



Learn Achieve Celebrate

A newsletter for Designated
Teachers of Looked After
Children
in Northumberland

NORTHUMBERLAND
Northumberland County Council

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Message from the Virtual School Headteacher



Is it just me or has this term flown by exceptionally quickly?! It must be because we have all been so busy, and it's all been worthwhile as you will see when you read about the 2017 outcomes for our looked after learners.

Northumberland has a new Executive Director of Children's Services. Cath McEvoy took up the post on 1st December having formerly been our Service Director for Children's Social Care (the DCS). Cath is a strong advocate of the Virtual School and there will be opportunities to meet with her and hear from her in 2018.

We also have a new champion in SEND. Janine Baxter of the SEND monitoring and assessment team is now the SEND LAC Champion and will ensure that looked after children are prioritised and accelerated through the system, such as early hearings at Panel and swift placements in special schools.

On the subject of staffing, we are in the process of recruiting to a new and permanent education psychologist post for the Virtual School which will mean added capacity and more training for Designated Teachers. I have also commissioned a school improvement partner to review the Virtual School, with a specific focus on assessment and the quality of teaching. The review will take place in January and I hope to feed back to you by the end of that first Spring half term.

What else are we involved in that's new? Well, there is a national PALAC programme driven by University College London which is focussed on promoting the achievement of looked after children. And we are currently developing with the Family Placement Team and the Northumberland Adult Learning Service some training for foster carers to help them support learning in English and maths at home.

The relatively new half termly progress report is providing us with vital and useful information to accelerate learning for our children. Thank you for embracing this initiative and 'making it work'.

So it's time to say thank you and Merry Christmas to all of you. 2018 is going to be exciting, I am really looking forward to working with you all in the New Year.

Jane Walker, Virtual School Headteacher

Visit our website here:

**Virtual School
and inclusion
support
services**

The Virtual School fulfils local authority statutory duties to ensure that vulnerable learners receive their entitlement to good quality full time education in inclusive settings where they are safe to learn.



Revised statutory guidance

The DfE consulted on revised statutory guidance for Virtual School Headteachers and Designated Teachers during October and November 2017, with a view to publication in April 2018. The revised guidance is a consequence of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Training from Northumberland Virtual School to launch the new guidance is planned for the summer term and you can view the draft guidance [here](#).

The headline changes are:

- **new duty to promote the educational attainment of previously looked after children** – providing support and guidance to schools and adoptive parents;
- **shift from Virtual School support to looked after children of statutory school age (5-16) to eligibility for early education at 2 to 19+ for care leavers and 25 for EHCP;**
- **increased emphasis on mental health of looked after children and creating the right conditions for learning** – adding another layer of required training for Designated Teachers and school staff;
- **proactively building interagency relationships** – not something new in an operational sense but new as part of a statutory requirement and there will be more of it;
- **maximising impact of Pupil Premium Plus** – a policy and evaluation of impact is already in place in Northumberland, but we welcome the opportunity to learn more widely from other Virtual Schools;
- **emphasis in the School exclusion section on Virtual School Heads being proactive in building relationships with designated teachers to help ensure behavioural issues are resolved early** – excellent idea to capture this in statutory guidance, the approach is already there but it can often be challenging to find the right resource in a timely way;
- **revised guidance for Designated Teachers** – greater emphasis on the duties of governors in relation to looked after children. Resourcing implications for schools are significant.

Pupil Premium Plus

The Pupil Premium Plus for 2017-18 has now been distributed to schools with eligible pupils. If you have not received your funding then please contact Adele.

Next term I will send you a revised Pupil Premium Plus policy which will set out arrangements for 2018-19 and there will be a significant change.

The National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) responded to the stage one consultation on the schools national funding formula and consequently the DfE confirmed earlier this term that in the future support for looked after children and children who were previously looked after would be targeted through the Pupil Premium Plus instead of including a looked after children factor in the national funding formula.

The DfE will transfer the total amount spent through Looked After Children (LAC) factors in local formulae in 2017-18 from the Dedicated Schools Grant to the Pupil Premium Plus budget.

As a result of this transfer, the 2018-19 Pupil Premium Plus rate will be £2,300.

Northumberland's policy will be to continue to retain £400 of each premium to fund such interventions as the education psychologist. On the completion of the Pupil Premium Plus agreement in each child's PEP, schools will then receive up to £1 900 for each eligible pupil.

The Secretary of State for Education set out the final design of the national funding formulae (NFFs) for schools and high needs in a speech to Parliament earlier this term. This is set out in detail in

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-for-schools-and-high-needs>

Education Outcomes 2017

Our looked after pupils didn't let us down again, and there are many individual stories of success to celebrate for 2017. Validated data and national data is not yet available for comparison, but I can share the headlines with you before my Annual Report is published next term.

1. The number of age 6 pupils working at the expected standards for phonics has increased sharply from 20% to 80%.
2. The success rate of age 11 pupils meeting national expectations in the combined measure of reading, writing and maths has more than doubled since last year to 28%.
3. In line with our expectations, performance at Key Stage 4 was sustained and the same number of pupils who achieved the basics (ie grades 4 or above in English and maths combined) is the same as in 2016.
4. Almost 100% of pupils who completed accredited courses in Year 11 were engaged in further education, training or employment in September 2017.
5. Progress from the starting point of entering care is very good at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

Well done to all of our learners, teachers and the ESLAC team!!

Designated Teacher Training 2018

Based on your feedback and developments during this term we have revised the Designated Teacher Training Programme for 2018. Further dates will follow including English and maths training for foster carers and more Thrive training. To book or enquire further please contact Adele Stevens

01670 622779 and at eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk

8 Feb 18	Training for foster carers with Education Psychologist	Choppington Welfare
21 Feb 18	Meeting the needs of looked after learners - Primary Learning Together - induction/refresher, what works (from participants), specific cases, ePEP training, transition	West Hartford Fire Station
28 Feb 18	Meeting the needs of looked after learners - Secondary Learning Together - induction/refresher, what works (from participants), specific cases, ePEP training, transition	West Hartford Fire Station
2 dates tba	A conference for Designated Teachers for Looked After Children: roles and responsibilities in 2018 New role and statutory guidance (Children and Social Work Act 2017)	tba
14 June 18	Support and guidance for parents of post-LAC pupils	West Hartford Fire Station
12 July 18	Support and guidance for parents of post-LAC pupils	West Hartford Fire Station



A new training module is now available on Learning Together called **Designated Teacher for Looked After Children**. It is designed as an induction/refresher module for all Designated Teachers but I would encourage all school staff who work with looked after children to take a look. It will be updated in April when the new statutory guidance is published.

A new and free resource – the [Designated Teachers' resource hub](#) - has been developed by Achievement for All in consultation with care leavers, virtual school heads, designated teachers, foster carers, social workers, education psychologists, charity partners and the Greater London Authority Children in Care advisory group.

Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services: ILAC

In November 2017 Ofsted published a new framework for the inspection of local authority children's services. It replaces the *single inspection framework of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers* – or the SIF. The new framework can be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

The inspection of education outcomes for looked after children has a higher profile and now includes children missing from education and children who are electively home educated. From 2018 all local authorities can expect to be inspected using this new framework. There are 3 new pathways which inspectors will apply based on the intelligence they have about each local authority and their most recent inspection judgement. The pathways are: a standard inspection, short inspection or focussed visit.

More information about the ILAC will be shared with you at Designated Teacher training sessions.

ePEP

The new ePEP is on target for full implementation by July 2018. Thank you to those who have been involved already.

For those of you who haven't yet converted to ePEP, your Education Support Worker (ESW) will contact you before you receive an email from **Vschool360**. You may need to check your spam box as the email won't be from your ESW.

If you have any problems please contact your ESW as soon as possible, and if there is an error message please make a note of it and send to us to resolve.

We welcome any feedback about using the ePEP - it a work in progress and we want to improve things in the early stages if possible.

Remember the ESLAC team

Just a reminder of who's who in the Education Support for Looked After Children (ESLAC) team. Every looked after pupil has an allocated worker but you might like to use the expertise of other team members depending on the needs of the pupils you are working with.

Contact us – 01670 622779 and at eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk



Team Manager
Toni McGuire



Personal Education
Advisor KS4/5
Peter Green



Virtual School Careers
Advisor
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Virtual School Inclusion
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Senior Education
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Education Psychologist
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Education Psychologist
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