

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT – 31st MARCH 2014

Title of paper:	Personal Education Plans	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman Acting Director Safeguarding	Wards affected: ALL
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Other colleagues who have provided input:	None	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)		
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report sets out details of Personal Education Plan results for the period January to December 2013.		
The quality of Personal Education Plans still remains a significant focus for improvement. This report indicates actions taken and those planned to address this issue in the future		
Recommendation(s):		
1	The Board is asked to note the maintenance of PEP completion figures at over 90% and the actions undertaken to address the quality of PEPs.	
2	The Board to note developments planned to enhance the quality of the written records of PEP meetings.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure we see an increase in the number of PEPs being completed. In addition to ensure we see an improvement in the educational focus of all PEPs.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 Every Child in Care (CiC) is entitled to a Personal Education Plan (PEP) when s/he is placed into care. The first is to be started within ten days of being placed in care and completed within 4 months. Following PEPs are undertaken every six months unless a child moves placement or school when a new PEP is expected.

2.2 The PEP contains a history of placement, school and social worker. It records the child's own view of their educational progress, ambition and targets as well as an educational plan for the next PEP period.

2.3 It is the social worker's responsibility to ensure that the PEP review takes place. Where possible the social worker should attend the meeting although it is not a requirement except for the first PEP. The school may take the lead in a PEP meeting except for the first.

2.4 PEP Completion Rates

Month	% PEPs In Date
January 2013	92
February 2013	90
March 2013	92
April 2013	93
May 2013	95
June 2013	95
July 2013	95
September 2013	95
October 2013	89
November 2013	92
December 2013	89

These results display a continued stability that has been present in recent years' figures.

2.5 The past year has seen the monthly completion rates at an average of 92.5%. This has been achieved through:

- Virtual School robust admin.
- A monthly reminder being sent to all social workers
- Earlier notification to social care team leaders of completion percentages for each month
- Reminders at designated teacher network meetings of PEP completion expectations and social worker and designated teacher responsibilities;
- Combining PEP and statement review meetings to avoid the repetition of meetings. An achievement consultant has worked with NCC special schools to make these adaptations;
- PEA/EPG applications only being accepted if a PEP is in date and the PEA/EPG request matches priorities identified in the PEP;
- The training of the CiC Social Work team regarding PEP essentials and their submission to the Virtual School;
- Where possible the attendance of achievement consultants at PEP meetings for

pupils with changes to provision or placement.

2.6 The Virtual School has also produced a Key Stage 5 PEP to support those young people transferring to college. The aim is to complete it in the second half of Year 11 and invite the prospective college to the meeting so that it can ensure support mechanisms are in place. A network of colleges has been established by the Virtual School to ensure best practice is modelled by, and shared between, the colleges.

2.7 **Quality of PEPs**

The quality of PEPs still remains variable. The pupil view is generally well recorded; carers' views are also now recorded as is the historical information. But the education plan is often limited and does not always focus on English, Mathematics or other subjects where the young person is underachieving but rather behavioural and social targets. This has to be a priority focus over the next 12 months.

2.8 The Virtual School has changed its audit process to ensure all PEP records are audited as soon as they are received and, therefore, designated teachers in schools and social workers receive more timely feedback on their quality. The Virtual School will be working closely on this audit process over the next 6 months to improve on its effectiveness.

2.9 Actions taken so far are:

- An audit of a PEP record is completed as soon as it is received by the named consultant for that child
- Feedback on audited PEPs is given to the designated teacher and the social worker
- PEPs and audit records are held electronically on the Virtual School IT system
- Copies of PEPs are kept in pupil record folders
- IROs to ask for PEPs at reviews
- The CiC Team has received training on the required areas for improvement in PEPs
- Designated Teacher network meetings have highlighted PEP requirements and will continue to identify best practice
- The establishment of the Virtual School Steering Group to monitor the impact of the Virtual School on the provision made for CiC and to make recommendations and influence the practice of social care and schools
- A section has been added to the PEP to record the use of Pupil Premium funding

2.10 Further actions to be taken:

- Consideration of the commissioning of an e-PEP which would transfer information from one PEP to the next and would have a built in reminder to social workers and designated teachers of the requirement to complete their sections
- Extension of attendance and attainment data collection to include all city schools. Presently this is commissioned for City academies and those schools external to the LA whilst LA schools attendance data is collected through the electronic B2B system
- Training sessions for new Designated Teachers and social workers on how to complete a good quality PEP to be planned into the 2014-15 support programme
- For Out of City children Designated Teachers to be informed of PEP's out of date status alongside the social worker to ensure a meeting is co-ordinated and a PEP report completed

- The re-establishment of a active Virtual School Steering Group, meeting termly to refocus the priority on improving educational outcomes for all Children in Care
- Holding a CiC Conference in the summer 2014 targeted at Designated Teachers, Social Care teams. One of the key areas will be improving the quality of Personal Education Plans and their impact in ensuring accelerated progress in learning.
- Making further contact with all our schools both inside and out of the City to share best practice on the writing of good quality educational progress targets involving the CIC in the process.
- Given the present staff vacancy within the Virtual School it is recommended that 2 posts are created to return the team to full strength while also increasing the capacity of the team to work more effectively with schools at both a strategic and operational level.

Evaluation

- 2.11 2013 saw a completion rate of at least 90% in terms of PEP meetings.
- 2.12 Some improvement has been seen in the quality of PEPs. But additional work is required regarding the Education Action Plan. The Independent Reviewing Officers will request sight of the PEP in advance of the child's Looked After Reviews.
- 2.13 It has been a challenge to correlate PEP completion rates with pupil outcomes. The PEP meeting is a discussion regarding progress and attainment and a place where future actions are identified. The child's or young person's outcomes are impacted upon by the actions taken by the school and resources provided; e.g. Pupil Premium, PEA/EPG funding, 1:1 tuition, learning support which may need to change from those recorded at the PEP meeting as circumstances change.
- 2.14 Discussions with Virtual School Head Teachers in the East Midlands region and nationally indicate that all LA's have issues over the quality of PEP meeting records. But this can not be allowed to impact of the quality for our CiC going forward.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Virtual School, on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Board, takes on the responsibility for monitoring and recording PEP completion and their quality. This has resulted in a more consistent completion rate, at least similar and in some cases much higher than regional and statistical LA's.
- 3.2 There are challenges for social workers and staff within the Virtual School in terms of the distances travelled to attend some PEP meetings as sometimes children reside outside of Nottinghamshire. Slightly more than half of the school aged CiC are placed in schools external to the City.
- 3.3 The size of the Virtual School Team means that they are not able to attend all PEP and LAC review meetings. Where they cannot attend a PEP meeting they offer advice to social workers and designated teachers. They also offer training at team meetings and designated teacher networks as well as to individuals.
- 3.4 The Virtual School requires up to date information on its children to determine where

support is required to improve progress and raise the attainment of individuals and year groups, because of the large number of schools involved and the lack of access to a significant number of schools' data storage systems the Virtual School has commissioned the collection of attendance and attainment data on its behalf for the past 2 years. Now in 2014 a tendering process is underway for a new 3 year contract to include these two elements and an e-PEP. This service has proved invaluable to the Virtual School especially with the increasing numbers of academies in the City and the lack of access to information from schools external to the City boundary. It is the intention of this invitation to tender to include all Nottingham City CiC both inside and out of the City.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 The costs of PEP meetings are contained within salary costing of staff and very rarely are room hire/refreshment costs incurred as most meetings take place within the school. Social care has costs for social worker travel to meetings, especially those held external to the City boundary.

5.2 Schools incur costs when making provision to meet the action plans but pupil premium funding contributes to this as does any additional SEN funding approved as part of the usual statement or MSG bid process. Educational provision is the school's responsibility. This is why a section has been added to the PEP to record of the school are making use of Pupil Premium funding to improve learning outcomes. In a few exceptional circumstances, additional funding has been provided by the SEN or Virtual School budgets or the social care team to meet changes or adaptation to school provision.

5.3 To appoint 2 new staff members to the Virtual School should not require any additional cost, as there is a salary included within the current budget for the existing vacant post. If we appoint 2 Higher Level TA posts to fill the current vacancy this will provide better value for money in the long term. This restructuring of the service will enable the Virtual School to work more effectively at both a strategic and operational level. By doing this we should see an increase in PEP completion rates and more focused progress towards Education Action Plans

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Children in Care have an entitlement to a Personal Education Plan regardless of age, gender, race and disability and it forms part of the child's care plan.

7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

None