

Guidance for Education Plans for Previously Looked After Children. (EPPLAC)

Rational and Purpose.

- For those in education to be fully aware of the needs and issues faced by children who have been adopted, or have left care under a Special Guardianship Order, or Child Arrangements Order and their parents.
- To encourage further positive collaboration across home and school/early years provision.

The following points are emphasized throughout the process:

- *An Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) (formally known as EPAC - Education Plan for Adopted Children) will only be initiated when parents/guardians choose to identify their children as having left local authority care to be adopted, or under a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order.*
- *Maintaining confidentiality of information is essential.*

The majority of children and young people who have left care were neglected and/or suffered trauma in their birth families and became Children in Care (CiC) before their final move to join their new family. Parents emphasise the need to make school/early years provisions fully aware that these Previously Looked After Children continue to have the same needs as they had as a Child in Care. Indeed, these issues may have been exacerbated as becoming previously looked after can be yet another move in their journey. There is also a need to make lasting relationships within their family. This can cause anxieties for children who have had difficulties with relationships and attachments in the past.

The Kent's Education Plan for Previously Look After Children is used widely used across the county. The Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) is used for all Previously Looked After Children who have left care under an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order. The EPPLAC's main function is as an awareness raising document to ensure that relevant information is available to those who need to know and that effective communication routes are established. It draws on the pro-active nature of the Children in Care Personal Education Plan (PEP). The intention of the PEP process is to ensure collaborative planning and support across home, education provisions and other agencies. The EPPLAC 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 EPPLACs can provide evidence of how the education provision meets the needs of vulnerable pupils.

EPPLACs can be initiated by either the education provision or parents/guardians. 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 EPPLAC process is initiated when:

- A school/early years provision aged child leaves care and becomes adopted or transfers to a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order, i.e. at the last Children in Care

Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting before the new Adoption/Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements order is in place.

- A Previously Looked After Child starts at a new school/early years provision.

It is recommended that the EPPLAC is also used for Kent pupils leaving care and living in other Authorities.

The EPPLAC was developed in collaboration with adoptive parents.

“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 Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC).

Prior to the EPPLAC Meeting.

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

- Curriculum planning and proposed topics and visits to ensure any sensitive areas 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. (see Key Education Indicator Form for the relevant Key Stage).
- Information on SEN including any additional funding.

It is recommended that the relevant Key Stage Key Education Indicator Form for Previously Looked After Children is updated and discussed during the meeting.

During the EPPLAC meeting.

The meeting should be chaired by an appropriate member of school/early years provision staff; normally the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. Other staff members will be determined by their role in school/early years provision, their knowledge of the pupil and previous involvement with the pupil or parents. Parents may choose to invite others (e.g. Adoption Support Worker, Virtual School Kent etc) to the meeting to enrich the discussion around the Young Person’s needs.

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 parents, may include significant and relevant details on the history of the child, or views on how experiences in the birth family or foster care have impacted on the young person's learning and development.

Further Information: all parents have a confidential file which they may choose to share with school/early years provision (in part or full). There is an assumption of confidentiality on the part of the school/early years 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 parents/guardians if and at what point in the meeting the young person should attend.

Parents' 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 EPPLAC/EPAC and be part of the discussion). Actions might include: setting up a playtime observation, organising a more appropriate space for homework, instigating a LIFT referral, monitoring lunchtime eating, opportunities to share interests and achievements, arranging summer holiday activities, requesting additional assessments etc.

It might be especially useful to consider upcoming transitions and any means by which resources and communication can be shared between school/early years 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 previously looked after 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 EPPLAC/EPAC to parents who will decide who else should receive copies, e.g. other school/early years provision staff, Virtual School Kent, Adoption Support Team or other agencies. It is important to agree where in school/early years provision the EPPLAC/EPAC 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 EPPLAC 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 **EPPLAC 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 EPPLAC Review Meeting: Ensure that you have gathered and updated the following information:

- Curriculum planning and proposed topics and visits to ensure any sensitive areas 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 school/early years provisions are planned carefully and that effective communication routes are established between the current and receiving school/early years provisions, along with the parents 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 parents to visit school/early years provision(s) and for school/early years provision staff to ensure appropriate information is exchanged promptly.

**If you require any further advice regarding EPPLAC meetings, please email
VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk.**