

Framework

**for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Early
Years Provision for Looked After Children**



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following who contributed to the development of this toolkit.

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Contents

Introduction

How to use the framework

Self-assessment framework

1. The role of the accountable person/registered body
2. Leadership and statutory responsibilities of the designated practitioner
3. Admissions and transitions
4. Teaching and learning – closing the attainment gap
5. Partnership working
6. Personal education plans
7. Inclusion

Action plan

Statutory and non-statutory guidance

Glossary of terms

Frequently asked questions

Introduction

The (West Midlands) Framework for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Early Years Provision for Looked After Children.

“Closing the attainment and progress gap between Looked After Children and their peers and creating a culture of high aspirations for them is a top priority. We must ensure that the educational achievement of these children is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.

Ref: ‘Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities’ DfE2014

All children in care have the right to receive high quality provision in their early years setting.

A Looked After Child is likely to have experienced trauma, separation and significant disruption in their lives which can have an impact on their progress in the early years. Children in care benefit from professionals working together to understand their needs and by early years practitioners having an understanding of the impact of trauma and loss on a child’s emotional well-being and development.

This framework has been based on the good practice that already exists in West Midlands early years settings. It brings together advice and guidance for working with Looked After Children into one place. Initially it should be used as a tool to assist early years settings in their self-assessment of their current provision and practice. This will help early years settings to identify any gaps that need to be addressed in order to provide the best possible inclusive practice and outcomes for Looked After Children.

Getting support right for Looked After Children in the early years has the power to change their life chances for the better. As Virtual School Heads we see many examples of settings who show great passion and care for Looked After Children, settings that go above and beyond every day because you know it matters.

Thank You.

Sarah Rivers - Head Teacher of Staffordshire Virtual School for Looked After Children on behalf of the West Midlands Virtual Head Teacher Network.

How to use the framework

This framework is intended to support early years settings in evaluating their own provision and practice. Its scope is not a broad assessment of the provision in general or the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, but its focus is the areas of provision and elements of practice which support the particular needs of Looked After Children, over and above that which is ordinarily available to all children.

The principles and statements are not age specific, but describe good practice for all Looked After Children not yet statutory school age, with the exception of references to funding which is age specific, such as Early Years Pupil Premium. Schools already have a national framework that they can refer to; early years settings based on a school site may wish to use this framework in conjunction with specific schools' guidance.

The framework can be used by referring to individual, specific sections as relevant and be completed over a period of time. It does not need to be used to provide a 'snapshot' of provision. However, it is recommended that all sections are completed over time in order to provide a full picture of provision, and that the evaluation is repeated periodically to check that best practice is being maintained, particularly when there are changes in staff, new children, and so on.

We recognise that early settings often use different terminologies to schools and this is reflected within the framework. For example, we have used 'registered body' where we are referring to the owner or a committee but we hope that settings will be able to interpret this appropriately for their own circumstances. We have also made a distinction between a member of staff who is the 'designated practitioner' for Looked After Children, and a key person, but we acknowledge that in many settings where there are only one or two Looked After Children, this may well be the same person. A glossary is provided towards the back of this document to support understanding of specific terminology and interpretation of statements.

A space for notes is provided at the end of each section and the intention is that settings will be able to record evidence to support their evaluation, this supporting an objective assessment of the provision. There is also an action plan to record opportunities for improvement and progress.

The intention is for all early years settings to be able to use this tool in whichever way is appropriate for them, in order to support improved outcomes for Looked After Children, and as such copying of any or all of this document is permitted, provided that this is not for commercial gain.

1. Role of the accountable person/ registered body* (*see Glossary)

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>The needs of vulnerable groups are considered by the setting but Looked After Children are not considered specifically in policies.</p> <p>Practice is usually in-line with policies but there are occasions when policies are not followed for Looked After Children.</p> <p>The registered body has some awareness of the needs of Looked After Children.</p> <p>The registered body has some awareness of the progress of Looked After Children in their setting.</p> <p>The registered body understands Looked After Children are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).</p> <p>A specific person has been identified to have a focus on Looked After Children, but there are some barriers which prevent this person from being effective in their role.</p>	<p>Policies which consider the needs of Looked After Children and other vulnerable groups are in place, and are understood and implemented by staff.</p> <p>The registered body has some understanding of the needs of Looked After Children, although they are somewhat reliant on the staff to meet the settings responsibilities.</p> <p>The registered body has some knowledge of the progress of Looked After Children in the setting.</p> <p>The registered body has a tracking system in place to measure progress of Looked After Children (and all other eligible children) for EYPP.</p> <p>There is a role profile/job description agreed for the role of designated practitioner.</p> <p>The designated practitioner is allocated time to carry out the role, for example to attend meetings.</p>	<p>All policies (where appropriate) make reference to Looked After Children as a vulnerable group and show an understanding of how the families may have different needs (e.g. attendance/behaviour/bullying policies).</p> <p>Policies promote high expectations for all children, including vulnerable groups and do not put Looked After Children at a disadvantage e.g. a charging policy is in place for additional activities which considers Looked After Children.</p> <p>There is a specific policy in place to ensure that staff are aware of how the setting supports Looked After Children in their care (including progress, development, attendance and working with other agencies involved in the child's life).</p> <p>There is evidence that the registered body fully understands their statutory responsibilities in regard to Looked After Children and the potential impact on attainment.</p> <p>The registered body receives regular reports on the progress of Looked After Children in the setting and implements strategies to address any concerns.</p>

		<p>The registered body collects evidence of the use of EYPP and its impact on individual children's development and progress and success measures are reflected on.</p> <p>There is evidence that the designated practitioner's role profile is clearly linked to the setting's policies and procedures for Looked After Children, and the role is included in supervision discussion and appraisal.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

2. Leadership and statutory responsibilities of the designated practitioner

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>There is a named designated practitioner who has responsibility for Looked After Children and who is the known key contact for carers and outside agencies in support of Looked After Children.</p> <p>The designated person is qualified to at least level 3.</p> <p>The designated practitioner completes the setting section of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) prior to the PEP meeting.</p> <p>The designated practitioner attends and contributes to the PEP meeting.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures relevant information and targets agreed at the meeting are shared with child's key person and other relevant members of staff at the setting and implemented.</p> <p>The designated practitioner has received introductory training, which includes attachment awareness and exploring behaviour causes and strategies.</p> <p>The designated practitioner has received training to complete the PEP.</p>	<p>All Looked After Children have a current PEP in place which details progress towards meeting current educational and emotional well-being targets.</p> <p>The designated practitioner holds current information on the educational progress of all Looked After Children and keeps an overview of their attainment and progress in comparison to their peers.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures that every Looked After Child's key person tailors learning and care to meet the child's individual needs.</p> <p>The designated practitioner knows how much funding is received by the setting to support each individual Looked After Child. And ensures that EYPP is used effectively on a termly basis.</p> <p>The designated practitioner is familiar with the systems surrounding Looked After Children, for example the role of the Virtual School, the role of the social worker, etc.</p> <p>The designated practitioner has attended training to develop awareness of how the impact of being in care and/ or trauma can</p>	<p>There is evidence that the designated practitioner promotes a culture of high expectations and aspirations for Looked After Children, seeing them as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group. .</p> <p>The designated practitioner appreciates the importance of sensitivity and confidentiality about a child's status as looked after and ensures they are not publically treated differently from their peers.</p> <p>The designated practitioner actively engages in professional development and can demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how the impact of being in care and/ or trauma can contribute to the learning and emotional development of Looked After Children.</p> <p>There is evidence that the designated practitioner disseminates the knowledge acquired from professional development to the whole staff team on a regular basis, helping setting staff understand the things which affect how Looked After Children learn and achieve.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures that there is ongoing training for all staff linked to self-assessment of quality of provision for</p>

	<p>contribute to the learning and emotional wellbeing of Looked After Children.</p> <p>The designated practitioner acts as a source of advice to all staff about differentiated teaching and behavior development appropriate to Looked After Children.</p> <p>The designated practitioner arranges awareness raising training for all identified staff as appropriate, including where necessary, training provided by other agencies.</p>	<p>Looked After Children.</p> <p>There is evidence that the impact from ongoing training is continuously evaluated and informs the setting's self-evaluation form.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

3. Admission and transition

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>At admission the designated practitioner requests relevant information from the social worker, carers, previous setting and PEP (if one has been completed).</p> <p>Parental responsibility and contacts are confirmed and the setting staff are made aware of the child's looked after status. All staff know who will be collecting the child and whether there are individuals who do not have permission.</p> <p>The Looked After Child has a standard induction, including visit, settling in sessions, information for parents/carers, with some flexibility in order to meet their specific needs.</p> <p>A key person is identified for the individual child, with knowledge of the child and the context from which they are from.</p> <p>Information is shared between settings, schools and units within the setting.</p>	<p>Looked After Children are offered a place swiftly to ensure that they receive their entitlement to early education without delay.</p> <p>If the child is new to care, the designated practitioner and the social worker, initiate a PEP meeting which takes place within 20 working days of the place being confirmed.</p> <p>There are flexible settling in arrangements to support the individual circumstances of Looked After Children.</p> <p>Attendance can be flexible in order to support carers attendance at meetings.</p> <p>Staff are alert to the needs of the Looked After Children and appropriate observation, assessment and planning are place.</p> <p>Planning for all transitions takes place in partnership with the social worker, carer and core partners.</p> <p>Relevant information is transferred promptly between rooms/settings/schools following a transition, along with a handover conversation.</p>	<p>The child always remains at the centre of any decisions made.</p> <p>The setting is able to hold a place for a Looked After Child while care arrangements are set up.</p> <p>Settling in is supported with home visits.</p> <p>The designated practitioner arranges a PEP meeting as soon as possible on admission so that information is obtained about the needs of the child, including consideration of attachment.</p> <p>The designated practitioner liaises with staff to prepare for the PEP meeting.</p> <p>There is evidence of effective communication between the setting, carers and social worker.</p> <p>Planning for all transitions is done in conjunction with the child's PEP and following the setting/school's procedures for transition.</p> <p>There are clear procedures in place regarding a Looked After Child's transition outside of expected transition points (for example a child moving school within</p>

	<p>Training and Career and Professional Development (CPD) is accessed to support transitions.</p>	<p>reception year), i.e. contacting the Virtual Head and liaising with the social worker.</p> <p>The designated person supports Looked After Children with transitions in-setting, by meeting with the new key person.</p> <p>Key persons from setting/school meet to plan and share information prior to a Looked After Child's transition.</p> <p>Transition is discussed with the child and parent/carer, and information booklets shared either at a visit to the new setting/school or during a possible home visit.</p> <p>If a Looked After Child ceases to be 'Looked After' and returns home or becomes adopted, the school or setting continues to monitor the child's needs and progress and meetings are held with parents to review progress and identify ongoing support.</p> <p>There is evidence that training and support has an impact on smooth transitions.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

4. Teaching and learning – closing the attainment gap

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>The setting has a system for tracking the progress of Looked After Children.</p> <p>The Key Person is identified, and any other significant professional involved in working with the Looked After Child.</p> <p>The practitioners are aware of Looked After Children in their setting and identify them within their groupings.</p> <p>Looked After Children who attend the setting are assessed on entry for a baseline.</p> <p>The designated practitioner monitors attendance and reports overall attendance to the leadership team.</p>	<p>Progress and attainment are monitored to inform planning and next steps.</p> <p>Practitioners identify specific areas needing special understanding which may be linked to the Looked After Child's development.</p> <p>Intervention programs are in place to narrow the gap with the impact monitored and recorded.</p> <p>Carers are contributors to the Looked After Child's achievements.</p> <p>The designated practitioner and setting work with the social worker to support the child's carer to improve attendance where necessary.</p> <p>Where consent has not been given for photographs to be used the quality of assessment is not affected.</p>	<p>Practitioners focus on teaching and learning, to achieve high expectations.</p> <p>The setting promotes personalised learning and a culture where every child does matter.</p> <p>Looked After Children are identified and supported to achieve their full potential. The key person works with colleagues within the setting to identify the child's strengths and interests together with any areas for development or barriers for learning.</p> <p>It can be demonstrated that Looked After Children routinely receive high quality teaching and where appropriate further targeted support from experts is sourced.</p> <p>The setting is consistent in their approach and endeavor to treat Looked After Children the same as all of their peers in the group but with discrete flexibility where necessary.</p> <p>The setting sets appropriately challenging activities whilst supporting with high quality interactions.</p> <p>The Looked After Child's interests and needs are taken into account when considering the use of EYPP.</p>

		<p>The use of assessment data is scrutinised regularly to ensure progress is rapid and learning embedded.</p> <p>The designated practitioner and setting work with the social worker to support the Looked After Child's carer to maintain attendance. This is reflected within the PEP and progress is evaluated effectively.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

5. Partnership working

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>The designated practitioner knows the key people working with the child (for example carers and Social Worker).</p> <p>The setting is aware of other specialist services who may be involved with the individual Looked After Child, for example Educational Psychologist, Specialist Inclusion Support Service, emotional and mental health support, EAL support.</p> <p>Carers are given a named contact for the designated practitioner and Looked After Child's key person.</p> <p>The designated practitioner attends review meetings when invited.</p> <p>The setting has an understanding of the person who has authority to sign permissions and give consent, receive reports and invitations to setting events. Any documents requiring parental consent are signed by the relevant person and returned to setting.</p> <p>Records are kept up to date with relevant contact details of carers, parents and social worker.</p>	<p>The ethos of the setting and its policies, support collaboration with other agencies and services regarding Looked After Children.</p> <p>The designated practitioner plans ahead to ensure that they and/or the key person are able to attend all review meetings.</p> <p>There is effective two-way communication between designated practitioner and key persons and agencies responsible for the Looked After Child.</p> <p>There is effective communication with other settings that the Looked After Child attends (if relevant).</p>	<p>The designated practitioner forms strong partnerships with carers, Virtual Schools, Social Workers and other outside agencies, to ensure Looked After Children get the most out of their early years education and takes responsibility for sharing information as necessary with other professionals involved.</p> <p>There is evidence that the designated practitioner plays an active role in sharing information at meetings concerning the Looked After Child, which are planned in advance and well prepared for.</p> <p>The designated practitioner is pro-active in ensuring PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings are taking place within the agreed time-scale</p> <p>The designated practitioner includes the input of other professionals involved when gathering contributions for integrated 2 year old reviews.</p> <p>There is evidence that the designated practitioner works proactively to develop relationships with agencies in other boroughs when a Looked After Child is placed in the setting from 'out of authority'.</p>

Notes

6. Personal Education Plan

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
<p>A PEP is in place for Looked After Children and this gives parent/carers and professionals some information about the child's educational development.</p> <p>There is some individual target setting but next steps are not clear.</p> <p>There is some evidence that the setting is implementing actions but it is not clear that identified provision meets learning needs.</p> <p>The setting has a process in place to ensure the Looked After Child's voice is heard and acknowledged.</p> <p>The use of EYPP is recorded with some targets. Expected outcomes are in place.</p>	<p>The PEP gives parent/carers and professionals insight into the child's educational development and needs.</p> <p>All aspects of the PEP are completed and regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Next steps are appropriate and in line with the summary of learning, development and additional needs.</p> <p>Provision is in place to meet identified learning needs.</p> <p>There is evidence that the setting is implementing actions and working in partnership with carers.</p> <p>There is evidence that future transitions are planned.</p> <p>The Looked After Child's voice is recorded and considered by professionals involved and included in future actions.</p> <p>The use of EYPP is evidenced and impact on learning is recorded.</p>	<p>The PEP gives a wide range of parent/carer and professionals clear insight into the Looked After Child's educational development and needs. The document is shared widely and understood by practitioners as relevant.</p> <p>All aspects of the PEP are completed in detail.</p> <p>Identified targets match learning needs and previous targets are evaluated and inform planning.</p> <p>There is clear evidence that the setting is implementing excellent actions and working in partnership with carers and coordinating with other services.</p> <p>The setting's practice consistently reflects the highest expectations and the highest aspirations.</p> <p>There is evidence that future transitions are planned and documented to support the child's developmental needs.</p> <p>The Looked After Child's voice has been recorded and there is evidence that it has</p>

		<p>been fully acted upon by professionals involved.</p> <p>The use of EYPP is evidenced and shows measurable impact on development.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

7. Inclusion (including emotional health and wellbeing, behaviour, exclusions, EAL and SEND)

Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
Emotional health and wellbeing		
<p>The designated practitioner monitors the emotional health and wellbeing of individual Looked After Child and reports concerns to the registered body.</p> <p>Planning for the individual Looked After Child includes specific strategies to improve Education, Health and Wellbeing.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner takes action when concerns are noted about emotional health and wellbeing to ensure the social worker and all staff are aware of the concerns.</p> <p>The setting arranges CPD to support staff to meet the Looked After Child's emotional health and wellbeing needs.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures actions agreed at the PEP meeting to support emotional health and wellbeing are implemented.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner ensures appropriate support strategies are employed through actioning an early PEP meeting (within 20 days).</p> <p>There is evidence that CPD accessed to support staff to meet the Looked After Child's emotional health and wellbeing needs, has a positive impact in the setting.</p>
Behavior		
<p>The designated practitioner monitors the behavior of individual Looked After Children and reports any concerns to the registered body.</p> <p>The setting has a behavior support policy.</p> <p>The setting contacts the local authority and virtual school for advice where there is a concern about a Looked After Child's behavior.</p> <p>The setting seeks external support and advice for Looked After Children where behavior is cause for concern, difficult to</p>	<p>The designated practitioner monitors and explores why the behaviors are occurring.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures actions agreed at the PEP meeting to support behavior are implemented.</p> <p>The setting arranges CPD to support staff to meet the Looked After Child's behavior needs.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner ensures appropriate support strategies are employed through actioning an early PEP meeting.</p> <p>There is evidence that CPD accessed to support all staff in meeting behavioral needs of Looked After Children has a positive impact within the setting.</p>

manage and/or there may be a risk of exclusion.		
Exclusions		
<p>The setting seeks external support and advice for Looked After Children when there may be a risk of exclusion.</p> <p>The setting is willing to admit on roll Looked After Children who have been excluded from other settings.</p> <p>The setting monitors Looked After Children to ensure positive support strategies are employed to avoid exclusion.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner requests that the PEP meeting is brought forward if there is a risk of exclusion.</p> <p>The designated practitioner and setting staff implement strategies to reduce the risk of exclusion.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner requests that the PEP meeting is brought forward and reviewed more frequently if there is a risk of exclusion.</p> <p>Actions taken by the designated practitioner and setting staff support the Looked After Child so no exclusion takes place.</p>
English as an Additional Language (EAL)		
<p>Looked After Children, for whom English is an additional language, are welcomed into the setting.</p> <p>Information on ethnic origin and first language is gathered during the admission process.</p>	<p>Development of first language is established to check communication skills are developing as expected.</p> <p>First language is valued in the setting and the ethnicity of the Looked After Child is reflected in the setting provision.</p> <p>The setting arranges CPD to support staff to meet the Looked After Child's EAL needs.</p>	<p>Development of EAL is tracked using the stages of acquisition of language.</p> <p>All staff encourage the use of the Looked After Child's first language in the setting.</p> <p>There is evidence that CPD accessed to support staff to meet the Looked After Child's EAL needs has a positive impact in the setting.</p>
SEND		
<p>The setting follows their own SEND policy where there are concerns that a Looked After Child has additional needs.</p> <p>The setting has a SENCo in place that monitors children with SEND.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner and SENCo share SEND information with the Looked After Child's key person.</p> <p>The SENCo provides the designated practitioner with information to share at PEP meetings in order that appropriate SEND smart targets are included in the plan.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner and setting SENCo work together to ensure the SEND needs of each Looked After Child are met.</p> <p>The designated practitioner and SENCo share SEND information with the Looked After Child's key person and all staff to ensure the LAC SEND needs are met.</p>

<p>The designated practitioner informs the setting SENCo of any Looked After Children with SEND.</p>	<p>The designated practitioner and SENCo ensure that the registered body is aware of the SEND needs of individual Looked After Children.</p>	<p>The SENCo attends the PEP meeting.</p> <p>The early years setting's SEND documents (i.e. graduated response document) are saved in the PEP documents file for individual Looked After Children.</p> <p>The designated practitioner ensures additional provision for SEND Looked After Children is referenced in the PEP.</p> <p>There is evidence that all practitioners promote a culture of high expectation and aspiration for Looked After Children with additional needs.</p>
<p>Notes</p>		

Action plan

DATE	Action plan What do we want to change?	DATE	Evidence / Measure : Progress Made What have we done so far? What impact have we made?

Statutory and non-statutory guidance

Children Act (2004)	www.legislation.gov.uk
Childcare Act (2006) (2016)	www.legislation.gov.uk
Children and Families Act (2014)	www.legislation.gov.uk
Equalities Act (2010)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Promoting the education of looked after children (2014) – statutory guidance for local authorities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2016) - statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities - www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-o-25

Working together to Safeguard Children (2015) - a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) – Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five – www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework

Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings (2016) – guidance for inspectors undertaking inspection under the common inspection framework – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Early Years inspection handbook (2015) – handbook for inspecting early years in England under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Common inspection framework (2016) – a framework for inspections carried out, respectively, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, The Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the Childcare Act 2006. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Governance handbook - For academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools (2017) - www.gov.uk/government/publications

School Admission Code (2016) - a statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, school adjudicators and admission appeals panels - www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-admissions-code

Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England (2012). A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion - www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

Early Years Outcomes (2013) - a non statutory guide for practitioners and inspectors or help inform understanding of child development through the years www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-outcomes.

Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2012) – this non statutory guidance material supports practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS www.early-education.org.uk or www.foundationyears.org.uk

Healthy Child Programme (2009)– pregnancy and the first five years of life – www.dh.gov.uk/publications

Supporting children learning English as an additional language (2007) – guidance for practitioners in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) www.teachers.gov.uk/publications

Legal structures for Voluntary and Community Groups (2015) – guidance identifies the different kinds of legal structures that exists and the advantages and disadvantages for each - www.nicva.org

Glossary of terms

CPD	Career and Professional Development
EAL	English as an additional language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage – statutory framework for early years provision
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium
Looked After Children	Those for whom the state assumes parental responsibility (sometimes referred to as a ‘Child Looked After’ or a ‘Child in Care’)
PEP	Personal Education Plan
Registered body	The person or organisation who is registered as responsible for the setting, e.g. a management committee, an owner or a partnership
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
Virtual School Head	All local authorities must have a virtual school head (VSH) in charge of promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by the authority that appoints them.

Frequently asked questions

What is a Care Order?

A Care Order is a court order that places a child under the care of a local authority. The local authority then shares parental responsibility for the child with the parents, and will make most of the important decisions about the child's upbringing e.g. where they live and how they are educated.

A court can only make a care order if it is sure that: the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. the harm is caused by the child's parents or if the parents are failing to protect the child. the child is likely to suffer harm because they are beyond parental control.

Section 20

This means being accommodated only. There are no care orders on the child, although Children's Social Care has certain legal responsibilities. Legally the parents can make all decisions for a child who is only accommodated. It is advisable for schools to check with the child's social worker if they are unsure/need clarification.

Section 31

This is a care order and it means that Children's Social Care share Parental Responsibility with the parents and can make all important decisions. For example, if a birth family member contacts the school to make a request concerning access to information or educational issues then permission for any arrangement must be obtained from Children's Social Care.

Section 38

This is an interim care order and it gives Children's Social Care the same powers as a full care order, but only for the time period during which the interim care order has been granted.

Who has Parental Responsibility (PR) for a child in care?

For children subject to a Care Order the Local Authority holds parental responsibility working in partnership with parents, as appropriate. For children in care without a care order (also known as Accommodated) the parents retain PR.

What is a Care Plan?

All children in care must have an overall Care Plan which is reviewed every 6 months. The Care Plan should include what is being done to ensure the child is receiving an appropriate education.

The social worker, in partnership with foster carers and parents, needs to take decisions about what must be done to help the child achieve his or her full potential. Their responsibilities include: drawing up a Personal Education Plan for the child, and ensuring they are well supported in their early years setting/school making sure the child attends the early years setting agreed for the named sessions/ attends school every day choosing and applying for a school place when required making sure that there are good links with the designated key adult/teacher at the child's early years setting/school being involved in any assessment for special educational needs making sure that the foster carers attend parents' evenings and any other early years setting/school events which parents would attend.

What happens when a child is placed for adoption?

The long-term Care Plan may be that a child is placed for adoption. An adoption plan is made following a long process of assessment and is subject to legal proceedings. At the initial stages, a child placed for adoption remains in care until the final adoption order is granted by the court. Adoptive parents then take on full parental responsibility for the child.

A child placed for adoption may benefit from an Early Years PEP and adoptive parents may find this useful and supportive. This should be discussed with the adoptive parents and the child's social worker.

There is a statutory requirement of all school-aged children in the care of the Local Authority to have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP provides an on-going record of the child's strengths, interests and educational needs. It sets out targets and responsibilities that are identified at the PEP meetings. The PEP is part of the Care Plan.

The child's social worker has responsibility for informing the setting a child is in care, initiating PEP meetings, supporting the completing the EPEP form and reviewing. The early years setting needs to provide information on the child's overall progress including the Prime Areas of Learning – Communication and Language; Personal Social and Emotional; Physical Development and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Whose responsibility is the PEP?

The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school/setting. The social worker is responsible for initiating EPEP and arranging the PEP meeting. The social worker has responsibility for completing their sections of the EPEP. The Key Worker/designated teacher then has responsibility for completing their sections prior to the meeting). The PEP is completed during the meeting and quality assured by attendees.

What is the review process for the PEP?

The PEP should be reviewed alongside the Care Plan (i.e. after 20 working days of going into care, 3 months, 5 months, and 6 monthly intervals thereafter). In Staffordshire we have taken the view that PEP's should be completed on a termly basis. The PEP should also be reviewed when the child or young person moves care or education placement or when there are significant changes in circumstance.

PEP reviews should take place in consultation with the child, the school's/settings Key Worker/designated teacher, the social worker, carers and other relevant professionals.

Where a child has a statement of special educational needs/Education health and Care Plan, the PEP review should be linked with the annual review of the statement/EHCP.

Where a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs/EHCP, the PEP review should be linked with the Annual Review and education plans in place for the child, such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Children ages 3 & 4, attending funded places, are eligible for £300 Early Years Pupil Premium (annually). The funding should be used to support the agreed targets set during the PEP.

Any application for PP+ funding is actioned by the Virtual School. The Virtual School have monitoring system in place which aims to ensure PEP's are of a high standard and funding applications work in line with attainment and or a social and emotional requirement.