



BURY VIRTUAL SCHOOL: PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP) HANDBOOK 2024-25

For Designated Teachers, CLA Leads and Social Workers

All children in care must have a Care Plan and the PEP is a vital part of this. The PEP (Early Years to age 18) should be initiated as part of the Care Plan. It is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked-after children to enable them to make at least expected progress, preferably more than expected, and fulfil their potential. The PEP is a statutory document and is the joint responsibility of the Social Worker and Designated Teacher, overseen by the Virtual School.

We all have a responsibility as Corporate Parents of children in care to insist on educational standards for them that are as high as those we would expect for our own children. When holding PEP meetings and setting targets, Designated Teachers and social workers must always ask: "would this be good enough for my own child?"

Information and Guidance

- The PEP is a statutory document and is the joint responsibility of the Social Worker and Designated Teacher (DT). The DT should take the lead with chairing the PEP meeting and both social worker and the DT should jointly complete the termly PEP document.
- The PEP must be initiated within **10 working days** of a child being taken into care and **completed** within 20 school days. As a minimum, the PEP should be reviewed on a **termly** basis. A review should also be initiated whenever a school or care placement changes, need arises or additional funding is required.
- Statutory guidance describes the PEP as a 'living document'. The key part of the document is the **targets** section, which should be reviewed by everyone including the child or young person on a regular basis to ensure they are on track.
- Apart from when a child is new into care the previous PEP should be a starting point for each meeting with any updates made to Part 1 in advance. The meeting itself should focus on Part 2: reviewing targets set, recording progress made towards identified outcomes and setting new targets if appropriate.

PEP deadline dates

- Autumn Term – 29th November 2024
- Spring Term – 28th February 2025
- Summer Term – 6th June 2025



Process

Bury PEPs are completed via the LCS social care database. Designated Teachers will receive an email asking them to log in to a secure portal to complete their sections of the PEP. It is vital that the Virtual School has the correct email address for the member of staff who will be completing the PEP document as the portal link can only be sent to a specific named person.

The Virtual School team are responsible for the delegation of all PEP documents from Early Years to Post-16.

- The Designated Teacher, social worker and carer should agree a mutually convenient date and time for the PEP meeting and agree whether the meeting is taking place in person in school or virtually via video link. **Consideration should be given to the carer's preferences as their participation in the process is vital and every effort should be made to encourage them to attend.**
- If other professionals are working with the child (for example, CAMHS or Speech and Language Therapists), they should also be invited to the meeting. If they cannot attend, a request for a report should be made.
- **PEPs should not be held routinely at the same time as Looked After Review meetings as many children prefer to keep their home and school lives separate.**
- Where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), one PEP per year should coincide with the child's EHCP Annual Review. This is important to ensure that targets are planned holistically to support the delivery of the EHCP in improving the child's educational experience.

The PEP is divided into 3 main parts:

- Part 1 is the social care information and is completed by the social worker. The majority of information will be pulled through LCS and it will need to be checked and updated by the social worker if there are any changes. The SDQ score should be updated when it is reviewed.
- Part 2 will be sent to the Designated Teacher to complete prior to and following the PEP meeting. It is essential that the Designated Teacher meets with the child prior to the meeting to obtain their wishes and feelings and to discuss whether or not they wish to attend their PEP. Attendance of the child at the PEP should be encouraged, even if they do not take part in the entire meeting. It is vital to make them feel that this is their meeting and they have input into it, otherwise it can feel like just another meeting where other people will be



making decisions about their life.

- Part 3 documents what is discussed in the meeting and who attended and is completed by the social worker.
- The Virtual School runs a weekly report to monitor which PEPs have been completed.
- The Virtual School will initially QA the PEP document to check all sections have been completed appropriately. If needed, the Designated Teacher or social worker will be asked to supply additional information or make amendments. PEPs are rated Gold, Green, Amber or Red with clear criteria given for feedback and how to improve.
- It is vital that the target section is completed fully, that all targets are SMART and that requests for Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) funding (up to £600 per term) are fully costed.
- The VS conducts QA dip samples of PEPs on a regular basis. If the PEP is selected for more detailed QA sampling, a copy of the QA feedback will be sent to schools and the social worker.
- Following completion of a satisfactory PEP, the amount of PPG requested for the term will be released to the school to be spent as indicated on the PEP to support the needs of the child. A pdf of the PEP will be sent to the school and the social worker.

