



Dear Carer,

Welcome to our first newsletter! We hope you find it informative.

From all of us at
Cambridgeshire Virtual
School

Did you get a copy of the Autumn
Term's PEP document?

Please click on [here](#) to let us know.

There are leaflets on a range of
topics on our website such as
PEPs, Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) &
how to support with learning.

CFCA & Virtual School now have a
Working Group. If you are able to
give a little of your time and
expertise, it would be most
appreciated. Please contact us:

chair@cambsfostercarers.org

kim.green@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Have you seen the Q&A
video where CFCA chat to
Virtual School?
Click [here](#) to view.

If the DfE laptop your child/young
person is using, is too 'locked down',
it is possible to unlock it. Please
contact us to learn how.



Gosh, what a twelve months this has been! We would like to take this opportunity to praise and thank you for the AMAZING job you have done over this very difficult time. Many of you have taken on the role of teacher as well as carer—not what you signed up for! Not only have you lost precious respite time whilst your child/young person has sometimes not been in school but you've had to battle with online technology and children/young people's varying amount of engagement with education and their learning.

As we write schools are due to reopen fully on Monday, 8th March, which is yet another change for all concerned. Please remember the Virtual School has an Education Support line (Edu.Carersupport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). Your email will be responded to by the following Tuesday.

The impact on our children/young people's educational attainment and social/emotional wellbeing is, as yet, unknown but, rest assured, we will be working with all our schools to support their knowledge and understanding of the issues. We have already allocated an extra £350 per child to schools to promote Covid recovery (Reception - Y11).

The Virtual School plan to send out a newsletter each term moving forward. Let us know if there's anything you'd like to be included.

Virtual School are working
on a series of videos for
Foster Carers that will be
available via our Youtube
Channel.

Watch this space!

How to contact us:

virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

01223 699883



Follow us on Twitter
[@CambsVs](https://twitter.com/CambsVs)



Dear Carer,

A massive 'thank you' for all that you have done this year to support children's education. Enjoy your Summer!

From all of us at Cambridgeshire Virtual School

Did you get a copy of the Spring Term's PEP document?

Please click [here](#) to let us know.

Thank you to those of you who let us know about the Autumn Term PEP. The results of that poll have been shared with Social Care.

There are now 2 training videos for Foster Carers & their Supervising Social Workers on our Youtube Channel:

- [An introduction to Virtual School, PEPs & PP+](#)
- [Making the most of PEP Review Meetings](#)

There are also leaflets on a range of topics on our website such as PEPs, Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) & how to support with learning.



'What will I be in the future?'

The Aspirations Project builds confidence and employability skills for life via mentoring, workplace visits, arts and construction careers projects, inspiring extracurricular activities and more.

Come along to our Aspirations training for foster carers and follow us on Twitter [@AspireCambsVS](#) or contact sarah-jo.jefford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for more information.



Cambridgeshire is now signed up to 'Dollywood Imagination Library'. This is an initiative whereby children in care receive a free book through the post every month up until their 5th birthday. We will be starting with 2-4 year olds as we are already working with these children within the Virtual School but it will be extended to 0-2year olds in the near future. The children should receive their first book in August.

Next academic year, Cambridgeshire Virtual School will be offering the following training to all our Carers. Look out for the Teams meeting invite.

- How to support your child with their education – Early Years/Preschool - 24th Nov 2021
- How to support your child with their education – Primary – 20th Oct 2021 & 29th March 2022
- How to support your young person with their education – Secondary – 10th Nov 2021
- How to support your child with their education – Post 16 (for young people in Y9-Y13) – 29th Sept 2021
- How to support your child with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) – 23rd Feb 2022
- How to support your child/young person with transitions (focusing on moving up from Primary to Secondary school) – 18th May 2022
- How to support your Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) - 22nd Sept 2021
- My future self - How to support your child to develop high aspirations – 14th Oct 2021

Comments following latest training:

It gave an idea of what questions can be asked during the pep and how the child will be.

Tips on showing the child around the new school, taking photos of the school, really getting involved with the school around meetings, asking what help the child gets.

Knowing what other people are anticipating; often we think about different things.

How to contact us:

virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

01223 699883

www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/school-improvement/cambridgeshires-virtual-school-for-looked-after-children



@CambsVS



Dear Carer,

How is this term going for you and the family? Life is still very far from 'normal' for us all, isn't it? Thank you for all you are doing to support our children and young people with their education.

We know that this time of year can be very tricky for our children. Lots of memories triggered and lots of loss to be grieved but we do hope that you manage to generate a sense of fun and excitement despite the challenges.

Happy Christmas and New Year from us all at the Virtual School.



Have you completed the Virtual School Annual Foster Carer survey?

If not, please click [here](#)

We do very much appreciate your input.



Have you watched either of our videos? If not, take a look:

- [An introduction to Virtual School, PEPs & PP+](#)
- [Making the most of PEP Review Meetings](#)

There are also leaflets on a range of topics on our website such as PEPs, Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) & how to support with learning.

'Trauma Responsive School' training

We are developing a bespoke 2 day training package involving our virtual reality headsets for schools. This will be shared with schools in the new year. If you feel your school might benefit, let us know.

Pupil Voice

The focus for us this academic year is how best to gather the views of our children and young people in a way that is meaningful to them and to those who work with them in educational settings. We have been meeting with Foster Carers, Social Workers, members of staff and, of course, the children themselves this term. Results of our information gathering will be available in due course.

Spotlight on: PEP Champion

My name is Edwina Erskine. I have been with the Virtual School for over 16 years - some of you may recognise me from the different roles I have held within the team.



As PEP Champion I am available to offer support to all DTs and social workers to improve the quality of PEPs for our young people. I deliver targeted and bespoke training around all areas of the PEP and work alongside my VS colleagues to ensure all professionals for children in care are aware of the high levels of quality and compliance expected from our PEP process.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School has offered a range of training this Autumn Term. Thank you to all those who've attended. Three more sessions are offered over the Spring and Summer Terms. Look out for the Teams meeting invite.

- How to support your child with their education – Primary/Secondary – 29th March 2022
- How to support your child with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) – 23rd Feb 2022
- How to support your child/young person with transitions (focusing on moving up from Primary to Secondary school) – 18th May 2022

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www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/school-improvement/cambridgeshires-virtual-school-for-looked-after-children



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Dear Carer,

We are hoping that nursery/school/college feels more normal to your child/young person by now and that you are able to get out and about more as a family?

Wishing you and yours a very Happy Holidays,
 From all of us at Virtual School



Don't forget to encourage your child to enter our logo competition – pictures to virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk by 29th April please!

Aspirations Project

We now have an amazing careers information and guidance offer for our children in Years 9-11 – speak to your DT to arrange a session. There's also an enhanced careers project for young people 15+ who may be at risk of not remaining in education.

Join us in half term to make nature-based art at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge on Weds 1st June. Foster family workshops are 10am – 12 noon (Years 5-6) and 1-3pm (Years 7-8). Siblings welcome! Materials and refreshments provided. Contact us to book your place.

For more details on all opportunities contact us:

sarah-jo.jefford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk ☎ 07773229796

@AspireCambsVS

Virtual School Annual Foster Carer survey

A big thank you to those of you who completed our annual survey. We will share a few results with you each term.

- * Last year's survey only went out to in-house Carers. This year we have been able to contact IFA Carers directly via email. Of those who completed this year's survey 50% were in-house Carers & 50% were IFA Carers.
- * Last year 79% of you felt your contact with Virtual School resulted in the desired outcome; this year it was 94%. We are aiming for 100% so don't hesitate to get back in touch if you need to.

Spotlight on... Achievement Through Schools Team

Hello! We are the Achievement through Schools team. We provide support and challenge to schools to promote best possible educational outcomes for our young people. This term we have delivered attachment aware and trauma informed training to several primary and secondary schools. It's been great to talk to teachers about how they can support our young people by building those all-important relationships. We have just finished quality assuring PEPs for the spring term – reading all about what our children enjoy and aspire to be as well as what they need support with. One quote that made us smile was from a primary aged child who aspired to be 'elf on the shelf!' They're obviously a big fan of Christmas :)

Virtual School Foster Carer Training

We have had 97 Carers attend our 6 sessions so far this year. You have rated the training at 96%. There are a further 2 sessions to be held this academic year:

- * How to support your child/young person with transitions (focusing on moving up from Primary to Secondary school) May 18th 10am
- * How to support your child with their education – Primary July 5th 10am

All sessions are online and the invite should arrive in your inbox a couple of weeks ahead.

Have you watched our videos? If not, take a look:

- [Introduction to Virtual School, PEPs & PP+](#)
- [Making the most of PEP Review Meetings](#)
- [Supporting Early Years Education](#)
- [Supporting Post 16 education](#)

More videos to come—watch this space!



Pupil Voice

Thank you to those who supported your child/young person to complete our Pupil Voice questionnaire. One question we asked was: How often do you go to your Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings?

- * 42% said they always attend their PEP Review Meeting—mainly because they wanted to hear what was being said about them and their progress
- * 26% said sometimes—mainly because they like to see their Carer in school
- * 32% never attend—often because they don't like meetings.

What does your child/young person say about PEP Review Meetings?

How to contact us:

virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

01223 699883

[Cambridgeshire Virtual School - Learn Together](#)
 [\(cambsllearntogether.co.uk\)](http://cambsllearntogether.co.uk)



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Cambridgeshire Virtual School Foster Carer newsletter Summer Term 2022

Dear Carer,

The summer holidays are fast approaching. Schools and colleges are winding down. Timetables and regular activities are being replaced by Sports Days, leavers' events, Proms and Summer Fetes. Busy times that often dysregulate our children and young people as the structure and routine of normal term time ends. We hope that you are managing to find time to breathe in amongst it all.

Wishing you all the best over the holiday period—hopefully some sun, fun and wonderful memories :)

From all of us at the Virtual School

Virtual School Conference on 28th June 2022

160 delegates from across social care, education and representatives from carers came together with a focus on working collaboratively to hear pupil's voice – the ideal carer and worker videos created by our children and young people were shared. We had an insightful workshop planned and delivered by two of our care leavers. Delegates had an opportunity to hear the findings from our carers, DT and children's focus group on pupil voice within the PEP. We finished with an inspiring talk from Jaz Ampaw-Farr which affirmed the vital role we all have to play in making a difference.



Thank you to all those who submitted entries to our logo competition. Well done to the 5 young people who worked with a creative team to finalise the design—the logo is proudly displayed at the top of this newsletter.

Virtual School training for Foster Carers

All our training for the academic year 2022-23 is listed within the Fostering Brochure for in-house Carers and will be coming out to IFA Carers in September. Any suggestions of topics to cover in the future, please get in touch.

Virtual School Annual Foster Carer survey

A big thank you to those of you who completed our annual survey. We will share a few results with you each term.

- * 77% of you said you know how to contact the Virtual School. If you are reading this newsletter, you will see our details at the top.
- * Only 26% of you have visited the website recently. All those that did found it useful. Do take a look.

At a recent Foster Carer Support Hub Meeting a Carer asked about how to praise/thank a school when they are doing a great job. Of course, tell school but you can also put feedback here: [Welcome to Ofsted Parent View | Ofsted Parent View](#)

Spotlight on... Virtual School Head Teacher



Hi, my name is Claire Hiorns. I have been the Virtual School Head Teacher for the last 3 years. I have been a teacher for 22 years and I am also an adoptive parent. My role is to lead the direction and development of the Virtual School. I am really proud of the work of the Virtual School Team. We will continue to share

developments with you through the newsletter, twitter, the website and our training as we strive towards making our vision a reality 'all care experienced children will have the opportunity, experience and support to enable them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their maximum potential.'

'Recovery through Relationships' training for educational settings



The training is based around the use of our Virtual Reality Headsets which bring the experiences of our children into 3D and immerse people into their world.

The two day training and the 'in-school' projects are running very successfully in our pilot schools.

We have also taken the headsets into settings to deliver bespoke sessions. Participants have been deeply moved by the experience.



Cambridgeshire Virtual School Foster Carer newsletter Autumn Term 2022



Dear Carer,
Wishing you and your family a very happy Christmas and New Year. We hope you managed to build a snowman last week - do send your photos to us at virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
From all of us at the Virtual School

Annual Foster Carer survey

Thank you to those who have already completed the survey that was sent out by email last week. If you haven't, there's still time. Please go to:

[Cambridgeshire Virtual School Foster Carer survey](#)

**50 Things To Do Before
You're Five - Learn Together**
(cambslearntogether.co.uk)

SCIP

SCIP is for children and young people with a disability or additional needs and their families in Cambridgeshire.

Office hours: Mon - Thurs 8.30am to 1.30pm

T: 01480 379827

For further information on Special Education Needs and Disabilities in Cambridgeshire go to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send

Or visit the Family Information website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/>

'Trauma Responsive School' training

It was a privilege to train the Chief Executive and Senior Leaders in Cambridgeshire using our VR headsets. Stephen Moir's tweet speaks for itself:



Stephen Moir @SSMoir · 2h

Yesterday I experienced some of the most powerful learning I've had. The @CambsCC corporate leadership team focussed on being trauma informed/ recovery through relationships & our role as corporate parents. Aply led by our brilliant @CambsVs team, using immersive VR. #Impactful

Requests from Cambridgeshire schools for this training are coming in thick and fast.

Who is the Designated Teacher?

I am your DT



MY NAME IS:

Does your child know who their DT is? Virtual School have worked with the 'Child in Care' Council to produce a DT card. If your child/young person would like one please do mention it to the designated teacher. Templates to create them are available on the Virtual School website.

Spotlight on...



Hi. My name is Elly and I have been the Business Support Officer for the Virtual School for the last 5 years. My job is wide ranging and varied. It includes organising the bookings for training, co-ordinating bigger events such as conferences, ensuring PP+ is paid to schools and, of course, signposting incoming calls and emails to the relevant colleague.

Virtual School training for Foster Carers

Lovely to see those of you who attended the sessions that took place this term.

Next term we have:

- *Unaccompanied Migrant Young People - 9th January
- *Special Needs & Disabilities - 9th February
- *Supporting children with Maths in KS1 - 22nd February
- *My Future Self- supporting high aspirations - 21st March
- *Supporting children with writing in KS1 - 28th March

All sessions are online 10am-12pm. Book here:

[Online scheduling for Virtual School \(bookingbug.com\)](http://Online scheduling for Virtual School (bookingbug.com))

How to contact us:

virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

01223 699883

[Cambridgeshire Virtual School - Learn Together](#)
(cambslearntogether.co.uk)



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FOSTER CARER NEWSLETTER

A termly newsletter brought to you by Cambridgeshire Virtual School



Hi, my name is Helena Smith and I have been working as an Education Advisor in the Virtual School team since January this year. I am a primary teacher and my passions include working around inclusion, particularly positive behaviour management. My role within the virtual school enables me to support children in care accessing a fully inclusive education that meet their needs. I am looking forward to support the training offered by the virtual school to foster carers in the coming months.



Since the beginning of the Spring term the Virtual School have been piloting foster carer access to our PEP document. We currently have a group of 11 carers who now have read-only access to the Welfare Call ePEP platform. The hope is that over time all carers will be able to view PEPs at their leisure and not have to wait for social care to send through a document. You can use your PEP access to initiate conversations with education settings to discuss how the young people in your care are progressing against the desirable outcomes that have been set for them and how you can continue to support them.



The Cambridgeshire Virtual School (CVS) were proud to host the first FASD conference that placed a spotlight on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The event was attended by over 160 professionals within social care, education and health. The event included a key note speech by Dr Cassie Jackson, a Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist who is founder and director of The Centre for FASD, and the inspirational testimony of Carol Hunter, who found success living with a FASD diagnosis. Carol has achieved a degree and masters, she now works for Adoption UK.

