

Hillingdon Virtual School



The Virtual School Team



Virtual School Head
Kathryn Angelini

Senior Practitioner
Beverley O'Dwyer

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Lead Practitioners:
Nicola Kelly
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Virtual School Officers
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Mary Rees
Gareth Ellis
Helen Villaruel

Behaviour Consultant
Scott Osborne (1 day per week)

Careers Advisor
Melanie Kindley - Deeks (1 day per week)





Role of the Virtual School

The Virtual School is a statutory service which promotes and supports the education of Children both in care and on the edge of care.

The Virtual School in Hillingdon provides a range of support to children and young people who are known to social services.

We work directly with children who are in care to London Borough of Hillingdon and the team around them which includes schools and colleges. We will then remain in contact if they wish once they become care leavers at age 18.

We also provide information support and guidance for Previously Looked After Children





Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

COHORT

- Virtual School's Extended Responsibilities include all children and young people 0 – 18 that have had a Social Worker due to welfare or safeguarding reasons.
- This has been defined as children on Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plans. For ease, we refer to this cohort as CWSW (Children with Social Worker).
- This group have been identified as having significant barriers to education and worse long-term outcomes than their peers. Statistically, their attainment is lower than their peers including children looked after.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Virtual School provides information, advice and guidance to professionals that work with CWSW. We act as a bridge between social care and education to empower professionals in schools to understand social care related issues and we help education professionals to identify and address the barriers to learning CWSW face.
- This extension to Virtual Schools is strategic, not operational. We support the professionals around the child, *we do not do case-work for individual children.*





CWSW – Our Offer

- Hillingdon Virtual School provide information, advice and guidance to DSLs, Social Workers, PAs and internal education professionals about CWSW through weekly virtual clinics. Professionals can book appointments by completing a simple form that outlines what the issue is that needs support. These can include:
 - *Signposting for support around SEMH, SEND, funding, alternative provision, universal services, use of Pupil Premium (for CWSW if FSM), preventing further suspensions or exclusion, EHE, improving attendance etc. This list is not exhaustive.*
- Hillingdon Virtual School track where CWSW are educated, their suspensions and permanent exclusions and EHE & CME referrals. From September, HVS will track their attendance weekly through eGOV platform. This data is used to identify trends and themes within this cohort and share these with social care and other relevant services. This informs learning and practice for this cohort





CWSW – Our Offer

- Creating resources and providing training about barriers to learning for this cohort including attachment awareness and trauma-informed approach.
- Meeting monthly with Attendance Support, EHE, CME and Post-16 to review CWSW cases and identify if support is needed, escalating or signposting as necessary.
- Promoting the importance of attendance and education for CWSW and the inclusion of education in CIN/CP plans.
- Working with The Skills Hub to enhance support to CWSW that are permanently excluded by providing a TAC support framework on Admission (based on the PEP model) to pilot from September 2023.





Looked After Children (LAC)

- All of the Looked After Children (from Age 3 – 18) in Hillingdon will have a named Virtual School Officer (VSO)
- The VSO will lead and complete the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for all our LAC. This will include reviewing any targets which are set and funding requested to support the targets.
- The VSO will monitor the child's attendance, attainment, progress to ensure that the child is achieving.
- The VSO will provide support during key transition phases, they will identify possible schools for children who move placements or are without a school place.
- VSO's will work with the Team around the Child to ensure that the child is attending school and accessing the curriculum.
- The VSO will advocate for the child to ensure that their education needs are being met and that they are making progress from their starting point.





