

Children Previously in Care: Information for Educational Settings

What does previously in care refer to?

For the purpose of this document 'children previously in care' is a collective term which refers to children and young people who have been 'looked after' by a local authority for at least one day and have gone on to be:

- Adopted
- Subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
- Subject to a Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

It does not refer to children who have been 'looked after' and have returned to the care of their parent/s.

Pre-adoptive Placement and Adoption

When a child moves into a pre-adoptive placement they continue to be in care. Parental responsibility is held by social care. The birth family continue to hold a small percentage. The social worker will usually delegate day to day decisions e.g. signing for day school trips to the pre-adoptive parent/s.

There is a minimum time period of ten weeks, for which a child must be resident with the pre-adoptive family, before the family can apply to the courts, to finalise the adoption. Not all families feel ready to apply to the courts after ten weeks. It is usual to wait for approximately three months for the court date. The pre-adoptive family do not attend this court date. This is because the birth family can attend. The social worker will attend.

Once the adoption is finalised, the child will be issued with a new UPN number and NHS number. The adoptive family hold full parental responsibility and the child is no longer 'looked after'. This is the time when legally, the child's surname and sometimes middle names will change. It is not usual for the child's first name to be changed.

The family can choose to attend a 'celebration hearing'. This is an opportunity for the adoptive family and child to attend court. It isn't a legal hearing, it is child friendly celebration. The family may need to request a day off school to attend this. It is an important event for the family and the absence should be authorised.

We have produced a document which details educational considerations when moving a child into a pre-adoptive placement. This is available on our website.

Child Arrangement Order

This has replaced Residence Orders and Contact Orders. The order will state who a child lives and with and can determine who they can spend time with and for how long.

It gives parental responsibility (PR) to the person that the child will live, with allowing them to make day to day decision about the child including medical or dental treatments or signing for things like

school trips. There are restrictions in that carers cannot change a child's name or take them out of the country for more than a month without parental consent or permission from the court.

The parental responsibility given to the carer, is shared equally with any parent who has PR for that child. In the spirit of the order, it is best, where possible, to involve parents with decision making so that everyone can share an interest in the upbringing of the child. Parents would have the right to attend parents' evenings and school events.

Local Authorities have the discretion to provide an allowance to anyone with a Child Arrangement Order. If an allowance is agreed it is means tested and reviewed on a regular basis.

The Order will last until the Child is eighteen years of age unless it is ended by the Court before then.

Special Guardianship Order

This is deemed to be a permanent order that determines who the child will live with for the duration of their minority.

The order grants parental responsibility to the carers, which overrides that of anyone else with PR, allowing them to make all the decisions for the duration of the child's minority.

The order will also outline the arrangements for whom the child should have contact with and the frequency of contact. As a school, it is important to discuss with the carers whether it is a confidential placement, whether parents should have access to reports, be able to attend school events and what you should do if the parent was to turn up at school requesting to collect their child. Some of this may be detailed in the order / support plan.

What are the duties placed on school and the LA with regards to education and children previously in care?

Local authorities have a duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of children previously in care in their area by providing information and advice to:

- any person that has parental responsibility for the child.
- providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for children previously in care in maintained schools and academies; and
- any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.

The governing body of maintained schools and academies in England must:

- designate a member of staff to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children previously in care who are no longer looked after in England and Wales or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.
- ensure the designated person undertakes appropriate training; and
- ensure they and the designated teacher has regard any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Governing bodies should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress.

Statutory guidance was published in February 2018, with compliance by September 2018. Here are the links to these documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

How can schools and families access guidance and information from the local authority?

For children who attend a Cambridgeshire education setting (regardless of where they live) schools and families can contact Clare Hawking, Education Advisor for Children Previously in Care by email.

clare.hawking@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Or alternatively via Cambridgeshire Virtual School 01223 699883

The Virtual School has produced a leaflet on their role for children previously in care. This is available on the website.

How do schools and settings access pupil premium plus for children previously in care and what are the requirements for spending?

