



## Previously Looked After Children

### Frequently Asked Questions

In response to requests from parents, carers, school staff and other professionals, VSK have put together a collection of advice to answer many frequently asked questions regarding the educational support around Previously Looked After Children. If you have a question which is not answered here, please email VSK on [VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk).

### Frequently Asked Questions regarding Previously Looked After Children.

#### Who are Previously Looked After Children?

The Department of Education define Previously Looked After Children as those who:

- *“are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or*
- *Were adopted from ‘state care’ outside England and Wales. ‘State care’ is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.”*

#### What can VSK do to help Previously Looked After Child?

The role of Virtual School for previously looked-after children is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators and others where necessary. VSK will:

- Offer advice and information to parents and sign-post them to other services for advice and support if necessary.
- Offer advice and information to providers of early education, designated teachers in schools and providers of alternative provision in respect of individual previously looked after children.

- Make general advice and information available to early years settings and schools to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked-after children. This includes promoting good practice on identifying and meeting children's needs and guidance on effective use of the PP+ funds.

### **How are VSK achieving this?**

- VSK offer advice to parents and schools via a phone consultation, meeting or email. The Senior Education Support Officer for Previously Looked After Children can use the expertise, local knowledge and skills of the VSK staff across the county to offer the correct support to the local schools and parents within that area as well as using the established relationships within other professionals, such as SEN etc.
- VSK FELOs (Fostering Education Liaison Officers) have a vast array of experience in supporting children in their transition into their adoptive lives and will support all Early Years Children moving from looked after to previously looked after status.
- VSK are supporting schools through Designated Teacher Training, Attachment Training and other training opportunities where necessary.
- The Virtual School Website is constantly being updated with relevant information and resources for schools and parents. The aim of this website is to be the 'Go To' site for all Kent Parents and Schools for information and advice for Previously Looked After Children. We welcome your feedback and any other information that you feel would be appropriate for this site.

## **Frequently Asked Questions regarding Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC)/Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) Meetings**

*"This is like a like bulb being switched on... we needed something like this in Primary School. There was nothing proactive in place like this: we had to repeat our story every year."* Parent of an adopted secondary pupil.

*"It's time to sit down, reflect and think"* Parent of an adopted primary pupil.

### **What is an EPPLAC/EPAC Meeting?**

Kent's Virtual School is using the EPPLAC/EPAC to help previously looked after children achieve the best they can. The EPPLAC/EPAC form is completed at an EPPLAC/EPAC meeting with the school/early year provision, parents and others that parents choose to invite.

### **Why was it devised?**

EPAC meetings were developed by Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in collaboration with Adoptive Parents. In order to support other Previously Looked After Children (those with a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order) the meetings have been adapted – EPPLAC. EPAC is still referred to in line with the Post Adoption Service offer.

The purpose of the EPPLAC/EPAC is to encourage positive collaboration and communication between home and school/early year provision, and to raise awareness of the needs and issues faced by children and their parents.

The majority of Previously Looked After Children were neglected and/or suffered trauma in their birth families. It helps schools and other education settings to be aware that adopted children continue to have many of the same needs as Children in Care (CiC).

### **How can I ask for an EPPLAC/EPAC meeting with my child's school/early year provision?**

The EPPLAC/EPAC can be initiated by either school/early year provision or parents. The EPPLAC/EPAC forms explain how to structure the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting. After the first meeting, parents and school/early year provision set a review date to see how the plans made at the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting are going.

The first EPPLAC/EPAC meeting after the Adoption/Special Guardianship/Child Arrangement Order has been granted will normally be arranged at the last PEP review (when the child is still in Local Authority Care) and will normally be attended by a member of Virtual School Kent.

### **Who organises the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting?**

- **Early Years Provision** – The meeting will be chaired and minuted by the Early Years Advisor who is linked to the setting.
- **Schools** – Parents and school decide together who will chair the meeting and who else to invite.

### **How do school/early year provision or I get the EPPLAC/EPAC Forms?**

They are available from Virtual School Kent on the following website address:

<https://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/plac/education-plan-for-plac>

### **Does my child have to have an EPPLAC/EPAC? Their school/early year provision don't know that they are adopted.**

EPPLAC/EPAC meetings are a useful way to information share, problem solve and set targets for the future. If this is being achieved through other meetings, or you are happy with the support that your child is getting, then there is no need for further meetings. Alternatively, there may be other meetings already arranged that could be used as the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting. In this case, it would be best practice to complete the EPPLAC/EPAC form so that outcomes can then be reviewed in the future.

