

Chief Officer for Children's Services

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Dear Director of Children's Services,

**RE: ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED IN
DEVON LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA (which excludes Plymouth Unitary
Authority and Torbay Unitary Authority areas) BY OTHER LOCAL
AUTHORITIES**

A number of local authorities have looked after children they are responsible for placed in Independent Sector resources (fostering and residential) in Devon.

This letter sets out the process for notifying us when a looked after child or young person is placed in Devon, or when their placement arrangements change, and what we will do as a result of your notification.

If you need to contact Devon Children's Social Work service for advice about a potential placement please call **01392 382005** or e-mail: childrensplacements-mailbox@devon.gov.uk; for emergencies outside office hours call **0345 600 0388**.

In addition, Appendix A to this letter contains information about the resources and facilities available to looked after children and young people if placed in Devon by your local authority.

We also include information about our Virtual School for Looked After Children, information about accessing universal services and contact details for our Children in Care Council, known as the "Stand Up Speak Up" group.

Please disseminate this information to relevant professionals within your Children's Social Care Service and Virtual School. We hope that this information will help your staff to understand and access the diverse services that are available to looked after children and young people residing in Devon.

It would be helpful if you also passed this letter onto any of your foster carers in Devon so that they are aware of the services available to children and young people placed within our boundaries.

Notifications

All notifications of looked after children placed in Devon should be sent to our secure e-mail address:

cpchecks@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

and copy to:

- safeguardingchildren.sdtccg@nhs.net for children placed in South Devon
- d-ccg.lookedafterchildren@nhs.net for children placed in the rest of Devon

Changes of address and notifications of looked after children leaving Devon should also be sent to this mailbox when a child moves, so that we can update our records.

When placing a child in Devon, please ensure that the notification highlights any particular risks or vulnerabilities to assist the professional network within Devon to respond effectively to any issues that may arise.

In Devon, we routinely share information about other LA looked after children placed in Devon with our colleagues in Police, Health and the Virtual School. As part of your ongoing care planning responsibilities, where a child has specific additional needs or presents with specific risks, you may wish to make direct contact with these agencies to share information and undertake joint planning direct.

If you are unsure if a placement is based in Devon, please use the following tool for clarification: <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council>

We hope this information proves to be a helpful resource for professional colleagues from outside of Devon, who are working with looked after children placed here, and we welcome any feedback you may have.

Yours sincerely



Jo Olsson
Chief Officer for Children's Services

Appendix A

Additional information about services for looked after children and young people placed in Devon.

1. Schools

Devon has over 400 schools and settings reflecting a diverse landscape of educational provision including maintained schools, academies, free schools, early years settings and 4 colleges of higher education. Devon has a variety of alternative providers/independent providers and 10 maintained special schools, 3 of which offer residential places. In addition, there is a University Technology College and a Studio school open in Newton Abbot and Ashburton respectively which serve a wide area.

Devon has a well-established tradition of schools working in partnership. Devon also has a high number of independent providers offering specialist provision for a broad range of complex needs including those children with hearing and visual impairments. Devon undertakes regular monitoring of all independent specialist providers where it has commissioned places.

Exeter has a prestigious university which has provided 'taster' days for Children in Care so that they can experience a day in the life of a university and hear about the application process.

In Devon, our Virtual School tracks the educational progress of every Child in Care and works closely with the 0-25 SEND Team to ensure that all of the educational needs for those children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities are met.

The Virtual School has a number of Learning Advocates who maintain an overview of the academic provision and progress made by a specific cohort of Children in Care. Schools supply the Virtual School with regular progress information about every Looked After Child. Follow up contact and interventions are put in place where progress or attendance is below expectation.

A programme of learning mentor training is in place which aims to accelerate individual progress and to provide bespoke support for Children in Care. A range of specialist roles such as Education Welfare Officers and Educational Psychologists are dedicated to the Virtual School. The Virtual School has its own governing body which reports to the Corporate Parenting Forum.

The SEND Coordinator works closely with the Designated Teacher to ensure the information relating to any Child in Care with SEND is used to promote their educational achievement. Where a Looked After Child or young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, the SEND 0-25 Team will coordinate the formal assessment process and maintain the statement on behalf of the placing Authority. From September 2014, in line with new

legislation, Devon has a clear assessment pathway starting with early interventions and support supported by a Graduated response framework in schools and early help assessment and planning tools and if required a statutory needs assessment leading to a single Education, Health & Care plan (EHC plan).

In Devon, we also have a wide range of services available to provide help and support to children, their families and Carers, Schools and other professionals, to ensure that all children and young people get the best education.

- The SEND 0-25 Team can be contacted by emailing specialeducation0-25-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
- Information about and support for SEN in education settings can be found at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/supportforschools/services-and-contacts/send>
- For services and provision that can be expected for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Devon you can find further information on the Local Offer webpage at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer>
- Parent partnerships, DIAS
Foster carers of children with SEND access support from an independent advisory service, DIAS.
Their contact details are:
Virtual School Head - educationofchildrenincare-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
- Admissions – the school admissions service can be contacted by emailing school admissions: educate.childrenincareadmissions-mailbox@devon.gov.uk. A Devon Admissions Officer will support the process completing necessary paperwork and liaising with schools to support admission for children who do not have an EHCP and are in Years Reception to Year 11.

2. Early Years, Childcare and Nursery Provision

The [Family Information Service](#) are the main source of useful information for parents and carers of 0-19 year olds, and are the definitive source of registered childcare in Devon. They also provide information on other services and support for children, young people and parents.

Looked after children aged 2, 3 or 4 are entitled to 570 hours free early education and childcare a year at an Ofsted registered:

- Day nursery
- Nursery class attached to a school
- Pre-schools and/or
- Child minders that are registered to claim the free entitlement

A [Golden Ticket](#) is sent to carers of all 2 year old children in care; they can take the ticket to a childcare provider to access a funded place. Childcare providers for three and four year old children in care can also claim the Early Years Pupil Premium to support children's learning and care.

To search for childcare carers can search on [Pinpoint](#) or call 01392 380000 and ask for Pinpoint; alternatively they can email pinpoint@devon.gov.uk . A [childcare brokerage service](#) is also available for those who are unable to find the childcare they need.

3. Children's Centres

Children's centres will provide the gateway to Early Help services for **all children under 5** and their families in Devon, working closely with Social Care, Education, Public Health including Health Visitors, Midwives and GP's, alongside programmes encouraging parents to return to work. Children's Centre services are delivered within centres and also within the community.

More information about our Children's Centres can be found here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/early-years-and-childcare/childrens-centres>

4. Health Services

All looked after children and young people in the Devon Local Authority area are entitled to universal, targeted and secondary health services. Universal services include full registration with a GP and NHS Dentist, immunisations, neonatal screening programmes, development surveillance and health promotion in accordance with the Health Child Programme.

The emotional health and wellbeing of our children and young people in care is supported through a range of services, such as: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Learning Disability Services, which provides accessible targeted prevention and treatment services specifically for young people across the county.

Where the child will require specialist health services such as CAMHS, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) that commissions secondary healthcare in the area authority should be consulted, so the responsible authority can establish whether the placement is appropriate and able to meet the child's needs. If the placement has undertaken to provide mental health support appropriate to the child's needs then a parallel referral to Devon CAMHS will

not be required. Where the placement has not been commissioned to meet these needs we are to provide routine community CAMHS support for young people placed in Devon who meet Devon CAMHS thresholds and where the placing CCG has agreed to accept the Devon CAMHS tariff schedule for work undertaken.

If a child in care from another local authority has an urgent mental health issue, Devon CAMHS will provide a service and this will be recharged back through the CCG, unless reciprocal arrangements are in place and have been previously agreed. Young people accommodated within the Atkinson unit (secure children's home) will receive CAMHS care under a specialised commissioned service level agreement

There are two Designated Nurses for children and young people each covering a specific area of Devon and will be a valuable source of advice and information. The Designated Nurses can be contacted on:

Gwyneth Nightingale, NHS Northern Eastern Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group.

Tel: (mobile): 07500 578 574

email: Gwyneth.nightingale@nhs.net
d-ccg.lookedafterchildren@nhs.net

Linda Village, NHS South Devon & Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group

Tel 01803 652500

e-mail: lindavillage@nhs.net
safeguardingchildren.sdtccg@nhs.net

To request a Review Health assessment within Devon please request via the Devon health assessments co-ordinator via telephone on 01392 383000 secure email VCL.DevonReviewHealthAssessments@nhs.net .

Virgin Healthcare has a clear charging policy for Review Health assessments through a service level agreement.

5. Youth Offending Service

Devon Youth Offending Service (YOS) work with young offenders aged between 10 and 17 who are the subject of Court Orders and Police Cautions, and also work on a voluntary basis with young people who have been identified as being at risk of offending.

In line with Youth Justice Board guidance the YOS has its own processes to follow when cases are transferred in from other local authorities.

The Devon Youth Offending Service can be contacted on 01392 384978.

More information about our Youth Offending Service can be found here:

6. Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home (REACH)

Devon County Council's REACH Team (Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care or Home) is a service led by a team manager and two dedicated practice leads and comprising REACH family practitioners who work alongside Devon Children's Services, Early Help colleagues and Devon and Cornwall Police. The REACH Team provide specialist support for children and young people who are reported missing or who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and are complemented by Checkpoint (Children's Society), who provide longer term therapeutic input to children who are known to be or have been victims of CSE.

The key objectives of REACH are to firstly identify and protect those children and young people who are at risk from being vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked. Secondly, to share information and intelligence in respect of adults who may pose a risk to children or young people. Thirdly to work across agencies to raise awareness knowledge and confidence in working in this complex area.

The team operate throughout Devon and have four primary functions:

- Firstly, the completion of independent Return Home Interviews, to young people and children who either go missing, or are reported absent from their family or care home. Within this context, the workers can provide short term interventions to assist children and their families, and to divert children away from becoming 'repeat missing'.
- Secondly, to work with social work colleagues in order to help them to provide specialist 1-1 CSE interventions for children and young people (who are open to Childrens Services), who have either experienced CSE or who are deemed to be at risk of CSE.
- Thirdly, to take the lead role in undertaking Social Work assessments, as part of complex police CSE investigations. As part of this role, REACH practitioners participate in CSE operational meetings with partner agencies including Devon and Cornwall police.
- Lastly, REACH Family Practitioners can deliver targeted CSE education programmes within a range of schools and Youth Centres across the county, these aim to raise awareness of CSE and seek to support school communities with identifying CSE indicators and managing and reducing risk.

The team attend a range of safeguarding and multi-agency meetings and in particular, have a pivotal role within locality Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation forums (MACSE).

If your local authority has placed a child or young person in Devon and there are concerns that they are at risk from CSE and may be vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked, **please contact Devon's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 155 1071**

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/young-people/reach-reducing-exploitation-and-absence-from-care-or-home>

7. Advocacy Support for Looked After Children in Devon

Devon County Council has commissioned two advocacy support services which enable children and young people looked after by Devon County Council to have their voices heard in a variety of settings. These services are accessible for children and young people placed by other local authorities on a spot-purchase basis directly from the two services.

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) are commissioned by Devon County Council for the following purposes:

- Children aged 4-18yrs involved in Child Protection processes
- Children aged 4-21yrs who are looked after or care-leavers (primarily for Children in Care Reviews and Pathway Planning Meetings)
- Children aged 4-18yrs who wish to make a health or social care complaint
- Children aged 4-18yrs who are privately fostered
- Children aged 4-18yrs whose adoption placement is at risk of breaking down
- Children placed at the Atkinson Secure Unit – offering independent visiting advocacy service including acting as an independent person for Secure Reviews
- Independent Visiting for looked after children with few or no significant adults in their lives

To speak with someone about commissioning or purchasing NYAS services for children and young people, please contact Michelle Vaughan on 0151 649 8700 or email michelle.vaughan@nyas.net

See <http://www.nyas.net> for further information.

DAC (Devon Advocacy Consortium) are commissioned by Devon County Council for the following purposes:

- Young people aged 16-25yrs with additional needs, who may need to move from children's to adult support services
- Children and young people of any age who are sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983 and are deemed in need of an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)
- Young people aged 16yrs and above who are deemed in need of an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)

To speak with someone about commissioning or purchasing DAC services for children and young people, please contact Heather Blease on 01392 459222 or email heather.blease@livingoptions.org

See <http://www.livingoptions.org/index.php?page=devon-advocacy-consortium> for further information

8. Our Children in Care Council (Stand Up Speak Up)

We invite all Children in Care, living in Devon, to have their say and get the voice heard on issues important to them.

We run regular groups for young people aged 13-17, and care leavers aged 16-21 in Barnstaple, Totnes & Exeter. These groups give young people the opportunity to meet & socialise with other young people and if they wish, to get their voices heard.

Our formal Children in Care Council works in two ways.

Firstly, we have 'The Roadshow' these meetings take place twice a year, in venues across the County and are an opportunity for young people in care to pop in and have their say on issues that are important to them and speak directly with senior managers.

We then have 'The Committee' this group meets more regularly and is made up of representatives from different groups across the County. The role of 'The Committee' is to represent the views of children in care and care leavers and to help plan 'The Roadshows'.

These two parts of the Children in Care Council work together to use innovative ways to get across their messages about improving services for children in care, including being involved in film making, modelling and many other creative activities, as well as speaking directly with elected members and senior officers.

The groups are facilitated by the Participation Team and you can find out more by visiting the website <https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/> or contacting the team participationchildrensocialcare-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

9. Space (formerly Devon Youth Service)

Space (DYS Space Ltd) is a public sector mutual organisation, commissioned by DCC to deliver youth services across Devon. They provide three open access sessions per week for different ages between 11-19 in each of the eight youth hubs: Exeter, Exmouth, Tiverton, Barnstaple, Bideford, Okehampton, Totnes and Newton Abbot. The open access sessions are well used resources which enable young people in care, care leavers and other young people to access safe warm meeting places, to receive support where required, to take part in a range of activities and experiences, as well as taking part in development programmes, gaining accreditations and generally

grow in confidence. The hubs have provided stability for a number of young people in care and care leavers who have moved around the Devon as their placements have changed.

In addition, Space works in partnership with a whole range of voluntary and community sector organisations, including other youth clubs in communities, sports groups, arts, music, and exploration groups across Devon. These range from very small locality based organisations through to countywide organisations. If they can't connect with you directly they usually know who can!

Many of Space's youth workers also spend time on targeted support for young people in particular circumstances or with particular needs. This can be 1:1 or in groups. Young people can either self refer to the Space for targeted support or can be referred by Social Workers, schools and other professionals working with young people. When referred, Space will devise tailored programmes with young people to resolve some of those issues and circumstances.

For more information on what Space can offer email lisa.rutter@spacepsm.org, call their Central Office on 01392 662112, or visit the website: <http://www.devonyouthservice.org.uk/>

10. Commissioning and Monitoring of Providers

Devon County Council are part of a partnership arrangement with Peninsula Authorities to commission residential childrens homes, special schools, independent fostering agencies and 16 plus providers. We operate a robust framework contract process which has opened for new applications twice in the last year.

We are organised as a Board and Project team and undertake site visits and investigations as appropriate. We also arrange provider forums and seek to promote best practice through market development activities. If however significant concerns about providers are raised or providers are judged inadequate by Ofsted we are able to suspend them from the Peninsular Framework until satisfactory conclusion of an action plan.

For further information about the status of a provider, to share significant information about a provider or for other advice about independent sector providers in Devon please contact:
procurementpeople-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

11. Other Services

The Devon Community Directory provides information about a wide variety of non-Devon County Council and non-commissioned services which exist across Devon:

<http://www.directory.devon.gov.uk/kb5/devon/directory/home.page>

The Devon County Council website is also a useful resource for more information about general services and events in Devon:
www.devon.gov.uk

Useful Contact Numbers		
<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption</p> <p>Supporting adopters, children and families throughout the adoption process and beyond</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1076</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Care Direct</p> <p>Information and help for older people, vulnerable adults, and their carers</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1007</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Children's Social Work</p> <p>For ongoing Children's Social Work Enquiries (available 9am-5pm, Mon to Thurs and 9am-4pm, Fri)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1078</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Disability Information Service</p> <p>Information and help for disabled people and carers including equipment, benefits, and care support</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1005</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Family Information Service</p> <p>For information and advice on registered childcare, 2gether and services for children, young people and parents</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1013</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fostering</p> <p>Advice on becoming a Foster Carer</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1077</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)</p> <p>Speak to someone if you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1071</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Schools & Education</p> <p>School admissions, transport and free School meals</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 155 1019</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Emergencies (out of hours)</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 0345 600 0388</p>

