Education, Careers and Pathway Guidance for Children in Care, Previously Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Information and Guidance for Designated Teachers

The achievement of children in care, those previously in care and care leavers across all key stages is considerably lower than their peers. The role of each school, alongside each local authority’s Virtual School, is to raise their attainment by going ‘above and beyond’ in the support and interventions that are carefully chosen, planned and implemented to narrow the gap between these vulnerable learners and the rest of their cohort.

Raising aspirations, planning careers and preparing for adulthood are vital elements of how each school should support children in care, those previously in care and care leavers to maximise the chances of leading happy, successful adult lives.

Legislation and Guidance about raising aspirations, career and education guidance for children with care experience

The updated guidance for Designated Teachers makes it explicit that each termly document should “set out how a child’s aspiration and self-confidence is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer-term goals towards further and higher education, work experience and career plans. Discussions about longer-term goals should start early and ideally well before Year 9 (age 13-14) at school. High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future. They should focus on young person’s strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.” (The designated teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children: statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities, DfE, Feb 2018).

In addition, from September 2018 all schools are expected to have in post a Careers Leader who will take responsibility for providing careers guidance and access to education for all pupils in years 8 – 13. The DfE guidance states the following in relation to children with care experience:

Looked after children and previously looked after children, and care leavers may need particularly strong support to ensure high levels of ambition and successful transition to post-16 education or training. The designated careers lead should engage with the school’s designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children to 1) ensure they know which pupils are in care or who are care leavers; 2) understand their additional support needs and 3) ensure that, for looked after children, their personal education plan can help inform careers advice. For these young people, careers advisers should also, in co-ordination with the school’s designated teacher, engage with the relevant Virtual School Head or personal adviser to ensure a joined-up approach to identifying and supporting their career ambitions.

(extract from Careers guidance and access to education and training providers, DfE, Jan 2018)
As the school's Designated teacher, you play a key role in ensuring that the children with care experience receive the advice and support outlined in the guidance, by doing the following:

i) Notifying the Careers Leader of the children in care, previously looked after children and care leavers in your school

In order to provide the strong support that these pupils need, it is crucial that the school’s Career Leader knows who the pupils are. As the Designated Teacher, part of your role is to ensure that the Careers Leader is aware of each child in care, those previously looked after and each care leaver at the start of each academic year, and to update them as and when a pupil enters or leaves care.

Careers Leaders are advised to keep a record of the support that is provided for each pupil with care experience on a half termly basis. It would be valuable to go through these records with the Career Leader to monitor the input that each pupil receives and to make sure it matches a) their needs and b) is linked to the wider discussions about progress, pathways and outcomes that will take place about each pupil via PEP meetings or other. It is good practice for these records to document the destinations of each of these pupils.

An exemplar record sheet is attached. It is good practice to attach child in care’s record of support to each term’s PEP.

ii) Ensuring that the Careers Leader understands each young person’s additional support needs

Children in care, those previously looked after and care leavers will often have additional support needs, owing to the circumstances that led to them entering care and the implications of this situation. It is important that you ensure that the Careers Leader is aware of these additional needs, whether they be academic or social/emotional/behaviour, to enable them to plan bespoke input to maximise the impact of their work.

iii) Education and pathway guidance in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for children in care

The careers and pathway advice and guidance that a pupil receives during key stages 3, 4 and 5 is a significant way in which a school can support a pupil with care experience to narrow the gap in their attainment and to improve their life chances in adulthood. It is therefore really important that this support is recorded in detail in the termly PEP.

The PEP for Years 10-13 has a separate IAG element within the Support and Achievement section.

The following example demonstrates effective practice:
The guidance issued for Designated Teachers and PEP authors for this element of the Support and Achievement section advises that the following should be included in the commentary:

**Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)**

Each section’s commentary should include:

- Educational support should be linked to a) how gaps in attainment are being addressed and b) therefore the learning objectives set for the term
- Details of the support in place – what, why, when, who with (and why they are the best person to provide this support to the pupil). Statements such as ‘…has access to…’ should be avoided as they do not reflect the bespoke support that the school has identified for the pupil
- A review of the support in place during the term if needed, and details of how and why the support has changed
- Observations about the impact of the support – what has changed or improved with the support? What is going to happen differently now or next term because of these observations?
- For students working above expectations, please include evidence of ‘stretch and challenge’ support.
- For Years 6, 7 and 8, work completed with the pupil around aspirations, careers and education plans should be recorded in Educational Support. If it has been formally recorded in school, this document should be attached to the PEP as evidence of support.
- The Educational Support section for a pupil with an EHCP in Year 9 onwards must refer to details of the statutory pathway planning in the PEP. EHCP evidence relating to this can also be attached to the PEP.

(Suffolk Virtual School resource for Designated Teachers, updated September 2018)

The PEP for pupils in Years 7 – 9 does not currently contain these separate comment boxes. Instead, information and actions about careers advice and guidance should be included in the Support and Achievement section, under the heading Educational Support. This element of the section will detail all the support and interventions the young person is receiving but will stress the ‘above and
beyond’ support and interventions in place. Although the DfE guidance directs schools to provide careers advice and guidance from Year 8 onwards, it is likely that most schools will provide this from Year 7, and therefore details of this provision can be recorded in the Educational Support section:

### Support and Achievement

#### Educational Support:

B continues to receive weekly one to one sessions in both Maths and English. Maths is delivered in the school day by Mr R who liaises on a fortnightly basis with B’s Maths teacher. These sessions are focusing on simplifying fractions and ratio in preparation for achieving age related expectations by the end of the Autumn Term. B also engages in weekly one to one sessions in English. These take place at home and is a new intervention for this term. B said that she enjoyed the first session which took place last week with Ms G. Ms G is linking with B’s English teacher to support greater independent learning in class and improve extended writing. The total engagement expected in one to one tuition this term is 12 hours in maths and 12 hours in English which will have been completed by the end of Autumn Term 2017.

Alongside the whole year group assemblies and PSHE input about careers and adulthood, a half termly meeting plan between B and the school’s Careers Leader, Mr F, has been implemented to provide B with opportunities to explore a range of pathways and careers. As a result of each meeting, other support around pathways will be put in place. In the first meeting with the Careers Leader, B expressed an interest in pursuing A levels. To explore this further, in January a day has been arranged for B to attend sixth form lessons. This intends to help her to develop self belief in her abilities and to strengthen her aspirations, as well as providing her with a starting point to choose her GCSE options in the spring term. B also liked the idea of having a sixth form mentor and this will be arranged to support her consideration of pathways.

iv) **How the Careers Leader can support the Personal Education Plan for children in care**

Their work should both inform and be informed by the PEP.

It is good practice to ask the Careers Leader to share the details of the careers support and subsequent actions and outcomes for each child in care on a termly basis so that it can be included in the PEP document.

In addition, it may be appropriate for the Careers Leader to attend on occasions the part of the meeting where careers, aspirations and transition to adulthood is discussed. The young person, their carer(s), school staff, the social worker or the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer may raise questions or concerns about the young person’s progression plans. The Careers Leader will able to advise or feedback on how they have and can continue to support the young person to make a successful transition to the next stage of their education and beyond.

v) **Effective use of Pupil Premium Funding to support careers and adulthood preparation**

It may be appropriate for some of the termly funding to be spent on careers and preparation for adulthood input. This can be discussed as part of the PEP meeting or it may be an action that arises from the pupil voice work that is completed as part of the PEP during a term. As the school’s Designated Teacher, you are responsible for managing this funding for children in care and previously looked after children, and you will need to show how you have used the funding to support outcomes in a way that is effective and value for money.

Post 16 pupils in care or care leavers are automatically entitled to the 16-19 bursary, of £1200 per year. This funding is paid directly to the young person to support their access to learning and achievement, but their school or college should help them to
decide how best to use it. It may be decided that some of the bursary is spent supporting the young person with their pathway and career choices. It is important that the Careers Leader is involved in PEP meetings and any discussions about the use of bursary funding, where appropriate, to provide feedback on your input with the young person to make best use of the way in which the funding can be used to support the young person as appropriate.

Useful Resources


Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (DfE, January 2018)