

Camden Virtual School Bulletin

8th December 2023

If you have any items for the Virtual School bulletin, please email virtualschool@camden.gov.uk



Headlines

Christmas Theatre Tickets

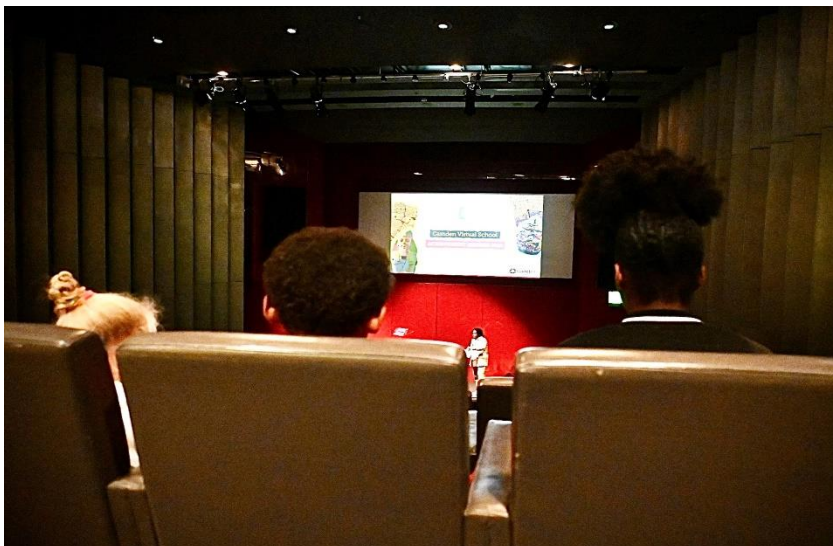
Friday, December 29th at 1.30pm

The Virtual School have limited tickets available on a first-come, first-served basis to see Aladdin at the Hackney Empire. Children aged 4+ require their own ticket. Ticket pairs are available for Camden children looked after and one accompanying carer. Please email VirtualSchool@camden.gov.uk by **Friday 15th December** if you would like to express an interest in securing a pair of tickets.

Camden Virtual School Achievement Awards

On October 24th, the Camden Virtual School held the annual Achievement Awards at the British Museum. Councillor Patricia Callaghan, Acting Leader of the Council, gave a welcome speech before 57 young people, aged 4 to 19, received awards. Certificates were presented to the young people by Councillor Nazma Rahman, the Mayor of Camden, along with Councillors Marcus Boyland, Jenny Mulholland and Jenny Headlam-Wells.

Before the ceremony, young people enjoyed entertainment comprising a magic mirror photobooth, face-painter, balloon modeller and magician. Each young person also received free books. A hot buffet lunch took place after the awards and young people then enjoyed a tour of the British Museum.



The Virtual School are now looking ahead to next year's event and as always we are keen to involve children and young people in the planning and delivery of the event as much as possible, if you know a child/young person who would like to get involved, please email VirtualSchool@camden.gov.uk.

Pupil Premium Plus and Post-16 Pupil Premium Plus

Since 2014, Virtual School Heads have been receiving Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding for children in care, aged 4 to 15. This is used to provide both individual support that a child needs, as identified in their Personal Education Plan, and for the cohort as a whole. This

funding ceases when the child reaches the age of 16, but Virtual School Head duties and the need for bespoke support continue for as long as the child is in care.

As such, from April 2023, Camden Virtual School now receives a limited amount of additional funding for looked-after children and care leavers at post-16. This funding will provide support to local authorities in England for expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them to extend support to looked-after children and care at post-16.

Local authorities can spend this grant to support costs associated with meeting this duty. In doing so, they should take account of the statutory guidance Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children, published on 26th February 2018, to help them implement this new duty.

Applications for Pupil Premium Plus and Post-16 Pupil Premium plus can be made via the young person's e-PEP. Once submitted via e-PEP, Pupil Premium Plus requests are considered by Natalie White, Virtual School Head, and Post-16 Pupil Premium Plus requests are considered by Mary Holder, Deputy Virtual School Head. Instructions on how to apply can be found below.

If you need support, please contact [Sarah Lewis](#), Virtual School Operations Manager.

Download: [How to apply for Pupil Premium Plus Funding](#)

Pick a Free Book

A FREE book from Camden Virtual School for all children looked after

We would like to offer all Camden children who are looked after the opportunity to request one of the books listed below, which the Virtual School will have delivered to your home address. This offer is part of our commitment to race equality and ensuring that this is reflected in the literature children have available at home. The importance of children having access to books where they encounter characters, situations and viewpoints that mirror their own lives, and also gives them a window into the lives of others is well very documented.

Please select the book you would like for your child/children looked after and share the list with young people so they can make the selection for themselves. The books are linked to target age ranges but remember for younger children you may need to share and read the book with your child.

To request your FREE book, please email VirtualSchool@camden.gov.uk (including the selected title).

Download: [Free Books for Children and Young People](#)

Information for Professionals

Virtual School Training Courses for Spring Term 2023/24

Camden Virtual School is offering the following courses to Camden Social Workers, IROs, Designated Teachers and Foster Carers.

Any new social workers are strongly encouraged to attend both courses. Colleagues who may benefit from refresher training in ePEP are also very welcome to attend.

	e-PEP Training	Monday 15th January 2024	3.30pm- 5.00pm	Social Workers, Designated Teachers, IROs.	Online via Microsoft Teams	Leonie Holt, Sam Denham & Mary Holder	An introduction to Camden's online PEP platform. All LAC Social Workers, Personal Advisors, and Designated Teachers are encouraged to attend.
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	An Introduction to the Virtual School	Monday 29th January 2024	3.00 – 4.30pm	Social Workers, Designated Teachers, IROs, Foster Carers, Residential Keyworkers	Online via Microsoft Teams	Mary Holder, Virtual School	An insight into the Virtual School and meet the VS team
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Continuation of the Role of Virtual School in promoting the education of children with a social worker into a further year

Following [the extension of the role of Virtual School Heads](#) to all children with a social worker, Camden has been focusing attention on tracking the attendance of these vulnerable pupils.

Attendance Data

The following collation methods are used for the tracking:

- Children in Need (CiN): Attendance data is collected termly from Camden schools for CiN. The requests are sent to schools the week after each half-term break and data is to be returned to VirtualSchool@camden.gov.uk.
- Child Protection (CP): Centralised weekly school attendance tracking of children with a CP Plan now takes place through e-PEP to generate early alert emails to allocated Social Workers to keep them abreast of any attendance concerns.

The data collation allows us to not only look at the attendance of this cohort but also to profile this cohort comprehensively for the first time. Many thanks for the support of colleagues in schools in supplying this information, which is enabling us to have a much clearer picture of the cohort and their low attendance.

Children In Need & Children on a Child Protection Plan Attendance Panel

This half termly Attendance Panel is a multi-agency forum which provides advice, support and signposting to schools and social workers on individual pupils, who are identified as CIN or on a CP plan, to support improve their school attendance.

The meetings take place virtually and are attended by the allocated social worker for the referred child and a school representative, with each case being allocated a 20 minute slot. All actions are recorded and tracked and the attendance of referred children is scrutinised for a minimum of 2 terms for any signs of improvement.

To discuss a possible referral of a CIN/CP child whose attendance is of concern by contacting [Fenella Walker](#).

PEPs in Academic Year 2023/24 - dates for diaries

The PEP timeframes for the 2023/24 academic year is available below.

Download: [Personal Education Plan Timeframes 2023 – 2024](#)

Information and Opportunities for Children and Young People

Enrichment Opportunities

First Five

Collaboration between Creative Futures and poet Yomi Şode

Remember the book that changed your life? The inspirational figure that opened your eyes? The song you'll never forget? Now pick two books, two tracks and one person that define you and you've got your [First Five](#).

Join Yomi Sode as he talks to an exciting panel of writers, musicians and champions behind the art and the artists that matter to us, delving into their First Five to find out who/what influenced them. Featuring special guests and live music performances, this year's Entry For All is not to be missed.

Designed to support young people from Hackney and wider London to access sensational live performance and art & culture, tickets to Entry For All shows are completely free for anyone 25 and under. If you're 25 and under or would like to book your school, youth or community group in to see the show, get in touch by emailing box.office@hackneyempire.co.uk or calling 020 8985 2424. Or for everyone else [Choose What You Pay from £3](#).

Letterbox Club

The [Letterbox Club](#) helps children who are looked after, previously looked after, on the edge of care and other vulnerable groups, with reading and numeracy. The Virtual School have signed up to the Letterbox Club programme, which is run by BookTrust, and provides each child with a colourful parcel of books, maths games, stationery and other complementary materials, once every month for six months, from **May to October**. Children looked after in the following year groups will receive a Letterbox parcel this year are Years 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8.

Festive Parcel Coming Soon

The Letterbox Club's Festive Parcel will be sent out to the current participants this month.

