

## Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker

**The 2019 Child in Need Review found that in 98% of state schools children with a social worker are:**

Almost 3 times more likely to be persistently absent

3 times as likely to have SEN,

Almost 4 times as likely to be claiming FSM

Nearly 6 times as likely to have both FSM and SEN

25-50% less likely to achieve a strong pass in English and Maths even after accounting for limiting factors

Had an average attainment 8 scores of just 21, compared to 50 for all pupils in 2019/20.



**Following the conclusion of the review:**

The DfE committed to ensuring children with a social worker are seen, safe and able to succeed so that they can achieve their potential

The leadership and the impact that Virtual School Heads (VSH) have had for CIC and PLAC was highlighted and pathfinder Virtual Schools were to be explored

**Impact of the pandemic:**

Virtual School Pathfinders were paused

Children with a social worker were able to attend schools, but generally only a minority took the offer up and since schools have reopened their attendance has remained below pre-pandemic levels and that of their peers

**The DfE have concluded the impact of the pandemic is likely to have disadvantaged children with a social worker further, adding to the education barriers identified in the Child in Need review**

**What is the current role of the VS?**

**Raise Awareness**

Ensure educational settings are fully aware of the children on their roll who are in Halton's care, whether they attend nursery, school, or college, either in Halton or out of authority.

Ensure schools are aware of how trauma and adverse childhood experiences impact on attachment and self-regulation and how this might manifest itself in behaviours

**Support and Challenge**

Support and challenge schools to have high aspirations and provide support for our children in care (CiC) through on-going dialogue and by holding termly Personal Education Plan meetings involving all stakeholder.

Manage Pupil Premium Plus funding to help meet identified additional needs of the child. This funding can support work with the child to support their emotional and/or behavioural needs, their academic needs or to support enrichment activities

**Offer support, training and alternatives**

Provide training to carers, school staff and social workers on topics such as; Understanding school and how to support your child's education, Developing trauma informed practice in your school, Understanding how SEND support for children is provided and assessed in schools

Provide support to schools to avoid or reduce the length of exclusions by offering alternatives

Work together with the local authority SEN/ECHP teams and the Educational Psychology Service to provide advice and guidance to schools on how best to support children with additional needs.

**What are the ambitions of the new duty?**

Make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children.

Promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.

Level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential. This will include helping to make sure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

**Partnership Working**

What the guidance says:

*Building on the strengths of the partnerships built between Designated Teachers and Social Workers, in the children we care for teams, we are being asked to develop new relationships such as the one with Designated Safeguarding Leads. We are also asked to help strengthen the relationships between all of the council teams to promote better outcomes for these children.*

**What are our plans:**

**To scope out what is already working well and to identify any barriers**

**To develop a more robust team around the family approach with partner agencies**

**To bring the important work of DSLs in line with the new duty by seeking their views on how we can improve outcomes in an holistic way**

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### What is in scope in the new duty?

As strategic leaders who champion children with a social worker, VSHs should create a culture of high aspirations and drive improved outcomes. They will:

Enhance partnerships between education settings and the LA so agencies can work together. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:

Work with education settings to encourage anyone supporting children with a social worker to hold high aspirations for this cohort of children. Convene education and LA leaders to develop shared goals and set the direction for improving outcomes, including addressing links with other strategic priorities e.g. working with Violence Reduction Units to tackle serious violence

Clarify the role of the VSH and communicate the offer of support to education settings and others in the LA so everyone has clear expectations of the VSH and what help is available.

### What is not in the scope?

The Virtual School Heads role for children with a social worker is a strategic leadership responsibility. For clarity, this means that Virtual School Heads are not being asked to:

Work with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring educational progress of individual children or providing academic or other interventions.

Respond to requests from parents or carers to offer advice, intervention, and support in relation to individual children with a social worker.

Take responsibility for children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) who do not require or need a social worker.

Identify the cohort's needs and intervene to overcome barriers to poor educational outcomes and ensure pupils reach their potential. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:

Use data and analysis to understand and monitor local trends in accordance with strategic priorities, e.g. safeguarding trends, attendance rates

Promote evidence and good practice that prioritises consistency, high support and high standards for children with a social worker, and recognises the importance of stability and strong information sharing.

Share knowledge and training to strengthen how education settings and social care understand the impact of adversity on education (newsletters, webinars and workshops)

Support and advise key professional to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence using evidence based interventions. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:

Engage and support key professionals and local services including social workers and school staff to promote improved outcomes for children.

Advise on evidence-based interventions and strengthen links with research organisations to participate in work that will build a stronger evidence base for what works for children.

Encourage schools and social care to be creative and thoughtful in communicating with children and families, including taking account of children's wishes and feelings.



### Useful Links

[The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

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