

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Virtual School Guidance and Support Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Children’s Services		Office Use
Grade: 5	Workplace: County Hall, Morpeth from Jan 2025. Northumbria House, Cramlington, NE23 6UR		JE ref: 4468 HRMS ref:
Responsible to: VS Lead Educational Psychologist	Date: 08.04.24	Manager Level:	
Job Purpose: To provide information, guidance and support to the schools, professionals and parents/carers of previously cared for children and children in kinship care about any issues relating to their education, including any special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The post holder will be responsible for developing the Northumberland Virtual School offer to previously cared for children, children in kinship care and CWSW. The post holder will ensure a rigorous offer providing information and signposting for parents/kinship carers and schools, whilst contributing to the Virtual Schools aim of improving outcomes, inclusion and well-being for previously cared for children.			
Resources	Staff	None	
	Finance	None	
	Physical	Access to and use of sensitive and confidential data	
	Clients	Schools, professionals, parents/carers, care experienced children	
Duties and key result areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with the Virtual School Head and Deputy Virtual School Headteacher to develop the Northumberland offer to previously cared for children and children in kinship care, their parents/carers and educators.2. Promote the educational achievement of previously cared for children and children in kinship care through the provision of information and advice to their parents/carers and educators.3. Build a system of responding to parental/carer requests for advice and information, including signposting to services who can offer advice and support.4. Ensure records are kept about queries and requests for information so that trends can be analysed and inform the development of appropriate support and future training.5. Build relationships with multi-agency partners and voluntary sector organisations to develop a good understanding of the support that is available and signpost parents and carers to those services.6. Meet regularly with and provide training for local authority services to raise awareness and improve understanding of the education needs of care experienced children.7. Develop and implement an effective system of communication for Northumberland schools to ensure good practice and policy development is shared.8. Promote and assist schools to pay particular attention to their cohort of previously cared for and kinship care, including promoting their duties to meet needs as detailed in the Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children guidance.9. Establish a system to ensure Northumberland schools are aware of the process for identifying previously cared for and kinship care children in their schools and how to access Pupil Premium Plus funding.10. Identify relevant training to share with Designated Teachers and educators that will help them to support the previously cared for and kinship care cohort.11. Build good working relationships with Adoption North East and Family Placement to ensure they understand the role of the Virtual School and to offer professionals ‘clinics’ on education issues and concerns to build capacity and knowledge within the wider teams.12. Identify good practice in understanding and meeting the needs of previously cared for children and children in kinship care and provide guidance on the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus for this cohort.13. Produce and maintain a frequently asked questions document that is updated regularly and promoted on the VS sharepoint page.14. Produce materials that can be used to provide information to parents/carers and educators.15. Work with the Family Placement to establish a presence in parent/carer support groups to ensure they have access to up to date information regarding education and associated areas such as admissions, travel, entitlements etc.			

16. Develop an education support document that can be used for children leaving care on an SGO/CAO/AO which their school use to share information regarding individual need and good practice.
17. Work closely with the parents/carers of children leaving care on an SGO/AO/CAO so that they are offered appropriate advice. If required, to attend the final PEP prior to leaving care on an order and, if requested, to offer a limited period of education oversight.
18. Contribute to the Virtual School training programme to ensure the needs of previously cared for children and children in kinship care are highlighted. This may include facilitating or delivering training sessions.
19. Ensure the Virtual School team is kept updated with policy and good practice developments for care experienced children.
20. Ensure the Lead Educational Psychologist and Deputy VSH are informed of complex cases and seek further advice and support as required.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Transport requirements:	Required to travel between base and a number of settings, potentially on a daily basis. Regular requirement to travel beyond the county boundary within the North East region
Working patterns:	Day work, with some flexibility around start/finish times and an occasional need to attend late meetings.
Working conditions:	Predominantly school environment which may include dealing with potentially challenging young people and adults.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Virtual School Guidance and Support Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Virtual School, Children's Social Care
Essential	Desirable
<p>Knowledge and Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of good standard of general education: five good GCSEs or NVQ 2 (including Maths and English) • Qualified to at least NVQ Level 3 • Detailed knowledge of the education system, learning styles and expected levels of achievement across the National Curriculum Key Stages • Detailed knowledge and understanding of statutory guidance relating to the education of cared for and previously cared for children, and children with a social worker • Knowledge of a range of universal, targeted and specialist services, both local and national, that could offer support and information to parents/carers. • Knowledge and understanding of trauma and attachment and using trauma informed approaches in education. • Knowledge of the Care System • An understanding of the SEND Code of Practice • Knowledge of the needs of care experienced children and their potential barriers to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold qualifications in a field relevant to education, health or social care. • Evidence of continuous professional and personal development in the field of children's learning, social emotional and mental health or care. • Understanding of school and educational systems and structures as well as how pastoral, SEND and family support is provided.
<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in an Education or Children's Services environment. • Experience of report writing and presentation of information for professionals in a range of agencies • Evidence of high quality and efficient service delivery, responding to tight deadlines and handling sensitive and confidential information. • Experience of offering advice and support via telephone, email and other communication methods. • Experience of working with parents/carers and developing positive relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working across a number of educational phases (i.e.: with different age groups). • Experience of multi-agency work. • Experience of facilitating and delivering training to groups of service users and professionals.
<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to resolve problems and work independently to do so. • Ability to work effectively under pressure and to prioritise own work to deadlines. • Excellent communication skills – including oral, written and presentational skills. • Ability to establish, develop and maintain effective partnership relationships with others. • Ability to work well in a team and as an individual. • Professional knowledge and experience of special educational needs and the code of practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad working knowledge of all relevant legislation relating to children, young people and families. • Good knowledge of Children's Services and provision for vulnerable children.

Physical, mental and emotional demands <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Commitment to improving outcomes for previously cared for children and children in kinship care.	
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Current clean driving license and use of a car	