

Written evidence submitted by the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH)

NAVSH: The National Association of Virtual School Heads for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children exists to improve educational outcomes for looked after children by working with partners and commissioning research to ensure that the educational needs of care experiences children are better understood. All local authorities in England are required to have a Virtual School Head

[National Association of Virtual School Heads – Looking After Learning \(navsh.org.uk\)](http://navsh.org.uk)

The responsibilities of a VSH including children in care outlined in statutory guidance.

[Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

For those children in custody additional guidance is contained in appendix 2

A meeting was convened between representatives of NAVSH, DfE and MoJ in November 2020 to explore a number of areas raised by NAVSH members including

- A need for improved data sharing between MOJ and Virtual Head Teachers to support them in their statutory duties so that VSHs can establish who in care is in custody at institutions in our area including children in care to other authorities, establish if they are attending 25 hours a week education. There is a Virtual Head in each geographical location of a YOI who could be key point of contact.
- A need to clarify expectations around personal education planning (PEP) for all children in care so that social care, education, carers and Virtual School Heads are able to oversee and support the planning for education including transition in and out of different education provisions to minimise the impact on longer term education and outcomes.
- Consider the development of an equivalent role to that of the designated teacher in schools so that institutions have a key point of contact for care experienced children with responsibilities around the specific oversight of education of this group of children and act as a key point of contact for Virtual School Heads.
- Consider how we ensure any education provision is delivered by professionals who have an understanding of attachment and trauma and the impact on education. Ensuring all education professionals are able to apply appropriate strategies informed by knowledge and research in the education setting.
- Given the high number of children with SEND, we would welcome development of a trained SENCO role in the education setting in line with the practice in schools. This would include responsibility to link with the VSH with a view to ensuring that the SEN Code of Practice is adhered to and that there is close liaison with previous and subsequent education providers to ensure that any assessments are continued whilst a young person is in a YOI.

- How we ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum that can meet the needs of high performing students so they are able to continue with GCSE and A Level Study as part of a pathway to higher education.

These areas will be an on-going area for consideration and research in order to improve outcomes for care experienced children in custody.

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