IT devices and access to internet policy for children in care and care leavers

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1.0	Final	20190524	Policy published		All
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Consultation Log

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Looked after children and care leavers will often benefit from having access to IT equipment to enable them to:

- Engage fully with education or training
- Maintain contact with family or friends who live at a distance
- Access on-line support and advice to meet needs including emotional and mental health support.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and any assessed need that could be met by provision of IT equipment should be considered under this policy.

<u>Education and training needs</u>

One of the aims of the Virtual School is that all looked after children of school age and care leavers who are at college or university, should have access to a computer to assist with their studies. For children and young people in foster and residential placements the expectation is that foster carers or placement providers for looked after children and young people under the age of 18 should provide computers and internet access for use by children and young people.

For children and young people in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 and for young people who are care leavers aged over 18 studying in Further Education and at University we believe that, where possible and appropriate, a young person should have their own IT device to assist them with their education. These devices are intended to support young people with their education. Therefore, a device will be provided to looked after young people and care leavers who:

- Are in school years 9 and over and who are at school, further education college, training course or university

AND

- Have been in continuous education, or have started on a new course and have been attending fully for a minimum of four weeks;
- Have attendance of at least 90% on the course, or in previous continuous education;
- Have not received a computer from the Virtual School in the last 4 years.

Additionally there are other exceptional circumstances that justify the provision of a computer – e.g. they are younger but have a particular need to have access to their own computer or need specialist equipment or programmes to support special educational needs.

<u>Other needs</u>

As stated above, foster carers and placement providers are expected to provide IT devices and internet use for children and young people. Therefore payment for IT devices and internet use will be for looked after children who are living independently or for care leavers. In exceptional circumstances then this could be considered for a looked after child if this was the most effective way of meeting need.

The need should be assessed and identified in the Pathway Plan and agreed in accordance with the current departmental policy for delegation of decision making and budget controls.

<u>Application for IT devices and internet use</u>

Pupil premium can be used to provide equipment for those still at school and this can be agreed at the PEP meeting.

CLA and care leavers who are registered on post-16 courses funded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) are entitled to a bursary through the college / training provider which can be used to purchase a device.

For those who do not have a bursary or do not have sufficient bursary, devices for young people will be applied for by their Virtual School Education Officer, Social Worker or 16+ Personal Adviser –

usually following a PEP meeting, CLA review or Pathway Plan review where it is agreed that the young person needs the equipment or internet use as set out in the sections below.

The request will be decided by the Virtual School Head if it is for the purposes of education or training and the 16+ team manager if it for a different purpose.

Joanna Chick

Virtual School Headteacher

And

Stacie Lane

Service Manager Children in Care and Care Leavers