



November

Welcome to November's newsletter, we hope you all had a lovely half term and have returned refreshed.

As always our website continues to be a place where you will find a wealth of information including resources for educational settings. For those that need a reminder our website can be found [here](#).

This month's newsletter focuses on the November 2025 Ofsted Framework which now includes a specific focus on **'Supporting pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care'**.

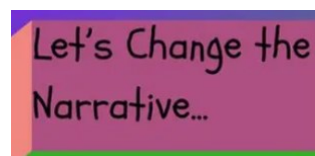
You will recall that last month we focussed on the Evaluation of the Extension of Virtual School Head's Duties to Children with a Social Worker.

The briefing included the recommendations for schools:

1. Schools should ensure they become full partners in the team around the child subject to a plan and recognise in their policy and practice the safeguarding risk that absence, suspension, and permanent exclusion constitutes for these (and other) vulnerable children.
2. Schools should recognise the benefits to attendance, inclusion, attainment, and progress that the adoption of more relational approaches to learning can have and take advantage of any training offered by the Virtual School.
3. Empower the school's DSL to enable them to fulfil their role and provide them with sufficient time to fulfil it effectively.
4. Include children subject to a CIN or CP plan as a separate category in reporting to governors and trustees.



- On average, children with a social worker do worse than their peers at every stage of their education.
- Pupils who had a social worker in the year of their GCSEs were around half as likely to achieve a strong pass in English and maths than their peers, and at the end of key stage 4 were around 3 times less likely to go on to study A levels at age 16, and almost 5 times less likely to enter higher education at age 18.
- Children with a social worker are present in 98% of state schools and face barriers to education due to experiences of adversity, most commonly as a result of domestic abuse, mental ill-health, and substance misuse, with 62% of children needing a social worker having experienced one or more of these.



Whats On

- ★ Thursday 13 November 2025 Racial Equity Conference 2025
- ★ Monday 1 December 2025 PEP/PP+ Deadline
- ★ Friday 19 December 2025 WBC Last day of term
- ★ Monday 5 January 2026 WBC Start of Spring Term
- ★ Thursday 15 January 2026 Primary/Junior School Application Deadline
- ★ Tuesday 3 February 2026 Wokingham DSL Meeting
- ★ Monday 23 February 2026 – Friday 27 February 2026 WBC Half Term



Guidance
Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025
Updated 9 September 2025

As you will all have noted, the new Ofsted framework specifically includes the section copied below, which in previous frameworks was not explicitly included:

Supporting pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care

In gathering evidence about supporting pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, inspectors consider the extent to which:

- the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children is appropriately qualified and experienced
- each looked-after child has a personal education plan and receives high-quality support to improve their learning and/or well-being
- the designated safeguarding lead and other leaders use their knowledge of a pupil's social care status to inform decisions about promoting their welfare, such as providing additional academic support, supporting their well-being or reducing barriers to attendance
- leaders share information effectively with the local authority, and support the authority to complete statutory assessments in relation to pupils' social care needs
- leaders work well with social workers, virtual school headteachers and other professionals to plan and provide multi-agency support for pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care

Whilst Virtual Schools around the country have welcomed the inclusion of this cohort being explicitly mentioned within the new framework, how do we ensure we change the narrative for the children and young people who fall into this category.

For children in care we have a PEP document whereby we discuss the child's attendance, academic progress, health and wellbeing and barriers to education three times a year.

Some questions to ponder...

Whilst children with a social worker will be discussed within the safeguarding team in your setting, how is this reflected?

Would you be able to evidence academic support where children are not meeting ARE specifically for this cohort?

Would you be able to evidence interventions specific to the child due to the ACEs these children have suffered?

Does the child/young person have someone in school who champions them the same way our children in care do?

What is different for a child with a social worker in your setting compared to a child who does not have a social worker and would the child or young person be able to identify that these things are different?



- Discuss in greater breadth and depth the young person's attendance, educational attainment and progress at **every relevant professionals meeting**, ensuring **accurate recording in meeting minutes**.
- Help create **aspirational targets** for the young person – advocate aiming high
- **Provide challenge** to all professionals to ensure high aspirations are recorded for the young person.
- **Improve your understanding of barriers to learning** for this vulnerable group, to include trauma informed practice.



You will note that we shared some training that is coming up specifically on ACEs that is being delivered by The Care Leaders on 20th November.

More Than an ACE Score

This powerful session explores what sits beneath the numbers of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), what they look like in children's behaviour, how they shape learning, and how small changes in your approach can make a big difference.

If you would like to book your place on this session please email:

jenny.lucas@wokingham.gov.uk



It is crucial that those supporting children with a social worker have the vision, awareness, and the right tools to enable these children and young people to achieve their best and ensure there is equal access to education opportunities.

"Every child deserves
A CHAMPION

an adult who will **never** give up on them
who understands the power of connectic
and **INSISTS** that they
become the best
they can possibly be."

-Rita Pierson
-retired teacher



We have changed the way we offer training to ensure that all colleagues across the borough are able to benefit.

If there is specific training you would like for your school/ trust please get in touch so that we can support the needs of our cohorts.

If you would like to discuss the training needs of your setting please contact:

Ruth.Blyth@wokingham.gov.uk

Don't forget the virtual school are here to assist you should you require any support. You can email us at the following addresses and we promise we will respond within 24 hours.

Jane Everton Head of Virtual School and Vulnerable Learner Support

Jane.Everton@wokingham.gov.uk

Ruth Blyth Deputy Headteacher

Ruth.Blyth@wokingham.gov.uk

Helen Belas PEP Officer

Helen.Belas@wokingham.gov.uk

Kat Johnston Post 16 PEP Officer

Kat.Johnston@wokingham.gov.uk

Emma Griffith Early Years Officer

Emma.Griffith@wokingham.gov.uk

Jenny Lucas Education Coordinator

Jenny.Lucas@wokingham.gov.uk

