







Virtual School Guidance for Schools

for
Children in the Care
of
Tower Hamlets











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1. Introduction

Tower Hamlets Virtual School introduced an electronic Personal Education Plan or EPEP for all our pupils in April 2017. Initially the process was of course new and therefore time consuming for all those involved in building the EPEP documentation - designated teachers and other colleagues in schools, social workers and Virtual School teachers.

The move to electronic PEPs and our combined efforts have paid off however; the Tower Hamlets EPEP is now a 'living', evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of our children's experience, progress and achievement and is accessible to all professionals involved in their education.

We have been pleased to see the percentage of green RAG-rated EPEPs rise term on term. For the summer term 2018, 63% of our pupils had an EPEP deemed to be 'good', almost twice the figure of 32% for summer 2017.

Since April 2017 we have invited feedback from users and reviewed and amended the EPEP templates on the Welfare Call extranet. Our intention has been to ensure they are user-friendly and to improve the readability and usefulness of the printed documents. The final changes to the templates will go live on 3rd September 2018.

However there remains a widespread issue relating to the timeliness of the information supplied and also, for a small but significant proportion of our pupils, the quality of the final document is too often inadequate. We need to tackle both issues with your support.

Our teachers are available to provide advice and guidance by phone or in person. As team we also offer a termly training day focusing in part on building a robust and effective PEP. This guidance, including the three appendices, will supplement the direct advice and support available from the Virtual School team by providing a first point of reference.

2. DfE Statutory Guidance

The Tower Hamlets EPEP and the agreed procedures for its completion are informed by two statutory guidance documents issued by the DfE:











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

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

and

Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (February 2018)

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

Designated teachers for looked after children should have a copy of the statutory guidance relating to their role and be familiar with its contents.

The PEP is a statutory requirement for all looked-after children and an integral part of their care plan. As such it must be initiated within 10 working days of the start of the first care placement and available for the first working LAC Review which takes place after 20 days. Subsequent PEP reviews must take place termly.

The DfE expects schools and local authorities, through strong links between the designated teacher and the Virtual School, to "share responsibility for making the PEP a living and evolving record of what needs to happen to enable looked after children to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential."

In respect of schools, the DfE requires the information supplied in the PEP to "reflect the individual planning in place they have in place for all their pupils" and a "personalised approach to teaching and learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances".

The guidance specifies that the designated teacher "will need to work closely with other teachers to assess their specific educational needs without delay" and "would normally have overall responsibility for leading the process of target setting for looked-after children in school, should monitor and track how their attainment progresses, and ensure that identified actions are put in place."











As for the Virtual School, we are required to have in place rigorous procedures for recording and monitoring the academic attainment of our looked after children and also for tracking and judging their progress. For this reason we use the EPEP to collect attainment data and information relating to teaching and learning from all schools at regular intervals and at the same point in each term i.e. within the first 10 days of term and/or of the child coming into care.

3. Using the Welfare Call website - https://extranet.welfarecall.com

Welfare Call administers the website through which designated teachers and other staff in school complete the information required for the EPEP. Welfare Call has produced a detailed EPEP User Guide which is available on the site. Below are some useful tips and pointers on how to get started.

Logging-in

As soon as a child of school-age becomes looked-after, the Virtual School provides the pupil's details to Welfare Call who in turn emails (epep@welfarecall.com) the designated teacher with their log-in details for the site. This is actioned immediately so that schools can complete the initial sections of the EPEP within the 10 days required by the statutory guidance.

Welfare Call advises users of their portal to access the site via the browser Google Chrome rather than Internet Explorer so that the EPEP website works quicker. Once you are on the site and have clicked on the tab **EPEP log-in** you will asked to enter the log-in details you have received.

If you believe that you have not been sent a username and/or password or are having technical difficulties with the site please contact Welfare Call directly by phone (01226 716233) or email (epep@welfarecall.com).

Completing relevant sections of the EPEP

Once you are logged-on, the site is easy to navigate. To complete an EPEP, click on EPEP on the navigation bar at the top of the screen. If you have only one child allocated to your account you are taken immediately to that child's EPEP document. If you have more than











one child linked to your account, when the EPEP button is clicked, you are taken to the EPEP summary page with links to all your looked after children.

Once you are in a child's EPEP, you will see the sections of the document numbered 1 to 14 (or 1 to 12 for reception and primary pupils). If you hover the cursor over the section tabs you will notice they are colour-coded according to who completes them: red (designated teacher), blue (social worker), purple (either designated teacher or social worker) and black (Virtual School teacher.

Save your information!

When completing a section of the EPEP please be aware that you need to save the information you have entered before clicking on a different section or you risk losing the information and having to enter it again.

At the top and bottom of every form within the EPEP there is a 'save page' and 'save page and go to next page' button which must be pressed in order for any changes and updates which you may have inputted to be saved correctly.

if you are called away from your computer or take a phone call, always click the 'save page' button first, as you could be timed-out of the site and lose the information

Whatever the situation it is wise to save the information you have entered at regular intervals of no more than 10 minutes.

Delegation

You may want to delegate parts of the EPEP to be completed by the SENCO or the pupil's class or subject teacher. To request this you need to access the section called 'DT Delegation'.

To access the page you will need to highlight the EPEP button and then click on the dropdown the 'DT Delegation' This will then present you with a screen within which you enter in the details of the additional user you wish to set up. and then click on the request delegate setup button.

This will then send the information to Welfare Call to be reviewed and clarified before the request is then either processed (and the new user given access) or denied. While the user











is being reviewed they will appear in the area called 'Requests awaiting processing'. You have the option to cancel any request at any point if you wish.

4. Scheduling the termly PEP meeting

For pupils who are new in care and who currently do not have a PEP, their first PEP meeting should be held as soon as possible i.e. within 20 days of their entry to care, earlier if possible. For pupils who have an existing PEP there is more flexibility about when the termly review meeting is held as long as long as it is no more than 4 months after their previous meeting.

The Virtual School asks designated teachers to avoid scheduling review meetings during the first 3 weeks of term to ensure that key information has been entered on the EPEP and feedback from the Virtual School has been provided. Similarly we ask that PEP meetings take place before the last two weeks of term to allow designated teachers to complete the final sections of the documentation within the term. Given the Spring term is significantly shorter than the Autumn and Summer terms, we accept that meetings may need to take place in early January or late March.

Dates for subsequent meetings are normally agreed at the end of the PEP review and entered in Section 12 (14 for pupils in year 8 and above) of the EPEP. Where this is the first PEP meeting for a child new into care or where no prior discussion has taken place, the designated teacher (or their delegate in school) schedules the date and time of the termly PEP meeting, checking the availability of and co-ordinating arrangements with the child's social worker, the Virtual School teacher and other relevant professionals from within school or external agencies. Normally the child's social worker liaises with the foster carer to confirm arrangements for the PEP meeting.

5. Completing the initial sections of the EPEP: Education & SEND Details and Attainment

10 day turn around

Key information about a child's attainment, their education provision and their teaching and learning must be provided prior to the PEP meeting via their EPEP within 10 days of their entry into care and then subsequently reviewed and updated within the first 10 days of each











term regardless of the date of the scheduled PEP meeting. For designated teachers, this information is entered in sections 7 (Education and SEND Details), and 9 (Attainment).

The Virtual School Senior Teacher sends out an email to all designated teachers on the first day of term with a reminder of the deadline for the completion of these two sections. If the deadline is not met the Virtual School teacher for the individual pupil will follow up formally by email to designated teachers asking for the information to be provided as a matter of urgency. If there is any further delay, the concern is escalated by the Virtual School Senior Teacher or Virtual School Head Teacher to the appropriate line-manager within the school, or where appropriate the head teacher.

Involvement of other staff in the school

In order to complete Section 7 satisfactorily, designated teachers need to liaise with other colleagues in the school.

