APPENDIX F

Schools Forum funding to Nottingham City Virtual School

September 2019

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.

2.   **Nottingham City Virtual School**

2.1. The Nottingham City Virtual School staffing 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 FTE Achievement Consultant- 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. This post is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

• 4.5 FTE Education Support Officers (ESO)- 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

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contributes to PEP meetings, re-integration meetings and exclusion meeting to offer advice and support. These posts are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

- .5 FTE Education Support Officer- provides advice, support and training, attends and contributes to PEP meetings, re-integration meetings and exclusion meetings to offer advice and support, specifically in respect to previously looked after children. This post is not funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant but is funded through the additional grant provided to Virtual Schools by the Department for Education to support the additional duties in respect to previously looked after children.

- 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.

- The 4.5 FTE Education Support Officers are allocated the 423(approx.) children in care of statutory school age between them, this equates to a case allocation of approximately 94 cases per ESO. As part of the case holding arrangements, the Education Support Officers are required to monitor attendance and attainment of each child allocated to them and monitor the completion and quality of Personal Education Plans.

- Education Support Officers also attend PEP meetings, education strategy meetings, looked after reviews, transition meetings and exclusion meetings where required. However, due to the large volume of cases allocated to each of the ESOs, attendance at every meeting and direct involvement with every case is not possible. Direct involvement is prioritised for pupils where there is significant educational concern, for example, those with no school place, those at risk of exclusion, school refusers and those with significant behavioural and learning need. The outcomes of other children in care, where there are no significant concerns, are monitored virtually.

3. **Staffing update**

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3.1. As part of the restructure of the Nottingham City Education Service, which will be finalised by the end of September 2019, the FTE Achievement Consultant post will be deleted and replaced with a Team Manager post, at a lower pay scale. The new Team Manager post will provide much need management support capacity to the Head of the Virtual School.

3.2. The Achievement Consultant post currently oversees a significant number of children in care cases, some of which are quite complex. The Team Manager post, created from the deletion of the Achievement Consultant post, cannot hold the same volume of cases previously held by the Achievement Consultant, due to the management responsibilities required of the new role. Consequently, an additional part-time ESO post will be created to pick up the less complex cases previously held by the Achievement Consultant.

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4. **Expenditure 2018-19:**

Virtual School income and expenditure 2018-19				
Detail	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**Description**
Income				
DSG Income		-0.470		
Local Authority Contribution		-0.017		
Total Income			**-0.487**	
Staff costs			**0.346**	
Non-pay costs				
Staff Travel, CPD and Conferences	0.004			
National Association for Virtual School Heads Subscription	0.001			
Office equipment, stationary and IT.	0.001			
Support costs				
Welfare Call	0.031			Commissioned to obtain attendance and attainment data for all our CiC.
Letter Box plus postage and package	0.020			
Designated Teacher Training, network and support costs	0.003			
Children intervention funding	0.085			Tuition and AP costs
Total non-pay costs			0.145	
Total expenditure			**0.491**	
Recouped from PPP			**-0.031**	
Net surplus			**-0.027**	

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5. **Projected expenditure 2019-20:**

Virtual School projected income and expenditure 2019-20				
Detail	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**Description**
Income DSG Income		-0.470		
Local Authority Contribution		-0.017		
Total Income			**-0.487**	
Staff costs				
Fte Head of Virtual School				In post: Responsible and accountable officer
Fte Team Manager				New post created through deletion of the Achievement Consultant post.
Fte Education Support Officer				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				In post: As above
Fte Education Support Officer				In post: As above
Fte Education Support Officer				In post: As above.
Pte Education Support Officer				In post: As above
Pte Education Support Officer				In post: As above
Pte Education Support Officer (PLAC)				Funded through additional PLAC grant provided by DfE. Nil cost to DSG- recouped from PPP
Fte Administrator				In post: Administrates PPP and oversees the collection of attendance and attainment information
Fte Administrator				In post: Maintains the Virtual School role, administrates and maintains the VS training Programme and coordinates the Dolly Parton Scheme.

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Fte Data Officer				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.
Total staff costs		0.436		
Non-pay costs				
Staff Travel, CPD and Conferences	0.004			
National Association for Virtual School Heads Subscription	0.001			
Office equipment, stationary and IT.	0.001			
Support costs				
Welfare Call	0.000			Cost being funded through PPP in the 2019-20 financial year.
Letter Box plus postage and package	0.000			Letter Box not continuing in the 2019-20 year. Free Dolly Parton Scheme being used.
Designated Teacher Training, network and support costs	0.003			
Children intervention funding	0.072			Tuition and AP costs- any further expenditure funded through PPP.
Total non-pay costs		0.81		
Total expenditure			**0.517**	
Recoup PLAC funding from DfE			**- 0.030**	
Net Position			**0.487**	

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6.   **Intended expenditure 2020-21**

Detail	£m	£m	£m	Description
Income				
DSG Income		-0.470		
Local Authority Contribution		-0.017		
Total Income			**-0.487**	
Staffing costs			**0.436**	
Non-pay costs				
Staff Travel, CPD and Conferences	0.004			
National Association for Virtual School Heads Subscription	0.001			
Office equipment, stationary and IT.	0.001			
Designated Teacher Training, network and support costs	0.003			Tuition and AP costs- any further expenditure funded through PPP.
Children intervention funding	0.082			
Total non-pay costs			**0.081**	
Total expenditure			**0.517**	
Recoup PLAC funding from DfE			**-0.030**	
Net Position			**0.487**	

<div align="center">Virtual School projected income and expenditure 2020-21</div>

6.1.   The DSG grant is used to fund staffing, operational costs and interventions to support
the education of children in care.

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7.   **Pupil Premium Plus Funding**

7.1.   The Pupil Premium Plus grant is funding provided by the Department for Education to the Virtual School to manage, and must be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs.

7.2.   The Virtual School receives an allocation of £2300 per child looked after for at least one day, as recorded in the previous March children looked-after data return.

7.3.   The Virtual School manages the Pupil Premium Plus through an application process; schools are required to apply for the funding using an online form sent out each term. Funding is requested and provided termly up to the £2300 allocation; schools can apply for £700 in the summer term and £800 in the Autumn and Spring Term. Currently the Virtual School do not top slice any of the Pupil Premium Plus Funding; schools can apply for the entire £2300 allocation over the three terms.

7.4.   If schools require funding over and above the termly allocation to support the cost of educational interventions that exceed the £2300 per year, the Virtual School have an Additional Funding Request process to support this, however, additional funds is subject to the amount of funding remaining.

7.5.   Improvements in the way in which Pupil Premium Plus is allocated and managed is required; the current process is time consuming, as it relies on the Virtual School Head reviewing and approving each application for funding, which can cause delay in the funding being allocated. Furthermore, the current process for allocating funding is not aligned to the PEP process, yet schools use of the funds should match the needs identified in a child's Personal Education Plan. The Virtual School Head will therefore be looking to change the allocation process in the 2020-21 financial year, which will be supported by the introduction of the new electronic PEP, as detailed in section 8 of this report.

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7.6. The table below provides detail of the Pupil Premium Plus expenditure in the 2018-19 financial year:

Annual Pupil Premium Plus budget for financial year 2018/19	£.0998m
Breakdown of Expenditure	**Amount £m**
Pupil Premium applications (includes summer, autumn and spring terms requests, plus applications extra funding)	0.717
Attendance at Alternative Providers - costs met by Virtual School	0.024
Nottingham City Education Psychology Service support	0.003
Nimbl Project	0.013
Attachment Training- Virtual School Team and some attach leads	0.009
Virtual School Head Teacher Post Graduate Course and expenses	0.002
Welfare Call Ltd	0.031
Big It Up Awards Virtual School's contribution	0.010
Education Progress Grant – Sept 18 requests	0.005
Other educational support to children in care (laptops, therapeutic education provision and education resources)	0.116
Fair Access- contribution to support education provision	0.007
Contribution to Special Educational Needs Team and Placement Team for the cost of education provision.	0.061
Total	0.998

