

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 7 April 2010

Subject: Children Looked After Personal Education Plan (PEP) Co-ordinator

Responsible Officer: Catherine Doran Corporate Director Children's Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Christine Bednell Portfolio Holder Children's Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures:

- Education Welfare Service & Children Looked After Information Sheet Two
- School Talk Booklet
- PEP Draft Quality Assurance
- Pre-school PEP
- The PEA guidance and application form
- Personal Education Plan For Children In Care
- Personal Education Allowance Guidance

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out details for the Personal Education Plan (PEP) Co-ordinator remit in respect of children looked after education and achievement.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Background

The PEP Co-ordinator position has been filled since April 2009. The post was created in accordance with the “Care Matters” agenda which is a Government initiative designed to improve the life chances and outcomes for looked after children, particularly in respect of education and health. Adults who have experienced public care as a child are over represented amongst the homeless, unemployed, mentally ill, offenders and substance users.

In 2008 a PEP audit and review identified a number of practice issues to do with roles, responsibilities, expectations and processes regarding schools, social care and carers. The appointment of the PEP Co-ordinator was to provide a dedicated resource to target practice and performance improvements for CLA educational outcomes.

Current situation

The PEP Co-ordinator has nearly completed their first year in post. There are no substantial changes being proposed for 2010 – 2011. It is anticipated that the PEP Co-ordinator will remain focussed on embedding and extending the existing work plan as outlined later in this report.

Implications of the Recommendation

Resources, costs and risks

The current PEP Co-ordinator is funded through the Care Matters Area Based Grant (ABG). The total Care Matters ABG allocation is £127k and the current funding was originally agreed for 3 years up until the end of 2010 – 2011. There is an expectation that a continuing commitment will be required thereafter.

Staffing/workforce

There is one PEP Co-ordinator located in the Education Welfare Team. The PEP Coordinator and CLA EWO work closely together. See attached Education Welfare Service & Children Looked After Information Sheet Two.

Equalities impact

The PEP Co-ordinator is a targeted and specialist resource aimed at improving the life chances and outcomes of some of the most vulnerable children in need in Harrow. Children looked after are disadvantaged for a whole range of reasons linked with their individual needs and circumstances and experiences of abuse, neglect and social disadvantage. As indicated in the background section above, there is a wealth of evidence to indicate that children looked after have poorer outcomes than their peers across a broad range of indicators, including education and health. CLA are considered to be additionally vulnerable members of Harrow’s community and as such would be included as a group of children and young people most needing corporate support in line with Harrow’s corporate priorities.

The Council also has statutory corporate parenting responsibilities for CLA in its care.

Role & Purpose of the PEP Co-ordinator

The role of the PEP Co-ordinator is to work with others, namely the child, his/her social worker, designated teacher and carer, to identify the child/young person's learning needs and opportunities, ensure appropriate support is put in place, address any barriers and promote an attitude and behaviour which is ambitious and aspiring. See PEP booklet attached.

The PEP Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that there is a clear PEP system and process in place for each CLA of statutory school age. The process is designed to ensure that there is an initial PEP meeting convened and chaired by the PEP Coordinator within 28 days of a child becoming looked after. The child, his/her social worker, designated teacher and carer/parent will all be asked to contribute to the process by sharing, discussing and agreeing information as part of a collaborative process.

The PEP is recorded and becomes part of the CLA's written education and social care record. The Pan London PEP has been subject of much debate for a long time and Harrow is now in the process of launching an electronic version. See the attached draft copy due for launch on 1st April 2010.

The PEP Co-ordinator has worked with a small group of officers and a Virtual Head Teacher to develop a Pre-School PEP for younger CLA in early year's settings. See attached draft copy which is due for electronic launch in April 2010.

The PEP is reviewed in accordance with the statutory review of the CLA's Care Plan. The Independent Reviewing Officer chairing the CLA's statutory child looked after review meeting will automatically review the PEP as an integral part of the on-going review process. Occasionally a separate PEP Review meeting is required to be held outside of the statutory review meeting and the PEP Co-ordinator will convene and chair these meetings too.

The PEP Co-ordinator is available to advise, support and assist the designated teacher and/or social worker with any specific issues that may arise. The PEP Co-ordinator operates an "open door" policy to be readily available to any school, carer or social worker seeking assistance. The PEP Co-ordinator also continues to link and liaise with the Virtual Head Teachers and the CLA Education Welfare Officer.

The PEP Coordinator is responsible for identifying CLA requiring a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) at the initial PEP and should receive and process other PEA requests following subsequent PEP reviews. CLA with specific needs, that cannot be met through existing services and provision, should be offered a PEA in order to add value and enable the CLA to enjoy or undertake a learning opportunity or experience that they would otherwise not have received. The PEA should focus on helping and supporting the CLA to achieve their agreed targets as identified in the PEP. The maximum annual PEA is £500 per CLA. The payment is made to the CLA's identified carer to be used as agreed. Commonly PEAs can be requested to provide private tutoring prior to exams or to boost confidence, for example. The PEA guidance and application form is attached.

The PEP Coordinator has a quality assurance role to ensure that PEPs are;

- current
- identify educational strengths & areas for academic development
- assign targets to work towards
- contain key information about the child
- record past educational attainment (particularly key stage results, other test scores, teacher assessments and exam results)
- define the roles and responsibilities of key people supporting the child
- record the various activities that the child will participate in to help meet the targets that have been set
- provide a record of overall achievement

The PEP Coordinator audits individual CLA PEP's. The criteria for assessing the quality of a PEP is set out in the attached Quality Assurance Criteria document.

The PEP Coordinator has played a role in linking and supporting foster carers and library services to maximise the impact of national initiatives like the Summer Reading Challenge and "Bookstart". Bookstart provides packs of books at age 1, 2 and 3 years of age. The library service is also keen to re-establish story times for fosters carers caring for young CLA and to provide a selection of appropriate follow on books for children benefiting from the "Letterbox" scheme, which is co-ordinated and administrated for CLA in years 3 – 6 by one of the Virtual Head Teachers.

The PEP Co-ordinator has a role in providing regular information and training to social care staff. The PEP process is included as part of the social care induction programme, is included in foster care training and as part of the Independent Visitor recruitment selection training programme.

The PEP Co-ordinator attends the CLA Life Chances Forum, the Virtual Head Teacher Meetings and supported the recent Designated CLA Teacher Forum event held on 16th March 2010. The CLA Designated Teacher Forum attracted 13 schools, 4 high schools and 9 primary schools.

The PEP Co-ordinator is pursuing discussions with the Virtual Head Teachers to determine the take up of CLA receiving 1:1 tuition as one of the targeted groups identified in the "Narrowing the Gap" programme. The PEP Co-ordinator is also pursuing options around weekend schooling opportunities. The PEP Coordinator is also consulting with the library service to ensure foster carers and residential staff are included in all relevant communication.

CLA School & PEP Co-ordinator Activity Data

For the purpose of this report, the numbers/details of CLA of statutory school age are as follows as of March 2010;

- 97 CLA of statutory school age
- 50 CLA of statutory school age attending Harrow schools
- 44 CLA of statutory school age attending out of borough schools

- 3 CLA of statutory school age not on school roll

Since April 2009 to March 2010, in addition to establishing the role and setting up the systems and processes outlined above, the PEP Co-ordinator has;

Chaired	12 Initial PEP meetings
Chaired	4 Review PEP meetings
Audited	18 Personal Educational Plans (18 out of 50 CLA placed in Harrow Schools)
Processed	9 Personal Education Allowances

Future Plans for 2010/11

The PEP Co-ordinator's future work plan will include;

- Complete PEP audits for all CLA (attending in and out of borough schools) by September 2010
- Complete review of PEA identification & allocation process for all CLA by July 2010 & refine & publicise the process for September 2010
- Continuation of chairing function for all Initial PEPs & Review PEPs, where requested
- Identify all CLA receiving 1:1 tuition as part of "Narrowing the Gap" & actively promote this for all CLA
- Launch & implementation of electronic PEP and pre-school PEP
- Launch the PEP scorecard
- Research a Post 16 PEP and link this to NEET/EET targets
- Continue and extend training opportunities
- Continue linking and liaising with Virtual Head Teachers, Harrow Foster Carers Association & the library service
- Continue to support the new CLA Designated Teacher Forum events

Financial Implications

The "Care Matters" Area Based Grant (ABG) originally allocated £127k for 3 years, for 2008/09, 2009/10 & 2010/11. The final year of this allocated ABG funding is 2010/11. It is anticipated that continued funding will be identified to support the continued employment and activity of the PEP Co-ordinator.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler



on behalf of the*
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 26th March 2010

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Gail Hancock, Head of Service, Safeguarding, Family Placement and Support. Telephone Number: 020 8863 5544

Background Papers:

- PEP Booklet
- EWS Information Sheet 2
- PEP
- Pre-school PEP
- PEP Quality Assurance Criteria
- PEA Guidance & Application Form

If appropriate does, the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES