

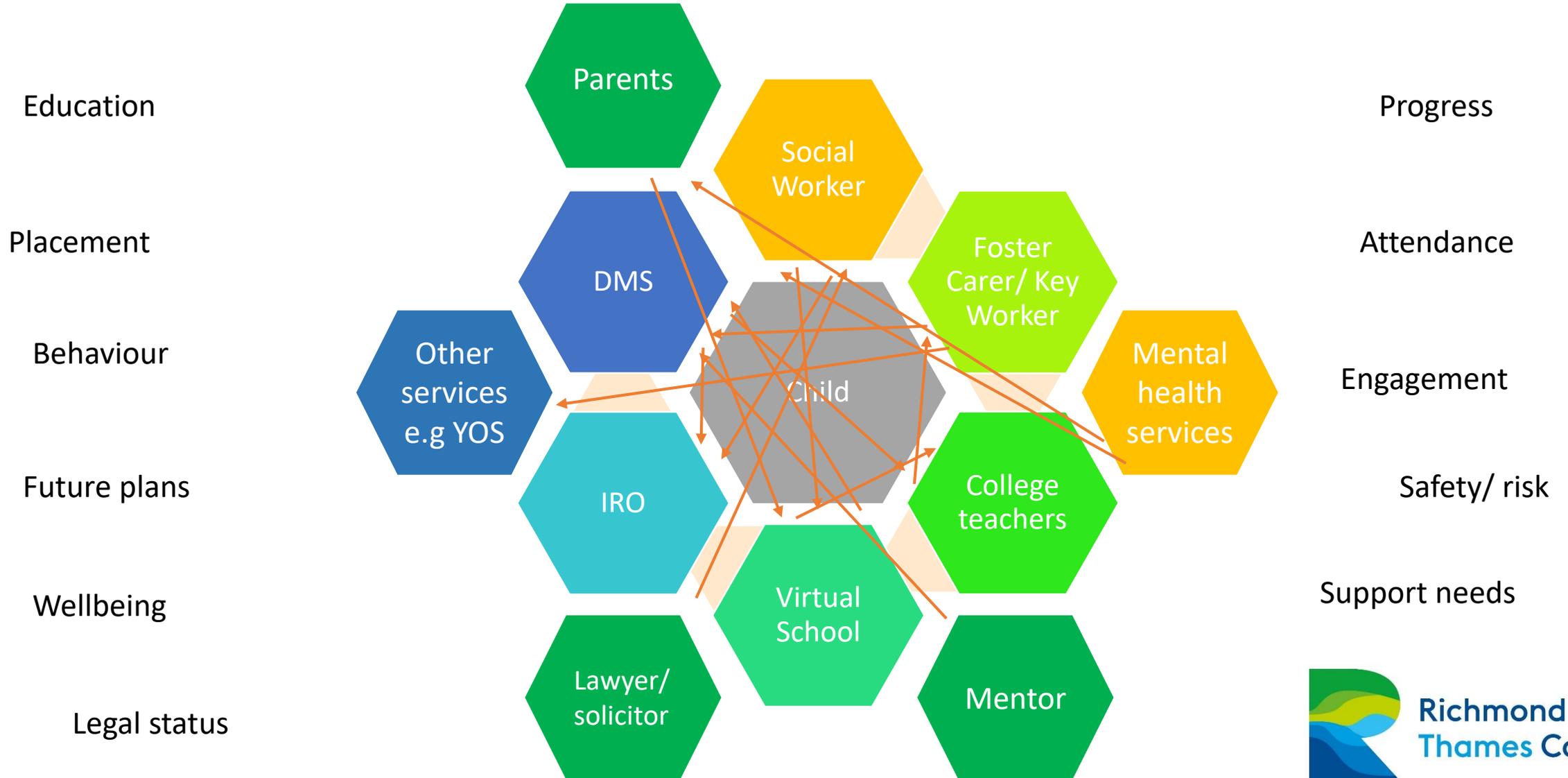
# Working together to support looked after children and care leavers – A joined up approach

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# Team around the child



# Differences in practice

## Virtual Schools

- Work with dozens of different providers
- Are responsible for hundreds of post-16 aged children at a time, in areas all over the country.
- Have their own procedures for PEP meetings, data gathering, and communicating.



## Colleges

- Work with several different Local Authorities.
- May have dozens of CLA on roll from various Local Authorities
- Have their own procedures for PEP meetings, data sharing and communicating.



# Examples of difference in practice

- “since the introduction of PEPs in 2000, reports from Ofsted and the limited research that has been undertaken on PEPs indicate a lack of consistency across local authorities in the quality and completion rates of PEPs... Information about attainment history is often missing, targets are not sufficiently specific or challenging, and the views of children and young people are not always evident. The result is that PEPs are yet to be consistently used to plan and evaluate effectively in order to support a child’s education and promote and raise their aspirations.” (Carroll and Cameron, Taking Action for Looked after children in School, 2017)

# When communication doesn't work

- “... a failure to work in partnership is likely to result in:
- Resentment and non-co-operation
- Mystification
- Dependency
- Short-lives success.”

(Thompson, Anti-Discriminatory Practice, *Working with Young People*, 2005)

# The benefits of partnership

“Increasingly, schools are adopting a joint practice development (JPD) approach. This was first proposed by Fielding et al (2005) in one of the few studies to have investigated the transfer of practice between individuals, small teams, schools, local authorities, and other institutions. These authors defined JPD as the process of learning new ways of working through *interaction and mutual engagement* [italics in original text] that opens up and shares practices with others.” (Carroll and Cameron, Taking Action for Looked after children in School, 2017)



# The South London DMS and Virtual School Network

- 20 members from FE and sixth form colleges/ Virtual Schools around South London and North East Surrey
- The group promotes the academic achievement of looked after children and care leavers
- The group promote collaborations between members in order to support the achievement of looked after children and care leavers
- The members of the group promotes the interests of looked after young people and care leavers in their organisations



# The South London DMS and Virtual School Network

- Termly meetings including guest speakers from social care, Kingston University, Aimhigher, Institute of Education and South London Refugee Association
- Work on data sharing, funding, transition support, SEN support, NEET reduction work, sharing best practice
- Current focus on developing best practise guidelines



# The compromise between policy and practice

- “In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground which overlooks a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution. The irony of the situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or to society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concerns.” (Schön, Atlas of Management Thinking, 1983)

# Activities

- What do colleges promise to do for looked after children and care leavers?
- What do Virtual Schools promise to do for looked after children and care leavers in post 16 education?

# Debrief

