The right support, at the right time

Child In Care and Previously Looked After Child Policy

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This policy sets out the procedures and responsibilities for supporting any Child in Care (CiC) or Previously Looked After Child (PLAC) at the Leading Futures Alternative Provision.

Contents:

1. Statement of Intent
2. Legal Framework
3. Definitions
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
6. Working with Agencies and the VSH
7. Training
8. Learner Mental Health
9. Suspensions & Permanent Exclusion
10. Learners with SEND
11. Information Sharing
12. Attendance, Engagement and Transitions
13. Monitoring and Review

1. Statement of Intent

The educational outcomes and future opportunities of children who are currently or formerly in care remain a significant concern. These learners often need tailored support and focused attention to help overcome challenges and improve their life trajectories.

Leading Futures endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention, for all our learners. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage learners to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that learners experience high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for looked after and previously looked after children in a realistic manner, making effective use of available resources to ensure the provision is well-equipped to meet their individual needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of provision life.
- Help learners develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

Working with the wider corporate parenting team we will take an active role in applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Maintaining education stability
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity and adhering to the individual's care plan
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening quickly
- Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression
- Celebrating successes

We recognise that in meeting the needs of Children in Care, we will also be providing the additional care and support many other children also need; the needs of children in care often mirror those of other children too.

Signed on 29th September 2026.

Director of Service: Emma Rennie-Gibbons

Director of SEND: Samantha Webster

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2018) Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- DfE (2022) Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement
- DfE (2024) Keeping children safe in education 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- DFE (2018) The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- DFE (2022) Promoting the education of children with a social worker (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- SEND Review - Special educational needs publication August 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Provision Attendance Guidance - Working together to improve provision attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Mental Health & Behaviour in Provisions Mental health and behaviour in provisions (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in provisions and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Early Years inspection framework - Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Provision Inspection Handbook Ofsted - Provisions inspection handbook- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Children's Wellbeing and Provisions Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament
- The current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education

This policy operates in conjunction with the following provision policies and documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Engagement for Learning Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Home Provision Agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

3. Definitions

Children in Care (CiC) are defined as:

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, as the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents (Section 20)

Previously looked after children (PLAC) are defined as:

- Children no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

Local Terminology

- Considering the views of a large sample of children in care within local authorities the terms 'children in care' (CiC) and 'previously looked after children' (PLAC) are the preferred reference rather than Looked after Children.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring the provision has a coherent policy for CiC and PLAC.
- Reviewing the provision's policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated teacher for CiC and PLAC has received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring CiC and PLAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if and when necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of CiC in the provision.

- Ensuring they gather feedback from staff regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.
- Providing a nominated Director who should:
    - Ensure that a provision's self-audit of provision for CiC and PLAC is undertaken.
    - Ensure that the provision's policies and procedures ensure that CiC and PLAC have at least equal access to all aspects of the provision life.
    - Attend meetings organised by the Virtual Provision to provide updates and training to nominated staff

The Virtual Provision Head Teacher (VSHT) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the education and outcomes of the authority's CiC, including those placed out-of-authority.
- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners, as well as other partners, so they and the designated teachers understand the support available to CiC and PLAC.
- Working with the provision to ensure all CiC within the provision are fully supported in reaching their full potential.
- Acting as the educational advocate for CiC.
- Acting as a source of advice and information to help parents of PLAC as effectively as possible.
- Ensuring there are effective systems in place to:
    - Maintain an up-to-date roll of the CiC who are in provision settings, and gather information about their educational placement, attendance and progress.
    - Inform the Directors and Designated Teacher if they have a learner on roll who is looked after by the LA.
    - Ensure social workers, provisions, designated teachers, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities regarding a learner's PEP.
    - Ensure that up-to-date and effective PEPs that focus on educational outcomes are maintained for all CiC.
    - Avoid delays in providing suitable educational provision.
    - Ensure the education achievement of CiC and PLAC is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their health and welfare.
    - Report regularly on the attainment, progress and provision attendance of CiC through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The Director of Service is responsible for:

- Appointing the Designated Teacher for CiC and PLAC.
- Allowing the Designated Teacher the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.

- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, and being able to evaluate the following:
    - The number of CiC and PLAC in the provision
    - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other learner groups
    - The attendance of CiC and PLAC, compared to other pupil groups
    - The level of suspensions and permanent exclusions, compared to other learner groups
    - Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting CiC and PLAC is a key priority.
    - Actively challenging negative stereotypes of CiC.

The Designated Teacher for CIC and PLAC (at both Leading Futures and the Home School) is responsible for:

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they and the VSH understand the support available to CiC and PLAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of CiC and PLAC at the provision.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the Virtual School.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring CiC are involved in reviewing and setting their own targets.
- Gaining the knowledge and skills to advise and support staff on teaching and behaviour strategies for CiC and PLAC.
- Ensuring that CiC and PLAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Supporting new CiC admissions to the provision:
    - Provide pre-admission support and where appropriate, an enhanced ‘welcome’ phase in the first days and weeks at the provision.
    - On admission of a CiC to the provision, liaising with the VS to agree a date for a PEP meeting.
    - Leading on how the child’s Personal Education Plan (PEP) is developed and used in provision to ensure the child’s progress towards targets is supported and monitored.
    - Liaising with the SENDCO to ensure all learners needs are met.
    - Working with the child’s social worker, VSHT and VST to develop and implement their PEP.
    - Working with the Directors to produce an annual report, which details the progress of all CiC and PLAC.

The Director of SEND/ SENDCo is responsible for:

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for CiC if the child has Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with the class teacher, designated teacher, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of CiC/ PLAC.
- Liaising regularly with the Corporate Parents for children in care - Virtual Provision & Social Worker.

- Ensuring timely assessment and intervention is in place through provision mapping and allocation of resources to meet specific needs.

All provision staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of CiC and PLAC in their classes and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Apply a relational approach to CiC and PLAC through developing a deep awareness of attachment theory and evidence-based trauma approaches to understand the young person's journey.
- Preserving confidentiality where appropriate and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Promoting the self-esteem of CiC and PLAC.
- Actively seeking advice, guidance or training to:
    - Understand some of the typical issues CiC and PLAC may present, such as early years trauma and attachment disorder.
    - Learn how to respond appropriately to the behavioural challenges these may manifest as, adapting any general policies appropriately.
- Being vigilant for any signs of:
    - Bullying or peer on peer abuse towards CiC or PLAC.
    - Safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CiC and PLAC.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All CiC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a learner to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. It will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.

The provision will work with other professionals and the child's carers, using the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the Designated Teacher and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.

The PEP will address the learner's full range of education and development needs, including:

- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind with work.
- Suitable education agreed with the LA, where the child is not in provision because of suspension or exclusion (this should be in place on the 2nd day of any fixed term suspension).
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new provision.
- Provision attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate. (Attendance data will be drawn down into the PEP from the completion of the online attendance records through CRM).

- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
    - Support to achieve at least expected levels of progress for the relevant national key stage and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.
    - Careers advice, guidance and financial information about FE, training and employment, that focuses on the child's strengths, capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
    - Out-of-provision hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

The views, wishes and feelings of the learner will be actively sought and recorded as part of the PEP process. Learners will be encouraged to contribute to discussions about their education, aspirations, strengths, barriers and support needs wherever appropriate.

6. Working with Agencies and the VSHT

The provision will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the social workers, in addition to parents/ carers or residential social workers. The provision will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual EHCP review at the same time as a PEP review. The provision will work with other agencies to exchange information such as changes in circumstances, suspensions, exclusions or attendance issues.

The provision will complete daily online attendance records which will enable the VS to monitor the attendance of CiC and react promptly if attendance falls or unexplained absences occur. For some CiC, it is essential that the VS has this information on a daily basis. Engagement strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the provision, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for CIC and PLAC will communicate with the VSHT/ VST and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP. **NB PEP dates are set through the Virtual School and any changes should only be made through the Virtual School.**

Through the Designated Teacher, the provision will work with the VSHT/ VST, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that the PEP targets clearly show how the PPG will be used. If necessary, this may involve consulting the VS prior to a PEP meeting to gain advice on using the PPG most effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.

Additional funding for further intervention can be requested which can be commissioned through intervention packages. The Designated Teacher will ensure prompt, consistent

and strong communication with the VSHT/ VST regarding CiC who are absent without authorisation.

The provision will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of CIC and PLAC. This may be through network meetings provided by the VS.

The provision recognises the wider strategic role of the Virtual School in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements and will engage with the Virtual School where appropriate to improve educational outcomes and participation

7. Training

The designated teacher and other provision staff involved in the education of CiC and PLAC have either received or identified and prioritised the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:

- Provision admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Supporting SEMH
- Attachment and the impact of trauma
- Attachment Research Community- Relational approaches
- Attendance/ Suspensions/ Exclusions
- Homework - raising educational outcomes, supporting carers
- GCSE options
- Managing, understanding and responding to behaviours which challenge
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting learners to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment

8. Learner Mental Health

Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their engagement and education. Designated Teachers will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.

Staff recognise that many CiC and PLAC may have experienced trauma, attachment disruption, loss, separation and adverse childhood experiences. The provision will adopt a trauma-informed and attachment-aware approach, focusing on safety, relationships, consistency and emotional wellbeing in order to maximise engagement and educational success.

The designated teacher will work with the VSHT/ VST to ensure the provision is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on CiC and PLAC, and when appropriate, know how to access further assessment and support.

To measure, if necessary, the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by CiC, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about CiC's emotional wellbeing. Teachers will regularly complete their element of the questionnaire to assist social workers in their assessment. Every spring term, an Education SDQ is requested and needs to be completed by provisions prior to the Spring term PEP date. This is for annual Education reporting and triangulation with Health & Social Care.

9. Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

Past experiences of CiC and PLAC will be considered when designing and implementing the provision's Engagement for Learning Policy, ensuring that it is suitably flexible and inclusive.

(See DfE guidance for DTs **Working together to safeguard children – March 2015 updated February 2024** updated May 2025 Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK

Designated Teacher for LAC & PLAC February 2018 The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children – 2014 Updated 2018 Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The provision will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance and, as far as possible, avoid suspension or permanent excluding any CiC or PLAC.
'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'

Leading Futures will work in line with all local authorities' relevant policies.

Provisions will have regard for Rarely Exclude documentation May 2023

Where the provision has concerns about a child's behaviour, the VSHT/ VST will be informed at the **earliest** opportunity. Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort. Provisions should consult the 'Exclusion Reduction Team' when an exclusion is being considered as alternatives such as short breaks provision should be considered first.

Where a suspension is considered, the provision will also consult with the VS prior to the suspension to consider what additional support can be provided to prevent suspension.

In the event of a suspension, the provision will ensure that suitable alternative provision will be in place from the first day of the suspension. The provision will inform parents and carers that they can seek the advice of the VSHT on strategies to support their child to avoid suspension for PLAC.

Provisions will engage with ARC (Attachment Research Community) in prompting educational outcomes for Children in Care. Attachment & Trauma Aware approaches in education | ARC (the-arc.org.uk)

Prior to any suspension, wherever possible, the provision will consider additional support, reasonable adjustments, restorative approaches and multi-agency planning to minimise the risk of exclusion and maintain educational stability.

10. Learners with SEND

Support for CiC with SEND who do not need an EHC plan will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews, in addition to following the SEND offer from the relevant local authority. The expectation is that a child in care is placed on the provisions SEND register for support then information is shared with the corporate parent - Virtual Provision, Social Worker and parents (if appropriate).

Where a learner is both a Child in Care and has SEND, professionals will work collaboratively to ensure that care planning, SEND provision and educational planning are aligned and do not operate as separate processes.

The SENDCo, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will involve the Virtual Provision/ Social Worker, carers/ parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.

If appropriate, the VSHT will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for PLAC.

11. Information Sharing

Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of CIC and PLAC are understood and met.

The arrangements set out:

- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured to comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- How learners and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.
- Mechanisms for sharing information between the provision and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual learners is passed between authorities, departments and the provision when learners move.

12.Attendance, Engagement and Transitions

The provision recognises the importance of educational stability for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children.
The provision will:

- monitor attendance and engagement closely;
- identify barriers to participation at the earliest opportunity;
- work collaboratively with carers, social workers and the Virtual School to improve attendance and engagement;
- support successful transitions into the provision, between educational settings and into post-16 education, employment or training.

Educational disruption will be minimised wherever possible to support continuity of learning and positive outcomes.

13.Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the designated teacher and the Directors.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.