



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAM (EST)

for

Looked After Children

KEY TEACHER / CO-ORDINATOR STRUCTURE

2005 – 2006

**“Every looked after young person has a
named link teacher within the Education
Support Team”**

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS, SERVICES

&

SOCIAL CARE STAFF



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Monitoring the Education of Looked After Children and Young People (LAC)

Introduction

‘Every child matters and every looked after child must matter to everybody’

The Children Act 2004 places a ‘Duty’ on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

‘Looked after children have a right to expect the same outcomes we want for all children – that they should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve academic well-being.....’

To achieve these five outcomes for looked after children, local authorities as their ‘corporate parents’ should demonstrate the strongest commitment to helping every child they look after, wherever the child is placed, to achieve the highest educational standards he or she possibly can. This includes supporting their aspirations to achieve in further and higher education.....’

The Government expects schools to take a proactive approach to co-operating with and supporting local authorities in discharging this duty. The duty applies to all children looked after by an authority, including those it has placed out-of-authority.’

(DfES Statutory Guidance 2005)

Extensive research over a number of years has shown that looked after children are very vulnerable and significantly at risk of underachieving at school unless certain measures are put in place.

Despite the fact that the majority of looked after children have the cognitive ability to do well at school, the circumstances of coming into care combined with the instability of care placements and poor personal attachments results in many young people not reaching their full potential.

The responsibility for improving the education of looked after children, rests with ALL agencies and services, not just those who provide education. Elected Members, Social Workers, Psychologists, Carers, Health, Education and Social Care managers, Housing, Leisure and the Police, etc., etc., all have a contribution to make in raising the education of children in their care. This information booklet describes EST’s contribution and structure for raising the achievement of LAC.

The government having recognised these findings, has prioritised the education of looked after children by setting local authorities some very challenging national and local targets aimed at increasing achievement. Such targets relate to SATs and GCSEs performance, attendance rates and exclusion rates.

EST’s monitoring systems have been developed to ensure that **every** child looked after in Stockport has their education provision and progress monitored on a regular basis so that higher levels of achievement and social inclusion is promoted for each individual.

1. EST's KEY TEACHER / CO-ORDINATOR MONITORING SYSTEM

The Education Support Team (EST) for looked after children provide a wide range of initiatives specifically designed to combat the disadvantage and underachievement of this vulnerable group (see *Service brochure for more detailed information*). This booklet describes the '**Key Co-ordinator System**', a system which determines the central operational structure of the Service.

EST's '**Key Teacher / Co-ordinator System**' monitors the educational progress of all looked after children and is a major initiative which exists to raise the educational achievements of this client group. Every looked after child, aged 3 – 16 years living in Stockport, including those young people placed in Stockport by other Local Authorities, have a named link EST teacher.

The '**Key Teacher / Co-ordinator System**' includes all LEA Primary, Secondary and Special Schools together with PRUs and central education support services. Consequently, young people new to care or without school provision or with a Statement will be covered by this system.

Each young person's EST Key Co-ordinator will be determined by which school they attend rather than where they live or who their social worker is.

Young people in the care of Stockport but placed out of Authority (OOA) or educated by independent providers are also closely monitored by an EST teacher who specialises in cross Authority issues. The social worker and where relevant, an SEN officer and Educational Psychologist may also be involved in the monitoring process of an OOA placement (see 1.3 for further information on OOA monitoring).

1.1 Role of the EST Link Teacher with schools

Each EST Teacher will be responsible for linking with a number of Secondary Schools and the Primary Schools in each of the catchment areas. Each School, PRU and Service is required to appoint a **Designated Teacher for LAC** with responsibility for championing and co-ordinating the educational entitlement of the looked after children on their roll. It is EST's role to support all designated teachers and their schools with this important responsibility.

Through a rolling programme of meetings between EST and each Designated Teacher for LAC, the young people's educational progress in the broadest sense will be monitored closely so that ultimately, educational achievement is raised.

These meetings will consider each individual looked after child's :

- Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Personal targets / ability levels / academic performance
- attendance
- social and emotional development
- exclusions
- support needs
- communication with Social Care staff / Review meetings etc

Training needs

EST will also provide advice on a range of learning and behavioural programmes together with bespoke training packages for any members of school staff.

All designated teachers are offered an initial one day multi-agency training course which is then followed up with on-going training through **NETWORK** meetings held twice a term.

1.2 Frequency of monitoring meetings with Designated Teachers

The numbers of LAC in each school are not evenly spread across Stockport. Some secondary and primary schools have large numbers on roll whilst other schools do not have any. The location of children's homes and clusters of foster carers often determine this. Therefore, all schools with LAC will get the minimum number of visits from EST but schools with higher numbers of LAC will attract additional EST support (Levels 2 and 3).

- *Secondary schools*
at least one monitoring visit per term + additional sessions according to number of allocated in-school support cases.
- *Primary schools*
two visits per year + additional sessions according to number of allocated in-school support cases.

Schools without any LAC are not routinely visited unless specifically requested to do so.

1.3 Monitoring Young people placed Out of Authority (OOA)

Young people in the care of Stockport but placed out of Authority (OOA) or educated by independent providers are also closely monitored by an EST teacher who specialises in cross Authority issues. The social worker and where relevant, an SEN officer and Educational Psychologist may also be involved in the monitoring process of an OOA placement.

The EST Co-ordinator for children placed OOA will link with all Stockport Social Care Team Managers and the relevant individual social workers (rather than the schools these young people attend) in order to monitor levels of educational achievement.

This system ensures that all young people placed OOA receive the same level of educational monitoring as they would if placed within Stockport.

Children & Young People's Directorate (C&YPD) - Social Care Teams:

Referral and Assessment	Contact Centre at Houldsworth Mill, Reddish / Mount Tabor
Family Support	Baker Street, Heaton Norris
LAC Service	Dialstone Centre, Offerton

1.4 Young people transferring to a new school

There will be circumstances when a young person already receiving direct input from EST, transfers to a school, which has a different EST Link Teacher attached. Serious consideration will be given to the appropriateness of transferring the case to a new EST Link teacher, as important relationships will have already been established with the young person, the carers and professionals involved. In practice, the case will remain with exiting worker unless there are good reasons for this to transfer.

1.5 Co-working Cases

There will also be other instances when it is possible to have two EST teachers involved in the same case. This may happen when a young person is moved out of Authority. The existing co-ordinator will remain involved until the young person is settled in a new school and care placement. The case will then transfer to the EST teacher with responsibility for OOA placements.

1.6 Monitoring Young people in the care of other Local Authorities (OLAs) and residing in Stockport

EST now has a monitoring remit for OLAs. The size of this group varies but there are approximately 175 young people in the care of other local authorities living in Stockport at any one time. A proportion of these young people will attend Stockport schools but others will be educated in other neighbouring authorities.

EST maintains a separate database on this group's care and educational arrangements. EST teachers include any OLAs in their regular monitoring visits with designated teachers of Stockport schools.

EST provides a limited amount of direct, in-school support for OLAs. 'The Regional Protocol for Looking After the Education of each other's LAC', established in 2003 by the Greater Manchester Authorities, provides reciprocal support packages. EST will provide support to e.g. Manchester social workers of LAC living in Stockport.

More detailed guidance information can be found in the Local Authority's document 'Young People in the Care of Other Local Authorities and Placed In Stockport (OLAs)' published in November 2004.

1.7 Monitoring LAC in Early Years Settings

EST has recently extended the monitoring system to include any pre-school looked after children. This has evolved from a recent audit of educational provision for this particular age group. Results from the Audit revealed that only a small proportion of pre-school children were accessing some form of educational provision. The audit also revealed that carers and social workers did not always know about what was available to them and how to access it.

EST has now appointed a p/t teacher with responsibility for developing this project. The main focus is on improving carers' access to pre-school provision for the children in their care so that more looked after children receive the support they need at an earlier stage. This in turn should not only raise achievement but also provide more stability and protect care placements.

The project will also focus on :

- training programmes for designated teachers in early years settings
- early years Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- delivering direct support. However, any form of direct work is very limited at present, but hopefully will increase in the future

1.8 Monitoring LAC in 16+ Further Education establishments

EST aim to increase the number of looked after children and young people who progress to further and higher education. Currently, only 1% of LAC enters University. Much effort is made to keep a young person engaged with their education so that they complete their final year and leave school with a future plan for college, training or employment. EST's KS4 Co-ordinator continues to offer transitional support to any post 16 LAC students entering college. Additional resources are being sought to provide on-going support to the students throughout their time at college. Schools are asked to prioritise some of their 'Aim Higher' monies for the looked after young people on roll.

1.9 Monitoring school aged young people who are discharged from care or become adopted

During the academic year, a proportion of LAC will be discharged from care. They may either return to their family or a care order may be revoked. Some children will become adopted. The majority of school aged children who leave care will remain on the same school roll and may still have a social worker attached to them. EST will continue with low level monitoring via the designated teacher and local authority monitoring panels to prevent or minimise any re-admissions to care. They will be monitored as children in need (CIN) for a short period of time.

1.10 Post Adoption Support

As from September 2005, EST will provide some limited support to schools and parents of adopted children. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 and subsequent Adoption Support Services Regulations 2003, recognises that children who become adopted may still experience some difficulties and may still require a form of support. EST's role is to provide consultancy and advice to the professionals and parents involved with these young people.

2. RECEIVING AND RECORDING INFORMATION

2.1 Accessing the EST Database

The EST database uses the SIMs software package and is therefore compatible with school based recording (although not directly linked to schools). Each young person has an electronic file maintained by EST's Database Administrator.

Link Teacher / Co-ordinators have regular access to EST's education database and to the local authority's EMS and CareFirst databases in order to manage this aspect of their work efficiently and effectively.

EST's Database Administrator, produces updated list of pupils at each school every term. Schools are asked to record any changes on their school's information systems.

Schools can contact their EST link teacher to request further information from the database.

2.2 Informing schools of looked after children on their roll

At the beginning of every term, all schools will receive a list of LAC on their roll (including OLAs) from EST. This information will also include basic data about each young person so that schools can cross reference with their own information. It is intended that this information will be used by the designated teacher and other school staff to plan accordingly with the young person, their social worker and their carers.

Each school needs to develop an internal system for recording and communicating any changes related to the looked after children on roll (*this should be detailed in the school's policy for LAC – see below*).

2.3 EST's Annual Census of Children in the care of other local authorities (OLAs)

This particular group of children form a very fluid and diverse group. The frequency of placement moves means that these children are particularly vulnerable and are more likely to experience interrupted education.

All local authorities have a statutory duty to notify any receiving authorities when a care placement is made in their area. Using these notifications, EST has established a process for then notifying all relevant Stockport agencies.

Local Authorities are also required to notify each other when they remove a child from one authority and place in another authority. Unfortunately, this is rarely done and so some children can be removed without any notice to schools and other agencies.

Therefore, EST will carry out an annual census in order to check on any changes that have not been notified to them. This in turn will help the local authority to plan future services.

2.4 EST's Recording Procedures

Each EST link teacher will maintain a 'Key Co-ordinator Monitoring File' for each school. Each will contain a school summary sheet detailing basic information e.g. name, main contacts at the school, etc.

A summary sheet of all the LAC on roll will also be included.

Each young person will then have an individual progress record containing information about his or her achievements, SEN status, attendance and exclusion history. The record will be updated each time the link teacher meets with the school's designated teacher.

Key information for each young person in care is also held on EST's educational database.

3.0 ACCESSING EST SERVICE

3.1 Referrals to EST

All referrals and enquiries are responded to. However, allocation of in-school support will be dependent on the following criteria :

- ◆ levels of severity
- ◆ availability of EST support staff
- ◆ permanent exclusion could be prevented
- ◆ school and / or care placement could be protected
- ◆ change of school or care placement is planned
- ◆ short term work is indicated
- ◆ educational achievement could be raised and exam success promoted

This type of support can be accessed by :

- ◆ social workers and other social care staff who can make direct referrals

Indirect referrals followed up with a written referral from a social worker can be made by

- ◆ schools
- ◆ education welfare officers
- ◆ education support services
- ◆ panels

3.2 Levels of EST Intervention

- *Level 1* - Key co-ordinator monitoring – general level, available to **ALL** looked after children (see 2.4)
- *Level 2* - Indirect support – active casework on behalf of the young person as identified by the EST link teacher or requested by school and / or social worker
- *Level 3* - Direct work – face to face work with the young person in their educational setting following a formal referral from a social worker
- *Level 4* - Resource Base Teaching unit- short term teaching provision for a very all group of KS4 pupils in crisis who are unable to access local authority provision

3.2.1 Allocation of Indirect Support for individual children - Planning and Reporting Procedures

Indirect support (*level 2 intervention*) will be allocated on a casework basis and will be dependent on the presenting need. Referrals for this type of support may arise from a monitoring activity or from an emerging crisis situation.

EST will work on behalf of the young person through planning activities with their carers, social workers and schools.

Examples of indirect support include :

- Providing advice on writing and delivering an Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)
- Accessing additional support resources from other Services
- Assisting with formal assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Co-ordinating the transfer to a new school
- Arranging educational provision for children returning to Stockport
- Liaising with other local authorities on behalf of schools
- Assisting social workers making OOA placements
- Devising a range of support interventions to avoid exclusion
- Assisting carers with study packages at home

All formal meeting will be recorded and reported, detailing any actions or recommendations. Indirect support cases will be regularly reviewed according to need.

3.2.2 Allocation of Direct Support for individual children - Planning and Reporting Procedures

Direct support in-school (*level 3 intervention*) will only be allocated to a young person when it has been demonstrated that the school's resources available for all children, have been 'applied and tried'. Support from EST must be seen as 'additional' not 'instead of'. The availability of direct support is limited and therefore, subject to availability of staff. Individual cases may need to be put on a waiting list. In such circumstances, EST will endeavour to provide some other form of indirect support until direct support becomes available.

Schools in receipt of EST support are asked to make relevant staff available for planning and review meetings. These meetings are critical to ensuring that all planning is integrated, purposeful and effective.

EST will provide a range of written reports for any looked after child who is allocated a programme of direct support. The direct support may be delivered by the EST link teacher or by an EST education support worker. The support may be delivered in class or on a withdrawal basis depending on what is agreed at the pre-allocation meeting.

- Pre-Allocation planning meeting (AP1)– report detailing the overall EST action plan
- Aims and objectives of the individual support programme including the evidence record and the risk assessment. The risk assessment must be signed by the school before the support programme can begin
- In school support Review meeting (ISS4) – held once a term or more frequently if required. Report details progress and revised action plan
- Final Review Meeting – exit planning. School receive a report detailing recommendations for future work with the young person

3.3 Referrals for EST Study Support Programmes

Schools, young people and their carers may request some support from EST's Study Support Co-ordinators (SSCOs). The request can be made via their social worker or their EST link teacher. Depending on where they are living, i.e. in foster care or in a residential unit, the appropriate SSCO will make an initial visit and assess what type of support is needed. All referrals are responded to.

The extent and content of each individual Study Support programme will vary. Some carers will require a small number of consultation visits, whereas for others, sustained support will be needed to ensure that the carer can keep supporting the young person with their education. Support with homework tasks is frequently requested.

All carers have access to EST's Carers' Resource Centre, which houses a vast range of educational materials. Carers are encouraged to try out the materials in the safety of the Resource Centre and then use them at home with their young people.

Regular Study Support is offered to all residential units on both an individual or group basis. Carers and young people are encouraged to learn together in a supported environment.

4. FURTHER GUIDANCE INFORMATION

4.1 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

It is a legal requirement that all looked after children have a Personal Education Plan. The PEP is part of the care plan and is reviewed at a Statutory Review (LAC). This must be completed within 20 days of :

- entering care
- changing school
- changing care placement

Social Workers are required to initiate the PEP and Designated teachers in conjunction with social workers and carers are required to write and review the PEP.

The PEP integrates the care and education plans. It should be reviewed twice a year.

(More detailed information can be found in the Local Authority's Policy document 'The Education of Looked After Children and Young People' published 2005)

4.1.1 PEP Meetings

Any PEP meeting should, as a minimum, include the Designated teacher (or school representative, the carer, the social worker and the young person for all or part of the meeting *(if deemed appropriate)*).

The social worker and designated teacher should agree in advance on the date, venue, invitations and agenda.

Additional professionals from C&YPD can be invited to contribute to the PEP depending on which Services are involved or need to become involved.

EST link teachers will always try to attend initial PEP meetings *(depending on availability and notice)* but will not necessarily attend the PEP Reviews. However, EST should be informed of any meeting as a matter of course.

4.1.2 LAC Statutory Reviews

Every looked after child has a Statutory Review of his / her care plan. This is held one month after coming into care or following a change of care placement. It is then reviewed 3 monthly and thereafter, 6 monthly. An Independent Reviewing Officer, who will review the care plan and the PEP, chairs this Review. The Review is arranged by the young person's social worker. Schools and other agencies involved should always be invited and should have sufficient notice to allow for attendance at the meeting. The young person is also invited for all or part of the Review.

In order for full consideration to be given to the PEP, it is recommended that the Social Worker and Designated Teacher arrange to review the PEP in advance of the Statutory Review. Reviewing Officers are then provided with a PEP Review summary, which can be subsequently incorporated into the overall Review.

This process will then ensure that the school has been fully consulted on the progress of the young person and in turn, fully involved in the care plan Review.

4.2 Reporting to Elected members and School Governing Bodies

4.2.1. Elected Members' Working Party for Looked After Children

EST report on the attendance and exclusion rates of LAC to the Elected Members Working Party once a term. The Working Party also receives EST's Annual Report which details the educational achievements of all LAC in relation to a number of factors and variable, e.g. type of care placements; types of school placements; SEN status, etc, etc.. The range of services provided by EST to schools and social care staff is also detailed and evaluated.

4.2.2. Reporting to School Governing Bodies

All Schools, PRUs and Services are required to provide an Annual Report on the progress of their LAC cohort (*where appropriate*). This report should not identify any individual children. Headteachers and Designated Teachers are provided with detailed guidance of what to include in such reports. **Please contact your link teacher should you require further information.**

4.2.3 A School Policy for Raising the Education of LAC

All Schools, PRUs and Services are required to produce a written Policy describing how they intend to raise the educational achievement of this particular group. Full guidance on what should be included in this Policy has been provided for all schools.

It is vital that this policy is designed by the school for the school in order to reflect different school structures and systems. The Policy should be written by the Designated Teacher in conjunction with the Senior Management Team. All school staff should be aware of the Policy and training should be given to key people within the school.

The 'Duty to promote the Education of LAC' as described in the Children Act 2004 places a significant emphasis on the importance of the school policy for promoting this group's achievements. OFSTED Inspectors together with inspectors from the Joint Area Review (JAR) will also be interested in the school's Policy.

4.2.4. Target Setting Process for LAC

It is good practice to set individual targets for all children in all subjects. Schools are asked to include these targets in the PEP for all looked after children. Schools are also asked to set cohort targets for Y6 and Y11 pupils. These cohort targets are then aggregated to produce an overall target for the local authority. More detailed guidance is provided for schools. Further guidance can also be obtained from your EST link teacher.

4.3 Exclusion of Looked After Children

Looked after children become even more vulnerable if they are excluded from school. Any exclusion can put significant pressure on a care placement and in some cases, will lead to the care placement being terminated. This can then create further cycles of disruption and instability. It is therefore critical that all other alternatives to exclusion are considered. EST work proactively with schools and other partners to look at creative packages of support which will prevent or limit exclusions. Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs) and Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) should always be in place for any children at risk of exclusion.

In line with the local authority's exclusion procedures, all exclusions should be formalised with carers receiving the same information as parents.

Young people receiving a fixed term exclusion may be eligible for some provision from the local authority's Behaviour Support Service. This will depend on the length of the exclusion. Any young person who receives a permanent exclusion that is upheld, will be considered for a new school or alternative provision depending on the circumstances. EST must be involved in any situations where exclusion is being considered.

5.0 LINKING WITH OTHER SERVICES

5.1 *Linking with the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)*

Each school has a named Educational Psychologist (EP). EST will link with the school's EP in relation to consultation, formal assessment, direct work, etc. It is possible that a young person in care is also known to the Community / Social Care EP. This would be to address matter relating to family work, therapeutic intervention, court assessments, etc. It is important that EST are clear about the co-ordination of EPS involvement.

Sometimes a young person may be moved to a specialist education provision outside the Authority. Usually, the same EP will retain a monitoring function, particularly if the young person is placed in an Independent Special school. If the young person is placed in another LA school (OOA), that school's EP will share the responsibility.

5.2 *Linking with the Education Welfare Service (EWS)*

In order to provide continuity and link in with other services, the Key Co-ordinator System will be based on the allocated schools of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs). Each Key Co-ordinator will be linked to secondary schools and will also link with their feeder primary schools that the EWS have responsibility for.

This link with the EWS will enable Key Co-ordinators to liaise more closely over the arrangements for PEP Meetings and subsequent reviews. Additionally, attendance rates of each looked after young person will also be more accurately monitored.

The Education Welfare Service have developed internal systems to 'flag up' any looked after young person with attendance difficulties. These are communicated to EST via a range of communication systems. The EWS also collect termly attendance data on all looked after children.

5.3 *Links with Residential Units*

The Study Support Co-ordinator (Residential) links with the three Local Authority residential units to offer training and support on how residential staff can raise the educational achievement of young people. General advice is also given on a range of educational issues e.g. SEN procedures, exclusion procedures, school placements, national curriculum levels, etc.

Casework for individual young people placed in one of the residential units will remain the responsibility of the EST Teacher / Co-ordinator for the relevant school.

5.4 *Links with Foster Carers and Family Placement Team*

EST's Study Support Co-ordinator (foster care), provides support for Stockport MBC foster carers. This can either be on an individual basis in the carer's home, on a group basis or at the Carers Educational Resource Centre. Strong links exist with the family placement team to offer training and advice and monitor the stability of foster care placements.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

- ❖ **Stockport's Policy - 'The Education of Looked After Children and Young People' – Revised January 2005**
- ❖ **Stockport's Policy 'Young People in the Care of Other Local Authorities and Placed in Stockport (OLAs)' – published November 2004**
- ❖ **EST's Service Statement – updated July 2005**