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)

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.

i) Knowing 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 you are able to identify who they are. Each school has a Designated Teacher who is responsible for monitoring the outcomes and school provision for children in care, previously looked after children and care leavers, and they will be able to tell you which pupils are in these categories of vulnerable learners.

Previously looked after children can be more difficult to identify as parents may choose not to inform the school of the status of their child. The school will record on its census those who they have been informed about and these will be the pupils who you should keep a record of provision for.

You should keep a record of the careers input each pupil receives as part of the universal and the bespoke packages that you put in place. It is also good practice to record the destinations of each of these pupils.
ii) Understanding 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 are aware of these additional needs to enable you to plan bespoke input to maximise the impact of your work:

- Your school’s Designated Teacher will be able to give you details of each child in care’s additional needs, whether it be educational or social/emotional, learning style and requirements.
- Some pupils will have an Education, Health and Care plan. This will detail their needs and how they are best met. The school’s SENCO can give details of the plan so that you can plan your support appropriately to have the most impact. The Suffolk Virtual School’s SEN Lead, Dawne Chumbley, is also available to offer advice and guidance about how best to work with children in care with additional needs.
- Some pupils will have attachment and trauma related needs, and the DT will be able to share these with you on a need to know basis as this information should be taken into account when planning your support.

iii) The Personal Education Plan

Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory document to record the progress and attainment of children in care and is central to improving educational outcomes for children in care. It considers what is going well and what is going less well, identifies the needs the plan should try to meet and how they will be met through the use of supported SMART targets. Pupil voice and the school’s response is a significant element of the PEP.

Another key element of the PEP is the ongoing information, advice and guidance that the child in care is receiving to support academic outcomes, to raise aspirations and to prepare them for adulthood.

Each pupil must have a termly PEP document, which is submitted to the Suffolk Virtual School at the end of each term. In Suffolk, we currently use an online PEP, CLA Tracker. An exemplar PEP is attached for reference.

Please note: previously look after children do not require a PEP. However, it is acknowledged that the issues that may have affected a child once in care do not disappear upon adoption. Therefore, the advice and guidance that is provided for this group of pupils should match the school’s provision for children in care.

iv) Education, Careers and Pathway Guidance in the Personal Education Plan

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)
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:

v) Supporting the Personal Education Plan for children in care

Your work can both inform and be informed by the PEP. It would be good practice to share the details of the careers support and subsequent actions and outcomes for each child in care with the Designated Teacher on a termly basis so that it can be included in the PEP document.

In addition, each child in care has a half yearly child in care review meeting, and it may be appropriate for you 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 (IRO, an adult who has an impartial overview and responsibility for each child in care’s wellbeing and provision) may raise questions or concerns about the young person’s progression plans. You will able to advise or feedback on how you have and can continue to support the young person to make a successful transition to the next stage of their education and beyond.

Each school receives additional funding each term for every child in care on roll directly from the local authority. In addition, if the permanency status of a child previously in care is known by the school and noted on the census, a school will also receive funding for them. This funding is designed to support a school with its ‘above and beyond’ interventions for each child in care and previously looked after children to narrow the attainment gap.

vi) 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. Your school’s Designated Teacher is 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 you are involved in PEP meetings and any discussions about the use of bursary funding 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)