



Education for previously Looked After Children with a Special Guardianship Order

Frequently Asked Questions

Children & Young People's Services



Who does the term 'Previously Looked After Children' (PLAC) apply to?

The term applies to those who were once in care (looked after) by a Local Authority in England or Wales, but who then left care through either:

- A Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- An Adoption Order (AO)
- Child Arrangement Order (CAO). These were formerly known as Residence Orders.

To be considered previously looked after, a child must have been looked after by a local authority immediately before the SGO/CAO is/ was granted.

Why might these children need additional help and support?

Research shows that children with early experiences of poor attachment and neglect are less likely to do well at school than their peers. In some cases the emotional impact of their experiences prior to coming into care and being placed on an SGO might act as a barrier to progress at school. Children may also have experienced disrupted learning and missed extended periods at school or have moved school several times.

What additional support is available from the Virtual School?

Since September 2018 the Virtual School has had the additional duty to promote the educational attainment of Previously Looked After Children (PLAC). The way we do this is through the provision of information and advice to parents/guardians and schools. The Durham Virtual School will provide this service to the parent/carer of any child educated in a Durham school, regardless of where they were previously in care.

We are able to offer information and signposting on areas such as:

- school places and admissions,
- school attendance and exclusions,
- Special Educational Needs and Disability, including signposting to the Local Offer,
- how to access additional advice and support,
- supporting schools in adopting a whole school approach to supporting previously looked after children.

Who can offer support in school?

Every school will have a Designated Teacher (DT) whose responsibilities in the school include promoting the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children on the school roll. The DT can be contacted to offer additional or specific advice and in some cases, may become your main point of contact. The guidance states they should work to promote a whole school culture where the needs of looked after and previously looked after children's personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised. DT's can help teacher's to understand the needs of each child and ensure that they are supported appropriately.

What funding is available to support my child?

Children in school years reception to year 11, who meet the criteria to be classified as previously looked after are eligible to receive Post LAC Pupil Premium funding. During 2019-2020 this was £2300. This money cannot be paid retrospectively and can only be paid from the point a child's status is recorded by their school. Please note this funding is different to the funding available to children still in care. No money is retained by the local authority and the school will receive the full amount directly into the school budget.

How do I access the Post LAC Pupil Premium funding?

The parent/guardian should present to the school with evidence of their eligibility. This could include a letter from their local authority advising of their previously LAC status and a copy of their SGO or adoption order. It is acceptable to present this with sensitive information blanked out. School will keep a copy of this evidence and will then record their Post LAC status in their school census. Children who are recorded on the January census will then become eligible for the funding from the April of that year. You should not need to self-declare again, unless the child moves to another school.

Does a school have to tell me how they have spent the Pupil Premium funding for my child?

The DFE consider it good practice for schools to work in partnership with parents and carers to have transparent processes in place and consider that funding should be used to improve the educational and personal outcomes of children who have previously been looked after. However the money is not ringfenced and the school do not have to spend £2300 on every Post LAC child they have in school. Rather, they need to consider how they can best use the money to have maximum effect, which could include things like training staff in recognising and responding to attachment related issues, additional 1:1 support in core subjects if a child has fallen behind or a contribution towards an enrichment activity to support social development. In some circumstances a particular child may require funding in excess of the £2300. If this was due to their SEND needs, funding could then be considered through an alternative route.

Having the ability to decide how best to use the funding means that schools can be flexible in meeting every child's needs. However, the role of parents and guardians in their child's education is seen as crucial and we would expect schools to engage with them about their

child's education. This is particularly important where there is a history the school may not be aware of that may be currently affecting their progress. If in doubt, or you are unsure of how the funding is being spent you should contact the Designated Teacher at your child's school.

Where else can I go to for support?

In addition to the support offered by your school and the Designated Teacher you may find the following are able to offer additional support and guidance.

Durham SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Website: <http://www.durhamsendiass.info/>

Telephone: 03000 267 007

County Durham Families Information Service

Website: <http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info/kb5/durham/fsd/home.page>

Durham's Local Offer

Website: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer>

SEND, Looked After Children and Vulnerable Groups

Telephone: 03000 265 878

One Point

Website: www.durham.gov.uk/onepoint

Durham School Admissions

Website: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

Telephone: 03000 265 896

The Full Circle Therapeutic Service

Telephone: 03000 264 730/731

Kinship Care and Support Team

Website: cypssgoreviewofficers@durham.gov.uk

**For further information contact:
Specialist Casework Manager for Post LAC**

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