

Appendix 1

Specification

Specification for Attendance Monitoring Service with electronic Personal Education Plan for Looked After Children

Note: A child “looked after” by a local authority under the Children Act 1989 is referred to by Government as a Looked After Child. In Oxfordshire, we use the term children we care for. However, for the purposes of this document, we will refer to children we care for as Looked After Children.

Background & Context

The Council is committed to improving the educational attainment of Looked After Children (LAC) and has a duty under the Children Act 1989 ¹ to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a specific duty to promote the child’s educational achievement, wherever they live or are educated.

As part of this duty, we are required to monitor their engagement with education – so, monitoring their attendance, attainment, and progress across all provisions they access. All Looked After Children (LAC) must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is reviewed regularly in conjunction with their LAC review. The PEP forms part of their care plan.

The Council are looking to commission a platform that offers integrated attendance monitoring, attainment tracking and ePEP systems on a shared platform. We are looking for a system that will improve both the quality and efficiency of ePEPs within the local authority and make the process of completing ePEPs streamlined and user-friendly. We also require the preferred Service Provider to offer a robust attendance monitoring service to accurately track and monitor the attendance of every Oxfordshire Looked After Child (wherever they reside), including Post 16 young people and care leavers that are attending educational settings.

Scope

The aim of this service will be to provide up-to-date and accurate information about the education of Oxfordshire Looked After Children. The system will monitor

¹ [Children Act 1989](#)

attendance and provide assessment for a number of different cohorts which range from: in and out of county Looked After Children, Youth Offenders, SEN children, Children Missing Education (CME), children attending alternative provisions, Post 16 young people and care leavers.

A secure cloud-based platform is required, enabling a fully managed service for the collection of attendance and attainment data for vulnerable cohorts of children, including reporting and analytics, regardless of what type of education provision they attend - registered schools, residential homes, PRU's (Pupil Referral Units), hospital-based provisions, youth offending institutes and work-based provisions for Post-16 children, colleges, etc. The platform should be able to collect attendance from Alternative Providers and make it clear when reporting that they are in such a setting.

While some of this data collection could be captured electronically, some data will need to be collected via direct contact, e.g. phone calls or other suitable alternatives initiated by people. Attendance data collected electronically will need robust monitoring, e.g. where there are gaps, these will need to be followed up on the same day.

The platform will need to be able to host ePEPs, with flexibility for templates to be amended and key information fields automatically transferred (by agreement) from one ePEP to the next. The platform will also need to be able to upload and store key documents (e.g. pupil reports and assessments) within the ePEP and have a facility for service users to add notes to the ePEP. The service should enable users to pull reports for analysis and capture visual data that highlights trends to inform actions to improve outcomes for Looked After Children.

Once an ePEP has been submitted for review by the Designated Teacher, the Council needs to be notified. If a Designated Teacher does not submit an ePEP within an agreed time period, the platform should automatically alert them. In addition, when the Council have quality assured the ePEP, there needs to be a way of notifying the Virtual School finance team about payments (as appropriate) and there needs to be a way of notifying the Designated Teacher to feedback on the PEP quality, any Pupil Premium Plus requests and to communicate the date of the next PEP meeting. The notification to the Designated Teacher should appear as the front page of the saved/downloaded ePEP.

Requirements

1. Client Group Size

The attendance monitoring service and ePEP platform will provide for approximately 800 Looked After Children. The Service Provider and Council agree to absorb any fluctuation of this figure up to 10%.

2. ePEP

Personalised ePEP templates will be required for all ages, including LAC attending education settings from Foundation 3/Nursery 1 (2-3yrs) up to Post 16.

Templates will be designed in conjunction with the Council and information fields pre-populated, as agreed, to reduce input and ensure accuracy.

Personal information must be stored safely and securely always and will comply with General Data Protection Regulations (2018)².

ePEPs must be linked to the same platform as the attendance service.

The ePEP should be a cloud-based system accessible 24 hours a day to users in the Virtual School, social workers, designated teachers, and any other users added by the Virtual School. User accessibility rights will be agreed with the Service Provider. A Support network must be available 52 weeks of the year.

The Service Provider will need a system in place to monitor the rolling allocation of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) available for each Looked After Child. When PP+ is allocated via an ePEP, the amount(s) should be deducted from their total allocation and make clear what remains from their allocation for that financial year.

3. Attendance Monitoring

The required outcomes of the service will be as follows:

- To provide timely and accurate information held on Oxfordshire LAC.
- Daily attendance should be collected for all Oxfordshire LAC (from the date they come into care) with built in reporting and analysis tools to support with monitoring cohorts and individuals. Any missing or unknown marks should be followed up on the same day as a matter of priority to ensure data accuracy and enable potential safeguarding issues to be followed up without delay.
- In certain Post-16 educational settings, with a considerable number of young people, the Service Provider should establish an appropriate system for recording attendance marks. These marks should be added to records on a weekly basis, with any missing marks promptly addressed.
- The platform should allow Designated Teachers to view attendance records for any LAC, young people or care leaver assigned to them.

² [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Reporting

The service Provider will provide customised reports (with built-in user flexibility) to allow the Virtual School to analyse, for example:

- Demographic data.
- Ofsted data.
- Attendance and exclusion data.
- Number of schools moves and school days between moves.
- Statutory attainment data (EY Baseline data, narrative statements for mathematics and LCL, EYFS, Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 Phonics Re-take, Year 4 MTC (Multiplication Tables Check), optional KS1 SATs, KS2 SATs, KS4 data) and PEP level data, e.g. school days from new into care to PEP held date.
- Progress and attainment of LACs
- ePEP timescales and quality
- Reports comparing historic data with current data

Reports should be available daily, weekly, termly and/or for the academic year as agreed between the Service Provider and the Council.

Reports will be required for PP+ payments and reports for mailing purposes, e.g. Designated Teachers, Exam Officers, etc. Reports for mailing purposes should have email addresses in the correct format, ready for use in Microsoft Outlook and should be in an exportable format. All ePEP and pupil level data should be available from the system.

There is also a requirement to be able to work with the Service Provider to produce any other necessary reports during the contract period.

Collection of Results for Statutory Assessments

The service Provider will collate and send National Curriculum Assessment results (EY Baseline data, narrative statements for mathematics and LCL, EYFS, Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 Phonics Re-take, Year 4 MTC, optional KS1 SATs, KS2 SATs) for all Oxfordshire LACs within 2-weeks of their publication.

The service Provider will collate all GCSE results for all Oxfordshire LACs as soon as possible after National Results Day, as well as any other Key Stage 4 qualifications completed – e.g. Functional Skills/BTEC/AQA Modules, etc. These results should be saved as part of the child's record, stored by the Service Provider and be easy to view when users are working on ePEPs.

Flexible reports on statutory assessments should be available to the Virtual School for analysis.

Implementation

Upon contract, the Service Provider will supply a detailed Implementation Plan reflecting a firm schedule, milestones, specific tasks with quantified goals and responsibilities.

It is essential that existing data is not lost or compromised. It is also expected that the Service Provider will supply a detailed Migration Plan. The migration of PEP notes and additional files (e.g. EP reports, end of year reports) attached to existing ePEP records will need particular care.

A phased approach will enable us to effectively migrate existing data from our current Service Provider to the new platform which should result in minimal disruption to day-to-day operations and administration.

Upon contract termination, the Council is entitled to access all stored data on the platform, including historical records and any saved notes or documents associated with ePEPs, in a usable digital download format.

Performance

The service will be monitored on a regular basis, dates of which will be agreed between the Council's and Service Provider's representatives, and will include telephone, Microsoft Teams, and/or face-to-face discussions to ensure performance measures are being met and to allow for two-way feedback.

The following table lists the key resources, processes, functionality, or services and their anticipated business outcomes that will inform the measurement of the performance of the project:

Key Resource	Performance Measure
Flexible Reporting	The system will provide flexible reports including but not limited to those outlined in the Requirements section above to enable users to analyse data that highlights trends to inform actions to improve outcomes for LACs.

Key Resource	Performance Measure
Attendance Monitoring	<p>Daily attendance should be collected for all Oxfordshire LACs, regardless of what type of education provision they attend.</p> <p>Any missing or unexplained absences should be followed up (same day) as a matter of priority to ensure data accuracy and enable potential safeguarding issues to be followed up without delay.</p> <p>Attendance data must be available to view online in real time by the Virtual School at any time, enabling them to intervene promptly to individual cases and develop strategic responses to trends when Looked After Children are absent from school.</p>
ePEP Information Transfer	<p>The platform will host ePEPs with flexibility for templates to be amended and key information fields automatically transferred (by agreement) from one ePEP to the next, without the need for Service Provider intervention.</p> <p>After implementation, relevant client information will be supplied by the Council through secure platforms such as Egress Switch.</p>
User Permissions	<p>Stored information on the ePEP and attendance monitoring platform must always be available to permitted users, dependent on user rights.</p>

Key Resource	Performance Measure
Software and System Maintenance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As this is a web-based service, no resources need be devoted to software maintenance, hosting, or storage by The Council. 2. As this service is critical to the Virtual School meeting its statutory duties, the Service Provider will ensure safeguards are in place to maintain business continuity on this platform and shall provide an uninterrupted service and notify The Council in the event of any service interruptions. 3. The system will strive for a minimum uptime of 99%, 24 hours a day for 52 weeks a year. 4. Scheduled maintenance windows must be communicated in advance. 5. Unscheduled outages will be addressed promptly and immediately communicated to the Council. 6. Response time to critical incidents needs to be within 1 hour and non-critical incidents within 4 hours. The Provider will need to establish a definitive plan detailing the process for incident communication to the Council. 7. Resolution of critical incidents will be resolved within 4 hours and non-critical incidents within 48hrs. 8. Monthly electronic status reports to be provided, including incident reports detailing any service disruptions and resolutions. Report fields should include date and length of time the system was unavailable to users, number of user queries (phone or email or online), type of queries, status of queries (resolved or not resolved) and time taken to resolve or timeframe for resolving if still open. 9. The ability to transfer data via CSV and XML and to import data into Education Management Systems. Should the provider be able to supply a comprehensive integrated Management Information System at any stage in the contract, the Council would like to explore this option.

Commented [BF1]: Please provide the X info.

Also, are there steps you would like to take, or for them to take to escalate i.e. how long before you escalate for unresolved issues.

Commented [CC2R1]: By response time do you mean telling the VS? I would say within the first hour of a working day for critical and hours for non critical? Resolution I would say 2 hours for critical and a working day for non critical but I may be overly optimistic?

Commented [FC3R1]: Perhaps @Patel, Hema - Oxfordshire County Council can assist with this one?

Commented [PC4R1]: agree 1 hour for critical incidents and possibly ask them to confirm how they plan to get the data shared with us if this happens? Otherwise it could be that a child doesn't attend and we don't get to hear about it... For non critical - 4hrs might be more realistic, @Comer, Emma - Oxfordshire County Council would that be okay for the service?

Commented [BF5]: How often would you like the report to monitor the system?

Commented [CC6R5]: I think monthly?

Commented [FC7R5]: I would include a basic layout that you require so that you don't get a report that you can't read. Or put in a comment where the report layout will be agreed according to needs. That way, it can be amended should you require any changes.

Commented [CC8R5]: I see this report as one on the system performance rather than reports we want to pull on data. I have added a little more on timescales to the Requirements section under Reporting. I will also add some headings here to show what I mean

Key Resource	Performance Measure
Customer Support	<p>The Service Provider will ensure advice and support is available to support system users in the form of online and telephone support between the hours of business Monday – Friday from 8am to 5pm.</p> <p>User guides would also be available for less urgent troubleshooting.</p>
Continuous Improvement	<p>The Service Provider must have a means of hearing and responding, without delay, to customer feedback and must be committed to continual service improvement in-line with changes in the market and statutory duties.</p> <p>The Service provider must have clear lines of communication so users can feedback easily when using the system online. The Service Provider will respond to all feedback in a timely manner. The Council should be able to view feedback and responses online, with timescales for any resulting changes to the system outlined. Regular monthly meetings between the Council and the Service provider will be held where feedback and responses will be discussed as well as any changes in statutory duties. If statutory duties were to change, we would expect the Provider to make the necessary system changes within the terms of the contract.</p>

Commented [BF9]: Please elaborate on how you would like them to do this and what they need to give to you for monitoring purposes. Is there also any escalation, i.e. what you will do if they don't provide this?

Commented [CC10R9]: I have added some detail but is it enough?

Commented [FC11R9]: I think that's fine. You have the opportunity to ask them to specify what communication they use in one of the marked questions, so the more they evidence, the higher the mark for quality.

I would also go through this doc to ensure that there is only one reference for VS staff and users so that it doesn't get too confusing. Generally the term 'the Council' is used so that you are not limited.

Commented [CC12]: We refer to some legislation earlier in the document, do we need to renumber with these included? Do we need to add links for all at the end?

Commented [FC13R12]: If you have quoted the same guidance/legislation at various pages on the doc, then you can cross reference to one link.

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

The Service Provider shall ensure that it has in place systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the protection of children and young people consistent with the ³Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's ("OSCB's") ⁴Procedures Manual, as amended from time to time, and ⁵Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and shall ensure compliance with such systems, policies, and procedures.

Risk Management

³ [Home - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board \(oscb.org.uk\)](http://www.oscb.org.uk)

⁴ [New look OSCB Procedures Manual - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#)

⁵ [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

The Service Provider shall produce a Risk Management Plan including elements of their web-based platform, resourcing and engagement, scope variations etc.

Relevant Legislation

The Children Act 1989, as amended by the ⁶Children and Families Act 2014 and the ⁷Children and Social Work Act 2017. ⁸The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, as amended.

⁶ [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)