were doing differently and how I could apply that to my own life."

"Most people I know who live in Hastings, don't leave here. It just doesn't happen. They don't even have the thought that they might want to do that. But it's one tiny town in a country where there are 60 million people. Why on earth would I want to stay here when there are endless possibilities elsewhere?"

On leaving Bedes, Kyle secured a place at the University of Sussex to read Business Management. He has also become an entrepreneur and has big ambitions: "I have been reselling clothes. Clothes that are high in demand and are rare in value. I like fashion, and I realised I could make a lot of money out of doing that."

'I am convinced my boarding school mindset will make me a millionaire.'



“ ”

I was pushed all the time with work, sport, outside trips and trying to make friends. It was a lot to take in. But because I had a couple of years in the prep school to get used to it, I was able to learn to thrive in that environment.

# Ambitions for the future

## Much bigger numbers

The findings from Phase I demonstrate the potential of the scheme to deliver for thousands of children at any one time. There is significant interest from Local Authorities to refer young people, with nearly half of the 152 local authorities in England/Wales actively engaged in considering young people who might be eligible. RNCSF analysis suggests that it is possible to identify c.200-300 LAVC in each natural school transition point of Yr7/12 each year who could be appropriate/suitable for the scheme's criteria. This could mean that, **if 7% of all school-aged children in the UK are currently educated privately, then so too could 7% of eligible children in and on the edge of care.**

## Merits of a central organising capability

The scheme to date has demonstrated a widespread ambition on the part of significant numbers of boarding and independent schools to set aside priority access places that represent fee remission in the order of '00s of millions of pounds. Currently 200 boarding and independent schools have pledged to do so, with a further 600 schools not yet engaged but who have the foundations laid for their involvement. Those schools highlight the importance of a central organising capability to ensure the careful support to transition planning, and recommending the right school for each young person depending on their needs and interests.



When we asked children in care what matters most to them they say it is fairness and education. They know that education is important so that they can realise their hopes and dreams for their futures.

**Rachel de Souza, Children's commissioner**

Watch the interview by clicking [here](#)

See page 3 for full link url details

## Funding

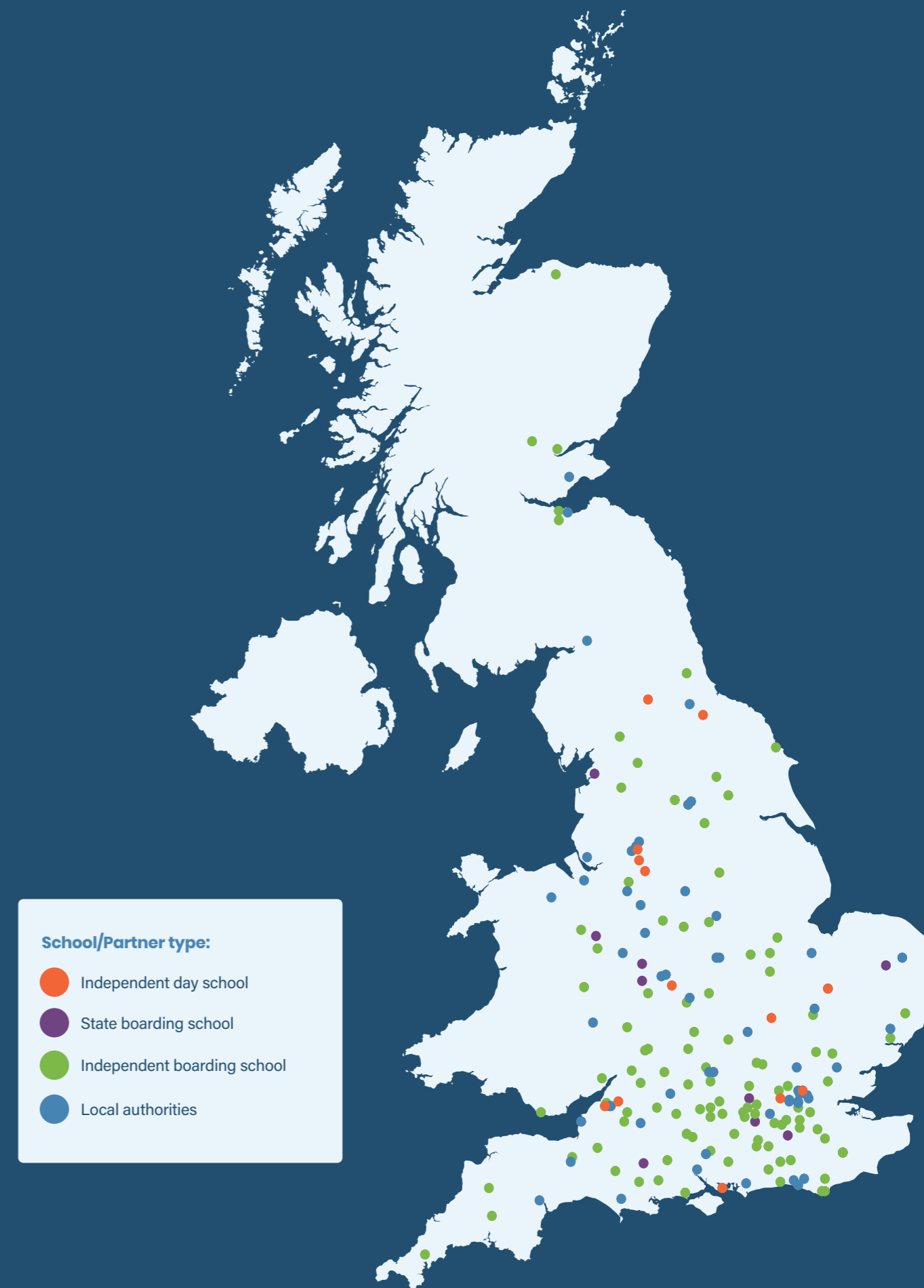
At the moment, the biggest limiting factor to achieving this scale of ambition is that most of the 'low hanging fruit' when it comes to boarding and independent schools willing or able to offer sizeable fee remission packages have already been gathered. The use of a small subsidy to independent schools to cover a proportion of the costs associated with accepting a care experienced child has proven to be very effective in convincing them to take part in the scheme. But scaling currently therefore depends on fundraised income, which is not sustainable.

**To overcome this, and deliver on the Care Review's vision, a mechanism is needed to ensure that small grants (of c.£5,000 per pupil per year) can be offered at scale as a contribution towards the much larger fee assistance subsidies to be met by participating schools. Broadly equivalent to the GAG/AWPU, this grant commitment represents a saving to government given these young people are not otherwise taking up their state school places.** The mechanism could work to provide the widespread incentive for independent schools to offer places, and convince local authorities of the value of the scheme, so they too will in time use their commissioning power to bridge the gap in funding.

## Positive policy framework

The scheme has made important headway in influencing local authorities of the potential that boarding or independent day schools offer. To secure this into the long term, guidance for local authority staff should be updated to embed the expectation of routine consideration of the potential suitability of children in, and on the 'edge of,' care for a state boarding or independent school place as part of plans made for those children at the natural school transition points. This could be extended to guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and as a criteria within OFSTED inspections of local authority children's social care departments.

Figure 6: boarding and independent schools and local authorities involved in the BEP scheme to date







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