

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN CARE

Peterborough Virtual School ACCOMPANYING WORKBOOK

AIMS

Schools are required to have a nominated governor with responsibility for Children in Care, but every governor shares the responsibility to ensure that these vulnerable children achieve their full potential in the school. The governing body must be aware of the responsibilities for schools, statutory requirements for staffing, the responsibilities for governors and why this is important.

AUDIENCE

Those involved in governance in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough maintained primary schools and academies; particularly Children in Care/ Pupil Premium/Disadvantaged Pupils Link Governors and members of the Standards and Resources Committee. Additionally, those involved in governance for schools outside of Peterborough but who may have Peterborough Children in Care on the roll of their school.

DELIVERY

This training is delivered through a series of four short webinars which can be accessed at the convenience of the delegate. Accompanying the webinars, is this workbook which offers:

- Additional notes
- Prompt questions for enquiry and reflection
- Links to supporting documentation and further reading

CONTENT

Webinar 1: Educational Outcomes for Children in Care (14 mins)

<https://youtu.be/tP9j-PGwijY>

Webinar 2: Knowledge and understanding of barriers facing Children in Care (14 mins)

<https://youtu.be/e08KoNRX2sk>

Webinar 3: Statutory Guidance and the role of the Designated Teacher (14 mins)

<https://youtu.be/aA9lbqJ1spY>

Webinar 4: Duties and responsibilities of the Governing Body (13 mins)

<https://youtu.be/sl6jitRUiM8>

Should you require any further information, advice or guidance on the role of the Virtual School or around a specific situation, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to working with you 😊

virtualschool@peterborough.gov.uk

WEBINAR 1: EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

DEFINITIONS:

The term 'looked after' has a specific, legal meaning based on the Children Act 1989. The definition is as follows:

A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in Sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act (that is, under a care order).

What this means is that a child is looked after by a local authority either under a court order or through a voluntary arrangement made with the child's parents.

Section 20	This is a voluntary arrangement made with the child's parents. Parents retain primary responsibility with the local authority acting as a corporate parent. A person with parental responsibility can remove the child from local authority accommodation at any time, without giving notice.
Section 31	This is a court order and the local authority shares parental responsibility with parents. A Care Order will be made when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and the making of the order would be better for the child than if no order was made. A Care Order can last until the child is 18, or an alternative order is made (e.g. adoption) or the order is discharged.
Section 44	An Emergency Protection Order is sometimes issued in an urgent situation where a child is suffering from, or is likely to suffer from, harm or abuse and is a temporary arrangement pending an Interim Care Order hearing.

The term 'accommodated' refers only to those children looked after by voluntary agreement. The term 'in care' refers to children subject to a Care Order.

A child will also become looked after if he/she is being held in council accommodation on a court-ordered secure remand - i.e. he/she is looked after under a compulsory order.

Despite its legal status, children in care have indicated that they do not like the term 'looked after' and instead have requested that the phrases of 'children in care' or 'care-experienced children' are used. You may also see the following abbreviations:

- LAC (Looked After Child)
- CiC (Children in Care)
- CLA (Child Looked After)
- pLAC (Previously Looked After Child)

KEY QUESTIONS:

Who are the Children in Care in your school currently?	
What is their current attainment and progress?	

What are their targets/predictions?	
What have the end of Key Stage outcomes been for Children in care in your school over the past 5 years?	
Further thoughts and reflections...	

LINKS AND FURTHER READING:

CHILDREN IN NEED AND CHILDREN IN CARE: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

University of Bristol and REES Centre. April 2020

[Final-Report-Nuffield.pdf \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Statistics on children under local authority care at national and local authority level

December 2020

[Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children

October 2012

[Ofsted publication \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

WEBINAR 2: THE TYPICAL BARRIERS FACING CHILDREN IN CARE

ACEs:

“ACEs” stands for “Adverse Childhood Experiences.” These experiences can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.

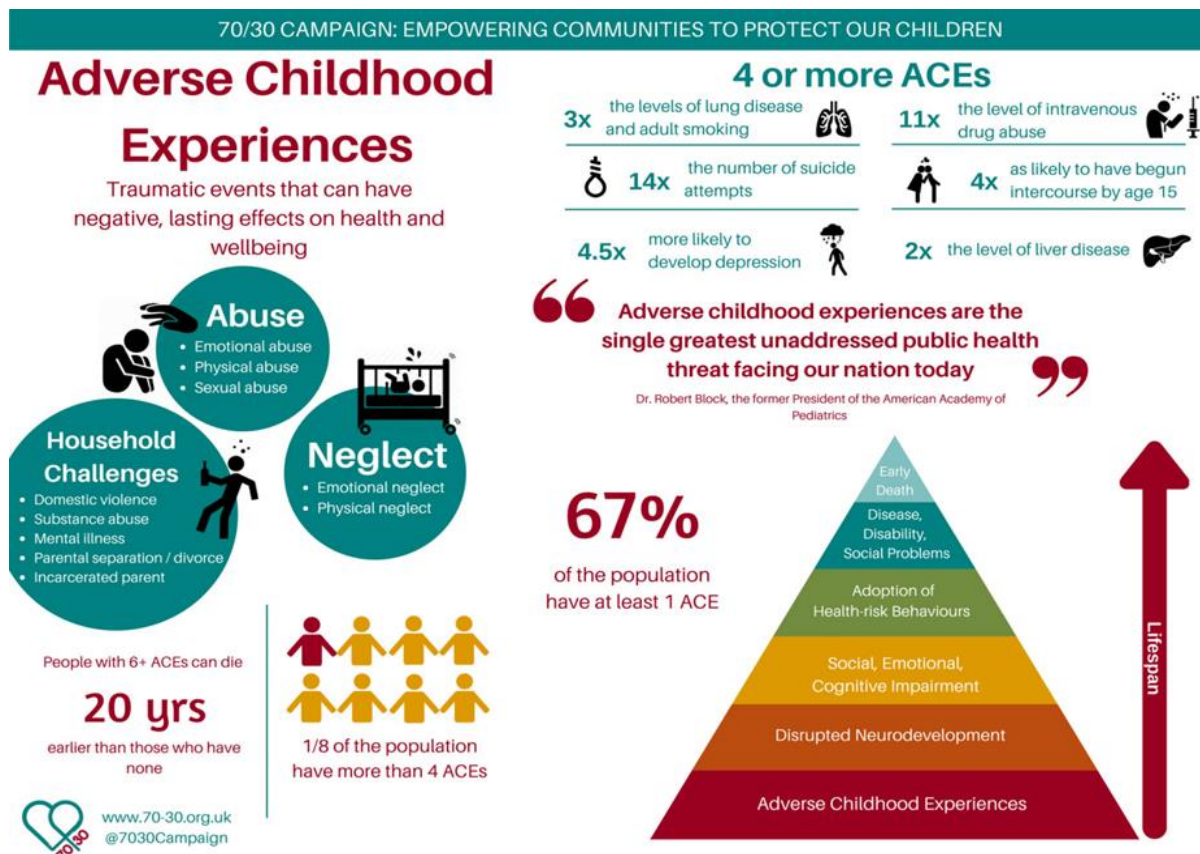
The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.

Experiencing many ACEs, as well as things like racism and community violence, without supportive adults, can cause what’s known as toxic stress. This excessive activation of the stress response system can lead to long-lasting wear-and-tear on the body and brain. The effect would be similar to revving a car engine for days or weeks at a time.

For those who have experienced ACEs, there are a range of possible responses that can help, including therapeutic sessions with mental health professionals, meditation, physical exercise, spending time in nature, and many others. The ideal approach, however, is to *prevent* the need for these responses by reducing the sources of stress in people’s lives. This can happen by helping to meet their basic needs or providing other services.

Likewise, fostering strong, responsive relationships between children and their caregivers, and helping children and adults build core life skills, can help to buffer a child from the effects of toxic stress.

ACEs affect people at all income and social levels, and can have serious, costly impact across the lifespan. No one who’s experienced significant adversity (or many ACEs) is irreparably damaged, though we need to acknowledge trauma’s effects on their lives. By reducing families’ sources of stress, providing children and adults with responsive relationships, and strengthening the core life skills we all need to adapt and thrive.



KEY QUESTIONS:

What are the barriers facing the Children in Care in your school?	
What training have the staff in your school had to ensure they work in an attachment aware and trauma informed manner?	
What moves (home or school) have the Children in Care in your school experienced?	
Have any Children in Care been excluded?	
Further thoughts and reflections...	

LINKS AND FURTHER READING:

[The Learning Triangle: A Model for Attachment & Learning \(epinsight.com\)](https://www.epinsight.com/)

[Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](https://www.developmentalpsychology.com/)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424822/exclusion-from-maintained-schools-academies-and-pupil-referral-units-in-england.pdf)

[The charity for children in care and young care leavers | Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/)

[Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk/)

[What is school really like for children in care? - YouTube \(Luke Rodgers\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

WEBINAR 3: STATUTORY GUIDANCE AND THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

Effective Designated Teachers have a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every Child in Care or Child previously in Care.

This involves working with the Virtual School to promote the education of these vulnerable children and promoting a supportive whole school culture. The Designated Teacher should be a central point of initial contact within the school for all queries relating to these children and young people.

Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

- promote a healthy culture of high expectation
- make sure the young person has a voice
- set SMART and aspirational targets
- support and communicate with parents, carers and key workers
- lead on the development and implementation of the PEP
- know how looked after pupils are progressing in terms of learning, attendance, behaviour and if they are meeting their targets
- ensure that all looked after pupils have a good quality Personal Education Plan which is updated termly
- ensure school staff have relevant information and training on vulnerable children to enable them positively to promote education issues
- advocate for vulnerable children in school especially around fixed term exclusions, residential visits, school outings and flexibility of procedures
- attend relevant training on the needs of vulnerable children
- liaise with Virtual School team, the pupil's social worker and the designated governor
- celebrate achievement

KEY QUESTIONS:

<p>Who is the Designated Teacher for Children in Care in your school?</p> <p>Who is the Designated Teacher for Children Previously in Care in your school?</p>	
<p>What relevant training has the Designated Teacher undertaken?</p>	
<p>Do the Children in Care in your school have up to date PEPs?</p>	
<p>How has the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding been allocated?</p>	

<p>What was the quality assurance and feedback given to your Designated Teacher?</p>	
<p>Do you have a specific policy for care-experienced children?</p>	
<p>Further thoughts and reflections...</p>	

LINKS AND FURTHER READING:

[Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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

[School Admissions Code 2014 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Pupil premium: conditions of grant 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Children in care | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

The Rees Centre's research on the educational outcomes of children in care was published in late 2015. It confirmed what social care professionals have known for some time. When the care system works as it should, children will usually do better at school than they would have, had they not come into care:

[Linking-Care-and-Educational-Data-Overview-Report-Nov-2015.pdf \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

WEBINAR 4: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

THE GOVERNING BODY

The DfE outline the role of the governor for care experienced children in the statutory guidance 'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children'.

Governors should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on the progress made by children in care and previously in care, including how the pupil premium plus has been used to support progress. This may be completed through regular reporting to the governing body however within reporting designated teachers and governors need to be mindful of confidentiality of individual children.

Governors should be aware that the needs of children in care and previously in care have implications for almost all school policies.

The statutory guidance outlines the following questions to be considered by governors, head teacher and governors:

- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and professional experience to provide leadership, training, information, challenge and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the designated teacher have appropriate seniority and skills to work with the school's senior leadership and governing body to help ensure school policies and approaches appropriately reflect the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and act as a champion for them?
- Does the designated teacher have training opportunities, including time away from timetable commitments, to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including a good knowledge of SEN?
- How does the designated teacher role contribute to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children to achieve?
- What resource implications might there be in supporting the designated teacher to carry out their role?
- What expertise can designated teachers call on within and outside the school such as SENCOs, health and mental health support?
- What monitoring arrangements might be appropriate to ensure that the role of the designated teacher is providing appropriate support for looked-after and previously looked-after children on the school roll?

(DfE, 2018, p.8)

KEY QUESTIONS:

Has the Designated Teacher (DT) had appropriate training to carry out the role?	
What arrangements are in place to allow the DT sufficient time and resources to discharge his/her responsibilities as set out in the statutory guidance?	
How does the DT influence policy and practice across the school?	

How does the DT manage the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings?	
How are staff informed about Children in Care and how widely is the information pertaining to these children shared? How are specific safeguarding issues managed?	
What training have all staff had on supporting Children in Care?	
How does the school support a child who attends the school and is recently in care or who is in care and new to the school to quickly feel safe and valued?	
How are additional resources that come into the school for Children in Care used to raise achievement? <i>(including pupil premium plus funding)</i>	
Are there any school related issues that are a barrier to the progress and attainment of Children in Care?	
What are the arrangements in place that have contributed to successful provision for Children in Care making good or better than expected progress? Have any case studies been completed?	
Further thoughts and reflections...	

LINKS AND FURTHER READING:

[Governance Handbook 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[LAC and previously LAC: role of governors | The Key for School Governors \(thekey.org.uk\)](https://thekey.org.uk) (Your school will need to be a member of The Key for you to access this article)