



A New Remit For The Virtual School – Children With A Social Worker

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities in England to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its Children in Care (CIC). The Virtual School Head (VSH) - must be an officer employed by the local authority or, where local authorities agree to collaborate or share the role, another local authority in England. This officer in Gloucestershire is Jane Featherstone.

From September 2021, local authorities have received funding to resource the Virtual School to work with early years' settings, schools, colleges and social care leaders to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children and young people with social workers to make educational progress. Non-statutory responsibility for promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker will be in addition to the existing statutory duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children so this is an extension of the role of the Virtual School.

Unlike looked-after children, or previously looked-after children, the cohort of children with a social worker who have an open referral or are subject to Child in Need plans or Child Protection plans have not had the benefit of a strategic leader that is able to champion the educational needs of their cohort and help them make educational progress.

I am pleased to be able to undertake this role and excited with the possibilities of how I can support you through guidance advice, signposting and training needs.

As a previous senior leader in education, I have held the role of DSL, DT and SENCo. I fully appreciate how busy each person's role is in school and want to be a useful support to you and your staff when I am aware of the huge demands on your time.

Myself and Corbern are always at the end of a phone or email. Building trusting relationships are key and we would welcome the opportunity to answer any queries you might have, arrange to come and visit your setting or even just say hello!



Lindsay Evans
Senior Education Advisor
for CYP with a Social Worker
lindsay.evans@
gloucestershire.gov.uk
07557 214097



Corbern Stonehill-Brooks
Special Projects Officer for
CYP with a Social Worker
corbern.stonehill-brooks@
gloucestershire.gov.uk
07775 816521

Did you know...?

- 1.6 million children needed a social worker between 2012 and 2018, equivalent to 1 in 10 children or 3 children in every classroom.
- In 2018, 50% of children who had a social worker in the last six years were able to achieve a good level of development in the early years, compared to 72% of children who never had a social worker.
- Pupils who had a social worker in the year of their GCSEs were around half as likely to achieve a strong pass in English and Maths than their peers, and at the end of Key Stage 4 were around 3 times less likely to go on to study A levels at age 16, and almost 5 times less likely to enter higher education at age 18.
- Children with a social worker are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school and between 2 to 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers. This group are also over ten times more likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils.
- The proportion of children and young people with probable mental health disorders increased from 1 in 9 in 2017 to 1 in 6 in July 2020.
- Children with a Social worker are more likely to go to prison than university.

Taken from 'DFE Promoting the education of children with a social worker' June 2021.

Click here to read the full document.

Survey results

Many DSL's kindly responded to a recent survey we sent out regarding the strengths you have and barriers you encounter supporting young people with social workers. Thank you; we know how busy schools are.

The messages you gave us were overwhelming and encompass the needs of many of these pupils. Key findings and the actions we have taken or will be taking are as follows:

What you told us	What we are going to do
An advice line	<p>Click here to find a list of contact details for the virtual school staff.</p> <p>For support and advice for a child with a social worker, please contact myself. lindsay.evans@gloucestershire.gov.uk Alternatively, a permanent dedicated contact email (in case of personnel change) to request support for children with a social worker is being monitoring by myself and Corbern. csw-vsch@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
Trauma Training	<p>The Virtual School can offer bespoke training on Attachment and Trauma to your school.</p> <p>If you are interested, please contact Philippa.Walker@gloucestershire.gov.uk for further information.</p>
Termly Newsletter	<p>We will be sending our a newsletter like this at the end of every term with information updates, signposts of resources and websites.</p>
DSL Training	<p>Dates for these meetings are now finalised and will be led by KCA training.</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Thursday 7th July from 9.30-12.30 and will be held at The Pavilions ion Cheltenham. The theme for the training is 'Relationships for Learning.'</p> <p>In the autumn and spring terms, we are going to be changing the format of these meetings and moving them online. Your feedback and further suggestions in the summer term meetings will steer the focus.</p> <p>As you can see below, there will be 2 meetings running over the course of a week running from 3.40pm- 5pm; 1 for primary schools and 1 for secondary schools. After training has been delivered, they will be an opportunity for facilitated, constructive discussions to be held with locality colleagues in breakout rooms.</p> <p>Themes for primary and secondary meetings might be different, linked to the specific and overarching needs of your cohort and age range.</p> <p>The initial training input for the virtual Autumn and Spring meetings will be recorded for all schools to use with your staff as further CPD. There is also no 'reasonable' limit on numbers (but non attendance will incur a cost).</p>

Summer Term 22 (Term 5/6)	Thursday 7th July	
	Relationships for Learning – the things your staff do everyday that make a difference to vulnerable learners.	
SAVE THE DATE!!	Primary	Secondary
Autumn Term 22 (Term 1/2) 3.40-5pm	Tues 15th Nov 22	Wed 16th Nov 22
Spring Term 23 (Term 3/4) 3.40-5pm	Tues 7th Mar 23	Wed 8th Mar 23
	If you are interested, please email Corbern.Stonehill-Brooks@gloucestershire.gov.uk for further information and to book your place. Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.	

Time for a chat

I am always available to visit you in school and intend to visit each Gloucestershire locality once a term. However, I am also available to offer open support clinics via TEAMS and will set aside one afternoon every month to be available for this. This will also help to reduce my carbon footprint.

For the summer term, I have set aside the following dates:

Monday 16th May 1-5pm • Tuesday 14th June 1-5pm • Thursday 14th July 1-5pm

If this interests you, then please send me an email to lindsay.evans@gloucestershire.gov.uk and I'll send you a TEAMS link.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you like to discuss this further.



Language use

Do you ever consider the language you use in your report writing? Sometimes the language we use, without realising, puts the young person at fault.

Is the young person drug running?

Or is the young person is being trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation.

Is the young person spending time/associating with 'elders'?

Or is the young person saying that they are friends with a person however, there are concerns about that person's age, the imbalance of power, exploitation, offending etc?

• Note: If the 'elder' is under the age of 18 years old, this will need to be considered using child protection processes.

This extract was taken from 'Language That Cares', an award winning publication by The Children's Society. [Click here to read the full version.](#)

Signposting

Being a young person is hard. Being a young person with a social worker is really hard. Being transgender can be extremely hard. Now imagine being a young transgender person with a social worker?

[Click here](#) to find a toolkit for all caring professionals to support and guide your school staff in this area.