



VIRTUAL SCHOOL KENT NEWSLETTER

January 2024

VSK@kent.gov.uk



Message from Tony Doran

I wanted to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported our young people in 2023 and continue to in 2024.

Please take time to read this edition and find out what we are doing in your part of Kent, including training, projects and activities for our Young People to become involved in.

All that is left to say is, we hope you had a fantastic festive period and are looking forward to a great New Year from all of us at VSK.

Virtual School Advisory Team

New Year Attendance.

We have heard of some amazing work being undertaken by schools, social workers, and professionals working together to increase school attendance and, in some cases, reduce the risk of exclusions for some of our most vulnerable young people - thank you for all the effort that you are putting in for this cohort of young people.



Social Workers and Early Help workers have all recently had the opportunity to undertake attendance training delivered by PIAS, KEPs, Social Services and VSK and have access to the EBSA training when required.

If you have young people who currently have a social worker, or Early Help worker, please ensure that plans to support with attendance are clearly laid out within statutory and planning meetings and that the professional working with the young person is aware of the attendance and EBSA training available to them. For Previously Looked After Children, EPPLAC meetings (Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children) can be a useful tool to consider their previous care experience within the context of any current attendance needs. For those who previously had a social worker (within the last 6 years) please use the Breakthrough Meeting template available on KELSİ.

Resources available to all education settings:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias/attendance/resources-for-schools>

[Educational psychology interventions - KELSİ](#)

Thank you to all those schools who have signed up to Wonde. For those who haven't, please consider signing up, as it will help the local authority with a district and countywide response to school attendance.

Please contact us for more advice regarding your PLAC or Ever6CWSW cohorts:

[Request advice for previously looked after children - Privacy notice - Kent County Council \(achieveservice.com\)](#)

[Request advice for children with a social worker cohort - Consent and privacy - Kent County Council \(achieveservice.com\)](#)

For Kent Children in Care, please contact your local area team by emailing VSK@kent.gov.uk

Post 16 Team

Supporting Care-Experienced YP into Higher Education

9th January Uni of Greenwich, Medway

Supporting Care-Experienced YP into Higher Education

10th January Uni of Kent, Canterbury PM

Foster Carer Training supporting Transition from KS4 into KS5

23rd January Teams 1100 - 1330

If you would like further information or make contact with our Post 16 Team please email 16plusvirtualschoolkent@kent.gov.uk

Out of County Team

As a team we aim to provide a high quality service to our most vulnerable young people. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and children and young people's learning needs to be understood developmentally.

Supported transitions outside of Kent are vital so that our young people feel safe in their education settings and where they live. Ensuring their wellbeing is important so that they have opportunities to be successful. Your support in achieving this is key and the voice of our young people is vital.

If you would like further information or make contact with our OOC Team please email virtuallsschoolkentocc@kent.gov.uk

East Kent Team

East Kent were pleased to continue with their successful Forum sharing best practise and meeting services that support CIC in a range of settings. We were delighted to welcome Mark Buckingham from Social Connections looking at the power of FGCs and further support. The mentors from the University of Kent also joined us looking at ways that teachers can empower young people. For these 3 mentors this resulted in them accessing a university pathway that they originally felt was beyond them. Finally, we also welcomed Steve Green from VSK to look at the support schools can deliver to UASC and EAL pupils.

Our next Forum will be in the 2nd of July at 1:30 in Whitstable. We are always keen to hear about the excellent work that is undertaken in schools, so if you feel you have something that you would like to share, please get in touch.

Our March conference is taking shape and once we have confirmed details of this we will be sending them out to all potential delegates with the aim of looking to raise the aspirations of young people.

