

Herefordshire Virtual School

Pupil Premium Policy For Looked After Children 2024-2025

I. Introduction

National changes in the arrangements for Pupil Premium for looked after children were introduced in February 2020 and this policy is informed by three key Department for Education (DfE) documents:

1. Pupil Premium: Allocations and Conditions of Grant 2024-25 (March 27th 2024) which can be viewed [here](#)
2. Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities (March 2015) which can be viewed [here](#)
3. Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018) which can be viewed [here](#)

Throughout our policy, the Pupil Premium for looked after children will be referred to as **Pupil Premium Plus** to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations.

The changes were as follows:

- For the financial year 2024-25 'Pupil Premium Plus' funding to support children and young people in care at school increased to £2,570 per child.
- Children and young people will be eligible following one day in care according to the SSDA903 social care census March 2023 and aged 4 to 15 on 31st August 2022. The final allocation is adjusted in December 2024 using the March 2024 census figures.
- Virtual School Head Teachers 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.
- Early Years Pupil Premium is additional funding (up to £388 per year) for Early Years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged 2,3 and 4 year olds. Details of eligibility can be found [here](#).

For children who have left care (through adoption, Special Guardianship Order, or Care Arrangement Order), the Pupil Premium Plus grant goes directly to the school. However, this grant is outside the remit of this policy. It is the responsibility of the parents, guardians, or carers of previously looked after children, to make sure that the school is aware that a child was previously looked after.

2. Pupil Premium Plus Arrangements 2024-25

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

- Pupil Premium Plus is to benefit the looked after child and must be used to enhance and improve their education. The child's voice and their specific needs are of paramount importance in considering the use and impact of this money by schools and settings. 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.
- The funding will be provided according to the needs of the child. The PEP is required to identify the targets, timescales and costs involved in delivering the intervention, and reviewing the effectiveness of the spending.
- In the financial year 2024-2025, part of the grant will be used to fund:
 - educational psychology support
 - training to schools and CPD events
 - tuition to children who are temporarily not able to attend school
 - alternative provision programmes for children requiring this
 - additional tutoring
 - enrichment activities
 - safeguarding measures including attendance monitoring
 - additional funding to schools for specific targeted interventions
 - specialist support in the Virtual School team
 - 1:1 mentoring for children facing challenges that are impacting education
 - Funding for non-academic school trips (see additional guidance)

These will be subject to review on an annual basis.

- In the 2024-25 year, schools will be able to claim up to £600 per term. This is in line with most other authorities and more than some neighbouring authorities. Additional funding can be requested through the PEP document and will be subject to approval by the Education Officers and Virtual School Head.
- Proposals to pool Pupil Premium Plus in a school to enhance services, providing its use is directly linked to individual looked after children's needs, are acceptable.
- Herefordshire 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. Why will the amount of Pupil Premium Plus passed on to schools vary?

- Children's needs vary and can change significantly.
- The Virtual School manages their Pupil Premium Plus allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked after children and according to children's needs. It is not a personal budget for individual children; the Virtual School may choose to allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.

- Children in care may move schools more frequently and not at natural transition points.
- Other local authorities may make other arrangements for the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus. In view of this, there may be a significant difference in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed by other local authorities. Welsh authorities do not pay Pupil Premium.
- The Pupil Premium Plus will be allocated to schools on a termly basis to reflect the changing needs of children

2.3. Circumstances in which Pupil Premium Plus will not be provided

- Pupil Premium Plus will not be used 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 a statement, SEN support plan or Education Health and Care plan
 - To fund other statutory work e.g. statutory assessment or support from health
 - To fund interventions put in place that do not require any funding or are already available to all pupils e.g. homework club
 - To fund services where the school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions.
 - In instances where the PEP action plan does not meet requirements (see section 3.1).
 - To fund uniform/school meals (foster carers receive payments for these items).
 - Contributing to the salaries of substantive staff (as interventions should be time-limited)
 - To fund school staff to prepare for or attend Looked After Children review / PEP meetings (as this is a statutory duty)
 - Interventions which have no link to the child in care's education needs will not be funded.
 - Routine transport to and from school (e.g. bus passes / taxis/ mileage)
 - To fund extra-curricular activities that are not linked to an education target

2.4 Use of Pupil Premium Plus to purchase laptops

- The Virtual School is often asked to authorise the purchase of a laptop for looked after children. There is an expectation that foster carers and residential care homes will make arrangements for children to have access to a computer to complete homework. Herefordshire Virtual School does not have a universal roll out policy for every student. Laptops will only be considered when it can be clearly demonstrated and evidenced through the PEP document that its use will support identified learning needs and impact on students learning outcomes.

