



## **Pupil Premium Plus Grant for Looked After Children – Frequently Asked Questions 2025-26 Financial Year**

### **What is the Pupil Premium Plus Grant?**

The Pupil Premium Plus Grant (otherwise known as PPG or PP+) for looked after children is intended to raise the academic attainment of looked after children to reach their full potential, by helping to deliver the outcomes identified in the children's personal education plans (PEPs). The funding is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) in each local authority, to support children looked after by that authority.

Children in the care of a local authority in school years Reception to Year 11 are eligible for PP+ funding. The local authority will receive £2,630 per eligible child for the 2025-26 financial year.

Post 16 PP+ funding is a separate grant available for the 2025-26 financial year. Guidance for this is available on our website or directly from the Virtual School Post 16 team. For advice regarding the Post 16 PP+ funding, please contact [clare.cloves@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:clare.cloves@norfolk.gov.uk).

### **What can PP+ be used for?**

It is expected that schools use the funding in line with the 'menu of approaches' set by the DfE. The menu has been developed in line with the EEF's 3-tiered approach to help school allocate spending across the following 3 areas:

- supporting high-quality teaching, such as staff professional development
- providing targeted academic support, such as tutoring, including through the National Tutoring Programme
- tackling non-academic barriers to academic success, such as difficulties in attendance, behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing

It should provide support which is in addition to general school provision and should not meet costs which should be funded elsewhere, including provision required by an EHCP, entitlement set out in the SEND code of practice or costs we would expect social care or carers to pay for.

### **Does the Virtual School Head have to give £2,630 to schools or can they give a higher or lower amount?**

The conditions of grant state that the fund must be managed by the Virtual School Head. It is for the VSH to decide whether to provide £2,630 to a school for a looked after child or a higher or lower amount and this will be based on an individual child's needs. Funding retained centrally by the Virtual School can be used for projects to benefit looked after children.

Any PP+ funding not passed down to schools by the end of the financial year will have to be returned to the Department for Education. No money can be carried forward to the next financial year by the Virtual School. Individual schools who have received PP+ funding are able to carry forward any unspent funding.

### **How do I access PP+ funding?**

Record the PP+ spend against one or more PEP outcomes. There is no automatic entitlement to funding and you may not need it every term. It must be clear from the PEP exactly how the funding is being spent – it is not enough to simply record a funding amount against an outcome without identifying exactly how it is being spent. When creating a PEP outcome, you can record this within the box 'How is the amount calculated?'

Independent specialist settings and alternative providers will need to follow the process for requesting exceptional PP+ funding as placements with these providers are funded differently.

### **Under what circumstances can I request exceptional PP+ funding?**

Local authority maintained schools, academies and independent mainstream settings can request exceptional PP+ funding, where need for additional support costing more than £600 in a term is identified.

Independent specialist settings can request exceptional PP+ funding where an intervention or support is needed in addition to what we would reasonably expect to be included with the placement.

Where specialist settings/Complex Needs Schools are unable to meet the needs of a pupil, they should follow their process for requesting additional funding through their EHCP Co-ordinator. E.g. for Norfolk Independent specialist settings, this would be a request to SENFAL.

Any request for exceptional funding must be discussed with a Virtual School Adviser and submitted before the intervention is put in place as funding is never guaranteed and retrospective requests may be refused.

## **How do I apply for exceptional PP+ funding?**

An application for exceptional funding must first be discussed with the Virtual School Adviser allocated to the setting to avoid delays in the process. They can be identified on the top right corner of the home page for the PEP or you can contact [virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk). Your Adviser will bring the request to a fortnightly PP+ panel meeting, following which the decision will be communicated to school. Requests may be agreed in full, agreed in part, or an alternative offer of support made. In some cases we will signpost to the appropriate funding source instead.

If more than £600 is recorded on a PEP, but no conversation has taken place with a Virtual School Adviser to agree exceptional funding, the PP+ spend will be reduced to £600 when it is signed off by the Virtual School and that amount will be paid. A note will be recorded on the PEP to this effect.

The request should be recorded against a PEP outcome with the proposed PP+ spend on whichever PEP is live on Welfare Call. There is no need to wait for a PEP meeting to record a PP+ request.

The level of need and reason for the request should be clear from the PEP outcome, so that decisions can be made without needing to request further information from school. We need to see planned dates for when the intervention will take place and an exit strategy for how it will be withdrawn. Further information can be added to box 2 on the Outcomes tab 'How is the curriculum being personalised', to support the request. Documents can be uploaded to the PEP but should be signposted within the PEP outcome.

In some cases, we may request additional information from school, such as the graduated and costed provision maps, so that we can understand a school's general provision and where we might be able to offer additional support.

If exceptional funding is agreed, we will set a 'bring back date' when we will review with school the impact of the funding and what the next steps might be. If we agree funding for a term, it is likely that the bring back date will be around half term.

## **When should I apply for exceptional funding?**

Schools should always apply for exceptional PP+ funding as soon as a need is identified and before putting an intervention in place as retrospective applications may not be agreed.

Funding for term-long interventions, such as 1:1 support for a term or a weekly tuition session, should be submitted well before the end of the preceding term, to allow us time to consider the request and communicate the outcome to school before the new term begins. You should have a conversation with your Virtual School Adviser around the half term point if you feel that an intervention needs to continue beyond the end of term.

In requesting exceptional funding, it will be important to consider implications if the young person's circumstances or care status changes, or where they are due to transition to a different setting where the same level of support may not be available.

### **Can the Virtual School Head pool funding for some of the authority's looked after children?**

The Department for Education expects Virtual School Heads to manage the pupil premium plus grant to ensure that it promotes the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the authority. It may be appropriate to pool some of the grant for activities to benefit the authority's looked after children more holistically. For example, to provide training for a group of designated teachers across the authority or a group of Teaching Alliance schools. Equally, the VSH and School may agree to combine pupil premium plus with other funding to provide an enhanced package of support for particular children or groups of children.

### **Can schools pool PP+ funding from several children on roll in a setting to fund support?**

Yes. Schools can pool funding to fund support that will benefit all those children. For example, for staff CPD or training. If funding is used towards staffing costs, please consider what will happen if the numbers of young people in care on roll reduce in numbers and therefore the level of funding reduces. All employer responsibilities remain with the school.

PP+ should not be used when other funding is available, such as SEN funding, or if we would reasonably expect something to be part of a school's core provision and available to any child on roll. PP+ funding will not be agreed for interventions which are offered at no cost to other children within the school with school funding covering the cost.

If you would like to pool funding from several children, please discuss this first with your Virtual School Adviser.

### **How do I access funding for any pupils on my school roll who are in the care of another local authority?**

Pupils educated in Norfolk but 'Looked After' by another authority will have their PP+ paid by that authority. Each authority will have their own guidance which may differ from Norfolk Virtual School and you should contact the Virtual School Head of the relevant authority for clarification on the process.

### **What happens if a pupil new to care joins the school during the term?**

The statutory guidance states that the PEP should be initiated within 10 working days of a child or young person coming into care. PP+ funding can be requested to assist with the transition and any outcomes within the PEP.

### **What happens if a pupil moves school within a school term?**

Any payments made as a result of completion and sign off of the termly PEP will not usually be recouped where a child moves within a school term. However, if the school has received additional funding because of an exceptional funding application, the Virtual School reserves the right to recoup any monies not utilised for the benefit of that looked after child. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis.

The receiving school can apply for exceptional funding, based on the outcomes set and evidenced within the new PEP.

### **What happens if a pupil moves to a different care placement?**

It is expected that any equipment purchased using PP+ funding, that can be taken home, for example, laptops, should remain with the young person and be taken with them to their new placement.

### **What happens if a pupil has more than one PEP in a term, at the same school?**

We will allocate funding based on identified needs but holding another PEP will not necessarily lead to further funding being agreed. Please discuss an exceptional funding request with your Virtual School Adviser if you are requesting more than £600 for a term.

### **Is a student who is held back a year entitled to pupil premium funding when they reach Year 11?**

Schools will still receive the funding for children that have been back-classed and are now outside of the normal age range for pupil premium funding.

### **How will the impact of the funding be monitored?**

All use of PP+ funding should be recorded against a PEP outcome. The impact of the funding should be reviewed and recorded at the next PEP. Funding should be itemised by intervention so that it can clearly be seen how all PP+ funding has been spent and what the impact is.

Schools should be prepared to evidence PP+ spend and impact on request. Virtual School Advisers may want to discuss how PP+ funding is used in school as part of their visits and conversations with you.

### **Can money be spent on 1:1 support for an individual child?**

In exceptional circumstances we may agree a contribution towards the cost of 1:1 support.

Prior to a request for 1:1 funding please make sure you have spoken with your Virtual School Adviser, who may also arrange to visit the school to observe the child and speak to their class teacher.

1:1 support will be funded for a **maximum of two terms**.

Where a young person does not have an EHCP, this allows time for a request for an assessment to be made. If a young person needs 1:1 support for an extended period, we expect there to be a level of need beyond SEN support, so would expect an assessment to be made. Where a young person has an EHCP, arrangements will need to be made to review the level of support to ensure it is reflected in the plan.

Funding will only be agreed when there is a clear plan evidencing why the support is required, what the expected impact will be and a clear exit strategy.

**It is important to note that PP+ is central funding and therefore cannot be relied upon to cover staff costs beyond the specified period for which it has been agreed. The Virtual School accepts no employer liability, and all employment responsibilities lie with the school.**

In requesting 1:1 funding, it will be important to consider implications if the young person's circumstances or care status changes, or where they are due to transition to a different setting where 1:1 support may not be available.

If we agree funding towards the cost of 1:1 support, no further funding requests will be agreed during that period.

Maximum funding per term will be £3,500 for full-time support, as schools will also contribute the notional and High Needs Funding. This figure will be pro-rated if support is not full-time or a reduced timetable is in place.

### **Can I spend PP+ funding on therapeutic interventions?**

The Virtual School will not usually fund therapy. If therapy is specified in an EHCP any associated funding should be discussed with your Coordinator. If therapy is recommended in relation to lived experience, funding will need to be discussed with the young person's social worker.

In very exceptional circumstances we may agree to fund a short-term (e.g. 6 sessions or one term) therapeutic intervention to address a particular barrier to learning, where there is a firm end date to the intervention. We will not agree to fund an open-ended therapeutic intervention as we need to be mindful that a change in circumstances could lead to a young person no longer being eligible for PP+ funding through the Virtual School, risking an abrupt end to that support if alternative funding can't be found.

We are happy to discuss supporting schools to upskill staff members to offer therapeutic interventions within school, to improve educational outcomes for looked after children.

Before commissioning therapeutic interventions the school must speak with the (corporate) parent.

### **Can I spend PP+ funding on Designated Teacher time?**

No, the school has a statutory responsibility to ensure that the Designated Teacher has enough time available to carry out their role effectively, including time away from timetable commitments where necessary, for duties such as preparing for and attending PEP meetings or training events.

### **Can money be spent on laptops or tablets?**

We do not routinely provide devices through the Virtual School, but where a need is identified to support learning outcomes, we may agree funding up to a maximum of £600, to cover the cost of the device, appropriate software, and a protective case.

For PP+ funded devices, the following conditions apply:

- Appropriate software and filters should be installed before handing the device to the young person
- School remain responsible for all online safety awareness and should discuss this with the carer if the device is taken home
- The young person must be advised that good care should be taken of the device as it may not be replaced if damaged (a protective case should be purchased)
- If the young person changes setting, it is expected that they keep the device
- The Virtual School accept no responsibility for maintenance or repairs going forwards

### **Can money be spent on school trips or clubs outside of school?**

**Money for school trips should be requested from social care in their role as corporate parent, or foster carers.**

Norfolk County Council's Foster Care Payments Information and Guidance includes the following information:

*Cost of Holidays by Schools, Youth Groups, Scouts, etc.*

*The cost of holidays with school, youth groups, etc., may be claimed in addition to the normal fortnightly assessed payments and holiday payments.*

*NB Only one Children's Services educational organised holiday abroad will be paid for in any three-year period, unless there are special circumstances approved by the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting.*

PP+ funding should not be used towards the cost of trips organised by school as part of the curriculum. Schools can only request a donation for these trips and it is expected that social care or carers should provide this.

Funding for clubs out of school hours should be provided by carers, who may wish to discuss with the young person's social worker.

### **If a looked after child is achieving well academically, how can the school spend the PP+ funding?**

The Conditions of Grant are clear that the funding is intended to help young people reach their potential. Even if a young person is already achieving well, consider how the funding can be used to help them achieve their full potential academically. Refer to the Menu of Approaches or ask your Virtual School Adviser for support.

Whilst any PP+ funding should be used with the needs or interests of the eligible child in mind, there is no reason why other pupils can't also benefit. For example, using the funding to pay for an author school visit, if this is something that will engage the eligible child and they have reading or writing targets.

The views of the child or young person should always be considered regarding the use of the funding.

### **Can PP+ funding be used for the cost of a leavers' Prom?**

The cost of a prom ticket can be funded as part of an incentive or reward offer if this links to PEP outcomes, but the maximum amount we will pay is £50. Schools are expected to prioritise PP+ spending according to the DfE's Menu of Approaches.

The cost of an outfit or transport should not be funded through PP+.

Exceptional PP+ funding will not be agreed for prom costs.

### **Is there anything PP+ should not fund?**

Pupil Premium for looked after children should not be used to cover interventions which should be funded elsewhere. This includes the entitlement set out in the *SEND code of practice: 0 – 25 years*, published in June 2014.

PP+ funding should not be requested when alternative funding is available.

If a school would usually expect to fund an intervention or activity for all other children on roll, a charge should not be made for a looked after child.

PP+ funding should not be used for school uniform, school meals or transport to school.

### **Can the foster carer be given the PP+ funding to spend?**

The Virtual School Head manages pupil premium plus funding to support the education of looked after children as set out in the Personal Education Plan. It should not be used for



activity the local authority would 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 and can therefore make a valuable contribution to decision making.


### **Are Looked After Children entitled to free school meals (FSM)?**

In Norfolk, the position regarding FSM is as follows:

- Entitlement to FSM was frozen at 1.4.18. Anyone who had free school meals before this point will have continued to receive them until 31.3.25 regardless of any changes in circumstances, including becoming looked after.
- Any pupil no longer eligible as of 31.03.25 will keep eligibility until the end of the current phase of education (so FSM won't stop part way through a year or keystage)
- Looked after children do not have an automatic entitlement to free school meals but foster carers are subject to the same eligibility criteria as all other parents and carers and can apply in the same way.

PP+ funding should not be spent on school meals.

***You can contact us on:-***

 **01603 307769 or 01603 303323**

 **[clare.farrant@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:clare.farrant@norfolk.gov.uk) (Pupil Premium Manager)**

**[virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk) (Team mailbox)**

***You can also find out more on our website at:-*** [www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/virtualschoolac](http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/virtualschoolac)

