

Guidance for Education Plans for Children living in Kinship Care. (EPKC)

Rational and Purpose.

- For those in education to be fully aware of the needs and issues faced by children who within Kinship families under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order.
- To encourage further positive collaboration across home and school/early years provision.

The following points are emphasized throughout the process:

- *An Education Plan for Kinship Children will only be initiated when carers choose to identify their children as having a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order, although you may wish to also use these forms for informal kinship arrangements.*
- *Maintaining confidentiality of information is essential.*

Children living with different families than their birth parents are doing so due to exceptional circumstances. When issuing a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order, the Judge decided that it was in the child's best interests to live with the carers. Each child's circumstances will be unique to them, but all will have experienced some form of adverse childhood experience and trauma. It is well documented that adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on a child's development. Research indicates that the outcomes for children who grow up in kinship care have overall better outcomes than those that grow up in 'non-parental care', but that their outcomes can fall below those children with no social worker involvement.

This Education Plan for Children living in Kinship families (EPKC) has been developed from the established Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) to support plans for all Previously Looked After Children, including those who have left care under a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order. The EPKC's main function is as an awareness raising document that ensures that relevant information is available to those who need to know and that effective communication routes are established. The intention is to ensure collaborative planning and support across home, school/early years provision and other agencies. The EPKC is not intended to replace other (more reactive) education-based plans such as Provision Plans or Pastoral Support Programmes. One benefit for education provisions is that EPKCs can provide evidence of how the provision meets the needs of vulnerable pupils.

EPKC can be initiated by either the education provision or carers. The process will establish ongoing reviews. The review date will be set by those attending the meeting and according to the child's circumstances, e.g. 3 months/6 months or 1 year.

It is intended that the EPKC process is initiated when:

- A school/early years provision aged child transfers to a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order.
- A Kinship Child starts at a education provision.

It is recommended that the EPKC is also used to support transition of Kent pupils moving to other Authorities.

“This is like a light bulb being switched on... we needed something like this in Primary School/Early Years provision. There was nothing proactive in place like this; we had to repeat our story every year.” Parent of an adopted secondary pupil.

“It’s a time to sit down, reflect and think.” Parent of an adopted primary pupil.

Guidance for Completion of the Education Plan for children living in Kinship Care.

Prior to the EPKC Meeting.

Copies of the (blank) EPKC form and guidance documentation to be distributed to all those attending. Information available at the meeting should include:

- Curriculum planning and proposed topics/visits to ensure any sensitive subjects are discussed.
- Young Person’s voice (see What I would like you to Know About Me document)
- Key Education Indicators – including attainment, attendance and progress data.
- Information on SEN including any additional funding.

It is recommended that the relevant Key Stage Key Education Indicator Form is updated and discussed during the meeting.

During the EPKC meeting.

The meeting should be chaired by an appropriate member of the education provision staff, (for example, the Designated Teacher (if the child was previously in care), the SENCO or Designated Safeguarding Lead etc). Other staff members will be determined by their role within the education provision, their knowledge of the pupil and previous involvement with the pupil or carers. Carers may choose to invite others (e.g. Kinship Support Team, family friend) to the meeting to enrich the discussion around the Young Person’s needs.

Please note: the VSK Advisory Team will not normally attend EPKC meetings. They will, however, offer a ‘cohort’ discussion (an anonymous, general discussion regarding the needs of the provision’s Kinship cohort and staff understanding around their needs) with a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the education provision and can use this opportunity to ensure that they are fully aware of the rationale of the EPKC meetings and answer any questions regarding this that the provision may have.

The chair should go through the Rationale and Purpose at the start of each meeting.

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Please ensure all sections are completed.

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Please record all previous and current professional involvement, who attended the meeting and who will attend the next meeting.

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Significant Information: this summary, determined by the carers, may include significant and relevant details on the history of the child, or views on how experiences with birth parents have impacted on the young person's learning and development.

Further Information: all carers have a confidential file which they may choose to share with education provision (in part or full). There is an assumption of confidentiality on the part of the education provision and an awareness of which other people information can be shared with.

