

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING DURING COVID

Context

The Virtual School (VS) holds a statutory duty to:

‘ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.’

DfE 2018, p.29

The VS has always had a wide training offer.

Education Training Offer:

From September 2019 until March 2020, the Virtual School had delivered the following training sessions:

Training	Number of settings attended	Number of participants
Designated Teacher Training	39	45
Attachment Awareness and Trauma Informed Schools	10	19
FASD	28	47
Designated Person for Children Previously in Care	12	12
Towards a new way of working	16	16
Towards a new way of working – Early Years	22	22
Network Meeting (Virtual)	12	12
Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Minors	6	21

And the following bespoke sessions at the request of schools:

Training	Number of settings attended	Number of participants
Attachment, Trauma and Executive Functioning	1	20
Trauma and Attachment Awareness	6	120

Whilst the full offer has always been available to all Designated Teachers, in 2019 the VS recognised that there was a need for ‘virtual training’ as 50% of Cambridgeshire children in care were placed outside of Cambridgeshire, and whilst all training was available to DTs, it was not viable for all DTs to attend in person. A zoom account was purchased and a you tube channel set up with a first wave of live webinars followed up by pre-recorded webinars with a focus on creating SMART desirable outcomes.

COVID has prevented face to face training being delivered by the Virtual School (VS) or any organisation / key partner since March 2020. Having already begun to explore virtual training, this put us in a strong position to build on this offer. A piece of action research was undertaken to consider effective attributes of ‘virtual training’. This led to the webinars being pre-recorded and chunked into themes typically lasting approximately 15 minutes each. The virtual training offer now includes:

Designated Teacher / Designated Person:

- The Role of the DT for children in care (2 webinars)
- The Role of the DP in Early Years settings
- The Role of the DP in Post 16
- The Role of the DP for children previously in care
- A series of webinars on creating SMART outcomes
- Completion of the attainment and progress section of the PEP
- Completion of the Covid attendance and engagement section of the PEP
- Empowerment of the DT (3 webinars)

In addition, a longer live virtual session has been developed on attachment aware and trauma informed practice in

education. So far there have been 3 sessions reaching 60 participants across early years (EY), primary and secondary. There are a further 3 sessions planned to include, EY, primary, secondary, post 16 and special schools. Bespoke staff meetings have also taken place virtually at the request of schools.

To supplement this the Virtual School has purchased credits via outside providers for training on:

- The Boxall Profile
- FASD
- UASC

Governors (launching April 2021):

- Education outcomes for children in care
- Knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by children in care
- Statutory duties of the designated teacher
- Duties and responsibilities of the governing body

These webinars have an accompanying workbook

Training Offer for other key partners:

From September 2019-March 2020. The following sessions were delivered:

Training delivered	Number of participants
1. Foster Carers	
Trauma	18
FASD	13
Role of the VS	9
2. LA Partners	
SC, PEP training	134
SC, Admissions and exclusions guidance	86
IRO training team	7
SEND 0-25, VS role and PLAC update	31
3. New Adopters	
Supporting Education	7

Since March 2020, the offer has been as follows.

Social Care and IROs Training Offer:

- The role of the social worker in education (pre-recorded webinar)
- Children in Care with SEND and the SEND Protocol (offered to all social care teams and the Statutory Assessment Team)
- Bespoke 1:1 support for social workers with the PEP upon request (virtual)
- Bespoke live education session for IROs (virtual)

Carers Training Offer:

- SEND
- Education (Early Years) – due to take place May 2021
- Education (Secondary School)
- Transitions – due to take place May 2021
- Q and A sessions on education, pre-recorded
- Education (Post 16) – due to take place May 2021
- Empowerment within the PEP (currently under development)

Evidence of Impact

Designated Teachers / Designated Person:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
Series on creating SMART Desirable Outcomes	December 2019	457
Designated Person (EY)	September 2020	21
The role of the Designated Teacher (SSA)	September 2020	145
PEPS and PPP	September 2020	84
Post 16 PEPs	August 2020	133
Designated Person (Post 16)	August 2020	38
Designated Person for children previously in care	February 2021	56
Attainment & Progress within the PEP (EY, primary, secondary, post 16 & SEND)	November 2020	94
Completion of the COVID attendance and engagement	January 2021	

SMART Desirable Outcomes Training

As a result of this training and a key focus on developing SMART outcomes in the wider work of the Virtual School, the RAG rating of outcomes has demonstrated a reduction of red ratings by 21.4% and an 12.6% increase in green ratings of the desirable outcomes sections of PEPs.

