

Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Spring Term 1 2023



Welcome back to the Spring Term and I hope you all had a restful break. Here are a few reminders as we start the new year.

Personal Education Plans Thank you so much to so many of you who completed such thoughtful PEPs last term. Just a reminder that the PEP is a statutory document and does need to be completed by the deadline. If you are unsure how to complete it or need help with formulating SMART targets, please do contact us.

Funding Please remember that we hold Pupil Premium Plus funding for statutory age looked after children. This is requested through the PEP and should be attached to clear, achievable targets for the young person with a breakdown of the strategies used and the costings. Funding is usually in the region of about £500 a term. We also hold recovery funding and again this can be requested through the PEP attached to a target.

Suspensions and Exclusions If you suspend a child, please make sure you let the social worker and the Virtual School know. If things are deteriorating in school, again please contact your caseworker—we would rather work with you proactively to avoid any suspensions.

Website Our website has lots of useful information and support on it ...from information about PEPs with sample targets to resources for young people. Please do have a look and let us know if there is anything else you would like included on it <https://www.barnetvs.org/>

Speech and Language Therapy As part of a new project, the Virtual School and Barnet Children's Integrated Therapies- Speech and Language Therapy Team have teamed up to deliver universal and targeted level support for Barnet Looked After Children and Young People. One strand of the project will be to deliver a screening package to train school staff on using an evidence-based screening tool to assess the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of the LAC population in their settings. Look out for emails with more details!

Attendance

Following on from the recent attendance guidance issued by the DFE, here are some ideas around how this can be implemented in relation to our children in care.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent Please ensure that attendance is accurately recorded in every PEP document along with the context of any absences. The Virtual School caseworker, in collaboration with the wider network, can then support with ideas to help and prevent any further deterioration. If a child's attendance is below 95% (unless there is a specific reason e.g. in the Autumn Term it is quite easy to be below 95% with one bout of illness) please ensure there is a target on the PEP.

Persistently and severely absent pupils As above we would ask that a target is added to the PEP to address the concerns. See below for some specific ideas around target setting for attendance in PEPs. If the absences are related to anxiety and emotional based school avoidance, your virtual school caseworker can signpost you to some helpful tools and resources to support wider planning. If a pupil has been consistently absent for an extended period of time, your Virtual School caseworker, in collaboration with the wider network, will be supporting you with a more robust plan of support for reintegration which may include input from Education Psychology, ensuring there are mechanisms in place for regular safeguarding and emotional wellbeing check ins and supporting with access to additional provision where appropriate.

Ideas for target setting around attendance

SMART target	What is the reason for for the target?	What strategies will be used to help support the child with this target?
<p>X's attendance to increase to at least 95% (lower if this is unrealistic to begin with)</p> <p>X to attend school on time every day at least x times per week (building up to every day)</p>	<p>X is not attending school on time every day and their current % is X</p>	<p>General Strategies to promote attendance and punctuality</p> <p>Action Plan is devised in collaboration with network and young person and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Attendance data is shared with parents/carers/ SW via email on weekly/monthly basis.</p> <p>Parents/carers to report all absences to school as per school systems.</p> <p>School to link with child via phone/home visit when absences are prolonged to maintain contact and work provided if necessary.</p> <p>Alarm clock is purchased and set the night before (parents/carers)</p> <p>Parents / carers are supported to implement a morning routine. (Early Help Practitioner/SW)</p> <p>Family members to support with taking to school in the morning.</p> <p>Mentor to be provided to meet with X before school to regulate and prepare for the day (School)</p> <p>Motivating activity to be scheduled at start of day to encourage punctuality</p> <p>SENCO/Learning mentor support to ensure needs are identified and addressed.</p> <p>Attendance at breakfast club</p> <p>Travel plan is devised/provided with bus times/routes etc to promote punctuality.</p> <p>Evidence of GP/hospital appts to be provided following absence. (parents/school)</p> <p>Appointments to made out of school hours where possible.</p> <p>EBSA checklists are completed to reduced EBSA (school/Ed Psych/young person and parents/carers)</p> <p>Ed Psych Consultation (school)</p> <p>Flexible start time / reduced timetable (school)</p> <p>Improved attendance and punctuality to be recognised, celebrated and shared.</p> <p>Incentive to be provided for achieving target and maintaining.</p> <p>Attendance policy to be shared and circulated so network are clear of school expectations.</p>
<p>X to reduce the level of unauthorised absence from x to x by the end of the term.</p>	<p>X has a high number of unauthorised absences</p>	
<p><i>Targets can be further broken down by using the strategies as a basis for the target i.e.</i></p> <p>X to complete the young person's EBSA audit tool and identify aspects of school attendance that cause greatest anxiety.</p> <p>X to meet with mentor before school at least x times per week</p> <p>X to attend breakfast club on time at least x times per week.</p> <p>X to devise personal action plan to improve attendance by identifying triggers for absence and strategies to manage this with support from a trusted adult.</p>	<p>Network will have understanding of patterns of absence, associated needs and support needed</p> <p>X is building a trusting relationship with key adult to express and address needs</p> <p>X is attending school on time and building a new routine</p>	

Please look on the Virtual School website for more information about attendance, including some useful links. [Attendance](#) | [Barnet Virtual School](#) | [London Borough of Barnet \(barnetvs.org\)](#)

Training

The Speech, Language and Communication Needs of Looked After Children and other vulnerable young people – what might the needs be and how can you support them



This course is relevant to all D.Ts, safeguarding leads or any school staff.

Some children/young people who have become looked after or who have a social worker may have had different experiences to many children in their early childhood. These experiences may impact on their speech, language and communication needs. They may have missed out on many experiences that help develop language, have missed developmental checks and frequently moved nursery and schools. This course is run by two highly specialised speech and language therapists who will: -

- Develop your awareness of the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in Looked After Children and children with a social worker.
- Give helpful hints and tips on how to support SLCN within the school and classroom environment.

Leaders: Chloe Laitman – Speech and Language Therapist Alison Montgomery- Speech and Language Therapist

12th January 2023 9:30 - 11:00 This will be a remote training session.

Body Based approaches to working with children and young people who have experienced trauma

This course is relevant to all D.Ts, safeguarding leads or any school staff.

This course will:

- Explore how trauma affects a child's nervous system and what happens when they are triggered into a fight/flight/freeze response.
- Develop an understanding of how trauma can impact a child's sensory regulation and sensory/physical development.
- Explore practical approaches to sooth a child's nervous system when in fight/flight/freeze (including individual and whole class approaches)
-

Leaders: Dr Amy Gibb—Educational Psychologist

23rd February 2023 9:30 - 12:00 This will be in person at the PDC

To book, please open this link: [CPD Strand-doc v3.9c \(schoolcircular.co.uk\)](https://www.schoolcircular.co.uk/CPD-Strand-doc-v3.9c)

Scroll to the bottom to find Virtual School Training

Follow us on Twitter to keep up with news and opportunities to support our young people. [@barnetvs](https://twitter.com/barnetvs)



Website: [Home | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet | England \(barnetvs.org\)](https://www.barnetvs.org)



Tel: 020 8359 4534



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Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People

A large number of our young people in care are unaccompanied asylum seeking children or separated children as they are sometimes called. These children have added challenges often having experienced difficult circumstances in their home country, a hard and traumatic journey to get to the UK and then the impact of the language barrier and potential cultural differences. We are constantly looking to improve our understanding of this group and how we support them. For any schools/colleges who might be interested Barnet Virtual School are still facilitating a regular UASC working group involving a wide range of professionals from colleges, virtual schools, social workers, charities and more. The aim is to discuss support for UASC mainly in the area of education but the group has branched out and a variety of topics are raised and a number of different speakers attend. If anyone is interested in joining please contact Frazier.stroud@barnet.gov.uk to receive an invite to the next meeting on 9th February 2023.



On the Post 16 Personal Education Plan, you will see a new tab headed UASC. This is a checklist of activities and tasks that can/should be done to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in the first 6 months of them being in care. The idea will be to cover the checklist at each PEP meeting to make sure that all of the activities and tasks are eventually ticked off. These activities/tasks can also be used to support the creation of SMART targets in particular for the initial PEP. Initially we are rolling it out only for post-16 PEPs and then depending on the response and feedback we may then extend it to statutory age pupils.

Our website also has links and useful resources. You will find it here: [Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children \(UASC\) | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet \(barnetvs.org\)](https://www.barnetvs.org/)

Recently a Padlet has been created to better share the various different resources, information and organisations available to professionals throughout the UK which can be accessed here: <https://padlet.com/frazierstroud/ipvy4eswkxc3iu1v>

We hope to further develop the support we offer our UASC and will keep you updated in future newsletters!

Key Contacts at the Virtual School

Head Teacher: Sarah.deale@barnet.gov.uk **Deputy Head of School:** Julie.locke@barnet.gov.uk
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