

## **Briefing Notes for Schools and Teachers Receiving a Child in Public Care**

(This document has been written to inform newly appointed Designated Teachers for Looked After Children and those who have not, as yet, had children looked after on their school roll)

### **Definition of Children in Care/Looked After Children taken from [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)**

"Children in care" or "children in public care" are the expressions used by practitioners to describe children who are looked after by a local authority under Part 3 of the 1989 Act. Strictly speaking, the expression "*in care*" should only be used in respect of a child who is in the care of a local authority by virtue of a care order made under section 31(1) of the 1989 Act or an interim care order made under section 38 1989 Act. "Looked after children" is the collective term for children who are the subject of care orders or interim care orders; who have been provided by the local authority with accommodation for more than 24 hours either under section 20 (sometimes referred to as "*voluntary accommodation*") or for their own protection or by virtue of an order made in criminal proceedings (under section 21); or who have been placed or authorised to be placed with prospective adopters by a local authority (but not a registered adoption society).

Children in public care may live in a children's home cared for by residential social workers or with foster carers. The child will also have a social worker that is responsible (usually in partnership with the natural parents) for overseeing the care and educational arrangements made for him or her.

The vast majority of children are in public care because their **parents** are experiencing difficulties.

*Children and young people may be looked after because:*

- *Their parent/parents are too ill to care for them – physical or mental health.*
- *Their parent/parents are not caring for them appropriately and not meeting their needs – often these cases fall into the Child Protection area – parents may be abusing their children physically, sexually, emotionally or neglecting them – neglect includes failure to protect the child or young person from abuse by others.*
- *Sometimes children and young people are placed with other members of the family e.g. grandparents, but are 'looked after' to provide support through advice and financial means.*
- *Their parent/parents need support in caring for their child because of the level of the child's needs e.g. 24 hour care.*
- *Their parent/parents is/are unable to care for them because they are in prison.*
- *Their parents are unable to manage the child's behaviour.*
- *Their parent/parents are dead and there is no-one else in the family to care for them.*

When the child attends your school, ensure that:

- A child or young person joining the school other than at the usual admission age i.e. entry to Primary or Secondary phase, has an induction meeting attended by the young person, carer (and if appropriate social worker and natural parents) and the school's **Designated Teacher for children in public care**. Your local **Adviser for Looked After Children** should also be consulted.
- The school has obtained **educational records from the last school**, (particularly if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need) and a copy of the **Personal Education Plan** and any relevant personal information from the social worker or carer, but treat the latter as confidential.
- The school has ascertained if the child has a **Statement of SEN**, and if so, the Additional Needs Coordinator has convened a Statutory Review meeting to amend the Statement
- If the child lives in a residential home, you know **who the key worker is** (residential social worker), who you should link with and how to contact each other.
- You have discussed with the social worker **who should receive school reports** and other communication, and who should be invited to parents' evenings and who should give consent for school events etc.
- You discuss with the young person what they wish their peers to know about their home/care situation, if anything and how they refer to their carers (for example, first names).
- The school has been informed of when the next **Social Care (LAC) Review** on the child will be taking place so that you or an appropriate teacher can contribute to the review either in person or by a report.
- You should be aware that young people in public care may suffer educational disadvantage for a number of reasons, for example: disrupted home and school placements; emotional trauma; unresolved concerns about their families; fears about their future; low self-esteem; being subject to stigmatisation and bullying; unaddressed special educational needs; the lack of a consistent adult to act as their advocate.
- You can provide examples of the effective use of Pupil Premium funding and can produce evidence that the child's achievements have been raised as a result.

## **PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS**

If the young person already has a Personal Education Plan it should be reviewed and revised as appropriate. By reviewing/revising or completing a Personal Education Plan for the child or young person, you will ensure that all these issues have been covered.

- Summary of Review and revised action plan provided for Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) at Statutory LAC Review.
- IRO checks actions from previous PEP.
- IRO can challenge any agencies if actions not implemented
- School and Health invited attend/contribute to Statutory LAC Review.
- Your local Adviser for Looked After Children can be contacted for advice and support:

If the young person does **not** have a Personal Education Plan:

- A PEP meeting should be called
- A PEP must be completed by the time of the next Social Care (LAC) Review meeting.

### **Who does what to contribute to the PEP meeting?**

#### **Social Worker**

- Contacts designated teacher, carer and Adviser for LAC and arranges PEP meeting.
- Agrees who should be invited to contribute.
  - Carers
  - Designated Teacher
  - Adviser (LAC)
  - Child
  - Birth parents (if appropriate)
- Agree who will organise invitations.
- Agree venue.
- Provide background information
- Facilitate attendance of carer and the young person.

#### **School**

- Prioritises PEP meeting.
- Records discussion and completes PEP.
- Monitors implementation of action plan with SW and the Adviser for LAC
- Reports to the meeting how Pupil premium is being spent to raise achievement
- Attends LAC Statutory Review meeting if possible

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**Virtual School website address: [www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk)**

