

# VSK WEEKLY UPDATE

21 January 2026

## Strengthening Our PEPs:

### Key Messages for Designated Teachers and Social Workers

High quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs) remain one of the most effective tools we have for improving the educational experiences and outcomes of children in care. Your work in preparing, contributing to, and leading these meetings ensures that every child's needs are understood, planned for, and monitored.

To support a consistent and robust approach across Kent, please keep the following in mind:

#### ✓ **Timeliness matters**

PEPs must take place within statutory timeframes and be uploaded promptly onto Liberi. This ensures that education planning remains current and responsive.

#### ✓ **Strong preparation leads to strong plans**

Designated Teachers should prepare attainment, progress data, attendance, SEND information, and intervention updates in advance. Social Workers should ensure care information is accurate and up to date, including recent changes or factors impacting learning.

#### ✓ **The child's voice must be central**

Please ensure the young person's views are gathered in a way that suits them and are fully represented in the PEP. Their ambitions, worries, and ideas should shape the targets we set.

#### ✓ **PP+ funding requires clear planning and impact tracking**

Requests should outline the rationale for interventions, expected outcomes, and how effectiveness will be measured. Regular review is essential to ensure support remains targeted and meaningful.

#### ✓ **Use the PEP to drive collaboration**

The PEP should reflect the joined up thinking between school, social care, carers, and other professionals. It is the shared roadmap for the term ahead.

### Resource to Support High Quality PEPs

We are pleased to share a new resource designed to support Designated Teachers and Social Workers in understanding a child's learning journey across EYFS, primary and secondary phases.

You can access it here:

☞ [Understanding Your Child's Learning](#)

☞ [Useful PEP Documents](#)

If you require any assistance, please contact our dedicated Kent PEP Team:

📞 03000 415353 | ✉ [VSKKentPEP@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKKentPEP@kent.gov.uk)



## Focus on Early Years

### Strengthening inclusive practice in early years: why professional conversations matter

Creating strong, inclusive early years provision is key to giving every child the best start.

Inclusive practice isn't just about meeting statutory requirements - it's about building environments where all children feel valued, supported and able to thrive.

Schools offering a nursery provision have a unique opportunity to shape inclusive practice early on.

Every registered early years provider in Kent, including those within a mainstream school, has an allocated Early Years Quality Advisor, provided by The Education People's Early Years and Childcare Service. By engaging with your allocated Early Years Quality Advisor, you can:

- Reflect on current practice and identify areas for development.
- Access expert guidance tailored to your setting.

Explore practical strategies for supporting children with SEND and diverse needs.

These professional conversations are collaborative discussions that help you strengthen provision and share best practice. If you have not yet taken advantage of a professional conversation with your allocated advisor, get in touch by emailing [eycquality@theeducationpeople.org](mailto:eycquality@theeducationpeople.org).

## Starting strong for early years children in Kent

**Starting-Strong** a guidance document designed to support all early years providers in developing their Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP).

The starting strong guidance refers to the range of experiences, opportunities and strategies ordinarily offered as part of high-quality teaching for all young children. It sets out clear expectations that aim to ensure inclusive provision across the early years sector, which is of a consistently high standard. Our goal for all babies and young children in Kent is to give them the best start in life by supporting them with highly effective, inclusive early years provision to:

- Ensure learning experiences nurture children's holistic development.
- Build a strong foundation for later learning and for life.
- Prepare children for their future educational journey.

This document describes a way of working that will give every child the best chance to succeed. It will support early years practitioners to understand what helps each individual child and to identify any additional needs as soon as possible.

This guidance is underpinned by key legislation, including:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- The SEND Code of Practice.



### Supervised toothbrushing programme for three- to five-year-olds in targeted early years settings

KCC's supervised toothbrushing programme is supporting targeted early years settings, nurseries and pre-schools, in key areas of Kent who sign up to the programme to set up supervised toothbrushing.

