

<b>Item No.</b> 9.	<b>Classification</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 10 November 2010	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Effectiveness of Personal Education Plans	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note Children's services Approach to delivering effective personal education plans (PEP's) for every school aged looked after child.
2. The Committee to ask Southwark Children's Services to write to all designated teachers, outlining: a) the role of the virtual head and the importance of the personal education plans; and b) asking designated teachers to set out their aspirations for CLA and their role in improving performance.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The PEP became a legal requirement for looked after children as part of Section 52 of the 2004 Children Act.
4. The associated guidance under the "Every Child Matters – change for children Framework" placed a range of statutory duties upon local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
5. The guidance refers to a PEP as a record of what needs to happen for a looked after child to enable them to fulfil their potential whilst reflecting any existing educational plans such as statement of special educational needs and individual education plan.
6. The recommended PEP content is outlined in paragraph 49 of the guidance (Appendix 1)
7. CLA Services and the Southwark CLA Educational Team developed an individual PEP for each school year group which asks specific questions relevant to the child's expected development, key stage and attainment eg: selection of GCSE subjects in Year 9.
8. Each year PEP proforma is available as part of each child's electronic record which enables immediate access to all relevant professionals in Children's Services including the Independent Reviewing Officer, Virtual Head Teacher, SEN Services, Social Workers, Managers and the CLA Education Team.
9. Children's Services have adopted a core principal that a child's personal education plan should be held at the child's place of education and attended by the child's carer and social worker. Wherever possible the child should also attend. It is recognised that the PEP is a crucial focal point to bring together the partnership of school and home learning whilst providing a clear message to the child in care that education is valued and supported by their social worker and carer.
10. ICS has been developed so that the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer can "pull through" the PEP action plan directly into the statutory looked after review to ensure that the actions are tracked and integrated into the child's care plan.

Foster carers are trained as part of their pre approval training about the role of the Foster Carers to promote education and are given direct input the PEP process and their contribution. Appendix 2 contains the two specific leaflets produced for carers, children and for young people

11. The CLA Education Team undertake two formal PEP audits (each academic year) (junior and secondary) to review quality, participation and timeliness. These audits include the Virtual Head Teacher, front line Managers, CLA Education Team and colleagues from SEN services.
12. Audit findings and action plans are fed back to the relevant Service teams. PEP findings have resulted in developing clear social work guidance and advice. (Appendix 3).
14. Delivery of PEP's to all school aged looked after children are managed through Carefirst tracking reports.
15. The CLA Education team advisory teachers may be asked to attend a PEP by the allocated social work team if there are significant problems with regards to school conduct, bullying, poor attendance, behaviour or home learning support issues. In addition new children entering into the system are allocated to education team advisory teachers to liaise with the new social worker to ensure that the first PEP happens within timescales and to provide additional support should the worker be inexperienced.
16. Each school has a designed teacher for looked after children who has a specific role to track the progress of each looked after child and maintain key information with regards to care arrangements and relevant local authority.

#### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

17. The CLA Education team have reported year on year improvements in the quality of PEP's being delivered by Southwark social work staff.
18. During the academic year 2009/10, 100% of school aged children had their PEP completed.
19. 97% of all school aged looked after children had that PEP conducted by half term (Feb 2010)
20. By the end of the 09/10 academic year 77% of all school aged looked after children had both their main PEP and follow up PEP conducted (it should be noted that this figure cannot be 100% as CLA Services do not conduct a second PEP for Year 11 pupils as they are in the process of sitting their GCSE's in May).
21. A revised target has been set for the 2010/11 academic year that 100% of school aged children (who have been in care four months or more at the 1 September 2010) will have their first PEP undertaken by the 23 December 2010. This revised target reflects the CLA services drive to fully engage schools, young people and carers fully as soon as possible in developing effective education plans at an early point each academic year. The PEP will have a key role to play in developing best possible practice and tracking the progress of children in care.
22. During 2010/11 Carefirst is being developed to enable key information (sections) from each PEP to be extrapolated into tracking reports for the CLA Education Team and Virtual Head Teacher. This "in year" progress reporting will then be cross referenced with the child's previous end of year report to enable early

identification if expected progress is not being made or children are falling further behind This initiative will support the developing framework of a virtual school and when appropriate enable the Virtual Head Teacher to allocate additional resources or require named schools to review their interventions.

23. Feedback from young people in care has been mixed with regards to PEP meetings in that whilst a few find it embarrassing, the majority appreciate the direct focus and attention given to their education and what additional help can be provided. Steps are taken to ensure that PEP's are not scheduled to have pupils missing their lessons or having attention drawn to them through being called out of lessons. (Appendix 2)
24. The Virtual Head Teacher and CLA Education Team are developing a strategy to induct, train and support Southwark designated teachers for looked after children which will include an annual information sharing forum to improve awareness and learning.
25. It is proposed that the 2010/11 PEP audits will also include some designated teachers from Southwark schools.
26. Southwark designated teachers value the fact that they can also contact the Southwark education team to seek advice at any time relating to a named child if they are experiencing difficulty.

**Policy implications**

27. There are no new policy implications relating to this report.

**Community impact statement**

28. Southwark CLA Service works to promote the five outcomes for children in care as outlined in Every Child Matters. It is recognised that placement stability, engaged in education, access to additional activities linked with healthy lifestyles all contribute to building resilience in young people.
29. Successful school outcomes are also strongly linked to placement stability. Research also shows that a sound and enjoyable educational experience assists a child's sense of worth and well being which has a positive impact upon placement stability. It is recognised that school exclusions or truancy can place additional pressure upon Foster Carer's resilience to maintain the placement.
30. Equally it is recognised that for a young person to flourish at school and to achieve to their maximum potential, they need a safe, caring and permanent home environment. Placement stability and school success are therefore intertwined and it is recognised that the school need to be effectively included in a child's life and care plan where everybody is involved in addressing any potential issues at the earliest possible opportunity whilst having high aspirations for attainment.

**Resource implications**

31. There are no resource implications

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate	Constitutional Team	Bola Roberts

Parenting Committee	160 Tooley Street SE1 5LX	020 7525 7232
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## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Paragraph 49 of guidance – ref: Section 52 2004 Children’s Act
Appendix 2	Sample PEP leaflets for carers and young people (to be circulated at the committee meeting)
Appendix 3	Social Work PEP Guidance

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children’s Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Saunders Head of Services for Children in Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	28 October 2010	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer</b>	28 October 2010	