2.5 Use of Pupil Premium Plus to fund school trips

- The Virtual School is frequently asked to fund 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 use Pupil Premium Plus. It is expected that the carer should provide resources for these activities.
- For trips that are not part of the curriculum and are optional, Pupil Premium Plus cannot be used to fund them.

- The Virtual School recognises that all children benefit from the opportunity to attend residential trips with their peers at certain points in their school career. There is separate guidance covering the application for funds to assist looked after children to attend school trips where high cost is barrier to participation.

2.6 Use of Pupil Premium Plus to fund music tuition / sporting activities

- The Virtual School recognises the positive impact of extra-curricular activities to support social and emotional well-being, extend experience, raise confidence and self-esteem e.g music, drama, dance and sport.
- It should be noted that carers are provided with an allowance towards paying for extra-curricular activities. When it is agreed at the PEP meeting that there is an educational benefit to the child to attend such enrichment activities, Pupil Premium Plus can be used to fund them. The funding should still be linked to an identifiable SMART target on the Pupil Premium section of the PEP document.

3. Management and accountability

The Virtual School Headteacher will be accountable to the Corporate Parenting Panel for setting up a transparent and rigorous allocation process, ensuring that effective use and impact of the grant is monitored, evaluated, supported and where necessary challenged.

Use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus will be clearly recorded in the child/young person's PEP and in other evaluative documentation held by the Virtual School. Impact will also be measured against termly progress data and returns from schools.

Schools and settings are accountable for ensuring the money is used appropriately and effectively to enhance and improve the child in care's educational achievement. Targets will be submitted termly by the school/setting via the PEP. Schools will be expected to review the previous term's targets and the effect of the spending.

3.1. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Paragraph 28 of the Statutory Guidance, Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children (February 2018, DfE), states: *Virtual School Heads should make arrangements for PEPs to be reviewed each school term. This should include mapping how the pupil premium and any other additional funding has been used to support the targets set in the PEP. This is to ensure that the story of the child's educational progress is current and continues to meet the child's educational needs. It is also to ensure that information from the PEP is available to feed into the next statutory review of the wider care plan.*

- Schools will be asked to review and detail the impact of the Pupil Premium Plus at each PEP meeting.
- The Virtual School Headteacher will allocate to each school with a Herefordshire looked after child on roll a termly Pupil Premium Plus amount on receipt of a completed PEP from the school identifying how the school will use the Pupil Premium Plus, the intended outcomes and making clear the links to the child/young person's targets. The amount allocated will be paid to the school on only receipt of a suitably completed PEP document detailing how the funds will be spent and the impact of previous allocations. As such, only PEPs rated Gold or Green will be eligible to receive the funding requested.
- The requirements for each rating are detailed below:

	Gold	Green	Amber	Red
Completion of the ePEP	All sections of the ePEP are fully completed (including child's strengths and achievements, SEN, Attendance, Cultural Entitlement, past school history etc)	Some information is missing which does not significantly compromise the impact of the plan	Most of the sections are complete, but there is key information around attainment or target setting missing.	Important information is missing, compromising the impact of the plan.
The young person's views	The plan fully reflects the contribution of the young person	The voice of the young person is evident but the plan does not fully reflect all his/her views	The voice of the young person is minimal.	There is no evidence that the young person has contributed to the plan
Attainment Data	Current and past data is recorded, enabling precise and challenging academic targets to be set.	Data is provided which enables progress to be evaluated and targets to be set.	Key data is missing which means progress cannot be evaluated and new targets are not set.	Insufficient data provided to meaningfully evaluate progress.
Previous targets	Previous targets are reviewed with the impact of interventions carefully evaluated, informing current plans	The plan shows that previous targets have been reviewed and there is demonstration that these are influencing current plans	The plan shows that previous targets have been reviewed, but little or no evidence of how they are influencing current plans	There is insufficient evidence that targets have been reviewed, so current support may be compromised