Get in touch to see if you are eligible to be part of the programme: [complete the form](#)

If you have any questions, you can contact KCC's Supervised Toothbrushing Programme Team by emailing [oralhealth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:oralhealth@kent.gov.uk).





## Young Cooks!

Young people are annually invited to take part in our Young Cooks cookery competition with the winners receiving a share of £600!

In addition, a finalist will be selected for a whole days work experience at The Dog at Wingham, cooking at a showcase lunch for specially invited VIP guests.

Other entrants have the opportunity of being invited to attend a master class with Zoe Gill, food and business development chef for Brakes Foodservice, and Great British Bake-Off finalist Jane Beedle. Or a look behind the scenes in the Cook Kitchens.

This is not just a cooking competition but a way for children to develop an understanding of the importance of food, nutrition and budgeting.

This programme is a way to encourage children to try new things and develop a basic life skill and, for some, a future career choice.

We aren't just looking for the next Master Chef, we want all children to understand that being healthy and cooking is something they can all do.

For full details and to enter visit the [Young Cooks website](#)

### **Building confidence and connections in pupils' mental health and wellbeing**

3rd February— A dynamic half-day conference designed to empower Senior Mental Health Leads across Kent.

You'll:

- Attend practical workshops packed with resources and strategies
- Network with fellow school leads
- Hear updates from local leaders on the mental health system
- Meet local services.

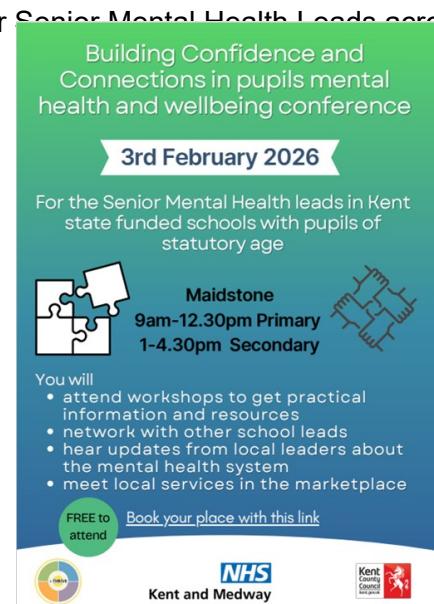
Primary schools - 9am to 12:30pm

Secondary schools - 1pm to 4:30pm

This conference is aimed at Senior Mental Health Leads in Kent state-funded schools (statutory age pupils).

Special Schools and Alternative Provisions can attend the session of their choice.

