

Question 1 – Do you agree that the advice provided in the personal education plan (PEP) guidance will support local authorities, schools and settings to make the PEP process more meaningful and impactful for children looked after?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

We agree that the advice provided in the guidance may improve the current PEP process, but we would like to raise that the improvements this guidance makes may be limited by it not being mandatory. PEPs need to be flexible to reflect the needs of each individual child and young person, however, we feel a more consistent approach would be more effective and child centred. For instance, a child moving from one local authority, or moving school may find consistency in meetings and the questions easier so that they know what to expect. Currently, this guidance is open to interpretation which limits how meaningful and impactful it will be nationally.

We consulted our youth advisory board on the young person's version of the guidance, and they agree that as guidance, it is positive, however, they also expressed concerns around its authority and whether it will be followed.

Question 2 – Do you agree that the guidance adequately covers everything needed to support local authorities, schools and settings to make PEPs more meaningful and impactful for children looked after?

Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

Whilst this guidance does provide a comprehensive list of support and resources available to local authorities and schools, we would recommend an introduction to this guidance and/or training to be rolled out with the published guidance, or ideally before it is published. Particularly as this guidance illustrates the Welsh Government's consultations with young people around ensuring school staff are trained to support care experienced children. This way, the guidance could better help local authorities and schools implement it into their current process.

The guidance mentions quality checks of PEPs to ensure they are completed to a good standard, however, there is no guidance around how this would be monitored and upheld. This guidance should also include steps on accountability for circumstances where things have not gone so well, so that it can be precautionary, proactive and supportive to local authorities and schools.

The section that goes through the different roles and responsibilities of those involved is useful, however, it is missing guidance on coordinating responsibility for follow-ups that fall outside of the school/education setting to ensure the part 6 code of practice is followed, whereby PEPs should be inter-related with other strands of the plan. There needs to be further clarity and coordination on who holds the responsibility and who is accountable for

different aspects discussed in the PEPs in-between meetings. We are concerned that PEPs become tokenistic if not followed up.

This guidance does set out the process map and outlines the suggested attendees for the first meeting; however, this guidance needs to be more explicit and consistent with who should be invited and allow the suggested attendees the opportunity to send feedback prior to the meeting if they cannot attend. For example, through our discussions with our foster carer members on our advisory board to feed into this consultation, some of our members highlighted that foster carers often have different experiences with the PEP process across local authorities, and with children in their care attending different schools. Further to this, some of our members expressed that they have always been invited to attend and participate in meetings, whilst others said they have either never been invited to attend and/or are not able to review the document afterwards. The inconsistency with the PEP process needs further clarification and there needs to be guidance for all local authorities and schools to understand the importance of foster carers input as professionals.

We would agree that future pathways discussions should start earlier than 16, although there needs to be further clarification on post-16 support with regards to PEPs in this guidance. For instance, within the PEP process map section, the guidance states 'local authority prepares a Pathway plan to assist with the transition to adulthood and leaving care. PEP maintained while the child/young person is in full or part-time education. Continue to review PEP as part of the Pathway process – regulations specify minimum review periods.' Whereas within the terminology section, this guidance states 'Children in care, who are not over compulsory school age, should have a PEP.' There is confusion between these two extracts as to whether children and young people should still have a PEP in college/University in full time education, post 16.

Question 3 – If you disagreed with the statement in question 2, what else should be captured in the guidance?

Comments

As answered in Question 2 – there should be further clarity on roles and responsibilities regarding accountability and following-up and, training or introductory processes to be implemented with the guidance, including how the training will be supported and rolled out.

Question 4 – Do you agree that the guidance provides sufficient advice to local authorities, schools and settings on making the PEP process child-centred?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

This guidance does reflect young people's feedback to Welsh Government on key issues with the current PEP process and we would agree that if this guidance is followed, it could

improve the process and address many of the issues raised by young people. For example, the section on the PEP meeting does reflect the voice of the child. However, we feel the guidance could go further to emphasise the necessity and importance of ensuring the process is clearer to children and young people. Similarly to the comments from young people to Welsh Government within this guidance, some of our young people explained that they either did not know what a PEP was prior to this consultation, or that they did not always know the difference between a PEP meeting and another meeting or that they did not know a PEP meeting was to take place until just before. Ensuring that children and young people are well informed can help them fully prepare their thoughts, or their voice may get lost and not heard.

As mentioned previously, if there is no follow-up from discussions in a PEP meeting that sit outside of the school setting, then the child or young person may not feel their voice is heard. Our youth advisory board mentioned that moving placements often meant that they also moved away from outside of school activities. This guidance should include a section on ways to maintain consistency for children and young people, and make it clear who would be responsible for overseeing different strands.

Question 5 – Are there any other sources of support or resources that it might be useful to highlight in the guidance?

Comments

Question 6 – What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the guidance on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?
Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

Supporting comments

Question 7 – In your opinion, could the guidance be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Supporting comments

Question 8 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

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