

## **CWSW GENERIC ENQUIRIES**

### What is the extended remit of the Virtual School?

In July 2021, the DfE announced an extension to the VSH's remit to include all children with a social worker. For ease, the term 'children with a social worker' (CWSW) will be used to refer to this group of children. It includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection (CP) plan. This cohort has been identified as a group of children who face significant barriers to education because of experiences of adversity, most commonly abuse and neglect.

Under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, all local authorities have duties to children with SEND. VSHs should not duplicate support available to children under existing local authority duties. The remit of the extended VSHs role includes children who are disabled and have, or have had, an allocated social worker.

This extended role does not require VSHs to provide direct intervention, help or support for individual children with a social worker or their families. This guidance does not change existing duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children and should be read in conjunction with statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children'.

Further information can be found in the published non-statutory guidance below:

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

### How does Hillingdon Virtual School fulfil this extended remit?

HVS has created the Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) Team, consisting of Lisa Steel (Advanced Lead Practitioner) and Chloe Rock (Virtual School Officer). The team focusses on support for children who are currently open to social care on Child Protection (CP) or Child in Need (CIN) plans. To fulfil the extended remit, the team can provide:

- Impartial advice and information to key professionals working with CWSW
- Guidance on use of PP.
- Invitations to CPD training for relevant professionals on trauma and attachment.
- Signposting to relevant services.
- Advice on further education and training.
- Tracking and analysing CWSW data to identify and implement targeted interventions.
- Consultation about education issues related to specific children or school-related issues for this cohort.
- Building relationships between social care and education professionals.

### How can I contact the CWSW team?

For generic enquiries please contact: [virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk)

To book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific child, please complete the following form: [Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2023-24\) \(office.com\)](#)

### How can I book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific young person?

To book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific child, please complete the following form: [Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2023-24\) \(office.com\)](#)

A member of the team will then be in touch to offer the next available clinic slot following triage.

Does the Virtual School CWSW team hold a caseload of young people and attend all meetings for those young people?

As this is a strategic role, the CWSW team are unable to hold a caseload of young people and therefore cannot attend all meetings or offer casework level of involvement. The team may deem it necessary to join some wider professional meetings or specific CIN/CP meetings however they will not form part of the Team Around the Child and this will differ on a case-by-case basis.

Hillingdon Virtual School do not usually provide for CWSW:

- Case work.
- Stationery or books.
- Educational visits.
- Payment for uniform, trips, exam entry fees, equipment, etc.
- Regular meetings.

Please note that the DfE do not allocate Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) to Virtual Schools for the CWSW cohort. PPP remains an allocated funding for CLA only.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### When is a young person statutory school age and what does this mean?

Young people become Statutory School Age following their fifth birthday.

- Children who will turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.
- Children who will turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st September.
- Children who will turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st January.

A young person is no longer Statutory School Age from the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16 years of age.

During the years that a young person is Statutory School age, their parents must, by law, make sure that they are in full-time education – either in school or by receiving Elective Home Education.

### A family has moved into the borough and the children do not have school places, what needs to happen?

If the young person has never been permanently excluded from school, then an in-year application should be made to local schools. This can be completed using the following link: [In-year school application form - Hillingdon Council](#)

If the family wish to apply to an out of borough school, then they will need to do this using the specific local authority's in-year application form – this can be found on individual's local authority's websites.

If the young person has previously been permanently excluded from mainstream school and was attending a Pupil Referral Unit in their previous borough, then their previous PRU will need to complete a PRU to PRU transfer to the PRU in Hillingdon – The Skills Hub.

If the young person has an EHCP, then the previous borough's SEND team will need to transfer the EHCP to Hillingdon's SEND team who will then consult with local schools. For further information regarding this please contact Hillingdon SEND: [strongerfamilieshub@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:strongerfamilieshub@hillingdon.gov.uk) Phone: 01895 556 006.

### A family is unhappy with their child's current school, what can they do?

Parents have the right to apply to change their child's school via an in-year application, using the following link: [In-year school application form - Hillingdon Council](#).

It is important to note that schools may not have spaces in the year group applied to and spaces are especially limited in Years 10 and 11. Schools must give a reason for not accepting an application and young people may be added to their waiting lists. Waiting list positions can be found out by contacting individual schools.

### A young person who was previously permanently excluded in another borough has moved to Hillingdon; how do they gain a place at The Skills Hub?

The young person's previous PRU / Alternative Provision must contact The Skills Hub to complete and PRU to PRU transfer. The young person will then be invited for an intake meeting at The Skills Hub.

A young person will be presented at Fair Access Panel, what does this mean?

Fair Access Panel is a forum where vulnerable (including those supported on a CP or CIN plan) secondary age young people without a school place are allocated a school place. The panel is chaired by the local authority admissions team and local head teachers.

Young people are allocated to schools considered within a reasonable distance from their home address in line with the admissions code.

If a young person on a CIN or CP plan is being presented at the panel, then their social worker or the CWSW team may share further information regarding the young person at the panel to support an informed decision.

For further information regarding the Fair Access Protocol, please find statutory guidance here: [Fair access protocols: advice for local authorities and school admission authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-advice-for-local-authorities-and-school-admission-authorities).

## **ATTENDANCE**

### How does HVS collect attendance data for the CWSW cohort and why?

All schools who have a child or young person on roll supported by Hillingdon's social services on a CIN or CP plan are given access to an online platform called EGov. The CWSW team are using this platform to track attendance of the statutory school age CWSW cohort for the period of their CIN or CP plans.

This data is analysed weekly to identify the persistent and severe absentees in each cohort. Enabling the CWSW team to offer support to the networks of specific young people, if necessary, as well as develop wider training resources and opportunities designed to specifically support the professionals working with CIN and CP young people.

### I am working with a young person who has low attendance to school, what support can be offered?

Often the first step of understanding why a young person may have low attendance to school is in identifying the barriers to going to school. It is often most effective for an adult with a positive and trusting relationship with the young person to have this discussion with them – this could be a family member, a social worker, or a member of school staff. Examples of barriers could be:

- Mental health
- Bullying
- The journey to school
- Educational neglect
- Lack of importance of education within the family network
- Challenging relationships between home and school

Once the barriers have been identified, then a Team Around the Child meeting could be useful in considering how to overcome the barriers and strategies that could be implemented.

Further specific attendance support resources can be found here: [Resources & Training - Leap \(hillington.gov.uk\)](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/resources-and-training-leap).

### A family have been invited to a formal attendance panel, what does this mean?

Prior to being invited to an attendance panel in school, families are likely to have received several letters outlining concern regarding their young person's attendance to school. Individual schools choose the regularity and attendance thresholds when they send letters. This information can be found in their individual attendance policies.

If a young person's attendance continues to be a concern than it is likely the family will be invited to a meeting / panel in school including parents, the young person, and the attendance officer. There may be other professionals in attendance at the meeting. If a young person is on a CIN or CP plan than the school or family may choose to invite the allocated social worker.

At the panel barriers to attending school and support available will be discussed. A target / goal will be set for the young person with regards to attendance with a deadline / review date.

### A family have been fined for attendance, what does this mean?

If following a formal attendance panel in school, a young person's attendance to school has not improved in line with the agreed goals and deadlines; the school may then refer to the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team.

The Attendance Support Team can issue fines to parents for poor attendance, which if not paid could result in court proceedings being issued.

To find out more about the role of the Attendance Support Team, please see their LEAP page here: [Attendance Support - Leap \(hillington.gov.uk\)](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leap/attendance-support).

A family are taking their child on a family holiday during the term time, will they be fined?

If a young person is taken out of school during term time for a holiday, then school may refer to the Attendance Support Team to issue a Holiday Penalty Notice to the family. Further information regarding Holiday Penalty Notices can be found here: [Penalty Notices - Leap \(hillington.gov.uk\)](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leap/penalty-notices).

If you are a member of school staff looking to refer to the Attendance Support Team – you can do so via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillington Council](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/stronger-families).

## **SUSPENSIONS / EXCLUSIONS**

### A young person has been suspended from school, what happens next?

The suspending school will inform the family in writing that the young person has been suspended, this letter should include the reason for suspension, the date and time of the reintegration meeting and details of how to appeal the suspension if the family wish to do so.

It is best practice for social workers to attend the reintegration meetings for young people on CP and CIN plans who are suspended – to ensure joined up working in reducing the risk of further suspensions.

