



Department  
for Education

# **The designated teacher for looked- after and previously looked-after children**

**Statutory guidance on their roles and  
responsibilities**

**2017**

# Annex 1 Useful questions in developing effective practice

## Planning

- Does the school's planning include material on raising the attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- How does the school develop strategies that encourage collaboration with other agencies and services, e.g. VSHs, health professionals, CAMHS, school attendance services?
- What is the school's approach on professional development for all staff in contact with vulnerable children?
- How does the school assist local authorities with requests to provide data on attendance, attainment and exclusions?

## Raising staff awareness

- What safeguards does the school have in place for sharing sensitive information about individual looked-after and previously looked-after children with relevant staff members?
- What is the procedure for liaising with carers/residential children's homes and social services – in particular the child's social worker – to ensure that the school has relevant information about a child's care history?
- How are the child's achievements communicated to the child, the child's corporate parent, adoptive parents birth parents (where appropriate) and carer/guardian?
- What training is in place for staff to ensure they have the skills to meet looked-after and previously looked-after children's needs?

## Admissions

- How are applications handled after the normal admission round?
- What barriers are there to the admission of looked-after and previously looked-after children<sup>1</sup>, particularly outside normal transition, and how do you plan to overcome these?

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote six for definition of looked-after and previously looked-after children regarding school admissions.

- What are the arrangements for welcoming new looked-after and previously looked-after pupils, and do they take into account that these children (perhaps arriving mid-term) may have additional support needs?
- What does the school do to ensure that new admissions are well supported by their peers?

## **Record keeping and transfer**

- Who in school reviews and keeps the looked-after child's PEP up-to-date?
- Who updates school records with current addresses of carers, birth parents, social worker, etc?
- What is the procedure to prepare information for transfer if a looked-after child changes school?

## **Promoting inclusive schooling and good home-school communication**

- Does the school have good communication channels with carers, adoptive parents and guardians, and work with them to ensure that their child is well supported in school?
- How does the school record who is entitled to a looked-after child's report, receives invitation to parents' evenings and other school events?
- Are carers given a named person, such as the designated teacher, to contact if they have concerns?
- Are carers, adoptive parents and guardians asked to sign the home school agreement even when their child may be placed temporarily in the school?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that carers have understood and signed the home school agreement?
- Does the school charging policy need to be changed to ensure better take-up of trips among groups of children, such as those who are looked after?
- Are a range of study support and out-of-school opportunities such as homework clubs, careers guidance and work experience available to looked-after children even if they join school mid-year?

## **Promoting inclusive schooling: curriculum and options**

- Have the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children been considered in the context of the school's curriculum?

- What is the process when making a decision to place a young person on an alternative curriculum at KS4? Does the school always consult relevant professionals, including the VSH, the young person and their carers?
- Is flexible personalised learning available to looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the school have a good baseline of information – informed by transfer of school records and thorough assessments – so that barriers to learning are quickly identified and actions are put in place to secure each pupil's progress?
- Is the school timetable flexible with regard to outside fixed activities?

## **Promoting high expectations and achievement**

- Are appropriate learning targets being set for looked-after and previously looked-after children in the school that include measures to accelerate their progress?
- What are the specific barriers to achievement facing looked-after and previously looked-after children, and can the school take action to remove them?
- Is there good liaison with foster carers, children's homes managers, parents and guardians to support children's learning?
- If looked-after children and previously looked-after children get behind, how is this identified and help provided?
- How does the school celebrate the educational successes of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Would specific interventions, such as regular access to a learning mentor or one-to-one tuition, help looked-after children succeed?
- What revision support is available for examinations for children at risk of underachieving? How are looked-after and previously looked-after children encouraged and supported to attend these?
- How are looked-after children and previously looked-after children encouraged and supported to access taster activities for further and higher education?
- How are looked-after children and previously looked-after children supported if they are gifted and talented?

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

- How does the school ensure prompt identification of SEN of looked-after and previously looked-after children?

- Are carers of looked-after children informed that the child has SEN and that they can get help from the Information, Advice and Support Services?<sup>2</sup>
- How are carers/social workers involved in assessments and reviews?
- How are young people involved in reviews and target setting?
- Is the level of support given to looked-after children with SEN sufficient and meeting their needs considering their status?
- Is the SENCO (where appropriate) involved in PEP, care and, if applicable, ECH plan reviews?
- Are there particular staff training needs in connection with meeting the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children?

## Exclusions

- What strategies does the school use to avoid exclusion of vulnerable children including looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- When considering exclusion, does the head teacher and the governing body have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on exclusion?
- Is there any trend in exclusion rates of looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Is the appeal process fully explained to social workers, foster carers, residential social workers, parents and guardians when a looked-after or previously looked-after child is excluded?
- Are young people in care encouraged to attend governors' hearings which are reviewing their exclusion?
- Has the appropriate person/team in the local authority with responsibility for children missing education been notified of the child's exclusion?
- What are the reintegration arrangements for looked-after and previously looked-after children who have been excluded?
- What other agencies are working with the child, and have they delivered the necessary support, e.g. educational or clinical psychology/CAMHS?
- Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion does their PEP include pastoral support provision?

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<sup>2</sup> These services are to support and work in partnership with children, young people, parents, local authorities, CCG's and other relevant partners.

## Promoting health (including mental health)

- Are the needs of looked-after children considered in health-promoting schemes?
- Do the citizenship and PHSE curricula take full account of including children whose experiences and understanding of 'family' may be different?
- Do staff have awareness and act on early potential signs of mental health problems and know who to highlight this to so potential concerns can be raised and appropriate further assessment considered?

## Pastoral support

- What targeted interventions can the school initiate that focus on groups of children who have known risk factors, such as being looked-after or previously looked-after?
- How does the school behaviour policy pre-empt escalating behaviour problems?
- Do staff working with looked-after children (including those placed for adoption) and previously looked-after children have a sufficient understanding of how problems with attachment can impact on a child's behaviour and attainment?
- How does the school ensure that initiatives such as lunchtime clubs and anti-bullying work include looked-after and previously looked-after children?
- Does the school have procedures for contacting relevant professional help for specific problems, e.g. CAMHS, educational psychologist?
- Are looked-after children's carers and previously looked-after children's parents or guardians contacted on the first day of any unexplained absence?
- Are carers, parents and guardians aware of the school's anti-bullying policies?
- How do staff work to build positive relationships with vulnerable children, including looked-after and previously looked-after children?

## Study support

- Does the school regularly consult with carers, parents and guardians, looked-after children and previously looked-after children about study support activities?
- Are there effective intervention strategies such as one-to-one tuition provided for every looked-after and previously looked-after child who need them?
- Are looked-after young people/care leavers going on to 6th Form told about the 16-19 bursary?