



## Annual Newsletter for Designated Teachers in Isle of Wight Schools

Welcome to the first edition of the annual newsletter for Designated Teachers for Children in Care on the Isle of Wight. You may be aware that Jackie Boxx, the current Virtual School Head Teacher, is currently on secondment at the Island Learning Centre. During this time, we will continue to oversee the Isle of Wight Virtual School and look forward to continuing forward thinking and new developments.

This first DT newsletter draws together a range of key information, research and ideas to further support you in your role as DT. In future editions we also hope to showcase some of the excellent and innovative work Isle of Wight DTs do on a daily basis to support looked after children to thrive and succeed in their learning. Please do get in touch with Michelle Cain from our Virtual School team who will be pleased to discuss contributions from you.

Designated Teachers for children in care have an instrumental role to play in improving educational outcomes for the children we look after. Your leadership around inclusive practice and pedagogy, your knowledge and skills in relation to attachment and trauma, and your ability to champion and inspire vulnerable learners are some of the ways in which you achieve this. We recognise that the role of DT can be a challenging one and we are very much committed to supporting you so that you feel confident, knowledgeable, and able to meet the statutory requirements of your role. We hope that our DT publication will offer you food for thought as well as being a practical and useful resource to you as a DT.

We continue to explore and pilot new interventions and approaches to meet the needs of our children in care funded through pupil premium, contributing to the growing evidence base both locally and nationally around meeting needs and improving progress and outcomes further.

Anwen Foy

*Head Teacher Hampshire Virtual School for children in care and Interim Head  
Teacher for the Isle of Wight Virtual School*

Michelle Cain

*Education Adviser for the Virtual School for Children in care (Hampshire and Isle of Wight)*



## Local Updates

### Website

The Virtual School pages on the iwight website have been updated to include the partnership with Hampshire Virtual school. It is being kept current with publications, events and news – please use it as a first point of reference for any information you need.

<https://www.iwight.com/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/Virtual-School/Introductio13>

You are here > Home > Residents > Schools and Learning > Virtual School > Introduction

## Virtual School

About Contact

Introduction Personal Education Plans (PEPs) Forms and Guidance Looked After Child (LAC) Pupil Premium

### Introduction

The Virtual School exists to:

- Champion the educational needs of looked after children.
- Improve the educational outcomes of looked after children.
- Raise awareness of the council's responsibility as a "corporate parent" towards looked after children.

All children in the care of the Isle of Wight Council belong to the virtual school as well as their mainstream school, whether this is on the Island or on the mainland.



The virtual school is led by a head teacher, supported by a team of Social Care Educational Professionals (SCEPs). Our Interim Virtual School Headteacher is Anwen Foy.

The role of the of Virtual school head is to monitor admissions, attendance and exclusions and to work with the SCEPS, carers and professional agencies to give support where required.

### Support

As a looked after child, there are a number of people who will be available to support a young person to achieve their education targets. As well as carers and a social worker, every looked after child will be able to access support in school from a named designated teacher.

The designated teacher will make sure, through talking with carers, social workers, SCEPs and other professionals that needs are identified and are appropriately supported.



## Hampshire Virtual School (VS) on IOW

The Hampshire Virtual School is currently overseeing the statutory roles and responsibilities for the Isle of Wight Virtual School.

The two named officers that you will be working with are:

**Anwen Foy (VSHT)**

**Michelle Cain (Education Adviser)**

Along side overseeing the statutory responsibilities for CiC, we aim to offer support to all schools that have CiC on role through some of the following work and activities:

Monitoring, tracking and reporting on progress, attainment and attendance through:

- Data collection and analysis
- PEP monitoring through audit tasks
- School visits (annual corporate parent visits)
- You may already be familiar with a company called Welfare Call which is used by numerous Virtual Schools across the country to collect attendance and attainment of looked after children on their behalf. As you know this is an essential part of the statutory duties of Virtual Schools. We are aiming to introduce this system to the Isle of Wight and so you can expect an introductory letter soon from Welfare Call explaining how the service will work.

Providing training and support;

- Core training for DTS (bookable through HTLC)
- DT Networks
- Training for 1-1 tutors of CIC (bookable through HTLC)
- Bespoke training and support upon request
- EP support through consultations and specific case work.
- Access to VS Hampshire Website: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-school>

Developing systems and process;

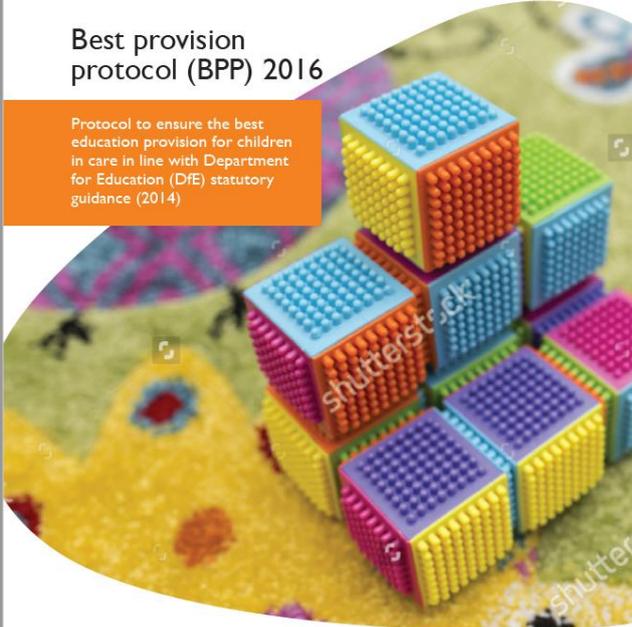
- Publishing the Best Provision Protocol (BPP) to reflect the IOW in terms of admission of CIC to schools.

## The Best Provision Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that The Isle of Wight's CiC receive the best education provision to meet their needs and secure good educational outcomes.

Appropriate provision for CiC is defined within the statutory guidance for local authorities (Promoting the education of looked-after children, DfE) (P11)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>



**Best provision protocol (BPP) 2016**

Protocol to ensure the best education provision for children in care in line with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance (2014)

**Protocol to ensure the best education provision for children in care**

**I Introduction**

- 1.1 This protocol is a revision of the previous Hampshire protocol document around ensuring the best education provision for children in care (CiC) and supersedes it, taking account of the Isle of Wight context.
- 1.2 It aims to simplify and clarify the process around securing the best educational provision for Children in Care (CiC). It defines best practice including the joint role of key professionals in this regard.
- 1.3 The main purpose of this protocol is to ensure consistency of approach across all professionals who work together to secure high quality education provision for CiC.
- 1.4 Research such as that of the Rees Centre states there is a significant discrepancy between the educational outcomes of children in care or on the edge of care and those in the general population and that changes in school placement impact significantly on educational outcomes. It notes that whilst an average of 3% of those children not recorded as CiC or children in need (CIN) changed secondary school, the rate was up to four times higher for some CiC.

*"Both school changes and placement changes are risk factors for looked after children's educational outcomes." (P5)*  
<http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/research/educational-progress-of-looked-after-children/>

**This protocol**

- Includes all moves of school by CiC, i.e. does not confine itself to in-year school placement moves, but covers all normal admission round<sup>1</sup> transfers as well.
- Takes into account recent changes within the education system<sup>2</sup>, for example the creation of academies and free schools. It makes the assumption that all education providers will follow this guidance in order to ensure the best provision for all CiC<sup>3</sup>.
- Takes into account legislation relating to school admissions contained in the School Admissions Code (December 2014). A key provision of the Code, for the purposes of this document, is that in-year applications can be made directly to schools. However, The Isle of Wight Council's Admissions Team have agreed to co-ordinate in-year applications for CiC as a means of reinforcing and supporting the aims of this protocol.
- Has benefitted from the input of representatives from Social Care, SEN, Admissions, Virtual School and Head teachers. It will be reviewed annually in the summer term, with next review due in May/June 2018.




To download please visit the iwight website:

<https://www.iwight.com/documentlibrary/view/virtual-school-best-provision-protocol>



## Meet the SCEPs

The SCEP (Social Care Education Professional) role is unique to the Isle of Wight and spans social care and education. SCEPs will be one of your first points of contact as a Designated Teacher. They will use their extensive knowledge of individual children and young people to work with you and other agencies to ensure that each child has access to a high quality education and the right support to meet their needs.

Meet the team.....



### **Rosie Lister**

*Rosie Lister joined the SCEP team in September 2016 following a move to the Isle of Wight. Prior to this role she worked as a middle leader in a number of large inner city secondary comprehensive schools. Rosie has a strong understanding of safeguarding policies and processes from both school and industry experience. She is enjoying working with our looked after young people to support them to achieve and enjoys the variety and ever changing nature of the role. Rosie's focus for the coming year is to raise standards at KS4 and ensure IOW LAC are receiving the best possible provision available to them.*

### **Sam Sinnicks**

*I joined Children's Services in 2005 after working for the NHS and have now worked for the department for nearly 13 years in various roles and teams. I was the Duty Worker for the 16+ Team for seven years and then a Child Practitioner prior to gaining my current role of Social Care Education Professional in 2014.*

*I have extensive experience of working with Children in Care, Homeless Young People and Care Leavers and I have an Award in Education and Training. My achievements include the development and implementation of the Duty Worker role, Housing Benefit Coordinator, Peer Mentoring Scheme and the Independent Living Skills Programme with my colleague Elena Thomas.*

### **Elena Thomas**

*I have worked with children in care and leaving care supporting their education for nearly 16 years. I have a degree in social sciences and Award in Education & Training. Before becoming a Social Care Education Professional I co-ordinated the 16+ Training Room Project. My achievements are; 2010 'Inspiring Island' council recognition award for setting up Children in Care Councils in Hampshire and IoW, Young People's Interview and Recruitment Panel, hosting 'Every Child Matters Conference' and a pantomime production of 'Jack & the Beanstalk'. In 2013 'Improving the chances for children & young people' recognition award for the development and implementation of the 1-2-3 IoW*



*Apprenticeship Programme and this year the Independent Living Skills Programme with my colleague Sam Sinnicks. I also am the AQA and Arts Award co-ordinator.*

## **Pupil Premium for looked after children (Pupil Premium Plus)**

You will already be aware that the purpose of the grant is to close the attainment gap for this cohort of children, improve progress and improve their educational outcomes. Virtual School Heads have responsibility for managing the LAC Pupil Premium together with decision making around the amount pass ported to schools on behalf of their children in care This is notably different from other types of Pupil Premium. Full details of current arrangements for the Isle of Wight Virtual School, together with a Frequently Asked Questions document may be viewed on the Isle of Wight Virtual School website <https://www.iwight.com/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/Virtual-School/Looked-After-Child-LAC-Pupil-Premium> This document includes further links to examples of best practice in terms of using Pupil Premium Plus.

## **School Visits**

The Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member (LM) are, respectively, professionally and politically responsible for ensuring that their local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children is properly discharged.

When a child becomes looked after – either on a short-term or long-term basis – it is the duty of the Local Authority as a corporate parent, to safeguard and promote his or her welfare. This means that alongside planning secure and reliable care and responding to the child's need to be well and healthy, local authorities have a specific responsibility to support his or her educational achievement. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member (LM) are, respectively, professionally and politically responsible for ensuring that their local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children is properly discharged.

The Virtual School Hampshire and Isle of Wight will make annual contact with all schools, special and maintained and academies. This will be in the form of a visit or a phone call. The activity will be recorded and reported.

Visit activities could include:

- Discussion on attainment and progress of each CIC
- Quality assurance of the PEP documentation and use of additional funding



- Consider the most recent report to governors
- possible visit to some lessons the CiC are in (if appropriate)
- Agree further actions and support

Please ensure you have the relevant documentation available to enable our discussion.

We hope that schools will find these visits useful and a source of support and guidance for ensuring provision for CiC.

DTs might find it useful to prepare using the national framework for evaluating effectiveness of the schools provision for CiC:

A framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's provision for children in care (CiC/CiC/LAC)\*

1. Achievement of Pupils	Guidance to schools	Indicator of Good Practice	Evidence to support assertion
	1.1	CiC are supported to achieve in line with their peers making progress appropriate to their starting point	<p>Across the last 3 years CiC have consistently made expected progress and often made better than expected progress</p> <p>Across the last 3 years the gap between CiC progress and attainment to those of their age appropriate peers in school has reduced</p>
	1.2	The school has a culture of high aspiration and nurture for CiC	<p>Younger CiC contribute to the PEP Older children describe their aspirations for their future by suggesting ways to boost their achievements.</p> <p>Across a 3 year period the proportion of CiC moving from Year 11 into EET is at least as high as for non-CiC pupils</p>
	1.3	The school sets appropriately challenging grade/level targets for individual CiC	CiC know their grade/level targets and can describe how they are doing against them as well as actions they need to take to achieve them.

Judgement: (Not as Appropriate)

- Not Yet Good
- Good
- Outstanding

Virtual School Heads

This is downloadable from the NAVSH website:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B25T0We5vNpTMVFLaUtFbnN0ejg/view>

## Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEP)

As you may already know the Virtual School have a service level agreement with Hampshire and Educational Psychology, with Tara Diebel being the Link Educational Psychologist. The EP service work in collaboration with school staff and carers to promote positive relationships, well-being and resilience, and learning, motivation and achievement of Looked after Children. Here are some examples of the activities that are being carried out:

- **Transition project-** Staff workshops for Primary and Secondary Schools to support effective transitions from Year 6 to Year 7
- **Therapeutic Story writing project.** Therapeutic story writing is a ten week intervention that uses the metaphor in stories to support children whose emotional and behavioural difficulties are getting in the way of learning.
- **Designated Teacher Networks:** These are termly meetings open to all DTs. The EP input in these sessions has varied according to what DTs have identified as being useful in their work. Past sessions have focused on understanding behaviour, The PEP Toolkits and effective target setting, and helping to identify barriers to learning. It has also included Circle of Adults, a collaborative problem-solving process, based on an issue brought by one of the participants.
- **Person centred Planning meetings,** involving the young person and key adults. This is a meeting that has the young person at the centre. They are invited along to the meeting, which is for them and about them, with the aim of finding out what their strengths are, what they are finding difficult and identify possible ways to move forward.
- **Circle of adults for whole staff/year/class teams.** As mentioned above, this a structured group problem solving process, which has been used effectively in both primary schools and secondary schools. It is an opportunity for staff to get together in a reflective space to problem solve, gain a deeper understanding of a pupil's behaviour and identify as a team what will work going forward.
- The EP service also offers **consultations** around individual children, which can be signposted through your link SCEP. Consultations are designed to be solution focused and empower the key adults that are in a key position to affect change and make a difference for the child or young person, regarding difficulties with their learning, relationships, well-being or resilience. They are an opportunity to discuss your concerns, clarify issues and, together, generate possible courses of action. An outcome may be further EP involvement to help identify barriers to learning, model interventions to staff or further exploration of behaviour and what social, motivational or psychological factors could be underlying it.

Please talk to your SCEP if you think EP involvement could be useful for the LAC in your school.



The screenshot shows the Hampshire Services website page for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEP). The page features a navigation menu at the top with links for Educational Psychology, What we do, About us, How we work, Training, Transition, Talk to us, Contact HIEP, and Services for Pupils. The main content area includes a large image of two young girls looking at a book, with the text "Our team of highly skilled Educational Psychologists are here to help" below it. To the right, there is a section titled "Work for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology" with a list of further information links: Get Local Offer, Get Service Choices, Issues, and Support Local Children. At the bottom, there are four small images representing different services: What we do, Talk to us, Training, and How we work.

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/educational-psychology.htm>



## Training opportunities

<p>Core Training for Designated Teachers for Looked after Children Incorporating the PEP Toolkit</p>	<p>A one day course for designated teachers, who are new to roll in all IOW schools, and other establishments with IOW looked after children on roll. The course will explore the issues for schools and settings in supporting looked after children. It will support schools in complying with statutory guidance and clarify the role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children. This course will also explore the complexities of identifying the needs of looked after children. It will ensure teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to draft comprehensive PEPs which clearly identify the specific needs of the individual child and outline appropriate related interventions. This will be facilitated through training on the use of the PEP toolkit.</p>	<p>24<sup>th</sup> November 2017</p>	<p>Community Learning Centre (Westridge)</p>
<p>Designated Teacher Networks</p>	<p>Network Meetings for Designated Teachers cross phase/settings. Colleagues will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive updates on government legislation, national initiatives and programmes.</li> <li>• Develop skills and knowledge to further lead and promote better outcomes for looked after children.</li> <li>• Share good practice for looked after children across education settings in Hampshire.</li> <li>• Have the opportunity to develop county resources and guidance.</li> </ul>	<p>21<sup>st</sup> November 2017</p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> March 2018</p> <p>12<sup>th</sup> June 2018</p>	<p>Thompson House</p>



## Training opportunities

<p><b>NEW**</b> Maths Intervention for Looked After Children (and Other Vulnerable Pupils)</p>	<p>This is an exciting opportunity for practitioners who work with looked after children to be involved in an action based research project around mathematics. The course will explore the key challenges facing maths teachers in helping youngsters in care make progress in mathematics. Teachers will be asked to trial and evaluate behaviour strategies that have been developed to engage vulnerable pupils in the maths classroom as well as drawing on appropriate aspects of interventions programmes to address mathematical 'gaps' and misconceptions.</p>	<p>22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 (9.30-4pm)  20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 (9.30-1pm) 24.may 2018 (9.30-1pm)</p>	<p>TBA</p>
<p>Virtual School Annual Conference - in association with neighbouring local authorities.</p>	<p>TBA</p>	<p>Summer term 2018</p>	<p>TBA</p>
<p><b>COMING SOON**</b> Improving the learning of students with emotional and behavioural barriers to engagement</p>	<p>Every school is working hard to improve the attainment of disadvantaged students. The causes of underachievement for these students are often complex and inconsistent. During this course teachers will develop the empathy and understanding of the underlying causes of student disengagement and identify and trial strategies to enable these students to learn better.</p> <p>Please contact Laura Hales to express your interest in this course.  <b>Virtual School</b> <a href="mailto:virtual.school@iow.gov.uk">virtual.school@iow.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Multi sessional</p>	<p>TBA</p>



## **National Updates:**



### **The Statistical First Release – Outcomes for Looked After Children**

The long awaited SFR has been published and again demonstrates some real areas of strength. The data has again been broken down to help provide a clearer understanding of where there needs to be further focus and more attention in order to improve outcomes. The data will also help us to change the narrative, for example, in terms of progress at KS2, looked after children out performed non-looked after children!. This is a real credit to the hard work of schools and virtual schools nationally to ensure PP+ is well targeted and our collective high expectations have helped so many children achieve accelerated progress.

The full report can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-las-31-march-2016>

### **NCER – NEXUS NOVA CLA dataset ready to go!**

Staying on the data theme, some of you will recall that the Virtual School Hampshire was pleased to announce at our DT network meetings a national dataset for CIC. Well, it is now live! These reports have the potential to really enhance our work and provide a much greater understanding of the cohorts and how our pupils compare to pupils with a similar profile. It also really puts into context the lives that many of our pupils have experienced – how much instability they have had, how many care episodes, their mental health needs, school placement type... We are truly data rich and we will be using this new resource to dig deeper to make good use of the data we now have.

### **Pupil Premium Awards – New Pupil Premium Plus Category**

Hopefully you will have been aware of this development as it will provide a great opportunity to showcase the work you do in your settings and the work done by Virtual Schools in partnership with schools to improve outcomes for looked after children.



### **Pupil Premium Plus category**

This category is open to both schools and Virtual School Heads to demonstrate how the Pupil Premium Plus has been used effectively to support Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children (i.e. those who have left care through adoption or via a special guardianship, child arrangements or residence order). The application can be based on a single child or a group of children.

Either a school or Virtual School Head could apply on an individual basis or they could submit a joint application. All applications must include a statement/letter of support from both a school and a Virtual School Head.

Applications could include information and evidence on how the Pupil Premium Plus has been used to:

- Improve attainment;
- Have a significant impact on stability and wellbeing;
- Develop authority wide training for designated teachers on the needs of looked-after children and previously looked after children;
- Develop effective partnerships between a virtual school and an education setting;
- Achieve smooth transitions between primary/secondary, care placement moves, entry and exit from care;
- Supporting those aged 16 plus to remain engaged in high quality education and training; and
- Support for those for whom English is a second language.

There are some fantastic prizes for grabs for schools!...so please take the time to consider entering!

For further information on the 2018 PPP awards please the website;

<http://www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk/ppawards2017/en/page/categories-and-criteria>

## What is known about the placement and outcomes of siblings in foster care?

### An international literature review

Sarah Meakings, Judy Sebba and Nikki Luke



This review of the international research examines what is known about the placement of siblings in foster care. It synthesises the findings from studies that have examined factors associated with the decision to place children together with, or apart from siblings, and considers the evidence on a range of outcomes for joint or separate foster placements. The over-arching review question is therefore: *What is known about the placement and outcomes of siblings in foster care?*

The findings from this review support the legislation that requires local authorities to place siblings in care together where possible, subject to welfare considerations of the children. However, this is not able to happen consistently.

Only two of the 18 studies looked at educational outcomes and both reported a positive association between educational outcomes and being placed together.

Given the proven relationship between education and subsequent employment, health, housing and crime, the report recommends further research and more studies that consider the relationship with educational outcomes in the context of sibling placement status.



## Does your school have a child in care who has siblings living elsewhere?

Siblings Together is a UK based charity that promotes positive contact between brothers and sisters separated in foster care, kinship care, residential care, or adoption. They champion, build and strengthen relationships between brothers and sisters, aged 7 -18 years, separated by the care system, and are widely acknowledged as the leading independent voice on issues of sibling contact in care.

They offer a lively annual programme of opportunities for siblings, including residential summer camps which have been the cornerstone of Siblings Together's work since its conception, educational and creative activities such as their theatre workshops at The Young Vic Theatre and Questors Theatre, and a Young Writer's Weeks held in partnership with Arvon, which encourage positive learning of new creative and educational skills.

Obviously, you'll need to discuss this with the carers, their supporting social worker and the child's social worker fully and it might not be suitable for everyone, but it could well offer a fantastic opportunity for many. Visit their website by clicking on the blue links, and for more information about their residential camps see below.

For more information about summer camp referrals, click here

<http://siblingstogether.co.uk/our-work/referrals/>

For camp FAQs please click here

<http://siblingstogether.co.uk/residential-camps/camps-faq/>

Click here to find out more about camps in a PDF

<http://siblingstogether.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/camp-core-info-website1.pdf>





## **Children and Social Care Act 2017**

A new bill was recently passed by Parliament covering children and young people in care including those leaving care at 18.

*So, what is it and is there anything you need to know about this new law?*

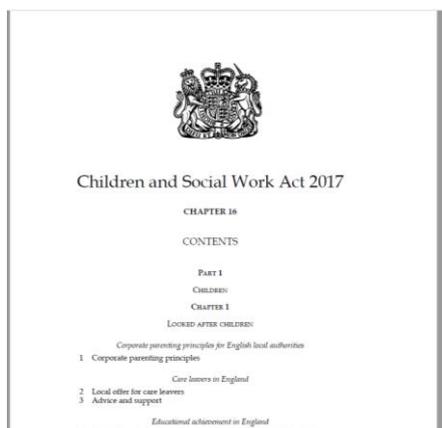
The new act is broadly an attempt to clarify the role of councils as “corporate parents” to both young people in care and care leavers and to tighten up what councils and other agencies should do in safeguarding cases. The new law applies mainly to England and received Royal Assent at the end of April.

Described as ‘an important step forward’ for vulnerable children by the children’s minister, Edward Timpson, it will bring a number of changes; including -

Maintained schools and academies must:

- Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children and young people previously in care.
- Ensure that the Designated member of staff accesses appropriate training and follow relevant government training
- Ensure school governors follow the relevant government guidance

*(The secretary of state may also issue regulations requiring governors to ensure the designated person has particular qualifications and or experience)*



Children’s minister, Edward Timpson, stated in Parliament that the act was “an important step forward” which “defines what good corporate parenting looks like and secures the involvement of the whole council in looking out for children in care or leaving care.”

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/pdfs/ukpga\\_20170016\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/pdfs/ukpga_20170016_en.pdf)

A significant implication of this act for us a virtual school and designated teachers on schools is the inclusion in our remit of children and young people previously in care. We are awaiting the new Statutory Guidance for DTs and further guidance and input to clarify this



new responsibility. However, the general thinking is that the inclusion of this cohort in our remit is welcomed as we all know all too well how equally children adopted from care can be.

## Consultation seeking views on changes to two statutory guidance documents for children looked after

The Government has now launched the consultation seeking views on changes to two statutory guidance documents: ***Promoting the education of looked after children***; and ***Roles and responsibilities of designated teachers for looked after children***. You will be aware that the Designated Teachers guidance includes details around the role and responsibility of DTs, so it's extremely important that schools respond and their views inform any new statutory guidance.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 expanded the role of both Virtual School Heads and designated teachers to include the provision of information and advice to certain previously looked after children and their families. The guidance has been revised to reflect this change and new developments in policy, research and practice for these children and young people. The DFE is seeking your views on the proposed changes.

The consultation will run until **27/11/17** and can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/revised-guidance-for-virtual-school-heads-and-designated-teachers>

We would appreciate it if Head teachers, Designated Teachers, and school governors with responsibility for children looked after could send a response to the consultation. We will also be sending in a Virtual School response.

Please contact the Virtual School if you need any further information.



## Focus on Adoption

### Lost at School

**At this school, I feel lost.**

I feel stuck in a whirlwind and I just cannot get out.

It's the same thing every day:

"Pull your skirt down"

"Take your eyebrows off"

"You are letting yourself down"

"You are letting this Outstanding school down"



**If you knew me better you would say:**

"Are you okay?"

"You look nice today"

"Do you need time out?"

"I'm so proud of you"

**Because I'm proud of how far I've come.**

School should be a part of nurturing me as a person – but secondary school for me has not been the safe place I need. It hasn't taught me to have a thick skin, it's forced me to have a thick skin. And that's sad. I used to cry in primary school, that it was near the summer holidays, but now I'll pray for the summer holidays to start.





This school has let me down dramatically, and that's a real shame because I really like school. I want to learn and do well. It's a shame that the teachers don't want to know the real ME. They just want my face to be bare, my skirt at my knees and my grades to keep improving. That's all that seems important.

**It would help me more if I felt safe.**

I trust no one and if I do start to make a connection with someone, my trust is easily lost.

At times, I will stand up for myself as I feel that I'm the only one that will, and that may come across as rude.

I think people fake liking me.

**Sometimes I walk away from situations when they are scary or I'm getting too fighty.**

My safe person might be a friend. That's hard because I always feel so far away from them (e.g. Kate) and at break & lunches I don't get to talk to her.

My issues are just as hard and serious as someone who is crying, because I'm crying on the inside, I just don't feel safe enough to show you.

When people don't like Mum, I feel sad because she is my safe person.





***Written by Annie aged 16, about her experiences as an adopted teen in mainstream education. Thank you Annie for sharing this brave and honest piece of writing with us.***

<http://beaconhouse.org.uk/tag/adoption/>

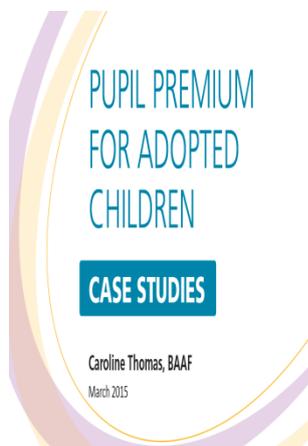
The Virtual School recommends schools consider the following in relation to children and young people adopted from care:

- Enable a method of sensitive communication with guardians and parents
- Invite dialogue about reasons for care context in order to understand the needs of the child
- Do consider using an education plan format to specifically capture the needs of the child, the interventions, strategies and approaches the school will use and account for the use and impact of the adoption premium (£1900)
- Ensure an attachment friendly approach consistently across the education setting
- Ensure confidentiality when reporting to governors

Schools are required to record on their census those pupils who are adopted. This requires the school to have seen the relevant legal paper work. It is at the discretion of the adoptive parents to disclose this information.

The Department for Education (DfE) asked the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) to undertake case studies to illustrate the early use of the Pupil Premium for adopted children. The case studies described here aim to promote adopted children's educational and personal development through appropriate use of the Pupil Premium. The messages are intended to enable adoptive families and schools to consider the potential application of innovative approaches facilitated by the availability of this additional funding.

This can be downloaded from [http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Pupil-Premium\\_Case-Studies.pdf](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Pupil-Premium_Case-Studies.pdf)



## Useful Resources

### Who are Coram Voice?

Coram Voice enables and equips children and young people to hold to account the services that are responsible for their care. We uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

We do this because we believe in a society which recognises and willingly accepts its responsibilities to children and young people, where the inequalities and discrimination they currently face have been eradicated, where they are fully engaged in all decisions made about their lives and where their views, needs and feelings are at the core of those decisions.

There are fantastic FAQs for children and young people



### *New book celebrates the remarkable talent of children in care*

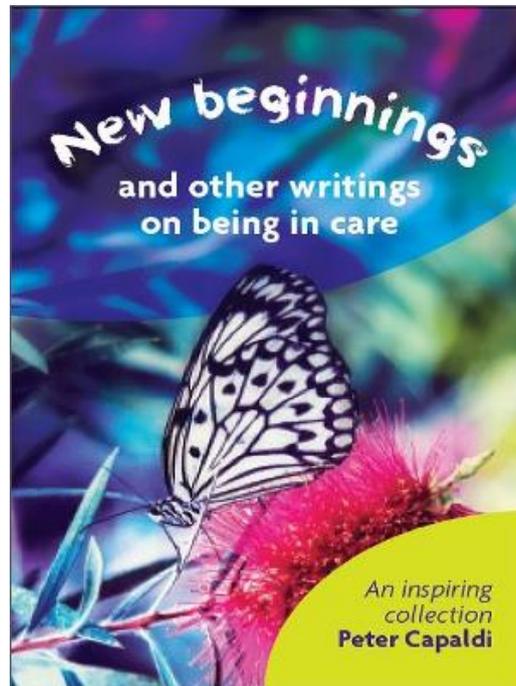
Written by children and young people who have experienced the care system, the book is split into two sections, “Finding a new life” and “Moving on”. Each piece of writing shares stories and feelings on a number of different topics, including leaving home, facing changes and embracing new beginnings.

These pieces of writing give us a rare and powerful insight into how children and young people feel about being in care. The stories and poems highlight the importance of listening to children in care, and making sure their voices are heard and celebrated.

Long-term Coram supporter, actor and Doctor Who star, Peter Capaldi, who hosted our Voices 2017 awards ceremony, spoke about the importance of the book:

“This rich collection of poetry and prose is a testament to the creativity and remarkable talent of its contributors...It is impossible not to be moved and humbled, not only by the creative talent and spirit of resilience of the writers, but also by the courage they display by sharing their personal experiences with the public.”

The book aims to create a better understanding and insight into these young people's lives, and to encourage more young people to share their experiences of the care system



To purchase:

<https://corambaaf.org.uk/books/new-beginnings-and-other-writings-being-care>

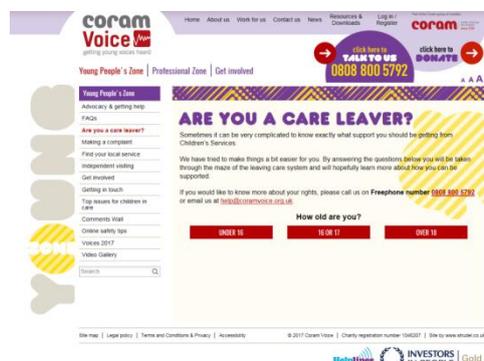
**Coram Voice deliver high quality advice and support:** If someone in authority fails to fulfil their obligations to a child, they support them to have their opinions taken into account, make complaints and access what is rightfully theirs, improving their lives and their experience of the care system.

**Advocates** offer direct support through a free national helpline and at face-to-face meetings. Specialist advocates offer expertise on more complex topics, including problems faced by care leavers, unaccompanied refugees, and those with disabilities or mental health issues.

This useful website has a **young peoples zone** and a **professionals zone** with stacks of useful information, resources and links. It is really accessible for young people.

**Freephone number 0808 800 5792** and speak with the Helpline advocate. The lines are open from 9.30am to 6pm with an answer phone at other times. You can also email at [help@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:help@coramvoice.org.uk)

<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/>



The screenshot shows the Coram Voice website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About us, Work for us, Contact us, News, Resources & Downloads, Log in / Register, and a 'click here to TALK TO US' button with the phone number 0808 800 5792. Below the navigation bar, there are sections for 'Young People's Zone', 'Professional Zone', and 'Get involved'. A sidebar on the left lists various services like 'Young People's Zone', 'Advocacy & getting help', 'FAQs', 'Are you a care leaver?', 'Making a complaint', 'Find your local service', 'Independent visiting', 'Get involved', 'Getting in touch', 'Top reasons for children in care', 'Comments VISA', 'Online safety tips', 'Videos 2017', and 'Video Gallery'. The main content area features a large banner titled 'ARE YOU A CARE LEAVER?' with a sub-headline 'Sometimes it can be very complicated to know exactly what support you should be getting from Children's Services.' and a call to action to call the freephone number 0808 800 5792. At the bottom, there is a footer with legal information and logos for Help4text and Investors in People.



## **YOUNG PEOPLE’S GUIDE TO THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS’ HANDBOOK**

“Ok, Foster carer. Tell me what my IRO is for and what they should do for me?”

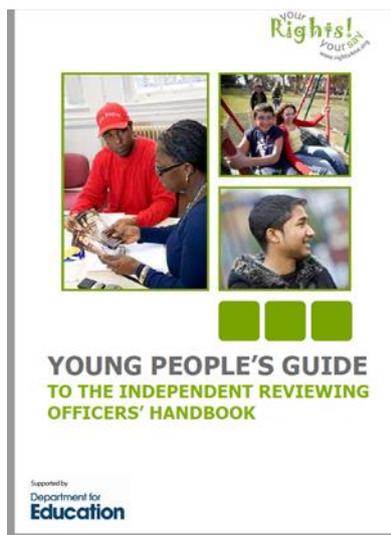
‘Well, that’s a good question. I know there’s a brilliant guide explaining just that, so let’s sit down and we can both look through it?’

This Guide was written by the Office of the Children’s Rights Director and approved by the Department for Education

What is this Guide about?

It is all about Independent Reviewing Officers (known as “IROs”). They are the people who chair reviews for children living in children’s homes or foster care (sometimes called “looked after” or “in care”). They have an important role in deciding what happens in your future.

It’s a “Handbook”, written by Government, which tells IROs what they should be doing for children and young people like you.”



To download the Pdf, click the link below:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/221761/young\\_people\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_independent\\_reviewing\\_officers\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221761/young_people_guide_to_the_independent_reviewing_officers_handbook.pdf)