	Red	Amber	Green
Autumn 2019	30%	46%	24%
Spring 2021	8.6%	43.2%	36.6%

In response to the webinars on desirable outcomes, another VSH has commented 'I really love this' and has requested permission to use these with DTs they are working with in their local authority.

Previously in Care Training

In relation to this training one participant commented that as a result of viewing the webinar they have worked with 'teachers, [to support them to understand] who is post-LAC, what that means and the funding available.'

Another participant commented 'it was so well considered and clear' and 'I could share it with colleagues and they could hear it directly from the VS'.

Live Virtual Trauma and Attachment Training

In response to the question 'what do you think were the key benefits of this session', comments from participants include:

'to be able to take this training back to my practice'

'reflecting on the impact early trauma has on a young person and the ways they may respond, and what that may look like in a school setting'

'videos from the child's perspective were very powerful'

'a good selection of resources and further reading'

With reference to how effectively did the training meet the objectives on a scale of 1(low)-10 (high).

All ratings were 8 or above.

In response to the questions 'what do you think could be done better', comments from participants include:

'not to be virtual but this is out of everyone's control'

'virtual wasn't ideal but unavoidable'

'personally I found it hard to be online for so long'

The response to this can be seen in the legacy section.

In response to the tweet



A school who had previously attended the training responded:



Following on from one bespoke whole staff meeting, the DT was contacted to understand the impact of the training four months on. The DT commented there had been 'a change in approach to behaviour. Teachers see the importance of building relationships with the children.' Staff have 'referred to the training throughout the year when discussing individual children and how they manage their behaviours and emotions.'

Five months on another DT commented that as a result of the training staff are now routinely 'using ABC forms throughout school and using scripts'.

Boxall Training

25 DT have completed the Boxall training. For further evidence on the impact of the Boxall, please refer to the specific Boxall case study.

FASD and UASC

These courses are being publicised from May 2021; it is therefore not possible to report on impact at this time.

Governors:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
Education outcomes for children in care	April 2021	17
Knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by children in care	April 2021	8
Statutory duties of the designated teacher	April 2021	14
Duties and responsibilities of the governing body	April 2021	6

A governor who trialled the training commented 'it has further developed my knowledge and understanding of the role of the CiC link governor. The suggested questions at the end of each module will help to frame and focus meetings with the Designated CiC Teacher.' 'The Webinars were a very good, time effective way of accessing the training and apart from the lack of opportunity for discussion/clarification it provided quality resources with excellent links for additional reading.'

Owing to the recent launch of these webinars further evidence of impact is not yet available.

Social Workers:

Webinar Theme	Launched	Viewings
The Role of Social Workers in Education	October 2020	97

Having viewed the webinar, one Social Worker commented 'The training supported my team with ensuring we are meeting the standards of quality assurance when completing PEPs for our children / young people. I felt it helped me with understanding what is required to be put in each section and also what work the areas of development for our team. I asked for follow up support to clarify what forms needed to be completed for the PEPs as we were following a different format due to Covid19. The training and support has been useful for knowing what is expected when completing future PEPs and I have been able to see improvements with the quality of my PEPs since receiving the training.'

The RAG ratings of the social care section of the PEPs for this social worker improved from 70% green and 30% amber in the autumn term to 100% green in the spring term.

The impact of training around SEND and the SEND protocol will be evidenced by the application of the protocol into practice. For initial evidence, see the case study relating to the SEND protocol.

IROs:

Responses to the education session for IROs include 'very interesting and helpful' 'really helpful thank you'. IROs were asked to rate their confidence (1 low 10 high) in understanding SEND prior to the presentation and again at the end. There was an increase of between 2 and 3 points per person by the end of the training.

Legacy

The development of virtual training has proved to be a powerful tool. Beyond Covid the Virtual School will continue to use and further develop virtual training. For the following reasons:

- It provides immediacy of access
- It reduces the need for supply cover in schools
- It widens participation, particularly for those living a significant distance from Cambridgeshire
- It can be revisited by participants

However once face to face training can resume, there is a plan to offer a blended approach. Face to face sessions will supplement the virtual offer. This will enable:

- Networking / greater collaboration
- Longer and more in-depth sessions. This will include training for new DTS, trauma and attachment sessions and FASD. Virtual School have purchased virtual reality head-sets. These have been embedded within face to face training to support participants in understanding the lived experience of children and young people they are championing.