

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM

SUBJECT:	Pupil Premium dedicated to Children in Care (Pupil Premium Plus)
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SUMMARY OF REPORT: THIS REPORT INTENDS TO:-

- **SETS OUT THE ORIGINS AND POLICY FOR PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS (PP+),**
- **EVIDENCE THE SPEND TO DATE AND**
- **HIGHLIGHT EFFECTIVE USE OF THE GRANT.**

1. Introduction

The DfE made significant changes to the criteria and deployment of the Children in Care (CiC) element of the Pupil Premium (PP) grant for 2014-15 financial year. These changes were researched and developed by the DfE through a pilot with West Sussex and their Virtual School. Following this pilot the DfE produced two key documents announcing significant national changes in the arrangements for Pupil Premium for Children in Care (CiC) for financial year 2014/15. These two documents can be found on the Virtual School Kent's (VSK) website at: <http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

- Pupil Premium Grant 2014 to 2015 Conditions of Grant (February 2014)
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher 2014-15 - Frequently Asked Questions (March 2014)

Key changes included, the formulae amount per CiC which was raised to £1900; the length of time in care eligibility criteria reduced from six months to first day in care and the deployment model which became ring fenced to a set criteria deployed through the Virtual School and its Head Teacher.

2. Policy

All Virtual Schools were required to produce a working policy to meet the new deployment requirements based on the two DfE documents listed above. The key guidance document was released on the 24th March 2014 which was problematic for schools who had already completed their budget build. This is why the Virtual School agreed to make a first direct payment of 5/12ths to each school based on the March 31st SSDA 903 return, all subsequent applications were to be made on a child's needs driven model with no cash limit.

Overall principles underpinning our child's needs driven model

The Virtual School Head teacher is responsible for the use of Pupil Premium Plus to close the learning gap and realise the potential for all children in our care, wherever they live.

The funding will be provided according to the needs of the child and there is no set amount.

Kent County Council and the Virtual School Head teacher are Corporate Parents, so the question 'would this be good enough for my child?' is a central one in making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of the use of Pupil Premium Plus

How and why will the amount of Pupil Premium Plus vary?

Children's needs may vary over time and therefore a personalised approach is needed. For some children a significant amount will be need to fund the cost of the support they need.eg:

- Children who come into care in an emergency with a fragmented home and education history who are behind academically
- Children who move into or out of Kent who may require additional support
- Children with significant and often delayed reaction to abuse and neglect, which may present as complex emotional, social and/or challenging behaviour impacting on progress.

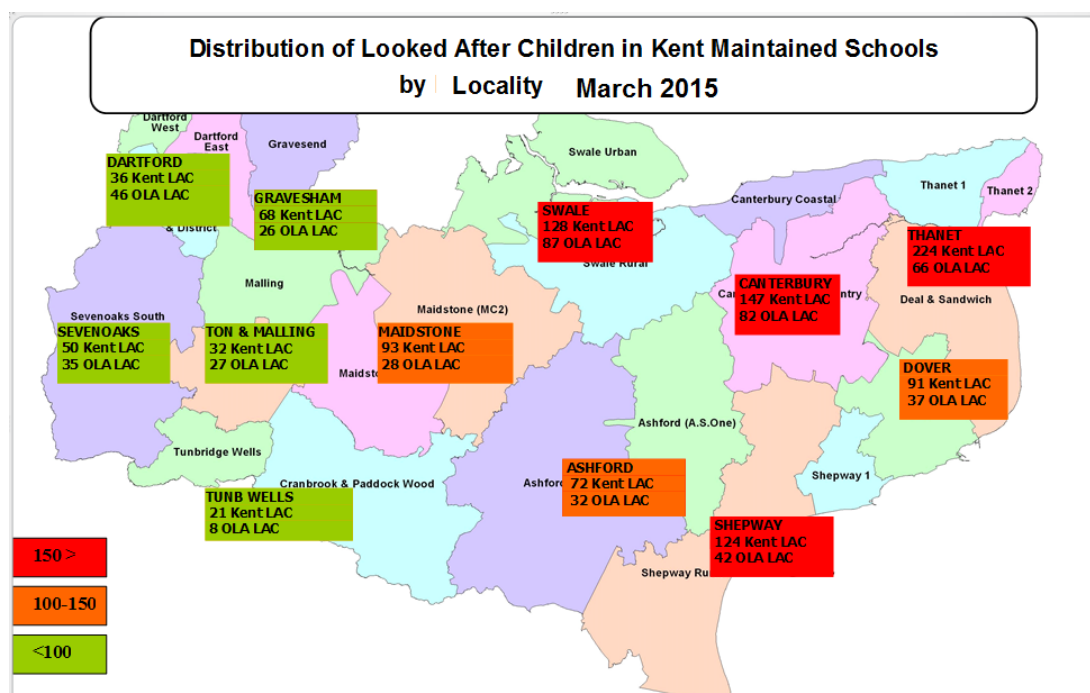
In view of this, there may be variations in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed.

Proposals to pool Pupil Premium Plus in a school or group of schools to enhance services, providing its use is directly linked to the needs of CiC via the PEP, are acceptable.

The full VSK Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Kent Children in Care can be found on the VSK website <http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/resources/pupil-premium>

3. Financial allocation of PP+ per locality

Figure 1.



Geographical dispersal of Kent CiC sees East Kent with 41.6% of eligible CiC; South Kent with 24.3%; West Kent with 11%; North Kent with 13.7% and the remainder placed outside of Kent.

Figure 2.

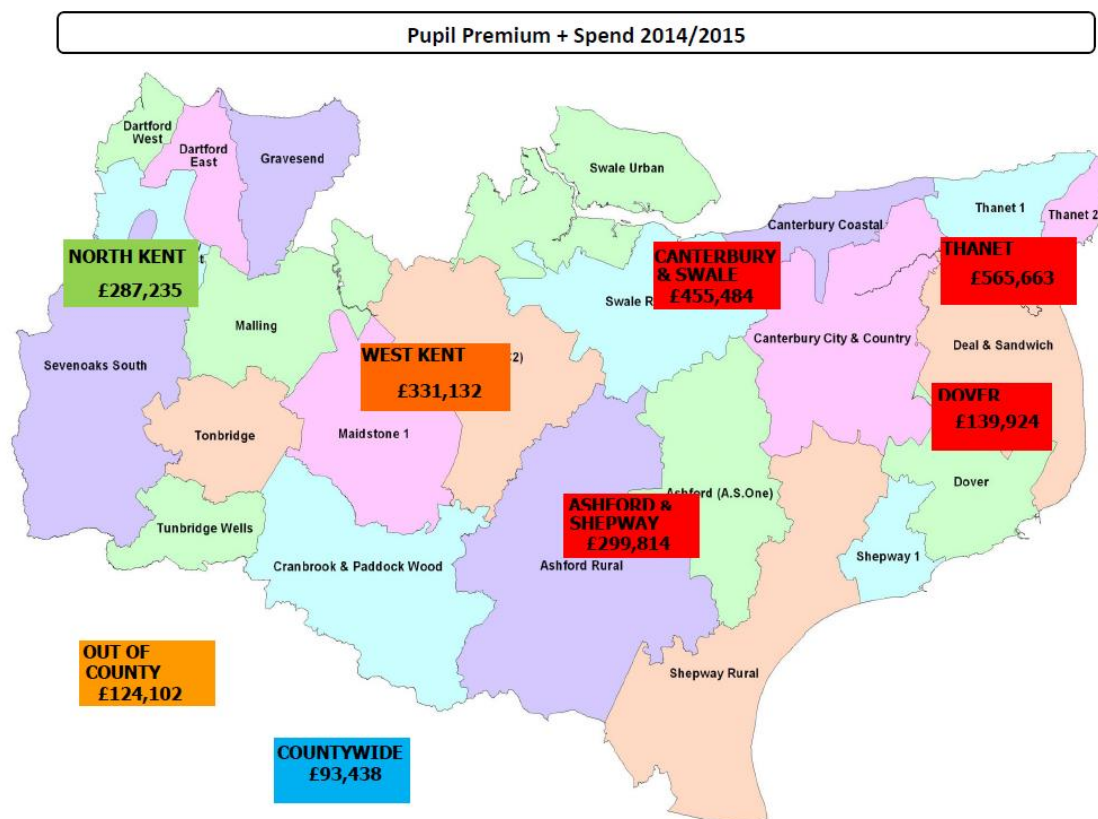


Figure 2 highlights the PP+ spend in each locality area. 2014-15 PP+ spend was roughly in line with population distribution with the exception of Thanet where they account for 19% of cohort and 25% of grant deployment. This again links with the PP+ policy around the Child Needs Model and the number of more complex CiC we have placed in East Kent due to location of specialist care settings.

In addition to the direct payments and initiatives in the localities VSK directly commissioned activities which included literacy development programmes such as Beanstalk and Paired Reading.

There have been a myriad of interventions and support programmes generated for our CiC across the county. 23% of the grant in localities have been spend on 1:1 tuition; a further 19% utilised on targeted individual support; 36% focused on group or school based approaches and 18% on collaborative approaches across schools.

4. Good Practice Examples

Striving to Thriving at The Leigh Academy

A need was identified by school staff that had concerns for some more vulnerable students. They identified within their students that low self-esteem, anxiety and lack of confidence impacted upon achievement, aspiration and ability to respond appropriately when difficulties arise.

The brief was to devise a specific bespoke programme. Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques (CBT), coupled with Positive Psychology strategies the **Striving to Thriving** programme aims to improve:

- Relational difficulties: unhealthy/dysfunctional
- Poor communication skills
- Low aspiration
- Negative self-talk

- Poor self esteem
- Poor emotional resilience
- Poor self-nurture

The full report evidences the outcomes; details the methodology, content and how the programme fulfilled some specific aims for several students at The Leigh Academy.

Programme impact

The key conclusions are:

- Students averaged an improvement of **10** points on the WEMWBS scale, measuring improvement in emotional wellbeing.
- Improved support networks
- More effective communication styles
- A more positive outlook, more optimistic about the future
- Ability to challenge negative thinking
- Increases in confidence have enabled participants to:
 - Challenge and tackle unhealthy aspects in relationships
 - Establish healthier boundaries regarding their and others behaviour
- More effective communication styles
- A deeper recognition of strengths will enable a more resilient response to stresses and difficult situations

Canterbury Coastal Alliance Project

Head teacher representatives from the Alliance with VSK met to discuss collaborative approaches to using the PP+ Grant. The Alliance identified the prime areas of need for these children that the schools felt were not being met as well as they should be via the usual routes especially regarding speed of response. These areas were:

- Access to therapy/therapeutic work: children in care often struggle with emotional/mental health difficulties. Through the usual routes taken, support through organisations such as CAMHS, Young Healthy Minds and other similar professional bodies, is difficult to access and there is a waiting list often of up to 12-18 months. The schools recognised that this was not ideal and would welcome a trained and accredited therapeutic professional being available to the children when they needed it. Therefore, the proposal of the Alliance employing an art/play therapist (more Primary based) and a psychotherapist (more Secondary based) was outlined
- Access to Speech and Language Therapy: it is becoming clear that many children in care need support with their speech and language development. The current situation regarding the Speech & Language Therapy service is that it is difficult to access without a Statement of Special Educational Need/Education, Health & Care Plan where speech and language issues are identified. Without this, referrals are becoming harder for schools to make and rarely accepted. Therefore, the Alliance felt that hiring a Speech and Language therapist would guarantee that their children in care would be seen as and when needed without the need for unnecessary paperwork and long waiting periods.
- Extended access to the Education Psychology Service: this service operates on a basis of a service level agreement with schools. This would also be an invaluable aid should schools feel that a child in care would benefit from having an Education, Health & Care Plan.

The expected impact will be:

- Improved engagement with the learning process and the confidence to take risks with their learning, see the value in education and develop ambitions and aspirations for the future
- Improved social interactions/relationships whereby children can make and maintain meaningful and positive relationships with their peers and adults
- Better understanding and interventions for mental health difficulties experienced by many children in care, with the appropriate support in place when it is needed
- Informed educational interventions that support children appropriately and ensure that they are given the best opportunities to experience success and progress academically in line with their peers
- Improved levels of speaking and listening which are the foundations for learning and interaction: children will be better placed to have the correct support with their understanding of the language of the classroom; their ability to listen appropriately for salient information; their ability to formulate appropriate responses to a range of people in varying contexts
- Opportunities for staff development and training from their resident experts in order to best support children in care in their classrooms, and their colleagues

EAL Tutor to work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) South Kent

South Kent are funding the services of a qualified EAL tutor to teach basic English to UASC who have little or no spoken / written English skills on arrival in the locality. The tutor works with students prior to them starting mainstream school and will continue to support them during their integration.

The expected outcome is for these students to integrate more quickly into mainstream curriculum and social networks and to improve their English vocabulary as quickly as possible to support their learning and social needs.

English Tutor North Kent

Currently working with 12YP in Y6 and 11 (9 secondary age and 3 Primary aged students). All Y 11 students have seen a rise of between 1 and 4 grades for their English GCSE predictions. One of the year 11's re-engagement in English and studies has prevented a potential permanent exclusion. Two of the three Y6's have moved from Amber to Green cohort (on target to achieve Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Mathematics). One of the Y6's although making progress has been identified as needing an EHCP.

