

Pupil Premium Plus Grant for Looked After Children – Frequently Asked Questions 2024-25 Financial Year

What is the Pupil Premium Grant?

The Pupil Premium 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. With effect from April 2024, each eligible child is entitled to a notional sum of £2,570 for the 2024-25 financial year.

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

Post 16 PP+ funding is a separate grant available for the 2024-25 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.

Does the Virtual School Head have to give £2,570 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 £2,570 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.

Norfolk Virtual School allocates a maximum of £600 per term to local authority maintained schools and academies, through the termly PEP.

How do I access the termly funding?

Record the PP+ spend up to a maximum of £600 against one or more PEP outcomes. You may not need the maximum £600 every term. It must be clear from the PEP exactly how the funding is being spent – it is not enough to simply record £600 against an outcome without identifying exactly how the funding is being spent.

If more than £600 is recorded on a PEP, but no exceptional funding is agreed, the PP+ spend may be reduced to a lower amount 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.

Under what circumstances can I request exceptional PP+ funding?

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

Independent 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.

Any request for exceptional funding should 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 should 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.

The request should be recorded as a PEP outcome with the proposed PP+ spend on whichever PEP is live on Welfare Call.

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.

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 the 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.

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 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 provide training for a group of designated teachers across the authority or a group of Teaching Alliance schools. Equally, a VSH might negotiate with a school regarding pooling pupil premium plus 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.

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, or to contribute towards the salary of an additional member of staff to work with Norfolk Looked After Children or additional hours for an existing staff member. If funding is used towards staffing costs, please consider what will happen if the number of young people in care on roll reduce in numbers and therefore the level of funding reduces. All employer responsibilities remain with the school.

Funding can also be pooled to fund interventions that will support all those children, such as small group activities, or for equipment and resources in some cases. Just remember that 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.

Any PP+ spend to support a child needs to be recorded against a PEP outcome in order to trigger a payment. If you are pooling funding from several children, please make it clear in each individual PEP. When creating a PEP outcome, you can record this within the box 'How is the amount calculated?'. If you are requesting a payment for a child, it should be clear from the PEP document how that funding is being spent.

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 pupil premium 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. Subsequent to the meeting taking place and the PEP documentation being completed and signed off by the Virtual School team, funding will be allocated to the school to assist with the transition and any targets within the PEP, as per the amount of PP+ spend recorded against PEP outcomes.

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 targets 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 up to a maximum of £600 per term, not £600 per PEP.

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.

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?

Where 1:1 funding is requested, a Virtual School Adviser may visit the school to observe the child and speak to their class teacher before any exceptional funding is agreed.

In exceptional circumstances, 1:1 funding may be agreed for a reasonable period. In most cases, this will be for a **maximum of one and a half terms**. Funding will only be agreed when there is a clear plan detailing 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 becomes no longer looked after, or where they are due to transition to a different setting where 1:1 support may not be available.

If we agree funding towards 1:1 support, we don't expect to fund other interventions as well.

How do I calculate 1:1 funding?

We have introduced a standard calculation, where we agree to contribute towards the cost of 1:1 support:

£23,500 TA Scale D annual salary
Equates to £18,529 term-time +2wks
£6,176 termly cost
Less Element 3 SEN termly funding
= PP+ exceptional funding

Where 1:1 support is needed for a young person with SEN, we expect schools to request Norfolk Element 3 funding where appropriate, by submitting the INDES and 'requesting support'. In all cases we will deduct Element 3 funding, to avoid double funding. It is

expected that these funds will also be prioritised for the 1:1 cost. A deduction will still be made for Element 3 funding if a child is eligible, but school have not applied. Specific advice around SEN funding can be sought from element3funding@norfolk.gov.uk.

If the INDES outcome is a Band 4 a, b or c, we will not make any adjustment to the maximum amount of PP+ funding we will pay.

If the INDES outcome is a Band 3, we will pay 75% of our maximum contribution. For Band 2, we will pay 50% of our maximum contribution and for Band 1, we will pay 25%. If no INDES banding is awarded, we do not expect 1:1 support to be required. These restrictions are to reflect the fact that evidence submitted by school indicates that a lower level of support is required, or that support needs can be met within existing provision. If school resubmit the INDES and are subsequently awarded a higher banding, we will adjust the amount of PP+ we will pay.

The formula calculates the maximum amount we will pay. If the cost to the school is less than the total calculated using this formula, then please let us know at the time of your application. We may pro rata the amount of exceptional PP+ funding if the support is not full-time or if the young person is not in school full-time..

For out of county schools accessing Element 3 funding from their own Local Authority, we may request further details of bandings in order to consider whether we need to restrict what we pay, as each LA has its own system.

Can I spend PP+ funding on therapeutic interventions?

We do not routinely fund therapeutic interventions, but there may be some time-limited interventions that are appropriate for school to commission if they are linked to education (PEP outcomes). If this is the case, please consider that a young person's care status may change and they may no longer be eligible for PP+ funding. In those situations, schools may need to find alternative funding to continue an intervention.

For something like life-story work, we would expect this to be funded by social care.

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?

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

In line with the EEF's recommended approach, we would expect schools to prioritise high-quality teaching. 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.

The DfE encourages schools to use robust evidence in making decisions about how to spend the funding to support looked after children. It is up to each individual school to decide how to spend the allocation each term, to a maximum of £600, and it must be discussed at the PEP.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to use PP+ to contribute towards the cost of a school trip, where there is a clear link to a PEP outcome. 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 would usually be expected to be provided by carers.

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 whether the funding can be used to provide an extra stretch or challenge to help the child achieve their full potential academically.

Funding can also be used to support social and emotional needs, where appropriate, or for other enrichment activities when there are no other academic targets requiring funding identified in the PEP.

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.

If you are struggling with ideas of how to use the PP+ funding, please speak to your Virtual School Adviser and they will be happy to support you.

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 and can be funded within the termly £600 limit. 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 continue to receive them until 31.3.25 regardless of any changes in circumstances including becoming looked after, but they will no longer be eligible for the FSM6 element of Pupil Premium funding. Instead they will be eligible for the looked after children element of the funding.
- Children who become eligible for free school meals will similarly continue to receive them until 31.3.25. Foster carers are subject to the same eligibility criteria as all other parents and carers and can apply in the same way.
- Looked after children do not have an automatic entitlement, however if they qualified as in point 1, they would continue to receive free school meals until 31.3.25. In those circumstances, carers may be asked to complete some paperwork
- 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)

PP+ funding should not be spent on school meals.

You can contact us on:-



01603 307769 or 01603 303323



clare.farrant@norfolk.gov.uk (Pupil Premium Manager)

virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk (Team mailbox)

You can also find out more on our website at:- www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/virtualschoollac



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