 

**A one minute guide** - **VIRTUAL SCHOOL – A SOCIAL WORKER’S GUIDE**

**What is it?**

All Looked After Children (pre-school to age 16) require a PEP as part of their care plan. Post 16 young people have their own EET plans which also focus on education. The PEP should be initiated as part of the care planning process. A PEP should be held before the first Review meeting (20 days) and then reviewed termly.(within 10 days if the placed in an emergency) Responsibilities for initiating, maintaining and implementing the PEP are shared between the school, social worker and virtual school. The social worker is responsible for arranging the PEP meeting alongside care planning reviews and inviting the appropriate parties to attend. Where a child has an EHCP the review of this will take place at the same time as one of the PEP meetings.

**Why are we doing it?**

All looked-after children have a named Virtual School link to oversee the case, ensure that the child has access to suitable full-time education and who will challenge schools where progress is inadequate. The school should take the lead on maintaining the PEP and implementing the agreed actions as well as providing data to demonstrate the impact of interventions and support. The Virtual School is responsible for the RAG rating and quality assurance of the PEP to ensure that quality plans exist for all.

**When is it happening?**

When a child comes into care the Social Worker should:

 For a child over 2 yrs: liaise quickly with the early years setting to arrange the initial PEP. For a child of statutory school age (Reception to Year 11) please also liaise with your Virtual School link.

**While a child is in care the Social Worker should:**

 **Attend all PEP meetings** to ensure that essential information is correct, fill in the summary of discussion part of the PEP meeting, sign-off the social worker section and ensure that all decisions are conducive to the child’s situation and care planning;

 Inform the Virtual School of any issues relating to education where specific support is required.

 Inform school and Virtual School if they cannot attend the meeting and re-arrange for another meeting within the school term.

**After the PEP meeting the Social Worker should:**

 Review final version, share as appropriate and note the date of the next meeting.

**Social Worker ePEP flowchart** and descriptors are all available on the ePEP system which will clearly show the actions you need to take prior to, during and at the end of the PEP meeting.

Where a new school is required the Virtual School will work with the Social Worker and SEN team (if appropriate) to identify options that meet the child’s needs. The Social Worker will then complete the application for mainstream places while the SEN Team will consult for SEN children. **NO** school move should be planned without the agreement of the Virtual School.