NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Virtual School Education Support Officer	**Director/Service/Sector: Children's Services**		**Office Use**
Band: 5	**Workplace:** County Hall, Morpeth		**JE ref: 2544** **HRMS ref:**
Responsible to: Virtual School Lead Education Officer	**Date: May 2025**	**Manager Level:**	

Job Purpose:

- To oversee and support the educational progress of a caseload of cared for children who may have complex behavioural difficulties, SEND or attendance issues
- To create stable learning environments so that cared for children can do their best at school
- To liaise and advocate with schools and other professionals to ensure that high quality Personal Education Plans are completed within statutory timescales
- Whenever possible, to break down barriers to educational achievement so that every cared for child can do their best at school

Resources	
Staff	None
Finance	None
Physical	A variety of educational resources including a laptop.
Clients	A group of cared for children whose circumstances and needs are often complex and challenging, Designated Teachers, SEND, Care Teams, foster carers

Duties and key result areas:

1. To have an active role in the Virtual School for Cared for Children, contributing support to raise the aspirations and improve the achievement of children in care.
2. Develop a detailed knowledge of the individual circumstances of each child within the caseload to achieve a clear understanding of the educational needs of each individual, including their emotional well-being. Keep abreast of any changes or issues that might impact on their education.
3. Establish and maintain positive relationships with the children, school and other relevant professionals involved with the child ie Head Teachers, Designated teachers, social workers and carers
4. Support, advocate and negotiate with professionals and non-professionals on behalf of cared for children regarding their education to enable them to maximise opportunities to achieve their full potential and overcome barriers to progress and achievement.
5. Work collaboratively with care teams to encourage school stability I.e. reducing school moves, improving attendance and exploring alternatives to suspension.
6. Support the emotional wellbeing of each child through liaison and advocacy to promote positive engagement and success within education.
7. Participate in relevant meetings and professional reviews, producing written reports when requested.
8. Attend Personal Education Plan meetings and support Designated Teacher to ensure that statutory timescales and requirements are met.
9. Ensure children and young people contribute to the development of their Personal Education Plan and understand its purpose, and that their voice is clearly documented and acted upon.
10. Support Designated Teachers to use the Pupil Premium Plus for maximum impact on education outcomes.
11. Support school transitions (academic and mid year changes) ensuring efficient sharing of information thereby assisting the receiving school to appropriately welcome and support the child.
12. Maintain accurate records using the appropriate software, writing reports and entering data as required.

13. In some circumstances directly support challenging children in school, including the delivery of therapies when appropriate eg drawing and talking, Lego
14. Provide a first point of information, support/advice for social workers, Designated Teachers and schools regarding the looked after system/schools and the associated procedures etc.
15. Actively participate in your own professional development.
16. Comply with all County Council policies i.e. Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding, Confidentiality & Data Protection etc

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements	
Transport requirements:	Required to travel between base and a number of settings, potentially on a daily basis. Regular requirement to travel beyond the county boundary within the North East region
Working patterns:	Day work, with some flexibility around start/finish times and an occasional need to attend late meetings.
Working conditions:	Predominantly school environment which may include dealing with potentially challenging young people and adults.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Virtual School Education Support Officer	**Directorate** Children's Services	Ref: 2544
Essential	**Desirable**	**Assess by**
Knowledge and Qualifications		
Evidence of good standard of general education: five good GCSEs or NVQ 2 (including Maths and English) Evidence of a knowledge of: • Emotional regulation therapies eg drawing and talking, Lego • The education system, learning styles and expected levels of achievement across the National Curriculum Key Stages • Education support services available within the County Council and from external providers • The 'Cared for' system and Cared for Reviews • The policies and procedures linked to the education of children in care • An understanding of the SEND Code of Practice • Attachment disorder	Evidence of education at 'A' level or above. Evidence of professional qualification relating to supporting the learning of children	Application form Interview References
Experience		
At least 2 years experience of working with children and families in an education or social care setting, including on a 1:1 basis in a voluntary, or paid capacity, or during professional training. Evidence of supporting and promoting the education of young people Evidence of ability to work as part of a multi professional team Evidence of ability to work within a strict confidentiality policy	Experience of working with individual clients and organisations in a supportive capacity and implementing plans Experience of working with children in an education setting.	Application form Interview References
Skills and competencies		
Good interpersonal skills Ability to work with children, schools and other professionals dealing fairly and assertively with difficult situations and behaviours Active listening skills Ability to negotiate and persuade professionals, carers, parents and children to adopt a course of action that they may not have considered or otherwise choose to follow.	Experience of using ePEP system or equivalent information management system Experience of using ICS (social care case management system)	Application form Interview References

Excellent communication skills: ability to explain contentious or complex issues to a wide audience (carers, education and social care professionals, parents, children) orally and in writing and to prepare written plans and reports to required standard. Able to organise and manage own workload, working under pressure to meet conflicting demands and deadlines. Ability to make decisions on own initiative in day-to- day work and out in the field without close supervision, referring to line manager for advice or guidance on serious issues. Effective range of IT skills and ability to understand and develop use of ICT to achieve work objectives. Ability to process complex information quickly and accurately Works collaboratively within a team structure Ability to work within a clear policy of confidentiality. Demonstrate and support equality and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of work. Reliable and keeps good time. High level of commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children Confident and effective in stressful situations. Willingness to participate in training and personal development.		
Physical, mental and emotional demands		
Majority of the time will be spent in either an office or school environment and will include getting to and from a variety of settings sometimes carrying files and resources. Regular lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention with some pressure from deadlines, interruptions and conflicting demands Contact with students and adults who may exhibit challenging behaviour which may who may exhibit challenging behaviour which may cause emotional stress. Resilience to deal with distressing situations and information. Ability to cope with the driving demands of long journeys on a regular basis		Application form Interview References
Other		
No adverse criminal record Able to meet the travel requirements of the post		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits