EARLY YEARS
CHILDREN IN CARE

GUIDANCE PACK FOR
EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

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Introduction
The Guidance pack for early years children in care has been developed to support early years setting staff and other professionals in their work with children in care and their carers.

The term ‘child in care’ is used in this guidance. The term ‘looked after child’ is also widely used and is also correct.

The majority of children in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect and are one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Until final Adoption Orders are granted in the courts, a child placed for adoption remains in care/looked after by the placing authority e.g. a child in a B&NES Early Years setting may be placed in your area for adoption by Wiltshire.
**Underlying principles**

- All children in care have the right to a smooth transition into an early years setting with setting staff having the necessary background information to support them appropriately.

- All children in care have the right to receive high quality provision in their early years setting.

- Children in care benefit from early years setting staff working in close partnership with the children’s carers, parents and social workers.

- Children in care benefit from early years professionals having an understanding of the impact of relational trauma and loss on a child’s emotional well-being and development. A child in care is likely to have experienced trauma, separation and significant disruption in their lives and their progress often impeded as a result.

- Information sharing and on-going communication is essential to help provide appropriate support for children in care and help support transitions. For children in care, the child’s social worker is the Lead Professional

- Maintaining confidentiality is essential

**Information sheet**

This sheet provides information about the purpose of each section within the guidance pack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of guidance pack</th>
<th>Purpose of section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions questions</td>
<td>Prior to admission it is essential to gather relevant information to ensure that appropriate support and resources are put into place. Also the process of asking and answering questions provides a foundation for future communications with the carers and social workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What helps?</td>
<td>This section provides a list of ‘tips’ that will help professionals working with children in care and their carers. The list is not exhaustive and can be added to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care</td>
<td>There is a statutory requirement of all school-aged children in the care of the Local Authority to have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP provides an on-going record of the child’s strengths, interests and educational needs. It sets out targets and responsibilities that are identified at the PEP meetings. The PEP is part of the Care Plan. It is good practice for a child in care to have an Early Years PEP. The child’s social worker has responsibility for informing the setting a child is in care, initiating PEP meetings, completing the PEP form and distribution. The early years setting needs to provide information on the child’s overall progress including the Prime Areas of Learning – Communication and Language; Personal Social and Emotional; Physical Development and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All About Me</td>
<td>The All About Me child’s record is a sheet that aims to reflect the child’s voice. It provides information about the child’s personality, strengths, interests and needs. The record is drawn up with the child and shared with carers and professionals involved with the child and family and can be part of the PEP. Some settings and Local Authorities may choose to record the child’s voice in other ways to contribute to PEPs.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk assessment</td>
<td>The risk assessment is a document highlighting areas of risk, an evaluation of the level of risk and appropriate steps taken to minimise risk. This is an essential document to complete and review on a regular basis. The PEP should also note any potential risks to a child in the early years setting e.g. any adults that should not see the child or contact the setting for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful contacts</td>
<td>There are several key people and organisations that can be contacted for further information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQs</td>
<td>The FAQs have been developed to support early years setting staff and other professionals in their work with children in care and their carers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Admission questions to include if the child is in care or in the process of being adopted (these are also included on the Early Years PEP)**

**Child’s legal status:**

In care since?
In current foster placement since?
Is the child placed for adoption?
Give any relevant details:
Who has parental responsibility?
Who will take/collect the child from the provision?
Who will be first point of contact for the Early Years Provider in an emergency?
Contact arrangements and times:
Who will take the child to contact?
Who will sign consent forms? e.g. admission, medical, trips
Funding arrangements / responsibilities
Are there any medical conditions of which the Early Years provider needs to be aware?
Is there anyone who should not have contact with the child the setting needs to be aware of?
Is there a Risk Assessment required?
Who will complete and share the Risk Assessment?
Funding
From September 2012, all two year old children in care are entitled to funding for 15 hours a week (term time or all year round equivalent) in an early years setting if it is felt to be appropriate for the child to attend an Early Years Setting at this stage. If a child has recently experienced separation and trauma or a significant transition, arrangements and hours will be made to meet the child’s best interests. This decision should be made by the child’s social worker, foster carers and parents and may include advice from other child care professionals working with the child.
This funding can be accessed by contacting Nick Fortt, Early Years Integrated Funding Administrator on 01225 395412.

What helps
- Well planned and supported transitions are key to children who may have experienced neglect and trauma so it important to have a Team Around the Child meeting before the child starts, which should include significant Life Events, relational trauma and loss. Some Local Authorities will use a Transition PEP to plan child’s start. The child’s social worker will advise.
- For an adopted child, the parents should provide information to plan the child’s start and ensure significant information about the child is shared. The child’s social worker may also be involved at the time of transition into the setting
- It is important to check with the child’s social worker and carers whether a Risk Assessment is needed and to complete this together.
- Having information/advice about the impact of the child’s emotional needs on carers (secondary trauma)
- Birgit Foerster (01225 395309) B&NES Adoption Support Social Worker can provide advice to settings for children who are placed for adoption.

Early Years Personal Education Plan (PEP)
A copy is available on request.

All About Me – Child’s feedback.
Copy included.

Risk Assessment
A copy is available on request.

Useful Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Care Teams in B&amp;NES</td>
<td>Children newly into care</td>
<td>01225-396312/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children in long-term care</td>
<td>01225 396930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birgit Foerster</td>
<td>B&amp;NES Adoption support social worker</td>
<td>01225-395309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Birgit <a href="mailto:foerster@bathnes.gov.uk">foerster@bathnes.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lynne Whitfield  
B&NES Education coordinator for children and young people in care  
01225-396950  
Lynne_whitfield@bathnes.gov.uk

Michael Gorman  
Head of the B&NES Virtual School for children in care  
01225-396932  
Michael_gorman@BATHNES.gov.uk

The Virtual School for Children in care  
To help professionals and social workers develop and share expertise so that good practice can be disseminated across the Local Authority  
www.bathnes.gov.uk/virtuallschool

Children and Young People in Care Local Authority web page  
To provide information about children in care and key processes  
www.bathnes.gov.uk

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is a Care Order?

A Care Order is a court order that places a child under the care of a local authority. The local authority then shares parental responsibility for the child with the parents, and will make most of the important decisions about the child's upbringing e.g. where they live and how they are educated.

A court can only make a care order if it is sure that:
- the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- the harm is caused by the child's parents or if the parents are failing to protect the child.
- the child is likely to suffer harm because they are beyond parental control.

2. Who has Parental Responsibility (PR) for a child in care?

For children subject to a Care Order the Local Authority holds parental responsibility working in partnership with parents, as appropriate.

For children in care without a care order (also known as Accommodated) the parents retain PR.

3. What is a Care Plan?

All children in care must have an overall Care Plan which is reviewed every 6 months. The Care Plan should include what is being done to ensure the child is receiving an appropriate education.
The social worker, in partnership with foster carers and parents, needs to take decisions about what must be done to help the child achieve his or her full potential. Their responsibilities include:

- drawing up a Personal Education Plan for the child, and ensuring they are well supported in their early years setting/school
- making sure the child attends the early years setting agreed for the named sessions/attends school every day
- choosing and applying for a school place when required
- making sure that there are good links with the designated key adult/teacher at the child’s early years setting/school
- being involved in any assessment for special educational needs
- making sure that the foster carers attend parents’ evenings and any other early years setting/school events which parents would attend

4. **What happens when a child is placed for adoption?**

The long-term Care Plan may be that a child is placed for adoption. An adoption plan is made following a long process of assessment and is subject to legal proceedings. At the initial stages, a child placed for adoption remains in care until the final adoption order is granted by the court. Adoptive parents then take on full parental responsibility for the child.

A child placed for adoption may benefit from an Early Years PEP and adoptive parents may find this useful and supportive. This should be discussed with the adoptive parents and the child’s social worker.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Early Years PEP - All About Me:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I like doing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a child playing]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People I like:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of children with a gift]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I am good at:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a child building]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I feel happy when:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Smiley face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I feel sad or worried when:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Sad face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I feel angry when:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Angry face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I like playing with:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a child in a box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People who help me:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a superhero]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Something special about me is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of a special person]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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