

Information Sheet

Previously Looked After Child Status

Qualified for PLAC status

For a child to qualify for Previously Looked After Child (PLAC) status, they must have been a child in care for at least one day before moving to a new order of permanence: Adoption, Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Child Arrangement Order (CAO) (previously Residency Order).

The DfE states that schools should be 'satisfied' with PLAC status. A child's new order of permanence (adoption, special guardianship or care arrangement order) will state that the child was under the care of 'named' local authority prior to the new order being granted. Schools should be mindful of confidentiality and GDPR responsibilities if they ask.

Please note that not all children with an SGO/CAO have previously been in care and, therefore, would not qualify for PLAC status.

Once a school is 'satisfied' with the child's status and they qualify as PLAC, they can amend their school census record. Ultimately, a headteacher takes responsibility for a school census, registers and DfE returns.

PLAC status must be recorded on schools' Autumn (October) Census in order to receive pupil premium plus (PP+) funding for the following financial year. Each child recorded as PLAC on the Autumn Census currently generates £2630 (2025-2026).

Post looked after arrangement codes school census:

N > Not declared (default for most children)

A > Not looked after – Adoption from England and Wales

G > Not looked after – Special Guardianship Order (SGO) from England or Wales

R > Not looked after – Residency Order (RO) from England and Wales (ceased in 2014 and replaced by CAO)

C > Not looked after – Child Arrangement Order from England and Wales

O > Not Looked after – adopted from state care outside of England and Wales

Not qualified for PLAC status

A child in care (looked after child) either on an Interim or Full Care Order, even if placed at home with parents, will remain a child in care – until the care order is discharged.

Once the court discharges a care order, unless a new order of permanence is issued (Adoption, SGO, CAO), they do not qualify for PLAC status.

A child returned to birth parents is re-unified, and no new order of permanence is issued, so they do not qualify for PLAC status. The child may return under a Supervision Order or Child in Need plan (or with no order or plan); either way, this return to the existing legal parent is not a new order of permanence, but rather re-unification.

A Supervision Order is **not a new order of permanence**; it is a legal order which gives the LA a duty to supervise the parent around the child's care for a limited period. These children will, therefore, not qualify for PLAC status.

In any situation where legal parental responsibility is ambiguous for the child or attempts made via parents/guardians do not satisfy the school, the school should seek further advice/support to ensure there are no safeguarding concerns and there is clarity over who holds legal parental rights and responsibilities for the child.

Please see our Moodle page for more information:

[Course: PLAC Status \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/courses/PLAC-Status)

Please contact for further assistance:

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