

## **Peterborough Virtual School**

### **Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Children in Care 2025-26**

It is the responsibility of the Virtual School Head to determine and be accountable for the distribution of the grant. The grant is not a personal budget for individual children and, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care, does not have to be allocated on a per capita basis. The Virtual School Head may retain some of the grant centrally to fund services that will benefit the full cohort of children in care.

This policy references and should be read in conjunction with the following government guidance documents and national advice:

- [Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium/overview)
- [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium/allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2025-to-2026)
- [Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium/virtual-school-heads-responsibilities)
- [Using pupil premium | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium)

### **Allocation of the PP+ Grant**

Peterborough Virtual School retains approximately 50% of the grant to benefit the full cohort of children in care. This is used to:

- Fund Virtual School staff who provide specialist support regarding inclusion and engagement.
- Provide strategic support to all settings to develop best practice in meeting the needs of our children in care and wider cohort.
- Support targeted projects for specific groups.
- Fund training opportunities for stakeholders delivered at no charge.

Designated Teachers may request the PP+ grant to support individual children's educational needs in accordance with outcomes in their Personal Education Plans (PEPs). All requests for must be submitted on a termly basis through the online ePEP portal; this process includes the setting SMART Desirable Outcomes and a breakdown of intended spending. The impact of the grant should be reported on in the following term. An example can be seen below.

<b>What can I do at the moment?</b> <i>What is my baseline?</i>	I can count on in steps of 2 up to 10.
<b>By</b>	The end of the autumn term
<b>What will I be able to do?</b> <i>What will I have achieved?</i>	I will be able to count on and back in steps of 2 to and from 50.
<b>How will I achieve this?</b> <i>What interventions / support will be put in place?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. I will come into school early each day and work with Mrs Green for 30 minutes. We will practice counting in variety of different contexts.</li> <li>ii. When I am at home, I will practice my counting with my carer and we will play games such as pairs.</li> </ul>
<b>PP+</b> <i>Amount of funding required:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 5 x 30 minutes = 2.5 hours per week. For 14 weeks @15 per hour = £525</li> <li>ii. No funding</li> </ul>

The Virtual School may recoup the PP+:

- If there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the pupil's needs
- If the pupil moves from the school

### **Effective use of the PP+ Grant**

Schools and settings are accountable for ensuring that the money is used appropriately and effectively to enhance and improve the educational achievement of the child in care. It must be spent on evidence-informed activities in line with the 'menu of approaches' set by the Department for Education (DfE) [Using Pupil Premium: Guidance for School Leaders](#)

([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)). The menu aligns with the Education Endowment Foundation's [Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#) evidence-informed tiered approach, which helps schools allocate spending across 3 key areas:

- Improving teaching: This might include professional development, training and support.
- Targeted academic support: Evidence consistently shows the impact that one-to-one and small group interventions can have on pupils who are falling behind.
- Wider strategies to overcome non-academic barriers to learning: This might include strategies to boost attendance, improve behaviour or provide social and emotional support.

Funding may also be awarded to support progress towards Education, Employment or Training aspirations to minimise the likelihood of a child becoming NEET. This may include:

- Encouragement and support to aspire towards further education, higher education, employment, or training
- Targeted Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

### **Restrictions on the Use of PP+**

PP+ will not be provided if it is being used to double fund or replace funding which should already have been allocated to support the child, for example:

- To fund services that should be provided via an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Other statutory work e.g., statutory assessment or universal services available from the health service
- To fund activities that are expected to be covered by fostering allowances or other local authority resources.

For example:

- School uniforms
- School lunches
- Transport to and from school
- Out of school activities (including childcare and EYFS additional hours)

PP+ will not be paid if:

- The activities/interventions are not detailed or aligned to the child's PEP
- The interventions offered by the school are universally available to all child or young person in school and the school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions
- Interventions are not evidence based, for example – paying for additional adult support or an extra-curricular club with no agreed baseline, outcome, or measure

Where PP+ is agreed to fund a child or young person to participate in a small group intervention or activity, PP+ should only fund the child or young person's proportion of that intervention or activity.

### **Commissioning Tuition**

When commissioning tuition funded through the pupil premium plus grant, schools and other education providers are expected to follow appropriate quality assurance and due diligence processes. This includes ensuring value for money. Unless there are mitigating circumstances which have been agreed with the Virtual School, the maximum hourly tuition rate which will be awarded will be £50.

### **Children Previously in Care**

Children who have previously been in care and are now subject to a Special Guardianship Order, a Child Arrangement Order or have adopted from state care or equivalent are entitled to PP+. This will need to be claimed through the October annual school's census. The PP+ grant for children who have previously been in care is managed by the child's school; it is outside the remit of the Virtual School and this policy.

### **Other local authority children**

Children in care attending Peterborough schools, who are in the care of other local authorities will receive PP+ from the placing authority's Virtual School. The name and contact details of other Virtual School Heads can be requested from Peterborough Virtual School.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Can PP+ be used to fund IT Equipment?**

IT equipment, including laptops and tablets, may be purchased using PP+ so long as need is identified and recorded within the PEP.

- The maximum PP+ available to purchase a laptop or tablet and accessories is £500 (at KS3&4) or £250 (at KS1&2); if a device is required in upper KS2, consideration should be made as to which device would best support through into secondary education.
- Software, including Microsoft Office packages, may also be purchased using PP+ except for specific packages detailed in EHCPs as these should be provided through SEND funding.
- Appropriate safeguarding, licensing and maintenance should be undertaken in line with school policy.
- Any equipment purchased using PP+ is the property of the child and therefore should transfer with them in the case of school or placement moves; IT safeguarding packages should be removed ahead of planned transitions away from the education setting.
- It is recognised that IT equipment does become out-dated over time, however it is expected that PP+ should not be used to replace equipment more frequently than every 3 years.

### **Can PP+ be used to fund trips and visits?**

- PP+ may not be used to fund any trips which form part of the pupil's core education offer [Charging for school activities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/charging-for-school-activities.pdf). This includes education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or part of religious education.
- Voluntary contributions may be requested; the carer's allowance enables such contributions. Where an individual carer's personal circumstances prohibit this, they should be treated as any other parent on a limited income in line with school policy.
- Schools can charge for board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit, and it is recognised that this cost may be a barrier for some Children in Care. Therefore, PP+ may fund up to 50% of a residential trip with the remaining 50% being made up of contributions from social care, carers, school, or another funding stream.

### **Can PP+ be used to fund extra-curricular or enrichment activities?**

We understand the value of extracurricular and enrichment activities for children and young people. PP+ grant can only be used to fund evidence-based activities which lead to improved **educational** outcomes. Funding will not be continued if there is no, or limited, positive impact on educational outcomes.

- Foster carers are expected to encourage extra-curricular activities; weekly allowances include funding for additional activities such as swimming, scouts, beavers, tennis, football, dancing etc. Where the allowance is insufficient to cover the costs of a child's enrichment or extra-curricular this should be referred to the child's social worker who is able to seek funding through the social care panel.
- There is some evidence to suggest cultural capital positively impacts on educational outcomes. Funding will be authorised for interventions or experiences which build cultural capital and therefore support access to the curriculum. (eg. 1:1 pre-teaching on political or historical contexts ahead of studying specific texts in English).
- There is some evidence to suggest a link between arts education and overall educational attainment. Where engagement in the arts is being used to boost academic achievement, schools should carefully monitor

whether this aim is being achieved. It must be clear within the desirable outcomes what the need or gap is and how it is being addressed, measured and evaluated. [EEF: Arts Participation](#)

- Physical activity has important benefits in terms of health, wellbeing, and physical development. Participation in sports does not straightforwardly transfer to academic learning although it is recognised that involvement in extra-curricular sporting activities may increase attendance and retention. It must be clear within the desirable outcomes what the need or gap is and how it is being addressed, measured and evaluated. [EEF: Physical Activity Participation](#)
- PP+ may be used to fund activities or awards that contribute to an aspirational career pathway or an accreditation (eg Artsmark, AQA awards, music grades etc).

#### **Can PP+ be used to fund specialist advice and guidance?**

- If there is concern that a child in care is not making adequate progress, this should be discussed with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). In the first instance, schools should put in place evidence-based support and interventions matched to the child's area of need; these should be regularly reviewed.
- In line with the Code of Practice, where a child continues to make less than expected progress, schools should consider involving appropriate specialists, (for example SALT, OT, EP) who may be able to identify effective strategies, equipment, programmes or other interventions to enable the child to make progress towards the desired learning and development outcomes. This should typically be accessed through the same pathways as all other children.
- Where there are barriers in accessing specialist support which will further impact the progress of the child, or specialist support is not universally available for all children, PP+ funding may be requested through the PEP. The impact on educational engagement and achievement will be the primary consideration of the Virtual School when approving requests for this.

#### **Can PP+ be used to fund therapeutic intervention?**

- Whilst we recognise the positive intention of wanting to implement therapy, it **should not** be put in place without prior consultation and agreement, of the child or young person's social worker. This is because children in care have experienced significant adversity and trauma in their early lives and exploration of this needs to be considered by professionals/experts in this field. Concerns should be shared with the child's social worker, who will consult with other professionals, and where appropriate will lead on sourcing and funding an appropriate intervention.
- Funding can be used for activities to develop social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, relationship and communication skills, and decision-making which are not universally available and are not considered therapy (eg. Nurture group activities, Circle of friends, ELSA, Lego Therapy, Social Stories work, individual mentoring and coaching). It must be clear within the desirable outcomes what the need or gap is and how it is being addressed, measured and evaluated. Funding will not be continued if there is no, or limited, positive impact on educational outcomes.
- Funding can be used to purchase screening tools and other resources to support social, emotional and mental health development. It must be clear within the desirable outcomes what the need or gap is and how the resources will be used to address, measure and evaluate the need or gap.

#### **Can PP+ be used to fund alternative provision?**

- All children are entitled to full time education provision. Pupil premium plus should not be used to replace this entitlement or fund alternative provision during the school day.

#### **Can PP+ be used to fund careers activities?**

- It is recognised that children in care may have limited lived experiences of careers and the wider world of work; this may limit aspirations.
- PP+ may be used to fund additional, bespoke careers advice and guidance appropriate to the age and stage of the child. It may be used to support access to exposure to the world of work and work experience opportunities as well as interventions supporting the development of employability including CV writing and interview preparation.
- PP+ may be used to facilitate access to Further Education and University open days and workshops.

**Can PP+ be used to fund holiday clubs and activities?**

- The PP+ grant must be used to promote educational outcomes for children in care. It cannot be used to fund childcare.
- Where there is a clear educational outcome, the PP+ grant may be used to fund educational activities out of term-time. It must be clear within the desirable outcomes what the need or gap is and how it is being addressed, measured and evaluated.

**Guidance on effective PP+ spending:**

My Education	My Attendance	My Individual Needs	My Achievements
<p><i>Staff training that enables a relational approach to be embedded across the setting.</i></p> <p><i>Staff training which enables a robust understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of Children in Care.</i></p>			
<p><b>Transitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced transition support.</li> <li>Supported visits to build relationship with key adults in new setting.</li> <li>Transition projects including attendance at summer schools.</li> <li>Resources / tuition to support curriculum continuity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enrichment &amp; Cultural Capital Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential trips (up to 50%)</li> <li>Participation in arts or sports enrichment experiences which directly transfer to improved educational outcomes.</li> <li>Cultural capital experiences which support access to the curriculum. (eg. 1:1 pre-teaching on political or historical contexts ahead of studying specific texts in English).</li> <li>Other accredited activities that lead to awards (eg Artsmark, AQA awards, music grades etc).</li> </ul> <p><b>Aspirations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to the world of work activities for younger children</li> </ul>	<p><b>Attendance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional pastoral time and individual mentoring.</li> <li>Meet and greet by a key trusted adult.</li> <li>Participation in before school activities including breakfast clubs and other extra-curricular clubs.</li> <li>Additional tuition to support 'catch-up' to overcome barriers to attendance and confidence</li> <li>Activities to support re-engagement in education</li> <li>Additional resources needed to promote engagement.</li> <li>Activities to develop inclusion and engagement such as self-regulation, relationship and communication skills, and decision-making which are not universally available.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities to develop social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, relationship and communication skills, and decision-making which are not universally available. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nurture group activities</li> <li>Circle of friends</li> <li>Elsa</li> <li>Lego Therapy</li> <li>Social Stories work</li> </ul> </li> <li>Individual mentoring and coaching.</li> <li>Screening tools and other resources to support social, emotional and mental health development.</li> </ul> <p><b>SEND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional advice and guidance which is not universally available (eg. SALT/EP/OT). Impact on educational engagement and achievement will be the primary consideration when approving requests for this.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic Interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted academic support through 1:1 tuition. The EEF recommend "Short, regular sessions (about 30 minutes, three to five times a week) over a set period of time (up to ten weeks) appear to result in optimum impact."</li> <li>Pre-teaching</li> <li>Screening tools and other resources to enable a focus on identified gaps/needs.</li> <li>Metacognition and self-regulation approaches.</li> <li>Mastery learning approaches.</li> <li>Additional resources including wider reading, text books, revision guides, practical apparatus.</li> </ul> <p><b>English as an Additional Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-teaching.</li> <li>Activities to support vocabulary acquisition.</li> <li>Activities to support familiarity with British culture and values.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at university open days.</li> <li>• Targeted work experience and internship opportunities.</li> <li>• Individual mentoring and careers information, advice and guidance.</li> <li>• Workshops to support knowledge and skills such as CV writing, interview technique.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional and or different resources – e.g. Augmentative and alternative communication.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">EEF: School Transitions Tool</a> <a href="#">EEF: Physical Activity Participation</a> <a href="#">EEF: Arts Participation</a> <a href="#">Careers Advice   Apprenticeships and Jobs Advice   UCAS</a>	<a href="#">EEF: Behaviour interventions</a>	<a href="#">OAP Toolkits (peterborough.gov.uk)</a> <a href="#">EEF: Social and Emotional Learning</a>	<a href="#">EEF: One-to-one tuition</a> <a href="#">EEF: Metacognition-and-self-regulation</a> <a href="#">EEF: Mastery learning</a>