

# PACE Northwest – Looked After Children (LAC) & Care Leavers Policy

**Approved by:** Board of Directors

**Policy owner:** Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT-LAC)

**Effective date:** 29 August 2025

**Next review due:** Annually (or sooner if guidance/law changes)

## 1. Purpose

PACE Northwest recognises that **Looked After Children (LAC)** and **care leavers** are among the most vulnerable learners in society, and may face barriers to participation, progress and wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring they are supported to achieve positive outcomes, consistent with our safeguarding duties and obligations under the law.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, tutors, assessors, managers and support staff.
- All learners at PACE Northwest who are currently in the care of the Local Authority (“looked after”) or who are **care leavers** (defined under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000).
- All partner employers, subcontractors and agencies involved in supporting LAC learners and care leavers.

## 3. Legal framework

This policy aligns with:

- **Children Act 1989 & 2004** (duties of local authorities and education providers).
- **Children and Families Act 2014** (SEND and care planning).
- **Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**.
- **Children and Social Work Act 2017** (duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC and previously looked after children).
- **Care Leaver Covenant** (DfE, 2016 onwards).
- **Equality Act 2010** (protection from discrimination).
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**.
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)** – safeguarding and support for vulnerable learners.
- **ESFA funding rules** (including bursaries for vulnerable groups).

## 4. Policy statement

PACE Northwest will:

- Appoint a **Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT-LAC)** with lead responsibility for promoting LAC learners' educational achievement.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in supporting LAC learners and care leavers.
- Work in partnership with local authorities, Virtual School Heads, social workers, carers and employers.
- Ensure LAC learners and care leavers have full access to learning, support, enrichment and progression opportunities.
- Monitor attendance, progress, retention and achievement of LAC learners to identify and address barriers.
- Provide targeted support for wellbeing, safeguarding, financial needs and progression.

## 5. Responsibilities

### Board of Directors

- Ensure compliance with legislation and adequate resources for supporting LAC and care leavers.

### Designated Teacher for LAC (DT-LAC)

- Acts as central point of contact for LAC and care leaver learners.
- Ensures each LAC learner has an up-to-date **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**.
- Liaises with Virtual School Heads, local authority teams, carers, parents and social workers.

- Ensures staff are aware of individual needs, confidentiality, and agreed strategies.
- Monitors attendance, retention, progress and outcomes.
- Reports termly to the Senior Leadership Team and annually to the Board.

## Tutors/Assessors

- Identify and support LAC learners in their groups.
- Embed inclusive teaching and support strategies.
- Communicate concerns promptly to the DT-LAC and Safeguarding Team.

## All staff

- Promote an inclusive and supportive environment.
- Challenge stigma, discrimination or stereotyping.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL.

# 6. Support available

PACE Northwest will provide:

- **Initial IAG and induction** tailored to LAC and care leavers.
- **Designated point of contact** (DT-LAC) for advice and support.
- **Additional pastoral and wellbeing support**, including counselling referrals if required.
- **Support with bursary funding** (e.g., 16–19 Bursary Fund for vulnerable groups; Care Leaver bursaries in apprenticeships and HE progression).
- **Progress reviews** with input from social workers/carers where appropriate.
- **Priority access** to enrichment, careers guidance, and employer encounters.
- **Transition support** for progression into employment, apprenticeships, higher education or further training.

# 7. Confidentiality

- Information about a learner's LAC or care leaver status is confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Data processing complies with **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**.
- Consent will be sought where appropriate, but safeguarding duties override confidentiality if risk of harm is identified.

## 8. Safeguarding

- All LAC learners are considered **potentially vulnerable** and staff must be vigilant for safeguarding concerns.
- Any concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via **becs@pace-com.org**.
- LAC learners have the same rights and protections as all learners under the Safeguarding & Prevent Policy.

## 9. Monitoring and evaluation

- The DT-LAC maintains a confidential register of LAC and care leaver learners.
- Outcomes are monitored (attendance, retention, achievement, destinations).
- Data is analysed annually and reported to the Board to inform improvement actions.
- Learner voice feedback is collected to evaluate effectiveness of support.

## 10. Complaints

Any learner or carer who feels that the support provided is insufficient may raise the issue:

- Informally with their tutor or the DT-LAC.
- Formally by following the Complaints Procedure (contact: **becs@pace-com.org**).

## 11. Related policies

- Safeguarding & Prevent Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Learner Support & SEND Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy

**Contact for LAC & care leaver enquiries:** [becs@pace-com.org](mailto:becs@pace-com.org)

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