



## **Children's Safeguarding and Family Help**

Corporate Parenting Service

Care planning for the education of looked after children

### 1 Key care planning standards

- Assessment of the child's needs must include an assessment of their education needs; where necessary, social workers should seek guidance from the Camden virtual school via the virtual head or relevant consultant.
- Social workers must take all necessary action to ensure that all CLA have a suitable school place that meets their assessed needs and advice should be sought from the Virtual School Head. Camden's policy is that CLA attend only schools that have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating.
- Where it is necessary for a child to change schools, social workers should consult with the Virtual School head regarding the best provision for the child.
- A new school must be secured within 20 school days, and children should have an opportunity to visit any new school so that their views and wishes can be taken into account.
- It is essential that whenever a child is to become looked after, any placement request sets out the child's educational needs clearly. There should be a discussion between the social worker, the Resource team and the virtual school to ensure the choice of placement can support the child's education and that a suitable educational provision is available for the child as soon as they are placed. For emergency placements, there must be an immediate discussion regarding the child's educational needs.
- For pre-school children, social workers must ensure that they are receiving their statutory entitlement for nursery provision.
- Social workers should be aware that there is a strong correlation between placement stability and educational achievement, and local authorities have a duty to minimise any disruption to the child's education that may arise from placement moves.
- Where possible, social workers should choose a placement that enables the child to remain at their current school and throughout the child's time in care. In particular, social workers should work to avoid the child moving schools during Years 6, 10 and 11, as this may have a detrimental effect on education outcomes.

## Education care planning

- Social workers should take strong action to avoid permanent exclusion, making any representations necessary to help the child remain at their school. Where the child is excluded, social workers should consult with the virtual school head to agree actions to ensure suitable alternative provision is put in place and that steps are taken to find a new full-time school place.
- Social workers should work with carers and key workers to ensure that children attend school regularly and that they are fully involved in the PEP process (see below). Social workers should have high expectations of children and enable the child to aim high in order to achieve their goals and ambitions.
- Where a child is placed out of borough, social workers must work with Business Support Services to ensure that the local education authority where the child is placed is notified of the placement and that there is agreement regarding the provision of education, including SEND services.

Planning for the education of CLA involves a high degree of partnership working with foster carers, schools and Camden's virtual school. Social workers should refer to the multi-agency guidance "*Promoting the education of CLA*" for further details.

<..\Promoting the welfare of CLA\Promoting the education of CLA multi-agency guidance.doc>

## 2 Personal education plans (PEP)

The PEP is part of the looked after child's care plan that contains details about how their learning will be promoted in order to achieve good educational outcomes. It is a tool to be used by all those involved in the child's education and sets out the child's educational targets and how they will be achieved. The plan also contains details of the child's educational history, attendance and attainment.

All looked after children up to the age of 18 must have a PEP. This includes the following:

- children who do not have a current school place
- children who have been permanently excluded
- children placed in secure accommodation
- young people held on remand in local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation and who are looked after
- CLA who are subject to a care order and serving a custodial sentence
- eligible young people aged 16 and 17
- children placed for adoption with prospective adopters for whom an adoption order has not yet been granted.

## Education care planning

Young children aged 3 and 4 should have an early years PEP detailing provision of nursery and reception places and monitoring their progress.

Eligible young people aged 16 to 18 should have a post 16 PEP that details how they will take up opportunities for education, training and employment, including moving on to higher or further education.

### 3 The PEP process

#### 3.1 Overview

The PEP process is one of partnership between social workers, designated teachers, the virtual school, foster carers and the child. Professionals involved in the child's education will have responsibility for certain key tasks and for the collation and recording of information about the child's education, and the process is overseen by the virtual school.

The key element of the PEP process is the termly PEP meeting where the child's PEP is developed and reviewed. The PEP is also reviewed every 6 months at the statutory review of the child's care plan.

The PEP process, including the PEP plan, is recorded on the ePEP system available at: <https://epeponline.co.uk/camden>

The system allows social workers, designated teachers, foster carers and children to record important information about the child's educational history, attainment and their views on their education and contains the agreed ePEP setting out their educational targets.

However, social workers must still ensure the following information is recorded on the child's **MOSAIC case record**:

- The child's current school or education provision must be recorded on the *Personal Details* screen of the MOSAIC record.
- The agreed actions of the PEP plan recorded on the ePEP must be copied into the PEP section of the care plan in the updated assessment prior to each CLA review (see 7.4 for details).

### 3.2 Initiating the PEP

Social workers are responsible for initiating the PEP process within 10 working days of the child becoming looked after and should log on to the ePEP system as soon as the child becomes looked after to initiate the PEP process. Social workers should follow the steps set out in the ePEP guidance for social workers available at: [VS PEP](#)

The PEP must be available for review at the first statutory CLA review held 20 working days from the date the child became looked after and should be reviewed every term, with the current PEP available for review at every statutory CLA review. IROs can also access the ePEP system to view the PEPs for their cases.

### 3.3 Information for the PEP process

- Information on attendance and expected and actual levels of attainment for CLA is recorded onto the ePEP by the designated teacher
- Social workers should ensure that during assessments they gather all the information available regarding the child's education history to date, including nurseries and schools attended, their attendance and behaviour, and any reasons for leaving a school or being excluded.

### 3.4 The PEP meeting

PEP meetings should be convened by the child's social worker and should be attended by the child (where appropriate), their carer and a representative from the school who will be responsible for implementing the PEP. Parents should be invited to PEP meetings where the child is placed at home or will imminently return home as part of a rehabilitation plan. Invitations for meetings, including the relevant attendees, are generated by the ePEP system.

If the child does not have a school place, a member of the Camden Learning team may be asked to attend to advise on obtaining a school place. The meeting should look at what alternative provision can be made for the child's education whilst a school place is being sought and advice should also be sought from the virtual school head.

Where the child is in secure accommodation or custody, a representative from the secure establishment who has been allocated to work with the child should attend.

## Education care planning

The meeting should take place outside of school hours so it does not disrupt the child's education.

PEP meetings should only go ahead if the child and their foster carer can attend and a cancelled meeting should be re-convened as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances where a child or foster carer cannot attend, the "Young Person's Views" can inform the meeting and foster carers can complete the foster carer consultation form.

Please note that the PEP review meeting should be brought forward under the following circumstances:

- when the child changes school
- when the child is permanently excluded
- at the request of the Camden virtual school consultant
- when a young person receives a custodial sentence.
- on the advice of the IRO.

### 4 The PEP as part of the care plan

The PEP plan is part of the child's care plan and should be reviewed as part of the care plan at each statutory CLA review. Details of the current PEP should be recorded in the PEP section of the care plan whenever the social worker completes the updated assessment for a statutory CLA review.

Social workers should copy the smart targets from the smart target table of the ePEP into the actions column of the PEP plan in the *Updated assessment and progress on care plan* record and complete the rest of the table with details of timescales, the name of the person responsible and progress made to date. Details of how the pupil premium will be used to support the action should also be recorded. This information will pre-populate into the *CLA chairs report and updated care plan* record.

The key role of the statutory CLA review is to ensure that actions in the PEP plan have been carried out. If the IRO queries aspects of the PEP or the lack of specific supports in place for a child, this will be reflected in their report and decisions made by the IRO for ongoing work to be addressed will be recorded in the report. Any concerning or needs requiring immediate action or challenge would be taken up directly with the Virtual School Head to progress.

## 5 Consultation

Throughout the child's time in care, social workers must regularly consult with the relevant virtual school consultant and take advice from them regarding the PEP as set out in this document. In particular, it is important that any targets set by the school are discussed and that the consultant's views are sought. Virtual school consultants hold more detailed, historical information about the child's attainment and can advise on their levels of progress.

There must be an initial consultation when the child first becomes looked after and then prior to each PEP meeting so that the consultant can advise the social worker on what issues to raise with the school. This is especially important where a child finishes a Key Stage, as the consultant will be able to advise whether the child has reached the expected levels of attainment.