Following the success of the conference the CVS will be running a half day training event in November 2023 which will be open to our Foster Carer's.

"Wow, what a fantastic conference. I have learnt so much today and am keen to go back over my learning and look into some areas even further. All the speakers were so knowledgeable, and I really felt a great link between everything we learnt today. The day was so well organised."

Feedback from a Cambridgeshire Foster Carer

We look forward to seeing you there!



During the Spring term, the Virtual school launched a series of podcasts aimed at supporting education professionals in schools to better understand the needs of our children in care. Available on all major platforms, please do download and listen. Moving forward we plan to host a series specifically for carers and residential key workers.

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday 6th June at 10am online: **School Readiness and Transitions to School (Early Years)**

Thursday 22nd June at 10am online: **Making a Positive Contributions to Personal Education Plans**

Thursday 29th June at 10am online: **Supporting Your Older Children as a Writer (KS2)**



Available on all Apple and Android platforms, our app is intended to be an exciting tool which brings together key information on the education of children with a social worker into one accessible place.



Available on all major podcast platforms, our podcast is intended to support education and social care professionals to best support children in care in education



@CambVS

Cambridgeshire's Virtual School - Learn Together (cambslernrtogether.co.uk)

FOSTER CARER NEWSLETTER

A termly newsletter brought to you by Cambridgeshire Virtual School



Hello,

My name is Heather Edwards and I feel very fortunate to have just been appointed as the Deputy Head Teacher for Cambridgeshire Virtual School! I was previously a Senior Leader responsible for Inclusion in a Cambridgeshire Secondary School and more recently have been the Assistant Head Teacher at Cambridgeshire Virtual School overseeing the Achievement Through Schools Team – both these roles have given me a great foundation for my new role.

In partnership with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire Virtual School are delighted to be offering 12 young people the opportunity to participate in the Firebreak course during the summer holidays.

This is specifically designed for young people in school years 8,9 and 10.

The course will run **9:00am-3:00pm Monday 24th July – Friday 28th July at St Ives Fire Station, Ramsey Road, St. Ives, PE27 5RA.**

Breakfast and Lunch will be provided.

Exams are nearly over. Results day is looming...

A Level result day is the 17th August

GCSE result day is the 24th August

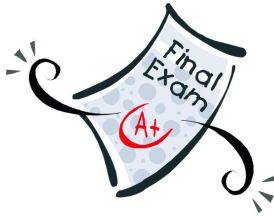
Higher Education (University) and Further Education (Post 16) pathways are usually subject to results. If your young person's results are as expected or above their initial offer will be automatically accepted. If however the results are lower than predicted what should you do?

Cambridgeshire have support available for our children in care.

Rebecca McCallum, Education, Training and Employment Co-ordinator works with young people supporting their next steps. Her email address is rebecca.mccallum@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, contact us at the Virtual School for support into Further or Higher Education.

Our email address is Virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



Ongoing VS project update!

The Virtual School is working with St Andrews C of E School in Soham, which is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust.

The aim of the project is to develop a model which explores how care experience can be 'usualised' across the curriculum to provide better inclusivity and representation for our children in care and previously in care, whose stories are often missing or misunderstood.

Dates for Your Diary

Introduction to Cambridgeshire Virtual School and PEPs – Online - CFC

Date - Tuesday 26th of September 2023— 10am – 12pm

Early Years – Understanding Children's Behaviour's and Interactions – Online CFC & PFC

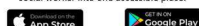
Date - Tuesday 17th of October 2023—10am – 12pm

FASD – in person – CFC

Date - Tuesday 14th of November 2023



Available on all Apple and Android platforms, our app is intended to be an exciting tool which brings together key information on the education of children with a social worker into one accessible place.



Available on all major podcast platforms, our podcast is intended to support education and social care professionals to best support children in care in education



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