



## Early Years Pathway for Social Workers

**There is a range of support and services available to children who are 0-5 years old that Social Workers should be aware of. The pathway below provides information on the various routes to support.**

Is the child attending a Early Years setting? (e.g. a nursery, pre-school or childminders)

YES

NO

Do you know about the Nursery Education Funded (NEF) Sessions available at Early years settings?

### 2-3 years old

Children who are Looked After or whose parents receive certain benefits, are entitled to claim the NEF sessions the term after their second birthday. The full qualifying criteria, along with further information can be found on the following link: [who is eligible for two year old funding](#)

### 3-4 years old

All children are entitled to claim the NEF sessions the term after their third birthday.

The majority of Early Years settings (including childminders) in Worcestershire offer these sessions in order to support the Early Education of children. They are available to children until the term after their fifth birthday.

Whilst the sessions should be offered for free, Early Years settings are able to charge for additional services such as lunch. Find out more on:

[free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds](#)

Some children will also be eligible for **30 hours of free childcare** the term after their third birthday, for further information visit the following link:

[apply for 30 hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds](#)

Whilst parents and foster carers should be encouraged to form strong attachments with their children in the home, early years provision can benefit children's development by providing a high quality environment where they have access to:

- A range of resources
- Positive per group models (e.g. for language development and appropriate behaviour)
- Qualified and dedicated early years practitioners.



Is the child Looked After by the Local Authority? If so, please ensure you inform the setting that the child is Looked After.

Children in foster care may be eligible for **30 hours of childcare** if it is consistent with their care plan and foster carers are in paid work outside of their role as a foster parent. The Local Authority advises foster carers who may be eligible to discuss this with their Social Worker, to gain your permission to apply for the 30 hours. You will need to counter-sign the application form, and the Team Manager and Virtual School Headteacher will also need to agree. For more information on the process, and to access the application form please follow the this weblink: [30 hours fostering](#)

NO

If a child is Looked After there is a statutory requirement for the Social Worker to support the Early Years setting to carry out an **Early Years Personal Education Plan**. The Statutory Guidance states that **all children who are subject to a care plan**, and are **in receipt of free nursery education sessions** – either as a 2, 3 or 4 year old, require an Early Years Personal Education Plan (PEP). Children should receive a EY PEP within 10 days of becoming Looked After.

The PEP should be initiated as part of the care plan and should be completed/reviewed 3 times a year. All relevant people should be invited to the PEP meeting. The Social Worker invites the carers to the meeting. The carer will receive a copy of the PEP from the Social Worker after it has been completed and signed off. From September 2020, the Early Years Settings will have access to the EY e-PEP on Welfare Call.

The child's Social Worker will be expected to attend all 3 ePEP meetings, check accuracy, update and sign off the PEP each term on Welfare Call. The final ePEP sign off is done by the Early Years Area Learning Advocate. This will ensure consistency in the quality of the PEP.

Further information on the support provided to Early Years settings, including the Early Years Pupil Premium funding can be found on the following webpage: [Virtual School Early Years](#)

### Support for Early Years Settings for Children who are Previously Looked After

A Previously looked-after Children (PLAC) advisor works within the Virtual School team to promote the educational achievement of Previously Looked after children (Adoption, Special Guardianship, child arrangement order) through the provision of information and advice to their parents and educators. There is also an inclusion plan available on the Virtual School website.

[Worcestershire Virtual School - Previously Looked After Children](#)

This is a partnership agreement document between the young person, parents, professionals and school to ensure the effective provision for a Previously Looked-after child in school, it is particularly useful when preparing for transition.

It allows for exploration and understanding of a young person's pre-adoptive experiences, discussion around developmental trauma, curriculum triggers and strategies to support the young person to be regulated and access a positive learning experience.



Does the child have an additional need, such as a registered disability, or emerging underlying needs such as speech and language, complex communication needs or are presenting with an attachment difficulty?

  
NO  
YES  


### If the child has Complex needs and/or SEND

Children with complex SEND needs should be referred to the Pre School Forum (PSF) by health professionals working with them. This is a multi-agency meeting which monitors the progress of children with SEND and also makes referrals to additional services where required. However this may not always have been completed. **Social Workers can refer to the forum** if you feel that a child should be known to the PSF because they may:

- Require an assessment place at the Specialist Nursery Assessment Units
- Require additional speech and language input at the Specialist Language Units
- Require a high level of support on entry into school reception (e.g. and Education Health Care Plan)
- Require additional support for complex emotional needs i.e. Educational Psychologist

The preschool notification, guidelines and parent information leaflet can be downloaded from the following website:

### Support for Early Years Settings


Support is available from the Worcestershire Children First Early Years Inclusion Service for:

- Children who are referred by the Pre School Forum
- Training in all matters of inclusion
- Traded visits for children not known to Pre School Forum
- Local Inclusion Funding to support children with SEND (for staffing, resources and training – this can not be used for fees.)

More information can be found on the following webpage:

[Worcestershire Children First Education Services - Early Years Inclusion](#)

The setting may also be supported by other services such as health (Speech and Language, Occupation Therapy) as well as other Specialist services such as:

- Visual Impairment Team
  - Hearing Impairment Team
  - Multiple Sensory Impairment Team
  - Complex Communication Needs Team
- 



### **Additional Support to Early Years Settings**

Worcestershire Children First Early Years Improvement Advisors can support the quality development of Early Years settings and schools who are judged by Ofsted to be inadequate or requires improvement.

Any concerns about the quality of a setting you visit should be challenged directly to the senior practitioner, recorded and then reported to the Early Years Advisors:

[EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

#### **Which setting does the child attend?**

Complete Liquidlogic to identify the setting and contact the Early Years Area Learning Advocate (shaigh@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) to arrange a date for the ePEP.

#### **What if one of the children I support attends a Early Years Setting graded inadequate or requires improvement?**

If Liquidlogic indicates that a Child who is Looked After is attending such a setting, then the EY Improvement Advisors will communicate with the EYALA to discuss the capacity of the setting to improve and whether the setting continues to be an appropriate placement.

'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children' guidance indicates:

"Schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised when seeking a place for looked-after children in need of a new school. Unless there are exceptional evidence-based reasons, looked-after children should never be placed in a school judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate'. When consideration is given to schools judged 'Requiring Improvement', VSHs and social workers should have evidence that the school is providing high quality support to its vulnerable pupils, and will enable a looked-after child to make maximum progress before placing them in that school.'

### **Useful resources and further reading**

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children guidance

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children)

Promoting the Education of Looked After Children

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children)