



Supporting Post 16 Children in Care and Care Leavers

Introduction

This guidance aims to support professionals in education settings who are working with young people in care to help them achieve the best possible outcomes. This guidance is designed to be read in conjunction with the following documents produced by the Norfolk Virtual School:

- Guide to Post 16 PEPS
- Guide to setting SMART Targets
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidance

Statutory Framework at Post 16

The duty to promote the educational achievement of a looked after child extends to looked after young people aged 16 or 17 preparing to leave care. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that:

- In Norfolk the PEP is maintained until the end of academic year in which the young person turns 18 (Year 13) as part of the preparation and review of the pathway plan and builds on the young person's educational progress
- The pathway plan captures the measures being taken to help the child prepare for when they cease to be looked after
- Links are made with further education (FE) colleges and higher education (HE) institutions so care leavers are supported to find establishments that understand and work to meet their needs
- Each care leaver knows about the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
- Each eligible care leaver receives a higher education bursary of £2,000 when going on to study a recognised HE course.

In line with the Children Act 1989 and the corporate parenting principles, young people transitioning from care should be supported to continue their education and achieve their aspirations. Virtual Schools work with care leaving teams to ensure the education of those transitioning from care is supported at both a strategic and individual level.

Further information on supporting care leavers in their transition to adulthood is available in [Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/311247/Children_Act_1989_transition_to_adulthood_for_care_leavers.pdf)

Definitions

There are many definitions that are used to define young people who are or who have been in care. Here are some of the key definitions you may come across:



Looked After Child (LAC)

Looked After Children are under 18 year olds who are in the care of the local authority

Care Leaver (CL)

Care Leavers are usually 18 years up to the age of 25 who have previously been in the care of the local authority and are still entitled to some additional services.

Care experienced

Care experienced is someone who, at any stage of their life, and for any length of time, has been in care (e.g.: looked after by the local authority).

UASC

(Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers.

It's important to identify who your cohort of vulnerable learners are on entry to the college so that the right support and intervention can be put in place as early as possible.



Click here for further information on supporting care leavers in their transition to adulthood

[Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers)

Norfolk Care Leaver Local Offer

Norfolk's Care Leaver Local Offer is required under the Children and Social Work Act (2017). The local offer sets out our offer for young people who have been looked after by Norfolk County Council, including the information, services and support available. The local offer provides information on the following areas:

- *Money*
- *Accommodation*
- *Education, Employment and Training*
- *Support and relationships*
- *Getting involved*
- *Health and wellbeing*
- *Age 21-25*
- *Contact information*

Each local authority will have their own Care Leaver Local offer



It is good practice to signpost and share the local offer website with Care Leavers in your setting. They may need to be supported going through all the information and understanding what might be relevant and helpful to them.



Click here to find out more about the Norfolk Care Leaver Local Offer

[Norfolk's Local Offer for care leavers - Norfolk County Council](#)

The Post 16 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the young person, carefully tracking their progress, and supporting them to achieve well and to be aspirational.

All Looked after children have a statutory Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority that looks after them. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a legal part of the Care Plan and is a statutory requirement for Looked After Children up until the age of 18 years old.

In Norfolk, Personal Education Plans remain in place until the end of Year 13.

The Post 16 Personal Education Plan (PEP) also supports and informs the Pathway Plan for Care Leavers. It focuses on the following key areas:

- Young person's views
- Record of the meeting
- Education, employment, and training
- Young person details

Termly PEP meetings should ensure the young person's PEP is robust, with a clear and positive plan, helping to remove barriers and support them transition into adulthood and long-term employment.

The Importance of the Post 16 PEP

Key things to consider:

The plan reflects what is important to the young person now (and for the future) their strengths and what support they require

The plan ensures a personalised approach that provides support and enables the young person to reach their aspirations and builds life chances

The plan ensures that every young person in the care of the local authority has a planned and monitored education or training route until the end of Year 13



Roles and responsibilities for the Post 16 PEP

The PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the setting the Looked After Child is on roll at. The PEP is centralised by the Virtual School, but it is owned by the Social Worker. Norfolk Virtual School uses Welfare Call to provide an electronic PEP in which participants log into a secure portal to upload information before and during the PEP meeting.

Welfare Call provides a help desk to ensure all stakeholders are assisted with the PEP process and allows many of the sections which do not change to pre-populate. This reduces the amount that has to be completed for each PEP and ensures the focus is on the young person and their wishes. Norfolk Virtual School also has a PEP Manager who can support you with any PEP queries. If you have any PEP queries, please contact julie.steward@norfolk.gov.uk

Key individuals who should be involved in the PEP process are:

- The Young Person
- Social Workers / Personal Advisor
- Designated Teacher / Key Person
- Foster Carer / Parents

The Role of The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher's statutory role is to promote the educational achievement of all Looked After Children in their setting. They should have lead responsibility for helping staff understand the factors which affect how Looked After Children and Care Leavers learn and achieve.

Designated Teachers should:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Make sure the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers are prioritised
- Ensure high quality provision and support is in place for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Take lead responsibility for the coordination of PEPs, ensure they provide the young person with the opportunity to achieve the best outcomes and quality assure these within their setting
- Ensure any Looked After Children or Care Leavers are claiming and receiving their financial entitlement e.g., 16 to 19 bursary
- Ensure staff within the setting prioritise, understand, and support the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers (e.g., through training, information sharing, etc)
- Act as a central point of liaison and information for local authorities, social workers, and virtual school staff to assist efficient communication with the college



The role of the Social Worker / Personal Advisor

The PEP needs to take place once a term. The Social Worker/Personal Advisor decides with the Designated Teacher when a PEP is necessary within the statutory timeframe and arranges a date with the education provider and anybody else who needs to be invited. The date is recorded on the young person's ePEP on Welfare Call.

The Social Worker/Personal Advisor will organise the date and time of the meeting. Best practice is to schedule and agree the date of the next PEP meeting at the end of the PEP meeting.

The Personal Advisor takes on the role of the Social Worker when the young person turns 18 and will support them as Care Leavers.



Click here to find out more about the role of the Personal Advisor

[Personal adviser - Norfolk County Council](#)

The role of Norfolk Virtual School

The Virtual School will be a key contact for all Post 16 settings. You can contact the Post 16 Virtual School Team here: virtualschools@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Virtual School will:

- Act as a central point of contact to provide guidance and support to further education settings
- Quality assure the completed PEPs
- Offer Post 16 PEP training and support

Promoting the young person's voice

It is important that the young person is kept central to the PEP meeting. They should be invited to plan and attend their PEP meeting in a way that is appropriate for them. They should be supported to participate in their PEP meetings. Their wishes and feelings about their education should be listened to and held at the centre of the PEP and inform targets.

If the young person feels unable to attend their PEP meeting, their views must be brought to the PEP meeting by the most appropriate person. Feedback from the meeting should be shared in a supportive way with the young person after the meeting.

The young person's views should be captured in a strengths-based approach which recognises and celebrates their skills, talents, and achievements. The young person's views focus on the following areas:

- Things that I think are going well
- Things that I am worried/concerned about
- What I think needs to happen to help

Key areas to consider for the PEP meeting



Having a structured approach to the PEP meeting will help to ensure that everyone is working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young person.



Before the meeting

- Consult with the young person
- make sure they know where and when the PEP is taking place
- Gather the young person's views
- Gather feedback from tutors including current attainment & attendance data
- Consider any individual needs e.g. is an interpreter required?



During the meeting

- What's going well?
- What's not working?
- What are the next steps?
- Agree on SMART targets
- Discuss enrichment activities and work experience opportunities
- Signpost to careers advice
- Bursary support
- Set the next PEP date on Welfare Call



Following the meeting

- Complete the ePEP on Welfare Call
- Sign off should take place within 10 days of the PEP meeting
- Ensure any actions are put into place
- Ensure the PEP is active and everyone works together to support the young person to achieve their outcomes

Setting Smart Outcomes / targets on the PEP

It's important that the outcomes/targets that are agreed on the PEP are:

- ✓ person-centred
- ✓ reflect the young person's wishes and aspirations
- ✓ SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely)

For more detailed information on how to complete the Post 16 PEP on Welfare Call please refer to the Virtual School Guide to Post 16 PEPS, which explains the PEP process for Post 16 children and young people.

For examples of SMART outcomes / targets please refer to the Virtual Schools Guide to setting SMART Targets.

Post 16 Funding

Post 16 Looked After Children and Care Leavers are currently not eligible for pupil premium plus funding. However, all Looked After Children are entitled to apply for help with education related costs via the 16 to 19 Bursary. This is for 16 to 19 year olds who are studying at school or college. The bursary is administered by the setting not the Virtual School.



Click here to find out more about the Post 16 Bursary

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2023 to 2024 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year)

The accompanying checklist can be found here: [16 to 19 Bursary checklist.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-checklist)

You can also contact our Post 16 Virtual School Team to discuss further options around funding or if there is a specific intervention, such as tuition, you would like to explore for the young person.



Supporting Transitions to Post 16 settings

Developing a whole college approach ensures that everyone is working together to support the wellbeing and academic outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. All of our Norfolk FE Colleges and many of our sixth forms now have 'working arrangements' in place with Norfolk Virtual School. These 'working arrangements' documents set out the support that the setting has in place for our Norfolk cohort.

The following are examples of approaches and practice from evidence-based research that help to support and lead to positive experiences of transitions at Post 16:

- Offering taster visits to support enrolment and course decision-making
- Early identification and support on entry to the college
- Signposting to the 16 to 19 bursary fund, enrichment activities and careers advice
- Creation of a college policy for students in care and care experienced students
- Creating a trauma-informed and attachment aware setting
- Developing staff awareness, understanding and practice to support outcomes

Transition to adulthood – turning 18

Once a young person reaches their 18th birthday, they are legally no longer a looked after child and their placement with a foster family can no longer be classed as a foster placement. Some young people may have a 'Staying put' arrangement or move to supported housing.

The transition from care to independence for many young people is often challenging and difficult. The move into independent accommodation can happen very suddenly for the young person and can have a significant impact on their ability to manage their studies in college. At this point, they are likely to be managing the following challenges:

- Leaving care abruptly and with little notice
- Moving into new accommodation in an area they don't know
- Having no internet access in new accommodation
- Having to develop independent living skills such as grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning
- Managing finances independently such as budgeting and paying utility bills
- Understanding what benefits and exemptions they may be entitled to
- Managing different or longer journeys to college

Useful Contacts

Norfolk Virtual School

Tel: 01603 303323

Email: virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @SchoolCic

Website: [Virtual school for children in care and previously in care - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/virtual-school-for-children-in-care-and-previously-in-care)



Welfare Call

Tel: 01226 716333 (support line)

Email: epep@welfarecall.com

Links to Statutory Guidance documents

Statutory Guidance Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Published: July 2014 / Updated: February 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Published: November 2009 / Updated February 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

Statutory Guidance on SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (2014)

Updated May 2015 / last updated May 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Children and Families Act 2014

Published March 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-children-and-families-act-2014-gains-royal-assent>

Useful Links to support care leavers:

Coram Voice: [Home Page - Coram Voice](#)

Coram Voice will help if you are in care, leaving care, have or need a social worker. They will get your voice heard, tell you about your rights, give you the support you need through advocates.

Become: [Home Page - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](#)

A charity offering advice and support to children in care and care leavers.

Turn2us: [Fighting UK Poverty - Turn2us](#)

Helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face with partner organisations.

icanbea... [\(Careers and Ideas in Norfolk and Suffolk\)](#)

A social media styled careers website designed to help young people choose their future career from a massive range of opportunities across Norfolk and Suffolk.



Propel [Propel](#)

Propel is brought to you by Become the charity for children in care and young care leavers. Propel will provide you with information on care leaver support for every university and college across the UK.

Help You Choose [Successful Apprenticeship and Job Hunting | helpyouchoose.org](#)

This advice section on Help You Choose offers advice and support around CV building, application forms etc. for young people.

I Cloud [Home - icould](#)

Real stories to inspire your career - Career videos, job information and ideas for your future. Includes the Buzz quiz [Buzz quiz - icould](#) In under five minutes, discover: your strengths and what makes you tick and which celebrities share your personality type. There are 16 possible results, each connected to an animal. Which animal are you?

The National Careers Services [Careers advice - job profiles, information and resources | National Careers Service](#) The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work. This service is available to people who live in England.

Start [Start Profile](#)

'Start' is a free, online careers platform, designed to connect 11–18-year-olds with their future career potential. Covers the 'World of Work'; 'What to Study'; 'Where to Learn'; and 'Employability'.

Amazing Apprenticeships [Amazing Apprenticeships](#)

Amazing Apprenticeships is a leading organisation in the education sector, founded to tackle misconceptions about apprenticeships and promote the benefits.

University of East Anglia [UEA - Resource Centre](#)

Resources for students, guardians, and professionals to access from home or school to explore infographics, videos, blogs and more for students of all ages and those supporting them.

Prospects [Prospects.ac.uk](#)

Prospects are the experts in graduate careers. They help to guide students and graduates to a bright future with unrivalled information, advice, and opportunities.

Listening Works [www.family-action.org.uk/listening-works](#)

Mentoring offers you longer-term, independent support from one of our clued up on care experience Volunteer Mentors. Your mentor will draw on his or her own knowledge and experience to help and encourage you through your next steps as you work towards the goals you set.