Pupil Premium Plus Policy and Practice for Looked After Children

Guidance for schools, Early Years settings, social workers and foster carers

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About this document

Title : Pupil Premium Plus Policy and Practice for Looked After Children

Purpose : This policy and practice guidance is for schools, social workers and foster carers working with Looked After Children to provide guidance and information about Cambridgeshire’s approach to, and the use of, the PP+ Grant (PP+) to raise attainment.

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1. Introduction

In April 2014 the government introduced the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) so that each Looked After Child attracts funding of £1,900 for each financial year, from the date they enter care. In April 2015 this was extended to include children in Early Years settings attracting funding of £300 per financial year. The government has set out with statutory force that the Head of Virtual School (HVS) is now responsible for managing the PP+ budget.

Whilst education results in Cambridgeshire are comparable to the Eastern Region, overall the education outcomes of Looked After Children remain low compared to their peers in Cambridgeshire schools. Many children entering care or starting school do so with low entry levels, trauma and with special educational needs. Equally though a greater number of Looked After Children are underachieving and should be making the expected or accelerated levels of progress.

Without wishing to negate the achievements of any individual child, it is clear from outcomes to date, that continuing to do the same things will not make the impact that we, as Corporate Parents and the government, should be hoping and expecting. It is the priority of Cambridgeshire County Council to raise attainment, increase progress and improve the quality of learning that all Looked After Children receive, through rigorous monitoring of the Personal Education planning process.

The arrangements for the PP+ make for increased accountability for the HVS but also offer an opportunity to focus on raising attainment and to work in close partnership with schools, Early Years providers, carers and social workers to make a significant difference for some of our most vulnerable learners.

Schools and Early Years providers will already be aware that Ofsted Inspectors are required to evaluate the performance of children who are supported by the PP+ and will report on the impact and whether the in-school gap is closing. It is also an Ofsted Eastern Region priority to improve the outcomes of Looked After Children and to assess/monitor how PP+ has been used to raise attainment and accelerate progress through inspection. It is essential for schools to be able to demonstrate that high quality Personal Education Plans, along with the effective use of PP+ is impacting on improved educational outcomes for Looked After Children.
2. Pupil Premium Plus

As Corporate Parents raising the attainment of Looked After Children is a central responsibility of Local Authorities, schools and their partners in the community. The PP+ grant is a vital resource to help close the gap between disadvantage children and their peers.

This policy and practice applies to children in the care of Cambridgeshire Local Authority, whether they are placed in or outside of the county.

2.1 Eligibility

The Early Years PP+ for Looked After Children is available the term after their third birthday.

Children and young people attract the PP+ for all maintained schools from the first day of care from Reception age through to and including the summer term of Year 11.

Children who attend non maintained schools, e.g. private schools, by the choice of the carer cannot receive Pupil Premium as the conditions of grant preclude this.

Children who are placed in a private education setting, specialist provision or therapeutic placement which includes education, by choice of the Local Authority, receive funding to cover the full needs of the child. These placements will no longer receive Pupil Premium funding.

All providers will be able to apply for additional support as described in the pooled funding section below.

2.2 Allocation

The DfE has set aside an amount of £300 for Early Years (the term after their third birthday) and £1900 for children and young people in statutory mainstream and non-mainstream settings (children and young people from Reception age to Year 11).

The funding is allocated on the basis of learning need as set out in the Personal Education Plan (PEP); in exceptional circumstances schools can apply for additional funding through the HVS.

In Early Years settings the amount is guided by the number of hours provision the child accesses (a percentage).

From January 2018 Cambridgeshire will allocate £500 per term for each child or young person attending primary, secondary school and special schools. A total of £1,500 per annum.
2.3 Pooled Funding

The remaining £400 per annum will be held by the HVS and used to provide training e.g. for Designated Teachers for Looked After Children and will also provide additional support for young people who are experiencing significant difficulties in their education. In this way the HVS may commission services or activities that will benefit Cambridgeshire Looked After Children more holistically.

Equally, some clusters of schools or Early Years providers may have a proposal for using PP+ funding for the benefit of Looked After Children in the locality. Any proposals should be discussed and agreed with the HVS/EY VS teacher.

3. Use of the PP+ Grant

The PP+ is an opportunity to address the learning needs of a looked after child through the provision of additional interventions and learning resources tailored to the individual child’s need. It is not intended to replace services, support or resources that the Local Authority, schools, Early Years providers, carers or other agencies working with Looked After Children already provide, or that is provided to all children in the area of universal services as part of the education offer.

Spending should provide additional interventions, resources, activities or support to that which is received from other services. In particular funding should not be used to replace:

- The support set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) or those attached to a school based plan for additional special educational needs.
- Interventions that have no additional cost and where the Early Years setting or school’s own funding covers the cost.
- Resources that a Local Authority provides for through its allowance to foster carers or children’s home fees. Carers have an allocation for clothing, uniform and out of school activities within reason.
- Trips and visits organised by the school as part of the curriculum. If these are part of the curriculum or specifically related to exam coursework, schools can only request a donation. It is expected that Social Care or carer should provide resources for these activities.
- Basic equipment that the child or young person needs to participate in lessons or for school uniform, school lunches or equipment for physical education lessons.
- Alternative education for Looked After Children subject to fixed term or permanent exclusion
- Before or after school childcare clubs.

On occasions there are specific activities that improve self-esteem or social skills or are linked to raising aspiration. These must be clearly linked to the child’s learning...
objectives recorded in the PEP along with how it will contribute to improved educational outcomes.

4. Personal Education Plans (PEP)

A Cambridgeshire looked after child will have a PEP from the term after their second birthday and up to the summer term of Year 13 if they remain in education.

The PEP provides an ongoing, holistic overview of the child / young person’s education journey.

In Cambridgeshire we use an electronic process for the PEP paperwork and it is therefore referred to as an ePEP.

An initial ePEP is completed within 10 working days of a child becoming looked after.

- A full ePEP should be completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after
- The ePEP meeting will usually take place in school with the Designated Teacher for LAC, other relevant school staff, carers, social worker and the child / young person. A teacher from the Virtual School may also attend. It may be that, due to capacity issues, the social worker and/or virtual school teacher may contribute to the meeting via phone/skype or similar system.
- The school does not need to attend a LAC review or provide additional paperwork as the relevant information is contained with the ePEP. If the ePEP has been completed sometime before the LAC review and/or if the school wish to attend and are invited they may attend.
- Cambridgeshire schools update each looked after child’s ePEP termly.
- In the event of the child changing school or care placement a full ePEP will need to be completed within 20 days.

The Cambridgeshire ePEP is based around three key areas.

- The activities within school, progress, transition work, extra-curricular activities etc, this part is completed by the Designated Teacher for LAC in the school prior to the meeting
- The middle section, and the basis for discussion at the meeting, is the progress the child/young person is making, what additional support or intervention is required, how this will be paid for (PPP allocation) and who will monitor the interventions.
The final part of the ePEP will be pre-populated by the social worker and represents the factual information about the child/young person; age, status, contact details etc.

Early Years, Post 16 and SEND (Special schools) ePEPs are slightly different to match requirements. But are based on the same premise.

4.1 Why are PEPs important?

- They are **statutory** documents
- Monitor attainment and achievement
- **Carers** need to have a thorough understanding of their role in supporting education including attending PEP meetings, consultation evenings and social events.
- **The school** need to understand the reasons why a young person is looked after and how this may affect them. Including an understanding of:
  - Legal terms: ICO, Section 20/Accommodated, Full Care Order
  - Contact arrangements (with whom and when)
  - Life Story work
  - Care Plan and Court dates
  - Other professionals involved; Unit Clinicians, Guardians
- **Social workers** need to understand the young person’s school requirements

The PEP is part of the overall care planning process that is managed through the statutory reviewing process overseen by the Independent Review Officer.

5 Management and Accountability

5.1 School level Accountability

The Designated Teacher will be accountable to the Head Teacher and the school governing body for the efficient expenditure and effective impact of PP+ and the progress of the Looked After Children on roll.

In Early Years settings the manager will be accountable to the owner or committee members for the efficient expenditure and effective impact of PP+. 
5.2 Virtual School Head Management and Accountability

The HVS is accountable to Cambridgeshire County Council, the Virtual School Management Board and the DfE for setting up and administering a transparent and rigorous allocation process ensuring maximised impact for Looked After Children. The HVS will detail this termly in the report to the Virtual School Management Board.

The PP+ allocation for Cambridgeshire looked after children is managed by the HVS. It must be used for the benefit of the educational needs of the individual child/young person as set out in the ePEP. If there are concerns regarding the quality of the ePEP and the proposed use of the PP+ there are arrangements in place to ensure that there can be a discussion with the school. Through this discussion the plan or proposed use of the funding can be amended so that it can be approved without delay.

The HVS reserves the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding has not been used to address the specific learning needs of a looked after child or withhold future funding if the schools PP+ allocation is deemed inappropriate.

PP+ payments are made each term directly to schools via the BACs system. In the event that a child moves school during the term, there will be no recoupment, the new school will be able to claim PP+ at the start of the next term unless there is a particular need in which case the new school should contact the HVS. Where it is expected that a child or young person may move at the half term £300 will be allocated.

The Local Authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the next financial year and must pay back any underspend to the Government.

Schools are permitted to carry forward PP+ funding if, for example, they are using accumulated funding for a single event or particular annual activity.

High quality ePEPs are the means by which the HVS will monitor the effective use of PP+ within individual schools and across the Local Authority.

The PEP must include base line data, targets for improvements, expected outcomes and timescales as well as the cost of interventions, resources and support provided through PP+ funding.

6. PP+ for Looked After Children from Other Authorities

Different approaches will be adopted by each Local Authority. Cambridgeshire Early Years providers and schools that have looked after children on their roll from other local authorities must contact the relevant HVS from that authority to ascertain their PP+ funding arrangements.
7. **Adoption Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders (Post LAC)**

From April 2014, schools in England have attracted the Pupil Premium for children adopted from care or who have left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangement Order. Parents and guardians will need to inform the school about their child’s circumstances and provide supporting evidence, for example, the Adoption Certificate in time for the school to record the child’s status on the school census in January of each academic year. The school or setting is not permitted to claim this funding without permission from the child’s parent/carer.

This can be a sensitive and confidential issue for families so consideration will need to be given about how and to whom parents/carers will need to provide the relevant documentary evidence in school.

The Virtual School has no role in Pupil Premium for Post LAC children/young people.

8. **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1 - What is the difference between Pupil Premium and PP+?**

The government provides additional funding in the form of Pupil Premium in recognition that some groups of children, for example those entitled to free school meals, do less well at school. It is understood that looked after children have additional needs and vulnerabilities and as a cohort achieve significantly less well, and so they attract additional funding called PP+ Grant. The funding is to enable schools and Early Years providers to accelerate progress and to close the gap in attainment.

**Q2 – Do children have to access the full early education entitlement (15 hours to be eligible for the Early years Pupil Premium)?**

No, from April 2015 providers will receive an additional 53p per hour for each eligible child. Children do not have to access the full entitlement in order to be eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium. Providers will receive an amount that is proportionate to the number of hours that a child is accessing.

**Q3 – The school wants to spend the money on educational strategies for the school is that acceptable?**

Yes, the conditions of the grant state that it should be used for the educational benefit of the looked after child and linked to their ePEP. If an improvement in school strategies or interventions can be shown to impact directly on the Looked After Child the school could use the funding this way if it has been agreed via the ePEP. The school has to publish its use of the PP+ grant on its school website and is
accountable to the governing body and Ofsted for the impact on improved educational outcomes the funding has made.

Q4 – How much funding is the PP+ Grant?

The PP+ for Early Years is £300 and for children between reception age and Year 11 it is £1900 per financial year. However, it has been given to the HVS to manage and allocate according to the child’s needs.

Q5 – When are children eligible for PP+?

For Early Years settings, they become eligible the term after they their third birthday. Children attending primary school reception already receive PP+ and therefore will not be eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium.

Children are eligible from the date they enter care between Reception and the end of Year 11 when they end statutory education.

Young people in care attending Post 16 education attract the post 16 Bursary. The young persons social worker, college or school (6th form) will be able to provide further advice.

Q6 – How does a school or Early Years provider receive PP+?

Funding is received via NEF unless the child is placed out of county and then it would be HVS. The amount of £300 for the year will be divided over three terms at 53p per hour for each session attended.

Q7 – Who can decide what the PP+ can be spent on?

Schools and Early Years providers know their children best and are able to identify their learning needs and interventions to enable them to accelerate progress. However, final approval lies with the HVS based on the learning objectives and support discussed in the ePEP.

Q8 - Which providers are eligible?

All maintained, academies and free schools are eligible to claim for PP+.

In Early Years all registered early years providers that take children for the funded early education entitlement including school nurseries and maintained nursery schools, private, voluntary and independent providers and child minders will be eligible to claim Pupil Premium.
Q9 – What does not work in terms of effective interventions?

Ofsted findings:

• Spending the funding indiscriminately on teaching assistants with little impact and not managing their performance well
• Spending the funding on one-to-one tuition and booster classes – that are unmonitored… and do not relate to class teaching…and are not audited or quality assured
• Planning spending in isolation – not part of the school action plan
• Assuming that pupils eligible for the PP+ will have learning difficulties
• Comparing the performance of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium with other eligible pupils nationally, rather than all pupils – lowering expectations.

Q10 – What does work?

• Targeted tuition to include measuring impact (start and end of intervention)
• Homework support
• TA appointment and targeted input for specific areas
• Resources (e.g. revision guides, text books, equipment for particular lessons such as DT, Art, college / off site courses, sensory equipment, etc.)
• Group work intervention, with LAC as focus child (for both learning and pastoral areas )
• Online access to learning resources which require funding
• Access to extra-curricular activities which will support or impact behaviour and in turn learning (e.g. Drama clubs)
• Reward systems (e.g. rewards for daily golden time) which will impact learning
• Behaviour interventions
• Opportunity to extend school time, in order to access learning
• Summer school access
• Staff training to enhance understanding of LAC related difficulties (e.g. attachment)
9. Contacts

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Website link:
http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learningtogether/homepage/131/virtual_school

10 Useful Documents and Resources:

- Promoting the education of looked after children - Statutory guidance for local authorities:

- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children Statutory guidance for school governing bodies:

- Sutton Trust link – Education Endowment Foundation:
  http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/