

Cheshire West & Chester Council



Children and Families Service



Cheshire West
and Chester

Cheshire West and Chester Virtual School



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The Children and Social Work Act 2017 amended the Children Act 1989 to introduce a new duty on local authorities to promote the education of certain previously looked-after children, including appointing an officer (commonly known as a Virtual School Head) to discharge this duty through the provision of information and advice to relevant parties supporting the education of those children. This duty came into force on 1 September 2018.

The purpose of this grant is to provide support to local authorities in England, to help them meet their duty to appoint a Virtual School Head for previously looked-after children and make information and advice available to the following parties for the purposes of promoting the education of eligible previously looked-after children:

- any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
- providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies; and
- any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.

Local authorities can spend this grant to support costs associated with meeting this duty. In doing so, they should take account of the statutory guidance *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* published on 26th February 2018, to help them implement this new duty.



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Virtual School - Education of Children in Care

Children and Social Work Act

Briefing May 2017

Educational achievement of previously looked after children

- local authorities in England must make advice and information available for the purpose of promoting the educational achievement of previously looked after children educated in their area, and must appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging that duty;
- schools must designate a member of the staff as having responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

Role of Virtual Headteacher:

- Lead responsibility for:
- Discharging the specific duty on the LA to promote the educational achievements of CIC
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational outcomes of CIC, including those placed out of authority
- Primary responsibility for ensuring suitable education provision for CIC
- Ensuring that the educational achievements of CIC are seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare



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Virtual School - Education of Children in Care

Planning a Child's Education

- School Admissions
- Minimising school moves
- Choosing the right school
- Starting pre-school, school and college for the first time
- Transitions
- Personal Education Plans

School's legal responsibilities - Education Act 2004

- School's act in *loco parentis* during the time that children are with them
- Schools must safeguard and promote welfare
- Ensure that those persons retaining PR meet their responsibilities

Schools must also ensure that:

- Children in care are given the highest priority in school admissions
- The role of the Designated Teacher has been placed on a statutory footing, with an expectation that the person will be a teacher who has the experience and training to effectively lead the improved attainment of children in care.
- Children in care do not move schools unless 'reasonably practicable and consistent with their welfare' – particularly in Y10&11 – implications for exclusions etc.
- Children in care are provided with increased personalised support to improve their attainment and to reduce school absence.



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Virtual School - Education of Children in Care

Who is a Corporate Parent?

“Removing a child from their parents is the most extreme intervention the state can make in family life. Once a child or young person is in care, responsibility for their wellbeing falls to their ‘corporate parents’: this refers to everyone who is elected to, or employed by, a local authority, and their partner agencies, who all share a collective responsibility to the children looked after by that local authority.” (www.becomecharity.org.uk)

Corporate Parenting Principles

1. Act in their best interests and promote their health and well-being
2. Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. Take into account their views, wishes and feelings
4. Help them gain access to and make use of services
5. Promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them
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Education of Children in Care

Members can support our children in care achieve their potential through knowledge and understanding of their role as corporate parents. This entails providing support and challenge to schools, families/carer and all professionals.



**There's nothing more important
than your education**

**Education matters. You
learn. It's the key to
freedom in what you want**



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The impact of abuse and neglect on learning - attachment



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Links between attachment and learning

INSECURE/DISORGANISED ATTACHMENT

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Become very abusive to the other young people in the class | Get very frustrated and show this through their behaviour which can be self-destructive eg: banging their heads | Run around uncontrollably or run out of class unexpectedly | Explode into temper for no apparent reason |
| Change from being very agitated to 'switched off'. They might be loudly demanding your attention one minute and the next telling you they do not need you and to go away | Can be very abusive to the teacher, rubbishing their attempts to teach | Truant classes and bully other pupils into coming with them | Become very aggressive with their peers, making other pupils wary of them and unwilling to spend time with them |



Children and Social Work Act

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‘Just like other children, those in care need support and encouragement to get the most out of their education- whatever stage they’re at and whatever they want to do with their lives’



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Both school changes and placement changes are risk factors for educational outcomes.

A placement change can lead to a school change and result in poor educational outcomes for children in care.

Both kinds of change are signs of a child in **difficulty** so we need to deal with the **difficulty** and not just move it!



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Care Placement, Educational Outcomes and Progress

Those whose final placement was foster or kinship care did better at GCSEs than those in residential care

The longer the placement, the better the outcomes



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Pupil Premium Plus



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Statutory Guidance – Pupil Premium Plus and the role of the Virtual School Head

- Conditions of Grant 2021-2022

The conditions of grant clearly states that:

‘The grant allocation for Looked After Children must be managed by the designated Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after those children to be used for the benefit of the looked after child’s educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).’



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Cheshire West and Chester Model



Individual child's needs driven model which will be managed carefully and robustly through the completion of effective, timely and high quality PEPs.

No set amount – led by what each child needs



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Statutory Roles

- Governing bodies should ensure that Designated Teachers have an understanding of the needs of children in care and undertake appropriate training.
- The designated teacher for children in care should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children learn and achieve.
- Governing bodies and school leadership team should also make sure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care



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Role of the Designated Teacher in School

- CiC are not inherently “special needs”; very important to understand the context and the causality for presenting attitudes and behaviours
- Education: the great “leveller”
- Designated Teachers
 - key role to help school staff understand the things which affect how CiC learn and achieve
 - advocates, champions for the children
 - conduit for strategies for managing and supporting learning

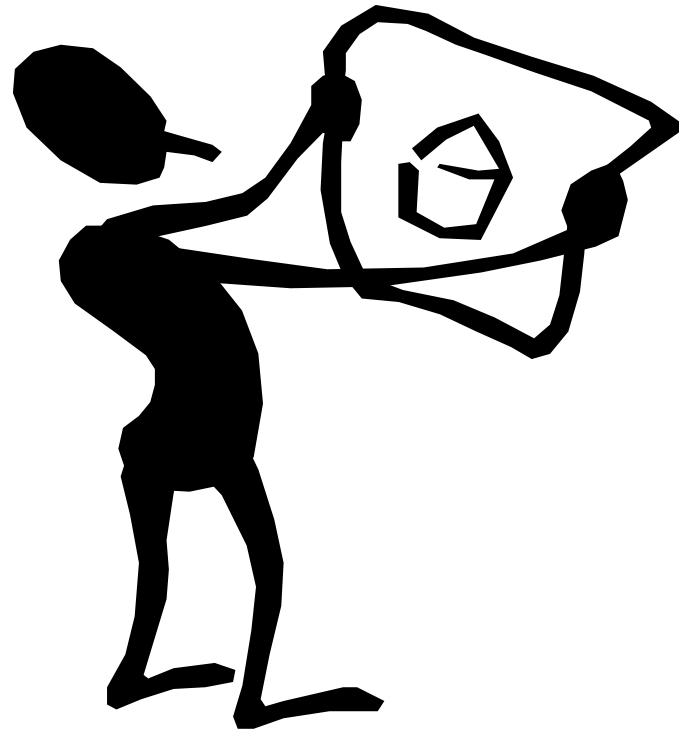


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Personal Education Plans



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An effective and high quality PEP should be:

‘a ‘living’, evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child’s experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise) and inform any discussion about education during the statutory review of the child’s wider care plan.’

(Promoting the education of looked after children: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities Pg 15)



Her journey
through
education



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Key points to remember

- PEPs are termly and every CIC must have one
- PEPs must be high quality, effective, SMART and improve the educational outcomes for CIC
- PP+ is an individual child needs led model
- PP+ can only be requested through the PEP.
- PP+ must be used for improving the educational outcomes of the child in care
- Must be able to demonstrate impact of PP+ interventions
- No high quality PEP – No PP+



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Outcomes 2019 – Last available data pre Covid

- Performance of Children in Care in CWAC improved in KS1 and EYFS
- There were No PEX which is below national average of 10%
- Attendance of CIC was 95% which is above national benchmark of 90%
- 73% of Y11 CIC are in Education, Employment or Training which is above national benchmark of 50%
- 6% of Care Leavers have progressed to higher education which is equal to the national benchmark of 6%



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Corporate Parenting Principles

Children and Social Work Act 27th April 2017

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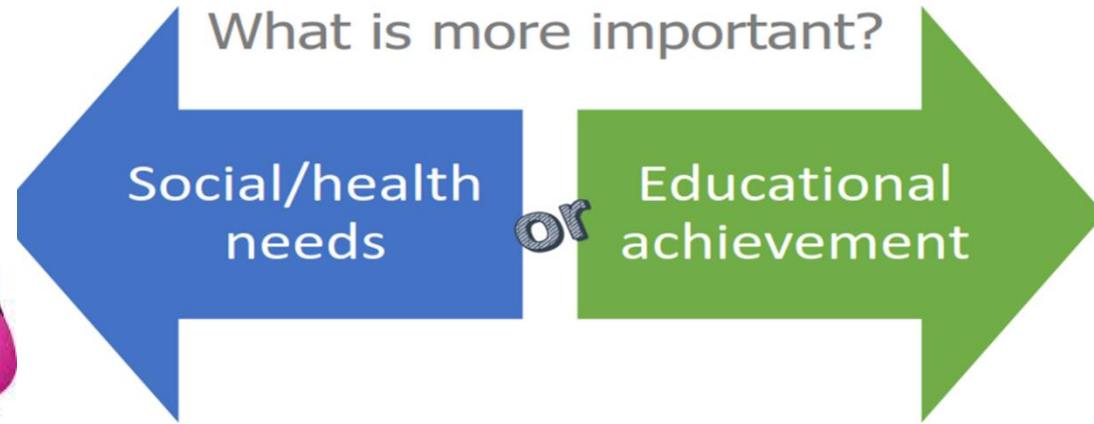


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Corporate parenting means everyone works together



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Looked-After Child/Young Person

All children aged 2 to end of compulsory education that are **currently looked-after by Cheshire West and Chester Council** regardless of where their education setting is.

Consent to discuss a child is not required as Cheshire West and Chester **are** the corporate parent and hold parental responsibility

VSH responsibilities include:

Information and advice to professionals and carers

Support re admissions, exclusions, interventions etc.

Allocation of Pupil Premium Plus grant

Pupil Premium Plus grant

VSH budget holder

Schools evidence need and impact via the Personal Education Plan (PEP) termly process

Grant to be spent in schools on identified pupil

VSH produces annual report of Pupil Premium Plus spend

Impact of Pupil Premium is monitored via the PEP quality assurance process



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Previously Looked-After Child/Young Person

All children in Cheshire West and Chester settings and schools aged 2 to end of compulsory education who:

Have been adopted from care

- Are the subject of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Are the subject of a Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

Parents/carers to self- declare and evidence child’s status to school/VSH

Consent to discuss a child is required from the person with parental responsibility as Cheshire West and Chester Council are not the corporate parent

VSH responsibilities include:

- Information and advice to parents, educators and others who the VSH considers necessary
- Signpost to other agencies who may be able to offer information and advice
- The VSH duty relates to the previously looked-after children educated in Cheshire West and Chester irrespective of where the child lives

Pupil Premium grant

- Paid directly to schools via the School Census return
- Parents/carers required to self-declare and provide evidence of previously looked-after status
- Grant can be spent by the head of school

Schools required to publish annual report on website of Pupil Premium spend and impact

Children with a Social Worker

All children from birth to 18 who have had, or previously had, a social worker

There will be no direct work or involvement with the children, this will be with the professionals around the young people so no consent required.

VSH responsibilities include:

- A strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes of 0-18 yr olds with a social worker
- Working with EY settings, schools , colleges and social care leaders to create a culture of high educational aspirations
- Enhancing the partnership between education settings and Local Authorities
- Work with Agencies to understand and address the disadvantages children with a social worker often experience
- Reinforce the importance of attending an education setting
- Offer advice and support to education settings and social care with the aim of narrowing the attainment gap

These children may be entitled to PP or SEND funding depending on circumstances but no funding will be allocated from the Virtual School.