



Previously Looked After Children

Lancashire Virtual School Offer

February 2022

www.lancashire.gov.uk

Lancashire

County
Council



Introduction

The role of the Virtual School for previously looked-after children (PLAC) is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators and others as necessary for the best interests of the child or young person.

Previously looked After Children are those children who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are:

The subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

(A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if they are in the care of, or accommodated by, a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society)

The duty of the Virtual School for PLAC commences when the child becomes eligible for free early education, which is currently the start of the term following the child's second birthday. This duty concludes when they complete the compulsory years of education.

This duty relates to PLAC who are in education within Lancashire, regardless of where they live.

How we communicate with Head Teachers, DTs and other services about the PLA offer and updates

- Provide details of our service in the following ways:
 - Portal briefings / newsletters
 - Input into headteacher briefings
 - Out of county newsletters
 - Dedicated Previously Looked After electronic mailbox
 - Included in designated teacher training
 - Included in Social worker academy and CSC training
 - An item as part of
 - Education Improvement SLT
 - Heads of Service Education Meetings.

How we support Designated Teachers to meet their duties for PLA children

Lancashire Virtual School:

- Provide a letter template for them to distribute to parents and guardians to explain their role.
- Offer the following specific training which we selected based on the needs and requests of designated teachers:
 - Promoting the achievement of PLA children in education
 - Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
 - Sensory Training
 - Attachment and Trauma – whole school training
 - Britannica Encyclopaedia
- Send the "Lets Learn Together" guide from Adoption Lancashire to every Lancashire school and provide the option of additional copies.
- Provide a well-informed webpage for a range of information, advice and signposting.
- Run an electronic mailbox: previouslylookedafter@lancashire.gov.uk for schools and other agencies to ask for information and advice on educational issues and respond to this in a timely manner. We are using some of the more common enquiries we receive to produce a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on our webpage.
- Fund access to the Britannica Encyclopaedia resource for all Previously Looked After and Looked After Children. This is also available for use by teachers as a whole class resource to support PLAC and CLA and it contains lesson plans to support this.

How we provide advice and guidance to parents and carers

Lancashire Virtual School:

- Maintain regular communication with Adoption Lancashire and parents' groups. We attend groups each year to provide updates.
- Hold Regular consultations with the Pupil Access team and Adoption team around issues and needs.
- Provide an up-to-date signposting document for Adoption Lancashire to support as a first point of contact whilst on duty. This helps service users to receive a timelier response.
- Have purchased copies of the "Lets Learn Together" guide and we ensure that they are available for parents/carers free of charge.
- Offer specific training courses providing IAG in the following areas free of charge:
 - Promoting the Achievement of Previously Looked After Children
 - Transitions in Education
 - Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
 - Sensory Issues
 - Next steps: Careers and raising aspirations

- Provide access to e-learning in the following areas:
 - Attachment and Loss
 - Managing Challenging behaviour
 - Mindfulness
 - Healing Environments
 - Children and young people who run away or go missing
 - Bereavement
 - Caring for a child who has been sexually abused
 - Harmful Sexual Behaviours
 - Impulsive behaviour
 - The impact of trauma on sensory processing
 - The impact of parental mental health on parenting
 - Trauma and the impact on brain development
 - Online safety and Cyberbullying
 - Pornography and the potential impact on young people
 - Social Media, Selfies and Sexting
- Signpost parents to other services that can offer advice and support.
- Provide a well-informed webpage for a range of information, advice and signposting.
- Run an electronic mailbox: previouslylookedafter@lancashire.gov.uk for parents/carers to ask for information and advice on educational issues and respond to this in a timely manner. We are using some of the more common enquiries we receive to produce a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on our webpage.
- Provide advice and information to parents and carers via the telephone, if the query is more in-depth and requires a discussion.
- Fund access to Britannica Encyclopaedia. This is a fantastic resource to support the learning of children with age appropriate material. This can support their work by providing accurate information for research and it also includes games and interactive quizzes to aid their learning.

Other roles

- We will signpost any query about a child previously in the care of Lancashire, but now living outside its boundary, to the Virtual School in the authority where they now live and go to school.
- Supporting Adoption Lancashire social workers with educational needs with advice and guidance and signpost to appropriate services as relevant.
- Offering our training courses to Adoption Lancashire social workers to increase their knowledge and skills. This also includes access to e-learning.
- Supporting colleagues in other Virtual Schools with queries.