

Annex A

September Report to the Corporate Parenting Board

Authors: Tricia Head (Virtual School Head – VSH)

Sarah Clarke (Virtual School Assistant Head – AVSH)

Introduction and York context

1. Students in the Virtual School

The City of York has a fluctuating cohort of school aged Looked After Children. The Virtual School is made up of the whole cohort of school aged Looked After Children where York is the corporate parent but they may live and be educated anywhere. In July that cohort was 169 5-16 year olds, 69% are educated in York with 31% in a range of schools across the country.

	Primary	Secondary	Total/%
CYC LAC (5-16)	69 (41%)	100 (59%)	169 (100%)
Educated in York	44 (26%)	73 (43%)	117 (69%)
Educated OOA	25 (15%)	27 (16%)	52 (31%)
Mainstream in York	42 (25%)	42 (25%)	84 (50%)
Mainstream OOA	22 (13%)	18 (11%)	40 (24%)
Specialist in York	2 (1%)	31 (18%)	33 (19%)
Specialist OOA	3 (2%)	9 (5%)	12 (7%)

In the past there has been a nominated Virtual School Head – starting with Joan Lupton for 2010/11 and then Sian Rees for 2011/12. In September 2012 Tricia Head was approached to take up the oversight of the Virtual School as there was an interregnum when Sian stepped down from her secondment. Tricia Head agreed to do this on a voluntary basis as she saw a lot of productive overlap with the work of The Danesgate Community.

There is much work to be done in all aspects of the Virtual School but we are in a much better place than we were a year ago. Tricia Head has produced a working School Self Evaluation and School Improvement Plan (it would be useful to discuss these with the CPB at a future date if possible) and we know what work there is to do and have identified a tight set of operational actions and strategic work-streams in order to improve the virtual school. However, the reality is – up to 1.9.14 - there has been insufficient investment in the Virtual School and so the capacity needed to make a difference to education outcomes and future life chances has been limited.

2. Staff in the Virtual School

Name	Title	Contact details
Tricia Head	Virtual School Headteacher (seconded from The Danesgate Community one day a week)	tricia.head@york.gov.uk
Sarah Clarke	Virtual School Assistant Headteacher (seconded from The Danesgate Community full time)	sarah.clarke@york.gov.uk
Anna Pearson	Tutor for Looked After Children (3 days a week) (sits in Specialist Teaching team)	anna.pearson@york.gov.uk
Paul Bent	Educational Psychologist for LAC (2 days a week)	paul.bent@york.gov.uk
Gill Clapham	Connexions Adviser for	gill.clapham@york.gov.uk

	LAC (3 days a week)	
Michelle Barker	Administrative Assistant (seconded from Danesgate for 2 days a week)	michelle.barker@york.gov.uk

Other LA colleagues give of their time to be part of the Virtual School senior leadership team – these are **Maxine Squire**, **Stephanie Windsor** (Early Years Senior Adviser), **Maxine Benson** (Early Years Consultant), **Nikki Wilson** (Children’s Rights Advocate).

National Context

In September 2013 it became statutory that LA’s should have a Virtual School Headteacher (VSH). At the same time Ofsted changed the LA inspection framework and the Virtual School came under closer scrutiny in terms of overall outcomes as well as the monitoring of progress and the quality of education planning for LAC.

By April 2014 there were two other significant developments.

One was that the DfE was working on a set of central regulations that all LA would be expected to deliver in terms of having an effective Virtual School. All VSHs nationally were part of this consultation and the final document was published in July 2014 – Promoting the Educational Attainment of Looked After Children (**Appendix B**).

The second development was that the Pupil Premium for LAC was increased from £900 to £1900. The increase in the pupil premium has been matched with a closer scrutiny of its usage and a directive from the DfE that the Virtual Head in each Local Authority should be responsible for the total pupil premium allocation and its allocation to schools. This directive was clearly laid out in the DfE document – **Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15: Frequently asked questions** – also attached to this report for CPB members to read – **Appendix C**.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR YORK'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Please see a detailed breakdown attached (**Appendix A**).

The Personal Education Plan (PEP)

A PEP is a document which summarises educational provision for a LAC and, crucially, highlights targets for the year and additional support needed. Improving the quality and completion of PEPs was an Ofsted action point from May 2012 inspection. The current PEP completion rate is 80% but in June 2014 we had reached 92%. We expect this to rise as people return to normal working practices as term starts.

Paul Bent, Sarah Clarke and Anna Pearson are in the process of re-writing the PEP document to meet the new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice. It is hoped this will be a better designed and more child centred document and will match more closely to the My Support Plan and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) thus making it more workable for all professionals to use. Sarah Clarke hopes to take a child and young person centred explanation of PEPs to the November Show Me That I Matter Group to get user involvement with the wording and lay-out of the document to ensure it meets their needs.

2014/15 Priorities for the Virtual School

The School Improvement Plan for 14/15 details all the work planned for this year and it is all aimed at raising achievement and improving progression. It would be very helpful to have a longer slot to talk through the School Plan if the CPB feel this is appropriate to the role of the CPB. It will be looked at in detail at Multi Agency Partnership (MALAP) level in any case.

However, we feel we must bring to your attention two key issues.

Attendance monitoring. There is no systemic process in the LA for collecting attendance information on LAC. This is a serious issue and one that has been flagged up previously. We have managed to get a

free trial this month of a commercial system called 'Looked After Call'. This may be too expensive to do in future but we are hoping we can use the trial to set up our own system. We are investigating an Integris data storage system. Integris is one of the school management systems available to schools. The cost of a license is a modest £500 and although there would need to be an investment in time to input the data at the start it should generate a much more flexible and pragmatic system that can hold attendance, achievement exclusion information.

LA funding for Virtual School. Tricia Head consulted with all schools on the broader use of the Pupil Premium and in July 2014 all schools agreed that the £1900 Pupil Premium Plus would have a top slice of £300 for general benefit to the Virtual School. However, this money is for resources to improve achievement and so cannot be spent by the LA on the leadership of the Virtual School now that the role is a statutory duty of the LA. Tricia Head has a meeting on 23.9.14 with Jon Stonehouse, Eoin Rush and Maxine Squire to discuss this so this is in hand.

Tricia Head, Sarah Clarke. 11.9.14

Appendices (attached)

Appendix A– Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children

Appendix B – Promoting the Education of Looked After Children (DfE publication June 2014)

Appendix C – Pupil Premium for LAC

<https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-virtual-school-heads-responsibilities>

Abbreviations

AVSH	Virtual School Assistant Head
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
LAC	Looked After Children
MALAP	Multi Agency Partnership
PEP	The Personal Education Plan
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
VSH	Virtual School Head