



Learn Achieve Celebrate

A briefing for Designated
Teachers of looked after and
previously looked after children
in Northumberland



September 2018

Northumberland Designated Teacher Essentials

- ◆ e-learning induction/refresher training - [Learning Together](#)
- ◆ training programme - [Virtual School webpage](#) and *Learn, Achieve, Celebrate*
- ◆ online booking form for training – click [here](#)
- ◆ training hub - <https://afaeducation.org/our-projects/lift-learning-in-family-teams/northumberlanddt/>
- ◆ toolkit - <https://afaeducation.org/free-dt-resources/>
- ◆ webpage - <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Looked-after/Virtual.aspx>
- ◆ Contact us - 01670 622779 or ESLAC.info@Northumberland.gov.uk

Message from the Virtual School Headteacher: Jane Walker



Welcome to the new school year! I hope you have all had a good summer break. This is the first of what will be our half termly communications with you for 2018-19. The aim is for the Virtual School to provide clear support and guidance as you fulfil the broader requirements of your Designated Teacher role. As always your feedback is welcome.

In brief

Training programme 2018-19

Our comprehensive training programme which will be delivered with partners *Achievement for All, Thrive* and the *LSCB* is now open for bookings. Follow this link to find the easy to use on-line booking form – [click here](#)

If you want to return to the booking form at any time between now and July 2019 then this link can be found on the Virtual School webpage and in the *Designated Teacher Essentials* section under the masthead of every Virtual School newsletter.

Education Psychology support for previously looked after children

From 1st September our new duties to provide support and guidance to parents and professionals working with previously looked after children came into effect. Demand from you is already high so we have commissioned a Virtual School Education Psychologist, initially for 1 day per week, to focus on providing you with support to plan for and meet the needs of previously looked after children in your school.

This is in addition to the support already provided by the Virtual School Education Psychologist, Carol Booth.

To access this support please contact **Louise Brennand** directly on **01670 622779**.

Designated Teacher Annual Report

As you know it is a requirement of the Designated Teacher to report annually to your governing body about the provision, progress and achievement of looked after and previously looked after children in your school.

To support you with the drafting of this report we are sending you a report containing **provisional data** for every looked after child on roll at your school. We hope you will find this useful when preparing the report and planning provision for the coming year.

We will work this year with you to explore the usefulness of other data which the Virtual School can provide. **Please let us know if this data sheet was helpful.**

Once your report for 2017-18 is finalised I would be grateful if you could **share it with me**. It is not a requirement to do so but having sight of the reports will help me to disseminate best practice and think about the data I can share with you in the future.

Stability index

We know that **stability** for looked after children has a positive impact on education achievement.

For the second year the Children's Commissioner has published a Stability Index which uses DfE and local authority data to measure **placement stability, school stability** and **social worker stability** for looked after children. It is intended to provide professional conversations to enable reflection (rather than as a performance measure).

The Stability Index is available to view and download [here](#). It tells us that for most children the care experience is positive and stable in terms of these measures. Not surprisingly those more likely to experience instability are those with complex needs.

Alongside the national report, each local authority was sent its own data relating to the same three stability measures. For Northumberland, school placement stability is impressive:

- 8% had a mid-year school move in 2016-17 compared to 10% nationally
- 2% had at least one school move in both 2015-16 and 2016-17 compared to 4% nationally.

We want to improve on this position even further and ask you to continue to work with us to avoid mid-year school moves for looked after children, reduce fixed term exclusions and sustain our record of no permanent exclusions since 2008.

School placement protocol

To ensure that unavoidable school placement moves happen swiftly and involve all relevant professionals and the pupil in the decision making process, a new **School Placement Protocol for Looked After Children** has been developed and will start implementation this term.

The protocol ensures the oversight of the ESLAC Team Manager as soon as any school placement becomes unstable, and involves both current and potential receiving schools in the decision making process of the Care Team. The protocol continues to be based on an individual needs assessment.

The draft protocol is available to view [here](#). Your feedback is welcome.

Feedback has also been invited from children's social care colleagues.

The ESLAC team manager will trial the protocol before it is finalised and then ratified by the Virtual School's governing body, the MALAP (Multi-agency Looked After Partnership).

Exclusions

The number of fixed term exclusions experienced by our looked after children during 2017-18 was **unacceptably high** and has trebled since the previous year. Fixed term exclusions are a serious threat to school placement stability and affects our confidence as corporate parents that pupils are placed in inclusive environments where they feel safe to learn.

The Virtual School wants to work with you to reduce the use of exclusions and we urge you to contact your ESLAC worker or the Virtual School Education Psychologist to:

- consider alternative and more effective strategies
- support you to review your school's behaviour policy
- discuss our training programme and what might help.

Change to assessment requirement of half termly report

To help us to monitor progress more effectively at the Virtual School and to simplify our requests for data and information from you, we have made changes to the content of the half termly report which you already complete for us.

Last year we asked you to tell us whether a pupil is *emerging*, *developing*, *secure* or *mastered* in respect of their age-related expectations.

This year you will simply be required to answer **YES or NO** to the question '*is the pupil achieving age-related expectations?*'

You don't have to do anything, the half termly report template has been updated ready for you to complete in October.

More effective benchmarking of pupils' attainment and their capacity to make progress and meet age-related expectations will emerge during the year as the Education Psychologists initial assessment on entry to care is implemented.

Revised statutory guidance

Last term many of you attended the workshops I delivered on the revised statutory guidance for local authorities and Designated Teachers.

Two briefing documents which summarise the guidance and our broader duties can be viewed and downloaded from our webpage:

- for [Designated Teachers](#)
- for your [school governors](#).

ePEP and Pathway Planning Process

A revised process for **pathway planning** with looked after children from the age of 15 will begin implementation from 1st September. The process has been developed with the 16+ Care Leaving team based in Northumberland Adolescent Services. If you are a Designated Teacher working with looked after children in Years 10 and 11 then please take a close look at the process in the diagram. **Peter Green** and **Andrea Johnson** will work with you this year to ensure that the process is implemented smoothly. The aim is to ensure that as many young people as possible are in education, training and employment at 16 and continue to engage successfully beyond their 21st birthdays.

Joint process NAS and Virtual School: From ePEP to Pathway Plan

Year 10

School arranges careers' guidance interview before Year 10 PEP review
Written action plan from interview included in PEP
Throughout Year 10 regular visits by Peter Green to pupil and Designated Teacher to review careers' action plan

On-going support from ESLAC (Peter Green)
Year 10 PEP review attended by social worker (locality)



Year 11 - September/October - PEP review

If young person has an EHCP then review aligned with LAC review - co-ordinated by IRO
Reviewed EHCP added to ICS by social worker
During the school year transition from locality social worker to NAS, preferably by age 15 3/4
If already transferred to NAS by time of PEP review then NAS social worker to attend
Needs assessment of Part 1 of Pathway Plan started by NAS social worker at nearest post-15 LAC review



Year 11 - March/April - Final PEP review

Final PEP review arranged by social worker with support from ESLAC (Peter Green) and Designated Teacher
Review also attended by social worker and Virtual School Careers' Guidance Adviser (Andrea Johnson)
Objectives set, aspirations clarified
Plans now in transition - PEP now 'closed', pending Year 11 outcomes in August
PATHWAY PLAN now main education support plan, copy shared with young person



By end of August of Year 11

Social worker transfers information from Year 11 PEP to Pathway Plan
Social worker uploads last PEP and latest EHCP to ICS
Virtual School Headteacher (or representative from ESLAC) signs off ETE section of Pathway Plan
For pupils in sixth forms, Designated Teacher and social worker review Pathway Plan every 6 months
For pupil in sixth forms, ESLAC support continues to Year 13