Virtual School website: [http://www.essex.gov.uk/virtualschool](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.essex.gov.uk%2Fvirtualschool&data=04%7C01%7C%7C76e05f2761464c90913408d9986ee6ae%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637708425351588217%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ZFHj9COUP9%2F1lWW0XZ18ZPR63TKxsOCrgSQyWRbN86o%3D&reserved=0)

***New Duty for children known to social care***

From September 2021 Virtual Schools are being asked to become strategic leaders for the cohort of children 0-18 who have been assessed as being in need. That is defined as those who currently have a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker.

The Virtual School Lead for Children with a Social Worker and Previously Looked After Children will work in partnership with children’s services, early years settings, schools, colleges, and other education providers to further understand and address the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience.

This will build on Essex Virtual School’s statutory work: improving outcomes for Looked After Children and our offer for Previously Looked After Children.

**How we will do this:**

The Virtual School will champion the interests of children with a social worker and work to build collaboration, enhancing existing partnerships so that engagement with education increases and young people are able to meet their potential.

**We will:**

* Respond to queries from a range of education professionals in early years settings, schools, colleges, and other education providers.
* Work to raise aspirations and awareness of potential barriers to learning experienced by children and young people with a social worker.
* Advise early years settings, schools, colleges, and other education providers on how they can work together with social workers and early help children’s services to help children and young people overcome potential barriers to learning.
* Advise social workers, early years settings, schools, colleges, and other education providers on how they can support improvements in attendance, punctuality and behaviour, and avoid exclusions.
* Provide advice regarding the best use of Pupil Premium to promote attendance, punctuality, attainment, and progress.
* Advise early years settings, schools, colleges, and other education providers to work towards attachment and trauma awareness.
* Bring together all partners and colleagues working in Children, Young People and Families to help remove the significant barriers to education of adversity, trauma, abuse and neglect that these children and young people may have experienced.

**What are the limits of our duty?**

* Working with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring educational progress of individual children or providing academic or other interventions.
* Responding to requests from parents or carers to offer advice, intervention and support in relation to individual children with a social worker.
* Taking responsibility for children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) who do not need a social worker.