

Pupil Premium Policy and Practice for Children in Care

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

Document Reviewed: August 2020
Document Review due: August 2022

About this document

Title	Pupil Premium Policy and Practice; for Children in Care
Purpose	This policy and practice guidance is for schools, early years providers, carers and social workers working with children in care to provide guidance and information about the Essex approach and use of Pupil Premium Grant to raise attainment.
Updated by	Natalie Stephenson Virtual School Head
Approved by	Standards and Excellence Service and Family Operations Management Team
Date	June2016
Version number	04
Status	Approved
Review frequency	Two-yearly
Next review date	August 2022

Table of Contents

Section	Page(s)
1. Introduction	4
2. Pupil Premium Plus	4
3. Use of Pupil Premium Plus	5
4. Personal Education Plans	6
5. Management and Accountability	7
6. Pupil Premium Grant for Children in Care from other Local Authorities	8
7. Adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders	8
8. Frequently Asked Questions	8
9. Contacts	11
10 Useful Documents and Resources	11

Introduction

In April 2014 the government introduced the Pupil Premium Plus so that each child in care attracts funding of £2300 for each financial year, from the date they enter care. In April 2015 this was extended to include children in Early Years settings for children in care to support them to achieve their learning goals. The government has set out with statutory force that the Virtual School Head is now responsible for managing the Pupil Premium Plus budget. We believe that schools and early Years providers are best placed to know their children in care and what interventions and support they need to achieve their maximum potential.

Whilst educational results in Essex are comparable to the Eastern Region overall the educational outcomes for children in care remain low compared to their peers in Essex 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 children in care are underachieving and should be making the expected or accelerated levels of progress.

Without wishing to negate the achievements of individual children it is clear from the overall outcomes to date, that continuing to do the same things will not make the impact that we as Corporate Parents and the government are hoping and expecting. It is the priority of Essex to raise attainment, increase progress and improve the quality of Personal Education Plans.

Essex does not allocate Pupil Premium Plus to those independent schools and education providers where the child's individual education placement is funded by the Local Authority specifically for their individual need. However individual providers can make specific requests to meet an identified learning directly to the Virtual Head. Requests will be considered on an individual basis.

The arrangements for Pupil Premium Plus make for increased accountability for the Virtual Head 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 Pupil Premium and will report on the impact and whether the in-school difference is diminishing. It is also an Ofsted eastern region priority to improve the outcomes of children in care and how the Pupil Premium Plus has been used to raise attainment and accelerate progress through inspection. It is essential for the school to be able to demonstrate that high quality Personal Education Plans along with the effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus is impacting on improved educational outcomes for children in care.

1. Pupil Premium Plus

As Corporate Parents raising attainment of children in care is a central responsibility of Local Authorities, schools and their partners in the community. The Pupil Premium Plus is a vital resource to help diminish the difference between disadvantaged children and their peers.

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

2.1 Eligibility

The Early Years Pupil Premium for Children in Care is for children aged from three years and one term accessing their free entitlement through the universal offer. It is managed by the Virtual School Head.

Children and young people attract Pupil Premium Plus for schools from the first day of care between Reception age through to and including the summer term of year 11.

2.2 Allocation

The DfE has set an amount of £300 for Early Years (for children from three years and one term in age) and £2300 for schools per child in care. The funding is allocated on the basis of learning need as set out in the Personal Education Plan and in some circumstances may be more or less than the amount set.

In Early years settings the amount is guided by the amount of hours provision the child accesses.

There is a presumption that funding will be passed to early years providers and schools, although there is no longer a requirement to do so.

2.3 Pooled Funding

The arrangements provide the opportunity for the Virtual School Head to pool some of the funding to commission services or activities that will benefit Essex children in care more holistically.

Equally, some clusters of schools or Early Years providers may have a proposal for using Pupil Premium Grant for the benefit of children in care in the locality. Any proposals should be discussed and agreed with the Virtual School Head.

3. Use of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant

The Pupil Premium Plus is an opportunity to address the learning needs of a child in care 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 children in care already provide, **or** that is provided to all children in the area as 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 allowances to foster carers or children's home fees. Carers have an allocation for clothing, uniform, out of school activities and residential or trips abroad 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 or for lessons including school uniform, school lunches, or equipment for physical education lessons this would also include access to a computer and the internet for completion of homework or private study.
- Alternative education for children in care 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 and this must be clearly linked to the child's learning objectives along with how it will contribute to improved educational outcomes.

4. Personal Education Plans

Every child in care between 3 years and one term and 18 years must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). This is part of the care plan that is reviewed through the statutory review process by the Independent Review Officer. Essex has a two-part approach to PEPs.

4.1 PEP1 (EPEP)

Personal Education Plan Part 1 (PEP1) is completed at any point during each term by the school on Welfare Call www.welfarecall.com . To achieve high quality Personal Education Plans, it is important that there are short and long term learning objectives set by the school that are focused enabling the child to make the next steps in learning. The proposed spend of the Pupil Premium Plus is set within PEP1 and it should demonstrate a clear link between those interventions that will additionally be provided and an outcome of accelerated progress and raised attainment.

The Early Years PEP1 is also completed on Welfare Call www.welfarecall.com and should be completed each term .

Each term the review should include a discussion with the child or young person to ensure that the learning objectives are understood along with the use of the Pupil Premium Plus. Pupil Premium will be allocated solely on the basis of the termly PEP1 when completed by the school. It is not dependent on the PEP2 meeting that is arranged by the social worker. It will, however, be important that schools take the most recent PEP 1 and plan for spending to the PEP meeting to ensure that carers and social workers understand the child's targets and the plans to support the child's learning.

4.2 PEP2

Responsibility for the initiation and maintenance of the PEP2 is with the child's social worker. It should be reviewed at least every 6 months or when there are changes to the education setting. For example a school move or change to an alternative education provider. This usually takes the form of a meeting and should include the child or young person, carers, social worker, Designated Teacher and any other relevant professionals. The meeting should focus on the educational progress and the support required by professionals to enable the child or young person to achieve their learning objectives as set out in PEP1.

4.3 Requesting Pupil Premium Plus through PEP1

Pupil Premium Plus funding will be allocated on a termly basis through completion of PEP1 and should reflect the child's learning needs as set out in section 3. Where the intervention plan covers a longer

period it will be important to set termly milestones and request the funding for the plan that term with approximate costs.

Where planned interventions are intended for a wider group of children; early years providers and schools will need to set out how the individual child in care will benefit. Proportionate costs need to be calculated. For example if four children benefit from the intervention, a quarter of the costs can be requested on the PEP₁ form. Once the plan and planned spend has been submitted by the school on Welfare Call and approved by the Virtual School the funding will be sent out.

5. Management and Accountability

5.1 School Level Accountability

The Designated Teacher or Early Years setting manager will be accountable to the Head teacher and the School Governing body for the efficient expenditure and effective impact of the Pupil Premium Plus and the progress of the children in care on roll.

The Headteacher of the school must be aware of the amount of funding received by the school for children in care and how effectively it is spent.

5.2 Virtual School Head Management and Accountability

Pupil Premium Plus will only be provided to meet needs identified in a high quality plan in PEP₁, with clear, quantitative (and exceptionally, qualitatively or soft) targets for improvement.

The PEP₁ must include baseline data, the target for improvement, expected outcomes and timescales as well as the cost of interventions, resources and support.

Funding may be moderated to require specific outcomes or evidence before payment, suspended or ceased where it is not clear that a service is being provided or a plan delivered.

Systems have been put in place with financial services to provide Pupil Premium Plus to schools on approval of a high quality PEP₁.

Pupil Premium Plus payments are made each term. In the event that a child moves school during the term, there will be no recoupment unless an amount greater than the termly amount of £700 has been approved. The new school will be able to claim at the start of the next term unless there is a particular need in which case the new school should contact the Virtual School.

The grant allocation for Essex children in care is managed by the Virtual School Head. It must be used for the benefit of the educational needs of the individual child in care as set out in the Personal Education Plan. If there are concerns regarding the quality of the Personal Education Plan and the proposed use of the Pupil Premium Plus 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 Virtual School Head is accountable to the Essex County Council, Corporate Members Panel, and responsible for setting up and administering a transparent and rigorous allocation process ensuring

maximised impact for children in care. The Virtual School Head will detail this in the Virtual School Annual report.

The Local Authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the next financial year.

The Virtual School Head 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 child in care.

6. Pupil Premium Plus for Children in Care from other Local Authorities

Different approaches will be adopted by different Local Authorities. Essex Early Years providers and schools that have children in care on their roll from other Local Authorities must contact the relevant Virtual School Head (VSH) to request their Pupil Premium Plus arrangements.

7. Adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Placement Orders

From April 2014, schools in England have attracted the Pupil Premium for children adopted from care or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Placement Order providing they are recorded on the School Census.

To attract the Pupil Premium for adopted children and those who are the subject of a Special Guardianship Order and Placement 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.

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.

8. Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1 What is the Pupil Premium Plus?

The government provides additional funding to schools 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 children in care have additional needs and vulnerabilities and as a cohort achieve significantly less well, and so they attract an additional amount called the Pupil Premium Plus Grant. The funding is to enable schools and early years providers to accelerate progress and to narrow the gap in attainment.

Q2. Do children have to access the full early education entitlement (15 hours a week) 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 the 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 in school, is that acceptable?

Yes, the conditions of the grant state that it should be used for the educational benefit of the child in care and linked to their Personal Education Plan. The school has to publish its use of the PPG on the 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 Pupil Premium Plus?

The Pupil premium for Early Years is £300 and for children in school between reception and year 11 it is set at £2300. However it has been given to the Virtual School Head to manage and allocate according to the child's needs and can be more or less than the amount set.

Q5. When are children eligible for Pupil Premium Plus?

For children in Early Years settings, they become eligible at three years and one term old. Children attending primary school reception class already receive Pupil Premium Plus 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 college or school will be able to provide further advice.

Q6. How does a school or Early Years provider apply for Pupil Premium Plus ?

Schools and Early Years providers will complete a termly PEP¹ on Welfare Call. Once submitted the learning objectives and proposed spending plan will be assessed by the Virtual School for Children in Care and the money will be released.

Q7. Who can decide what the Pupil Premium Plus 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 approval lies with the Virtual School Head (VSH) based on the learning objectives and support plan set out in the PEP 1.

Q8. How will I know if the identified need is approved?

The school or Early Years provider will identify the child's learning objectives in PEP¹. The objectives and spending plan will be assessed by the Virtual School and the funding will be sent out. On occasions there is a moderation process to clarify or reassess the plan if necessary. The money will be sent either as a BACS payment headed 'PPG CiC (term Year)' or as a cheque each term.

Q9. The child or young person attends an Academy or Free School; are they still eligible for Pupil Premium Plus?

Yes the funding is allocated to all maintained schools, Academies and free schools on the basis of need.

Q10. Which providers will be eligible?

All maintained, academies and free schools are eligible to claim pupil premium. 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 the pupil premium.

In Essex, Pupil Premium Plus is not allocated to non-maintained or independent schools as those places are funded differently and funding is already based on the child's individual needed.

Q11. My school or Early Years setting has children in care but they are not looked after by Essex County Council? How do I get the Pupil Premium Plus?

Each individual Local Authority has received the Pupil Premium Plus for their children in care. They will each have their own methods of distribution. If schools have not been advised of the application process or received the Pupil Premium Plus, you will need to contact the Local Authority Virtual School Head. If you are unable to make contact with that Local Authority please contact the Essex Virtual School and we will try to assist.

Q12. Will the school fund out of school clubs, uniform, and trips?

We appreciate that some schools may in the past have used the Pupil Premium Plus to fund school trips, out of school activities, uniform, equipment etc. In these cases schools will need to review those commitments and make an assessment regarding their contribution to raising attainment. On occasions there are specific activities that improve self-esteem or social skills and this would need to be clearly linked to the child's targets along with how it will contribute to improved educational outcomes. Requests should not be agreed on the basis of requests from other professionals. Within the fostering allowances, foster carers have an allocation for clothing, uniform, school trips and out of school activities within reason. Foster carers can claim additional funding to support the cost of the year 6 residential trip as well as one school trip aboard during the child's secondary education. There may be occasions when carers and the school can agree to share the costs of these trips, but it is at the discretion of the school. Where this is the case it will be important that it is discussed with the social worker and carers.

Q13. Can the Pupil Premium Plus be used to purchase a laptop?

As with all requests for the Pupil Premium Plus, careful consideration should be made to ensure effective use of the funding. Additionally, all requests should clearly link and support the learning objectives on the PEP1.

Digital Technologies such as Laptops, iPads and tablets can be costly resources, which may not be as effective as other interventions in raising attainment and progress. (Education Endowment Foundation also known as Sutton Trust)

These items should not be requested for purposes such as 'to aid homework', as fostering services should ensure that foster homes provide suitable facilities for completion of homework or for private study, and therefore children should have access to a computer to support their education within the home, library or through access after school.

Q14. Can the Pupil Premium Plus be used to fund Alternative Provision?

No, every child is entitled to a full education provision, regardless of whether they are in care and attract PPG plus. The PPG plus should be used for additional interventions and should not be used to replace services, support or resources that the Local Authority, schools, Early Years providers, carers or other agencies working with children in care already provide, **or** that is provided to all children in the area as universal services as part of the education offer.

5. Contacts

Essex Virtual School virtual.school@essex.gov.uk

If you wish to send a document or information securely please use:
virtual.school@essex.gcsx.gov.uk

6. Useful Documents and Resources

DfE statutory Guidance *Promoting the Education of Looked After Children 2014*

[DfE Conditions of Grant](#)

[Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head](#) (DfE 2014)

Essex Fostering Handbook

[The Pupil Premium *Next Steps*](#) (Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation July 2015)

[Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit](#)

Website:

Virtual School for Children in Care

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Virtual_School/Pages/default.aspx