

TOOLKIT AND GUIDE TO SUPPORT ENHANCED CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN





CONTENT OF TOOLKIT

- **Section 1:**
Introduction to the toolkit, its aims and summary of the pilot on which this toolkit is based.
- **Section 2:**
A Step-by-Step Guide to using the toolkit and resources to develop an enhanced careers offer for Looked after Children.
- **Section 3:**
Links to resources and activities to support the career needs of Looked after Children
- **Section 4:**
What you might want to do next in your area.

PEP	Personal Education Plan
LAC	Looked After Child(Children)
NEET	Not Engaged in Education, Employment or Training
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
CLs	Career Leaders
DTs	Designated Teachers



SECTION 1

Introduction to the toolkit and how to implement improved delivery of career related outcomes for Looked after Children. This toolkit has been produced using the learning from the Careers and Enterprise Company & West of England Combined Authority pilot in South Gloucestershire.

This toolkit aims to: -

- Support stakeholders including virtual schools, local/combined authorities, schools, colleges and careers hubs to implement improved processes to support the career needs of Looked After Children.
- Share resources and tools developed during the pilot to aid the implementation the improved processes tested in the pilot.
- Share the learning captured and impact from the project.
- Suggest possible roles and responsibilities for engaged stakeholders to ensure processes can be effectively implemented and intended impact measured.

We do hope you find the toolkit useful to audit where you are now with your enhanced careers support for looked after children and to help you get where you would like to be within this area of support.

The Project context, its development and outcomes

The pilot delivery was led by John Walker as project management working in partnership with the Careers Hub, Virtual School, as well as Careers Leaders and Designated Teachers from schools in scope. The pilot ran from September 2021 to March 2023. It is worth noting that students up to the end of YR 11 were in scope for this project.

It was clear from both a national and local perspective that Looked After Children have a significantly higher risk of NEET once they leave education, with increased barriers to achieving positive careers outcomes. Looked After Children are more likely to have additional educational and other needs and have higher rates of absence from school, potentially missing out on CEIAG provision.

Our vision was to better enable Looked After Young People to fully understand and consider their career ideas, options and future goals through an improved PEP process. By implementing a Pre-PEP careers conversation, the main career discussion within the PEP meeting would be more robust.

THE TOOLKIT
CONSISTS OF
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RESOURCES USED
IN THE PROJECT

Changes to the PEP itself would also improve the sharing of key information and actions relating to CEIAG supported needed by a student between key stakeholders (such as the Virtual School, Career Leaders and Designated Teachers)

Through the implementation of a Pre-PEP, key people would be brought together within the school to ensure further CEIAG activity to support the student to achieve their goals is in place. The changes to the process and structure of the PEP would also enable the Virtual School to have better oversight of the quantity and quality of CEIAG being provided by the schools.

This is the Theory of Change that was developed: -

Challenges

LAC have higher risk of NEET	CLs and DTs do not fully understand the benefits of CEIAG on LAC	South Gloucestershire Virtual School are not able to monitor how and if LAC were being engaged in careers activities that met their needs.
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Inputs

Development of Pre-PEP checklist	Development of training modules for CLs and DTs	Funding for development of resources and project lead costs.	Funding for development of resources and project lead costs.
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Activities

Students have a Pre-PEP conversation	Students have a careers conversation within their PEP	Delivery of training to CLs and DTs	Delivery of training to virtual school staff
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Short-term outcomes

Virtual School can monitor and evaluate CEIAG programmes delivered to their cohort. Virtual School can identify gaps in school CEIAG provision and provide additional activities where needed.	Schools can support their looked after children to identify their CEIAG needs through the PEP process and deliver the CEIAG activity as required.	Looked after children gain improved career readiness skills, career aspirations and expanded pathways.	Other areas use PEP to support LAC access to CEIAG.
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HAVING A MORE ROBUST CAREERS CONVERSATION IN THE MAIN PEP RESULTED IN MORE FOCUSED ACTIONS TO FURTHER SUPPORT THE CAREER NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER STUDENTS

Activities

Looked after children achieve positive career outcomes
(track over a number of years).

Assumptions

There is time and space in the school day to facilitate a Pre-PEP conversation. There is willing among CL and DT to take part.

