

# Designated Safeguarding Lead Update

Issue 9  
Term 5,  
2024-25



The aim of this publication is to share information, useful strategies and ideas to support the work you do with children subject to CIN and CP planning, children who have at some point been open to Children's Social Care and children in kinship care. Please also take time to look at these webpages [Children with a social worker | Oxfordshire County Council](#) [Children in kinship care | Oxfordshire County Council](#) to support your work with these cohorts. If you have any questions/requests regarding content, contact [virtualschool@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## CONTACT US

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## Training Programme 2024/25

\* [BOOK HERE](#) \*

Upcoming training:

Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> April and Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> May

PACE for school staff

Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> October

Oxfordshire Virtual School Conference  
Theme: *Transforming lives through human connection*

We will share our updated 2025-26 training and support offer with you in an email very soon and in next term's newsletter.

## Thank you!

Dear DSLs,

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to supporting children with a social worker. Your role is crucial in helping these vulnerable children overcome significant barriers and thrive in their educational journey. By raising awareness, providing comprehensive training, engaging in multi-agency working and embedding trauma-informed practices, you ensure these children receive the support they need. Regular monitoring of attendance and engagement is vital for their progress and wellbeing. Together, we can make a positive impact on their lives.



Please reach out if you need further support.

Clare Pike  
Acting Head of the Virtual School

## OSCB Training Courses

[Training - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#)

**Is Bullying A Form Of Trauma?** from The Beacon School's School Behaviour Secrets Podcast

[Click here](#)

## Free downloadable resources

[Click here](#) to view free downloadable behaviour resources from the Beacon School.

# Attendance is everybody's business

## The attendance of children with a social worker is your business

### Average attendance

Status	Year groups 0 - 6			Year groups 7 - 11			All year groups		
	Last year	This year	Change	Last year	This year	Change	Last year	This year	Change
EHCP (all children)	93%	93%	0%	91%	92%	1%	92%	92%	0%
EHCP (children with open cases)	88%	88%	0%	84%	81%	-3%	87%	87%	0%
LCSS	94%	94%	0%	86%	84%	-2%	93%	92%	-1%
Early Help	94%	92%	-2%	79%	68%	-11%	91%	89%	-2%
Open C&FA	92%	93%	1%	84%	86%	2%	90%	91%	1%
ChIN	92%	92%	0%	82%	81%	-1%	90%	90%	0%
CPP	90%	90%	0%	70%	70%	0%	87%	87%	-1%
CWCF	96%	95%	-1%	91%	90%	-1%	95%	94%	-1%

Median average. "Last year" includes entirety of last academic year. "This year" includes current academic year to date. "Change" shows difference between the two. Changes of at least +/- 5% are highlighted

Attendance of children in Oxfordshire at the end of Term 4 2024/25

Don't wait until a child's attendance drops below 90% to act! As soon as you see signs of attendance slipping, take action!

Looking at the data circulated at the end of Term 4 (see above), you can see that the attendance of all vulnerable groups needs attention and action. This is particularly the case for secondary-aged learners open to Early Help and subject to CP and CIN planning.

You can see from the table above that:

- Primary-aged children subject to CIN and CP planning are on average absent from school the equivalent of 1 day a fortnight;
- Secondary-aged children open to Early Help are on average absent from school for the equivalent of 3 days a fortnight;
- Secondary-aged children subject to CIN planning are on average absent from school the equivalent of 2 days a fortnight; and
- **Secondary-aged children subject to CP planning (the most vulnerable) are on average absent from school for the equivalent of 3 days a fortnight – 12 school weeks / 3 months!**

*If children are not in school, how can you be sure they are safe? What can you do to make school unmissable?*

**\*\* CALLING ALL SECONDARY SCHOOL DSLs \*\***

**We urge you to uphold your duties to consider every one of your young people with a social worker and work with the team around those young people to find a way forward.**

## Transition Planning for Terms 5 and 6

Summer Term is a key time for planning new beginnings and endings. Change is unsettling and for many children a move up a year or to another setting is tricky. Class teachers, DSLs and key workers play an important role, alongside parents and social workers, in helping children on CIN and CP plans prepare for their next steps.

Class teachers, DSLs and key workers will know the story of each child and will be able to notice changes in behaviour or motivation and recognise these as potential anxieties about the end of the school year.

Look out for tummy aches, attendance wobbles, lack of motivation, bravado or ambivalence. All these may be masking feelings a child may not be able to articulate. **Year 6s and Year 11s particularly will be realising that they are leaving.** It is a good time to hold a transition meeting and make sure there is good communication and planning between year groups and settings.

Don't leave things to chance - invite key staff from the new school or college to the meeting, set-up extra visits and talk to staff in the next year group or setting so there so someone holding the case and keeping that pupil in mind.

- ☐ Create a Transition Pupil Profile\*
- ☐ Keep parents and social workers up-to-date and listen to their worries and hopes.
- ☐ Liaise with the SENCO for identification and sharing of SEND information.
- ☐ Booster groups and 1-1 tuition are great at transition times.
- ☐ Plan for endings – don't forget opportunities to say goodbye such as creating a memory book, signing a card, special goodbye sessions with key adults in school. This makes a huge difference to children with a social worker.

## \* Y6 and Y11 Transition Profiles

Transition profiles for Year 6s and Year 11s are a great idea for children moving on this September. Example templates can be found [here](#). Once completed, the profiles can be shared with key adults to support them in preparing for a smooth transition.

## What is Private Fostering? Your duty to report...

If you become aware of a private fostering arrangement, this must be reported to the local authority. This is a mandatory duty. The DSL should ensure staff are aware of this and be involved in any reporting to the local authority.

### What is Private Fostering?

When a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if they are disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts.

To qualify as private fostering, the arrangement will not have been made by the local authority and the child or young person will not be in the care of an approved foster carer. Many private foster carers are excellent and safe, but if the local authority is unaware of the arrangement, they are unable to offer any support.

**If you are aware of a private fostering arrangement, you must notify the local authority:**

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/fostering/PrivateFosteringNotificationform.docx>

**For more information and go to:**

[Private fostering arrangements | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

## Year 11s

Good luck to all Year 11s as we approach exam season. Please continue to encourage them to attend additional revision sessions, support with revision timetables and exam technique and put in further one-to-one tuition, where necessary. See overleaf for upcoming open days/events.

**Post-16 Plans:** Hopefully your Year 11s will now have a conditional offer from a college or Sixth Form, but if not, please encourage and support them to apply or follow up with applications **as soon as possible**. Please do let the social worker know the details when an application has been made.

**Any Year 11s with EHCPs:** The deadline for the Post-16 destination to be named on the EHCP has now passed. If there are still concerns about your Year 11 not having a clear plan for next year, if funding has not yet been approved, or you are concerned that things have changed significantly, please flag this up with the EHCP Caseworker, copying in the social worker. For mainstream colleges, your young people will still need to apply to their chosen course, ensuring they mention having an EHCP on the application.

**Thinking ahead to Results' Day:** It's really important that your young people plans how they are going to collect their results on **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August**. If they are not able or willing to go in person, please help them arrange in advance how their results will be collected or sent to them, especially if they are moving over the summer. Ideally, they need to receive them on the day, so that they can submit their results to college to enrol in their chosen course. Young people have sometimes missed out or gone on waiting lists when they have not enrolled on Results' Day or the day after. They should plan to enrol **in-person** at the college/Sixth Form, as sometimes the online enrolment can be unreliable.

**Transition Meetings:** Please consider if a transition meeting might help towards the end of the year, after exams have finished. Someone from the school and from the college or Post-16 destination should be invited. As mentioned on the previous page, Transition Profiles are a great idea for children moving on this September. Example templates can be found [here](#). Once completed, the profiles can be shared with key adults to support them in preparing for a smooth transition.

There are more **College Open Events** coming up. The more visits your young people in Year 10 and 11 can make to the different Post-16 destinations, the easier their transition will be, so please do encourage them to go along with support.

### **CITY OF OXFORD COLLEGE OPEN EVENTS:**

**City Centre Campus, Oxpens Road, Oxford OX1 1SA**

[City of Oxford College - Wednesday 23rd April 4:30 - 7pm](#)

**Blackbird Leys Technology Campus, Cuddesdon Way, Oxford OX4 6HN**

[Blackbird Leys Campus - Wednesday 7th May 4:30 - 7pm](#)

### **BANBURY COLLEGE OPEN EVENTS:**

**Banbury College, Broughton Road, Banbury OX16 9QA**

[Banbury and Bicester College - Wednesday 30th April 4:30 - 7pm](#)

### **ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE OPEN EVENTS:**

**Abingdon College, Wootton Road, Abingdon OX14 1GG**

[Abingdon College - Wednesday 18th June 3:30 - 7pm](#)

**Witney College, 6, Holloway Road, Witney OX28 6NE**

[Witney College - Wednesday 18th June 3:30 - 7pm](#)

**Bicester Construction Skills Centre, 126 Churchill Road, Bicester OX26 4XD**

[Bicester Construction Skills Centre - Wednesday 25th June 4 - 7pm](#)

**OUFC Advanced Football Programme Trials, Oxford United's Bangkok Glass Training Complex, Oxford, OX4 2RY**

[OUFC Advanced Football Programme Trials - Wednesday 9th April 12 - 3pm](#) ([Sign up here](#))

### **THE HENLEY COLLEGE OPEN EVENTS:**

**The Henley College, 1 Deanfield Avenue, Henley-On-Thames RG9 1UH**

[The Henley College - Thursday 24th April 5:30 - 8pm](#)

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about supporting your young person with their plans for next year.

## **Latest School Readiness Newsletter**



[Go to this Sway](#)



## **Becoming a Trauma-informed Restorative Educator**

Wednesday 7 May 2025, 12-1pm (Online)

<https://www.minthouseoxford.co.uk/events/2025/5/7/becoming-a-trauma-informed-restorative-educator>

Margaret Thorsborne and Joe Brummer will discuss how individual educators can bring trauma informed restorative practice into their day-to-day work.

Margaret and Joe will share theory and research from their book [\*Becoming a Trauma-informed Restorative Educator: Practical Skills to Change Culture and Behaviour\*](#), including insights from neuroscience and theories about shame.

More info and booking: <https://www.minthouseoxford.co.uk/events/2025/5/7/becoming-a-trauma-informed-restorative-educator>

## Children Dealing with Loneliness – NSPCC

Loneliness is a difficult feeling for anyone, so it's not surprising that children with a social worker can really struggle when they feel lonely. By learning more about loneliness, settings can reflect on how to go about combatting it. The Campaign to End Loneliness defines this feeling as: 'a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when there is a mismatch between the quantity and quality of the social relationships that we have, and those that we want'.

While loneliness can be caused by being physically alone, being alone doesn't necessarily lead to feeling lonely. Sometimes children can feel lonely even if they're often with other people. This is especially true for children who have a social worker, as they may experience unique challenges that contribute to feelings of loneliness. They might feel this way if they don't feel properly seen or understood, which can be exacerbated by frequent changes in caregivers or living situations.

For children with a social worker, the sense of not belonging or being different from their peers can intensify feelings of isolation. Loneliness can look and feel different for everyone, but if you're worried about a child or young person, it's good to talk to them about what they might be feeling and experiencing. Open and empathetic conversations can help them feel more connected and supported, reducing the impact of loneliness on their well-being. The NSPCC's new guidance on this issue is well worth a read - find it by following the link below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/how-help-child-feels-lonely>

# BE THE DIFFERENCE.

As educators, you hold the incredible power to shape the futures of your students. The Virtual School want to emphasise the importance of having high aspirations for every child, especially children with a social worker.

Children who are supported by social workers often face unique challenges. These challenges can sometimes overshadow their potential, but it is crucial to remember that every child has the capacity to achieve greatness. Your belief in their abilities can be the catalyst that propels them towards success.

Believe in every child's potential - your high aspirations can transform their future!

