

The Team at **Virtual School Liverpool** hope that this Summer Term newsletter finds you safe and well in these challenging and unprecedented times.

With the sudden closure of our schools and social distancing measures in place, the Virtual School Team are busier than ever supporting our fantastic frontline workers. The creativity and collaboration across Liverpool's multidisciplinary workforce has been remarkable. As always, we are so very proud to belong to and serve the children and young people in this great city. Despite the trials, fear and sadness that this global pandemic has presented, it is still so easy to recognise the famous 'Scouse Spirit' and the kindness of the City's people every day.

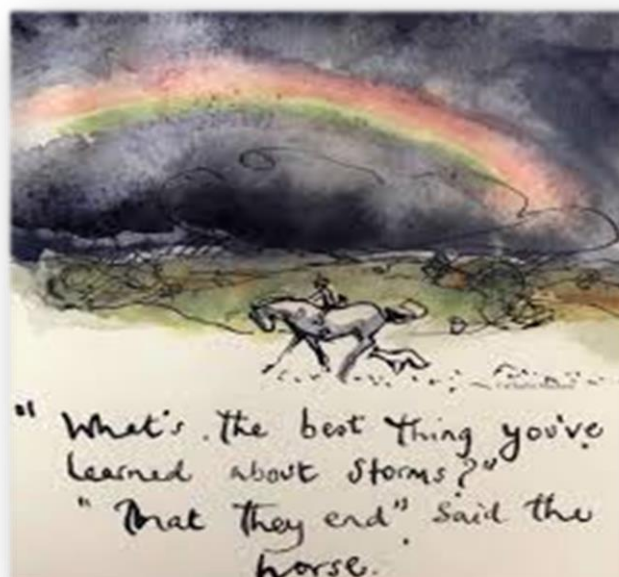
As a Virtual School Team, we continually strive to give our best to support our colleagues and young people. We aim to respond in a timely way to the emerging needs of the children and young people in our care. It has been so uplifting and encouraging to hear how you, our front-line key workers, have continued to prioritise the young people that we serve and ensure their well-being, safety and healthy engagement. **THANK YOU** for ensuring that our young people remain a high priority and are not left feeling lost, forgotten, frightened or further disadvantaged in this crisis period. These young people are our future, the keyworkers and the world community of tomorrow. With your continued support, encouragement, modelling of good citizenship, values and care they will be inspired and can achieve anything. Sometimes the smallest things we do without a second thought have the most lasting impact.

The complexity of the current climate heightens the challenges that we all face every day. We must remember to celebrate the creative ways that our services are working to overcome them. We are truly in this together. By continuing to strengthen and build our collaborative practice and maintain open and timely communication, we further strengthen our successes. Together we make a significant difference to the lives of our most vulnerable children and their hope for tomorrow.

As always, we would like to extend our genuine thanks and gratitude for your continued commitment and support. Stay safe and well.

*Carolyn Lawler*

Virtual School Head



## Personal Education Plans (PEPS)

As our schools and colleges remain closed for the foreseeable, our focus primarily needs to be on healthy engagement in learning opportunities and well-being. In response to this we have designed an interim PEP model that we consider to be more appropriate and therefore straightforward. With this newsletter we have also sent an interim process document that will explain the temporary arrangements, clarifying what is expected of our Schools and Designated Teachers. It also explains pupil premium plus allocation arrangements for this period for school years Reception to 11.

At present we only have this document available as a paper version but we hope that our talented colleagues in I.T. can create us an interim electronic version. We will inform you if and when this happens by email. When sending a word document **please ensure that it is password protected** or is sent to us via a secure system e.g. egress. So that confidentiality remains and data breaches are avoided. All PEPs should be returned by the Designated Teacher to [vsliverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:vsLiverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk) with the email title 'Summer 2020 Interim PEP' **no later** than 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020.

Despite school closures, I must stress that **the Personal Education Plan remains a statutory document that all Children in Care from EYFS to 18 years must have** as part of their overall care plan. **It is a legal requirement.** I cannot stress enough the importance of it, more so in the current situation. We need to ensure our youngsters have all the support they need.

The Virtual School endeavour to provide the most relevant and appropriate support to the children in our care, and always have high aspirations for their achievements in education. The continued monitoring and analysis of PEPs on a regular basis and the outcomes help us to shape the service we provide to meet the needs of our young people in Liverpool and ensure that it is the best that it can possibly be. In Spring Term, we continued to receive many quality PEPs. This demonstrates how well our schools know the needs of our young people and how they go that the extra step to support individual learning needs and ensure that the difference in the achievements between our children in care and their peers is diminished.

If you have any issues or questions related to PEPs please contact the Virtual School team at [vsliverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:vsLiverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk).

### Pupil Premium Plus for CLA

Pupil Premium Plus should be used for any intervention or service that you feel may improve educational outcomes or enhance the pupil's engagement in education. PP+ spending should always be discussed and agreed at the PEP meeting and it's use clearly indicated on the pupils PEP, linked to their targets and outcomes.

The Virtual School request that schools ensure that the targets on each termly PEP are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) It is important that individual attainment and progress remains a focus and that schools continue to be creative in their use of the funding, recognising the importance of improving confidence, self-esteem, development of personal skills, and promoting engagement, as well as supporting learning and academic achievement. It is also important that like with other types of pupil premium, it's impact can be clearly demonstrated.

