

# **Schools Forum funding to Nottingham City Virtual School**

## **September 2018**

### 1. **Context**

- 1.1. The Children and Families Act 2014 required all 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 looked after children, wherever they live or are educated. That person, the Virtual School Head (VSH) must be an officer employed by the authority or another local authority in England.
- 1.2. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 expands the remit of VSHs to include the promotion of educational achievement of adopted children in England and children subject to Special Guardianship Orders.
- 1.3. The purposes of the Virtual School for Children in Care consist of:
  - Supporting with closing the attainment and progress gap between looked after children and their peers, and creating a culture of high aspirations for them.
  - Ensuring looked after children have access to a suitable range of high quality education
  - Monitor, tracking and reporting on the attendance and educational progress of the authorities' children in care.
  - Ensuring there are arrangements in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of their authority's children in care.
  - Ensuring every child in their authorities care has a high quality and up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)
  - Ensuring social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in promoting the education of children in care and initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP.

- Managing and allocating Pupil Premium Plus and ensure there are arrangements in place to ensure schools are using the allocated funding to benefit the educational needs of the child.

## 2. **Nottingham City Virtual School**

### 2.1. The Nottingham City Virtual School consists of:

- Virtual School Head- Accountable for the management, activities and development of the Virtual School. This post is funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 1.5 FTE Achievement Consultants- provide advice, support and training to key stakeholders, specifically Designated teachers, social workers and teachers, in respect to the education of children care. Has responsibility for an allocation of children in care cases; monitoring and supporting their educational experience and outcomes. Attends and contributes to PEP meetings, re-integration meetings and exclusion meeting to offer advice and support. These posts are funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 3 FTE Education Support Officers- provide advice, support and training to key stakeholders, specifically carers, adoptive parents and social workers, in respect to the education of children care. Has responsibility for an allocation of children in care cases; monitoring and supporting their educational experience and outcomes. Attends and contributes to PEP meetings, re-integration meetings and exclusion meeting to offer advice and support. These posts are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 2 FTE administrators- carrying out all the administrative tasks associated with the Virtual School; administration of Pupil Premium Plus and EPG funding, data inputting and cleansing. These posts are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 1 FTE data lead- developing and maintaining the information management systems for the Virtual School to enable effective reporting and tracking of the authorities' children in care. This post is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

3. Staffing update since the last report to Schools Forum

- 3.1. Two Education Support Officers were recruited to the Virtual School in February 2018, which brings the total number of Education Support Officers in the team to three. Funding was previously agreed for the recruitment to a senior Education Support Officer with a specific responsibility for post-16 children in care. However, it was decided that the team can better monitor, track and support individual children in care with more staff working at the same grade rather than appointing one senior level Education Support Officer.
- 3.2. As a consequence of having 5 caseworkers (3 Education Support Officers and 2 Achievement Consultants) the Virtual School has been able to implement case holding arrangements to enable a more systematic, planned and targeted approach to supporting and improving the educational needs of looked after children. Cases are allocated to each caseworker with minimum expectations of work required for each and every case.
- 3.3. The Service Manager is currently acting up as Head of the Virtual School. Sarah Fielding previously held the role but after taking up her position as Chief Executive of Nottingham Learning Trust, it was agreed it would no longer be appropriate for her to continue as the Head of the Virtual School.
- 3.4. A further review of the Virtual School structure will be carried out as part of the wider education service review, it is anticipated that any restructure will have nil cost implication to Schools Forum and the current Dedicated Schools Grant used to fund the service.

4. **Proposed Funding Allocation:**

Virtual School projected income and expenditure 2019-20				
Detail	£m	£m	£m	Description
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Projected DSG Income		-0.470		
Local Authority Contribution		-0.017		
<b>Total Projected Income</b>			<b>-0.487</b>	
<b>Staff costs</b>				
Fte Head of Virtual School	0.074			In post: Responsible and accountable officer
Fte Achievement Consultant	0.065			In post: Case holds, provides advice to schools, and other professionals re: education of CiC. Provides training for Designated Teachers and facilitates the DT network and the attachment lead group.
Pte Achievement Consultant	0.038			In post As above.
Fte Education Support Officer	0.040			In post: Case holds, provides advice to schools and other professionals re: education of CiC. Provides training to carers and social workers.
Fte Education Support Officer	0.040			In post: As above
Fte Education Support Officer	0.040			In post: As above
Fte Administrator	0.026			In post: Administrates PPP funding. Administrates and oversees the collection of attendance and attainment information
Fte Administrator	0.026			In post: Administrates EPG funding. Maintains the Virtual School role, administrates and maintains the VS training Programme and coordinates the Letter Box service.

Report Author: Jasmin Howell, Virtual School Service Manager.

Date: September 2018

Fte Data Officer	0.035			<p>In post: currently works part-time (22 hours per work), however post required full-time. Responsible for obtaining, cleansing and reporting on all educational outcomes for children in care. Responsible for developing and maintaining the Virtual School information management systems.</p> <p>Commissioned to obtain attendance and attainment data for all our CiC.</p>
<b>Total staff costs</b>		0.384		
<b>Non-pay costs</b>				
Staff Travel, CPD and Conferences	0.003			
National Association for Virtual School Heads Subscription	0.001			
Office equipment, stationary and IT.	0.001			
Support costs				
Welfare Call	0.031			
Letter Box plus postage and package	0.020			
Designated Teacher Training, network and support costs	0.015			
Children intervention funding	0.032			
<b>Total non-pay costs</b>		0.103		
<b>Total Projected expenditure</b>			<b>0.487</b>	
<b>Net Position</b>			<b>0.000</b>	

## 5. Outcomes and performance:

5.1. School attendance: There has been a very slight drop in the school attendance rate for Nottingham City children in care; the percentage school attendance in the 2016-17 academic year was 94.6%, in the 2017-18 academic year, the total percentage attendance was 93.61%.

5.2. Exclusions: There have been no permanent exclusions of children in care during the 2017/18 academic year. There were 139 incidents of fixed term exclusion over the 2017/18 academic year, a decrease from the previous academic year. The breakdown of exclusion codes/reasons are noted in Table below.

Report Author: Jasmin Howell, Virtual School Service Manager.

Date: September 2018

5.3. The Virtual School were previously unable to do comparisons of exclusions between each academic year, however, new recording and reporting arrangements were developed early in 2017 to enable comparisons in exclusions data to be made year to year. The table below provides details of the number and types of fixed term exclusions experienced by our children in care in the 2016-17 academic year compared to the 2017-18 academic year:

<b>Exclusion Code</b>	<b>Number of Incidents 2016-17</b>	<b>Percentage of incidents 2016-17</b>	<b>Number of Incidents 2017-18</b>	<b>Percentage of incidents 2017-18%</b>
Bullying	2	1%	2	1.4
Damage	1	1%	3	2.1
Drug and alcohol related	2	1%	4	2.8
Other	84	53%	45	32.3
Persistent disruptive behaviour	15	9%	29	20.8
Physical assault against a pupil	5	3%	14	10.0
Physical assault against an adult	22	14%	10	7.19
Racist Abuse	1	1%	2	1.4
Theft	3	2%	1	0.7
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil	4	3%	7	5.0
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	20	13%	22	15.8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>159</b>		<b>139</b>	

5.4. There have been fewer incidents of fixed term exclusions experienced by our children in care in the 2017-18 academic year compared to the 2016-17 academic year.

5.5. Pupil Premium: The entire budget of Pupil Premium Plus was allocated/spent in the last **financial year** (2017-18). The table below details the number of applications received for children in care in the last **academic year** 2017-18 :

<b>Term</b>	<b>Number eligible children</b>	<b>Number of children that did not have PPP</b>
Autumn Term	347	21
Spring term	360	108
Summer term	380	134

5.6. Attainment: The Virtual School has not received a significant enough number of returns to report on performance for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs for the 2017-18 academic year.

Report Author: Jasmin Howell, Virtual School Service Manager.

Date: September 2018

5.7. In the 2017-18 academic year, the Key Stage 4 eligible LAC cohort consisted of 39 pupils (who had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2018). Information for 3 pupils has not yet been provided to the Virtual School. The table below details Key Stage 4 (unverified) attainment for children in care at Key Stage 4 in the 2017-18 academic compared to the previous academic year:

Keys Stage 4 attainment *	Number		Percentage		+/- change
	16/17	17/18	16/17	17/18	
Total number in cohort	48	39			
No qualifications	5	4	10%	10%	No change
Any qualification	40	32	83%	82%	-1%
5+ GCSE A*-G	23	18	48%	46%	-2%
5+ GCSE A*-C	7	9	15%	23%	+8%
5+ GCSE A*-C, incl E & M L4+	5	7	10%	18%	+8%
E & M L4+	8	8	17%	21%	+4%

5.8. Achievement of English and Mathematics GCSE level 4 or above, has increased by 4% this year, making an increase of 10% on this measure over the last 2 years.

5.9. Achievement of 5 or more 'good' GCSEs (level 4+) has increased by 8%, making an increase of 16% on this measure over the last 2 years.

### **Developments in the Nottingham City Virtual School**

5.10. Case allocation: Cases are allocated to each caseworker within the Virtual School team and there are standard minimum expectations in place for each case, these include: monitoring and tracking attainment and attendance, offering support and advice to improve educational outcomes and experiences of individual children, support with securing high quality and stable education provision, attendance at education meetings where required, ensuring every child in care has a PEP and the quality assurance of PEPs.

5.11. PEP review: The Virtual School are currently working on development of an electronic PEP, with an implementation timeframe of January 2019.

Report Author: Jasmin Howell, Virtual School Service Manager.

Date: September 2018

- 5.12. Training: An Annual Programme of Training is being delivered by the Virtual School again for the 2018-19 academic year. Training is available for Designated Teachers, social workers, foster carers, residential carers, adoptive parents, independent reviewing officers and school governors in respect to the education of children in care. The Virtual School also continues to facilitate the Designated Teachers Network. Attachment training and attachment resources has been funded and provided for Designated Teachers that are a part of the network to support them in their role.
- 5.13. Pupil Premium Plus: A new process for the administration and distribution of Pupil Premium Plus was implemented at the start of the 2017-18 academic year. The new arrangements provide a more effective and efficient way for the Virtual School to monitor and distribute funding and is simpler and less onerous for schools to apply for the funding. 6.3. The Virtual School also introduced an opportunity for schools to apply for additional Pupil Premium Plus funding, through an Additional Funding Request (AFR). AFR enables schools to apply for PPP when they have missed the termly funding round deadline, require funds for intervention(s) that cost over and above the allocated termly amount or where a child has moved to a new school and funding is required to support transition
- 5.14. Information and case management systems: Significant progress has been made in the development of an information and case management systems to enable effective monitoring and tracking of educational outcomes and the experience of individual children in care.

Report end.