8. **Commissioning of an electronic PEP**

8.1. The Nottingham City Virtual School currently uses a paper based Personal Education Plan (PEP) for its children in care, and carries out PEP reporting manually through SIMs, a school based information management system adopted for use by the Virtual School to track, monitor and report on the educational outcomes of individual children in care.

8.2. A review of the current system for completion of PEPs and feedback from the latest Ofsted inspection proposed the need for a more robust and efficient system for PEP completion. Furthermore, work carried out by the Head of the Virtual School over the last 18 months scoping information management systems and developing/improving existing systems demonstrated clearly to effectively and efficiently fulfil its duties the Nottingham

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City Virtual School requires a purpose built information management system, which includes an electronic PEP.

8.3. Two leading providers have developed a bespoke information management and PEP system specific for Virtual Schools- Welfare Call and eGov. Nationally over 110 other Virtual Schools use either the Welfare Call or eGov Information Management and ePEP system.

8.4. Welfare Call are already commissioned by the Virtual School to collect, hold and report on attendance and attainment data, having already gone through a full tender and procurement process; this provider was therefore approached to provide the additional ePEP portal service.

8.5. The Head of the Virtual School, in consultation with social care colleagues therefore made the decision to discontinue with the current paper-based PEP and move to an electronic PEP to support a more thorough and efficient way of completing, monitoring, quality assuring and reporting of PEP compliance for children in care.

8.6. The costs for commissioning the Welfare Call Virtual School Information Management and ePEP system will be met through Pupil Premium Plus, made possible through the Conditions of the Grant.

9. **Rationale and benefits of an electronic PEP**

9.1. Key benefits of commissioning a purpose built Virtual School information management and ePEP system include:

- Ability to collect, track, hold and report on educational outcomes for individual children and groups of children in one system, irrespective of where they are being educated.

- Reporting of educational outcomes automated through the portal, so less time consuming and resource heavy for the Virtual School team.

- Ability to align Pupil Premium Plus Spend with the PEP- enabling funding allocated to be targeted at improving educational outcomes for individual children in care.

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- Schools, social workers, carers, children and the Virtual School can access the portal to complete their specific tasks and have dedicated areas within the portal to do so.
- Enables better oversight and tracking of educational outcomes by the Virtual School Head, without having to attend meetings.

- Ability to quality assure and report on PEP quality more effectively and timely.

- Ownership placed firmly with the relevant persons to ensure the PEP is completed accurately and fully.

- Ability to transport information from the Virtual School information Management System and ePEP to other local authority systems (e.eg Capita One and Liquid Logic)

10.   **Progress and next steps for the implementation of the electronic PEP**

10.1. The Virtual School has designed the ePEP portal and has sent this over the commissioned provider, Welfare Call, to build.

10.2. Feedback from social care colleagues and Education Support Officers went into the initial design of the ePEP portal and the design of other authority's ePEP have also been considered in designing the Nottingham City ePEP.

Time frames:

- September 21st 2019: sign-off the contract for the ePEP portal.

- September 28th 2019: Initial ePEP portal design complete.

- September 30th – October 12th: testing of the new ePEP portal

- October 14th – October 26th- report building and tests in ePEP portal.

- Week commencing 28th October ePEP roll out.

11.   **Children in care attainment outcomes**

11.1. The Department for Education released verified attainment data for children in care as part of the Statistical First Release in March 2019. An analysis report detailing the attainment of Nottingham City children in care over the last three years is enclosed with this report.

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Report end.

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