The Virtual School will **only allocate the PP+ funding to schools on receipt of a good quality PEP by the deadline** and within in the termly time frame set. Please see below for PEP deadline dates.

SPRING TERM	TO	PEP SIGN OFF DEADLINE
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
SUMMER TERM	TO	PEP SIGN OFF DEADLINE
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2020



## A NEWLY DEVELOPED DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**[www.neurolove.org](http://www.neurolove.org)**

The Virtual School work in partnership with Chanua Health. Chanua is based at Liverpool Science Park and provides programmes to help young people, including Neuro Champions for schools. Neuro champions uses games and technology to teach young people about how their brains work and their emotional health. As school closures meant that the planned projects could not go ahead for some time, we decided that for this period, it would be more appropriate to use some of the allocated PP+ funding to commission the development of a digital platform, specifically aimed at our 13-18-year olds and focusing on maintaining their well-being.

The online platform enables young people to book one-to-one sessions online and chat directly with trained mentors and therapists and reduce feelings of loneliness. It also features a wealth of activities, resources and tips to help youngsters manage their emotional and mental health, from group therapy and creative classes to fitness and relaxation exercises.

Naomi and Megan at Chanua Health applied for an additional grant to support the project. Chanua Ltd was one of just 18 projects nationwide that were selected and awarded the funding. Over 1,600 businesses throughout the UK applied to receive funding from the NHSX TechForce19 Challenge. Neurolove was the only project proposal aimed at supporting vulnerable young people.

A HUGE ACHIEVEMENT in JUST 4 WEEKS!! Many congratulations and sincere thanks to Naomi and Megan for their forward thinking, creativity and development of a wonderful resource and support mechanism for our young people.

This platform provides a solution for supporting isolated young people who are living in care or being supported on a child protection plan. Do please encourage **any young person** you may know who may benefit from its content to use it. It is fully accessible to all pupils.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING UPDATES

Before lockdown, we delivered the first of our new training sessions focusing on improving the quality, purpose, effectiveness and impact of the Personal Education Plan. We want to ensure that the PEP continues to be a useful, relevant and effective working document for all of our young people. Training is free of charge and aimed at all professionals who work with our Children in Care: School Leaders, Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers. Training together as a group of professionals was a new and hugely positive experience. It was very beneficial to hear the different viewpoints and perspectives across the disciplines and work together to develop a shared understanding of the PEP model and what is deemed best practice. The sessions were fully booked and attendance was excellent. The feedback from all attendees was very positive. At present, the training has been suspended but it will be resumed and we will continue to deliver these sessions regularly. New dates will be released in the future. There will also be specific sessions for those who are new to role and for support staff. Details of the training menu and future dates will be published in the future.

**NETWORKING** When schools return after this period, we will schedule and launch the Virtual School Network. We will run termly events to ensure that the good practice across our city is shared, celebrated and developed. Holding this event on a regular basis will provide us all with a quality opportunity develop our multiagency interactions and also for our colleagues in Health and Social Care to join us and share their expertise, experiences and news about the good practice and developments from their sector. The more we develop and strengthen our multiagency interactions, collaboration and understanding of services across the city the stronger and more focused we will be, which will significantly benefit our young people and improve their success and outcomes.

## Designated Teachers Q&A

Do you have any unanswered questions? Why don't you email us your questions about Children Looked After – in general or specific, including any queries about statutory guidance on the education of CLA. We will do our best to find an answer, advise you, and then explore the issue in the subsequent newsletter, to inform others.

## School Improvement Liverpool Website

Virtual School Liverpool continue to discharge Liverpool City Council's statutory duty to promote the Educational Achievement of Liverpool's Looked After Children (Children and Families Act 2014).

Virtual School Liverpool remains a core service within School Improvement Liverpool Ltd and information about the Virtual School is accessible through the School Improvement website at:

<https://www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/teams-virtual-school>

We are currently in the process of developing the content and exploring designs for our own independent Virtual School Liverpool Website and hope that this will enable us to fulfil our duties through the provision of fully accessible, clear guidance and support for both our colleagues across the sector, our young people and their families.

## Useful links:

The Government guidance regarding supporting vulnerable young people during this time is updated regularly and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Liverpool City Council's Website specifically for information about the Coronavirus response is: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/communities-and-safety/emergency-planning/coronavirus/>

The link to the statutory guidance that schools must currently have regard for is <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

The Children in Care web page on the DfE site can be accessed via the link below: <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/education>

## Virtual School Team

**Carolyn Lawler:** Virtual School Head

**Jenny Clay:** Virtual School Deputy Head

**Catherine Falco:** PEP Coordinator

**Andrew Williams:** Education Officer

**Kate Dalton:** Virtual School Caseworker

**Dan Beatty:** Business Support Officer

Virtual School Liverpool also co-ordinate an additional range of specialist support provided by statutory and commissioned services, these include Education Psychology, Therapeutic Intervention and Education Welfare.

## **Talk to us:**

Email: [VSLiverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:VSLiverpool@si.liverpool.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/teams-virtual-school>