Letterbox Club Impact Report 2023

The following is a message from BookTrust, who provide the Letterbox Club programme.

"A warm hello from BookTrust!

Last year, Letterbox Club reached children in 87% of local authority areas across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Between October 2022 and May 2023, we heard from almost 400 of these children through our Letterbox Club Children's Survey. We're delighted to be able to share our latest Impact Report (attached) with you.

This year we found that:

- *Children enjoy and value Letterbox Club. **96%** of children say they like or love Letterbox Club.*
- *Children like the books they are given. **86%** of children say they like or love the books in their parcels.*
- *Children report that they read more because of Letterbox Club. **68%** of children say they're reading more on their own after receiving Letterbox Club parcels.*

This builds on similar findings from previous surveys and evaluations.

Research shows that children who choose to read and who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. They enjoy more success in life. We therefore hope this report provides you with the most up-to-date evidence of impact that Letterbox Club parcels have for children who receive them.

As an evidence-led organisation, BookTrust is always keen to learn about our impact and how we can improve. This means we will be repeating our Children's Survey again next year to ensure we keep learning directly with children.

If you have any queries, then please contact research@booktrust.org.uk

Also, a reminder that **registration for Letterbox Club 2024 is open**. You can sign up via this link: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/letterbox-club/how-to-sign-up/>

Download: [BookTrust's Letterbox Club Impact Report 2023](#)

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

The Virtual School are delighted to be involved with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – a wonderful book gifting program designed to help instil a love of books in children. Camden children looked after aged from birth until the month they turn 5, are sent a free book, addressed to them, through the post each month to keep. We have recently extended the scheme to all children aged 0-5 with a Camden social worker. Please see the attached leaflet and registration form which parents/guardians will need to complete if the child has a child in need or child protection plan. Please return completed forms to Hayley Solomons at virtualschool@camden.gov.uk.

Download: [Camden VS DPIL Leaflet](#) | [Dolly Parton Imagination Library Registration Form](#)

Education, Employment and Training Opportunities

Camden Young Talent Guarantee

The Camden Young Talent Guarantee is Camden Council's commitment to connect every 16-24 year old with the support needed to access employment opportunities.

This includes:

- Work experience during post-16 education
- Careers guidance with a local advisor
- Timely support with long term career choices
- Training, an apprenticeship or a job
- Help to access benefits, mental health, housing and financial support

To access support, Camden young people should contact youngtalent@camden.gov.uk or call 02079741127. A member of the Camden Young Talent Team will take some details and connect them to the service that best meets their needs.

Download: [Camden Young Talent Guarantee 2023](#)

Free Steel Pan Music for Young People

Mondays 6pm, The Warren Centre, Whitfield Place, W1T 5JU

Learn to play in a steelband Well Grounded are providing four weeks of part time barista training, including 3 day work experience. View the flyer below for eligibility criteria.

Download: [Steel Pan Music](#)

Leading Inclusive Futures through Technology - LIFT

Employment and Training Opportunities in Tech, Digital, Creative and Science

[LIFT](#) is a three-year programme across Camden, Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets that aims to help residents into good local jobs in the knowledge economy including tech, digital, sciences, and creative production, and to support businesses and start-ups in these sectors. The latest bulletin from LIFT is available below.

Download: [LIFT Opportunities Bulletin – November 2023](#)

Connexions

Connexions Newsletter and Weekly Bulletin

The Connexions Newsletter for July and the latest weekly Connexions bulletin are available below, detailing the latest opportunities, jobs, training and college news for NEET young people in Camden.

Download: [Connexions November 27th](#)

Connexions Services – Open for Business

Connexions is "open for business" once again for face to face drop-in every **Friday 10.00 - 4.00 pm**. The telephone number for the Drop-In service is **020 7974 7252**. Connexions can also be contacted on Connexions@camden.gov.uk.

Camden Apprenticeships

Camden Funded Placements are unique opportunities for 16-24 year old Camden only residents to complete a 6-month paid work placement with a local employer. Visit the [online portal](#) to register and to apply for roles on the portal, and additional roles are available in the download below.

Contact the team: apprenticeships@camden.gov.uk 0207 974 8778 or 0207 974 6474 if you encounter any problems in using the system.

Best wishes

Camden Virtual School for Children looked after

If you would like to know more about the Virtual School, you can visit our web pages on Camden's website. There you can find information about the things that the Virtual School is involved in, who's who, and various downloads relating to our work. Our address is [Camden Virtual School](#).

