



Learn Achieve Celebrate

Information and guidance for Designated Teachers of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in Northumberland

May 2021

North East Regional Children in Care Council

The North East Regional Children in Care Council is currently setting their priorities for what they would like to work on as a region. They have narrowed this down to six key areas by listening to children and young people in their local areas.



They would like to focus on two key areas for the coming year but would like to see these chosen by children in care and care experienced young people. They have developed a really short online form which gives children and young people a chance to say what they would like the group to work on, not just in Northumberland but across all 12 authorities.

They are asking for your support in this, firstly to share with any children and young people in care, and those who have left care.

They would like to see as many children and young people vote as possible so they know that the changes they are trying to make are what will benefit most, and they have pledged to send out regular information and updates on what they have been doing via staff, mailing lists and social media.

The form will take two minutes at the most to complete. Please encourage your looked after children to get involved and to submit a form.

[Voting link - Please click here](#)

Northumberland's children in care council, **Voices Making Choices**, is part of the North East Regional Children in Care Council.

Designated Teacher Summer Conference

You will shortly receive a Teams invitation for our Designated Teacher Summer Conference. It will take place as a virtual meeting from 1.00pm on **7th July 2021**. A Teams meeting invitation will be sent to you nearer the time.

The agenda was developed with the Designated Teacher Working Group and will include:

- **Perspectives of Designated Teachers in Northumberland schools**
Sally Collins and Colette Laidler, Designated Teachers from a special and a mainstream school
- **Working Memory**
Amanda Cuthbertson and Fiona Lynn, Speech and Language Therapist/Specialist Language Teacher from SALT
- **Our perspective**
Carol Booth and Jenny Shannon, Virtual School Lead and Educational Psychologists
- **Introducing the Designated Teacher Padlet**
Tara Prescott, Deputy Virtual School Headteacher
- **Shout outs for looked after children**
Mark Phillips, Headteacher at Barndale Special School

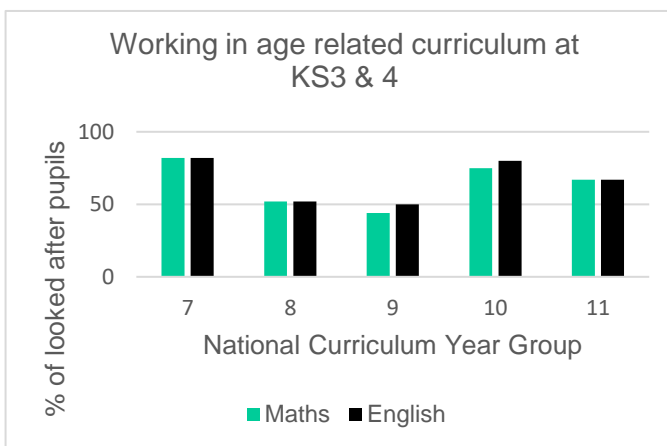
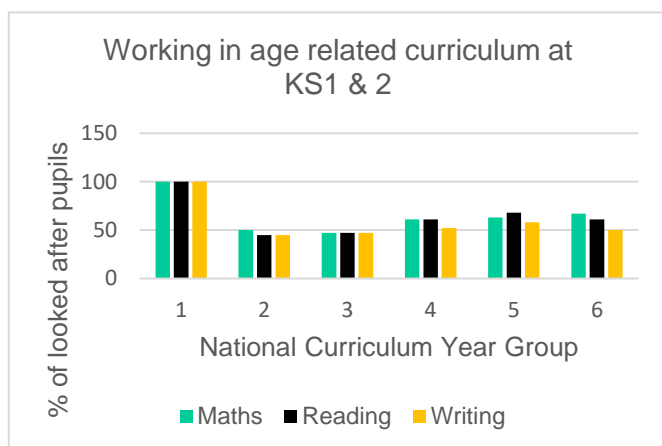


The Autumn Conference 2021 will have the theme of looked after children with SEND.

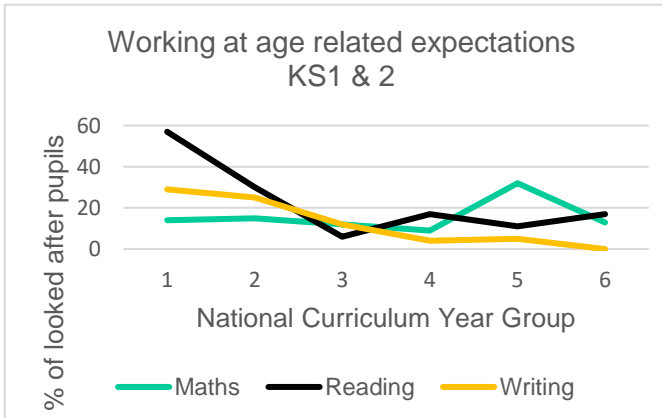
Spring Progress Report

The termly progress reports that you send us through the ePEP system provide us with helpful information to plan our support for pupils and for schools. In these half termly briefings we are going to share more of that data with you to give you context for the progress of your own looked after children, and so that we can work together on strategies that will benefit all Virtual School pupils.

We know that looked after children have often experienced disrupted learning, have gaps in their education and can have unidentified special educational needs. We therefore monitor the proportion of looked after children in each national curriculum year group that are working in their age related curriculum. The data from the Spring Progress Reports (2021) shows us the impact of those disruptions to learning:



Looking further into those pupils who are meeting age related expectations in their national curriculum year group, we can see that the biggest and most consistent concern is with writing in KS1 & 2:



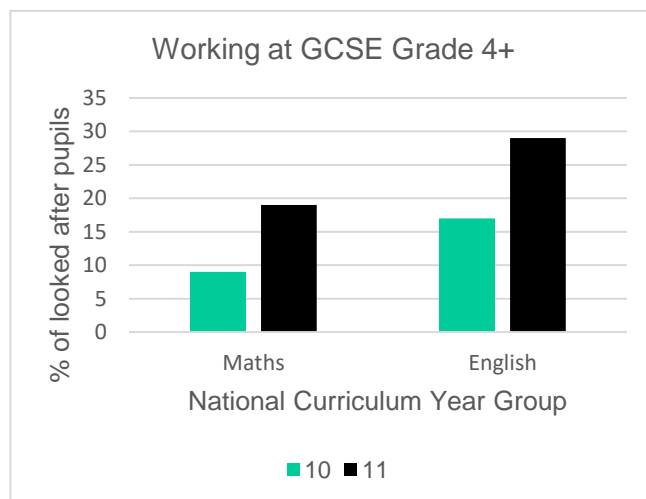
We want to focus on **writing** as an area of improvement. Work is underway to see how the Virtual School can support schools to accelerate progress in writing and close those gaps.

We want you to tell us what you think would work. We will continue to provide support when needed for individual pupils, but welcome your ideas on resources we could develop or provide through the Virtual School to make a difference. Let us know what you think:

ESLAC.info@northumberland.gov.uk

A key measure for us at Key Stage 4 is the proportion of our looked after children who achieve the Basics at GCSE. Alternative arrangements since 2020 make this difficult to compare to previous years, however our current KS4 pupils look set to do much better in English than in maths, and this will affect the number who achieve a good GCSE in both subjects.

The good news is that our Year 11 looked after children are working closely with our careers' advisers and nearly all of them have a pathway into education, training and employment in September. If you are working with a Year 11 pupil who needs guidance then please contact our Virtual School Lead Careers' Adviser, Andrea Johnson: andrea.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk



Let us know

We want to make sure that our looked after children are benefiting from all the initiatives underway as lockdown eases and we continue to get them back on track. Get in touch with your ESLAC link worker or email us – ESLAC.info@northumberland.gov.uk - to let us know what's happening in your school.



- Is your school hosting a **summer schools** or structured activities during the summer holidays?
- Are you using the **National Tutoring Programme** and do you have our looked after children in mind for it, especially those currently in Year 10 and Year 5?
- Will your early years class teacher be benefiting from the **early language training**?
- Is any of the **Recovery Premium** being used for our looked after children?
- Will you be encouraging pupils to engage with the **Oak National Academy** during the summer?

Have you submitted it yet?

Our ePEP dashboard helps us to help you and to make sure that everything is in place for our looked after children. This snapshot is telling us that:



- 50 Spring Progress Reviews, due by 16th April, have still not been submitted
- 63 termly reviews of outcomes, due by 16th April, have still not been submitted and therefore PP+ for the Spring Term for those children has not been paid yet

The dashboard also tells us the good news – our PEP completion rate is back to 98% (just 7 to do for children new to care and waiting for their first PEP meeting). The first PEP needs to be in place within 20 days of becoming looked after. And the quality of the PEPs are consistently high – an amazing 46% are green, 49% are amber, and only 5% are red. Thank you, this is so good!



You will shortly get a reminder to submit Summer Progress Reviews and termly reviews of outcomes. They will be due by the end of the first week of the summer holidays which is Friday 23rd July 2021.

Weekly attendance



Thank you for submitting the weekly attendance data for your looked after children and for understanding the importance of sharing the data so that we can arrange support before there are any escalations. Please remember, it doesn't need to be the Designated Teacher who is responsible for attendance as the link does not give access to the ePEP so there are no information security issues.

Shout Out

Last year's shout-outs celebrating achievement were such a success that Mark Phillips, Headteacher (and DT) at Barndale has offered to do them again this year. If you'd like to acknowledge a looked after child's achievement for a piece of work, good behaviour, resilience, anything at all then please send a brief description including any pictures and comments to your ESLAC link worker or to ESLAC.info@northumberland.gov.uk by the end of June. These will be shared at the DT conference in July.



School Transitions

Work is already underway with those children in making **phase change transitions** in September. Joint PEP meetings between the existing and receiving schools are already in place. With the exception of only a couple of looked after children who are waiting on special school places being allocated, all have their preferred school choice.

For looked after children in Early Years settings, please could you ensure that the **school ready passport** is updated ready to support transition. Any queries, then please contact Julie Robson Grainger.



SEND Re-inspection



The Ofsted/CQC local area re- inspection of SEND took place from 19-21st May. So far there has only been informal feedback, but we were pleased to be able to demonstrate that more Looked After Reviews are now aligned with EHCP reviews for Northumberland's looked after children. This is in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) from the initial inspection in 2018.

There is still work to be done though, so please contact us if you need support when arranging the reviews for your looked after children.

Private fostering

On behalf of the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP), we are reminding you about your duty to make known to the local authority any child who you think might be in a private fostering arrangement.

Private fostering is about all children and not just children who are looked after by the local authority.



A private foster care arrangement is in place if:

- A parent asks for someone else to look after their child full-time for more than 28 days
- If the person looking after someone else's child full-time for more than 28 days is **not** a close relative

Examples of situations when children become privately fostered are:

- children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents from overseas
- children living with a friend's family as a result of a parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- a teenager living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children living with host families for any number of reasons
- people who come to this country to study or work, but antisocial hours make it difficult for them to use ordinary day care.
- children and young people living apart from their families
- minority ethnic children with parents working or studying in the UK
- children with parents overseas

For further information please look at: [Private Fostering: A Guide for Professionals](#)

Please remind the staff in your school about private fostering.

What the DTWG is getting up to



The Designated Teacher Working Group (DTWG) has been working with Deborah Aubrook on the pupil voice section of the ePEP. For September you will see some changes to the template and will be able to use some new resources to

support you, or your co-worker, as you talk to your looked after children about their views of school and education.

Your feedback is important to us too, so if you have any suggestions about pupil voice then please get in touch – contact us directly or use the ESLAC.info@northumberland.gov.uk mailbox.

Facebook



Designated Teachers in Northumberland, you now have your own Facebook page!

The purpose of the page is to keep connected, share good practice, ideas and resources. Please feel free to join and support each other, search for us at:

Northumberland VS Designated Teachers

Contact Us

Here are contact details for teams and services that you might need when working with looked after children. Let us know if you need any others:

- OneCall 01670 536 400
- CYPs 01670 502 700
- ESLAC 01670 622779
- Family Placement 01670 626 262
- Email: eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk
- IROs 01670 624888

Virtual School Headteacher: Jane Walker



Northumberland
County Council