Parents have emphasised that confidentiality is vital. The EPPLAC/EPAC will only be used:

- If parents choose to identify their children as previously looked after.
- And if parents wish an EPPLAC/EPAC to be implemented.

The Adoptive Parents Consultation Group's experience is that it is extremely beneficial for schools/early year provisions to be aware.

## **I'm worried about having an EPPLAC/EPAC because information may be shared unnecessarily – What can I do?**

Please discuss your concerns with the Designated Teacher/Nursery Head (VSK or your Adoption Support Worker). Confidentiality regarding where records are kept will be discussed as part of the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting.

## **Does the school/early years provision have to arrange an EPPLAC/EPAC meeting if I ask them to?**

It is not statutory; however current evaluations indicate that it is good practice and that schools/early years provisions value them. The EPPLAC/EPAC draws from the pro-active nature of the CiC Personal Education Plan, to ensure relevant information is available and effective communication routes are established.

## **My child already has a Provision Plan, Individual Education Plan or a Pastoral Support Programme. Do we still have to have an EPPLAC/EPAC?**

This is for you and the school/early years provision to decide in discussion. Parents and schools/early years provisions have found that EPPLACs/EPACs provide different information which is valuable in understanding the pupil's strengths and needs. There is no reason why the EPPLAC/EPAC meeting cannot coincide with the Support Review meetings as information will be relevant for both. By completing the EPPLAC/EPAC forms, schools and parents have additional flexibility to review outcomes outside of the timescales of the other meetings.

## **Do Virtual School Kent need to be present at the EPPLAC/EPAC Meeting?**

After consultation and discussion with the parents, if it is deemed appropriate, VSK will attend EPPLAC/EPAC meetings if possible. VSK are an advisory service for previously looked after children and often parents and schools do not require additional support during the meeting and prefer a phone consultation prior and post the meeting to discuss issues and outcomes. If you would like to discuss your child's schooling and issues you may be facing, please contact [VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk) to arrange a phone consultation in the first instance.

## **Frequently Asked Questions regarding Pupil Premium Plus Funding.**

### **Is my child eligible for Pupil Premium Plus?**

The Pupil Premium: Conditions of Grant 2020 to 2021 updated in December 2020 confirms that the schools with children on roll, who have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order) will receive £2,345 per child as part of their Pupil Premium Grant.

## **How can I make sure my child's school is receiving Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Funding?**

In order for your child's school to receive the Pupil Premium, you need to provide evidence that they have previously been looked after (for example Adoption Certificate). The school will then receive funding in respect of each eligible pupil identified on their October School Census.

## **How can I make sure that my child is receiving the Pupil Premium Grant?**

Pupil Premium for Previously Looked After Children is not a personal budget for individual children as it is not ring-fenced. The government allows schools the flexibility to group all children's PP+ funding in order to provide interventions, staff training or whatever the school deems appropriate use of funding in order to support the children '*... emotionally, socially and educationally by providing specific support to raise their attainment and address their wider needs.*' (PAC-UK).

Information on what the school uses their Pupil Premium Grant for should be available on their website or ask the school's DT for further information.

## **How do I know what the school is using the Pupil Premium Plus Funding for?**

It is considered best practice for schools to share their plans for the Pupil Premium Grant with the relevant parents/guardians. This is sometimes done as an information sharing meeting with all parents, or it is done on an individual basis. '*Designated teachers have a responsibility to encourage parents and guardian's involvement in deciding how the PP+ is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use.*' (DofE Statutory Guidance Feb 2018).

## **As a school, how can I ensure the best use of Pupil Premium Plus Funding for Previously Looked After Children?**

The Department of Education guidance on the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding is an excellent source of information. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings> It recommends schools refer to The Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit, their Schools Database and Evaluation Tools to ensure that maximum impact of support and read school case studies for good practice.

Virtual School Kent regularly send out information to Designated Teachers regarding VSK's training, updates on legislation and initiatives around the county. Please refer to our website <http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/> or email [VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk) for more information.

VSK continually review this document. If you have any further questions regarding Previously Looked After Children, please email [VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk).