

Warwickshire Virtual School FAQs

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

Frequently Asked Questions for School Leaders, DSLs and CWSW Leads

This FAQ supports the Warwickshire Virtual School CWSW website page by providing additional guidance for schools and settings.

Who are Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)?

For this area of Warwickshire Virtual School work, Children with a Social Worker includes:

- Children subject to a Child in Need (CiN) plan.
- Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan.
- Children who have previously had a social worker within the last six years (Ever-6 CWSW).
- Children in formal kinship care arrangements.

Why are Children with a Social Worker a priority group?

Children with a Social Worker are more likely to experience challenges relating to attendance, attainment, wellbeing and inclusion. The Virtual School works strategically to promote high aspirations, improve educational outcomes and ensure this cohort remains visible within schools.

Do schools need a named CWSW Lead?

Warwickshire Virtual School recommends that every school identifies a named lead for Children with a Social Worker. This is often the DSL, Deputy DSL, Inclusion Lead or another senior leader with responsibility for overseeing support and monitoring outcomes for the cohort.

What are schools expected to do?

Schools should:

- Identify and maintain an accurate register of CWSW.
- Monitor attendance, learning, attainment, wellbeing and belonging.
- Promote high aspirations and inclusive practice.
- Ensure education is considered within safeguarding planning.
- Work effectively with families and partner agencies.
- Evaluate and evidence the impact of support provided.

What support can the Virtual School provide?

The Virtual School provides:

- Strategic advice and guidance.
- Professional development and training.
- Support with attendance, inclusion and engagement.
- Resources and practical guidance.
- Network opportunities.
- Information on national and local developments.
- Strategic advice on effective practice for supporting the CWSW cohort.

Can schools discuss individual children with the Virtual School?

The Virtual School does not undertake casework or direct case management. However, the Education Adviser can provide strategic information, advice and guidance around:

- Educational barriers affecting the CWSW cohort.
- Attendance and inclusion.
- Effective practice and school improvement.
- Multi-agency working.
- Strategic provision planning for vulnerable learners.

What support is available for attendance concerns?

The Virtual School promotes attendance as a safeguarding, wellbeing and educational priority. We work alongside schools and Warwickshire Attendance Service to support early intervention, improve engagement and share effective attendance practice.

What is meant by 'behaviour as communication'?

Children who have experienced adversity, trauma or disruption may communicate unmet needs through their behaviour. Schools are encouraged to explore underlying needs and use relational approaches that strengthen belonging, regulation and engagement.

Do all Children with a Social Worker have SEND?

No. However, some Children with a Social Worker may also have identified SEND or additional vulnerabilities. Schools should take a holistic approach that considers educational, emotional, social and safeguarding needs.

How should schools support positive transitions for Children with a Social Worker?

Positive transitions should include early information sharing, joined-up planning and consideration of attendance, wellbeing, learning needs and belonging. Schools should use transition points to review support, strengthen relationships and ensure that key adults understand the child's needs and strengths.

How should schools use resources and tools to support the CWSW cohort?

Schools can use Warwickshire Virtual School resources, guidance, newsletters, training materials and partner learning opportunities to strengthen provision for Children with a Social Worker. These should support whole-school systems, staff confidence, early identification of need and evidence-informed practice.

How can schools keep Children with a Social Worker visible within their systems?

Schools should ensure that CWSW are clearly identified within relevant tracking and review systems, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Attendance, learning, attainment, wellbeing and belonging should be monitored regularly so that patterns are identified early and support can be adjusted when needed.

How can schools evaluate the impact of support for Children with a Social Worker?

Impact should be reviewed through both data and professional discussion. Schools may consider attendance, progress, attainment, behaviour, suspension and exclusion, wellbeing, engagement, pupil voice and the effectiveness of multi-agency planning. The key question is whether support is improving the child's experience of school and their educational outcomes.

How can schools strengthen multi-agency working?

Effective multi-agency working includes:

- Clear communication.
- Shared understanding of professional roles.
- Appropriate information sharing.
- Joint planning around outcomes.
- Timely escalation of concerns when required.

The Virtual School provides advice and training to support partnership working.

What training is available?

The Virtual School offers:

- Annual CWSW Leadership Training.
- New to CWSW Leadership training.
- Termly network meetings.
- Trauma-informed and relational practice training.

What is the role of governors in relation to Children with a Social Worker?

Governors should understand how the school identifies and supports Children with a Social Worker, how leaders monitor attendance, learning, inclusion, wellbeing and belonging, and how impact is evaluated. This should remain strategic and should not involve discussion of identifiable individual children unless this is required through the school's usual safeguarding governance arrangements.

What might Ofsted inspectors ask about Children with a Social Worker?

Schools should be able to explain:

- Who their CWSW cohort are.
- How needs are identified and understood.
- What support is in place.
- How attendance, learning, inclusion, wellbeing and belonging are monitored.
- How impact is measured.
- How outcomes are being improved.

When should I contact the Virtual School?

Contact the Virtual School if you need:

- Advice regarding your CWSW cohort.
- Support with attendance, inclusion or engagement.
- Guidance around multi-agency working.
- Information about training opportunities.
- Strategic advice on identifying appropriate support approaches.
- Advice on improving outcomes for Children with a Social Worker.

Virtual School's CWSW Education Adviser is: sharonharris@warwickshire.gov.uk