

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

Southwark Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The purpose of PEPs

PEPs provide a way for all those involved with the education of a child in care to help them achieve their potential by providing a focus on the actions required by carers, child and professionals. Their progress is tracked to try and ensure they continue to make appropriate progress throughout their school life. Relevant pre-care history or current care plans can be shared, educational needs can be identified and implications for their continued progress can be planned for. PEPs are statutory for every looked after child from 3 until the end of their compulsory education at 16.

Timing of PEPs

It is the social worker's responsibility to ensure that PEP meetings take place and are within the following statutory timescales:

- Within 28 days of coming into care, then after 3 months, then every six months
- Within 20 school days of a child starting a new school, then every six months

2 PEPs should therefore take place each school year. The first PEP taking place in the first school term of the academic year (Sep – Dec) and the second PEP taking place in the last school term of the academic year (Apr – July)

If a child has a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) then if possible one PEP each year should take place alongside the SEN annual review

Understanding the PEP forms

There are 2 main PEP forms: An academic year PEP e.g. year 1 or year 5 and a review PEP. (There is also a different PEP form for CLA who are not in school.) In each school year the appropriate year group PEP should be completed in the first term (Sep – Dec) and providing the child is in the same school and with the same carer the review PEP should then be used for the 2nd PEP of the school year (completed usually in Apr – July) The year group PEPs are divided into 5 parts. Section 1 will have information downloaded from carefirst. Social workers will need to check the accuracy of this information and see if any additional information is required. Section 2 will be filled in during the meeting. Section 3 is information provided by the school (preferably filled in by the school before the meeting) and discussed at the meeting. Section 4 is filled in during the meeting, although the child's view will more appropriately be completed prior to the meeting. Section 5 should be filled in at the meeting and concerns the actions required by adults and appropriate target(s) for the child

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

How to do a PEP (ensuring good quality PEPs)

Before the PEP meeting

The social worker should, in consultation with all those to attend, arrange a date and time for the PEP meeting. The school, carers, child, parents if appropriate and other education personnel involved in child's education should be invited to attend the PEP meeting. The Designated teacher for CLA is usually the social workers first point of contact in schools. The meeting usually takes place at the educational setting.

The social worker should remind the school about the information they need to bring to the meeting. Fax or email section 3 of the PEP through to the school prior to the meeting and ask them to fill in as much of the information as possible prior to the meeting.

The social worker should discuss the PEP meeting with the child before the meeting and ask the child for their views on their education. (See later section – 'Involving children in their PEPs') If this is not possible then the social worker should make alternative arrangements for someone else to find out child's view of their education prior to the meeting and make sure their views are available for the PEP meeting – unless the child is happy to talk at the meeting about how they are doing and their likes and dislikes in school etc.

The social worker should access the appropriate PEP form from ICS. They will need to know which academic year the child is in and access the corresponding PEP form. If this is the second PEP within an academic year, and the school and care placement haven't changed then the review PEP should be used for the second PEP.

NB The first section of the school year PEP will automatically be filled in with information from Carefirst. The social worker needs to check the accuracy of this information and change it if it is not correct. If there are any individual circumstances around parental responsibility or contact arrangements these need to be added manually.

At the PEP meeting

(The social worker should take the last PEP to the PEP meeting so that actions required by carers and professionals, and the child's targets can be reviewed)

School or education personnel should chair the meeting.

The social worker's role during the meeting is to:

- Offer to take notes and ensure all sections of the PEP form are discussed and completed
- Ensure sensitive information about child's pre-care history, current care plan and any contact arrangements are shared appropriately, probably when child is not present

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

- Ensure that there is a clear picture of the progress the child is making in school and how they are doing in relation to what is expected of them at their age
- Ensure that there is a clear understanding of what the child needs to develop next so that they can make satisfactory progress
- Ensure that any help the child needs to make appropriate progress is planned
- Ensure that there is a balance of discussion around strengths and weaknesses and the child's achievements are recognised
- Ensure that any health or emotional issues that could affect child's progress are shared and planned for
- Ensure that actions required by carer and professionals are clearly noted and understood
- Ensure the child is involved in identifying their target(s) and they are appropriate and realistic (See later section – 'The child's targets')

The first section of the PEP will have been filled in by carefirst when accessing the form in Care assess. The second section should be filled in at the PEP meeting as should any of section 3 and 4 not filled in prior to the meeting. Section 5 should also be filled in at the meeting when all views have been shared

If the PEP is a review PEP then the main focus should be on reviewing progress for the academic year but the school should also be brought up to date with any changes in the child's circumstances. New targets for child and any actions for adults should also be made clear.

Social workers don't need to have lots of knowledge about education, but will need to ask relevant questions (See later section – 'Questions to ask at PEP meetings')

The child should be encouraged to attend all or part of the meeting according to their age, maturity and their ability and interest in participating in the meeting.

The child should be involved in deciding their targets as appropriate. There should be at least one academic target. If a child has an IEP (children at school action, school action plus or those with a statement usually have an IEP) the targets from the current IEP can be used.

A date for the next PEP should be set if this is the first PEP in the academic year. If this is the second PEP (ie the review PEP) in the academic year then it is best not to set a date for the next PEP as this could involve different school staff personnel as the child will be in a different school year.

After the meeting

Following the meeting the social worker will need to enter all the information into the appropriate year or review PEP in care assess and send a copy to the school, carer and

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

anyone else who requires a copy eg child if appropriate. Any school reports etc should be scanned into ICS

The social worker should ensure that the actions agreed by professionals and carers at the PEP meeting are all carried out within the agreed timescales.

IROs will also want to know about the child's targets, which actions (by professionals and carers) agreed at the PEP meeting have been carried out or not and any difficulties child is continuing to experience at school.

Involving children in their PEPs

Talking to a child about their education should be ongoing, however a child will benefit from preparation for their PEP meeting. This will help the young person feel part of the process and understand the purpose of the meeting. It will hopefully help them feel as if it is not just one more meeting that is happening to them with other people making decisions about their life.

It is best for social workers to have a discussion about PEPs and gain the child's view about school during their last visit to the child before the PEP meeting. If this is impractical then a chat at the school just before the PEP meeting or a telephone conversation a day or two before the meeting would be the next best option. Alternatively the social worker will need to arrange for someone else to discuss how child feels they are doing with someone else prior to the meeting and ensure that this information is made available at the meeting

Points to consider covering:

- Tell them who will be at the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting. (For those who are concerned and involved in their education to all get together and find ways to help them achieve their best in school)
- What will be discussed at the meeting (The child's, school's and carer's view about their education, their strengths, weaknesses and achievements, out of school activities, any issues e.g. anything relating to homework, behaviour, friendship or learning difficulties etc, new targets for the next 6 months and any actions that need to be carried out to help child do well in school. If the child is changing school soon then this should be part of the discussion too)
- Discuss and encourage them to attend the meeting. Share with them how difficult it is to have a meeting about someone if they are not there and that their view is as important as anyone else's. The expectation is that they will attend at least part of the meeting. They may need help to be clear about what they want to say about

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

any concerns they have about school and how they feel they are doing. Social workers have a key role in helping them clarify their view about school.

- Ask if there is anything they want an adult to say at the meeting that they are uncomfortable about saying themselves and who they would like to say it for them. This would include whether or not they want to talk about how they feel about school or would prefer an adult to speak for them
- Discuss what they want to achieve and get out of school during the next six months or so (also longer term for older children) eg academically, extra activities, any choices being made, any friendship/social issues, and career and college choices etc.
- Ask the child if they would like a copy of the PEP
- After the meeting discuss how it went and if they agree with what was said. Check that they understand what the PEP should help them achieve.

Some questions to ask at PEP meetings

(These questions will help to give a full picture of how child is progressing and find out more about any relevant issues)

Academic

Are they achieving what is expected of them (in terms of the national average for their age group) in English/Maths?

If not, how far behind are they and how significant is this?

Why does school/child think they aren't achieving as well as they should be doing? (E.g. poor concentration, lack of motivation, learning difficulty)

What can the school/carer do to help them catch up?

What progress would you expect them to make by the end of the academic year?

If that progress isn't made do you think they should be put onto school action/be put up a stage on the SEN code of practice?

What subjects do they enjoy the most/least? What can we do to help them enjoy the subjects they do not like much?

For children with significant educational needs it is often helpful to ask the school what they believe to be the over-arching educational need/focus.

Social

What are their relationships like with adults/other children?

Does child have any difficulty making and keeping friends?

If this is an issue what can be done to help them?

How do children/adults respond to them?

Do you think they are vulnerable to bullying/have bullied others?

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

What form does the bullying take?
What can be done to prevent the bullying?

Behaviour

Are there any behavioural concerns?
If so, what inappropriate behaviours do they present with?
What does school/child think triggers these behaviours?
What lessons/times of the day do these behaviours happen e.g. playtime, maths lessons, with particular school staff or after lunch etc?
What strategies have been tried to change the behaviour?
How successful were they? What else can be tried?
How can the carer/social worker help?
Does emotional distress effect their learning?
Has the LEA behaviour support team been asked for advice?
If there were any exclusions find out what they were for and how significant the school view the exclusions. Also what actions are being taken to try and improve child's behaviour and help prevent another exclusion occurring?

General

Do they bring the appropriate equipment to school?
Do they do homework on time and is it done well?
If there are homework issues what suggestions can school make to help child and carer?

To ask carer

How do you encourage them to do their homework?
Do you feel they enjoy reading with/to you?
What interests do you think could be developed outside of school?

The child's targets

The child should be asked what they would like to achieve in school over the next 6 months. 1 to 3 targets should be agreed with the child. The child's targets should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (usually PEP targets are for the next 6 months) It is very helpful to identify a target that the carer can support at home as we want to identify ways to encourage our carers to actively support child's education (School or education adviser for CLA may need to offer some extra help to carer)

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL WORK PEP GUIDANCE

There should be at least one academic target e.g.

I will learn my 2, 3, 4 and 5 times table.

I will read and talk about 6 books by my favourite author

I will learn to use the following initial blends in my reading and writing: sp, pr, pl, gr, sh, th, ch, fl, bl and cr

I will read the text for my English literature GCSE

There can be other targets as well e.g.

I will line up when asked to, quickly and without touching anybody else

I will get the equipment I need to do my work and try to start my work on my own

If I do not understand what work I need to do I will put up my hand until an adult is able to help me

I will get to all lessons on time

I will show that I need time out (in a way agreed by the school staff) if I am feeling angry or troubled.

It should be made clear which adults are going to help the child achieve their target and how they are going to help and how often (if appropriate)

The progress towards achieving targets should then be reviewed at the next PEP and new targets set.

Existing school targets e.g. from IEPs can be used as PEP targets if they are appropriate

For children not in school

If a child is not attending school or alternative educational provision the 'PEP for children with no school' form should be used. The main aim of the PEP should be to find out why the child is not in school and form an action plan to help the child access some appropriate educational provision.

For children attending schools not in Southwark

If a child attends a school in a Local Education Authority (LEA) other than Southwark then that school has the right to use the PEP used by their LEA. Many schools and LEAs are happy for Southwark social workers to use the Southwark PEP form but Kent schools in particular have to use the Kent PEP form. Where the Local Authority insists on using their form a Southwark PEP will also need to be filled in so that the relevant information can be entered on care assess. .