

April 2025

Children We Care For Personal Education Plan and Pupil Premium Guidance

Introduction

All Children in Care from Reception to Year 11 benefit from Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to support their education and academic achievement. For the financial year 2025-26 the amount allocated to the Virtual School for each eligible child is £2,630.

It remains the responsibility of the Virtual School Head to manage the PP+ for all children who are in care to its local authority regardless of where they go to school.

The Personal Education Plan

As part of the local authority's duty to improve the educational outcomes for children in care, a Personal Education Plan (PEP) should be completed termly to support the statutory Child Review.

The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It should describe what needs to happen for children to help them fulfil their potential; and reflect, but not duplicate, any existing plans such as Education, Health and Care plans. The PEP presents an opportunity for those involved in the child's day to day education to come together and share information.

All looked-after children should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is part of the child's care plan or detention placement plan. The broad areas of information that must be covered in the PEP are specified in Schedule 1 (paragraph 2) of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 as amended.

Invitations to attend the PEP

Statutory guidance states that the meetings are attended and can take place with the designated teacher and social worker.

Children should always be consulted before every PEP meeting, but their attendance is not mandatory. We advise that children should not come out of lessons to attend PEP meetings without consent.

There is an expectation that the social worker will ensure that the carer has been invited and will attend. Virtual School staff should be invited to all meetings, but it is not essential that they attend. Parents are invited at the discretion of the social worker.

There may be occasions where practitioners working with the child (for example, a Connexions adviser, school nurse, learning mentor) may be invited if advice is needed. Their attendance is also at the discretion of the social worker and the school.

Recordings

The PEP is a written record of proceedings therefore meetings cannot be recorded to protect the legal right of attendees.

What happens at the meeting

Before the meeting (approximately a week before), the social worker and designated teacher will have completed their sections. The child's voice should be captured and recorded, including a reflection of their previous views.

For Sandwell, the designated teacher adopts the role of chair for the meeting.

Actions and targets from last PEP should be reviewed. No more than three targets should be agreed at each meeting. These may include continuing a target from the previous PEP. If an exceptional funding request is made, this should be reflected in the targets and emailed separately to the Virtual School.

Lace_team@sandwell.gov.uk.

Who has access to the PEP

Along with the Virtual School, the Social Worker and Designated Teacher has electronic access to the PEP.

Social worker makes the decision to provide a printed copy to the carer or parent (not section A).

Sandwell Virtual School Expenditure

Due to the range of needs and the high degree of mobility for children in care, they often require additional support with their placement and in particular around transition. The Virtual School therefore retains a portion of each PP+ to ensure that we can offer specific interventions, respond to the needs of the child and ensure that designated teachers and other stakeholders have the skills to support children in care appropriately through regular training.

In some circumstances, the Virtual School will withhold all of the funding if it is deemed that the provision is already well funded. This mainly applies to pupils attending independent and non-mainstream provision, and includes withholding the

summer term payment for Year 11 pupils, who are likely to receive fewer interventions during this term.

It is our intention to distribute the funding on the basis of a thoroughly completed Personal Education Plan (PEP) with appropriate SMART targets. A payment of £650 will be authorised on a termly basis for the 2025-26 financial year.

The PEP

In order to ensure that the use of PP+ remains appropriate and that it is used for the improvement in educational outcomes for the pupil, PEPs will be reviewed on a termly basis. As a minimum each meeting will:

1. Be attended (or have comments) by the designated teacher, social worker, carer and young person.
2. Set, review and evaluate SMART targets.
3. Provide details of how the PP+ is being used to close the gap to peers, taking into consideration how they relate to the targets.

Attracting the funding

In order to attract the funding, schools will have completed an electronic PEP each term. The PEP in the previous term will be assessed to determine payment, giving colleagues time for completion.

The two following principles apply to the release of funding for the majority of local authorities within the West Midlands:

- a) There will be a current PEP in place, including evidence of progress made from using the PP+.
- b) The school will have provided details of how their PP+ has been spent for the child; particularly in terms of maximising potential in literacy, numeracy and overall progress.

Points to note:

1. Children in care are eligible for PP+ from the first day of care.
2. The PP+ is managed by the Virtual School Head and will be paid as outlined above.
3. Designated Teachers can discuss individual cases with the Virtual School if additional funding is required.
4. The Virtual School Head is entitled to withhold future payments if it is considered that the use of the PP+ falls below that expected for all children in care.**
5. For children in non-mainstream or independent settings PP+ will only be distributed if considered appropriate and they will be required to provide supporting evidence demonstrating that PP+ is having an additional impact on progress and attainment.

6. Funding for children in Year 11 is redirected in the summer term and only exceptional requests will be considered.
7. Once PP+ has been distributed to a school, it will not be clawed back if the child moves on.
8. Children educated in Sandwell but looked after by another local authority, will receive their pupil premium from their 'home' authority.
9. If the child leaves care the PP+ will be paid up to the term in which they leave as long as the appropriate documentation has been provided.
10. The list of the different types of use (many previously used by schools) are provided below.
11. The Virtual School will offer advice and guidance for children who leave care through adoption or a special guardianship order, however we do not manage PP+ for these pupils. The responsibility is on the school to claim the funding once clarification is sought from the carer.

** The Virtual School will review attainment data to compare the progress of all children we care for.

Pupil Premium Plus uses

Teaching Approaches which Close the Gap

The Sutton Trust has created a toolkit which summarises the research evidence on improving learning and attainment to support schools in making informed choices about how to support pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Below is a summary of the evidence on teaching children 5 to 16. The complete toolkit can be downloaded from:

[Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/teaching-learning-toolkit)

	Low/Very low or no cost	Moderate Cost	High/Very High cost
High Impact	Collaborative learning - based on limited evidence. Feedback - based on extensive evidence. Homework - based on very limited evidence. Mastery learning - based on limited evidence. Metacognition and self-regulation - based on extensive evidence. Oral language interventions - based on extensive evidence. Peer tutoring - based on extensive evidence. Phonics - based on very extensive evidence. Reading comprehension strategies - based on extensive evidence.	One to one tuition - based on moderate evidence.	

Moderate Impact	Arts participation - based on moderate evidence. Behaviour interventions - based on limited evidence. Individualised Instruction - based on limited evidence. Parental engagement - based on moderate evidence. Small group tuition - based on moderate evidence. Social and emotional learning - based on very limited evidence.	Extending school time - based on limited evidence. Teaching Assistant Interventions - based on moderate evidence. Within-class attainment grouping - based on moderate evidence.	Summer schools - based on limited evidence.
Very low/ Low or no Impact	Aspiration interventions – unclear impact based on insufficient evidence. Learning styles – unclear impact based on insufficient evidence. Performance pay - based on limited evidence. School uniform – unclear impact based on insufficient evidence.	Mentoring - based on moderate evidence. Outdoor adventure learning – unclear impact based on insufficient evidence. Physical activity - based on moderate evidence.	Reducing class size - based on moderate evidence. Repeating a year – negative impact based on limited evidence. Within class attainment grouping - based on very limited evidence.
	Low or no cost	Moderate Cost	High cost

Interventions that Sandwell will agree:

A) One to One support	B) Booster Classes	C) IT and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1:1 additional learning• Support worker (emotion/behaviour)• Extra tuition• Learning mentors• Focussed in class support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early years intervention• Literacy intervention• Reading support programmes in year 7 and 8• Additional staffing• Pupil Premium group tuition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revision guides• Digital Technology (subject to carer contract)• Books• Speaking and listening equipment
D) Interventions	E) Extra Curricular	F) External Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nurture groups• Social and Communication activities• Play Therapy• Social and Emotional Learning• Behaviour Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After school club• Drum lessons• Singing lessons• Drama and theatre• Enrichment activities• Music Therapy• Summer Schools• Sports participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports coaches• Volunteer Readers• Specialist support and training• Parent/Carer Workshops

NB: Pupil Premium Plus expenditure has to reflect how it is narrowing the gap and the school will need to demonstrate that it has had an impact, not only in reporting it to us, but in response to its own governance processes and Ofsted inspection.

Sandwell will not agree funding for:

- Reducing class sizes
- Repeating a year
- School Uniform
- Teaching Assistants – general for the whole class
- Equipment that should be provided by the carer
- Trips (that are open to the whole class)
- Prom Dresses
- School equipment such as pens and pencils etc
- Transport/Bus passes
- Anything else that school, carers and social workers should provide

The question you should ask is “How is this activity being funded for all other children?”

Early Years Pupil Premium

Early years education settings can receive up to £570 pupil premium per school year for each child in the care of the local authority when they take up their free childcare entitlement. They become eligible from the age of 9 months if they are in a recognised setting.

Early years providers are any organisation that offers education for children aged under 5, including nurseries and childminders.

For children in care taking up a nursery place in Sandwell, the setting will receive their funding from the local authority. Schools/settings should ensure that the Virtual School has up to date information of all children in care on roll and will receive their payment in three instalments of £190 per term.

The Education Endowment Foundation has worked in partnership with the Sutton Trust to produce an Early Years Toolkit for The Early years Pupil premium. They have looked at a variety of interventions with the top use in terms of low cost high impact being: Communication and Language approaches, self-regulation approaches, early literacy/numeracy approaches.

[Early Years Toolkit | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/EarlyYearsToolkit/)

Our advice for delivering intervention in this way would be:-

1. To have someone the child knows to deliver extra sessions.
2. To assign a TA/HLTA (who would be paid extra) to deliver 8 - 1/2 hour sessions or 4 - 1 hour sessions to the child and carer after their school session ends (straight after dinner or after school) at a rate of around £25 per hour (including preparation).
 - This means that the TA/HLTA can work directly in collaboration with the setting teacher.
 - There is continuity for the child and they build up trust with the member of staff.
 - Progress will be noticeable and easily tracked.

The EYFS PEP enables settings to record progress against these measures. There are also established tracking methods familiar to most settings, therefore this can be incorporated into our established PEP if appropriate.

Previously Looked After Children

The pupil premium for 2025 to 2026 will include pupils recorded in the October school census and alternative provision census, who were looked after by an English or Welsh local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). These are collectively referred to as post-LAC in these conditions of grant.

For the purposes of these conditions of grant, mainstream school means infant, junior, primary, middle, secondary, high schools, special school and pupil referral units. It does not include general hospital schools or other alternative provision.

The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate PPG to schools and local authorities (who must allocate for each FTE pupil on the October 2024 school census, at each school they maintain) £2,630 per pupil for each post-LAC in year groups reception to year 11.

PPG allocations will be confirmed in June 2025 once pupil number data from the census has been validated and agreed.

Eligibility for PP+ for Previously Looked After Children

Local authorities should follow a different process for checking the eligibility of children who:

- have been adopted from local authority care
- have left care through a special guardianship order
- have left care through a child arrangements order

Local authorities will not be able to check such eligibility through the department's eligibility checking system. Instead, the parents, adoptive parents or guardians of these children should show authorities evidence of the court order that proves that the child was in local authority care in either England or Wales.

Additional Information

PUPIL PREMIUM: Conditions of Grant 2025-26

In order to achieve the purpose outlined in section 2.1 in Conditions of Grant, it is the responsibility of the Virtual School Head (VSH) in the local authority that looks after the child, in consultation with the child's educational setting, to ensure that PPG is used to support those children's educational needs in accordance with their personal education plans.

The local authority can pool any amount of LAC PPG to fund activities that will benefit a group, or all, of the authority's looked-after children. Any pupil premium held centrally must not be used to fund services that the local authority is responsible for funding, such as support for foster carers, school uniforms or transport to get the child to school.

For any funding that is passed on to the child's education setting, processes for allocating the funds should be as simple as possible to avoid delay.

Local authorities may not carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2025 to 2026. Centrally-held LAC premium that has not been spent, or allocated to the child's education setting, by 31 March 2026 will be recovered.

[Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Early Years Pupil Premium

VSHs provides advice on the eligibility of children we care for within the local authority area. Information can be found in the [Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#). Further details for providers and carers is available for [Help paying for childcare: Childcare you can get help paying for \('approved childcare'\) - GOV.UK](#)

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