If you would like further information or make contact with our East Kent Team please email EastVSK@kent.gov.uk



West Kent Team

WK DT Update & Networking session

MS Teams – 22nd Feb 2024

A reminder on our service providers who can support our Kent CIC in West Kent schools:

- Dandelion Time – Therapeutic programme 'Building on Futures' for children and their carers
- MIND – mentoring support for children and young people in schools
- Speech & Language assessment and support plans from Sarah Post Associates
- Sensory Needs consultation with Bower Grove School's Sensory Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- Dandelion Time – Therapeutic programme 'Building on Belonging' for children undergoing transitions between Yr5-7

Please speak to our Education Support Officers for more information and advice re. referrals

If you would like further information or make contact with our West Kent Team please email WestVSK@kent.gov.uk

North Kent Teams

DT Update 10th January 2024 8.00am, 12pm and 16:00pm

DT Update 28th February 2024 8.00am, 12pm and 16:00pm

Drawing and Talking training 1st February 2024

If you would like further information or make contact with our North Kent Team please email NorthVSK@kent.gov.uk

South Kent Team

Term 3 :

Thursday 25.1.24 Wincheap Primary School Trauma informed practice workshop pm
VSK SK Area meeting

Friday 24.1.24 SK Partnership meeting (VSK, SEN and Social services)

Term 4 :

Thursday 22.2.24 VSK SK Area meeting

Friday 1.3.24 National secondary school offer day (Year 6 to Year 7)

Wednesday 20.3.24 SK Partnership meeting (VSK, SEN and Social services)

Thursday 21.3.24 VSK SK Area meeting

If you would like further information or make contact with our South Kent Team please email SouthVSK@kent.gov.uk

Participation and Engagement Team

The Participation Team

After an exciting festive period of Christmas arts and crafts workshops, parties and a 'Christmas Show in a Day' with our young people, the Participation Team are now turning their attention to terms 3 and 4!



February School Holiday Activities

The February school holiday is already shaping up to be a great one with some exciting activities for both Kent Children in Care and adopted young people living in Bexley, Kent and Medway. During the week, young people will be able to enjoy a 'Space Day' in Ashford with themed experiments, arts and crafts and an immersive astrodome experience, the latter led by the University of Kent. We are also looking forward to two multi-sports activity days taking place in Medway and led by Strive PE and Sport, a teacher led organisation that specialises in primary, secondary and SEND sport.

Young People's Council Groups

And, of course, all of our Young People's Council Groups will be meeting during the school holiday to share their views and opinions and get their voices heard!

Our **Children in Care Councils (Super Council** for 7 – 11 year olds and **Our Children and Young People's Council** for 11 – 16 year olds) will be meeting in Maidstone and Margate during the week. These groups are opportunities for young people with lived experience of care to share their ideas about how to make it better for all young people, allowing them to contribute to positive changes for everyone. The group will also enjoy lunch and a visit from some creepy crawlies and reptiles as part of an animal encounter experience!

The **Adoptables** for Adopted Young People aged 11 – 16 living in Bexley, Kent and Medway will also meet. This council group allows young people to talk about adoption and how to make it the very best it can be for young people and their families with everything they say shared with VSK and Adoption Partnership South East. This February, we are excited to take them to the Big Cat Sanctuary in Smarden for their meeting and a private tour to see the lions and tigers.

Another group visiting the Big Cat Sanctuary this February, is our **OCYPC MAGIC** group for young people aged 11 – 18 with SEND. This group is open to Children in Care, adopted young people and young people with a social worker. A newer group, this council allows young people to share their views about learning, education and wellbeing in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

And last but not least, the **Children WHO Care Council** for the children of foster carers will meet in Ashford to share their views about how fostering impacts the whole family and the important role they play in the fostering journey. They will also have the chance to get creative and paint some pottery too in an arts and crafts workshop!

Other Ways to Engage

The Participation Team are also keen to meet with young people who want to share their views about the services they receive from KCC and other professionals but may not be able to or want to come to a regular group meeting. The Team can meet with young people individually in person at a venue that suits them or virtually, or young people can submit written or drawn feedback to us.

Get in Touch!

If you would like to learn more about the Young People's Groups facilitated by the VSK Participation Team or any other opportunities for young people to get involved and have their say, please do email VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk.