

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN WE CARE FOR AND PREVIOUSLY CARED FOR CHILDREN UPDATE



Issue 46

Term 2
2024/25



The aim of this publication is to provide some information updates, contacts, useful strategies and ideas to support the work you do with our pupils. Watch out for each edition and do pass on, print and display. The more we can raise awareness, the better equipped schools are to do their best for our children. Please also take time to look at our webpages – [click here](#). If you have any questions/requests for content of upcoming issues, contact virtualschool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CONTACT US

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Training Programme 2024/25

* **BOOK HERE** *

Upcoming training:

Wednesday 6th November

Year 11 DT Induction Training

Tuesday 12th November

Attachment Theory

Tuesday 14th January

Formulation – Planning interventions for complex children

Tues 21st January and Thurs 6th February

PACE for School Staff

Thursday 30th January

Designated Teacher Practice Day

Funding for Previously Cared For Children

School funding is based on census data, so it's vital to ensure that information about your Previously Cared For Children cohort is up to date.

Previously Cared For Children - referred to by the Department for Education (DfE) as Previously Looked After Children or PLAC - are children no longer in local authority care because they are the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order. Children who have gone back to live at home with no Child Arrangement Order are not eligible for this funding. From 1st April 2024, Pupil Premium funding is also available for pupils who have been adopted from care or have left care from outside of England and Wales.

Pupil Premium Plus funding is paid at the start of the financial year as a single indicative amount. Following data verification by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), an adjustment is made for actual funded numbers later in the summer term. For the financial year 2024 to 2025, the Pupil Premium Grant equates to £2,530 per Previously Cared For Child per annum.

2024 to 2025 census dates

To secure the Pupil Premium Grant, it is the responsibility of the educational setting to prompt parents and guardians who will have needed to inform the setting about their child's circumstances **in time for the setting to record the child's status on the January census**. We suggest that you include a question regarding previously in care status both on your admissions form and at regular intervals when requesting information regarding Ever 6 FSM eligibility. A letter can be sent out regarding Previously Cared For status – to preview an editable example letter, [click here](#) and look within the 'Pupil Premium Grant' tab.

For more information about the Pupil Premium Grant for Previously Cared For Children, visit [Previously cared for children | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

What is the SDQ for?

The strengths and difficulties questionnaire is an important tool to help professionals identify emotional and behaviour concerns and to flag up the need for further assessment. It supports discussion in PEP meetings and enables professionals to see specific areas which may need targeted intervention. Tracking SDQ data is important as unmet SEMH needs are one of the key reasons for educational underachievement in Children We Care For and Previously Cared For Children. For more on strategies to support in meeting SEMH needs in your setting, view the [SEND Ordinarily available toolkit \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Preventing suspensions and exclusions is critical. The Virtual School can support settings in identifying alternatives to exclusion - please contact us as soon as you have concerns. The SDQ can be part of the identification of needs, as often this is missed. **Vulnerable and SEND pupils are more likely to be excluded** and there is an understanding that more compassionate schooling is needed. See this thought-provoking trailer '[Excluded](#)'.

All local authorities are required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of Children We Care For. This data is collected through the SDQ and a summary score for each child issued for tracking the emotional and behavioural difficulties of Children We Care For at a national level.

[Click here](#) to access a copy of the SDQ and for guidance on how to use it.

Post 16 Transition

Remember that some of your Year 11s may need additional support with the process of applying to colleges.

Ideas to support Children We Care For:

- DT call carer to explain the process (especially for carers who have not had a Year 11 before).
- Time in school researching courses, talking to ex-students and support with application form.
- Flag up open events and identify a member of staff to meet them at college to facilitate the visit.
- Ask college course leader to come in and talk to a group in school.

Remember, Remember...

Bonfire night and fireworks are a big part of November. Please be aware that for some children who have experienced trauma, fireworks can be a cause of distress.

Christmas time can also be a difficult time with lots of feelings flying around. [Click here](#) for a Beacon House resource which explores how to **use PACE at Christmas time**.

Looked After Call

When a PEP has been held, remember to log back in and complete the relevant ePEP sections and submit for review by your Virtual School case worker.

Please check email addresses of key adults in Section 1 of the ePEP:

- DT email
- Social Worker email
- Carer email
- Finance contact email

We use these emails to contact settings with information about Pupil Premium Plus payments and to circulate information such as our updates to DTs and Parents/Carers.

Reminder that it is DTs are responsible for sharing the completed PEP with carers.

Thank you.

Anti Bullying Week 2024: *Choose Respect*

Anti-Bullying Week will take place from **Monday 11th to Friday 15th November**. The week starts with Odd Socks Day on Monday 11th November. For more information and resources, [click here](#).

Research tells us that **care-experienced children are twice as likely to get bullied compared to their peers**. For more information on how to safeguard care-experienced children from bullying and from being bullies, [click here](#).



From Foster Care to Fine Art: Celebrating a Young Artist's Journey with John Lewis



We are thrilled to share the inspiring story of one of our Care Leavers, who has been pursuing an undergraduate degree in Fine Art. Recently, this talented young artist was selected to collaborate with John Lewis, and their unique designs now feature on John Lewis brands. These designs, inspired by their experiences in various foster homes and viewed “from a bird’s eye view,” beautifully capture their journey.

Iz expressed immense gratitude for the unwavering support from the Leaving Care and Virtual School teams, who have been instrumental in helping them achieve their goals and ambitions. To celebrate this remarkable achievement, Iz invited colleagues to a special launch event held on Tuesday 22nd October at the London Foundling Museum.

Here is some heartfelt feedback from Iz’s Virtual School Worker: *“It was such an honour to be there at the launch event. It was stunning; the pieces created have been made to a high standard. Thought-provoking and emotional to see how Iz has turned their pain into power. It definitely made me reflect on how we work with young people. Such a beautiful day!”*

We are incredibly proud of Iz whose creations are now available for purchase on the John Lewis website and in Waitrose stores.

See below for more information:

- [Made by Care Gifts | John Lewis & Partners](#)



Designated Teacher Practice Day

In response to feedback from DTs, and because we desperately want DTs to have a community of support and practice they can turn to, we are replacing our termly online network meetings with an in-person day at Unipart House. DTs can reach out to their Virtual School Workers at any time for support. However, we strongly recommend (particularly given that we are not having a June conference this year) that your DT attends our practice day.

The day has been designed to bring DTs and Virtual School colleagues together to reflect on shared experiences, what's going well, identify/work through challenges and consider ways to work more effectively going forwards to improve the educational outcomes of our most vulnerable children and young people. The day will be facilitated by [The Restorative Lab](#) ('The Lab'), supported by Dr Hester Riviere and Virtual School staff. The Lab will facilitate a check-in with participants and do some relationship building activities. There will then be a focus on breaking the cycle of suspension using restorative approaches followed by a check out. We anticipate that it will be an incredibly valuable day.

There are limited places, so make sure you book on soon!

Book on here: [Designated Teacher Practice Day | Oxfordshire | Education Services](#)

Protocol on leave of absence requests

In exceptional circumstances, requests may need to be made for a leave of absence during term-time for Children We Care For (CWCF).

If this is the case, approval must be sought from both the Head of Service for Children We Care For and the Virtual School Head.

Schools / educational settings should not be approached directly by carers or social workers with such a request.

Carers and social workers must not apply for holiday in term time.

To view the policy, click here: [Protocol for term-time leave of absence applications](#)

Any Year 11s with EHCPs should have had an Annual Review towards the end of Year 10 or have one booked before the end of Term 1 to ensure the EHCP that is sent out to Post-16 providers reflects the most current, accurate picture of the young person and their needs. It is also the opportunity to capture the young person's wishes and pull together everyone's thoughts on preferred Post-16 destinations. Schools can then request that the SEN Team send out consultations to providers as soon as possible before Christmas - this allows plenty of time for places to be agreed before the end of March deadline when the destination is named on the EHCP. If the Annual Review has not yet happened or been booked, or you are concerned that things have changed significantly, please flag this up with the SENDCo, copying in their Virtual School case holder.



Oxfordshire's commitment to children we care for and care experienced young people

A corporate parent is the name given to an organisation or person who has special responsibilities to children we care for and care experienced young people.

A corporate parent is intended to carry out many of the roles a parent should. While you or your organisation may not be able to provide everything a parent can, you should still be able to provide the children and young people you're responsible for with the best possible support and care.

Corporate parent responsibilities are intended to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can towards improving the lives of children we care for and care experienced young people, so they feel in control of their lives and are able to overcome the barriers they may face.

As corporate parents in Oxfordshire we are ambitious for our children we care for and care experienced young people. We are committed to

working together to help children, young people, and families to thrive.

We want Oxfordshire to be a great place to grow up and for any Oxfordshire child or young person to have the opportunity to become everything they want to be.

To achieve this vision for children and young people we have a focus on all children and young people being successful, safe, healthy, and supported.

Some of our children we care for and care experienced young people have told us what they need from their corporate parents and how we can best support them to help them thrive.

YOUTH VOICES

OXFORDSHIRE

CARE FOR THE FUTURE

Youth Voices (formally Children in Care Council, CiCC) is the new forum for Children We Care For (CWCF) and Care Leavers. Youth Voices help the council achieve our commitment to CWCF and care-experienced young people in Oxfordshire. Youth Voices have regular meetings, run surveys and access a range of enrichment activities that support us in working alongside them to better understand their needs and aspirations. Youth Voices hold the council, as Corporate Parent, to account against its commitment.

Should you know a child or young person who might like to join Youth Voices, please contact James Collins (Youth Voices Engagement Officer) on 07803287813, james.collins@oxfordshire.gov.uk or visit [Children in Care Council | OXME.INFO](#)

What your school needs to offer Children We Care For

