

Halton Virtual School

PP+ Policy

2023-2024

Policy Date: January 2023
Updated January 2024

Policy Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: January 2025



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Introduction

The Children and Families Act (March 2014) made Virtual School Heads statutory for Local Authorities, with responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of the Local Authority's Children in Care. This role includes responsibility and accountability for managing the Children in Care element of the Pupil Premium Grant.

Throughout this policy the Pupil Premium Grant for Children in Care will be referred to as Pupil Premium Plus, to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is managed by the Virtual School Head based on the educational needs of the child as identified in the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head ensures PP+ spend is linked to raising achievement for CIC pupils and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. The Virtual School Head manages the budget, oversees PP+ spend for all CIC pupils and reports on its impact. Unlike a physical school the Virtual School does not have a discreet Governing Body. However, oversight and governance of the Virtual School is primarily undertaken by the Children in Care Partnership Board. In addition to this, the Head teacher of the Virtual School provides regular reports to the Children in Care Council, Head teachers, senior leaders, elected members and HSCB.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. Virtual School Heads (VSHs) have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential. For looked-after children, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others. For previously looked-after children, the VSH will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible.

****For the purpose of this policy, when referring to carers, we include foster carers, residential staff and parents****

GUIDANCE ON THE ALLOCATION OF PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2023/24

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for Looked after Children (LAC), who are looked after for one day or more on the statistical return to DfE for 2023 is allocated to Halton Borough Council at £2530 for each Halton LAC from their Reception Year up to the end of Year 11. The child or young person must be looked after by Halton Borough Council to receive funding from Halton's Virtual School. For Pre-School aged children, accessing a setting, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is allocated on a needs led basis.

The LAC PPG must be used to support Halton looked after children to meet additional needs identified in their PEPs, in order to narrow the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. The funding is to provide opportunities that these young people may not otherwise have the chance to experience. The guidance from the DFE highlights that schools may receive varying amounts depending on the identified needs of each child.

The Virtual School have a duty to ensure that we can evidence the impact this funding has on the outcomes of our looked after children. The evidence of this will be monitored and recorded in the PEP. An annual report of expenditure and impact will be shared with Governors at the end of each academic year.

With effect from April 2014 the PPG for LAC had to be managed by the Virtual School Headteacher of the local authority who the child is looked after by. Children who cease to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of an adoption, special guardianship order, a child arrangement order or residence order are also entitled to £2530. However this pupil premium grant is sent directly to schools and is allocated based on information provided in the census.

In Halton it has been agreed that we will allocate the funding in line with the individual needs of pupils as identified in their Personal Educational Plan meetings. This means we do not pay a set amount of funding each term to schools.

What it can be used for?

Anything that can enhance the education or life experiences of a looked after child that is over and above the offer that would normally be provided by the school/setting, carer or agency within Children's Services. Requests can also be made for training that will support the professional development and expertise of adults working with children looked after by Halton Borough Council.

The funding can provide support at 3 levels:

- **Centrally funded resources**
- **Contribute towards school based initiatives/interventions**
- **Fund additional support and/or enrichment for individual looked after children**

The Virtual School provides a **core service** of advice, training, monitoring, and advocacy to all schools who have Halton LAC on roll.

The following criteria will be used to determine the use of Pupil Premium Plus and priority **MUST** be given to closing the achievement gap.

- 1) **Academic Achievement:** Closing the gap with their peers with priority given to literacy/numeracy as core curriculum areas. Data collected in the PEP, teacher knowledge and the views of the child/young person/parent/carer/social worker/educational case worker will be used to identify if:

- A child/young person is working at below age related expectation for their year group or is not on track to make the expected level of progress.
 - There are gaps in learning/particular aspects of learning or development where additional support is needed
 - They would like support with a particular subject/aspect of learning. This may be an area of excellence where accelerated progress is being supported by Pupil Premium.
 - Referrals to external agencies that will support the young person to be ready to learn and able to access the curriculum with less barriers for example, Educational Psychology and Speech and Language Services.
- 2) **Improving attendance:** If attendance is below 96% there should be consideration of strategies to improve attendance which may involve the use of Pupil Premium.
 - 3) **Strategies/interventions to promote social and emotional well-being:** e.g. where the effects of attachment and developmental trauma are a barrier to learning or when there is a 'spike' in behaviours due to factors causing instability such as placement move which impacts on learning. It will **NOT** be used to pay for therapy/counselling by outside providers where evidence has not been provided to show why Barnardo's or CAMHS are not undertaking this work. Additionally, strategies to reduce internal and external exclusion through external services could be considered
 - 4) **Extra-Curricular:** e.g. in an area where the child shows an ability/interest/talent they want to follow.
 - 5) Key points of **Transition** where additional support may be needed.
 - 6) **Resources:** e.g. a child may need additional resources to promote physical development.

Centrally Funded

Funding is retained centrally by Halton Virtual School, including additional grants where appropriate in order to provide the following core offer:

- Book parcels (Reception & tailored parcels requested through PEPs)
- Storytime magazine (Primary)
- Packs for key transition points when requested through the PEP
- Virtual School staff to enable all Looked after Children to have a named Education Caseworker from the Summer term of Pre-School to Year 13 as well as additional support services.
- Training for Designated Teachers & DSL's for LAC and other staff who support our looked after children, Post Looked After and those children with access to a social worker.
- Training for Governors in all Halton Schools, Academies and colleges
- Training for all social workers
- Funding for Educational Psychology consultations and other commissioned services.
- IT & data support, including Welfare Call for attendance and PEPs.

Funding can be requested for one term's intervention/support in advance of that term and will be reviewed at the next PEP to consider requesting a continuation of the

support/intervention where the impact is evidenced. Retrospective funding will not be agreed.

School Based Initiatives/additional support and enrichment activities

Provision	Guidance around provision
<p>Short term Funding to employ LSAs/support staff</p> <p>(In the case of requests for project funding – children and young people looked after by Halton will benefit from the project the cost for the individual only must be requested.)</p>	<p>1:1 school based interventions (core areas)</p> <p>1:1 ELSA/Pastoral support</p> <p>Group based social emotional and well-being support</p> <p>Interim support for a child who is under-going an Education Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment or where evidence is being gathered.</p>
<p>1:1 tuition for children at home or at school</p>	<p>This can be sourced through school or through the bank of tutors that the Virtual School have access to.</p>
<p>Access to Personalised/ alternative curriculum.</p>	<p>Review at least half termly, commissioned wherever possible by schools. This would usually consist of bespoke timetables. These plans need to be shared with the Virtual School with a weekly plan of how reintegration will happen. Further guidance can be accessed through the Virtual School team.</p>
<p>Contribute toward school/pre-school based initiatives that support vulnerable learners (for example the setting up of Thrive or Nurture Spaces) Resources for Thrive/ Nurture e.g., Calm boxes, puppets, sand etc</p>	<p>Initially a contribution up to half of the costs will be considered. Evidence of impact will be needed for any future funding requests.</p>
<p>Equipment and resources for young people.</p>	<p>It is expected that carers allowances will cover the majority of these costs, however requests for specialist equipment will be considered.</p>

Support the training of school/pre-school staff (over and above the offer provided free by the Virtual School)	Designated Teacher Training will be funded in 2022/23
School trips and visits and extra-curricular opportunities that support education	Requests for funding for additional trips will be considered on a case by case basis.
Therapy - Provider must complete assessment, weekly monitoring and final report as part of the agreement.	CAMHS/Barnardo's must be explored initially and evidence provided why this is not being accessed and an alternative being sought prior to a request for funding through the PEP.

Process for requesting Pupil Premium Plus

- Pupil Premium requests for school aged pupils and pre-school children, are discussed during PEP meetings. A request for funding with clear evidence for the support/intervention and expected impact will be submitted via the PEP.
- The PEP Lead will quality assure the document and discuss all PP+ requests with their Team Leader.
- Once a quality PEP has been signed off by the PEP Lead & Team Leader, the request will be sent to the Virtual Head Teacher to process
- Interventions should be put in place straight away rather than waiting for funds to arrive in school account
- Virtual Head will process all requests and send to the finance department to release funds.
- Halton Borough Council maintained schools will receive payment via journal transfer.

Post 16 Funding Request

Each local authority in England is required to appoint a Virtual School Head to promote the educational attainment of children in the care of their local authority. Virtual School Heads currently receive Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding of £2,530 per child in care, aged 4 to 15. This is used to provide both individual support that a child needs, as identified in their Personal Education Plan, and for the cohort as a whole. This funding ceases when the child reaches the age of 16, but Virtual School Head duties and the need for bespoke support continue for as long as the child is in care.

The purpose of the Post-16 grant is to provide additional funding for looked-after children and care leavers at post-16 to all local authorities. The extension will run from April 2023 to March 2024.

All Post 16 request must be presented to the Team Leader. Considerations might include:

- English and/or Maths tuition where the young person is on role at an education provision, has attendance above 96% and is on a Level 2 course securing a Level 3 progression.
- CSCS card training
- Residential/work experience - These will be considered on an individual basis.
- College enrichment trip/overseas volunteering. For these opportunities part funding will be considered in partnership with both the young person's own fundraising and a contribution from children and social care.

Designated Teacher Role

The PEP is the key document which will be used to plan for Pupil Premium spend and so the role of the designated teacher is key in ensuring that the PEP is of high quality and provides the information below:

- View of the child/young person and how these will be addressed.
- Prior attainment and current attainment data, whether the child is on track to make the expected levels of progress in key subject and attendance data.
- Educational needs must be identified using above data and knowledge of the child's wider needs. Intended outcomes must be clear and quantitative targets for improvement must be set.
- Costings must be provided for interventions and clear timescales for intervention and by whom.
- Outcomes must be discussed and impact evaluated when the PEP is reviewed (without this, funding for the new term will not be agreed).

Young Person Views

It is very important that the view of the child/young person are gathered, recorded and considered in the decision making and PEP process and there are two specific questions in the views of the young person page to support this. If requests cannot be met an explanation must be provided to the young person and reasons recorded in the PEP.

Foster Carers/Educational Case Workers/Social Workers Views

The team around the young person have a valuable contribution to make via the PEP meeting. The overriding principle is that the funding must focus on raising the educational outcomes. DFE guidance states clearly that Pupil Premium Plus should **NOT** be used for an activity which the local authority would normally fund as Corporate Parent. Foster Carers and Residential Children's Homes are resourced to act as a reasonable parent and to support the young persons in their education and holistic development.

Virtual School Head

The Virtual School Headteacher must ensure that Pupil Premium Plus spend is linked to raising achievement for looked after children and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. The Virtual School Headteacher will manage the budget, oversee Pupil Premium Plus spend of all LAC and report on its impact to the Virtual School Governing Body and Corporate Parenting Panel through the annual report.

Circumstances in which Pupil Premium will not be provided

Halton Virtual School will not provide LAC PP funding to schools in the following circumstances.

- To double fund or replace funding which should already have been allocated to the school to support the child and specifically to fund:
 - Services that should be provided via an Education Health and Care plan (in England only);
 - Other statutory work (e.g. statutory assessment or support from health agencies).
 - The interventions put in place do not require any funding.
- The school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions.
- The LAC PP request in the PEP does not match the PEP SMART targets requirements
- There is no match to the needs identified in the PEP and the funding request. Particular examples that are often refused are IT requests, residential trips (full cost) and transport (against terms of grant).
- Transport costs cannot be funded through Pupil Premium Plus.
- To fund interventions that do not demonstrate a positive impact on the child's educational achievement and outcomes.
- To fund interventions that has impact only for other learners.
- School uniform
- Retrospective funding - Pupil premium funding cannot be rolled over so all requests must be within the financial year.