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|   | **Looked after children with an EHCP**To all Headteachers, Designated Teachers for Looked After Children and SENDCOs November 2020 |

**Dear Headteacher, Designated Teacher for Looked after Children and SENDCO’s**

This update is in relation to aligning the annual EHCP and looked After Child Review which is a priority in the local authority’s Written Statement of Action (WSOA), previously shared by SEN and the Safeguarding Team in September 2019.

Northumberland’s local authority area SEND inspection in 2018 identified as an area of improvement the need to align the annual EHCP and Looked After Reviews. As some of the most vulnerable children in society, looked after children are subject to various reviews. The alignment will ensure that the correct professionals are in attendance, in order to co-produce meaningful documents which offer children, families and professionals a streamlined and focused approach, while improving communication between Education and Social Care. From a school perspective your views are imperative to support both the emotional wellbeing and academic progress of the pupil, particularly in the current circumstances where the need to keep plans tight around the child are vital for safeguarding.

Statutory processes tell us that EHCP reviews must be held within 12 months of the previous review, or within 12 months of the first plan being issued. When arranging the meeting please liaise with the Safeguarding Unit to identify a suitable date to combine the reviews. In relation to the EHCP review, it continues to be the school's responsibility to invite the relevant professionals, request reports and return the documents fully completed - including pupil and parent views - within two weeks of the meeting.

Early planning will support the alignment, taking into consideration that Year 11 pupils will need a review in the Autumn term, and careers advice is needed prior to the reviews as destinations will be finalised by the end of March. For those transitioning schools e.g. primary to secondary, first to middle, who do not have their next school named in their plan, a review date must be arranged before October half term as destinations will be finalised by February.

There may be occasions where dates are subject to change due to emergency EHCPs or early Looked After Reviews. We will continue to work closely to align these where possible, however a level of flexibility may be needed to succeed.

For less complex cases the meetings can be held together, for others it may be necessary for one meeting to follow the other, with potential overlap of time and attendance of professionals.

The Virtual School will endeavor to attend aligned meetings where possible. The PEP process is the education section of the child’s statutory care plan which can be updated, if needed as part of the process.

For schools where the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children is not the SENDCO, we ask that you liaise in any planning to support the looked after child.

If your school does not currently have a looked after pupil with an EHCP, please be aware of this procedure for future reviews where it will be relevant.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

**Tara Prescott**

Deputy Virtual Headteacher and SENDCO

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# **Aligning annual ECHP and Looked After Child Reviews**

When a child becomes looked after the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children and SENCO will be invited to the 20 Day Review

Is there a significant change in child’s EHCP?

**Yes**

Bring the EHCP review forward to align with the Looked after review

**No**

Align the next Looked After Review with the Childs annual EHCP review

At the following looked after review arrange the date of the next annual EHCP and LAR, to align. Invites to include DT for LAC, SENCO and the Virtual School

An annual combined EHCP and Looked After Child Review will be held together. If the child does not want their looked after review to be held in school, consideration will be given which may involve a series of meetings. The Looked After Review is a child centered meeting and should not be arranged at a time which results in the child being absent from school.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the education section of the the statutory care plan and should be updated for the initial and subsequent looked after child reviews.

**Any queries please contact**

**SEN**: 01670 622759 or SEN@northumberland.gov.uk

**IRO Admin, Safeguarding team**: 01670 624888

**The Virtual School**: 01670 622779