



## **Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) Guidance Notes**

### **Who is the EPAC for?**

This plan may be used with any child who was Previously Looked After. 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 child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live.

**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 working document to highlight the strengths and needs of the child or young person who was Previously Looked After; to create a targeted plan to enhance their education, and identify good use of the Pupil Premium Plus 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 allow the child to reach their maximum potential.

*“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).*

### **When should it be used?**

Many schools have continued to use the PEP for three years from the date of the Adoption Order. It has proved to be a helpful document in identifying the needs of the child and targeting support in the classroom. However, the PEP is designed for Children in Care and so the EPAC will fulfil this role more effectively.

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.



In addition, the EPAC can be used at any point when the child or young person is past the three year Post Adoption Order point. The frequency of review can be agreed with all involved. It can be used in a variety of other ways some of which might include:

- problem solving the needs of the child or young person at a time of difficulty
- a method of capturing needs and strengths
- an additional transition document that identifies the needs of a Post LAC when the child is about to move educational setting.

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, either sending in advance to the chair of the meeting or bringing with them. This gives everyone an opportunity to be familiar with the various sections of the form, and have relevant information ready to share.

### **Chairing of the Meeting**

It is intended that the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children and Post Looked After 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 PLAC, 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](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 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.

The "Authority responsible for this child" relates to the Post Adoption Support Team that has responsibility 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 Team for the area in which the child is resident.

So, for example if James was placed by the Dorset Adoption Team to a family resident on the Isle of Wight then he remains with that LA (Dorset) for 3 years until the AO is issued. After that date he is then the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Adoption Support Team.

## **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 Team. (This is a separate team from CiC teams)

## **Section 3: Significant information on pre- adoptive and early adoptive 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. Adopters 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.

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. (The reports can be added in to this document on the final page if appropriate.)

#### **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.

#### **Section 6: Parent Comments**

This section should be completed by the parent(s) of the child ahead of the meeting, or 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 available for their comment. These are expanding boxes.

#### **Section 7: Things that have changed on 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. So 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-Lee 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 Attainment**

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

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

Here you will find two expandable sections to insert views and comments from parents, and from education staff, to capture the strengths of the child

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.

#### **PEP Analysis Toolkit**

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.

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 Toolkit Needs Analysis (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 Toolkit Needs Analysis should be completed annually. Areas of need/difficulty 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 etc

### **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 area 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.

It is helpful to include the interventions that the child is included in, particularly when they are relevant to the target set.

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 – this is particularly helpful when the finer details of transition need to be recorded. More information can be found on this link

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/educational-psychology/TPAschoolguidance2017.pdf>

## **Section 11: Pupil Premium Plus funding**

Currently the PP+ funding is £2300 per year. Schools should record the child as “Post LAC” in the January 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. “*

## **Section 12: Sharing of this document**

This page is to be used to specifically identify the people/organisations to which this document may be shared. Some examples are given, and could include ELSA, Class Teacher, Year Group Leader, OT, PBS, Specialist Teacher Advisory Service etc. Parent(s) to sign if in agreement to share.

Finally, please store the EPAC in a secure file, and only circulate by email to agreed parties. Please check that email addresses are secure. **Do not send the EPAC to the Virtual School**

Please contact the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Virtual School for any further queries, guidance and advice; also see our website for Post- LAC information.

Email: [virtualschool@hants.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@hants.gov.uk) or [virtualschool@iow.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@iow.gov.uk)

\*With thanks to the Hampshire Adoption UK Parent Support Group who played a crucial part in the consultation phase of this document\*