

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



Issue 50

Term 6
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 2025/26

* **BOOK HERE** *

Upcoming training:

Weds 17th Sept

eGov training for Designated Teachers

Weds 24th Sept

Designated Teacher (DT) Induction

Thurs 16th October

Oxfordshire Virtual School Conference

Theme: *Transforming lives through
human connection*

Tues 4th Nov and Tues 18th Nov

PACE for school staff

IMPORTANT: ePEP Platform Transition – Action Required

We are moving to a new platform for ePEP and attendance monitoring from the start of the new academic year. Our current contract with Looked After Call/IRIS will end this summer, and they did not participate in the recent tender process. The new contract has been awarded to [eGov Solutions Ltd](#), a provider already working with 87 Local Authorities across England.

If you've supported children from other local authorities, you may already be familiar with eGov. While the platform offers the same core functions, it has a different interface - so it's essential that all Designated Teachers (DTs), both new and experienced, prioritise training. See below options:

- **Self-help materials:** Pre-recorded guidance from eGov will be shared before September.
- **Live online training:** Scheduled for Wednesday 17th September, 3.30–4.30pm. [Book on here!](#)
- Additional sessions will be arranged, as needed.

Please speak to your **Virtual School Link Worker** if you need support or have questions. More information about the migration will follow shortly.

Oxfordshire Virtual School presents:

2025 Annual Conference

Transforming Lives Through Human Connection: Empowering Care-Experienced Children to Achieve Their Dreams



Join Oxfordshire Virtual School and contributors for our 2025 Annual Conference - a day of connection, learning and sharing of best practice.

This conference is dedicated to exploring the transformative power of human connection in the lives of care-experienced children.

When people feel truly seen and supported, extraordinary things happen.

With insights from a guest keynote speaker, along with practice activities and collaborative discussions, we will explore the vital roles that educators, caregivers and community members play in nurturing the holistic growth and development of children in need and those with care experience. Our focus will be on practical strategies and innovative approaches that empower these young people to overcome challenges, build resilience and confidently pursue their aspirations.

Keynote speaker:



Ashley John-Baptiste is a BBC reporter, presenter (The One Show / BBC News / Con Or Cure / Expert Witness / For Love Or Money) and author of 'Looked After: A Childhood in Care'.

From the age of two until he was 18, Ashley grew up in four foster families and spent two years in a residential care home. He was suspended several times from secondary school, and had already been issued a final warning when the opportunity arose to visit a summer school organised by the Sutton Trust at Cambridge University. This was when he realised that he would have to take responsibility for himself and that he had the potential to succeed.



Transforming Lives
Through Human
Connection: Empowering
Care-Experienced Children
to Achieve Their Dreams

Thursday 16th October
09:00 -15:30

Unipart House
Garsington Road
Cowley
Oxford
OX4 2PG

Join us as we come together to share insights, celebrate successes and commit to making a lasting impact on the lives of children in need and care-experienced children through the power of human connection. Together, we can create a supportive environment where every child is encouraged to dream big and achieve their best outcomes.

Book here

[Oxfordshire | Education Services](#)

Tel: 03300 249046

Email:
OxfordshireEducationServices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

** BOOKINGS NOW OPEN **

Our 2025 Annual Conference will be taking place on Thursday 16th October at Unipart House. We understand that this is a change from the date promoted in the previous newsletter. The change is due to the availability of our keynote speaker, Ashley John-Baptiste.

Primary settings will be entitled to 1 free space for their DT on a first-come-first-served basis. Secondary and FE settings will be entitled to up to 2 free spaces on a first-come-first-served basis.

Go to: [Oxfordshire Virtual School Conference 2025 | Oxfordshire | Education Services](#)

URGENT: Complete All PEPs Before Summer

Designated Teachers must complete and submit all outstanding ePEPs on Looked After Call **before the summer break**.

Virtual School caseworkers are required to quality assure them by end of July.

As we're transitioning to a new ePEP and attendance monitoring system this summer, **any ePEPs not completed by the end of July will not be migrated, meaning the data will be lost** - this will also affect Pupil Premium Plus payments.

Action Required:

- ☐ Check the status of all your PEPs
- ☐ Respond promptly to caseworker requests
- ☐ Prioritise completion to meet statutory duties and support our children's outcomes

Let's make sure no child is left behind.

Endings / New Beginnings

SATs – We are sure primary colleagues breathed a huge sigh of relief when all the Year 6 tests were completed and in the right envelopes. Thank you for supporting our care-experienced Year 6 pupils - we hope everything went as well as it could have done.

Transition Visits/PEPs for Year 6s – June and July are hugely important months for our Year 6s. DTs in primary and secondary schools will hopefully already have made arrangements to attend Term 6 PEPs to plan a smooth transition. Our Year 6s do benefit from extra visits to their new school, photos of key staff and information about routines, what to bring, timetables and what to expect.

GCSE and Post-16 exams – The exam season is fully underway. Exams are stressful for everyone, but especially for young people with instability and uncertainty in their lives. Please contact caseworkers if you want to discuss any individual young people who are struggling – we will do all that we can to advise and support. Can we also insist that the most up-to-date exam officer contact details are recorded on ePEPs as we will have to contact them if exam results are not all successfully pulled through to our system. It is critical we know our students' results as soon as possible so that, should things not going to plan. We will pro-actively support them regarding best possible next steps.

Y6 and Y11 Transition Profiles - Transition profiles for Year 6s and Year 11s need to be written for all our young people moving on this September. The templates can be found [here](#). Once completed, the profiles need to be uploaded into the documents section of the ePEP. Please contact your Virtual School case holders for support (if needed) and feel free to share the profile by email with them. We need profiles in place by the end of this term

Transition Planning

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. The Designated Teacher plays an important role in helping our children prepare for their next steps.

Designated Teachers 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 PEP and make sure there is good communication and planning between year groups and settings.

Don't leave things to chance - invite the DT from the new school or college to the review, 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. Talk to your Virtual School case workers for ideas about how best to support a smooth transition.

- ☐ Create a Transition Pupil Profile – see Virtual School [PEP Toolkit](#) for more guidance and templates.
- ☐ Keep carers or parents 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 our children.

Policies and End of Year Reporting Expectations

Have senior leaders and governors reviewed all school policies considering the needs of children we care for, previously cared for children, children with a social worker and children in kinship care? If not, please refer to:

- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
- [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK](#)

What we know is that the above guidance is being reviewed by the Department for Education to consider changes outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which is due to come into force in September 2026.

Do you have a DSL report template to support your annual report to governors?

If not, [click here](#) and scroll down to the 'School Governors' section for an example you can use.

Year 11s

Good luck to all Year 11s as exam season continues. Please continue to encourage them to attend additional revision sessions, support with revision timetables and exam technique, where necessary. See p.7 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 and Virtual School caseworker 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 Virtual School caseworker. 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 21st 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, as sometimes the online enrolment can be unreliable. **It's important that we also receive a copy of their results on Results' Day so that we can support those who need it.** An email will be sent out nearer the time with instructions and a link to our Results' Form which we ask you or your Exams Officer to complete on Results' Day.

Mock Results: If these have not been included on a recent PEP, please send these to the Virtual School caseholder, including a full list of qualifications they are expected to achieve. Please use these results to measure whether they are on-track to meet the entry requirements for their Post-16 course and put in additional support where needed.

PEPs and Transition Meetings: Please arrange a third PEP or transition meeting to take place towards the end of the year, after exams have finished. The DT at the college or Post-16 destination should be invited. If a full PEP is not needed (e.g. if no further PP+ funding is required), this [Year 11 Transition Planning Form](#) can be used to record the meeting instead of the ePEP. Please also use the [Transition Profile](#) in place of the Pupil Voice sheet.

Youth Voices – Making Young People’s Voices Count



Youth Voices is a forum for Children We Care For (CWCF) and Care Leavers in Oxfordshire. It gives young people a real say in how they’re cared for - what’s working, what’s not, and what could be better. Through regular meetings, surveys, and enrichment activities, Youth Voices helps the council understand young people’s needs and aspirations. It also holds us, as Corporate Parents, to account. If you know a young person who might like to join, please contact:

- James Collins, Youth Voices Engagement Officer, james.collins@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- You can also contact Jay Leach, Cultural Participation Apprentice, jay.leach@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- For more information, [click here](#).

What is Lifelong Links?

Lifelong Links helps children we care for and care leavers reconnect with family and trusted adults - whether known, lost or new. Through a structured process and a family group conference, young people build lasting support networks that offer stability during care and beyond. Do you know someone who could benefit? [Click here to learn more](#).

Pupil Premium Plus for Previously Cared For Children

From April 2025, the Pupil Premium Plus allocation for children adopted from care, children who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and children who left care under a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) will be £2,630.

For more information on how to access and utilise this funding, visit our [Previously cared for children | Oxfordshire County Council](#) webpage.

OSCP Training Courses

[Training - Oxfordshire
Safeguarding Children
Partnership](#)

Free downloadable resources

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

Have you any children with a parent in prison?

If so, you must [click here](#)



There are more **College Open Events** coming up. The more visits your children 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](#) - April event has happened. [Click here for future dates and/or contact to arrange a visit.](#)

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

[Blackbird Leys Campus](#) – May event has happened. [Click here for future dates and/or contact to arrange a visit.](#)

BANBURY COLLEGE OPEN EVENTS:

Banbury College, Broughton Road, Banbury OX16 9QA

[Banbury and Bicester College](#) – April event has happened. [Click here for future dates and/or contact to arrange a visit.](#)

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](#) - April event has happened. [Click here for future dates and/or contact to arrange a visit.](#)

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](#)



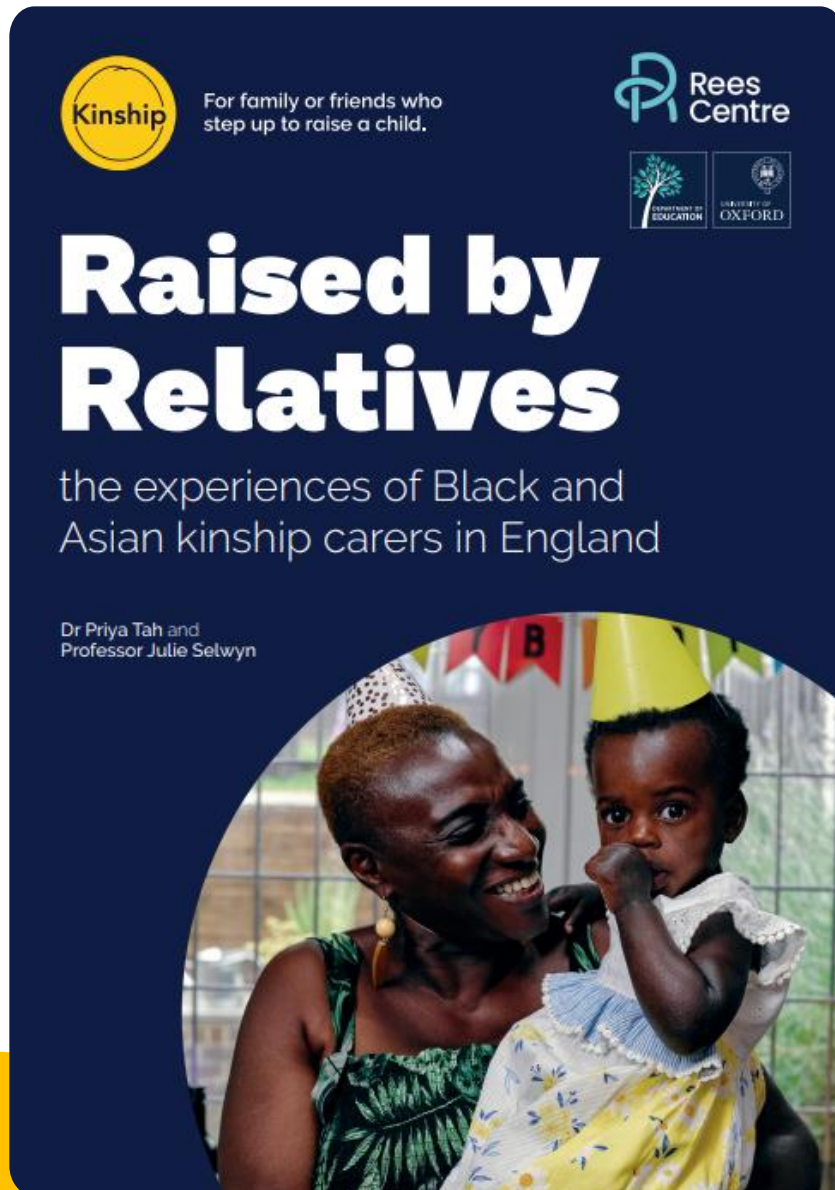
Becoming a Trauma-informed Restorative Educator

If you missed this session, you can watch it here: <https://youtu.be/v5ffdKtMvLc>

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

Margaret and Joe shared 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.

For more information on upcoming The Mint House events, click here: [Events — The Mint House](#)



New Report Highlights the Voices of Black and Asian Kinship Carers

A new report, *Raised by Relatives*, explores the lived experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers in England. It reveals how ethnicity shapes access to support, the challenges of navigating services and the emotional and practical realities of raising a relative's child. Many carers reported feeling isolated and unsupported, with gaps in culturally appropriate services and understanding of their role.

The report calls for more inclusive, accessible support and better recognition of kinship carers' needs



[Read the full report](#)