



Learn Achieve Celebrate

Information and guidance

for Designated Teachers of Looked After and
Previously Looked After Children in Northumberland

17th April 2020

EXTRAORDINARY CORONAVIRUS SCHOOL CLOSURE BRIEFING

School Transitions September 2020

This year we are thinking creatively about supporting those looked after children who will be moving to new schools in September. As children won't be able to have their usual visits to their new school, we need to find ways to bring their new school to them. Please view and download our Virtual School guidance: ['10 things you should know about transition for Designated Teachers'](#). Similar guidance has been published for foster carers and staff in residential homes to support all children moving schools, from Early Years to Post 16.

Toni McGuire, the ESLAC Team Manager, is going to organise the support for children and for Designated Teachers from the Virtual School. Here's what we're going to do.

The Designated Teacher who is saying goodbye

Good communication with the child, carer and the Designated Teacher in the new school is vitally important. Contact should be made regularly throughout the summer term. As the child's current Designated Teacher you have a wealth of information about the child/children and should be involved in the transition process. Get started as soon as you can:

- hold virtual meetings where possible, start doing it now!
- make sure you pass on all relevant information to the receiving school, including reports from professionals, meeting notes etc.
- prepare the child/children for contact from the new Designated Teacher
- if the child has an EHCP, make sure the SENDCO is involved in the transition and that the annual review has taken place if it is due between now and September
- Make sure you have a PEP meeting in the summer term, include the Designated Teacher from the receiving school and an ESLAC team member, and decide on appropriate outcomes for the autumn term together
- By the end of term, submit the latest progress review for the child through the ePEP system and review the outcomes so that Pupil Premium Plus can be allocated and the PEP is perfect – rated Green – and ready to be handed over to the new school.

The Designated Teacher who is saying hello

Every looked after child who is due to transition in September will receive a booklet from the Virtual School at the beginning of the summer term, and their current Designated Teachers will receive a copy for information. They will also be available on the [Virtual School webpage](#) in the first section *Virtual School – Coronavirus (Covid 19)*. The children will be asked to complete the first part of the booklet so that you, their new Designated Teacher, can get to know them.

The Virtual School will make sure that if you are the new Designated Teacher for the child then you will receive this part of the booklet. There is a section for the children to ask any questions they have about their new school. We're asking Designated Teachers to contact the carer and child to answer those questions for them. As soon as the Easter term starts you need to make contact with the Designated Teacher of the school(s) where your 'new' looked after children are currently on roll. Ask to see their PEP and to have a discussion about the child's needs. If there is an EHCP, you should involve your SENDCO and ask to see the plan. The current school should be arranging a PEP review meeting for this term. Ask if you can attend and decide the outcomes for the autumn term together.

There is already good practice emerging in Northumberland to involve children in their transition even though schools are closed. Some of our favourite examples, which you can use, are:

- a virtual tour of the school, highlighting main areas children will need to know about
- a virtual treasure hunt, so that children get to find out about different areas of school
- a frequently asked questions page on your school website
- a blog/video by looked after children who transitioned last year, with hints and tips for those moving in the summer
- individual letters to looked after children reassuring them about their school move
- some helpful resources you can use on www.twinkl.co.uk which range from early years to secondary school age

Support from ESLAC

To make sure things go as smoothly as possible, Toni McGuire will make contact with all of you at the beginning of term. She is already looking at the PEPs to make sure they are at least Amber or Green (Red is not acceptable) and has identified children for whom the transition might be more challenging to make sure appropriate support is already in place. She will also be monitoring the PEP reviews and meetings between Designated Teachers. Wherever possible, Toni will also be attending the reviews.

If you have a pupil who is anxious about moving schools, please contact us as we have a team of Educational Psychologists who will be happy to offer additional support and staff members who can deliver therapeutic interventions.

If you need any help or support with transition or you are worried or concerned about a child then please do not hesitate to contact your ESLAC link worker.

Frequently Asked Questions about PEPs

Our Acting ESLAC Team Manager, Tara Prescott, has answered your frequently asked questions about PEPs during school closure.

The PEP is a statutory document that needs to be maintained and updated now more than ever to fully support each looked after child through an extended period of disruption. The PEP is an evolving record and needs to capture this chapter in the child's educational story. It is part of the care plan and is therefore robustly monitored by the Virtual School, Care Team and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). During this time, particularly when a lot of children are learning from home it's imperative that education continues to provide a sense of security and continuity. Even those pupils who appear to be struggling or disengaged need to know that we are still working together, fully committed to supporting their future goals.

This week you will see several updates within the ePEP system which will make it easier to use and navigate. We've listened to teacher feedback and in conjunction with our Designated Teacher working group have developed three new sections **Transition, Success & Celebrations** and **Barriers to learning**.

Just a reminder, if you do have a child in your school who is new to care, the initial PEP meeting needs to be in place within 20 working days, whether the school is closed or not.

Arranging a Meeting:

- Meetings can take place face to face, hangouts or other virtual systems. If this isn't possible a telephone conversation will be just as productive.
- When initiating the PEP you still need to add a meeting date and time.
- Attendees will be anyone who has contributed to the PEP:
 - Young Person
 - Social Worker
 - Foster Carer
 - ESLAC
- Due to the simplicity of the ePEP system the majority of information can be added prior to any meetings.

Social Worker Attendance:

- When arranging the meeting the Social Worker will automatically receive their invite and feedback request form, this will be completed and returned prior to the PEP meeting.
- Social Worker's views are an integral part of the PEP process.

Pupil Details:

- Please check all information is correct and up to date including any changes to EHCP/SEND.
- If the pupil is on a reduced timetable, attends AP or is not currently attending school, this can be reflected within this section.

Pupil Views and Preparation for Adulthood:

- Now more than ever, pupil views are vital. It's important that we capture these including any worries or concerns and act accordingly. Pupil Views are at the core of the PEP.
- Pupil Views can be captured in various ways:
 - At home with the foster carer
 - Schools360
 - On the phone prior to the meeting
 - During the meeting
 - Mind of my own app.
- Looked after children can contact members of their Care Team using the mind of my own app at any time. If they have any education questions they can also contact the Virtual School on:
vspupil@northumberland.gov.uk

Transition - new section:

It's business as usual for transition and the role of the PEP in supporting the school move. See the section on **School Transitions September 2020** in this newsletter. The new ePEP section can be used to document the transition plan. Contact details for the Designated Teacher at the receiving school can be added here so the pupil is aware and has a named person.

Factors affecting progress, barriers to learning - new section:

Any concerns or issues can be reflected within this section, including behaviour. This can include if children are finding it difficult to motivate when learning at home or any emerging issues with emotional well being. We do have looked after children who have had to temporarily move schools to support with placement stability, this information can be added here.

Success and Celebration - new section:

Any positives, including feedback from staff or peers, can be recorded here - if the child is a member of any teams or clubs, in or out of school; if they're helpful or friendly - it doesn't matter how insignificant you think it may be.

Outcomes:

Outcomes may need to be amended to reflect the current circumstances as some may no longer be relevant. If they need to be ended, use the 'Actual Outcome' section to input any reasons. A lot of outcomes will continue, but you can amend these, including 'Action & Provision', as necessary. It may be appropriate to add an additional outcome to support emotional wellbeing.

Monitoring academic progress may prove more difficult, especially if the young person is finding it difficult to engage in learning activities within the home. Again, this can be reflected in your response, however academic outcomes remain essential and still need to be identified. How these are written can be more creative but they will need to remain challenging, SMART and meaningful while being diverse to reflect their individual needs at this current time.

The outcome section within the ePEP has been updated and you now see the same screen and information as we do at the Virtual School which makes reading the document easier. If you have any questions relating to outcomes please contact:

- [Karen Jeff, Secondary Teacher](mailto:karen.jeff@northumberland.gov.uk) karen.jeff@northumberland.gov.uk
- [Debbie Aubrook, Primary Teacher](mailto:deborah.aubrook@northumberland.gov.uk) deborah.aubrook@northumberland.gov.uk

Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Plus for last term has been dispersed to schools, regardless of whether or not outcomes were reviewed, to fully support you during this time. However the use of PP+ still needs to be reflected within the PEP. PP+ can also be used to support online learning packages, resources or equipment if needed.

Quality Assurance:

The Quality Assurance section is now built into the PEP and you will no longer receive the audit tool as a Word document. When the PEP has been quality assured it will be returned to you, but you'll only receive the sections that require additional information, making the process quicker and easier to use and understand.

Termly Progress Review:

All schools are required to submit their termly progress reviews and a reminder has been sent out for the Spring term. Monitoring of progress by the Virtual School is continuing so that we can identify those who may need additional support or any where there are individual concerns about progress.

- **Attendance:** Add in sessions attended, use the notes to add additional information e.g if the child attended school during the Easter holiday
- **Progress:** Input progress data.
- **Feedback:** This section allows us oversight of the current plan, especially at the moment - add in as much information as possible.
- **PP+:** You may have purchased additional resources, IT equipment etc.

Early Years

This padlet link may be of interest to you - [Northumberland Early Years Home Learning](#) It's produced by the Early Years team and is helpful for any setting that is working with families with very young children. The information covers a vast range of topics, answers a lot of parent/carers questions and it's updated weekly by the team.

Year 11

All Designated Teachers of Year 11 pupils have now been contacted by the Virtual School with a request to be involved in the Year 11 grading process and to provide contact details for the examinations officer or senior member of staff who is responsible for the grading process in your school.

We want to make sure that all of our Year 11 children achieve the best possible grade for their English and maths GCSEs, and that all the relevant evidence is available and has been taken into account.

If you haven't yet responded to Tara's request for information, please can you do so asap.

Key contacts

There will be teams and services that you need to support during this school closure period. Let us know if you need any others:

- OneCall 01670 536 400
- CYPS 01670 502 700 (CYPS, prescriptions, crisis)
- Family Placement 01670 626 262
- IRO's (Independent Reviewing Officers) 01670 624888
- SEND 01670 623 555
- SEND Co-ordinators:
 - **Sarah Jeremiah** for Ashington, NCEA, Morpeth, Ponteland and Berwick schools:
Sarah.Jeremiah@northumberland.gov.uk, Tel 01670 622 760
 - **Dawn Glass** for Cramlington, Amble, Hexham, Prudhoe, Alnwick and Haydon Bridge schools:
Dawn.Glass@northumberland.gov.uk, Tel 01670 624 657
 - **Jannine Baxter** for Blyth, Bede, Bedlington and Astley schools:
Jannine.Baxter@northumberland.gov.uk, Tel 01670 622 752

Virtual School Headteacher: Jane Walker

 **Northumberland**
County Council