

<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee	<b>Date:</b> 24/06/2020
<b>Subject:</b> Virtual School for looked after children update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Children's and Community Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Andrew Russell, Virtual Headteacher	

### Summary

Coronavirus is having a huge impact on the education of young people in care to the City of London, and Care Leavers.

The Virtual School has been working with social workers and care providers to ensure that education continues and that our learners can access on-line or face-to-face (video) learning. The Virtual School has funded laptops for many learners who did not have access and has helped with allocating laptops from the Department of Education Scheme.

A new email based Virtual PEP (Personal Education Plan) form has been developed and is in use.

The Virtual Headteacher is networking closely with the London Virtual heads and with National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) to share good practice for working with learners and carers at this time.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

1. Coronavirus is having a huge impact on the education of young people in care to the City of London, and Care Leavers.
2. At the start of the pandemic we had these young people in education:

**Key Stage 4:** 8

**Key Stage 5:** 22

**Post 18 education** (care leavers): 17 (including 3 at University)

3. Of the 8 at statutory school age, 3 are being tutored by our own tutors sourced via the City Adult Continuing education team. The other 5 are in schools and colleges which have been closed except for vulnerable learners or children of key workers. These 5 have been accessing learning on-line provided by their schools and colleges.
4. The decision for these learners not to attend their education setting was carefully considered by the Virtual School Headteacher (VSHT) and the social worker. In all cases the education on offer at each setting was simply a space to come to do their on-line work in the school building with non-specialist staff support. So, for example, there was no specialist ESOL provision on-site. This context, along with the need to use public transport, meant that we considered it better for them to continue their work at home.
5. This is also the case for the 22 post-16 learners and the 17 care leavers in education. All have been set work by the colleges and Universities. This work includes some on-line face to face sessions with coordinators at the college. The VSHT has been in weekly contact with colleges to monitor the work being set and to share it across all the key workers for our learners as much of the work was good, generic ESOL learning.
6. In addition to weekly contact with colleges, the VSHT has had weekly reports sent from most of the settings where our learners are living to monitor their engagement with the learning.
7. The tuition class based at the Golden Lane Community Centre set up via the Adult Education service had to move online. This was a challenge as the learners were all new to the country and very weak at English. Their IT skills are poor too, so it has been difficult to get up to full speed. In addition, the tutors did not at the beginning have their own laptops to use for the lessons. Initially lessons were done by phone using Zoom. They are now on laptops using a learning platform called Moodle.
8. Early in the lockdown it became clear that more laptops would be needed. The Virtual School funded an additional 13 laptops so the learners could access their work. Previously, a laptop would only be funded once the learner passed the Entry Level qualifications in ESOL and started on their vocational courses. Three other learners will be receiving their laptops from the Government scheme this week. These laptops arrived at Guildhall at the start of this week (1/6/20).
9. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) still need to be completed for those up to the end of the academic year at age 18. A new email based virtual PEP form has been developed and is in use. This is emailed to all the key people (young person / carer / key worker / education setting) by the social worker. Responses are then collated by the VSHT and the completed form uploaded into Mosaic by the social worker. The focus of the form is on the mental health and wellbeing of the learner as well as their engagement in their learning.

10. The new form will be used until such time as we are able to hold meetings in schools and colleges again.
11. The Virtual Headteacher is networking closely with the London Virtual heads and with NAVSH to share good practice for working with learners and carers at this time. The Pan-London group have all developed 'Covid' PEPs and shared good practice around engaging foster carers.
12. NAVSH have weekly webinars to hear from, for example, Ofsted leaders as well as producing a daily update of information from the Department for Education.

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