

# Sheffield Virtual School

## Pupil Premium Policy

### For

## Children Looked After (CLA)

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Status: Final

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#### **Key Changes:**

The Early Years CLA Pupil Premium has increased to £570 per annum, and the CLA Pupil Premium for school age children has increased to £2630 per annum



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## 1. Overview

This protocol is concerned solely with the strand of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant allocated for Children Looked After (CLA) by the Head of the Sheffield Virtual School.

There are three elements of this grant:

- (1) Early Years Pupil Premium Grant for CLA aged 2 to 4 (early years)
- (2) Pupil Premium Grant for CLA of statutory school age
- (3) Pupil Premium Grant for CLA of Post-16 age

The Early Years CLA Pupil Premium is £570 per annum, and the CLA Pupil Premium for school age children amounts to £2630 per annum.

This grant funding runs across the financial year, **not** the academic year. The grant is paid annually to the Virtual School by the Department for Education (DfE) and therefore funding beyond the current financial year (April to March) cannot be guaranteed.

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated that Virtual School Heads (VSHs) are responsible for managing the grant and for allocating it to schools and alternative provision (AP) settings (Alternative Provision setting provide education for children who cannot go to a mainstream school).

VSHs are also responsible for managing the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). They are in charge of giving the premium to the Early Years providers that educate CLA who are taking up the funded early education entitlement for 2 to 4 year olds.

The grant conditions state that the funding must be used for the benefit of the CLA. The grant conditions allow for the grant to be given directly to individual education settings or pooled together to benefit a group of CLA.

Where money is given to education settings, the money must be clearly documented in the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP).

DfE guidance on the conditions of grant are available here [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

The Post-16 Pupil Premium Grant - The DfE have confirmed this grant will be available to all Local Authorities in the 2025-26 academic year. The total value of the 2025-26 grant for Sheffield CLA in Post-16 is £75,440.

## **2. Distribution of CLA Pupil Premium**

### **2.1 Distribution Early Years Pupil Premium Plus Grant**

CLA children can access Funded Early Learning (FEL) provision from the age of 2. The VSH in Sheffield has agreed that the EY Pupil Premium Grant will be paid directly to education settings for all 3 and 4 year old CLA who are accessing the Funded Early Learning (FEL) places. The EY Pupil Premium Grant will be distributed by the Early Years Finance team on a termly basis

Early Years settings in Sheffield are not required to apply for the grant which is distributed automatically. Early Years settings out of Sheffield should contact their own Local Authority for details of how they will receive this grant.

A child will be eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) if they meet any of the following criteria:

- they are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
- they have left care in England or Wales through:
  - an adoption order
  - a special guardianship order
  - a child arrangements order

For children who are eligible for EYPP by virtue of being looked after by a local authority, the local authority must fund the early years provider at a flat rate of at least £1 multiplied by 570 hours (at least £570 per year).

The Early Years Finance team can be contacted on:  
[EYFEL.census@Sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:EYFEL.census@Sheffield.gov.uk) or 0114 2736423

### **2.2 Distribution of the Post-16 CLA Pupil Premium Grant**

The Local Authority receives a £75,440 grant from the DFE to support education outcomes of CLA in Post-16. This grant is distributed to social care and education providers through targeted requests for support. Education Providers and Social Workers can request funding by completing a proforma. Any requests need to have been discussed with the Virtual School advocate for the young person in advance of the proforma being submitted. Further details on this process are in section 2.3.2

### **2.3 Distribution of the school age CLA Pupil Premium Grant**

The Local Authority receives a £2630 grant (annually) from the DFE for every CLA that it is responsible for. The VSH has agreed with

Headteachers that the Pupil Premium will be distributed in the following way:

- £1800 will be given directly to schools (per CLA child) in 3 equal instalments of £600 each in January, April and August. All payments will be subject to the completion and signing off of a 'good' quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) by a termly deadline. A good quality pep is defined as *'a co-constructed 'live' document which captures the current situation, needs and progress of the child, and which has clearly defined SMART targets, actions and accountability –with clear attributable spend of the PP grant'*
- The remainder will be retained (and pooled) by the VSH to: (1) identify, commission and deliver targeted projects and initiatives which fall within the aims and objectives of the Virtual School, (2) to provide additional funding to individual schools and education establishments (as agreed) to promote attendance and progress, inclusion, participation and prevent exclusion

**Note:** The CLA Pupil Premium is a government grant given to the Local Authority on an annual basis. Therefore a commitment longer than one year cannot be made. The grant cycle does not follow the academic year but runs financial years (April to March).

### 2.3.1 Schedule for devolved funding to schools

The Virtual School will release the £1800 in 3 instalments at the beginning of the new term, reflecting the PEP submitted the previous term.

| Period      | Deadline for PEP to be completed by Schools | Date the payment will be processed | Amount & payment month | Payment Conditions                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Autumn Term | 30 <sup>th</sup> November                   | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> January</b>      | £600 in February       | on completion of high quality PEP with targeted support identified |
| Spring Term | 28 <sup>th</sup> February                   | <b>1<sup>st</sup> April</b>        | £600 in May            | on completion of high quality PEP with targeted support identified |
| Summer Term | 30 <sup>th</sup> June                       | <b>1<sup>st</sup> August</b>       | £600 in September      | on completion of high quality PEP with targeted support identified |

### 2.3.2 Funding linked to completion of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All payments are subject to the Designated Teacher (DT) completing and signing off the PEP by a termly deadline. It is important therefore that the member of school staff completing the PEP has appropriate authority to agree the expenditure or has gained permission to approve this prior to the PEP completion.

### 2.3.3 Will the Virtual School withhold Pupil Premium payments?

If Schools do not submit the PEP by the deadline or submits an inadequate Plan, pupil premium will not be released at the beginning of the new term and the DT and Headteacher will be informed of this.

The funding for inadequate plans **COULD** be released ON THE CONDITION that the **DT improves the plan** during the next term (supported by the Virtual School). If this does not happen, PP+ will be withheld each term until a good quality plan is in place.

To comply with the DfE statutory compliance and regulations, the Virtual School have responsibility to ensure that PEPs are of high standard and meet the individual needs of CLA in your school or setting. However, we never want to decline Pupil Premium payments, as this could have a negative impact on the CLA. Instead, we want to work with you to ensure that your PEP is of high standard and meets the needs of each young person. During the Virtual School compliance period and checking the quality of PEPs, the DT will receive prompts during this month to develop and finalise the PEP to a good standard.

## 2.4 Additional Pupil Premium Plus Grant requests

### 2.4.1 Making requests for additional PPG

The overall grant allocated is calculated on a per capita basis but does not have to be distributed on a per capita basis. Given that CLA have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care, a notional £830 per capita, will be retained by the Virtual School.

The retained amount will be used to support CLA in exceptional circumstances. For example to prevent permanent exclusion, provide interim education provision for children awaiting admission to school, to support access and transition to appropriate education provision and improve attainment and progress.

Similarly, schools may request additional funding to 'close the gap'.

Funding **will not** be provided to schools and educational establishments for universal support which they would normally be expected to provide e.g. access to learning mentor time, after school clubs (free).

Schools can request additional funding by completing a proforma. Any requests need to have been discussed with the Virtual School advocate for the child in advance of the proforma being submitted.

#### **2.4.2 Additional PPG decisions**

All requests received will be considered by the VSH on a regular basis. The VSH may agree to the whole or part of the request (subject to funding). The decision made by the VSH is final.

The decision will be communicated in writing via email to the school and payment will be made promptly to the school. Schools **should not** wait for the money to enter into the schools account before commissioning additional support/resources, once funding has been agreed.

All additional approved payments of PP+ grant should be accounted for in the child's PEP document in the 'Targets' section.

School must not make a financial commitment prior to the decision from the VSH being received. Schools should have a backup plan should the funding not be agreed.

All requests for School Age Additional Pupil Premium Plus grant must be received before the last Friday in February before the half term holiday commences in Sheffield. Requests received after this date will not be processed until the new financial year which starts on the 1 April.

Requests for **Post-16** Pupil Premium Plus will be received throughout the academic year. The decision will be communicated in writing via email to the social worker or education provider and payment will be made promptly to social care or the Post-16 provider if agreed.

### **3. Payments**

#### **3.1 Who qualifies for the funding?**

CLA Pupil Premium will be given to all schools who have Sheffield school age CLA on their roll and have submitted a PEP plan by the termly deadline, with the exception of CLA attending:

- Residential education establishments
- Independent special schools

The rationale for this decision is that the education placement at these settings is already funded at a significantly higher level due to the expectation they are meeting individual needs and the provision clearly detailed in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). However, these institutions can make a request for additional grant funding to the VSH

(see 2.4), providing the request is not reasonably expected to be covered under the EHC Plan.

**Dual Registration:** Where a child is dual registered the CLA Pupil Premium will be paid to the child's main registered school.

**For CLA placed into Sheffield schools by other Local Authorities**, it is the responsibility of their placing Local Authority's Virtual School to pay the CLA Pupil Premium grant to the child's current school as per their published CLA Pupil Premium policy.

### **3.2 In-year admissions to care**

There is a statutory requirement for a PEP meeting to be held within 20 days of a child becoming looked after. As soon as the Virtual School is alerted to the fact that a child has become subject to a care order they will request that the child's social worker contacts the educational establishment to arrange a PEP meeting. Once the social worker informs the Virtual School of the date of the PEP, a copy of this CLA Pupil Premium Protocol and the relevant PEP documentation will be made available.

### **3.3 In-year transfer between schools**

It is a statutory requirement for a PEP meeting to be held within 20 schools days of a new school placement.

The school where the child attended in the previous term (and who submitted the PEP) will receive the funding. If a Sheffield CLA moves school or setting shortly after their CLA Pupil Premium has been paid to the school, the receiving school will be allocated the grant at the beginning of the next term. Equipment that was purchased should be forwarded to the new school; **it will be for the two schools concerned to liaise over this.**

### **3.4 Spending CLA Pupil Premium**

The CLA Pupil Premium must be used to provide additional support for individual children to raise their attainment and progress and to close the gap with their peers; it should not be used to fund universal provision that schools are providing as their core offer to their pupils. The CLA Pupil Premium should also be used to support higher attainment CLA pupils to accelerate their learning and attainment.

In particular, funding **should not** be used to fund:

- I. The support set out in an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) or made at SEN support
- II. Resources that a local authority provides for through its allowances for foster carers or children's home fees
- III. Trips and visits organised by the school as part of the curriculum. It is expected that the local authority or carer (if covered through the fostering allowance or children's home fees) should provide resources for these activities

- IV. Basic equipment that the child/young person needs for school, such as school uniform or equipment for physical education lessons
- V. Education provision for Children Looked After subject to a fixed term or permanent exclusion from their school

### **3.5 Types of expenditure**

The following are examples of expenditure which the CLA Pupil Premium could be used for:

- Learning Resources
- Intervention Programmes [Academic]
- Intervention Programmes [Therapeutic]
- Additional 1:1 support
- Targeted group work – outside the core offer from school
- Out of school learning activities
- Hardware/software
- Specialist tuition/equipment
- Subject tuition

### **3.6 Unallocated CLA Pupil Premium Plus Grant**

The local authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into a new financial year. All activities must have been carried out and payments made by 31 March.

Schools are required to keep accurate financial records as these may be requested at a later date by Sheffield City Council for the purpose of audit or DFE returns.

## **4. Monitoring / Quality Assurance and reporting**

The VSH has a responsibility to ensure that the CLA Pupil Premium is administered in accordance to the conditions of grant and any subsequent information released by the Department of Education. Schools are required to retain accurate financial records of how they have used their CLA Pupil Premium as this information could be requested for financial audit purposes, DFE returns, Ofsted inspections and/or scrutiny by Sheffield's Corporate Parenting Board.

### **4.1 Monitoring and Accountability – Virtual School**

The Virtual School advocate for the child will monitor and evaluate the use of the Pupil Premium on a pupil by pupil basis using the PEP document. Once the PEP has been signed off by the Designated Teacher as complete, the Virtual School advocate will check the accuracy and content of the PEP and proposed CLA Pupil Premium expenditure. School age CLA Pupil Premium funding will not be released if the PEP has been

signed off as 'RED' (inadequate) and until the outstanding concerns/actions have been addressed.

Any concerns will be initially highlighted by the VS advocate with the school's Designated Teacher. Where there are ongoing or unresolved concerns with regards to the use of the CLA Pupil Premium these will be escalated to the VSH.

Where the PEP is not determined as good or Pupil Premium grant remains unspent, the VSH may retain the delegated PPG until the issues have been resolved. Where payments for specific interventions have been agreed and documented but not actioned, the VS may withhold future payments of PP grant until these issues have been resolved.

#### **4.2 Monitoring and Accountability – Education establishments**

All Educational settings will be expected to report to the Virtual School via the child's PEP:

- How the CLA Pupil Premium will be spent for each child
- How it links to the child's PEP targets
- How it will improve the educational outcomes for that child

The headteacher is required to produce an annual report to their School Governors on how the CLA Pupil Premium has been used to meet the needs of their CLA.

#### **4.3 Quality Assurance**

During school and local authority inspections, Ofsted inspectors sample random PEPs to ensure that CLA Pupil Premium is being spent appropriately.

#### **4.4 Reporting**

The Virtual School will report on Pupil Premium spend in the following ways:

- A breakdown of the expenditure will be provided in the Virtual School monthly dashboard report
- A summary of how the grant has been used will be included in the Virtual School annual report from the VSH

#### **4.5 Questions or concerns**

Should any professional (social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer) have concerns around the application or use of the Pupil Premium they should highlight these to the Virtual School advocate for the child.

Professionals may also put their questions/concerns in writing to the VSH:

Virtual School Head  
Education & Skills  
Children's services  
Sheffield City Council

Floor 5, Howden House  
1 Union Street  
Sheffield  
S1 2SH

Email: [virtualschool@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@sheffield.gov.uk)

## **5. Useful Information**

### **5.1 Post-16 funding (bursary)**

Post 16 CLA and care leavers are entitled to a post-16 bursary. This is a bursary to help with education related costs for 16 to 19 year olds who are studying at school or college (not university) in England or on a training course.

More information is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

### **5.2 Post-CLA Pupil Premium**

Children who have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order will not receive the CLA Pupil Premium from the Virtual School.

School aged former CLA from England and Wales are entitled to a grant of £2630 from the DFE. It is the responsibility of the school to apply for this in their October pupil census return. The additional funding will go directly into the school's budget from the DFE.

Post-LAC PP+ cannot currently be claimed for children who are home schooled unless this arrangement is being funded by the local authority. Pupils who attend independent schools are only entitled to claim PP+ if the local authority is funding the tuition fees. There are no plans to change this currently. Please Note: It is up to the school to ascertain that a pupil is post looked after and to ensure that the LA is aware of their status before the date of the October census. Otherwise the school (if Non-maintained school) or the LA will not receive Post LAC pupil premium for the following financial year.

Proof of former CLA status will be needed and permission received from the adopters / carers to add the child to the census as being previously looked after.

### **5.3 New settings - Banking process**

Education settings not set up on the Sheffield financial management system will be contacted by the Inclusion and Learning Service (ILS) finance team and asked to provide the school's banking details as soon as possible. If these details are not received, payment cannot be made.

**If a school changes its banking details mid-way through the academic year, the onus is on that school to inform the Virtual Head of the change. Failure to do so may mean a lost payment.**

All questions and queries should be directed to the Virtual School.

#### **5.4 Key contacts**

Helen Banjac - Head of the Sheffield Virtual School

Tom Gamble – Lead Advocate, Sheffield Virtual School

**Virtual School email address:** [Virtualschool@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Virtualschool@sheffield.gov.uk)