



# Learn Achieve Celebrate

## Information and guidance for Designated Teachers of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children in Northumberland April 2022

### SATs and GCSE preparation

We will be holding two Designated Teacher drop in sessions to share our thinking and planning to fully support our Year 6 and Year 11 looked after children through the test and exam season. We will look at what support is available and Virtual School Educational Psychologist Amelia Taylor will deliver a session on exam preparation including managing stress, sharing strategies and self help tools to use and share with pupils.

Links to join the drop ins are below. If you have any questions please get in touch with Karen Jeff or Debbie Aubrook.

- **Year 6 session: Tue 03/05/2022 15:30 - 16:30**
  - [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Year 11 session: Wed 04/05/2022 15:30 - 16:30**
  - [Click here to join the meeting](#)



### Have you looked at the Designated Teacher padlet recently?

Just a reminder that the Designated Teacher padlet is full of resources and information to support you in your statutory role.

New resources are added regularly, including this one on managing assessment and exam worry. Follow the padlet link to find it:

[Designated Teacher padlet](#)



Assessment and Exam Worry

**What is exam and assessment worry?** We have the amazing ability to be able to think about future events. 'Thinking ahead' means that we can anticipate obstacles or problems and gives us the opportunity to plan solutions. When it helps us to achieve our goals, thinking ahead can be helpful. For example, making a revision schedule.



However, worrying is a way of thinking ahead that often leaves us feeling anxious or apprehensive. When we worry excessively, we often think about worst case scenarios and feel that we won't be able to cope, for example, 'I will fail all my assessments, or I will never get this done in time'.

### STAN: Supporting Transition Across Northumberland

The Virtual School has been part of the multi-agency group working on the new framework for schools and other professionals to use to support transitions for all pupils. The work has been developed with partners from education, children's social care and mental health, influenced by the voices of children, young people and their families.

This year we have 90 looked after children transitioning to new schools, including our Year 11s. Due to the complexity and needs of our pupils preparation and discussions are already underway between schools, including joint PEP meetings.

A [transition padlet](#) with some very useful resources has been developed with videos, a good practice guide and numerous tools to support when working with young people and families.

Transition was also the main focus and theme of our Spring Designated Teacher conference, coinciding with the launch of the new framework and a session from Newcastle College. This led to the Virtual School delivering a training session to Newcastle College Learning Mentors on attachment and trauma, raising awareness of the needs of looked after children in further education and throughout their transition.



If you would like any further information on Post 16 looked after children, care leavers or options available please contact Andrea Johnson, Virtual School Lead Careers Adviser. [andrea.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:andrea.johnson@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Attendance initiative

We are delighted to announce that at least 66% of school-age looked after children will receive a reward for 100% attendance this term. Absences that were health/medical or COVID related (including missed sessions for PCR tests, schools needing to close, self isolating periods or LAC medicals) have not affected eligibility for the reward.

At 9.4% our overall absence is higher than regional and national averages (for last year) and a third of our children are persistent absentees.



We need to continue to encourage attendance and build on the momentum of the positive impact of the attendance initiative. We will be offering the incentive again next term between Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May (dates may vary). All Northumberland looked after children will again have the opportunity to receive a £50 voucher for 100% attendance.

Share with the pupils in you're school, encourage attendance and together lets' get everyone into school, safe to learn and exam ready!!

## Fixed Term Exclusions

Fixed term exclusions continue to be too high. Please contact the Virtual School for support as soon as pupils are at risk. We will support you to be creative, look at alternatives to exclusions, and explore options including strategies and interventions. Please remember stability is a priority for looked after children, if they aren't in school, where are they and are they safe?



## SDQ Scores



Our annual SDQ completion rate is disappointing at 32%.

Since September 2021, in line with statutory requirements, all Designated Teachers are required to complete an annual SDQ for all Northumberland looked after children on their school roll. The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire. Guidance is available on the DT padlet [here](#).

The SDQ score will be recorded on each pupil's ePEP and available to use at the six monthly PEP review. It doesn't need to be you that completes the SDQ, it needs to be someone who knows the pupil well and has regular contact with them as their answers should not be based on a specific day, but over a period of time.

Please complete a form for each looked after child, if you haven't done so already, and return to [Joanne.Lynch@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Lynch@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Trauma-Informed Practice

This term, the focus of our Educational Psychologists' reflections in supervision has been trauma-informed communities and how to develop these along with other colleagues in the local authority. As a Virtual School our conversations always stem back to how we might help schools to develop relationship-based practice as an alternative to behaviour policies.



We welcome your feedback on how you might envisage this working or what would you need to make it successful. Please contact our Deputy Head, Tara Prescott [tara.prescott@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:tara.prescott@northumberland.gov.uk) with any suggestions or to discuss further.

## Globalbridge



Globalbridge is a platform that connects young people & education with employers, apprenticeships and universities. It allows information and opportunities for courses, work experience, exam result support, enrolment, summer schools, and apprenticeships, as well as standard Globalbridge content to be shared quickly.

We ask you to encourage your Year 11 looked after children to download the globalbridge app to be able to access the resource. To make sure our pupils can make the most of the app, Globalbridge is able to set up dual registration with both the Virtual School and their participating schools to ensure they don't miss out on any specific opportunities available for looked after children and care leavers.

## All about PEPs



**WELL DONE** our PEP completion rate is **98%!!!**

Termly Progress Reviews are now due and need to be submitted by Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April at the latest please.

## So long, farewell



On behalf of our looked after children, all our partners in Children's Services and all Designated Teachers, we are saying so long and farewell to our Lead Educational Psychologist, Dr Carol Booth.

Carol was our Virtual School's first EP and she has played a significant role in transforming the service we are able to offer to children and schools. She has touched and changed many lives during her time with us, and has left a legacy that we will work hard to live up to.

Good luck for the future Carol, and we hope you might be able to work with us again some time in the future.

## 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
- ESLAC 01670 622779
- Email: [eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk)
- CYPS 01670 502 700
- Family Placement 01670 626 262
- IROs 01670 624888

Virtual School Headteacher: Jane Walker



Northumberland  
County Council