

# Barnet Virtual School Post 16 PEP Guidance

## Introduction

This guidance is designed to support you with the completion of Personal Education Plans and with supporting care experienced young people in care to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Effective and high-quality Personal Educational Plans (PEPs) that focus on educational outcomes are imperative for all Looked After Children. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a legal part of the Care Plan, which is a statutory requirement for LAC in education provision up to the age of 18.

## Challenges at Post 16

There are many challenges that face Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) as they transition into Post 16 education which increases their vulnerability. These can range from:

- Uncertainty at key transition points such as from Year 11 and when leaving care
- Not receiving targeted advice on college courses and pathways that suit their interests and aspirations
- The young person may drop out of college early without the right support in place
- The course doesn't match their academic ability
- Progression between courses can be problematic
- An accelerated move into independence
- Mental health and wellbeing

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) acts as a framework to hold and protect the young person, providing a supportive and vital network to support and safeguard them as they move into adulthood.



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## Acknowledgements

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Thank you to Barnet & Southgate College, and in particular Alice Fitzhugh, for your time and contribution to developing this guidance.

## 1. Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL)

There are many definitions that are used to define young people who are or who have been in care. Here are some of the key definitions you may come across:

### Looked After Child (LAC)/Child in Care (CiC)

**Looked After Children** are under 18 year olds who are in the care of the local authority

### Care Leaver (CL)

**Care Leavers** are usually 18 years up to the age of 25 who have previously been in the care of the local authority and are still entitled to some additional services.

### Care experienced

**Care experienced** is someone who, at any stage of their life, and for any length of time, has been in care (e.g.: looked after by the local authority).

### UASC

#### (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers.

It's important to identify who your cohort of vulnerable learners are on entry to the college so that the right support and intervention can be put in place as early as possible.

## Statutory Framework at Post 16

The duty to promote the educational achievement of a looked after child extends to looked after young people aged 16 or 17 preparing to leave care. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that:

- In Barnet the PEP is maintained until the end of Year 13 as part of the preparation and review of the pathway plan and builds on the young person's educational progress
- The pathway plan captures the measures being taken to help the child prepare for when they cease to be looked after
- Make links with further education (FE) colleges and higher education (HE) institutions so care leavers are supported to find establishments that understand and work to meet their needs
- Each care leaver knows about the 16-19 Bursary Fund

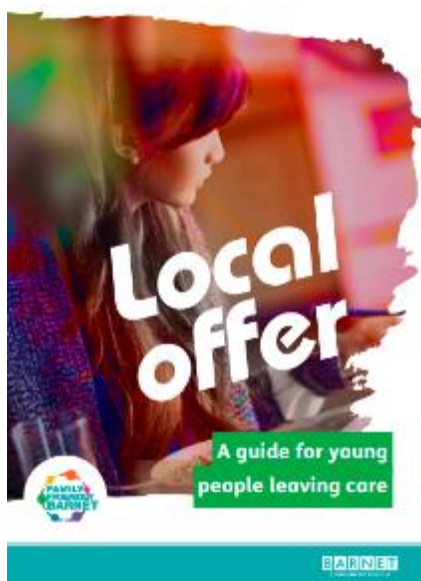
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- Each eligible care leaver receives a higher education bursary of £2,000 when going on to study a recognised HE course

In line with the Children Act 1989 and the corporate parenting principles, young people transitioning from care should be supported to continue their education and achieve their aspirations. Virtual Schools work with care leaving teams to ensure the education of those transitioning from care is supported at both a strategic and individual level.

Further information on supporting care leavers in their transition to adulthood is available in [Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## Barnet Care Leaver Local Offer



Barnet's Care Leaver Local Offer was launched in April 2019, as required under the Children and Social Work Act (2017). The local offer sets out our offer for young people who have been looked after by Barnet Council, including the information, services and support available.

The local offer provides information on the following areas:

- *Advice and support*
  - *Money and financial support*
  - *Housing and accommodation*
  - *Education, Employment and Training*
  - *Staying healthy*
- *Having your say*
  - *Our Pledge*
  - *Useful Information and contacts*

## Each local authority will have their own Care Leaver Local offer

It is good practice to signpost and share the local offer website with Care Leavers in your setting. They may need to be supported going through all the information and understanding what might be relevant and helpful to them.



[Click here to find out more about the Barnet Care Leaver Local Offer](#)

[Barnet On Point :: Care Leaver Local Offer \(itsaboutme.org.uk\)](https://itsaboutme.org.uk)

[Care leavers - local offer | Barnet Council](#)

## 2. The Post 16 Personal Education Plan (PEP)



*'...the PEP is an opportunity to celebrate success, as well as raise self-esteem and aspirations...'*

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the young person, carefully tracking their progress, and supporting them to achieve well and to be aspirational.

All Looked After Children (LAC) have a statutory Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority that looks after them. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a legal part of the Care Plan and is a statutory requirement for Looked After Children up until the age of 18 years old. In Barnet, Personal Education Plans remain in place until the end of Year 13.

The Post 16 Personal Education Plan (PEP) also supports and informs the Pathway Plan for Care Leavers. It focuses on two key areas:

- progress in education or training and
- transition into education, training, or employment after the current course of study.

Termly PEP meetings should ensure the young person's PEP is robust, with a clear and positive plan, helping to remove barriers and support them transition into adulthood and long-term employment.

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## The importance of the Post 16 PEP

Key things to consider:

The plan reflects what is important to the young person now (and for the future) their strengths and what support they require

Ensures a personalised approach that provides provision and support that enables the young person to reach their aspirations and builds life chances

Putting the plan into action helps everyone to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young person

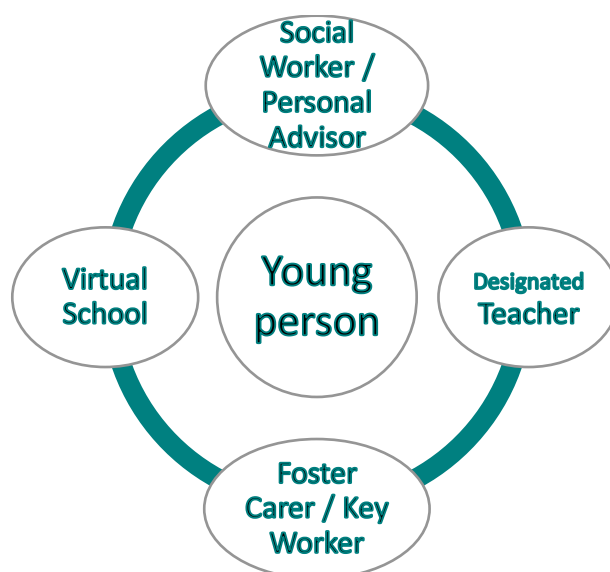
Ensures that every young person in the care of the local authority has a planned and monitored education or training route until the end of Year 13

## Section 3. Roles and responsibilities for the PEP

The PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the setting the Looked After Child is on roll at. The PEP is centralised by the Virtual School, but it is owned by the Social Worker. Barnet Virtual School uses Welfare Call to provide an electronic PEP in which participants log into a secure portal to upload information before and during the PEP meeting.

Welfare Call provides a help desk to ensure all stakeholders are assisted with the PEP process and allows many of the sections which do not change to pre-populate thus reducing the amount that has to be completed for each PEP and ensuring the focus is on the young person and their wishes.

Key individuals who should be involved in the PEP process are:



## The role of the Designated Teacher in Post 16 settings

The Designated Teacher's statutory role is to promote the educational achievement of all Looked After Children who are in their setting and should have lead responsibility for helping staff understand the things which affect how Looked After Children and Care Leavers learn and achieve. Designated Teachers should:

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Make sure the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers are prioritised
- Ensure high quality provision and support is in place for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Take lead responsibility for the coordination of PEPs, ensure they provide the young person with the opportunity to achieve the best outcomes and quality assure these within their setting
- Ensure any Looked After Children or Care Leavers are claiming and receiving their financial entitlement, e.g.: bursary
- Ensure staff within the setting prioritise, understand, and support the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers (e.g.: through training, information sharing, etc)
- Act as a central point of liaison and information for local authorities, social workers, and virtual school staff to assist efficient communication with the college

## The role of the Social Worker / Personal Advisor

The Social Worker/Personal Advisor decides with the Designated Teacher when a PEP is necessary within the statutory timeframe and arranges a date with the education provider and anybody else who needs to be invited. The date is recorded on the young person's ePEP.

The Social Worker/Personal Advisor will organise the date and time of the meeting (in the case of a review this is done at the previous meeting). Best practice is to schedule and agree the date of the next PEP meeting at the end of the PEP meeting.

The Personal Advisor takes on the role of the Social Worker when the young person turns 18 and will support them as Care Leavers.



**Click here to find out more about the role of the Personal Advisor:**

[Barnet On Point :: Care Leaver Local Offer / Advice and support \(itsaboutme.org.uk\)](https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk)



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## The role of Barnet Virtual School

The Virtual School will be a key contact for all Post 16 settings. You can contact your Post 16 Virtual School Caseworker for support with any questions or information in relation to a PEP:

- Acts as a central point of contact to provide guidance and support to further education settings
- Quality assures the completed PEPs on a termly basis
- Offer Post 16 training and support

## Section 4. The PEP meeting



*'...it is important that the young person's voice and wishes are held at the centre of the PEP meeting...'*

## Promoting the young person's voice

It is important that the young person is kept central to the PEP meeting through:

Inviting them to plan and attend their PEP meeting in a way that is appropriate for them, supports their wishes and enables them to be fully involved in the decision-making processes in relation to their care and education.

The young person should be fully supported to participate in their PEP meetings to ensure their wishes and feelings about their education are listened to and held at the centre of the PEP.

If the young person feels unable to attend their PEP meeting, their views must be brought to the PEP meeting by the most appropriate person and shared in a supportive way with the young person after the meeting.

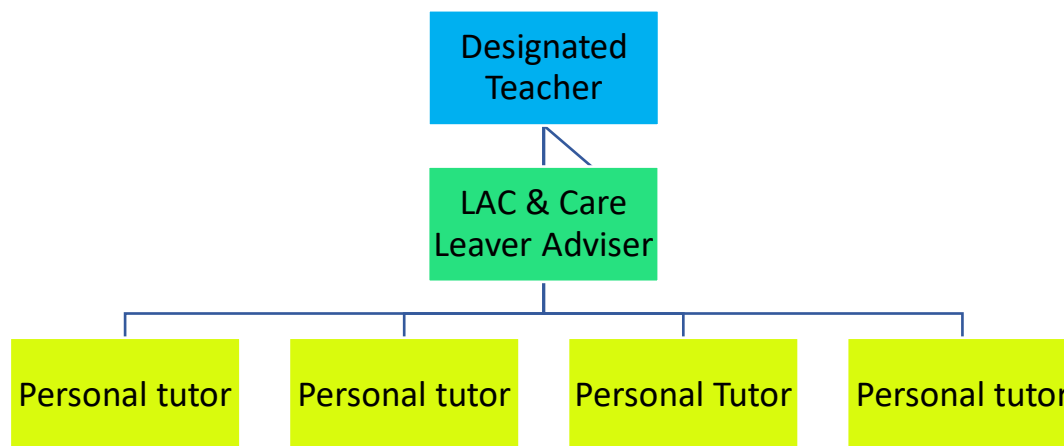
The young person's views should be captured in a strengths-based approach which recognises and celebrates their skills, talents, and resources and what the people around them can do to support them.

*'A strengths-based approach to care, support and inclusion says let's look first at what people can do with their skills and their resources and what can the people around them do in their relationships and their communities. People need to be seen as more than just their care needs – they need to be experts and in charge of their own lives.'*

**Alex Fox, OBE, Chief Executive, Shared Lives Plus**

## Co-ordinating PEPs in a college setting

It is beneficial to structure the organisation and coordination of PEPs in a strategic way so that there is operational oversight, and this is embedded into wider systems within the college.



Helpful models of practice tend to have a single designated individual who oversees the coordination of all PEPs and contacts tutors to gather feedback for the PEP meeting and obtain targets for the PEP. This could be the Designated Teacher for LAC or someone who is appointed specifically to carry out this role such as a Looked after Child and Care Leaver Adviser, or it can be built into existing structures through appointing Care Leads in every department.

## Key areas to consider for the PEP meeting

Having a structured approach to the PEP meeting will help to ensure that everyone is working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young person.

Before the meeting

## Setting SMART outcomes/targets on the PEP

It's important that the outcomes/targets that are agreed on the PEP are:

- ✓ person-centred
- ✓ reflect the young person's wishes and aspirations
- ✓ SMART
- ✓ realistic and achievable

You can link existing educational outcomes/targets from your internal college systems, such as ProMonitor, to the PEP.

Below are some examples of SMART outcomes/targets that have been set on Post 16 PEPs:

## Examples of Post 16 SMART Outcomes/Targets

| Outcome/target  | Why  | How   | Who will be responsible?             | When                             |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Safiyyah will be able to apply for the bursary at college</b>                        | Entitled to bursary and needs to make an application | Key Worker will send link to the placement so they can support with the online application<br>Key worker will support S to make application and contact college when complete | College, placement, and young person | By 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 |
| <b>Michael will be able to take a book out of the LRC once a week and write any new</b> | To support with developing                           | M to visit the LRC and look at the E3 books or the plumbing books to help prepare for next year   | Michael with support from Key Worker | By 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 |

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|  |  |  |  |                                |
|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>vocabulary in our vocab book</b>  | reading and writing skills   | Key worker to engage with M and books and support with vocab<br>M to bring vocab book to tutorial  |  |                                |
| <b>David will improve attendance to at least 80% with daily support from a Key Worker</b>    | Attendance is currently 65% which is below the college expectation             | D to check in with Key Worker at the Learning Hub on arrival to college. Key worker to through timetable and support D with talking through any worries about attending lessons. Tutors will email D materials for any missed lessons and offer additional support to go over work if he needs it.<br>D to use materials to ensure he does not fall behind | Key adult will support with daily check ins, particularly on Mondays<br>David to be supported by Learning Hub with check ins and support with catching up on any missed work | Review at end of February 2022 |
| <b>Eric will be able to catch up with the work that has been missed from poor attendance</b> | Due to missing college, they are behind with work and need support to catch up | Key Worker will gather a list of work that needs to be completed and share with young person. Support with be available in the staff in the LRC if help is needed.<br>Foster carer to support E with devising a timetable to complete the work which is manageable   | Key Worker to liaise with tutors and collate list.<br>List to be shared with young person.   | By end of February 2022        |

## 5. Post 16 Funding

Post 16 Looked After Children and Care Leavers are currently not eligible for pupil premium plus funding in the same way as statutory age children. Instead Virtual Schools have been allocated a lump sum to support young people. Use of any funding should be discussed in the PEP.

All Looked After Children are entitled to apply for the [16-19 bursary fund](#) to help with education related costs for 16 to 19 year olds who are studying at school or college.

You can also contact our [Barnet Post 16 Virtual School Caseworkers](#) to discuss further options around funding or if there is a specific intervention, such as tuition, you would like to explore for the young person.



## 6. Supporting Transitions to Post 16



*'Developing a whole setting approach ensures that everyone is working together to support the wellbeing and academic outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers'*

### Transition into Post 16 settings

Developing a whole college approach ensures that everyone is working together to support the wellbeing and academic outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

The following are examples of approaches and practice from evidence-based research that help to support and lead to positive experiences of transitions at Post 16:

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Creation of a college policy for students in care and care experienced students

Creating a trauma-informed and Attachment Aware setting

Developing staff awareness, understanding and practice to support outcomes

Early identification and support on entry to the college

Signposting to the bursary fund, enrichment activities and careers advice

Offering taster visits to support enrolment and course decision-making

If you are interested in developing any of these areas in relation to whole college practice, speak to Barnet Virtual School who will be able to signpost and support you.

## Transition to adulthood – turning 18

Once a young person reaches their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, they are legally no longer a looked after child and their placement with a foster family can no longer be classed as a foster placement. Some young people may have a 'Stay put' arrangement or move to supported housing.

The transition from care to independence for many young people with care experience is often challenging and difficult. The move into independent accommodation can happen very suddenly and quickly for the young person and can have a significant impact on their ability to manage their studies in college. At this point, they are likely to be managing the following challenges:

## Challenges for Care Leavers

Leaving care abruptly and with little notice

Moving into new accommodation in an area they don't know

No internet access in new accommodation

Independent living skills such as grocery shopping, cooking, time management

Managing finances independently such as budgeting, utility bills

Understanding what benefits or exemptions they may be entitled to

Managing a different or longer journey to college



## How you can support

Colleges need to be aware and mindful of these key transition points as they can happen at any time during the academic year depending on when the young person turns 18. It can also have a significant impact on the young person's capacity to manage their studies at that time.

It's important to provide support for the young person during this time and this can be considered in the following ways:

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Supporting their emotional wellbeing through 'check ins' with a key person. This could be a key worker, counsellor, or tutor

Making course tutors aware that the young person is moving so they are mindful of this and can offer support with studies if needed

Offer support from college provision such as Student Services and signpost to helpful organisations

Liaise with the young person's Personal Advisor and Barnet Virtual School with any concerns



*'Offering practical advice and support can be a significant help to a young person leaving care'*

## 7. Useful Links

**Barnet Virtual School - 0208 359 4534**

Email: [barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk) Website: [www.barnetvs.org](http://www.barnetvs.org)

**Welfare Call - 01226 716333**

[epep@welfarecall.com](mailto:epep@welfarecall.com)



## Links to Statutory Guidance documents

### Statutory Guidance Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Published: July 2014 / Updated: February 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

### Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Published: November 2009 / Updated: February 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

### Statutory Guidance on SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (2014)

Updated May 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

### Children and Families Act 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-children-and-families-act-2014-gains-royal-assent>

## Useful links to support Care Leavers

**Coram Voice:** [Home Page - Coram Voice](#)

Coram Voice will help if you are in care, leaving care, have or need a social worker. They will get your voice heard, tell you about your rights, give you the support you need through advocates.

**Become:** [Home Page - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](#)

A charity offering support to children in care and care leavers

**Turn2us:** [Fighting UK Poverty - Turn2us](#)

Helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face with partner organisations.

## Useful resources to support unaccompanied asylum seekers

On our website you will find some useful resources including videos in different languages explaining the Post 16 education system and expectations in the education system. There are also links to other sources of support that may be useful. [Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children \(UASC\) | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet \(barnetvs.org\)](#)