

Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) for Key Stages 1,2, 3, & 4

Guidance Notes

“Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, which in turn will lead to a successful adult life’. (Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011).

It is widely acknowledged that there are ongoing, and often complex, needs for a child who has come through the Care System to a place of permanency; the difficulties do not simply disappear when the Adoption Order is issued.

The DFE has issued a number of documents that have highlighted the needs of this vulnerable pupil group and, in Sept 2018, extended the remit of the Virtual School to provide advice and guidance in regard of these children.

Although the EPAC is not a statutory document the Virtual School would consider it best practice for schools to undertake one for every Post LAC child on their roll.

Who is the EPAC for?

This plan has been written specifically for children who have been Adopted; please see our other Education Plans for children who are subject to Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Residency Order (RO), or Child Arrangement Order (CAO) having previously been in care. Not all Adopted children and young people will meet the criteria to receive Post LAC Pupil Premium, but you may use this plan to support their ongoing needs anyway.

Please note that due to the difference in legal status of Adopted Children to those who are currently LAC, this plan may only be initiated with the full consent of the parent(s) of the child.

The EPAC is intended to be a continuation of the PEP process and used as a working document. The aim is to clearly identify needs and strengths and to create a targeted plan to enhance their education provision. Once completed it will also provide the evidence required for OFSTED around the decisions taken in allocation of specific use of the Post LAC Pupil Premium funding.

It is hoped that the coming together of parent(s), school staff, social worker, and any other professional with current involvement, will create a child focussed education plan that will protect vulnerability, and enable the child to reach their maximum

potential. This sharing of information will benefit the understanding around the child's needs. Please complete all sections.

When should it be used?

It is expected that the initial EPAC will be set up at the start of the academic year, or whenever the child changes education setting, and then reviewed every term.

The EPAC continues the good practice already established through the PEP process for Children in Care. It is tailored to reflect the child's change in legal status and establishes the (adoptive) parent as a key figure in the plan rather than the social worker. EPACs were established in Hampshire Schools in 2018 and have proved to have a positive impact on the children and young people.

It is recommended that prior to the meeting the blank EPAC document is distributed to all parties involved and they are invited to complete any relevant sections, and to send in advance to the Designated Teacher. This gives everyone an opportunity to be familiar with the various sections of the form and have relevant information ready to share.

If additional space is required, then please add a blank page to the document. Most of the text boxes are expandable. The form is designed to be flexible and to take the participants on a journey through the child's history, exploration of strengths and needs, establishing a plan of support, and consideration of best use of Post LAC Pupil Premium. Please add in any areas that are not covered but we would ask you to not omit sections. The document has been designed to capture the child's specific needs as a care experienced child. It is particularly important that parents are included in the discussions around the use of funding as required by the DFE.

The Virtual School recommendation is that the parent completes the following sections and sends to the Designated Teacher ahead of the meeting:

1, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Chairing of the Meeting

It is intended that the Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked after and Post Looked After Children will be responsible for chairing the meeting, collating the information and circulation of the document after, following up actions etc. The DT will have received training with the Virtual School around the needs of LAC and Post LAC, so best placed to carry out this role. More information around the role of the DT can be found in this link

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Presence/involvement of the child in the process:

Dependent on the age and understanding of the child, or young person, it is intended that they have a part in some of the discussion of this plan; at the very least to have their view captured in the Child View part of the document. It may be appropriate for just some parts of the plan to be shared with them. In some cases, it is more fitting for the child or young person to join the meeting in person to discuss targets or achievements. If this is not the case then maybe a short video clip, or photos of the child could be shared to show achievements or special events etc. this helps to keep the meeting and discussion very focussed on the child

Front page

Please note that the front page of the document does not have the child or young person's name on it. This is done purposely to protect their Legal Status. Do **NOT** add it to the front cover. This is a **CONFIDENTIAL** document. Please insert your own school logo in the place provided.

Section 1: Child/ Pupil information page

Please add in the child's details prior to the meeting. It is good practice to set a meeting date two weeks in advance, and to circulate the document to all key people. This allows parents and other professionals a chance to contribute if they so wish, and to be familiar with the various sections.

Dates for subsequent meetings: it is useful to pencil in dates ahead, the frequency is dependent on need, but our recommendation would be approx. one per term.

The Date of the Adoption Order is significant in terms of funding, please add this in. It is particularly important if the child has recently been Adopted.

Please note that the date of the Adoption Order will be different to the date of placement with the adoptive family. When a child is initially placed with their new adoptive parent(s) they are on "Adoption Placement" and are still a Child in Care, and so PEP meetings are held.

Not all families will have an allocated social worker. Parents will request support from their Post Adoption Service if required. The Post Adoption Service that has responsibility for supporting the child and their family will initially be the placing Local Authority (LA), and they remain responsible for three years following the Adoption Order (AO). After that it falls to the Post Adoption Service for the area in which the child is resident.

So, for example if James was placed by the Surrey Adoption Service to a family resident on the Isle of Wight then he remains with that LA (Surrey) for 3 years until the Adoption Order is issued. After that date he is then the responsibility of Adopt South, who are the supporting Post Adoption Service for the Isle of Wight.

Section 2: People present at this meeting

Add in as much information as possible to ease future communication

Please note that the child will not have an allocated social worker unless the parent has requested support from the Post Adoption Service. Only parents can request support (not schools)

Section 3: Significant information on early life experiences

This is a section to be completed by the parent(s) of the child/young person. They may add in as much or as little information as they wish. It is intended to be a snapshot of Early Life History and must be treated as highly confidential. This will be helpful context for any current difficulties and give an indication of support that has been put in place. Parents are frequently asked to give information regarding their child's early history, it is hoped that once this is passed to school as part of the EPAC that they will not have to repeat it. Please DO NOT include the names of birth parents, or birth siblings. If necessary, to reference them please use initials so their identity is protected and GDPR compliant

Indicate where any further information or more detailed information can be found: It might be helpful to list in this section any historic reports that are held eg Speech and Language, Paediatrician, Educational Psychologist etc.

Section 4: Professional Involvements

Please add in any professional involvements, this will help to give a clear picture of support over time for the child/young person. This is particularly helpful when the child has just started school or recently changed education setting.

Section 5: My Voice

This is a section to be completed by the child, with assistance if needed. It should be completed before the EPAC meeting and presented in the meeting. If the child is not able to be present, or is unwilling to be present, please make sure that their voice is heard by reading their views. Some schools, or families, may wish to play back a video clip of the child expressing their views, or of a relevant event.

Use the pages provided or a version of your choice.

Section 6: Parent's and Professional's Comments

This section should be completed by the parent(s) of the child ahead of the meeting or recorded/ minuted and added in later if not given in advance.

There are some suggestions within this section to guide the parent(s) around potential areas they may wish to comment on. Three key priority spaces are available for their comments. These are expanding boxes.

Any Professional person working with the child or family can be invited to complete the comments section. Add in more boxes if required.

Section 7: Things that have changed in my life since my last EPAC or PEP

If this is the first EPAC you will need to state a change as being a change in the child's legal status from a LAC to an Adopted Child. Please be careful NOT to add in names that the child was previously known by. For example **do not** write Roxi-Lee Atkins has now changed her name to Rosie- May Jones, instead write "new name is Rosie- May Jones" or "family name can now be added to Rosie- May's exercise books" etc

If this is a continuation of an EPAC please add in any significant changes eg Rosie-May has just completed a 10 week programme with the Sensory OT, this has had a significant impact on reducing her anxiety on arrival at school each morning. Or, Rosie received an Annual Letter box contact from her Birth Mother in January, this unsettled her for a few weeks and we saw a re- emergence of separation anxiety in this time.

Please review any previously set targets here. If this is the first EPAC and there are no targets please skip to the next section.

Section 8: Education and Academic Overview

Please complete with as much information as possible, as this creates an accurate picture of attainment over time.

Standardised Scores for Reading, Spelling, Comprehension, and Maths are included to show quantifiable progress, and early identification of potential areas of difficulty.

Section 9: Please use this section to note areas of strength, as well as barriers to engagement with learning

The Barriers to learning section includes space to record the outcomes from various Emotional Assessment Tools; these may include the PEP Toolkit, Boxall Profile, Thrive, SDQ etc. Please use the space to add in the information for the assessment tool that is used by your school.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Designated Teachers will be familiar with the PEP Analysis Toolkit, and will have received training on how to use it through their training with the Virtual School. This is a useful tool that helps with identifying some common areas of difficulty for children who are care experienced, as well as offering suggestions for ways to support. Please ask the DT for more information.

An initial EPAC must focus on stabilising the pupil, ensuring they feel safe and securely attached. Schools should consider adult relationships for any child new to

Adoption or/and new to the school to ensure there is a key adult (attachment figure) in place as a core strategy. If the pupil is new to your school it will not be possible to complete the PEP Analysis Toolkit (good practice would be to complete after 3 months once the school has got to know the pupil). This information can then be added at the next review.

The PEP Analysis Toolkit should be completed annually. Areas of need/diffculty will change. For example we find that relationships are the starting point when the child is new to school but as the pupil becomes stable in terms of attachment and sense of self, the learning needs can become more of a focus.

At the end of this section there is a space to add in other relevant factors eg cultural needs, permanency, stability, family relationships, and any sensory or physical needs etc

Space has been given to consideration of any additional needs that may need further exploration. Please discuss any areas of concern with the school SENCo. Also, be aware that there are set criteria for children to be recorded on the School SEN register as needing SEN support, and futher thresholds to meet tfor consideration of needs that would be supported through an an Education Health Care Plan.

Although much of this plan focusses on the needs of the child or young person please consider where their strengths lie. Experience shows that where these areas are acknowledged and supported the child or young person's self esteem is increased.

Section 10: My Education Action Plan

In light of the areas discussed in this meeting please set targets for this term and review over the academic year. Good practice would indicate that the targets should include an academic, social and emotional areas for development. Please make sure that the target is achievable and specific. Reviewing notes are important as they will influence the next step for development.

For young people in KS3 and KS4 there are additional sections that focus on choice of subject options, progress in formal qualifications, support for exams, and assistance in choice of Post 16 options.

There is a link included in the EPAC to the HIEPS website for the Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA). This may be between schools, or Key Stages, or to the next class. It is a really useful document when a child is transitioning to a new setting and this is particularly helpful when the finer details of transition need to be recorded. More information can be found on this link.

[Transition | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/transition)

Section 11: Pupil Premium Plus funding

Currently the PP+ funding is £2345 per year. Schools should record the child as “Post LAC” in the October School Census and the funding will be allocated directly to school. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of their child’s Post LAC status (this may be the Adoption Order or a confirmation from Childrens Services Department). Please be very careful with the storing/sharing of information, particularly if the documentation contains the names of Birth Parents.

The 2018 Designated Teacher Guidance from the DFE states:

“42. For previously looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by the child’s school. The amount a school receives is based on the number of eligible children recorded in the school’s annual January School Census return to the Department for Education.

43. For both looked-after and previously looked-after children PP+ is not a personal budget for individual children. The VSH and school manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children’s needs.

The designated teacher should:

- help raise previously looked-after children’s parents’ and guardians’ awareness of the PP+ and other support for previously looked-after children - this includes encouraging parents of eligible previously looked-after children to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+ funding;*
- play a key part in decisions on how the PP+ is used to support previously looked-after children; and*
- encourage parents and guardians’ involvement in deciding how the PP+ is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use.*

45. The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked-after and previously looked-after children. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child. “

More advice on use of PP can be found on the Virtual School Website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school/previously-looked-after>

Section 12: Sharing of this document

This page is to be used to specifically identify the people/organisations to which this document, or part of, may be shared. For example, these could include Social Worker, ELSA, Class Teacher, Head of Year, OT, PBS, Specialist Teacher Advisory Service etc. Parent(s) to sign if in agreement to share.

It is advisable to think ahead of any professionals who this might be shared with in the future eg County SEN Team, next school, EP etc. If parents are in agreement then the EPAC can be included in the evidence when applying for Statutory Assessment.

Finally, please store the EPAC in a secure file, and only circulate by email to agreed parties. Please check that email addresses are secure.

Please contact the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Virtual Schools for any queries, guidance and advice. See our website for Post-LAC information.

Email: virtualschool@hants.gov.uk or virtualschool@iow.gov.uk

DO NOT SEND THE EPAC TO THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL