

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 1.07.20

Title of report: Virtual School Report on working during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Purpose of report: To brief the Corporate Parenting Board on how the Virtual School has been working during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable – for information
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Jo-Anne Sanders for Mel Meggs
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick (Children)

Electoral wards affected: None

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes GDPR considered no service users identified

1. Summary

This data used in this summary was taken on 12.06.20

The role of the Virtual School is clearly defined in *Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children statutory guidance for local authorities February 2018*. Kirklees Virtual School currently works with all young people in the care of Kirklees from the age of 3 through to age 18 when they become care leavers. This is delivered by an EYFS / primary team and a secondary / Post 16 team.

Our current numbers of children and young people on roll are:

71 EYFS

173 Primary

246 Secondary

107 Post 16

The Virtual School Team support and challenge schools and other professionals to enrich the learning experience of our children and young people in care by striving to close the achievement gap through targeted support and intervention when needed. These key areas of work include:-

- Being proactive in supporting Social Workers with school applications (where a school move is unavoidable) and supporting the transition into the new educational placement.
- Leading and coordinating all initial Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings when a young person comes into care – or has turned 3 – to ensure that as much support is in place as soon as possible within their school or educational placement.
- Allocating all young people to an Achievement Coordinator or Teacher, who will be responsible for monitoring and tracking their cohort.
- Reviewing attainment and progress data on a termly basis to identify level of need and intervention and using this data to plan our support.
- Providing the specialist educational challenge and support in PEP Review Meetings according to need and liaising closely with Social Workers and Designated Teachers in these cases.
- Providing advice and guidance to Designated Teachers and coordinating individualised targets and support for our young people to accelerate their progress in education. These are funded through Pupil Premium Plus and their impact is reviewed as part of the PEP process.
- Commissioning work across services to prioritise work for our young people with the Educational Psychology Service, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENDACT) and the Early Years Outcomes Team.
- Strengthening partnership working with senior managers in Social Care to ensure that education is central to any decision taken about our children and young people in care.
- Closely monitoring attendance and establishing plans to improve engagement
- Offering support, guidance and training to Foster Carers, Head Teachers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officer's to enable them to work together to put education at the centre of all work with our young people.

As you can see from the above our role is crucial during this unprecedented time and it is very much "business as usual" for us even though the world feels to be a very different place.

The responsibility for a young person's education rests with their education provider. Our children and young people should currently be attending their education provision or there

should be a Risk Assessment in place detailing how work appropriate for the individual young person is being set and monitored, and what support is being offered to them.

Our role is to support and challenge all providers to deliver education during this exceptional period with each individual young person at the centre of our approach.

These are some of the current areas of focus.

Contact and support for carers

- We have worked to create a centrally held email contact list for our Kirklees carers and have made initial contact with them, reminding them about the support we can offer and sharing our contact details.
- We have also provided carers with links to the DfE suggested resources for home education to enrich those being provided to them directly from school.
- This will enable us to give them access to specific sections in the electronic Personal Educational Plan (ePEP system) to support the completion of the learner view section (via the Squiddle module) prior to any PEP meetings.
- All children and young people have an allocated member of the Virtual School team providing a key contact for support.

Contact and support for children and young people.

- Our ePEP system allows us to support young people through the setting of targets, funding can be requested at any time and resources supplied for them by their school or education provider.
- Targets are being creatively set and managed to take account of the need to continue to support the education of those young people who are currently not accessing a provision based offer.
- Many of our young people already have the electronic devices and resources that they need at home.
- For others this has meant that we can get resources to them quickly in these difficult times, wherever they are in the country.
- Most young people already have digital devices for working at home, and we have issued an additional 64 since 30.03.20.
- A further 77 digital devices are also being issued through the fostering services team
- 19 young people have requested that they continue to access additional 1:1 tuition remotely.
- We have also approved a further 112 targets for other educational and emotional health and well-being support at home.
- We respond supportively to any request at this time and have a system that enables us to do this efficiently and effectively.

Young people not on a school roll or at risk of withdrawal of their offer

- We currently have 7 young people not on a school roll – we have contributed to Risk Assessments with the Social Worker as a priority for these young people.
- It is our role to ensure that there is work and resources available where possible.
- It is our role to work with other professionals to secure an education provision asap.