New targets	Targets related to the agreed areas for development are appropriately challenging, reflect personal and academic attainment and are SMART	Targets related to the agreed areas for development are appropriately challenging, reflect personal and academic attainment and are SMART	No appropriate targets or targets that are too limited in scope or degree of challenge and are not sufficiently SMART	No targets recorded
Use of Pupil Premium funding	The plan evidences the impact of Pupil Premium Plus which is used well to bring about good progress	The plan evidences the impact of Pupil Premium Plus which is used well to bring about good progress	The plan does not adequately explain how additional funding will be used	No information provided on the use of PP spending.
Attendance data	Attendance data is recorded accurately. Any attendance below 95% is explained. An action plan for improving any low attendance figures is evident.	Attendance data is recorded. Attendance below 95% is explained but no action plan present for low attendance figures.	Attendance data is recorded but attendance below 95% is not explained and no action plan is present for low attendance figures.	No attendance figures recorded or explained.

- Pupil Premium Plus must be used to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in care to Herefordshire Council in the following areas:
 - Academic achievement and progress
 - Social and emotional support
 - 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
 - To promote inclusion and prevent suspension and exclusion
- The Pupil Premium Plus will **only** be provided to meet the needs identified in a high quality plan in the PEP with clear quantitative [and exceptionally qualitative] targets for improvement, underpinned by well-targeted support.

4. Allocation of grant

4.1 Allocation of funding to schools and recoupment policy

- Payments will be based on a fully costed high quality PEP. Requests for additional funding, will be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Schools will have Pupil Premium Plus transferred to them at the end of term following a successfully completed PEP. A remittance will be sent to the school detailing the amount paid and the initials of the child it relates to.
- Where there is a need to clarify what funding a school is providing from its own resources, the school may need to provide evidence before Pupil Premium Plus can be allocated.
- Herefordshire Virtual School will not recoup Pupil Premium Plus where a child moves during the term.
- Herefordshire Virtual School reserves the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the looked after child's needs.

4.2 Allocation of grant to Herefordshire children placed in 52 week residential provision or independent specialist provision.

- It is assumed that *all* the costs associated in meeting these children's needs is already met through the contract that the provider has with Herefordshire Council.
- If there are exceptional circumstances, a Pupil Premium Plus allocation may be approved by the Virtual School Head, on receipt of a clearly identified and target-based need linked to a high quality PEP.
- We reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the looked after child's needs.

4.3 Pupil Premium Plus for Children and Young People attending Herefordshire schools and settings placed by other Local Authorities.

- Different approaches will be adopted by different LAs and schools should discuss arrangements with the placing local authority Virtual School Head. A request for the Pupil Premium Policy should identify how the Pupil Premium Plus will be paid – it is the

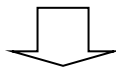
responsibility of the Virtual School Head to ensure that Pupil Premium Plus is allocated for all their school aged children and young people in care no matter where they are educated.

- The name and contact details of other Virtual School Heads can be requested from the Herefordshire Virtual School team.
- Welsh authorities do not pay Pupil Premium. In Wales looked after children receive funding through the Pupil Development Grant. Each region decides on the amount of money allocated. It is not a similar level of funding to Pupil Premium Plus. It is not compulsory for Welsh local authorities to have a Virtual School although some do. Each Welsh local authority has a Looked after Children in Education (LACE) coordinator. Whenever there is anything worrying you about a Welsh looked after child in your care or you simply want to find out something then contact the LACE coordinator for the placing local authority area.

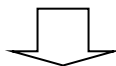
PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

SCHOOL FLOWCHART

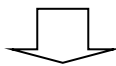
DESIGNATED TEACHER TO CONSIDER PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS NEEDS PRIOR TO PEP MEETING AND COMPLETE ePEP ON WELFARE CALL



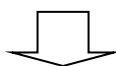
PEP MEETING TO TAKE PLACE



DESIGNATED TEACHER TO FINALISE THE ePEP AND CLICK COMPLETE TO NOTIFY THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL ON THE DAY OF THE MEETING OR WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF THE MEETING AT THE LATEST.



VIRTUAL SCHOOL TO AUDIT AND RATE PEP



VIRTUAL SCHOOL TO ARRANGE PAYMENT VIA FINANCE DEPARTMENT AT THE END OF THE TERM