Pupil Premium Plus is available for children that were previously looked after by an English or Welsh local authority and have gone on to be adopted, subject to a special guardianship order, a child arrangement order or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales, from accessing their Early Years Education entitlement until the age of 16.

In order to access pupil premium plus for children previously in care you need to see a copy of the legal documentation which the family will hold e.g. the adoption certificate, SGO or CAO orders. You need to indicate on the October school census that the child is previously looked after. For early years settings you need to complete an online form. The link is below.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning/early-years-pupil-premium>

The current levels of funding are:

£2570 per annum is passed directly to the school by the Education Funding Agency (from Reception to year 11).

£388 per annum is available to settings where a child is eligible for EYPP.

It is for the school to decide how this funding is used. There is no requirement to attach the funding directly to the individual that generates it. However, the funding is provided in recognition that statistically, children and young people who have been in care, achieve significantly lower than their peers. The purpose of the funding is to raise attainment of this group of vulnerable learners. There is clear guidance on the use of pupil premium plus, and the role parents / carers should have on this in the statutory guidance on the role of the DT:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

Schools will be challenged by OFSTED as to how the pupil premium is impacting on the progress of the vulnerable groups. There is a requirement to publish the school's strategy for the use of pupil premium on the school website. More information on what must be published can be found using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

There is more information available on pupil premium in the pupil premium conditions of grant document online.

Information on the Early Years Pupil Premium can be found here.

[Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025)

The parents / carers will know their children well. Working in partnership with them to look at how best to support their child, is best practice. We have created an Education Support Plan (available on the virtual school website), which you may find useful when looking at documenting how the young person is progressing and identifying next steps. If this is to be completed, it should be written in collaboration with the family.

What support is available to the family once the adoption / SGO / CAO is complete?

Post-adoption and SGO support for families is lifelong. For the first three years after the adoption is granted, it is the authority that placed the child who have responsibility for this. After three years, it is the local authority that the family are resident in. This can range from training for the carers / parents to therapeutic intervention for the young person. To access support, families contact the relevant body below.

www.cpadoption.co.uk

email - AdoptionandSGO.SupportDuty@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

01480 379679

When an SGO is granted, there is a support plan agreed, this outlines the support that can be accessed throughout the duration of the order. There is financial support available for Special Guardians which is means tested and reviewed annually. Carers can request a reassessment at any time. For the first three years after the order is granted, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority where the child was last a LAC to complete the assessment. After that it is the responsibility of the Local Authority where the child is living. Therapeutic intervention can be accessed through the adoption support fund, should this be assessed as appropriate. Carers need to contact the Adoption and SGO support team detailed above and request an 'assessment for support' to access this.

How do we find out about issues which may be of particular relevance to children previously in care?

The Virtual School offers Recovery Through Relationships attachment and trauma training which schools can access for all staff or for individuals. The details of these courses can be found on the Virtual School website - [Cambridgeshire Virtual School - Learn Together \(camblearntogether.co.uk\)](http://Cambridgeshire Virtual School - Learn Together (camblearntogether.co.uk))

Educare the Virtual school Education Support Line can be contacted via the below email:

Edu.CarersSupport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

There are also resources which have been published to support schools.

- The Beacon House website provides a wealth of free resources: [Home \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](http://Home (beaconhouse.org.uk))
- Nicola Marshall has produced a free educational guide and podcasts:

<https://www.bravehearteducation.co.uk/resources/>

She has also written a book 'A Teachers Introduction to Attachment' which is available via her website.

- NAHT and Adoption UK have also produced information:
- Louise Bomber and Dan Hughes are leading authors in the field of attachment. Useful books for schools are 'Inside I'm Hurting' and 'Know Me to Teach Me' by Louise Bomber. The yellow kite website provides lots of useful information and links to relevant reading material.

PAC-UK offer a wide range of resources which are available on their website <http://www.pac-uk.org/>

They also offer an education helpline **020 7284 5879**. It is available to **10am-12pm on Mondays and Wednesdays (term time only)**. It is an opportunity to speak to PAC-UK's Education Service about any issues to do with meeting the educational needs of permanently placed children and young people.

They have produced a book 'Creating an Adoption Friendly School' the link to this is on their website.