

24 June 2013**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****SUMMER TERM REPORT FOR THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED
AFTER CHILDREN****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on the virtual school for the Summer term 2013.

Information and Advice**Virtual School Senior Leadership Team and Virtual School Improvement Plan**

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 26 March 2013 and reviewed progress on the 2012/13 virtual school improvement plan and self evaluation form (SEF). An updated data evaluation on key stage outcomes was shared at the meeting and it was agreed that achievement of looked after children in 2012 was good overall.
3. A further meeting has been arranged for 3 July 2013.

Virtual School Staff

4. The two Looked After Children Achievement Officers continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. Caseloads are currently running at 390 for both workers covering the County.
5. Both officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children. Both officers will be attending training in June 2013 with Kate Cairns on trauma and attachment needs of looked after children in educational settings.

Termly Designated Teacher Network Meetings

6. These meetings will be continuing in the Autumn term 2013. The Summer term meetings are not being held due to a County-wide conference taking place for all designated teachers.

Designated Teacher Memos

7. These continue to be sent out regularly, minimally half termly. The virtual school coordinator uses this method to communicate information, news and events to designated teachers across the County. Feedback from designated teachers and head teachers has been positive and encourages contact from all schools with the virtual school. Fronter continues to be a reference point for school staff and all resources are placed on this web site.

School Links

8. Requests continue to be received for training from the virtual school on the needs of looked after children cross phase.
9. All schools have once again been given access to the online training modules on attachment, trauma and behaviour. All schools will also be offered the opportunity to take part in workshops County-wide following the conference in June 2013.

East Midlands Network

10. The East Midlands Network meeting of virtual schools was held on 4 March 2013 in Northamptonshire. This was a positive meeting with a number of colleagues sharing Ofsted experiences which all virtual schools will use to inform development plans and SEFs.
11. A number of colleagues also attended a national conference for virtual heads. This was a useful conference with keynote speakers from Ofsted and the Children's Commissioner. It was shared at this event that the post of virtual head (or equivalent) will be made a statutory role for local authorities.

Social Care Links

12. The virtual school co-ordinator has met with the through care team and will also further meet with the looked after children team in June 2013.
13. The LAC Achievement Officers will also use the looked after social work team building as a base to work from in order to provide regular ongoing support to social workers.

Fronter

14. The Fronter room for the virtual school is now accessible to all schools. This will be continually updated with information available for schools on important aspects of education for looked after children.
15. The virtual school co-ordinator also works alongside the adoption service to support a Fronter room for adopters and there is also a Fronter room which supports foster carers.

Floor Target Schools

16. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools.
17. Reports received from improvement advisors to date indicate that young people in these schools are making progress in line with expectations. Spring term monitoring sheets have been sent out.

Data

18. Further developments on the virtual school's data management system have been made. SIMS has been sourced as an appropriate system. Training of staff in the use of SIMS was delivered in May 2013. Installation of the software has now been completed.
19. Work on collating a full data set from schools is underway. Schools that have not returned data for looked after children on request are being followed up by the data management team.

LAC Strategy Performance Measures

20. The updated evaluation of attainment and progress for looked after children at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 4 is attached as **Appendix 1**. The achievement and progress of Nottinghamshire looked after children is good overall at key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, and compares favourably with national outcomes for looked after children. It is also good at the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics at level 4 and above and once again compares favourably with national outcomes. The achievement of Nottinghamshire looked after children at the end of key stage 4 is good in terms of the proportion achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C. However the attainment of Nottinghamshire looked after children at five A* – C grades including English and mathematics is an area for improvement. Although the targets set in the LAC Strategy were not met, improvements were seen on all indicators in comparison with 2011.

Achievement Event

21. Planning has begun for the 2013 Achievement Event to be held at Rufford Park once again following positive feedback concerning the venue. The date has been fixed for 6 July 2013.

Pupil Premium

22. This has now been distributed to all schools in and out of the local authority. The virtual school co-ordinator will write out to all schools in six months time to establish the impact of the payments on looked after children's educational attainment.

Projects

23. The 2012/13 multi-modality project is underway and going very well. Over 20 children and young people are taking part. The celebration event at the end of the project is booked at Rufford Park in June 2013.

24. The virtual school is supporting a music based project with colleagues from the local authority's music and arts service that will offer a chance of accreditation in an arts award and an opportunity to experience many styles of music. This project will be aimed at young people who may be vulnerable to exclusions, particularly in the run up to holidays.

Personal Education Plan

25. The new paperwork is now with the new looked after children social work team and any completed Personal Education Plans (PEPs) will be forwarded to the virtual school co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes. The aim is to have the updated and improved PEP documentation in circulation for all looked after children of school age by January 2014. The Children in Care Council has been consulted on the child/young person input section and this will be in a booklet format. The co-ordinator is to attend the Council again for further discussions on the layout.

Good News

26. Book tokens have been sent out once again to children and young people for a variety of successes, including attendance, participation and achievement.
27. A young person has won first prize in a national poetry competition and has been acknowledged for his achievement.
28. One secondary school has also continued to have a group of looked after children meet together regularly for support and social time. This group has been visiting primary schools to assist in transition to secondary school. This has been very positively evaluated and book tokens have been sent to all children who participated.

Other Options Considered

29. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

30. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Equalities Implications

31. Due regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee notes the update on the virtual school for the Summer term 2013.

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Constitutional Comments

32. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 31/05/13)

33. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

Looked After Children Strategy – report to Policy Committee on 18 July 2012

Looked After Children Strategy update – report to Policy Committee on 16 January 2013

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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