

**Nottinghamshire Virtual School  
Pupil Premium Plus Guidance  
for the Education of Looked After Children  
2014-2015**

## 1. Introduction

There are significant national changes in the arrangements for Pupil Premium for Looked After Children (LAC) from April 2014 and this guidance is informed by two key Department for Education (DfE) documents:

- Pupil Premium Grant 2014 to 2015 Conditions of Grant (February 2014) (see Appendix 1)
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15 - Frequently Asked Questions (March 2014) (see Appendix 2)

Throughout this guidance, the Pupil Premium for LAC will be referred to as **Pupil Premium Plus** to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations. The changes are as follows:

- from 1 April 2014 'Pupil Premium Plus' will see funding to support children and young people in care of statutory school age increase by £1,000 per pupil to £1,900 per child
- children and young people will now be eligible following one day in care according to the SSDA903 social care census March 2013 and aged 4 – 15 August 2012
- local authorities continue to be responsible for distributing the Pupil Premium Plus payments for LAC to schools and academies. However, in addition, Virtual School Heads are responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to benefit children looked after by their authority
- the overall grant allocated to each LA will be calculated on a per capita basis. However, it does not have to be distributed on a per capita basis, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care
- the grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the gap” as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the designated teacher
- as a result, PEPs will need to be monitored even more closely by designated teachers, the Virtual School team, social workers team leaders and Independent Reviewing Officers.

In addition and through a separate process, children adopted from care and those subject to residency order or special guardianship order from care will be entitled to £1,900 passed directly to the school. However, this grant is outside the remit of this guidance and will not be distributed by the virtual school.

As a result of the above changes, our allocation of Pupil Premium Plus needs to move to a “**child’s needs driven model**”, managed through high quality PEPs.

## **2. Pupil Premium Plus Guidance**

### **2.1. Overall principles underpinning our child's needs driven model**

- the Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for the use of Pupil Premium Plus to improve outcomes for all children in our care, wherever they live
- none of the grant will be used to pay for Virtual School management, administration or core staff salaries
- in the academic year 2014-15, all of the grant will continue to be distributed to schools on an annual basis to support all eligible children and young people to improve their educational progress and narrow the achievement gaps between children in care and their peers
- proposals to pool Pupil Premium Plus in a school to enhance services, providing its use is directly linked to individual children in care's needs via the PEP, are allowed
- Nottinghamshire County Council and the Virtual School Headteacher are Corporate Parents, so the question 'would this be good enough for my child?' is a central one in making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of the use of Pupil Premium Plus.

### **2.2. How and why will the amount of Pupil Premium Plus vary from LA to LA?**

- children's needs vary and can change significantly
- LAC may move schools due to care placement moves, infant to junior, primary to secondary or in year changes
- termly allocations rather than annual allocations.

In view of this, there will be a significant difference in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed by all LAs.

### **2.3. Pupil Premium Plus will not be provided if:**

- Pupil Premium Plus replaces funding which should already have been allocated to the school to support the child
- the planned use is to fund:
  - services that should be provided via a statement, SEN support plan or Education Health and Care plan
  - other statutory work e.g. statutory assessment or support from Health.
- the interventions put in place do not require any funding
- the school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions

- the PEP action plan does not meet requirements (see section 3.1)
- interventions have no link to the individual LAC's needs.

### 3. Management and accountability

The head of the Virtual School will be accountable to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for setting up a transparent and rigorous allocation process and ensuring maximised impact of the grant.

#### 3.1. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- we will allocate to each school with a Nottinghamshire child in care on roll PPG on receipt of a **Pupil Premium Reply form** identifying how the school will use the Pupil Premium Plus and the links to the child/young person's PEP
- the Pupil Premium Plus must be used to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in care to Nottinghamshire in the following areas:
  - academic achievement and progress
  - wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
  - transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

*e.g.: TG is below national age related expectations in reading. To enable TG to accelerate progress in reading, he will have 40 hours of one to one support at £30 per hour, membership of Letterbox Club (organised via Virtual School) and 15 minutes a night of reading with foster carers recorded in his reading log. Time period for achievement of this target: September 2014 - July 2015. Measured by: progress from 2c to 3c within the academic year highlighted in termly data returns to the Virtual School.*

- we have redesigned our Personal Education Plans and have consulted with Designated Teachers and Social workers on the design of the new PEPs. These are now in circulation and pupil premium is reflected in this document
- it is recommended, in the new legislation 'Promoting the education of looked after children' July 2014, that PEPs should take place **termly**. Further discussions will be held on achieving this for all LAC. However, where a LAC may be underachieving or struggling in an education setting termly meetings must be held as a minimum to support that LAC.

#### 3.2 Allocation of funding to all schools with Nottinghamshire children in care and recoupment guidance

- the Pupil Premium Grant will be transferred once a year by the virtual school on receipt of the Pupil Premium reply form detailing the plan
- where there is a need to clarify what funding a school is providing from its own resources, the school will be contacted by the virtual school before Pupil Premium Plus can be allocated
- we will not recoup Pupil Premium Plus where a child moves during the term

- we reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the LAC's needs.

### **3.4. Allocation of grant to Nottinghamshire children in care placed in residential providers or non- mainstream settings and recoupment guidance**

- we will provide extra funding to independent providers only on receipt of detailed reply forms linked to the child's PEP. These are already funded at a high level by central budgets
- the Pupil Premium Plus allocation will have to be approved by the Virtual School Head
- we reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the child in care's needs.

### **4. Pupil Premium Plus for Children and Young People attending Nottinghamshire schools and settings placed by other Local Authorities**

- different approaches will be adopted by different LAs, as the contexts vary so much, in terms of the number of school-aged children in care, the size of Virtual School team and the existing operational budget for the Virtual School team (which varies enormously between LAs)
- Nottinghamshire schools who have Children and Young People in Care from other Local Authorities on their roll must contact the Virtual Head of the relevant Virtual School to request their Pupil Premium Plus guidance. Nationally, all Virtual Heads are responsible for the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus for all school aged Children and Young People in care within their authorities, even though the child/young person is educated in a Nottinghamshire school. The name and contact details of other Virtual School Heads teachers can be requested from the Nottinghamshire Virtual School team.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Extracts from the Department for Education Conditions of Grant 2014-2015**

Basis of the allocations to the local authority:

The Department will allocate a provisional allocation of £1,900 per child for the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded in the March 2013 Children Looked After Data Return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2012. This allocation will be updated and finalised in October 2014 based on the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded in the March 2014 Children Looked After Data Return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2013.

Use of the Looked After Children Premium:

The grant allocation for Looked After Children must be managed by the designated Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after those children to be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss with the child's education setting – usually with the designated teacher – how the child will benefit from any pupil premium funding. The local authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2015-2016. Grant held centrally that has not been spent by 31 March 2015 will be recovered.

**Further enquiries were made to DfE for clarification and received the following response:**

'There is no "right" for the provider (school) to have the £1900 Pupil Premium for CLA. As Virtual School Head teacher you will make a decision on how the money is best used. Some children will not require as much support as others, so in those discussions around the PEP and putting in place that extra support through PPG funding it may be that some support will be more than £1900 and some will be less. If you believe that, usually for those expensive independent providers, all aspects of support for the child (through the PEP) have been covered in the existing package then why would you make a PP payment to the provider? However if you decided that there was even more support that could be provided then you could use it - it would need to be detailed within the PEP and agreed with you as the Virtual School Head teacher. The amount you might use for such support is not fixed (i.e. at £1900) it will depend on what support is being given.'

## **Appendix 2**

### **Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15 FAQ**

#### **What changes have been made to the conditions of grant for the Pupil Premium for looked after children in 2014-15?**

**The conditions of grant state the following:**

##### **Basis of the allocations to the local authority**

The Department will allocate a provisional allocation of £1,900 per child for the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded in the March 2013 Children Looked After Data Return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2012. This allocation will be updated and finalised in October 2014 based on the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded in the March 2014 Children Looked After Data Return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2013.

##### **Use of the Looked After Children Premium**

The grant allocation for Looked After Children must be managed by the designated Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after those children to be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss with the child's education setting – usually with the designated teacher – how the child will benefit from any pupil premium funding. The local authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2015-2016.

The conditions of grant for the pupil premium arrangements in 2014-15 are published on the Department's website and can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283193/Pupil\\_Premium\\_CoG\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283193/Pupil_Premium_CoG_2014-15.pdf)

#### **What are the changes to the pupil premium arrangements for looked after children in 2014-15?**

There are three main changes:

Firstly, looked after children attract a pupil premium of £1900, more than double the amount they attracted in 2013-14.

Secondly, the cohort of looked after children who attract the pupil premium is bigger and includes children looked after from the first day of care rather than, as previously, only those who had been looked after for six months or more.

Thirdly, for 2014-15 the pupil premium for looked after children must be managed by the virtual school head in the authority that looks after them. Unlike in previous years, there is no requirement for an authority to pass the funding onto the school where the child is on roll to contribute towards meeting the needs identified in their Personal Education Plan. The presumption, however, is funding is passed to the school and this is strongly encouraged.

**Why have the arrangements for managing the pupil premium for looked after children changed for 2014-15?**

The Department has changed the conditions of grant regarding how the pupil premium is managed for looked after children to reflect more effectively the particular challenges of supporting their education. Now that virtual school heads will be statutory they will be responsible as part of the corporate parent role to promote the educational achievement of the children looked after by their authority. Ministers therefore want them to have a greater role in working with schools to ensure that duty is fulfilled. And now local authorities attract pupil premium for children from the first day of care giving the virtual school head management of the looked after pupil premium is administratively less bureaucratic.

**Does the virtual school head have to manage the budget or can this be delegated to a local authority finance team?**

The conditions of grant for 2014-15 states clearly that the pupil premium grant allocation must be managed by the designated virtual school head for the children looked after by the authority. This has statutory force. It is a virtual school head rather than a local authority finance team who is best placed to know how to use pupil premium to maximise the benefits to looked after pupils. Virtual school heads should consult finance teams about the best way to distribute funding to schools.

**Can the Director of Finance dictate that the pupil premium funding is passed directly to schools?**

The conditions of grant state that virtual school heads should manage pupil premium funding. It is therefore for the virtual school head to decide how the pupil premium for looked after children is managed. That is an important part of how the virtual school head complies with the duty under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of the children looked after by the authority.

**Does the virtual school head have to give the money to schools?**

There is no requirement to do so. There is, however, a strong expectation that virtual school heads will pass on pupil premium funding onto a child's education setting to be used to meet additional needs set out in his or her Personal Education Plan. That can be passed to the school on a termly or annual basis. Any funding not passed down to schools by the end of the financial year will have to be returned to the Department.

**Does the virtual school head have to give £1,900 to schools or can they give a higher or lower amount?**

The conditions of grant state that grant allocation for looked after children must be managed by the virtual school head. It is for the virtual school head to decide whether to provide £1900 to a school for a looked after child or a higher or lower amount. They can also decide on whether to pay termly or annually. They can also link allocation to the content of the Personal Education Plan as agreed with the school.

**Can the virtual school head pool funding for some of the authority's looked after children?**

The Department expects virtual school heads to manage the pupil premium to ensure that it promotes the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the authority. It may be appropriate to pool some pupil premium for activities to benefit the authority's looked after children more holistically. For example, it might be appropriate to use this funding to provide training for a group of designated teachers across the authority or a group of Teaching Alliance schools.



Equally, a virtual school head might negotiate with a school regarding pooling pupil premium funding for looked after children with the school's pupil premium to provide an enhanced and more intensive package of support for disadvantaged children generally.

**Does the pupil premium for looked after children need to be passed to non-mainstream schools?**

There is no requirement to do so. There should be a discussion about what provision is being delivered and what would be provided in addition to that in accordance with the child's Personal Education Plan, if the pupil premium funding was passed on to the non-mainstream education setting.

**Can the pupil premium for looked after children fund a post in the virtual school?**

Pupil premium is additional funding provided to raise the achievement of looked after pupils and close the achievement gap. It is not intended to fund posts that should be the responsibility of local authorities as a corporate parent.

There may be instances where some pupil premium funding can be used to support the work of a person where it can be very clearly demonstrated that their role has a significant contribution to promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by the authority. That role could, for example, involve working with schools to raise the quality of learning targets in a child's Personal Education Plan.

**Can some of the pupil premium for looked after children be spent on providing other central services that support their education?**

Pupil premium funding is additional funding provided to support schools to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including looked after children. It should not be used to fund central services that would reasonably be expected to be funded by local authorities, to comply with their duty to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after. As stated above, however, virtual school heads are responsible for managing the efficient use of pupil premium funding for the purpose it has been provided. They will therefore need to demonstrate a direct link between spending and raising standards of achievement for the children looked after by their authority, wherever they are placed.

**Are virtual school heads accountable for the use and impact of the pupil premium on the achievement of looked after children, in the same way as headteachers?**

Virtual school heads are responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating pupil premium funding to benefit children looked after by their authority. That means:

- making sure that pupil premium funding for looked after children is spent effectively and fully, given any underspend needs to be returned to the Department at the end of the financial year;
- being able to demonstrate how pupil premium funding managed by the virtual school head is linked to raising achievement for looked after children and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers; and
- having arrangements in place to engage with the looked after child's school (usually with the designated teacher) about how pupil premium funding allocated to the school is contributing to meet the needs identified in his/her Personal Education Plan.

Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils who attract pupil premium on their roll, through Ofsted inspections and KS2/KS4 school performance tables. Virtual school heads and others involved in Personal Education Plans will want a constructive dialogue with schools about how best to support looked after children using the pupil premium.

The Ofsted framework for the inspection of children looked after services states that, as part of the performance information required, the inspector will ask for the annual report of the virtual school head. We would expect that to include information about how the pupil premium has been managed and the impact it has made.

**But to whom is the virtual school head accountable within their local authority?**

That depends on the line management arrangements in individual local authorities. Ultimately, however, the virtual school head is accountable to the Director of Children's Services and/or the Chief Executive and the Lead Member for Children.

**How should the funding be allocated for looked after children in 2014-15 when the funding is based on one-year old data in the SSDA903?**

It is important to distinguish the basis on which funding is allocated to local authorities from SSDA903 data and how that funding is managed by the virtual school head to support those children who are looked after during the 2014-15 period.

The provisional allocation is based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2012, as submitted in the SSDA903 in March 2013. This allocation is updated and finalised in October 2014, based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2013, as submitted in the SSDA903 in March 2014.

This funding should be managed by the virtual head teacher so it is used to support those children looked after by the local authority for one day or more during the 2014-15 period. This needs to take account of the fact that children move in and out of care.

**How should virtual school heads give schools funding for children who have been looked after for a very short period?**

It is up to virtual schools heads to manage pupil premium funding for looked after children during the 2014-15 period. Although £1900 is allocated for each looked after child, irrespective of how long they have been in care, this does not necessarily mean that virtual head teachers are expected to manage the funding on the same basis to schools. Virtual head teachers can therefore manage the funding to take account of the length of time in care, as well as other factors, if they wish. The funding, however, should always be to support the educational achievement of the looked after child, as described in their Personal Education Plan.

**Can the virtual school head carry over pupil premium funding to 2015-16?**

No. Any pupil premium funding that has not been passed to schools or spent by 31 March 2015 must be returned to the Department.

**Can we give foster carers the pupil premium to spend rather than give it to schools?**

The virtual school head manages pupil premium funding to support the education of looked after children, as set out in the Personal Education Plan. The expectation is that this funding is passed to schools unless there are clear reasons not to do this. It should not be used for activity that the local authority should normally be expected to fund as the

corporate parent, such as support for foster carers. Foster carers, however, have an essential role in supporting the education of the children for whom they care. Foster carers can therefore make a valuable contribution, such as with the Personal Education Plan.

**Does the pupil premium for 2014-15 work in the same way as personal education allowances did?**

No. The pupil premium is not a replacement for the personal education allowance. The pupil premium is much more focussed on support to improve the educational achievement of looked after children and close the gap between looked after children and their peers.

**Can virtual school heads impose conditions on how schools use the pupil premium for looked after children?**

We want local authorities to have a constructive and meaningful dialogue with the schools on the most effective use of the funding and not impose conditions. The funding should support children's Personal Educational Plan, overseen by the designated teacher in the school.

**Can a school insist that they get £1,900 for a looked after child on roll?**

It is up to the virtual school head to decide how the funding is managed, including how funding is distributed to schools. Although £1900 is allocated for each looked after child, irrespective of how long they have been in care, this does not necessarily mean that virtual head teachers are expected to manage the funding on the same basis to schools. Virtual school heads should also work closely with schools about how best to meet the needs identified in a child's Personal Education Plan with support provided through the pupil premium.

**Can an amount be held by the virtual school head to administer the grant?**

Pupil premium funding is additional funding provided to support schools to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including looked after children. It should not be used to fund central services such as the virtual school head to administer the funding. The pupil premium should be used to provide additional support for looked after children in order to raise the achievement of looked after children.

**What tips have virtual school heads got to share about how they have worked with schools up to now in how the pupil premium is used?**

Talk to other virtual school heads in your area through the virtual school head regional structures.