Support Offered by Virtual School for Previously Looked After Children

The role of Previously Looked after Children Education Support Officer

Virtual School Heads (VSH) are statutory and have a duty to promote the educational achievement of all children looked after and previously looked after by the local authority they work for.  The role of the Previously Looked after Children Education Support Officer is to:-

*Respond to parental requests for advice and information:-*

E.g. advice on school admissions in their area. sign-posting parents to other services that can offer advice and support (e.g. FUTURES (for careers advice), Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Adoption charities):-

*Respond to requests for advice and information from education providers:-*

E.g. providers of early education, designated teachers in maintained schools and academies, and providers of alternative provision in their area in respect of individual children supported by the local authority. The VS Education Support Officer builds on existing good working relationship with designated teachers for previously looked-after children within Nottingham City Council;

*Make general advice and information available:-*

To early years settings and schools to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked-after children. This includes promoting good practice on identifying and meeting their needs, and guidance on effective use of Pupil Premium.

*Training*

The VS Education Support Officer provides training in relation to educational provision and support to parents and carers of post looked after children – as well as prospective adoptive parents The training also will outline information around Pupil Premium funding and application of funds in schools.

Pupil Premium

For any post looked after child (i.e. adopted in England or Wales, subject to an SGO/child arrangements order/residence order) from reception to year 11, the school will receive post looked after child funding from central Government. Those adopted outside of England and Wales are not eligible.

In order for the school to receive this money, you will have had to inform the school that your child is previously looked-after and supplied satisfactory evidence. The school will then record this information on the January school census and receive the funding in the following financial year.

Some schools say they cannot support the child because they haven't yet received the funding. However, the money will arrive to the school and the lagged funding should not be used as a reason to deny a child support.

The money is not a personal budget for individual children, nor is it ring fenced. The school will spend the money how it sees fit for the benefit of the previously looked after children cohort. The Nottingham City Virtual School advises parents and schools that it is best practice to involve parents in expenditure decisions given the additional needs of previously looked-after children.

It is worth checking with your school that they have recorded the child as previously looked after on the census, however, as they will not receive the money otherwise.

**Please note – Pupil Premium for Previously Looked after Children is allocated directly to and managed by the school, not the Virtual School and the onus is on the parent, carer or guardian of the child to make the school aware.**  Virtual Schools have a duty to give advice and support to the person with parental responsibility for the previously looked after child and the Designated Teacher when requested. Designated Teachers should also help raise awareness in the parents or guardians of previously looked after children of the importance of making the school aware so that they can offer the enhanced support they are entitled to.

For the financial year 2019 to 2020, the Post-LAC pupil premium is £2,300 for each child.

Trauma and educational impact

A high proportion of adopted children experienced abuse and neglect before entering care. Two main additional educational needs that sometimes follow are:

* attachment and trauma issues
* difficulties with learning following impaired brain development

The areas of difficulty may include:-

* cognition and learning
* communication and interaction
* social, emotional and mental health
* physical and / or sensory

As a result of these traumas, they might experience learning difficulties within and educational environment.

You should speak with your school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). You can also find helpful information on the Adoption East Midlands website:-

<https://www.adoptioneastmidlands.org.uk/support>

Below is a list of websites which you may find useful. Please note that the listed sites are not Nottingham City Council recommendations but may be helpful as part of your research into information and services that you feel may meet your family’s needs.

* [Promoting the Education of Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)
* [IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice).](https://www.ipsea.org.uk/)
* [Theadopterhub.org Key Questions for Primary Schools](https://www.theadopterhub.org/learning-and-support/log-access-learning-and-support/logged-page/resources-schools/key-questions)
* [Teaching and learning toolkit](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit)
* [Afaeducation.org Wellbeing and Readiness to Learn](https://afaeducation.org/free-dt-resources/explore-our-resources/wellbeing-and-readiness-to-learn/)
* <https://afaeducation.org/free-dt-resources/explore-our-resources/ppplus-and-support-from-virtual-schools/>
* [Let's Learn Together (Adoption UK)](https://www.adoptionuk.org/lets-learn-together-ni)
* [CORAM Adoption Support](https://www.coramadoption.org.uk/adoption-support?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI08bT7oOK5QIVS8reCh1bVQVwEAAYASACEgLYVfD_BwE)
* [First4adoption.org.uk - Adoption Support](https://www.first4adoption.org.uk/adoption-support/)
* [NHS UK After Adoption What Help Can We Get](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/after-adoption-what-help-can-we-get/)
* [.pac-uk.org Adoptive Parent / Carer Support](https://www.pac-uk.org/our-services/adoptive-parentcarer-support/)