If a young person is suspended for more than 5 days (10 sessions) then the suspending school must provide an alternative provision from day 6.

### A young person has been permanently excluded from school, what happens next?

The excluding school will inform the Local Authority's Exclusions Support Team who will then refer the young person to The Skills Hub from day 6 following the permanent exclusion.

Parents have the right to appeal any permanent exclusions and information regarding this process will be shared in the permanent exclusion letter from the head teacher.

The CWSW should attend all intake meetings for young people on CIN and CP plans at The Skills Hub to support with their successful integration into the school and continued educational progress.

It is best practice for the social workers of all CIN and CP children who are permanently excluded attend all meetings regarding the permanent exclusion as well as intake meetings at the new PRU.

### A young person has been attending the local PRU for some time, and is making positive progress, the YP and family would like them to return to mainstream, what can I do?

Contact the current school of the young person to gain their perspective on whether the young person is ready to return to mainstream.

If the young person attends Hillingdon's PRU – The Skills Hub – then they will support with reintegrating the young person into mainstream through collaboration with the new school. To gain a mainstream school place, the young person will be presented at Fair Access Panel by The Skills Hub where the school best deemed to meet the young person's needs will offer them a place.

## **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (Also known as EHE)**

### A family wish to EHE their child, what do they need to do?

The family must confirm in writing to the young person's current school that they wish to Electively Home Educate their child. The school will then refer the young person to the EHE team who will contact the family. The family will need to provide an Outline Plan of the education that their young person will be receiving from their EHE. This Outline Plan will be reviewed at least annually by the EHE team to ensure that the young person continues to receive appropriate education. Reviews will be led by the EHE team. They may contact the VS CWSW team for advice or signposting if the child is on a CIN or CP plan and the family needs additional support.

If the young person has an EHCP, then school will need to call an Interim Review, naming that parents wish to EHE. The Hillingdon SEND team will then need to authorise the Outline Plan before naming EHE as the education provision on the EHCP. Annual Reviews will need to continue taking place yearly for all electively home educated young people with EHCPs.

The EHE team will be in contact with the social workers of children on CIN and CP plans whose family have requested EHE to gain understanding of any associated safeguarding concerns.

The EHE team will confirm to referring schools when they are able to off-roll the young person.

### I as a professional have concerns regarding the EHE that a young person is receiving, what can I do?

Please contact the EHE team at [ehe@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@hillingdon.gov.uk) to share your concerns. They will be able to advise regarding next steps.

For further information regarding EHE please follow this link: [Elective Home Education - Leap \(hillingdon.gov.uk\)](#).



## **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (Also Known as CME)**

A young person does not have a school place and they are statutory school age, what can I do?

If the family have not completed school applications, then this young person is CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingdon Council](#).

A family have gone abroad, and we are unsure when they are returning, what can we do?

As there is no confirmed return date, then this young person is CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingdon Council](#).

A child has not been to school recently, and we are unable to locate them, what can we do?

As the location of this child has not been possible to determine, this young person is CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingdon Council](#).

What support does the CME team offer to young people on CIN and CP plans?

The CME team will allocate a specific officer to each young person referred to them, it is their role to investigate where they are currently studying. The CME and CWSW teams meet monthly to discuss all CP and CIN children who are currently missing education; in this meeting they share knowledge to inform the best next steps in identifying and supporting pathways for these young people back into education.

Either the CME or CWSW team will usually contact the social worker to gain their perspective as well.

For further information regarding CME please follow this link: [Children Missing Education - Leap \(hillingsdon.gov.uk\)](#)

**POST-16**

A young person is not currently accessing any education, employment or training and they are over 16, what can I do?

Please contact the Post-16 Education, Employment and Training team at [post16eet@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:post16eet@hillingdon.gov.uk).

## Hillingdon Virtual School – Children with a Social Worker FAQs

Thank you for taking the time to look through the Frequently Asked Questions for Hillingdon Virtual School's Children with a Social Worker Team.

If you have been unable to find the answer to your questions or require further information, please contact the team at [virtualschoolcsw@hillingsdon.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolcsw@hillingsdon.gov.uk).

Alternatively, if you would like to book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific young person on a CP or CIN plan – please complete the following form: [Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2023-24\) \(office.com\)](#)