Young Person's Views: Where appropriate, it is advised to involve the young person within the meeting. The ***What I would like you to know about me*** document is a very useful way of capturing the young person's voice, irrespective of if they are able to attend the meeting or not. It may be appropriate to discuss with carers if and at what point in the meeting the young person should attend.

Carer's Summary: To include information on issues at home, updates on any involvement with other services, transitions to school and general observations from the ***What I would like you to know about me*** document.

School's Summary: A summary of discussions around the ***Key Education Indicator information*** and ***What I would like you to know about me*** document.

Areas of Pupil Strength (in and outside of education provision): Strengths may include identified areas within the ***What I would like you to know about me*** document, teacher or family observations both in and out of school.

Areas of Pupil Need: To include evidence where the young person may need additional support and what provision (within the education setting and at home) will be put in place to support them. These will then feed into the targets at the end of the meeting.

Other Relevant Information: this includes looking ahead at proposed curriculum topics/aspects/activities that may need to be treated with additional sensitivity e.g. family trees, family dynamics, sex education, genetics – eye colour etc.

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Information shared at the meeting: Any discussions around information for the education provision and home. For example, there may also be issues about staff changes or changes at home that are relevant, or upcoming assessments and medical appointments etc. Having consistent messages and support from both home and education provision will provide more effective and positive support for the young person.

Actions to help the Young Person: the actions are for the adults to carry out, to support the pupil either in or out of the education provision and should include a review of the provision's use of Pupil Premium Funding. They should not duplicate actions already identified in Provision Plans, Pastoral Support Plans etc. (If these plans are already in place, they should be attached to the EPKC and be part of the discussion). Actions might include: setting up a playtime observation, organising a more appropriate space for homework, monitoring lunchtime eating, opportunities to share interests and achievements, arranging summer holiday activities, requesting additional assessments, additional advice from other KCC and external services etc.

It might be especially useful to consider upcoming transitions and any means by which resources and communication can be shared between the education provision and home.

Boxall Profile Information: The Boxall Profile is a resource for the assessment of children and young people's social, emotional and behavioural development in all educational settings. It is a two-part assessment tool designed to track the progress of cognitive development and behavioural traits of children and young people through their education. As a National Nurture Virtual School, we recommend Boxall Profiles are used for all Kinship children (from 4 years old) to help inform the support plan for the young person. If the education provision is unfamiliar with Boxall Profiles, VSK are able to offer anonymous analysis of the profiles, with parental consent.

Copies: School/early years provision will give copies of the completed EPKC to carers who will decide who else should receive copies, e.g. other school/early years provision staff, Kinship Support Team or other agencies. It is important to agree where in school/early years provision the EPKC will be kept and who will have access to it.

If the Young Person was not present at the meeting: If the Young Person was not present at the meeting, it must be agreed who will feed back to them, including discussions, targets and outcomes. They need to feel heard and see evidence that their voice was heard within the discussions.

Guidance for Completion of the EPKC Review.

The Review is an opportunity to discuss progress, developments or additional information available since the last meeting and to consider what other actions need to be identified.

Please ensure that you use the **EPKC Review document**, as you will not need to gather information on significant information on early experiences, but you may need to update with any changes of circumstances and developments for the previous meeting.

Prior to the EPKC Review Meeting: Ensure that you have gathered and updated the following information:

- Curriculum planning and proposed topics/visits to ensure any sensitive subjects are discussed.
- Young Person's voice (see What I would like you to Know About Me document)
- Key Education Indicators – including attainment, attendance and progress data.
- Information on SEN including any additional funding.

Guidance for Completion of Transition Arrangements.

Transition is often an anxious time for children, and it is important that moves between education provisions are planned carefully and that effective communication routes are established between the current and receiving education provisions, along with the carers and staff. The Transition Arrangements sheet should be completed near the start of the year in which the pupil is transferring to give sufficient time for carers to visit the new education provision and for staff to ensure appropriate information is exchanged promptly.

If you require any further advice regarding EPKC meetings, please email VSKAdvisoryTeam@kent.gov.uk