**Please [see the poster for further information](#)**





# COMING SOON!

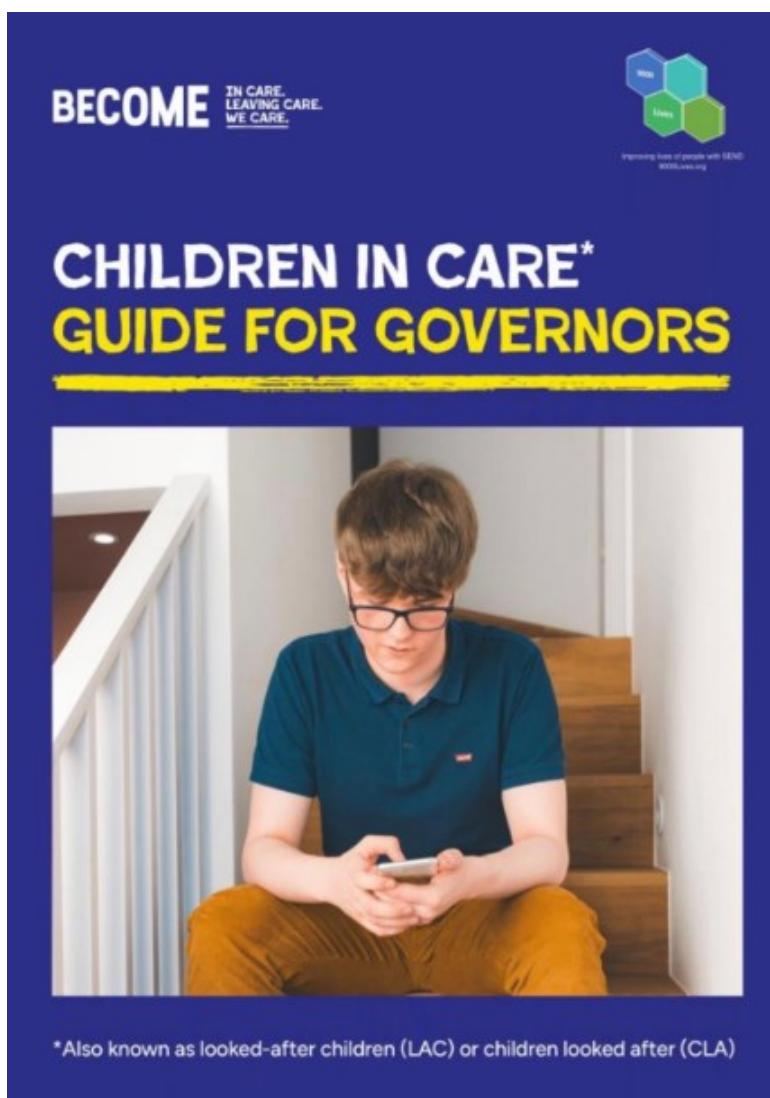


## Support for Governors

Virtual schools link to DTs...who link to governors.

The more governors this reaches, the more lives of children we are able to transform.

This guide provides key information, practical questions to ask and links to the 2025 Ofsted toolkit.



The cover of the 'BECOME Children in Care\* GUIDE FOR GOVERNORS' is shown. The title is in large, bold, yellow letters. Below the title is a photograph of a young man with glasses, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and yellow trousers, sitting on a staircase and looking at a smartphone. The BECOME logo is in the top left corner, and the 'Improving lives of people with SEND' and 'BECOME.org' text is in the top right corner. A small note at the bottom left states: '\*Also known as looked-after children (LAC) or children looked after (CLA)'.

Governors and trustees are a small but an important piece of the jigsaw puzzle. This gives them the relevant knowledge to do their job really well.

It's recommended by trusted organisations, including the DfE governance guide and National Governance Association (NGA) who said:

*"An important and accessible document for all involved in school governance on how you and school leaders can have the vital conversations about children in care"*

### BECOME Children in Care Guide for Governors

## Gaming and Gambling Harm Awareness session



### Free introductory session about gaming and gambling harms.

Medway and Swale Health Care Partnership, in partnership with [Ygam](#), a national charity that aims to safeguard children against gaming and gambling harms are inviting professionals to a gaming and gambling harm awareness workshop .

The collaboration is part of the self-harm programme workstream, which drew on engagement with children, young people, the public and professionals highlighted the impact of excessive participation in addictive behaviours such as gaming, social media and gambling.

During the introductory workshop you will find out more about:

- How and why children and young people game and gamble
- The blurred lines between gaming and gambling
- How to spot the signs of harm
- Where to signpost for further support

Following this workshop, delegates and their teams can sign-up for accredited free City and Guilds certification and access to Ygam's online resources hub.

This insight session is aimed for Managers, Team Leaders from education, youth services, sports clubs, voluntary sector, faith sector and healthcare.

#### How to book:

[Register for free by completing this form](#)

This guide and toolkit was initially developed by the Virtual School Kent and the Kent Educational Psychology Service. Its aim is to support schools in their understanding of the importance of promoting relational approaches to create a sense of connection, school belonging and with trauma informed practices supporting all vulnerable children, particularly those who may struggle to attend school.

## Relational Approaches to support School Belonging and Attendance:

A Guide and Toolkit

Kent County Council  
April 2025



[Click here](#)

## We'd love to hear from you!



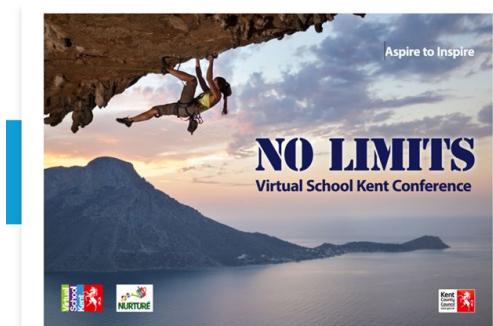
How have VSK supported you or your team recently? Please take a moment to let us know by clicking the link below:

[Feedback Form: Share how VSK supported you](#)



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

22.01.26	County Wide Designated Teacher Update 8am, 12pm and 15:45pm online  Book here: <a href="#">VSK - Designated Teacher Briefing - 22 January 2026 - Term 3 – Fill in form</a>
11.03.26	North Kent Designated Teacher Update 13:30 @ Riverside Community Centre  Book here: <a href="#">VSK - Designated Teacher 11th March 2026 Term 4 – Fill in form</a>
12.03.26	West Kent Designated Teacher Update 1pm @ Homewood School  Book here: <a href="#">VSK WK Designated Teacher Update 12/03/2026 – Fill in form</a>
20.03.26	Kent Designated Teacher Network Update @ Riverside Church, Whitstable
30.04.26	East Kent Designated Teacher Forum @ Venue TBC in Thanet  Book here: <a href="#">East Kent Designated Teachers Forum - Booking Form 30th April 2026</a>
12.05.26	County Wide Designated Teacher Update 12:30 & 15:45 Online  Book here: <a href="#">Countywide Virtual Designated Teacher Updates – Fill in form</a>
13.05.26	County Wide Designated Teacher Update 8:00 Online  Book here: <a href="#">Countywide Virtual Designated Teacher Updates – Fill in form</a>
30.06.26	East Kent Designated Teacher Forum 13:30 @ Whitstable Youth Hub  Book here: <a href="#">East Kent Designated Teachers Forum - Booking Form 30th June 2026</a>
01.07.26	North Kent Designated Teacher Update 13:30 @  Book here: <a href="#">North Team - Virtual DT briefing - 01 July 2026 -Term 6 – Fill in form</a>
02.07.26	West Kent Designated Teacher Induction 13:00 Online  Book here: <a href="#">Countywide Virtual Designated Teacher Updates – Fill in form</a>
07.07.26	South Kent Designated Teacher Update / Induction 13:30 @ Smile Centre Whitfield Primary  Book here: <a href="#">South Kent Designated Teachers Forum - Booking Form Tuesday 7th July 2026 – Fill out form</a>



SAVE THE  
DATE  
Wednesday  
7th October  
2026  
10am til 2pm

DETLING SHOWGROUND  
GUEST SPEAKER: ALFIE WATTS –  
Winner of Race Across the World

This event is for Designated  
Teachers, Senior Leadership  
Teams and the young people they  
support



# Who To Contact



**North Kent Assistant Head:** Jo Hayes - northvsk@kent.gov.uk

**West Kent Assistant Head:** Jen Kemp - westvsk@kent.gov.uk

**South Kent Assistant Head:** Carole Bailey - southvsk@kent.gov.uk

**East Kent Assistant Head:** Simon Fosse-Collins - eastvsk@kent.gov.uk

**Advisory Team Assistant Head:** Emma Wills - vskadvisoryteam@kent.gov.uk

**Post 16 Assistant Head:** Catherine Thompson - 16plusvirtualschools@kent.gov.uk

**Post 16 NEET Team Lead:** Samantha Perrin - 16plusvirtualschools@kent.gov.uk

**Out of County Team Lead:** Amanda Ormond - virtualsschoolkentocc@kent.gov.uk



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**VISIT OUR  
WEBSITE**

[Home | Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](#)

<http://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk>