

Cambridgeshire Virtual School offer for Children Previously in Care

In 2018, the remit of the Virtual School was extended to include offering advice and information for Children Previously in Care. This includes children who have been in the care of a local authority and are now the subject of:

- an Adoption order
- a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- a Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

or who were adopted from 'state care' outside of England or Wales.

'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

In 2024, the remit of the Virtual school was further extended to include offering advice and information for Children in Kinship Care including children who have never been in the care of a local authority.

Who can access advice and information?

The duty is placed on the local authority where the child accesses education. Cambridgeshire Virtual School has appointed an Advisor for Children Previously in Care and for Children in Kinship Care to provide advice and information where a relevant child attends a Cambridgeshire education setting. Where the child attends an education setting in another local authority, the advisor will support by providing the contact details of the relevant virtual school.

Advice and information is available to:

- Parents or carers of children previously in care and in kinship care aged 2-18 years
- Staff of Education settings including early years settings, schools and colleges
- Social Workers from the Adoption Team or Connected Persons Team
- Other Local Authority Teams (e.g. SEND services)
- Any other relevant party that the VSH deems appropriate.

Generic advice will be offered to professionals. No specific information will be discussed without the consent of the parents / carers. The Virtual School will ask that a referral form is completed and returned before individuals can be discussed.

What constitutes advice and information?

The Virtual School will make general information and advice regarding children previously in care and in kinship care available through their websites:

Cambridgeshire Virtual School [Cambridgeshire Virtual School - Learn Together](https://cambslearntogether.co.uk)
(cambslearntogether.co.uk)

This will include providing the contact details of the Education Advisor employed specifically to fulfil this role. Where questions are frequently asked, documentation will be produced to support, an example of this is how to claim pupil premium plus, how it can be used and accountabilities for it.

Specific advice or information is aimed at empowering others to act in the best interests of the child, to promote educational outcomes. This may include:

- Details on what is included within the statutory guidance
- Details of roles and responsibilities; along with what could reasonably be expected
- Signposting to other relevant local authority teams and support organisations
- Signposting to relevant resources and websites

The Virtual School is not the corporate parent, as they are for children in care. The role of advice and information does not extend to acting as a lead professional. The Virtual School will not:

- Lead on school searches
- Chair multiagency meetings
- 'Casehold'
- Provide reports on individual children.

Training

All Virtual School training will make reference (where relevant) to children previously in care and in kinship care. This includes:

- Trauma and attachment
- FASD

In addition, the Virtual School hosts specific training on:

- The role of the Designated Person for children previously in care
- Preparing to move children onto adoption
- Educational considerations for supporting children previously in care
- Preparing new adopters to support education

Attending Support Groups

The Advisor for Children Previously in Care and Children in Kinship will have strong links with the Regional Adoption Agency Post Adoption and SGO support Team. The Advisor will attend support groups to promote the role of the Virtual School and be available to respond to individual questions.