

**VIRTUAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **30 January 2019**

*From:* **Claire Hiorns  
Interim Virtual School Head Teacher**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Purpose:* **To provide an update on the priorities for development of the Virtual School over the next two terms**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is asked to:**

- a) note the direction the Virtual School is moving in;**
- b) offer support and challenge as appropriate.**

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## **Summary:**

*The Virtual School is undergoing a period of change. The report describes the background to this and the priorities for development from January 2019-September 2019.*

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The role of the Virtual School Head Teacher is a statutory role within the Local Authority. As Members are aware, the Virtual School Head Teacher resigned her post with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. There are interim arrangements in place until September 2019, when the substantive post will be filled. This report focuses on the development priorities within the Virtual School for the next two terms. These link to the newly developed vision statement of the Virtual School and is the foundation on which the Virtual School will need to continue to build over the coming years.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The vision statement and guiding principles of the Virtual School are:

‘We will champion the individual needs of all care-experienced children enabling them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their maximum potential’

- The voice of the child is of paramount importance
- All care-experienced children will receive high quality education which is inspiring and challenging, resulting in the best possible outcomes, thus closing the educational gap between these children and those who are not care experienced
- Every care-experienced child will have a positive educational experience which promotes social and emotional learning and wellbeing, alongside academic success to ensure readiness for adulthood
- Every setting will be empowered and able to lead the changes necessary to enable our children to thrive
- The Virtual School will meet the needs of care-experienced children through effective liaison and integrated work with all key partners

- 2.2 Four key priorities have been identified within the development plan. These are:

### **1. Strengthen the collection of data, use of data analysis to inform strategy and interventions to drive improvement and maximise impact**

The collection, analysis and use of data is a challenge for all virtual schools, given the transient nature of the cohort and the varying systems used in settings

for collecting and reporting of data. However, it is a barrier which must be overcome, if the Virtual School is to fully understand starting points for our children and young people (CYP) and support and challenge education settings to enable our CYP to achieve their potential.

Over the next two terms the Virtual School intend to:

- Create a pupil and school data dashboard
- Create capacity to maintain the dashboards in a meaningful way
- Analyse the data and use this to inform policy and practice

## **2. Create a school improvement approach to improving outcomes for looked after children and previously looked after children**

Over the last three years the Virtual School has begun to work towards empowering Designated Teachers (DTs) to lead on the operational processes for our looked after children. This has included moving to an electronic personal education plan (PEP), where the designated teacher chairs and documents the PEP meeting as well as increasing the training on offer to educational settings and social workers. The Virtual School has also trialled school audits.

Over the next two terms the Virtual School intends to:

- Work with other virtual schools in the eastern region, which have successfully moved to a school improvement model, to learn from their practice
- Work with key partners within the local authority to better understand how the work of the virtual school can complement and be complemented by their approach
- Develop and trial formats for school improvement visits
- Continue to build upon the training offered
- Develop a communication strategy, so that education settings, social workers, young people and carers understand the planned changes and what this may mean for them

## **3. Create a Virtual School Inclusion Team who will take the lead in supporting individuals to access high quality education provision and ensure that the child or young person's experience of education is positive, aspirational and meets all needs**

In moving to the new model, looked after children will no longer be allocated to a member of the Virtual School team to oversee all aspects of their education. The Virtual School want to be certain that no young person's individual needs are missed.

Over the next two terms, the Virtual School intend to:

- Strengthen collaborative work with key partners, to ensure protocols and procedures are in place to minimise drift. This would include: admissions, Statutory Assessment Team (SAT), special educational needs and

- disability (SEND), alternative provision and transport
- Upskill Support Managers in the Virtual School to take the lead in these areas
- Develop procedures for using the data dashboard to identify which children and young people, the Inclusion Team need to focus on

#### **4. Realign processes and procedures, to fit with the new model, whilst maintaining compliance with the statutory duties**

In order to move to a school improvement model by September 2019, all processes and procedures need to be reviewed to ensure they will work with the new model. Additionally, it is an opportunity to consider systems used in Peterborough, as part of the closer working relationship.

Over the next two terms, the Virtual School intends to:

- Review the PEP and quality assurance document and procedures
- Review the allocation of pupil premium plus
- Hold in mind the wellbeing and development of the Virtual School team, and in particular, systems for supporting the team during this period of change.

### **3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Resource Implications**

The Local Authority needs to increase resources to develop capacity around data collection and analysis within the Virtual School. The LA are currently exploring the possibility of a shared role with Peterborough to create capacity and resilience for both local authorities.

#### **3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications** N/A

#### **3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications** N/A

#### **3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications** N/A

#### **3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications** N/A

#### **3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement** N/A

#### **3.7 Public Health Implications** N/A

**SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

Source Documents	Location
None	