A Responsive Individualised PP+ Plan for Roger

Year 11 student at Holmesdale Technology College. Not motivated in his education, not attending revision or additional support classes, predicted E Grade in all GCSE's, no clear progression plans and no support at home.

Initial package identified 1:1 tuition for English and Mathematics with identified school support, closely tracked and monitored by VSK. Quickly identified Roger wasn't engaging with tuition, therefore VSK and school identified a programme of intensive mentoring to get Roger to a place where he was willing to access additional support. Key worker put in place then gradually introduced Roger to Homework support and later back into tuition.

Outcomes to date:-

Mathematics GCSE Grade C achieved (First entry)
 All remaining GCSE's predicted Grade C
 Secured place on Public Services course for September.

Paired Reading Project

Previous literature has shown that Paired Reading is an effective way of supporting children in care to make progress in their reading. A previous research project completed in Hampshire (Alfano, 2011) showed that Children in Care made significant gains in their reading as a result of their engagement in a 16 week paired reading project.

KEPS was commissioned to deliver this project by VSK, as a way of improving the reading progress of Children in Care. A further aim was to replicate the project completed in Hampshire, and establish whether it would improve the reading of children in care situated in the Kent context. The 16 week project was undertaken between September 2014 and March 2015. It was completed in South Kent, mainly centred on the areas of Ashford, Folkestone, Dover, Lydd and Canterbury.

Initially, 25 names were referred to KEPS from VSK. The criteria for inclusion in the project was a reading age two years below that of their chronological age, a stable foster carer placement and the children were under 11.

Consent was initially obtained for 16 children. A total of 11 children completed the project. This meant that there was a 31% attrition rate. Compared to previous studies completed in Hampshire, this is a favourable rate to attrition. The main reason for attrition was that the child's placement was unstable due to challenging behaviour, and it was felt by foster carers and social workers that they needed to prioritise a stable school placement.

Of the children who completed the project, 7 were male and 4 were female. 10 of the children were in Primary school, and 1 was in Secondary school. The average reading age for the children pre-intervention was 8 years, 1 month. At pre-intervention, there were two children at ceiling, meaning that they performed at the highest level on the reading assessment.

Results

At post intervention, the average reading age was 9 years, 4 month. This means that there was a reading gain of 15 months. Four children were at ceiling during the post-intervention assessment.

The average Reading Self Concept for the children at pre-intervention was 3.3. At post intervention, this average had increased to 3.6.

Qualitative information collected from telephone conversations with a sample of four foster carers, both those who had completed the project and those who had not, suggested that it was viewed very positively by the foster carers, even those who had not been able to complete the project. Those foster carers whose children had dropped out of the project asked to be kept informed about the possibility of re-joining the project at a later date, should it be run in the area again. Generally, the foster carers enjoyed the 1:1 time, and it began an open forum for general conversation, so they completed paired reading and then discussed daily life following this. One foster carer also believed the project had impacted upon the child's spelling and general literacy skills, although formal measures were not collected to confirm this.

5. Issues

The size and scale of Kent and its CiC population, coupled with a flexible needs based deployment model, mean administration of this grant is complex and time consuming. Additional administration support was requested, but denied due to austerity and utilising the PP+ grant itself to administer does not comply with the conditions of grant. Year one has been tracked and monitored via a manual spreadsheet system, which has met our basic

needs, however more robust and elaborate analysis tool is needed to maximise the efficient and effective use of this grant.

Other Local Authority (OLA) CiC has a significant impact on schools particularly in East Kent. It is now commonplace for secondary schools in East Kent to have in excess of 30 CiC, with the potential for some schools to have to liaise with 16 different Virtual Schools to secure their requested PP+ grant allocation. The DfE have not standardised application forms or models other than what is set out in the guidance discussed in section 2 of this paper. This means that there are potentially 152 different application processes for schools to navigate.

6. Next Steps

PP+ payments to schools in the 2015-16 financial year will be entirely based on the child's needs driven model.

Student support plans linked to their electronic Personal Education Plan (e-PEP) and PP+ grant application will move to an academic year plan rather than fitting in spending within financial year constraints. Work has already come to completion to develop the e-PEP system to allow live tracking of payments linked to either individual plans or agreed school or collaborative plans. E-PEP also tracks wider support given by the Virtual School and student progress.

The PP+ process and impact will be reviewed between October 2015 and January 2016 to evidence impact and areas for development. This consultation will be in time to review and renew existing process if need be for financial year 2016-17 assuming PP+ will continue in the same way.

7. Recommendation

Members of the Forum are asked to NOTE the contents of this paper.