It is essential that PEPs include the voice of the child, social worker and carer. If the PEP is sent to the Virtual School without these sections having been completed, the form will be returned for this information to be supplied before requested PPG funding is issued to the school.

Child/Young person's voice.

Points to consider when discussing PEPs with children prior to the meeting:

- 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 full potential in school.
- Tell them what will be discussed at the meeting: the child's, school's and carer's view about their education, their strengths, weaknesses and achievements, extra curricular activities, any issues e.g. anything relating to homework,



behaviour, friendship or learning difficulties etc., new targets for the next term and any actions that need to be carried out to help them do well in school. If the child is changing school soon, choosing GCSE options or completing assessments, these would be part of the discussion too.

- Encourage them to attend the meeting if possible. Emphasise that their view is as important as anyone else's. The hope is that they will feel able to attend at least part of the meeting. They may need help to be clear about what they want to say about 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 too.
- 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.
- Use the young person's voice section of the PEP to guide the discussion. Talk about what's going well, what's not going so well, future aspirations, what support they feel they need, if they're happy with their friendships etc.
- Ask the child if they would like a copy of the PEP following the meeting.
- 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.

The Virtual School are unable to attend all PEP meetings and the criteria for Virtual School involvement in PEPs is as follows:

1. New case on Virtual School roll
2. School placement move
3. 'Red' rated case (concerns raised at Virtual School meetings where there are attendance concerns, suspensions concerns with engagement or SEND, school rated less than 'good' by Ofsted etc.
4. Children with an EHCP or where significant SEND is present
5. Need for independent chair due to professional disagreement e.g., Pupil Premium spend to appropriately support need
6. Key transition year groups such as Preschool (Nursery 2), Year 6 or Year 11
7. Where schools request attendance due to educational or other concerns
8. Schools out of borough



During the PEP Meeting

School or education personnel should chair the meeting.

The following should always be part of the PEP and any changes discussed

- An achievement record (academic or otherwise); chronology of education and training history which provides a record of the child's educational experience and progress in terms of National Curriculum levels of attainment, including information about educational institutions attended and the reasons for leaving, attendance and conduct record, academic and other achievements, any special educational needs, an indication of the extent to which the child's education has been disrupted before entering care or accommodation
- Developmental or educational needs; existing arrangements for education and training, including details of any special educational provision and any other provision to meet the child's educational or training needs and promote educational achievement
- Short term targets; any planned changes to existing arrangements and provision to minimise disruption
- The child's leisure interests
- Long term plans and aspirations; role of the appropriate person and any other person who cares for the child in promoting the child's educational achievements and leisure interests.

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

- Take notes in the Discussion section 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
- Ensure that there is a clear picture of the progress the child is making in school
- 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
- Social workers don't need to have lots of knowledge about education, but they do need to ask relevant questions. Here are some suggestions of questions which will help to give a full picture of how the child is progressing and find out more about any relevant issues.

Academic

- Are they achieving what is expected of them 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/carers do to help them catch up?
- Is the school providing the pupil with one-to-one tuition?
- Would the pupil benefit from weekly home tuition?
- What progress would you expect them to make in the next 6 - 12 months?
- If that progress isn't made do you think investigations into possible SEND should be considered, or a referral made for EHCP assessment?
- 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 helpful to ask the school what they believe to be the over-arching educational priority at this point.

Social

- What are their relationships like with adults/other children?
- Does the 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?
- What form does the bullying take?
- What can be done to prevent the bullying?

Behaviour

- Are there any concerns?
- If so, what inappropriate behaviours do they display?
- What does school/child think triggers these behaviours?



- Are these linked to Trauma/Attachment?
- 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 support positive behaviour including Trauma informed/attachment aware approaches?
- How successful were they? What else can be tried?
- How can the carer/social worker/Virtual School help?
- Does emotional distress affect their learning?

In general – is a graduated response being implemented to the concerns raised?

If the child is at risk of exclusion (whether suspensions or permanent) it is essential that the Virtual School is immediately informed and advice sought. The Virtual School will endeavor to support in whatever ways possible.

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 (alone or with/to you as appropriate for the age of the child)?
- What interests do you think could be developed outside of school?

Ensure that the date for the next PEP meeting is set at the end of this one, and that everyone involved understands what their role is in ensuring the targets will be achieved.



SMART TARGETS

PEP targets should always include at least one academic target for English and one for Maths, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where a child has SEN and there is an EHCP or IEP in place, PEP targets should be informed by these.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DEFINING MEASURABLE 'PLANNED OUTCOMES'

All targets should be driven by the outcome we want to achieve. Targets set should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) and should present a balance of academic and personal development targets. Targets should not only address areas of difficulty and should also aim to develop areas of strength.

• **Step 1: Identify the unmet needs:** Before anything else, it's necessary to be clear about the child's *unmet* developmental and educational needs as well as their developing areas of strength.

Eg: Billy is working at a GCSE grade 3 in Maths but needs a grade 4 for college. He is below in arithmetic and long division and multiplication in particular.

• **Step 2: Identify the services/support:** Once the child's needs are clearly identified we can then look at areas of appropriate support or referral to additional services.

Billy needs support with specific areas of weakness in Maths, such as long division and multiplication. He would benefit from 1:1 tuition for an hour each week at a cost of £55, to be requested from PPG. Ten weeks will cost £550.

• **Step 3: Ask a few questions** about *each* identified need/risk factor:

- If this need was being met sufficiently (or if this risk was sufficiently reduced), how would I know?
- What would I see/measure/count etc. that would tell me?
- What would be tangibly different about or for the child?
- How would I determine that the child's development / wellbeing / care / safety has really improved?
- Have the services provided or the actions taken had any impact?

Effective intervention will mean Billy will improve in Maths from a 3 to a 4. His confidence will increase and he will be able to answer more questions correctly and complete practice papers in a faster time.



EXAMPLE TARGETS

Cognition and Learning

1. XXXX will develop her knowledge of literacy skills including letter names and decoding text, so her reading age will increase in line with age-related expectations by the end of the academic year.
2. XXXX will develop his knowledge of numeracy skills, including his counting knowledge and his knowledge of shapes, space and measures, so he is able to make progress in line with the school's model of assessment by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
3. XXXX will develop her understanding of specific instructions, so she is able to complete tasks such as hanging her coat up and finding her books with independence on a daily basis by the end of the academic year.
4. XXXX will develop his concentration and attention skills so he is able to remain on task for at least 15 minutes by the end of the term.
5. XXXX will be able able to complete written tasks independently without prompting to use punctuation and to be able to reach a target of XXXX by the end of the academic year.
6. XXXX will be able to retain and use mathematical formulae and increase his knowledge of problem solving so he will be able to reach a target of GCSE grade 4 by the end of the academic year.
7. XXXX will be able to consolidate her numerical and mathematical capability so that she can extend her understanding of the number system and place value to include decimals, fractions, powers and roots by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
8. XXXX will be able to complete written tasks using appropriate punctuation so that he can reach a target of XXXX by the end of the academic year.
9. XXXX will be able to increase his/her knowledge of spelling patterns, word families, roots of words and derivations and will be able to correctly write and spell 300 high frequently words by the end of the academic year.
10. XXXX will be able to follow instructions and tasks for a minimum of 5 minutes on a daily basis throughout the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.



11. XXXX will develop her processing speed and memory skills so she is able to carry out tasks with limited adult support, on a daily basis throughout the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.

Social Emotional and Mental Health

1. XXXX will be able to take part in a small-group activity such as Lego Therapy with adult support and be able to take turns and follow instructions, by the end of the Autumn term.
2. XXXX will develop an understanding of her own emotions so that she is able to identify happiness, sadness and anger in herself and others and will work to be able to express these in an appropriate way on a daily basis, reducing her SDQ score from XX to below XX by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
3. XXXX will increase his awareness of others around him through interaction so he is able to tolerate a shared activity with one other for short periods at least 3 times a week throughout the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
4. XXXX will begin to increase her understanding of emotions so she is able to recognise when she is *happy* or *angry* by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
5. XXXX will develop his social skills to a level where he is beginning to contribute and take turns in conversations with an adult and his peers at least 3 times a week by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
6. XXXX is able to understand social situations and be able to interact confidently with his peers and adults, so that he can identify at least 3 characteristics of a healthy relationship and 3 characteristics of an unhealthy relationship by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.

Speech/ Language and Communication

1. XXXX will be able to produce all speech sounds and be understood during conversations at school and at home on a daily basis by the end of the academic year
2. XXXX will improve her verbal reasoning and inference skills so that she can consistently explain what is implied (suggested meaning) rather than what is



explicit (stated/obvious meaning) by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.

3. XXXX will develop his communication skills so that he is able to express his wants and needs to those around him by using PECs on a daily basis by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
4. XXXX will be able to follow a two-part instruction by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
5. XXXX will be able to understand at least 50% of the common exception words for Year 3 and 4 by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term and will be able to use them correctly in a sentence.

Sensory/Physical

1. XXXX will develop her functional and fine motor skills so she is able to participate in physical activities and is able to move safely around school by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
2. XXXX will continue to develop his mobility to facilitate independent movement as appropriate to his development by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
3. XXXX will develop her fine motor ability so that she can produce letters and shapes clearly and produce a greater quantity of written work on a daily basis by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.

Independence and Self Help

1. XXXX will start to develop his independence skills so he is able to contribute to his own personal care needs as appropriate to his ability on a daily basis by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
2. XXXX will be able to concentrate on an activity/task for an increasing amount of time, leading up to a minimum of 10 minutes, at least once on a daily basis by the end of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term.
3. XXXX will be able to use strategies to help him work independently in lessons for a minimum of ten minutes per lesson during times of individual work (strategies to include...) by the end of the term.

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs)



The SDQ is a statutory part of the PEP document which should be completed by the social worker. If the school also wishes to complete an SDQ (or equivalent screening tool such as Boxhall Profile) they are welcome to do so. **An SDQ score of 17 or above suggests that the pupil may have emotional wellbeing needs which should be addressed within the Target Setting section.**

All children who are in care have experienced trauma and disruption and it should always be assumed that they will need additional mental health support.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Pupil Premium (PPG+)?

It is funding allocated by the DfE to 'raise attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities in order to reach their potential.' Children in care are one group of children who receive Pupil Premium to raise attainment.

PPG funding cannot be spent on administration tasks, clothing or transport costs.

PPG spend should be clearly linked to SMART targets, providing clear evidence of impact.

Schools can request up to £600 per term (£1800 per academic year) upon completion of a satisfactory PEP.

Post 16 PPG+ was introduced in September 2023 following a successful pilot and post 16 provisions or social workers can request up to £300 per academic year to support Education, Employment or Training if clearly linked to a SMART target and completion of a satisfactory PEP.

Early Years PPG+ is currently delegated to settings who request it for Bury cared for children by the Early Years Team on request.

Who is responsible for the PEP?

The Designated Teacher and social worker are responsible for holding the PEP and ensuring the document is completed with quality information. The Virtual School is responsible for monitoring PEP completion and quality and ensuring all children have a good PEP in place. The PEP should be a robust, living and working document which can be referenced between meetings and provides clear evidence of the support in place for the child.

How often should a PEP meeting take place?



The PEP should take place termly. Additional PEP meetings should be held when there is a change of school or school placement. Any further education meetings based within school should involve and be centred around the PEP document.

Who should know a child is looked after in school?

The Designated Teacher and Headteacher. Other staff should be informed on a 'need to know' basis. A Governor should be designated with responsibility for LAC progress.

Who should school information be sent to, including school reports and permission slips for school trips?

All of the above should be discussed and documented during the PEP meeting. The allocated social worker will be able to confirm who has Parental Responsibility.