Risk Assessments

- Social Workers have been asked to coordinate and complete Risk Assessments for all young people who are not attending a provision and we have currently contributed to all requests.
- We have a particular focus on how the schools are “keeping in touch” and monitoring work - offering challenge and support.
- In most cases the support offered by the Social Worker and School have been very positive

- We have flagged concerns that have been raised within risk assessments so that they can be resolved/monitored by the young persons allocated worker from Virtual School in partnership with social care and the educational providers
- However, this has also raised concerns where a school may have not had an appropriate educational offer for some of our young people and we have challenged the schools in these situations.
- We have taken the lead on securing brokerage provision where a risk assessment has identified that the young person's usual provision is closed, and alternative provision is needed to support placement stability

Attendance and monitoring overview

- We have developed an attendance and monitoring spreadsheet to keep an overview of the ever changing situation for our children and young people
- This has been coordinated across the service with input from the Virtual School, Social Work managers, Welfare Call and the Kirklees attendance data from schools.
- The information is collated, updated and circulated weekly across the service.
- On 12/06/20 167/442 (37.9%) school aged young people were attending their provision
- On 12/06/20 16/45 (35.6%) EY children (aged 2-3) were attending their provision
- We have been proactively working with Social Care to complete risk assessments for the young people who are working at home.
- There are particular challenges for the EYFS, Post-16 and Specialist provisions and we are working across service to support young people at an individual level.

Initial PEP's

- Since 20.03.20 (lockdown) there has been an increase of 48 children and young people coming into care , with a further 10 young people turning 3.
- We have been coordinating and conducting all initial PEP's (virtually) within the statutory timescales of 10 working days.
- These are particularly important during this period of lockdown to ensure that the young person and carers have access to all the support and resources they may need as soon as possible on entry to care.

Covid-19 PEP's and squiddle

- We have worked with eGOV (the ePEP system provider) and other Virtual Schools nationally to produce a Covid-19 PEP that enables relevant information to be collected during the PEP meeting for a young person who is attending their provision, or who is being educated at home.
- The Virtual School are coordinating all PEPs this term (some will be joint skype meetings but others may be a summary of individual conversations), to pull together all of the information for PEPs– this is in response to this exceptional situation as we do not usually attend all PEP meetings.
- We will ensure that there is at least one completed PEP for all our young people this term.
- The Squiddle module is also a new addition to the ePEP system, this is so that we are able to capture the views of our young people, even when they are being educated remotely at home.
- The questions for the young people to respond to have been tailored specifically to capture the young person's views in response to being educated in the current Covid-19 situation.

Prioritising PEP's for this term

- We have completed 344 PEP's this term to date including 47 initial PEP's

- 86% of young people had a completed termly PEP last term, as you will appreciate there were a lot of pressures on school as we came to the end of term and the delay in the sign off process.
- We are currently prioritising PEP's as below:-
 - Initial PEP's For young people who are new into care
 - Children and young people not on a school roll
 - Young people who did not have a PEP last term
 - Transition planning / PEP's (including NEET)

School transition planning (to discuss during the PEP meeting)

- We now need to start thinking about how we can best support transition in these uncertain times and will work with the wider system locally, regionally and nationally to plan for this group of children.
- Transition planning is being looked at creatively and we are looking to ensure that all young people have an appropriate transition plan.
- It is our role to ensure that all information is transferred from one school / provider to another and that the necessary resources/support is in place when the young person starts.

Young people undergoing SENDACT Statutory Assessment

- This should be progressing under the usual timescales wherever possible and in line with Government advice and guidance .
- Our role is to highlight where this is not the case and work to move forwards without drift and delay.

2. Information required to take a decision.

Not applicable.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People.
Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners.
Not applicable

3.3 Place Based Working.
Not applicable.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality.
Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children.
Oversight and monitoring of education outcomes for children in care. Corporate Parenting Board to monitor progress, as requested by the Chair.

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources).
Not applicable.

4. Consultees and their opinions.

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines.

Virtual School Head to continue to lead on this way of working during the pandemic.

- 6. Officer recommendations and reasons.**
That the report be noted.
- 7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations.**
Not applicable
- 8. Contact officer.**

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- 9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**
For information only
- 10. Service Director responsible**

Jo-Anne Sanders