

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Virtual School Engagement Officer		Director/Service/Sector: Children's Services		Office Use
Band: 7		Workplace: Northumbria House, Cramlington, NE23 6UR		JE ref: 4467 HRMS ref:
Responsible to: Virtual School Lead Teacher		Date: 08.07.24	Manager Level:	
Job Purpose:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a specialist service to adolescent care experienced children and young people to improve stability in education placements by improving attendance and reducing suspensions. • To promote relational and trauma informed practice across education settings, relevant agencies and with professionals working with children. • To deliver specialist interventions and direct work with individuals with the aim of achieving improved outcomes for care experienced adolescent young people. • Work in partnership with young people, their families/carers and a range of agencies in order to identify and develop plans to meet their individual needs in relation to education, training and employment. 				
Resources	Staff	None		
	Finance	None		
	Physical	A variety of educational resources including a laptop.		
	Clients	A targeted group of cared for children whose circumstances and needs are complex and challenging; Designated Teachers, SEND, Care Teams, foster carers, post 16 education providers, employers		
Duties and key result areas:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have an active role in the Virtual School for Looked After Children, contributing support to raise the aspirations and improve the achievement of children in care. 2. Support, advocate and negotiate with professionals and non-professionals on behalf of cared for children regarding their education to enable them to maximise opportunities to achieve their full potential and overcome barriers to progress and achievement. The postholder will specifically focus on stability by improving attendance and reducing suspensions for their caseload of children. 3. To follow Northumberland's policies and procedures to manage risk and implement decisions that ensure care experienced children and young people are safeguarded and their life changes are enhanced and promoted. 4. To actively promote relational and trauma informed practice to promote stability for cared for children in education placements. 5. To fulfil the role of a specialist Virtual School worker and manage a caseload of care experienced young people whose assessed needs are commensurate with the grade of the post in terms of their complexity. 6. Develop a detailed knowledge of the individual circumstances of each child within the caseload to achieve a clear understanding of the educational needs of each individual, including their emotional well-being. Keep abreast of any changes or issues that might impact on their education. 7. To provide a service to young people, including assessments of need, contributing to more complex assessments where appropriate, preparing and implementing plans through the ePEP 5-19, reviews, coordination of services, advice and support. 8. To support and lead in the implementation of specific tasks within a young person's education support plan (PEP) and Care Plan. 9. Establish and maintain positive relationships with the children, school and other relevant professionals involved with the child ie Head Teachers, Designated teachers, social workers and carers 10. To share knowledge, skills and resources with other staff, potentially provide training and mentoring to new staff members 				

11. To advocate for young people in order to ensure that their voice is heard.
12. Work collaboratively with care teams to encourage school stability i.e. reducing school moves, improving attendance and exploring alternatives to suspension.
13. Participate in relevant meetings and professional reviews, producing written reports when requested.
14. Ensure children and young people contribute to the development of their Personal Education Plan and understand its purpose, and that their voice is clearly documented and acted upon.
15. Maintain accurate records using the appropriate software, writing reports and entering data as required.
16. Provide a first point of information, support/advice for social workers, Designated Teachers and schools regarding the looked after system/schools and the associated procedures etc.
17. Actively participate in your own professional development.
18. Comply with all County Council policies i.e. Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding, Confidentiality & Data Protection etc

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 Engagement Officer	Directorate Children's Services
Essential	Desirable
<p>KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Recognised degree OR professional qualification in a relevant subject eg education, social care</p> <p>At least two years' experience working directly within an education setting in a specialism that is essential to the functioning of Virtual School i.e. school, PRU, alternative provider, local authority education or social care service (including Family Help)</p> <p>Sound knowledge of childcare practice and safeguarding</p> <p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional regulation therapies eg drawing and talking, Lego • The education system, learning styles and expected levels of achievement across the National Curriculum Key Stages • The Care system • The policies and procedures linked to the education of cared for children • An understanding of the SEND Code of Practice • An understanding of attachment disorder 	
<p>EXPERIENCE</p> <p>At least 2 years' experience of working with children and families in an education or social care setting, including on a 1:1 basis in a voluntary, or paid capacity, or during professional training.</p> <p>Evidence of supporting and promoting the education of young people</p> <p>Evidence of ability to work as part of a multi professional team</p> <p>Evidence of ability to work within a strict confidentiality policy</p>	<p>Experience of working with children in an education setting.</p> <p>Experience of using ePEP system or equivalent information management system</p> <p>Experience of using ICS (social care case management system)</p>
<p>SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES</p> <p>Skilled relational and trauma informed practitioner</p> <p>Ability to work with children, schools and other professionals dealing fairly and assertively with difficult situations and behaviours</p>	<p>Reliable and keeps good time.</p> <p>High level of commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children Confident and effective in stressful situations.</p> <p>Willingness to participate in training and personal development.</p>

<p>Ability to negotiate and persuade professionals, carers, parents and children to adopt a course of action that they may not have considered or otherwise choose to follow.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills: ability to explain contentious or complex issues to a wide audience orally and in writing and to prepare written plans and reports to required standard.</p> <p>Able to organise and manage own workload, working under pressure to meet conflicting demands and deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to make decisions on own initiative in day-to- day work</p> <p>Effective range of IT skills and ability to understand and develop use of ICT to achieve work objectives.</p> <p>Demonstrate and support equality and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of work.</p>	
<p>PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DEMANDS</p> <p>Regular lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention with some pressure from deadlines, interruptions and conflicting demands</p> <p>Contact with students and adults who may exhibit challenging behaviour which may who may exhibit challenging behaviour which may cause emotional stress.</p> <p>Resilience to deal with distressing situations and information.</p> <p>Ability to cope with the driving demands of long journeys on a regular basis</p>	
<p>OTHER</p> <p>No adverse criminal record</p> <p>Able to meet the travel requirements of the post</p>	