In the next section we will explain stage by stage how the project and process was implemented however here is a summary of the activity we undertook to deliver the pilot: -

- Engagement of South Gloucestershire Secondary schools through email, attendance at Head Teacher Networks, consultation events
- Development of the Pre-PEP careers conversation and new process
- Training for career leaders/advisers and designated teachers in schools and followed this up with on-going support to enable the schools to plan and implement the Pre-PEP.
- Training for the relevant staff at the Virtual School on CEIAG.

This approach also fitted well into schools' assessment against the Gatsby benchmarks in particular benchmark 3- meeting the needs of individual students.

The project concluded with evaluation of distance travelled by the students who were in scope, evaluation conversations with designated teachers and career leaders and feedback from young people.

Impact of Project

A full evaluation of the project was undertaken by the Careers and Enterprise Company who found that implementing the process had a positive impact across all key stakeholders. Below you can find a summary of the impact that was achieved through the pilot and therefore could be replicated:-

The Project Impact on Schools

- Interviews with Careers Leaders, Designated Teachers and the virtual school suggest that participating in the project has had a positive impact on schools and their staff.
- Through the implementation of the process, Careers Leaders became engaged with the PEP process and the careers support provided to looked after children could be differentiated or tailored to meet their needs.
- Careers Leaders can track and share data on participation of looked after children in the main careers programme and the impact it is having.

TO BRING TOGETHER
A MORE WHOLE
SCHOOL APPROACH
TO CAREERS AND
WORKING WITH
LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN

- Schools become accountable to the Virtual school for delivery of careers activity to meet the needs of the looked after children in their care.
- For Designated Teachers, the project has raised the profile of careers education for looked after children.

"The differences has been to bring together a more whole school approach to careers and working with looked after children. It has meant that the careers adviser works much closer with the designated teacher and this has been really helpful." – Careers Leader

"It has made us think about the whole school offer and how we better work closer together." - Designated Teacher

"It is the refocus and targeting of our work. It has also made us think about the wider world and the children's understanding of it." – Designated Teacher

Impact on Young People

- Students reported that the Prep PEP careers meeting was helpful as it supported them to understand the options they had available to them.
- Students reported that the careers support they had received had been tailored to their needs and interests. Students felt that their interests had been listened to and that this was reflected in the types of opportunities they were offered.

"[The meeting] has helped me identify what I want to do and understand the possibilities." – Student

"[The meeting was] helpful because I went through all options, and I understood the alternatives." – Student

"[My] GCSES [and] interests were listened to. My own ideas were explored but also additional opportunities linked to my GCSES, interests and skills." – Student

"Very much tailored towards me. I have felt that this was directly for me and not just a general offer." – Student

Impact on Virtual School

The virtual school is able to:

- Use the information gathered through the enhanced PEP to feed into the wider work of the Virtual School.
- Identify gaps in the support being offered to students by their main school and offer additional activities where needed or appropriate. By pulling out some of the key interests of students, the Virtual School could offer more bespoke activities for students.
- Identify where schools are not providing the looked after children with adequate careers offer and ensure that they are encouraged to improve. It is possible that PP funding could be withheld in extreme circumstances.

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"Let's say we've got children interested in the arts or theatre or engineering. We can unpick that through the PEP and offer bespoke pieces of work. Not just visits but getting people into discuss these ideas with them." - Head of the Virtual School

The above series of impact statements supports the main findings of the project these are:

- Having a PRE-Pep Careers Conversation prior to the main PEP meetings enhanced the young people's ability to articulate their career aspirations and ideas within the main PEP.
- Having a more robust careers conversation and content in the main PEP resulted in more focused actions to further support the career needs of looked after students. The secondary impact of this was that other key professionals involved in the PEP developed a greater understanding of careers as a meaningful process to support the aspirations of looked after children.
- The project developed much closer links in schools between career leaders and designated teachers ensuring a more effective follow up of information on individual student career development needs.
- Jointly training career leaders and designated teachers in career related learning and how to use a PRE-PEP careers conversation was beneficial although sometime challenging to get everyone together at the same time.
- The development of a range of templates to meet individual needs is useful as some LAs may want a more simpler framework whilst others might want to measure more robustly the impact of current careers provision against key benchmark headings. The other consideration here is the career journey a student might be on across key stages and how these impacts on the kind of career conversations you have with the student.
- As the project involved a clear evaluation strategy and methodology gaining clear information sharing and data management protocols is vital in the smooth implementation of such a project

A video illustrates both the challenges of career decision making for looked after children and the impact of the project from a range of views including care leavers, looked after young people, a school involved in the project and the virtual school head.

The below links will take you to the video

<https://vimeo.com/844870849/46e2ea0ea6?share=copy>

<https://vimeo.com/845887817/44c566820f?share=copy>

Subtitled

LAS MAY WANT A
MORE SIMPLER
FRAMEWORK WHIST
OTHERS MIGHT
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MORE ROBUSTLY



SECTION 2

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSOCIATED RESOURCES

In this section we will outline the steps and actions needed in order to deliver the process implemented through the pilot. The main focus of the activity is on holding a Pre-PEP careers conversation with the student to explore career options, assessing career learning to date and to help with future exploration, opportunities and planning to meet career goals. In order to ensure this conversation achieves a positive impact for the student themselves and for the other stakeholders involved the following steps are also suggested: -

Pre-Delivery Stage

The Virtual School will need to update the PEP process to make sure the Pre-PEP related questions can be discussed and actions recorded. The Virtual school will need to ensure all the Designated Teachers are aware of the changes and the new process through training. The slides used are in the resources part of the toolkit as Resource 1.

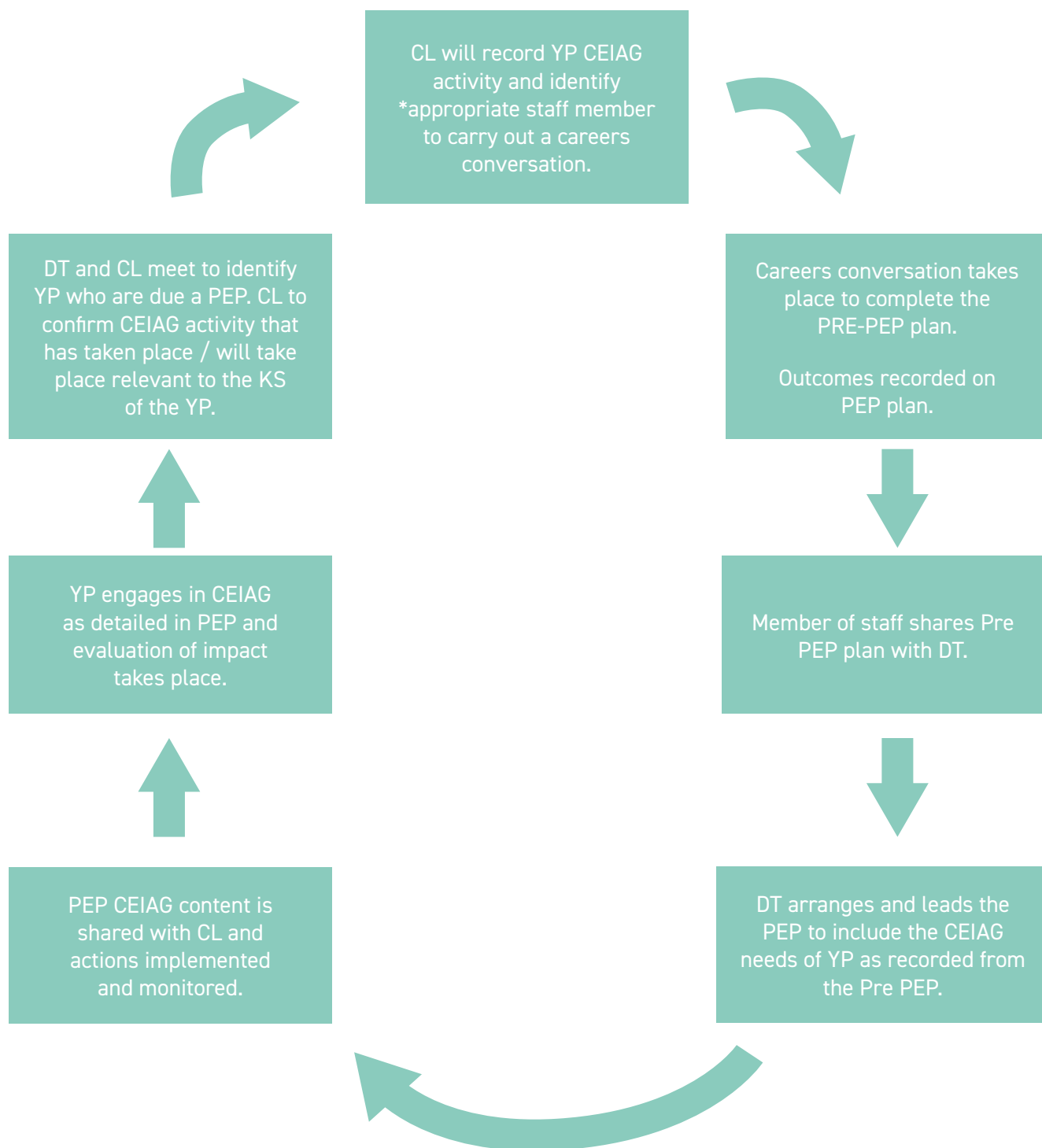
- Stage 1: Career Leaders and Designated Teachers meet at the beginning of each term to discuss and identify the students who have a PEP due.
- Stage 2: Career Leaders schedules a Pre-PEP careers conversation with the student. This is ideally with a qualified Careers Adviser who hold a level 6 or above qualification in Career Guidance and Development.
- Stage 3 Career Leader shares the Pre-PEP conversation completed template with designated teacher who will then use this within the main PEP meeting to talk with the student about their career learning and goals. We have included a completed example as part of this toolkit. You will find this in the resources section as Resource 2 A.
- Stage 4: Final PEP content and actions relating to CEIAG is shared with the career leader.
- Stage 5: Career leader identifies actions and the further career needs of the student and builds this into future CEIAG activity for the student either through the main careers programme or tailored support. The content is also shared with the virtual school as they also can support additional CEIAG activity support as required.

THE PROJECT
IMPLEMENTATION
WAS BASED ON
THE MAIN IDEA OF
FINDING A WAY OF
AMPLIFYING THE
YOUNG PERSON'S
VOICE

- Stage 6: At the next point a PEP is due, a review of progress against the identified actions and delivery of CEIAG support will take place to ensure progress to identified goals and learning outcomes are achieved. This can be recorded within the main PEP using the current review from last meeting process and recorded.

Key Role	Responsibility	When
Designated Teacher	Liaise with Career Leader to highlight students who are due a PEP	Termly
Designated Teacher	Carry out the PEP and complete the Careers Actions section within the PEP	As part of the PEP meeting
Designated Teacher	Post PEP feedback to Career Leader on career related actions agreed in the PEP	Within 2 weeks of the PEP taking place
Career Leader	To meet with Designated Teacher to confirm students who are due a PEP	Termly
Career Leader	To arrange the Pep PEP meeting with the student	Pre PEP meeting to take place approx. 2 weeks before the main PEP meeting
Career Leader	To Meet with Designed Teacher to look at the agreed career actions from the main PEP meeting	Within 2 weeks of the main PEP taking place
Career Leader	To implement agreed career related actions to support the career needs of the student	On Going
Career Leader	To track and evaluate impact of career reacted actions using agreed methods	On- Going
Virtual School	To liaise with Designated Teacher to ensure PEP due dates are available and schools are clear about PEP requirements and recording systems	Termly
Virtual School	To support career related actions identified from the PEP alongside Career Leader	On Going
Careers Hub	The Careers Hub could also play a role in ensuring schools are following the process and possibly supporting with delivery of the training. Careers Hubs can also support to ensure new Careers Leaders are trained and aware of the process.	On-Going

We have also illustrated this in the process flow map below.



* Appropriate staff member – Qualified careers professional or staff member who has developed an understanding of the needs of the young person.



SECTION 3

LINKS TO RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THIS PROCESS.

We have developed a series of take aways and resources to support the implementation of the approach the project took.

Resources 1-4 support the project activity and its implementation

Resources 5-8 support the general career related learning needs of students and could be helpful in the development of career related support for looked after children.

The resources and material can be adapted to meet individual a needs or existing systems.

These resources are part of this toolkit:

Resources 1: Developing a Pre-PEP careers conversation – Training workshop slides.

This resource can be used to support the development and implementation of the Pre-PEP careers conversation. The target audience for the workshops are Career Leaders, Designated Teachers, other professionals involved in the PEP.

Resource 2: The Pre-PEP Career conversation framework. This template will allow the Career Leader to audit the current career related learning programme using key headings linked to the Gatsby benchmarks and talk with the student about what they have gained or learnt by participating in the programme. This adds some significant context to understanding what the looked after student has taken part in, what has been useful, what the student might have missed out on.

Resource 2. A. This is an example of a completed template showing the careers conversation and actions agreed from the PEP

Resource 3: Career Activity Grid. This is a useful resource if you are looking at what types of career activity and career learning you might want to consider as either part of the main career programme or to support the individual needs of looked after students.

Resource 4: Career Related learning PowerPoints. This is a set of PowerPoint slides to enhance the learning of participants around key frameworks of career related outcomes.

THE RESOURCES
AND MATERIAL CAN
BE ADAPTED TO
MEET INDIVIDUAL
AUTHORITIES NEEDS

We have used the CDI framework here to illustrate an effective career development framework. Our thanks and acknowledgement to the CDI for these slides.

This is a useful set of slides if career leaders wanted to deliver some CPD to other colleagues in school to illustrate some of the key areas of career learning within a useful framework.

There is strong evidence that when all school staff see themselves as “teachers of careers” whether through subject topics, tutor support, PSHE support, or other pastoral roles the career learning and experiences of students is more joined up and impactful.

This is really important for looked after children who may “slip through the net” of a discreet careers programme of learning.

Resource 5: Influencing others.

This resource is helpful in developing some further skills that may help in engaging people in this area of work. The skills of influencing, persuasion and negotiation may be critical in getting key people on board with the PRE-PEP careers conversation.

Resource 6: Stakeholder mapping documents.

These documents can be helpful when looking at who needs to be included in the development of the Pre-PEP career format and its implementation. This can be useful when looking at consulting with key people who are impacted by the idea.

Resource 7: One to One career support

This includes a series of support material for working on a one-to-one basis with a looked after student to explore their career ideas and to help motivate them towards their career goals.

The handouts include:

- Suggested questions to clarify and explore career goals.
- Information and ideas around using a coaching model and goal setting model with looked after students.
- Motivational questions
- Supporting looked after young people through change.

Anyone who finds themselves working on a one-to-one basis with looked after children in order to help develop their ideas will find these handouts useful to support the career conversation.

Resource 8: Some useful websites

This resource is a list of useful career related information websites. If you are not familiar with a range of career related information that can help students plan and develop their career ideas these websites can help

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SECTION 4

WHAT NEXT TO ENABLE YOU TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT OUTCOMES AND LEARNING

If you want to implement your own approach to developing a PRE-PEP careers conversation you might want to use some of the resources and ideas in this toolkit.

Your starting point could be to use a stakeholder mapping grid to work out who you need to involve in the development of this area of work.

This would allow you to start to establish key lines of communication with some or all of the following:

- Looked after young people.
- Virtual school
- Other schools in your patch
- Senior Leadership Teams in Schools
- Designated teachers for Looked After Children in each school.
- Career leaders
- Other staff in school
- Other professional involved in the PEP.
- Carers

This is not a complete list, and you will want to add your local structures to this.

The resources in this toolkit will allow you to replicate as well as modify the process that we used in order to meet the individual needs of the looked after children in your locality. You might want to think about how you can further identify and support the careers aspirations of looked after children through activities like intensive support for apprenticeship application or assessment centre support or preparing for interviews etc.

The resources are also supported by an insightful video of the experiences of the range of stakeholders involved in the project. It is really interesting to hear the voice of young people on what they need and what can and has helped their career development and aspirations for the future.

John Walker, Project Manager

For further information about the project or the resources produced please contact:

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YOUR STARTING
POINT COULD
BE TO USE A
STAKEHOLDER
MAPPING GRID
