



One minute guide

Personal education plans (PEPs) and the Pupil Premium Plus

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What are personal education plans (PEPs)?

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) should be initiated as part of a looked after child's care plan. It is a statutory requirement for all children from age 3 to 18 to have a PEP whether they are in a school or not. It is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked after children to support them in their learning to enable them to achieve as well as their non-looked after peers and fulfil their potential.

The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances. The school, other professionals and the child's carers should use the PEP to support achieving those things. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school, and the Virtual School has responsibilities in relation to ensuring that PEPs are up to date, effective and of high quality. Please see the Virtual School one minute guide for further information.

PEPs must include aspirational and SMART targets for the child's progress in their learning and identify what additional help and resource the child or young person needs in order to achieve those targets. A good PEP ensures that teachers, social workers, carers, other practitioners and the young people themselves have a clear plan about what is needed to ensure that child is doing well in their learning and shows clearly if they are not.

How are PEPs written?

PEP meetings are arranged by a child or young person's social worker and those who attend must include the Designated Teacher or appropriate member of school staff, the carer and other practitioners working with the young person who can support their educational progress and aspirations. If it is the first PEP for the young person, it should be completed within 20 days of their entry into care.

All children can attend their PEP meeting or, if they choose, the carer or Designated Teacher or other trusted adult might share their views on their behalf. It's important that every PEP captures the child's views – even if they choose not to participate.

Each school has a Designated Teacher for children looked after who leads on the content, development and implementation of the PEP, working with key colleagues in school such as class/subject teachers and SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator) to identify the young person's strengths, needs and any barriers to learning. The Designated Teacher is also responsible for ensuring the child is making progress against their PEP targets/ outcomes.

The school must ensure the meeting is supported with all the relevant information needed including attainment, SMART targets and how the pupil premium plus grant is being used to support the child's learning.

PEPs are required to be reviewed termly, 3 times a year. However, for some young people it may be appropriate to hold more frequent meetings.

What information goes into a PEP?

A PEP includes some basic personal information to identify the child and details of their care placement and legal status, which is important for schools to know as it affects the kind of decisions they can make and the young person's current school.

Information about their current attainment, attendance, emotional health and wellbeing and how this impacts on learning must all be captured. PEPs should be seen as an integral aspect of the school's overall provision and reflect the graduated approach and the plan, do review cycle. If a child also has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) then their specific learning needs will be addressed in the PEP. It's important that a young person's interests are captured, as well as any opportunities to celebrate their achievements.

The most important discussion in the PEP meeting is to identify what is needed to make sure the child is making at least the same progress as their non-looked after peers and agree a set of clear and measurable targets/outcomes for the child's learning. This discussion informs how the Pupil Premium Plus grant monies could support the young person achieving those targets.

What is Pupil Premium Plus, and how does it relate to PEPs?

Schools receive Pupil Premium funding for a range of groups of children and young people that are at risk of poorer educational outcomes. Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is specifically allocated for children looked after (schools can also claim for previously looked after children, although these children do not have a PEP and this grant is not overseen by the Virtual School).

The Head of the Virtual School manages the Pupil Premium Grant for children currently looked after and decides how much each school will be allocated. The allocation of the PP+ must be spent on the cohort of looked after pupils and be linked directly to the educational targets or outcomes described in their PEPs and the school is accountable to the Virtual School for using the grant effectively and in compliance with the conditions of grant.

Schools in Leeds currently receive £1900 for each pupil, divided into three termly payments. The remaining monies are held centrally to make provision for additional support services and to enable schools to apply for extra funding for the young people who might need it most. Each termly PEP review is an opportunity to explore how effectively this additional grant is supporting the child's attainment and progress.

The Virtual School collect information about how well children are doing in their learning and how the termly allocation of the PP+ is spent. This information is then used to identify which children are at risk of not making good enough progress to enable the Virtual School to work with Designated Teachers, social workers and carers to understand and overcome any barriers to learning. Whilst schools are best placed to determine the most effective use of the PP+, it must clearly and directly support the targets or outcomes as set out in the PEP so that progress and impact can be measured.

Who are the key contacts?

If you are working with a child looked after or care leaver and would like to speak to someone about their educational attainment, either to raise concerns about their education or to request additional support, you can contact the Virtual School team. In addition, if you would like to request help for yourself or your team in supporting children's education, the Virtual School can provide information, advice and guidance, as well as training on the role of corporate parents and championing the educational attainment of children looked after and care leavers.

Jancis Andrew is the Head of the Virtual School for Children Looked After in Leeds. Jancis and her team can be contacted on 0113 37 81469 where you can leave a voicemail, or via email at virtualschool@leeds.gov.uk. This email address is for general enquiries only so please do not send personal or sensitive information about individual children and young people.