The class teacher (primary) or English and maths teachers (secondary) need to review progress against the learning targets set the previous term (question 33); provide examples of pupil's writing (English) and a marked maths assessment (question 34) and confirm new learning targets for the current term (question 35).

For pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan or identified as needing SEND support, the SENCO will need to answer questions 22 to 29 regarding SEND provision. The Admissions Co-ordinator will be able to help provide details of the pupil's previous school history (question 15). Pastoral leads may need to confirm details of any social, emotional and behavioural support in place (questions 41 and 42).

For Section 9 designated teachers may need information from the key stage co-ordinator or the school data manager in order to provide accurate attainment data. This includes prior attainment for the end of the previous key stage, current attainment and end of year attainment targets.

Tracking progress

Designated teachers are responsible for tracking the progress of their looked after children. For this reason the Virtual School expects the designated teacher to know their pupils' prior attainment as well as their current attainment; to enter it in Section 9 of the EPEP and to have an informed opinion on whether or not an individual pupil is making expected progress or on track to meet nationally expected standards at the end of the key stage.











Attainment drop-down boxes

The drop-down boxes in Section 9 require designated teachers to choose from a limited range of options to confirm attainment levels and grades.

For pupils in KS3, though not ideal, we ask designated teachers to confirm pupils' attainment by choosing a GCSE grade from 1 to 9. Please be aware that the grade chosen should reflect the pupil's current attainment and **not** their 'on track to achieve' (projected) grade for the end of KS4.

We appreciate that this will not be in line with the assessment policy of every school. In these cases, we ask that the subject teachers/Heads of Departments in each of the core subjects provide a 'best fit' GCSE grade which best reflects the pupil's current attainment and will allow the Virtual School to gauge progress against the pupil's outcomes at KS2.

In other subjects or where the options given are really not appropriate for an individual pupil, we ask designated teachers to confirm the pupil's attainment using the **Additional notes** section and to upload the school's assessment policy in the **Documents** section.

6. Feedback from the Virtual School teacher

The Virtual School teacher allocated to each looked after pupil reads the information supplied by the school in sections 7 and 9 and records feedback and raises any questions in section 8 before the PEP meeting takes place. The feedback will focus on the pupil's attainment and progress as well as their emotional and social development; the interventions and support in place and the use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding (PP+). The teacher will also suggest areas for discussion at the meeting and ask how and when the pupil will be participating.

7. Preparing for the PEP review meeting: meeting with the pupil and completing information regarding attendance, KS4 transition and careers advice and guidance

Pupils new into care with no current PEP

For pupils who are new in care and who currently do not have a PEP, their first PEP meeting should be held as soon as possible i.e. within 20 days of their entry to care. This means that staff in school should meet with the pupil to speak to them about the PEP meeting and complete Section 4 (Pupil Voice) at the same time as they complete the initial PEP sections 7 and 9. Likewise, information regarding attendance (section 6) and where appropriate KS4











transition and also careers advice (sections 12 and 13), needs to be completed promptly so that it is available for other professionals to read on the Welfare Call site prior to the PEP meeting itself.

Pupils with an existing PEP

For pupils who have an existing PEP there is more flexibility about when the review meeting is held as long as it is no more than 4 months after their previous meeting. The Virtual School asks that all the information relating to pupil voice (Section 4), attendance (section 6) and where appropriate KS4 transition and careers advice (sections 12 and 13) is completed 10 to 5 days before the PEP meeting so that other professionals can read and consider this information before the meeting.

Pupil voice

Looked after children often say they have no agency in their own lives. Some feel strongly that they should not be treated differently to their peers. This may result in pupils responding negatively to the PEP meeting, even refusing to attend. Younger or less confident pupils may not have the ability to contribute to the meeting unless they are supported. Yet pupil participation is key to an effective PEP meeting, particularly to the targets themselves.

For these reasons it is crucial that the designated teacher or the key adult in the school meets with the pupil beforehand to discuss how they will participate and to help prepare them psychologically and practically for the meeting. This may involve identifying a piece of work they are proud of and would like to talk about at the meeting. If the pupil is not happy to speak or even attend, then the pupil can be supported to put together a presentation or film to be shown at the meeting.

Section 4 of the EPEP needs to be completed with the pupil. Not every question needs to be answered but it is important the pupil has an opportunity to reflect on what is going well is their education, where they need more help and their aspirations for the future and that this is all reflected on the EPEP.

Attendance, including exclusions

Research shows that for every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, children in care scored over two grades less at GCSE. Discussion at the PEP meeting between professionals, the carer and the pupil and any targets agreed need to be informed by full, accurate and up to date information on attendance entered in Section 6 (questions 1 to 4).











The Virtual School asks the designated teacher to alert us as early as possible and not wait until the PEP meeting if there is any risk of multiple fixed term exclusions or a permanent exclusion. This will trigger discussion of additional support to prevent further deterioration.

If a pupil has been excluded, the exclusion letter should be uploaded on the Welfare Call site and details entered in Section 6 (questions 5, 6 and 7).

KS4 transition

Pupil's KS4 option choices need to be discussed in full at the PEP meeting before final KS4 courses are confirmed. Option choices should be an agenda item in all three termly meetings of the final year of KS3, either Year 8 or Year 9. In the summer term, the final choices as confirmed at the PEP review should be recorded in Section 12.

Careers advice, information and guidance

For pupils in Year 8 and above, all fields in Section 13 should be completed, even if the entry is N/A. Details of all CIAG provided should be recorded, including class or year group support in tutor group sessions or assemblies.

Please note that the Virtual School expects that all our pupils in the process of choosing their KS4 options will have one to one discussion and support from an adult within the school. In KS4 we expect pupils to have 1 to 1 support from a specialist careers adviser.

8. The PEP meeting

Chairing responsibilities

Though for practical reasons the designated teacher may delegate administrative aspects of the role or individual support for the pupil to other colleagues within the school, the Virtual School asks the postholder to chair the PEP meeting itself and in particular to guide the target setting process.

Schools are asked to provide copies of the paperwork for participants, including the completed EPEP sections, subject report/round robin comments and attendance report.

The chair is asked to consider carefully the agenda. This includes the order of items for discussion; which part of the meeting the young person will attend and whether they will make a formal presentation; the information still needed to complete the final sections of the EPEP; timings, including how to ensure an appropriate balance between discussion of











the pupil's academic achievement and their wellbeing; and finally and importantly, ensuring sufficient time is set aside to discuss and agree the targets themselves.

An agenda drafted by the Virtual School is available as a separate document for schools to use/amend as appropriate. Please see Appendix 2.

Target setting

Please be aware that the Virtual School asks English and maths teachers to confirm individual learning targets at the beginning of each term before the PEP meeting. These are recorded in Section 7 (question 35) of the EPEP along with other information relating to teaching and learning. These targets are key to the pupil's progress and it is good practice to discuss and clarify them with the pupil during the meeting.

These learning targets can be included with the final PEP targets recorded in Section 2 as short term goals i.e. for the end of term. However the Virtual School expects the final PEP targets to include medium term goals, including minimum end of year attainment targets for English and maths, as well as longer term goals.

The PEP targets should reflect discussion at the meeting, include the pupil's future aspirations and career goals and encompass a wider range of the pupil's educational experience other than their academic achievements alone, making reference where appropriate to their social development and emotional wellbeing.

Not all targets will fall within the remit of the school to organise and may fall to the carer or social worker to support, for example the pupil's engagement with the wider community.

All targets should be SMART (**specific**, significant, stretching, **measurable**, meaningful, motivational, agreed, **achievable**, action-orientated, realistic, **relevant**, result-orientated, **time bound**) and meaningful to the pupil.

Accountability

The PEP targets must be supported by actions from professionals. These should be agreed at the meeting and be time limited. The designated teacher is responsible for following up actions with colleagues within school between meetings and for reviewing progress against them before the next meeting.











9. Finalising the EPEP – completing the remaining sections and quality assurance

The designated teacher is asked to complete sections 1, 2 and 12 (14 for pupils in years 8 and above) and to click on the Click when complete! button on the top right of the home screen as soon as possible and no later than 10 days after the meeting.

Record of the PEP meeting

Section 2 is the most important section of the document and needs to be completed carefully and in full. Not only does the designated teacher record here agreed targets, actions, timescales and how the PP+ is to be used to support them but also the thinking that informed the target setting.

This includes a summary of the pupil's achievements and any concerns regarding their learning or social and emotional development; a comparison of their attainment against national standards; a view as to whether they are making expected progress given their prior attainment, whether the PP+ has been used effectively and finally how professionals and carers can improve support.

Quality assurance

After the PEP meeting the Virtual School teacher for the pupil continues to monitor the completion of the document and to advise the designated teacher on any issues if guidance is needed. If the whole document is not complete or cannot be rated 'good' for any other reason 10 days after the meeting, the Virtual School teacher will send a final email specifying the work that should be done to bring it up to standard.

The Virtual School teacher will give the final RAG-rating on the document within 15 days of the meeting. If the RAG-rating remains at 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' at this point despite the advice and reminders given, the document will be forced complete and no further input will be possible.

The Virtual School regularly moderates the RAG-ratings for EPEPs and seeks to include designated teachers, social workers and counterparts from other virtual schools in the process. If you would like to participate, please let us know.











10. Communication with head teachers and governing bodies

The Virtual School acknowledges and celebrates good practice in relation to the support for looked after children. The Virtual School Head Teacher writes to thank heads and chairs of governors in schools where our pupil has had all three termly EPEPs rated as 'good' within the year. Conversely, we also inform heads and chairs of governors where our pupil has had an inadequate EPEP.

Virtual School for Looked after Children London Borough of Tower Hamlets September 2018.











Appendix 1

Overview: Designated Teacher's responsibilities for Personal Education Plan (PEP) Review meetings

1. Within first 10 days of each term or of the pupil coming into care:

- Liaise with class/subject teacher(s) to update education and SEN details (Section 7) and attainment data (Section 9) of the pupil's EPEP on the Welfare Call site (www.welfarecall.com);
- Co-ordinate with social worker, Virtual School teacher and relevant professionals within school or from external agencies to confirm date and time of PEP Review meeting.



2. 5 to 10 days before termly PEP Review meeting:

• Meet with pupil to complete Pupil Voice (Section 4); provide attendance figures (Section 6) and Careers Information Advice and Guidance (Section 12) - Years 8 to 11 only) on the pupil's EPEP on the Welfare Call site (www.welfarecall.com).



3. Chair the termly PEP Review meeting:

- Facilitate pupil participation in part or all of meeting;
- Provide copies of relevant paperwork EPEP, round robin/teacher reports etc;
- Ensure full discussion of relevant information and review of pupil's progress against targets set at previous PEP meeting;
- Agree new /revised short, medium and long term SMART targets, including end of year attainment target(s);
- Set date for next term's PEP Review meeting.



4. Within 10 days of the termly PEP Review meeting:

- Complete final sections of EPEP documentation Attendance Log (Section 1), Record of Meeting (Section 2) and Next Meeting (Section 12 or 13) on the pupil's EPEP on the Welfare Call site (www.welfarecall.com);
- Ensure all relevant documents are uploaded on Welfare Call site.











Appendix 2

Personal Education Plan (PEP) Review Meeting Agenda

Pupil	name: Date	e:
Atter	ndees:	
2	Introductions - roles/responsibilities Changes in circumstance/information sharing - imminent change of carer/school - Changes to pupil's care status/parental responsibility - Prohibited contact - Health issues	EPEP Section 1 Meeting Attendance Log EPEP Sections 3 & 11 Pupil Details & Planning for a School Move
	Pupil joins meeting	
2	 Pupil voice Pupil speaks about what is going well/strengths/achievements. Pupil shares a piece of work. Adults share feedback from class and subject teachers re. English and maths including learning objectives for this term and check pupil understanding Pupil speaks about difficulties/further help needed Pupil speaks about change of school/secondary transfer/KS4 options as appropriate Pupil speaks about future aspirations/career goals 	EPEP Section 4 Pupil Voice EPEP Section 7 Education Details and SEND Questions 33 and 35 EPEP Sections 11 & 12 Planning for a School Move & KS4 Transition EPEP Section 13 Careers Advice Information & Guidance
3	Review of previous term's PEP targets Summary of progress made against targets and any additional progress? - What has worked well/what hasn't - Actions to carry forward	EPEP Section 2 Record of Meeting Question 1











Pupil leaves meeting

(NB Score and record participation EPEP Section 2 Question 8)

	(NB Score and record participation EPEP Section	2 Question 8)				
4	Attainment and progress					
	 Current attainment data – appropriate for age/ability? Making expected progress considering prior attainment? Consider feedback from Virtual School Review school report/teachers comments/round robin - consider Is Homework completed/recorded? Further support needed at home? 	EPEP Section 9 Attainment EPEP Section 8 Virtual School Feedback				
5	Curriculum interventions					
	 Review PP+ funded interventions and decide how to use funding going forward School funded interventions 	EPEP Section 7 Education and SEND Details Questions 38 and 39 Question 40				
6	Emotional and social development					
	 Review pastoral support provided by school/interventions by other agencies What is working well? What are the concerns? SDQ score Do we need a target re. pupil's social or emotional development? 	EPEP Section 7 Education and SEND Details Questions 41 & 42 EPEP Section 10 SDQ				
7.	Exclusions	EPEP Section 6				
	Review detailsStrategies in place to prevent further exclusions	Attendance Records Questions 5,6 and 7				
8.	Attendance	EPEP Section 6				
	- Further support needed to improve punctuality and/or attendance	Attendance records Questions 1 to 4				
9.	Transition					
	 KS4 options confirmed? School/college identified and place secured? Visit by pupil and carer/interview arranged 	EPEP Section 12 KS4 Transition EPEP Section 11 Planning for a School Move				
9.	Summary: Priority areas for short, medium and long term targets					
	 What would we like to be able to do by end of term/by end of year/by end of key stage/ whenleaves school Allocation of Pupil Premium Plus funding Agreed supporting actions by professionals/adults 	EPEP Section 2 Record of Meeting Questions 6 & 7				
10	Date(s) for subsequent PEP Review meetings	EPEP Section 12 (14 for pupils in Year 8 and above) Next PEP meeting				











Appendix C: PEP Calendar of deadlines 2018 /2019 - Schools																					
	Sep-18					Oct-18					Nov-18					Dec-18					
Monday	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	
Tuesday	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		4	11	18		
Wednesday	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		5	12	19		
Thursday	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	24	1		8	15	22	29		6	13	20		
Friday	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	2		9	16	23	30		7	14	21		
	Feb-19					Mar-19				Apr-19											
Monday	7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25			4	11	18	25		1	8	15		
Tuesday	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26			5	12	19	26		2	9	16		
Wednesday	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27			6	13	20	27		3	10	17		
Thursday	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28			7	14	21	28		4	11	18		
Friday	11	18	25	1		8	15	22	1			8	15	22	29		5	12	19		
·								May-1	L 9	Jun-19							Jul-19				
Monday	22	29					6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	
Tuesday	23	30					7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	
Wednesday	24					1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	
Thursday	25					2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	
Friday	26					3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	

Completion of EPEP sections 7 and 9. Termly PEP meeting takes place.

Final deadlines 17th September, 21st January and 6th May

School holidays

Termly PEP meeting takes place.

Final deadlines 7th December, 22nd March and 5th July