

Arts Link Champions – Supporting the Children In Care across the West Midlands

What is a Virtual School?

The Virtual School was introduced in 2014, initially to support Children In Care (of their Local Authority) and has been extended to offer advice and guidance for Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and most recently providing strategic guidance for Children With Social Workers.



Who are the West Midlands Children in Care Foundation (WMVSCiCFoundation)

The West Midlands region has approximately 11,000 Children In Care, with up to 40% of these residing out of the area to whom they are in care. These are aged from Early Years through to Post 16 and there are also close links with Care Leavers. There are 14 Virtual Schools in the West Midlands region who work in partnership via the WMVSCiC Foundation.

West Midlands Virtual Schools Children In Care Foundation has been established to ensure that:

- All care experienced children & young people are able to access high-quality arts & cultural experiences and activities
- All professional supporting care experienced children are well informed and trained

The WMVS CiC Foundation have three strands to deliver this offer:

- Arts Link
- Active Now – Sport
- Creating Chances (Professional Development

The region delivers these programmes locally, in clusters and/or regionally ensuring that all Children In Care are able to access high quality programmes, wherever they may reside.

What is the Arts Link programme?

The Arts Link programme works in partnership with Performing Perfectly, as Arts Coordinators, across the region delivering in six clusters:

- Birmingham
- Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)
- Coventry, Warwickshire & Solihull
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire
- Staffordshire & Stoke On Trent
- Telford and Wrekin & Shropshire

The programme is organised by the Arts Co-ordinator for the region working closely with the Arts Ambassador from each Virtual School.

The programme will be enhanced by the development of the Arts Link Champion – a leading role model from a range of Arts across the regional and nationally.

Arts Champions – Making the difference for Children In Care

An arts champion will:

Inspire children & young people by acting as an excellent role model

Enthuse children & young people by demonstrating a personal interest

Support children & young people in their cultural pathway

The Arts Link Champion will support each Child In Care that enrols on the Arts Link programme. This will ensure that all these young people receive a signed letter/e-mail from the Arts Link Champion. There will be the potential for further information to be circulated after the activity has taken place. All of these administrative tasks will be completely supported by the Foundation administration team.

There may also be opportunities for the Arts Link Champion to attend during one of the programmes or at one of the focus events organised. This would be subject to availability but would help to endorse the support of the Arts Link Champion to the young people.