

Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC)

Early Years and Yr R

Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) Version

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 children in School Years R to 11.

Although the EPAC is not a statutory document the Virtual School would consider it best practice for early years settings/schools to undertake one for every Adopted child on their roll.

Who is the EPAC for?

This plan may be used with any child who is Adopted, having previously been in care. A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or a child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live. This plan has been written specifically for children who have been Adopted; please see our other Education Plans for children who are subject to SGO or CAO.

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 when a child is newly adopted and used as a working document. It can be started at any time in their school career. 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 Plus funding. Please complete all sections.

EHCP Considerations

As this is a plan specifically designed for children with an EHCP you can use some, or all, of the targets from their plan, and copy and paste in to the EPAC targets. There may be a need to include a completely different set of targets particularly if there is a difficulty to be addressed in the short term eg separation anxiety, making friendships in a new school environment, transition support etc,. These are targets that may not be specifically mentioned in the EHCP, but the child will require support none the less.

There may be a need to enhance the provision already in place, and Pupil Premium funding could be used for this. For example, a child with sensory needs may require additional resources and equipment in the classroom. It can also be used for seeking additional assessments that bring further understanding to the child's needs.

Some schools may choose to use Pupil Premium Plus funding for staff training on specific needs of the child eg speech and language, or sensory needs etc. They could also use it for upskilling of staff in understanding the needs of care experienced children.

We would always recommend that where needs are significantly changing they are recorded as part of the Annual Review process for the EHCP following the SEN statutory processes.

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.

When should it be used?

It is recommended that the initial EPAC will be set up at the start of the academic year, or whenever the child changes education setting.

The EPAC establishes the (adoptive) parent as a key figure in the plan and can only be used in conjunction with their consent. Some families will have a Post Adoption

Social Worker supporting them, and the parent may ask for them to be included in the meetings and decision making process

The frequency of review can be agreed with all involved. Our recommendation is to review termly and one of the reviews to be near to, or form part of, the Annual Review meeting. If the child is about to change school, then you may like to invite the Designated Teacher (DT) for Looked After Children and Post Looked After Children from the receiving school to attend the review meeting so that they are familiar with the adults that are supporting the child, established plans and arrangements, along with the needs relating to the child's care experience.

How to use the EPAC for pupils with an EHCP

Please ensure that all parties are familiar with these Guidance Notes.

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 (DT). 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. 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.

Prior to the meeting

It is good practice to set a meeting date two weeks in advance, and to circulate the **blank** document to all key people. This allows guardians and other professionals a chance to contribute if they so wish, and to be familiar with the various sections.

Key people are invited to complete any relevant sections and return to the chair of the meeting in advance. This gives the Designated Teacher an opportunity to be familiar with any issues raised and be ready to address them or have relevant information ready to share.

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, 6 & top of section 8

Chairing of the Meeting

It is intended that the Designated Teacher (DT) will be responsible for chairing the meeting, collating the information, setting targets, 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

[The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Presence / involvement of the child in the process:

As this plan is for very young children, we wouldn't expect them to be involved in the planning of the support plan or target setting. However, it would be good practice for the child to be included in some appropriate way. This may be through showing a short video clip, or photos of the child, that show their achievements or special events etc. This helps to keep the meeting and discussion very focussed on the child. As the child gets older they can take a greater part in expressing their views and being included in the planning of their EPAC

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 information page

Please add in the child's details prior to the meeting.

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 when children are newly adopted, please add this in.

Please note that the date of the Adoption Order will be different to the date of adoption 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 continue to be held.

Parents will know the "Name of Post Adoption Support Service" who are responsible for supporting the child and their family. This will initially be the placing authority, and they remain responsible for three years following the Adoption Order. After that it

falls to the Post Adoption Support Service for the region in which the child is resident.

For example, if James was placed by the Dorset Adoption Service to a family resident on the Isle of Wight then he remains with Dorset Local Authority (Aspire Regional Adoption Agency) for 3 years after the Adoption Order is issued. After three years it is then the responsibility of the Post Adoption Support Service for the region in which he resides to provide support, in this case it would be Adopt South Regional Adoption Agency.

Section 2: People present at this meeting

Invite all professionals to the meeting who have a current involvement. This is an opportunity to build a robust education plan for the child that will include the professional views of those who have been commissioned to support them. Add in as much contact 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 Support Service. **Section 3: Significant information on care and 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 please use first initial 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 a new school or recently changed education setting. We would recommend that you add in the SEN Service Team email address, as well as the caseworker address for your SEN contact.

Section 5: My Voice

This is a section to be completed so that their views are captured. It should be completed before the EPAC meeting and presented in the meeting. Please choose the most appropriate way to convey the child's views. We have included an example child view but you may wish to use an alternative format if you so wish.

Section 6: Parent's and Professional's Comments

This section should be completed by the parent(s) and/or professionals as appropriate. Most helpful if it is completed and sent to the DT ahead of the meeting, or views can be recorded/ minuted and added in later.

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 included for the most important points.

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 following the issue of an Adoption Order you may need to state a change as being a change in the child's legal status from a Looked After Child 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 Mia 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, Sarah received an Annual Letterbox 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 previous targets, please skip to the next section.

Section 8: Learning and development

Two Year Old Check

Parent(s) to please add in any relevant information that was identified at your child's two year old health progress check. This is particularly helpful if it has an impact on their learning ability.

School staff to please complete with as much information as possible, as this creates an accurate picture of attainment over time. Some parts may not be relevant to your child. We recognise that this document is for use with children with a vast spectrum of Special Educational Needs, some of whom may be attaining highly and for some who this is a very different story. We hope that the plan is flexible enough to capture all of the child's attainments no matter how great or small.

Prime and Specific areas of learning and development

Setting /school staff to add in examples of child's development in Prime and Specific areas of development. It is helpful to give specific examples of the child's development in the 7 red boxes.

Characteristics of effective learning

Setting /school staff to click the boxes to show how the child is developing in these key characteristics of learning

Blue Text boxes: Further information in considering support requirements

Setting /school staff to please complete with information regarding those prime and specific areas of learning that are not on track. The questions guide thoughts around the reasons behind the areas of difficulty, use of assessment tools, adaptations to the curriculum and environment that might be needed as well as consideration for other places to seek advice.

Additional advice might be sought from the Virtual School, Services for Young Children, Primary Behaviour Support, Portage, School Nurse Service, Health Visitor, Educational Psychology.

Green Text Box: Consideration of areas of strength

Setting / school staff to add in information about strengths of the child and how these are being promoted/supported. This is particularly important for children who have low self esteem.

Section 9: Please use this section to note the barriers to engagement with learning, & identification of strengths

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

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Designated Teachers will be familiar with the Early Years 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/settings should consider adult relationships for any child new to home placement and/or new to the setting or school to ensure there is a key adult (attachment figure) in place as a core strategy. If the pupil is new to your school / setting it will not be possible to complete the Early Years PEP Toolkit Needs Analysis immediately (good practice would be to complete after 3 months once the school has got to know the child). This information can then be added at the next review.

The Early Years PEP Toolkit Needs Analysis should be completed annually. When children enter Year 1 school staff will use the different Toolkit for older children called the PEP Toolkit Needs Analysis.

Areas of need/difficulty will change as the child gets older. For example we find that relationships are the starting point when the child is new to a setting or school but as they become more 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, physical and sensory needs, permanency, stability, family relationships etc

Suggestions are given for consideration where children are struggling with their learning. We have included some common areas of difficulty, as well as some suggestions for where to go for further advice and guidance

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: Developing your Education Action Plan

Referring to the EHCP Target areas evaluate where the most and least progress is being made. Copy and paste key statements / targets that need consideration from the EHCP, or latest Annual Review. Which of these will become your focussed targets for this academic year? See next section for detail of the chosen targets?

In the top section note the areas in which the child is making good, steady progress (even if still behind peers)

In the lower section note the areas in which the child is struggling

In the orange section note the areas that need additional support that are NOT included in the EHCP. Sometimes these are things that have emerged recently as a difficulty eg separation anxiety when starting school.

In light of all the areas discussed in this meeting please set targets for this term and review over the academic year. Please make sure that the target is achievable and specific. These targets can be taken directly from the EHCP or can be entirely separate depending on the most pressing needs. Choose some of those that you have already considered in the upper and lower purple sections and the orange section.

Please note: SEN funding is given to setting/school to cover the support identified within the EHCP. Post LAC Pupil Premium Plus funding, or Early Years Pupil Premium, can be used to enhance this provision, or to support other areas that may not be included in the EHCP eg for emerging or temporary difficulties. Consider how the Pupil Premium can be best used to support the child's educational needs.

Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA)

Here is a link to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEPS) website for the Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA). This may be used between education settings, or Key Stages, or to the next class. It is a really useful document for when a child is transitioning and 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: Review of Targets (Spring and Summer)

Please review the previous terms targets here.

Section 12: Pupil Premium Plus funding

Currently the PP+ funding is £2345 per year (Oct 2021). Schools should record the child as "Post LAC" in the October Census, with parental consent, 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 Children's 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 (now October) 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>

Early Years Pupil Premium

The purpose of the Early Years Pupil Premium funding is to ensure that children who are inexperienced make accelerated progress. In effect, EYPP is used to close the gap between the child's progress and that of their less disadvantaged peers. Care experienced children who are aged between 3 and 4 years old and have been 'in care' for 1 day or more can receive EYPP as they are currently being looked after by a Local Authority in England or Wales or they have left care in England or Wales through: an Adoption Order, a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangement Order.

If a child qualifies for EYPP under more than one set of criteria they will only attract the funding once. The Early Years Pupil Premium is for the educational benefit of pupils and spend should be clearly linked to children's needs and educational targets.

How much is EYPP?

Children who are 3 and 4 and who meet the eligibility criteria will be funded at a rate of 53p an hour which equates to £302.10 per year. If a child in Local Authority care is attending a setting in a different Local Authority, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority in which the setting is based to fund the EYPP

Section 13: 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, Key Worker, Setting Manager, Class Teacher, 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