

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

**To: All Directors of Children's Services**

## **Services available to Children in Care (Looked After Children) and Care Leavers placed in Cheshire West and Chester**

Cheshire West and Chester would like to notify you of the services and facilities available to children in care that are placed in our area by other local authorities. Please circulate this information to relevant professionals within your area. We hope that the information will help your professional staff to understand and access the range of services that are available to children residing in Cheshire West and Chester. This letter includes the process for notifying us of the placement of a child in Cheshire West and Chester, information about accessing universal services and contact information for our Children in Care Council

It would also be useful to receive similar information and contact details about services and opportunities available to Cheshire West and Chester children that are placed in your local authority.

### **Context**

Cheshire West and Chester Council, is situated in the north west of England having been established as a unitary authority in April 2009 as a result of local government reorganisation. The council area covers both rural and urban populations and services are centred on the three districts of Ellesmere Port, Chester and Vale Royal.

There are a number of Looked After Children placed in Cheshire West and Chester by other local authorities. Cheshire West and Chester Council would like to notify you about key contacts, resources and facilities available to Looked After Children and young people placed in our area.

Please disseminate this information to relevant professionals within your Children and Young People's Service. It will be helpful if you also passed this information on to any of your foster carers based in Cheshire West and Chester so they are aware of the services available to children and young people in Cheshire West and Chester.

### **Consultations**

In line with the 2014 amendments to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, if you are planning to place a child or young person in Cheshire West and Chester, you should consult with us prior to placement. Please contact our Access to Resources Team on 01244 972334 or by email to [artduty@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:artduty@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)



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When you are considering a placement in a children's home you should take into account the information in the home's Statement of Purpose. You should ask for a copy of the home's location assessment which should include details of the home's safeguarding arrangements, including any measures taken by the home to manage safeguarding concerns arising from the neighbourhood where the home is located.

## Notifications

All notifications of looked after children placed in Cheshire West and Chester should be sent to [cicola.notifications@cheshirewestandchester.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cicola.notifications@cheshirewestandchester.gcsx.gov.uk) It is particularly important that changes of address and notifications of all looked after children leaving Cheshire West and Chester should also be sent to this address so we can maintain accurate records. Please ensure that notifications highlight any specific risks or vulnerabilities to assist services in Cheshire West and Chester to respond effectively.

If you need to contact CWAC Children's Social Care please call the Contact and Referral Team on 01606 275099 or for emergencies outside of office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 01244 977277.

## Education

There are more than 150 schools in Cheshire West, including nursery schools, infant schools, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and a pupil referral unit.

The local authority website offers a comprehensive range of information about admission to school including the LA's admission policy which applies to all community and voluntary controlled schools. Admission policies for other schools are published on either the CWAC website and/or the school's own website.

The School Admission team is based in Winsford and deals with admissions across the borough. The team is happy to provide advice and guidance on all aspects of admissions and appeals. If you wish to apply for a school place you can do so online by visiting the CWAC website [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions)

The admissions team can be contacted via email [admissions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0300 1237039.



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## Early Years, Childcare and Nursery Provision/Children's Centres

Our Families Information Service (FIS) is a free and impartial service which provides information and advice in relation to;

- Childcare and options available
- Benefits and grants
- Parenting support
- Family matters
- Support for children with additional needs/disability

For more information about the providers in Cheshire West and Chester, please contact the FIS on 0800 0852 863 or email the team on:

[fis.west@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:fis.west@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

## The Virtual School

Cheshire West and Chester has a Virtual School (VS) for Children in Care that promotes the educational achievement of Cheshire West and Chester looked after children aged 0-25 in partnership with colleagues in Children and Young People's Services. Cheshire West and Chester have appointed a Virtual School Head teacher (VSHT) to discharge the specific duty of the local authority to promote the educational achievements of children in care. The Virtual School Head teacher has lead responsibility for:

- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational outcomes of children in care, including those placed out of authority.
- Primary responsibility for ensuring suitable education provision is in place for children in care.
- Ensuring that the educational achievements of children in care are seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.

The Virtual School maintains a database of all Cheshire West and Chester children placed within and outside the local authority. Any decision to secure education provision for Cheshire West and Chester children should involve the Virtual School Head teacher.

The Virtual School works in partnership with other local authorities and Virtual Head teachers so that Cheshire West and Chester children in care are placed in appropriate education provision that is good or outstanding. The Head teacher and Virtual school from Cheshire West and Chester work with other local authority Virtual School Head teacher to offer educational advice and support for children in care in Cheshire West and Chester, however the responsibility for education rests with the home authority.



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Information on school inspections and Ofsted reports can be found on:  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Virtual School can be contacted 01244 976172.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

The SEN team work closely with the Virtual School and social workers to ensure that we have effective and joined up processes for meeting the needs of looked after children both those looked after by CWaC and those who are placed within our boundary but are looked after by another authority.

The Children and Families Act introduced in September 2014 has been fully implemented with clear processes in place for initiating new education, health and care assessments and a plan in place for transfer reviews which will consider the transfer of statements to EHCP's. The SEN will co-ordinate and facilitate transfer reviews for all CWaC looked after young people regardless of where they are resident. Facilitation of other authority's looked after young people will be considered upon request from the "funding" local authority.

The SEN team will consider requests for new assessments for young people who are resident within CWaC boundary but looked after by another council unless they have been placed in a 52 week placement. In this case both the funding and administrative responsibility rests with the authority with whom the young person is in care.

The Council's Local Offer provides information on the EHC assessment process, specialist provision within the borough and contact details for the SEN team.

## **Health Services**

Cheshire West and Chester offers a range of universal, targeted and specialist health services for children who are Looked After.

Through arrangements between the original Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the responsible CCG, all the children who are Looked After will have an Initial Health Assessment with a paediatrician within 28 days. Review Health Assessments will be offered in line with national statutory guidance and are conducted by the child's named health professional.

Within CWaC this generally will be the health visitor or the school nurse attached to the school which the child attends. However there is a team of children in care specialist nurses who can also complete these reviews. All review health assessments are quality assured by the children in care specialist nurses to maintain a high standard of assessment. As part of these assessments the strengths and difficulties questionnaire is also completed.



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Following the review health assessment, the named health professional or specialist nurse ensures that the child receives the highest standard of care by co-ordinating and referring the child into relevant local services that maybe required as a result of the health assessment. The named professional is also part of the child's care planning process and receives regular supervision on each child from their children in care specialist nurse.

The children in care specialist nurses can be contacted on 01244 393339.

In addition Cheshire West and Chester have commissioned Caring to Care, This is a CAMHS Tier 2 service run by Barnardo's for looked after and adopted children, including those displaying sexually harmful behaviour accessed by multi agency Emotional Health and Wellbeing Panel. Further details can be obtained from Anne Patchett 01244 977557 or the Children in Care Specialist School Nurses 01244 393339.

## **Missing Children**

Details of Cheshire West and Chester Council response to missing children can be found in the Pan Cheshire Joint Protocol Children and young people who run away or go missing from home or care at [www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk).

If your local authority has concerns any child placed is at risk from being missing, vulnerable or exploited please telephone the Contact and Referral Team 01606 275099 or for emergencies outside of office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 01244 977277.

## **Youth Justice Services**

Cheshire West Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Service (CWHWYOS) cover three Local Authority areas and is a multi- agency service. The aim of the YOS is to prevent offending and reduce re-offending by young people aged from 10 years old until the age of 18 years.

The YOS works with young people who are either at risk of offending, have received a Court Order or who are in a custodial establishment. An assessment is completed on each child and young person at the start of each intervention/sentence. This identifies the level of risk in terms of reoffending, harm to the public and the young person's vulnerability.

The YOT delivers both preventative and offence-specific interventions and programmes on either a group-work or a one-to-one basis. Through working with partner agencies other programmes provided include drug and alcohol sessions, knife crime, anger management, healthy relationships, victim awareness and specific domestic abuse programmes.



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Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Service

West Office: 2nd Floor, Wyvern House, The Drummer, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 1AH

North Office: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes Cheshire WA8 7QF

Tel: 0151 511 6622

## Youth Services

Cheshire West and Chester IES Youth Service works with young people 13 to 19yrs (25yrs SEND) to enhance their personal and social development increasing their social inclusion. Through delivering non formal educational activities youth work safeguards young people providing a safe space for them to explore their values and beliefs, challenges oppressive behaviour and ideas, challenging negative stereotypes by promoting young people in a positive light. By offering advice, information and support our youth clubs, programmes of activities, and Detached Teams enable young people to learn about themselves and others enabling them to make informed choices in their lives and a safe confident transition into adult hood.

Our youth clubs are in various locations across the area and for more information please see our CWaC website for further details and contact details for the locality Youth Workers.

## Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council work together to promote the views, values and opinions of cared for children & young people. They have an input at a high level into the design, delivery and evaluation of services provided for them by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

- There is an older and a younger CiCC
- The older (16+) group meet once a month from 5.30 - 8.00pm
- The younger (12-17) group also meet once a month from 4.30 - 7.00pm.
- Each council is open to any child or young person 12+ in care who is prepared to work to improve services.
- The CiCC has its own website [www.cicc.org.uk](http://www.cicc.org.uk)

If you would any further information contact Heather Cantrill or Kim Brooman on 0151 337 4594.



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Yours Sincerely

Emma Taylor  
Director of Children's Social Care  
Cheshire West and Chester



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