

# The Virtual School – an Update



## Virtual School Priorities for 2015-16

### To support schools and settings to raise the achievement of all Children Looked After (CLA)

- Effectively implement the electronic personal education plan (ePEP) in schools and settings for all CLA
- Track and improve outcomes for the most vulnerable CLA from early years to post 16 including: children with special educational needs and disabilities, asylum seeking minors, children and young people at a distance, and in residential care
- Engage and train Early Years practitioners to improve progress and transition for CLA.
- Negotiate with further and higher education providers better systems of support for vulnerable care leavers to improve access and attainment

#### Improved Joint Working

- Develop the Virtual School to meet both local and national priorities.
- Broaden the Virtual School brief to include advice and guidance for children and young people post care
- Commission 'Herts for Learning' to drive improvement in outcomes of children looked after

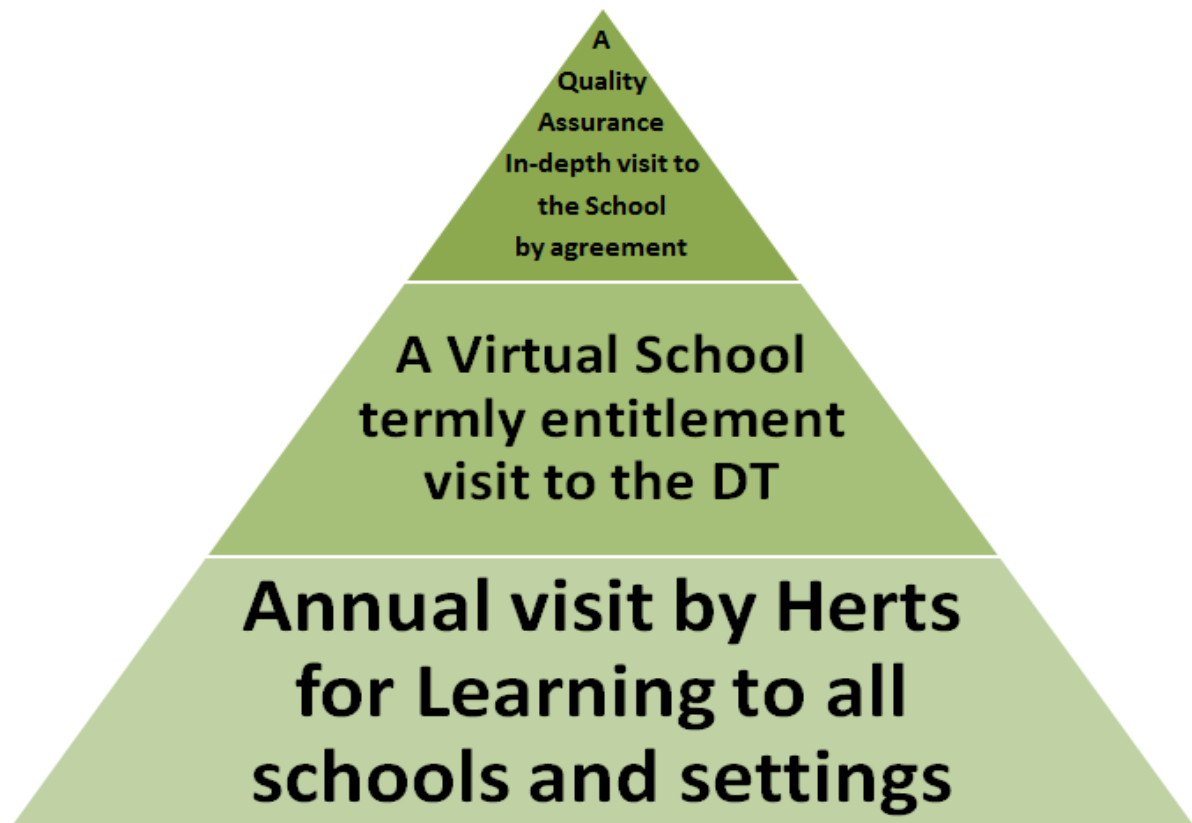
### To track and support the improvement of CLA progress using data analysis and precision intervention

- Improve outcomes for children and young people to achieve their best at the end of all key stages and post 16.
- Robustly track data within the Virtual School information management system to support target setting and effective intervention
- Improve tracking and analysis of achievement in early years and post 16.
- Ensure effective governance and impact of Pupil Premium Plus in all schools with Hertfordshire children.
- Link implementation of the ePEP to Pupil Premium Plus allocation and strengthen scrutiny.
- Collect and analyse early years data.
- Train and engage early years settings, including private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings and Children's Centres.
- Strengthen the process to support the identification of vulnerable children and care leavers at risk of child sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

### Building capacity of stakeholders and partners

- Ensure effective implementation of the ePEP with all partners.
- Embed Employment Excellence programme for all CLA in years 7-11 with Youth Connexions
- Develop additional employment training opportunities for CLA and care leavers
- Increase percentage of care leavers in further education completing courses
- Develop a strategy to support schools to improve progress in reading and writing throughout all the key stages
- Develop new and sustain existing focus group activity with carers, social workers, designated teachers
- Inform and train governing bodies in respect of their statutory responsibilities, particularly for Pupil Premium Plus.
- Increase employment skills and work readiness for care leavers and reduce the number not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Provide opportunities for young people to express their views about education to support planning of services for them.

Design ref: 074 xxx



## The Virtual School from January 2016

Following a comprehensive self-assessment and review in 2015 we have changed our way of working to support the education of children looked after. From January 2016, the new Virtual School Education Adviser team will be allocated to schools within district council areas and will work in either the Primary or Secondary phase.

Adviser	Email	District	Primary or Secondary
Janet Hegerty	<a href="mailto:janet.hegerty@hertfordshire.gov.uk">janet.hegerty@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Dacorum Watford St Albans	Secondary
Warren Tredgett-Brady	<a href="mailto:warren.tredgett-brady@hertfordshire.gov.uk">warren.tredgett-brady@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Three Rivers Hertsmere Welwyn and Hatfield	Secondary
Andrew Martin	<a href="mailto:andrew.martin@hertfordshire.gov.uk">andrew.martin@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Broxbourne East Herts Stevenage North Herts	Secondary
Elizabeth Kirk	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.kirk@hertfordshire.gov.uk">elizabeth.kirk@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Dacorum Watford St Albans	Primary
Katharine Passmore	<a href="mailto:katharine.passmore@hertfordshire.gov.uk">katharine.passmore@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Three Rivers Hertsmere Welwyn & Hatfield	Primary
Jason Weinrabe	<a href="mailto:jason.weinrabe@hertfordshire.gov.uk">jason.weinrabe@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	Broxbourne East Herts Stevenage North Herts	Primary
Pauline Williams	<a href="mailto:pauline.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk">pauline.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	County-wide	Education Adviser with the Adoption Team
Deborah Laurie	<a href="mailto:deborah.laurie@hertfordshire.gov.uk">deborah.laurie@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>	County-wide	Residential and ARC

## Research and information on the Education of Children looked after November 2015

### 1. NICE Guidelines Published 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

This guideline covers the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people up to age 18 who are adopted from care, in special guardianship, looked after by local authorities in foster homes (including kinship foster care), residential units and other accommodation, or on the edge of care.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG26>).

**Key Recommendation for implementation:**

13.2.1.1: Schools and other education providers should ensure that all staff who may come into contact with children and young people with attachment difficulties receive appropriate training on attachment as set out in recommendation 13.2.1.2

13.2.1.2: **Educational psychologists and health and social care provider organisations should work with the local authority Virtual School Heads and Designated teachers to develop and provide training courses for teachers of all levels on:**

- How attachment difficulties begin and how they can present in children and young people
- How attachment difficulties affect learning, education and social development
- Understanding the consequences of maltreatment including trauma
- How they can support children and young people with attachment difficulties

**2. The REES Centre. Research in Fostering and Education: Oxford University:**

[http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverviewReport\\_Nov2015.pdf](http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverviewReport_Nov2015.pdf)

**The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data: published 30 November 2015**

This is a joint research project between the School for Policy Studies and Graduate School of Education University of Bristol and the Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education and Education Department, University of Oxford. It was funded by the Nuffield Foundation. The research explores the key factors contributing to the low educational outcomes of children in care in secondary schools in England. It explores how linking care and educational data contribute to our understanding of how to improve attainment and progress? The relationship between educational outcomes, young people's care histories and individual characteristics have been reviewed by linking the National Pupil Database and the data on Children Looked After for the cohort who completed GCSEs in 2013.

**3. Statistical First Release (SFR): 2015**

The 'Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities' statistical first release (SFR)', is usually published in December. DfE have reviewed the SFR to make some improvements to the publication this year. Previously one of the key measures in the publication was the attainment gap between looked after and non-looked after children at the various key stages. However, this didn't take into account the high levels of special educational needs (SEN) in the looked after population. The forthcoming release is likely to include attainment breakdowns by SEN provision to provide greater context to the figures. There will also be comparisons with children in need.

Felicity Evans

Virtual School Head