The PEP meeting

- The PEP meeting takes place termly. This is chaired and the main meeting written up by the VSO. Both the social worker and the Designated Teacher have a section to complete, ideally prior to the main meeting.
- In the meeting will be the Team Around the Child (VSO, Social Worker, Foster Carer / Key Worker, Designated Teacher or other school representative). The child /young person (CYP) will also be asked to join to share their views.
- In the meeting the school will share information on how the CYP is performing in School / College. They will report back on the different subjects including areas of strength and weakness, attendance, engagement, extra curricular activities.
- The school will be expected to identify the PEP targets. These should be achievable by the time of the next PEP.
- As a minimum we ask for 3 targets, these must be based around Literacy, Numeracy and Attendance. Any funding via Pupil Premium Plus which is required must also be requested at this meeting. This will then be submitted to the VSH for Approval.
- The PEP and Attendance Platform we use in Hillingdon is provided by eGov Solutions





Pupil Premium Plus

- Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) is a sum of money allocated to local authorities to be used for the benefit of the educational needs of the authority's Looked After Children as described in their PEP.
- The amount of PPP each local authority receives is based on an allocation per child for the number of statutory school age Looked After Children for at least one day, as recorded in specific data returns.
- The amount of £2,530 is confirmed for financial year 2023/24 but is subject to review and change. The DfE guidance on PPP can be viewed [here](#).
- This funding is allocated according to the financial year, and if unspent may not be carried forward by the VS to the next financial year. Any unspent funds are returned to the DfE.
- HVS will allocate PPP to schools on a monthly basis. Where possible, this will be the month following the PEP meeting, but this is dependent on when in the month the meeting is held. For example, if a PEP is held in early October, monies will be released in November. If the meeting was held from the mid-point of October, monies will be released in December. The VSO will be able to confirm the date of release of funds at the PEP meeting.
- Schools can request up to £2000 per academic year.
- The VSH will allocate based on the targets set at the PEP meeting.





Our offer

- We also offer our young people a range of interventions or enrichment activities. These include:
- Letterbox – all children from -1 through to Year 7
- Flash Academy (UASC cohort)
- MyMaths (all learners)
- Power 2 mentoring
- Ultra Education
- Tuition
- Careers Information Advice and Guidance
- Jamie's Farm
- University days at Brunel and Oxford University





Care Leavers

- The Hillingdon Virtual School offers advice and guidance to care leavers up until aged 25 and the professional team around them i.e. Personal advisers.
- When a young person turns 18 and their final PEP meeting is complete, consent is sought from the young person for the Virtual School to continue to make contact on a termly basis to check in on their educational pathway progress and signpost any support.
- Young people are also provided with contact details should they need some advice and guidance outside of termly check in's.





Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

- Previously Looked After refers to Children who have:
- Been adopted from care
- Left Local Authority Care on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Become subject to a child arrangement order (CAO)





Previously Looked After Children

- If a child was Previously Looked After in England prior to being permanently placed, they have the right to priority in school admission.
- Children who have been adopted from care are entitled to a free early education and will qualify for the Early Years Pupil Premium.
- The Virtual School has a lead practitioner who oversees this area and offers advice and guidance to social care, schools, carers and parents.
- Schools are also entitled to receive the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) for Previously Looked After Children, at a rate of £2,530 per-pupil, per-annum. The funding goes directly to schools, based on census data, to support educational progress.





Expectations of School Governors

Governors must appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children who:

- Is a qualified teacher working at the school as a teacher OR
- Is a Headteacher or acting Headteacher
- Has appropriate seniority, professional experience and status and can provide leadership and training that will influence decisions around Looked After and Previously Looked After Children





Expectations of School Governors

Governors must:

- Make sure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training.
- Be updated at least annually by the designated teacher on Looked After Children and their progress.
- Work with the Leadership Team to act on issues raised in the report.
- Ensure that where the Designated Teacher is not a member of the senior leadership team, a member of the team is designated as a champion of Looked After Children.
- Ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect and are sensitive to the needs of Looked-After and Previously Looked After Children and those Children with a Social Worker.
- Ensure any additional needs are being identified and met including mental health issues.



Expectations of School Governors



The governors must be aware of:

- Workload implications of being the designated teacher.
- Levels of progress made by Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker.
- The impact of Pupil Premium Plus on supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Patterns of attendance and exclusions.
- Any process or planning issues arising from the Personal Education Plans.
- Progress of Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and Children with a Social Worker who are gifted & talented or who have special educational needs.
- Whole school planning –does it cover our Cohort?
- Training undertaken by the designated teacher.
- Work with the local authority.
- The impact of school policies on our Cohort.





Email Contacts

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