



Making Sense of the Surrey PEP for Looked After Children

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Section 1 - What is Surrey Virtual School?

The Team

You can contact Surrey Virtual School either by email (virtual.school@surreycc.gov.uk) or by phone (02085417761)

Senior Leadership Team:

- Anwen Foy – Virtual School Head Teacher
- Stacey McCabe – Assistant Head Teacher – East Progress/Attainment & CME
- Helen Hale (Covered by Cass Hardy) – Assistant Head Teacher- West/Inclusion/Exclusion/Attendance/Send
- Anna Maclean – Assistant Head Teacher – Post-16/UASC
- Liz Stanbridge – Business Manager

Education Support Officers:

- Michele Hawkins – Education Support Worker (North West)
- Ellie Bissell – Education Support Worker (post-looked after children)
- Caroline Carter – Education Support Worker (South West)
- Anne Vickers – Education Support Worker (Post-16)
- Lisa Smith (Covered by Abi Tidbury) – Education Support Worker (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)
- Andrea Hall – Education Employment Advisor for Care Leavers
- Sandy Ball – Education Support Worker (North East)
- Mary Cooke – Education Support Worker (South East)

Admin Support Team:

- Imraan Husain – Administrator
- Zubeda Haque (on secondment, covered by Micky Wolfsthal) – Administrator
- Lyndee Whyton – Administrator
- George Hook – Events Apprentice

The Role of Surrey Virtual School (SVS)

Surrey Virtual School (SVS) acts as a local authority champion to promote the progress and educational attainment of children and young people who are or who have been in care so that they achieve educational outcomes comparable to their peers. Ensuring that they receive a high quality education is the foundation for improving their lives.

Surrey Virtual School is not a teaching provision. However, it plays a vital role in helping looked after children to access education. It works to bring together all the information about the children and young people who are cared for by Surrey Local Authority. This ensures that their progress can be tracked and supported, while also ensuring that interventions are both effective and strategic.

When a child becomes Looked After in Surrey, they will remain with Surrey Virtual School until they leave care. This means that if a child is placed in another county, then Surrey Virtual School will still be responsible for them. If a Looked After child from another county is placed in Surrey, then they will remain the responsibility of the Virtual School in the county where they became looked after. Surrey Virtual School can still offer advice with local information and sign posting

Section 2 - What is a PEP?

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory document that is completed by early years settings, schools, colleges and social workers, at a termly meeting. Its purpose is to ensure that everyone recognises the importance of the young person's education. The PEP tracks their progress and supports achievement and aspirations as they progress through education.

Under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, Local Authorities must promote the education of all children in care from early years up to the age of 18.

Until a young person is 18, the PEP remains the responsibility of the social worker. After 18, the Personal Advisor (PA) takes over this responsibility.

All of Surrey's PEPs are electronic and are available on a secure web portal. These are known as ePEPs and this is maintained by Welfare Call. The previous SIM versions are no longer available. The ePEPs will remain Key Stage specific based on the age and national curriculum year of the individual, from Early Years through to Post-16. These must be reviewed on a termly basis, jointly by the education provision and the social worker. There are always deadlines (well-publicised) for the completion of the PEPs as there is a long process of quality assurance and evaluation of financial requests that take place after the PEP has been written.

Best practice is that the ePEP document is completed within 3 days of the meeting.

An initial PEP must be carried out within 20 working days of the young person coming into Surrey's care.

It is highly recommended that a new PEP take place if a young person moves educational setting

What does the DfE say about PEPs?

- It is a statutory requirement and an integral part of the care plan
- The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances
- The quality of the PEP is a joint responsibility of the school and Local authority
- PEPs should involve the child at all stages of the process
- The PEP should reflect but not duplicate any existing plans
- It should help everyone gain the clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to ensure academic progress and meet the child's educational needs, describing how that will be provided.

Pupil Voice

Though the PEP is a Statutory Document, it should be done with the intention of helping the child or young person. Throughout the PEP process they should be fully supported to participate, to ensure that their wishes and feelings concerning their education have been taken into account through the development, implementation and review of the PEP.

It is requested that before the PEP meeting, professionals meet with the child or Young Person to complete the 'My wishes, feelings and aspirations' section within their PEP. These views should be included, considered and recorded at each stage of developing the rest of the young person's PEP.

These conversations will take very different forms depending upon the child or young person's age, abilities, specific learning or language needs and/or frame of mind at the time. Everything should be done to support the child or young person in a personalised way so that they are able to voice their views, wishes and feelings.

If a child is too young or feels unable to attend their PEP meeting, then their views must be brought to the PEP meeting by an appropriate person and recorded in the ePEP document. The key discussion points should be shared in an appropriate way with the child or young person after the meeting.

Once a young person reaches 18 they can refuse a PEP taking place. This is discouraged but as long as the young person has received sufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) it can be allowed. This IAG must be recorded in the ePEP.

Children Missing in Education (CME) and post-16 NEET must have a pep meeting. It is arguably more important that they do so, more than others.

Section 3 - What is a Pupil Premium Plus?

In 2013 the DfE introduced Pupil Premium Plus for looked after and previously looked after children. In doing this, the DfE acknowledged the enduring impact of trauma and loss in children's lives and the key role of schools in supporting children who have had a difficult start in life.

Who is eligible for Pupil Premium Plus? Pupil Premium Plus is available to pupils from reception age to Year 11 in state-funded education in England who:

- Are in local authority care in England.
- Have been adopted from care in England or Wales.
- Left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- Left care under a Child Arrangements Order (formerly known as a Residence Order).

The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational and developmental support for children looked after in agreement with Designated Teachers and carers. Statutory guidance states that interventions supported by the funding should be evidence based and in the best interest of the child.

Looked after children in the Early Years are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium.

For guidance on the eligibility, allocation and use of Pupil Premium Plus, please see the Surrey Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Policy and Practice document.

Section 4 – Welfare Call

Welfare Call is an online system we use to monitor the education of looked after children. Each child's Designated Teacher and Social Worker will be given access to the secure system, and allocated the child. This allows the DT and SW to complete the online ePEP document prior to, at, and following the PEP meeting to record the child's views, attendance information, progress and attainment and targets. The ePEP is also the mechanism to request Pupil Premium Plus. If you become the DT or SW for a looked after child, please contact Surrey Virtual School (virtual.school@surreycc.gov.uk) so that we can set you up with a secure account with Welfare Call.

Once you are set up with an account, if you have any problems accessing or using your account, please call the Welfare Call helpdesk on 01226 716333.

Section 5 – Role of the Social Worker

- Agree the date of the PEP meeting every term with the School/DT and set the date for the meeting adding the date to Welfare Call
- Take urgent action to avoid a missed or late PEP
- Ensure the views of the child/YP are sought and record these on the PEP
- Ensure all detail is completed and that robust targets are agreed
- Check pupil premium information is clear
- Support foster carers prior to the meeting and at the meeting as appropriate
- Follow through any agreed actions

Section 6 – Role of the Designated Teacher

- Agree the date of the PEP meeting every term with the Social Worker
- Review previous targets using recent tracking information; (progress attainment, attendance and pastoral information). Link this to the pupil premium spend
- Be prepared to highlight strengths and areas for the child/YP to develop
- Complete relevant information on the PEP (Some of this can be done prior to the meeting)
- Write the new SMART targets into the spaces provided
- Link the new targets to the request for pupil premium
- Follow through any agreed actions

If a child is not attending school and therefore CME (child missing education), or NEET (not in education, employment or training) if post-16, the PEP meeting must go ahead, and the Education Support Worker from Surrey Virtual School will act as the DT.

Section 7 – PEP Quality

Surrey Virtual School is responsible for ensuring each PEP is completed to a high standard and reflects good quality planning. As such, we will quality assure each PEP every term, and rate the PEP Red, Amber or Green based on the following 5 statements:

A PEP will be graded GREEN if ‘The Big Five’ are all in place:

1. There is evidence that the Pupil Voice has been heard and is evident in the PEP planning
2. Short and long term learning targets are included which are aspirational, challenging and SMART. They include detail on how and when it will be achieved and name the adults that will be responsible for actions
3. There is evidence of updated attainment and progress data
4. The review of the previous Learning targets demonstrates the use of the previous term of Pupil Premium Plus Grant spend and the impact it has had on learning
5. New Learning targets include the proposed use of the Pupil Premium Plus and how this funding will support the achievement of the Learning Objectives

The absence of any one of the above will result in an automatic RED grading. If a PEP is graded RED, Pupil Premium Plus will not be allocated and you will be asked to review and amend the PEP in order to improve the quality.

For Post-16 PEPs we have ‘The Big Four’. All of these have to be in place for the PEP to be rated GREEN:

1. There is evidence that the Pupil Voice has been heard and is evident in the PEP planning.
2. There is evidence of updated attainment and progress data or for a young person that is NEET, that the NEET tab has been completed.
3. Short and long term targets have been included which are aspirational, challenging and SMART.
4. There is information on the young person’s attendance and strategies to support improvements as relevant.

At present there is no Pupil Premium Plus funding for post-16 young people but we will consider requests for monies on a case-by-case basis.

Section 8– PEP Process

This flowchart provides information on how the PEP document is completed. You can view the flowchart below, but the contents of this are written out below:

Is the child new child into care?

Yes: Contact Surrey Virtual School for log in details to the electronic PEP. First PEP to take place within 20 days of coming into care, initiated by social worker.

No: ePEP review date identified at last meeting. A PEP review should take place each academic term. Ideally in the first half of the term to allow for revisions necessary to secure a ‘green’ PEP.

Then contact Surrey Virtual School for log in details to the electronic PEP. First PEP to take place within 20 days of coming into care, initiated by social worker.

Social Worker needs to: Complete tabs 2,3 & 8 of the ePEP document prior to the PEP meeting. Tab 2 section 6 & 7 are mandatory.

Designated Teacher needs to: Contact subject/class teachers, TA and anyone working with the young person requesting information on progress and achievements. Complete sections 4-7 of the ePEP.

PEP Meeting: discuss each section 1-8 in turn. Ensure all have copies of the document or if possible display on a projector and complete as the review progresses.

Arrange next PEP date before the end of the meeting. Tab 2 section 6 & 7. The PEP cannot be signed off without this date.

Social Worker needs to: Ensure all Social Worker sections are complete and signed off by clicking the complete button at top of the page – within 3 days of PEP meeting.

Designated Teacher needs to: Ensure all Designated Teacher sections are complete and signed off by clicking the complete button at top of the page – within 3 days of PEP meeting.

Surrey Virtual School will audit the ePEP and inform, DT or SW if it is complete or rated 'red'.

If no: DT or SW will be contacted and amendments requested before document can be finalised.

If yes: ePEP will be signed off ready for next terms PEP review.

Section 9– Admissions Arrangements

Surrey Virtual School can provide advice and guidance to Social Workers on applying for a school place for a Looked after child, including key stage transfers as well as in year admissions. Please contact Surrey Virtual School for more information.

Section 10– Post 16 FAQ's

Who is responsible, the Social Worker or Personal Advisor?

Up until the age of 18, the SW is responsible for arranging, attending and recording the PEP. It's good practice for the PA to attend the PEP with the SW to support the handover, however the PA does not become responsible until the YP turns 18. Please ensure that the VS is notified of any change to the allocated worker so that access to the ePEP is kept updated.

When should I undertake a PEP with my YP?

- Within 4 weeks (20 days) of BLA (Statutory)
- 2 weeks after a college move, starting a new college or training or becoming NEET (Best practice)
- Each term (3 a year) or when needed. You can have more than 1 a term if needed!
- Until the end of Year 13.

Once the PEP has taken place, it should be recorded in full on Welfare Call within 3 days and signed off as complete.

Who should attend the PEP?

The YP should be asked who they would like invited to the meeting. Invitees usually include the parent, carer, keyworker, tutor etc.

Can the PEP take place without the SW/ PA?

The PEP is a statutory requirement, an integral part of the care plan and the quality is the joint responsibility of the college and the local authority. No PEP should take place without the SW or PA present, unless there are extenuating circumstances or with prior agreement from the VS.

Do the VS need to be at the PEP?

Due to the volume of PEPs that take place each term, ESWs cannot attend every meeting. Where there are known or anticipated issues that need support to move forward, the VS should be invited and will endeavour to attend.

Who chairs the meeting?

This very much depends on the individual situation. Factors such as the YPs relationship with the DT, SW/PA should be taken into account. It is good practice to establish who is undertaking this role prior to the start of the meeting

What if my YP is NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)?

- A PEP should still be completed each term.
- The ESW acts as the Designated Teacher and will sign off the PEP on WFC. The ESW won't necessarily attend the PEP.

How do I set targets for a YP who is NEET?

NEET targets are usually set around re-engagement into education and training or finding employment, although will differ depending on the individual. They may include:

- Finding courses/ training that they are interested in and the steps needed to apply.
- Writing a CV
- Searching and applying for Jobs or an apprenticeship.

For some YP where mental health is a barrier to re-engagement, it may also be appropriate to incorporate targets such as:

- Exercise
- Painting and drawing
- Writing and poetry.

What if my YP doesn't want a PEP?

If a YP is 16-18 years and doesn't want a PEP, the ePEP will still require completing (with the DT if in college) and should record:

- That the YP has chosen not to engage with the PEP.
- That the YP is aware of the support available to them through the PEP and that they can change their mind should they wish to.

A PEP should still be offered each term.

At 18, the YP can choose whether they want a PEP. In this case, the PEP doesn't have to be held, although the ePEP will also need to record this decision (as above). In both cases, the ePEP will need to be signed off as complete.

Please record these decisions in Tab 1(attendees) and Tab 12 (Feedback).

What if my YP is working or in an apprenticeship. Do they need a PEP?

Yes! It's important we are aware of the work or programme the YP is on to ensure they are receiving all the support they are entitled to. If the YP doesn't want to involve the employer or provider this is their choice, however please record this choice on the ePEP.

The next PEP- When should it be arranged?

The next term's PEP should always be arranged at the end of the current PEP meeting (tab 12). The date should be before the advertised deadline and as early in the first half term as possible. (The VS is aware that some colleges have difficulty in offering meetings at certain times)

What are the deadlines and why do we have them?

The VS sets a deadline each term for the PEP meeting to be held, recorded and signed off as complete on WFC. The dates are set for the week before each half term to ensure:

- That targets are set in a timely and effective manner
- That if a date needs to be rescheduled, there is time to do so.
- That if information is missing from the ePEP, there is time to reflect and amend where needed.
- That the ESW can Quality Assure all the PEPs prior to the end of term.
- PEP completion and quality data is collected for each team.

I forgot to record the meeting on ePEP before the deadline. Can I still add the PEP information and sign off my part?

No, please don't record PEPs from one term in another term! This causes confusion within the reporting system and unnecessary additional work for the VS. The PEP should be recorded in full within 3 days of it taking place.

Best Practice....

- Prepare the YP so that they understand what the meeting is about.
- Support the YP to chair if they want to. It's their meeting!
- If the YP is not attending the PEP, gain their views prior to the meeting.
- Know who is attending and recording the meeting on behalf of college and check that this person has access to WFC.
- Request that the college prepare some targets beforehand and if the young person is not going to attend, discuss the targets with them prior to the meeting.
- Record the PEP in full on WFC within 3 days of holding the meeting.
- If you're not sure about anything, ask the allocated ESW.

Changes in the allocated worker?

Please let us know as soon as a young person is assigned to you, so that we can update our records and arrange for you to have access to their ePEP.

Recording qualifications

In September and on entry to care, all efforts should be made to ensure that previous qualifications and results are recorded within the 'Attainment' tab.

Recording changes of College/ NEET status etc.

As soon as you are aware of any change to a young person's education status, you must inform the VS. Without this information we cannot track progress or actively offer the most appropriate support to you and the young person. Incorrect information also impacts on accessibility to the ePEP and team data.

Is there PEP training available?

Alongside this guide, the VS offer training to all SWs, PAs and DTs. Please contact the VS to discuss. You may also find some useful information on our [SVS website](#)

Section 11– Definitions & References

- SVS - Surrey Virtual School
- PEP - Personalised Education Plan
- SW – Social Worker
- DT – Designated Teacher
- PP+ - Pupil Premium Plus
- WFC – Welfare Call
- VSH – Virtual School Head
- AST – Assistant Head Teacher
- ESW – Education Support Worker
- LAC/ CLA – Looked after Child/ Child Looked After
- PLAC – Previously Looked after Child
- LA – Local Authority

References

Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Statutory Guidance for local authorities (DfE 2018)

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE 2018)

Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head. Frequently asked questions (DfE 2014)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2018)