

Pupil Premium Plus

What is Pupil Premium Plus?

Pupil Premium began in 2011 for children eligible for free school meals, children whose parents serve in the armed forces and looked after children; its purpose was to close the attainment gap between these groups and their peers.

In 2013 the DfE introduced Pupil Premium *Plus* for looked after and previously looked after children. In doing this, the DfE acknowledged the enduring impact of trauma and loss in children's lives and the key role of schools in supporting children who have had a difficult start in life.

Who is eligible for Pupil Premium Plus?

Pupil Premium Plus is available to pupils from reception age to Year 11 in state-funded education **in England** who:

- Are in local authority care in England.
- Have been adopted from care in England or Wales.
- Left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- Left care under a Child Arrangements Order (formerly known as a Residence Order).

In respect of children adopted from care, the Pupil Premium Plus was initially restricted to children adopted on or after 30 December 2005 but in the summer of 2014 was **extended to all children adopted from care**.

Pupils must be attending either:

- A local authority maintained school or maintained special school.
- An academy or free school.
- A non-maintained special school, an independent school and other alternative provision (e.g. home educated) where the place or provision is funded by the local authority.

Children who are educated at home or attend private schools are not currently eligible unless these placements are funded by the local authority.

How is funding accessed?

In order for schools to access the funding, parents and guardians must declare their child's adoptive, SGO or CAO status directly to the school before the school completes the January census. Parents and guardians must provide evidence, for example, a copy of the legal order order, or a confirmation letter from the local authority which placed their child. Parents should not need to declare their child's status again until the child changes school.

What is the money for?

The DfE has said that it intends the funding to be spent on:

‘...helping adopted children emotionally, socially and educationally by providing specific support to raise their attainment and address their wider needs.’

The focus on children's social and emotional and wider needs is in contrast to the Pupil Premium for children eligible for free school meals, which is focused on closing the attainment gap.

The money is not ring fenced and does not have to be spent on the individual child. The DfE has said that it has introduced this flexibility so that schools can get maximum impact from the funding and so that children who change schools are not disadvantaged.

In deciding how to use the Pupil Premium Plus, schools will want to understand and take account of the particular needs of looked after and previously looked after children, as these may be additional to or different from the needs of children who attract the Pupil Premium because they are from financially deprived family circumstances; for example, financial subsidies such as school trips and clubs may not address the needs of previously looked after children.

The DfE has clearly said that the funding should not be used to supplement the general school budget, or to support other groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs or who are low attaining. Some children who are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus will have special educational needs or low attainment, but these are needs which should anyway be met through the usual or additional funding streams available to the school.

The DfE encourages schools to use robust evidence when making decisions about how to spend the funding to support previously looked after children and recommends seeking advice from the local authority, the virtual school and the designated teacher for looked after children, as the impact of abuse, neglect, trauma

and loss does not disappear overnight. The DfE says that schools are also encouraged to seek advice from national organisations that specialise in adoption support. The DfE commissioned BAAF to gather examples of good practice in spending the Pupil Premium Plus.

Who decides how the funding is spent?

It is up to each individual school to decide how to spend the money. The DfE has clearly stated that it is good practice to consult parents and guardians when making the decision. Some schools are consulting with individual parents and guardians, while others have invited adopters and special guardians to group consultations or task groups about how to spend the funding.

Schools must act transparently and publish their pupil premium spending on their websites. We strongly recommend that schools separate their pupil premium and pupil premium *plus* spending in these breakdowns, since the needs of the two groups are different.

In some Local Authorities such as Windsor & Maidenhead the Virtual School has voluntarily extended its remit to include previously looked after children. The Virtual School uses its expertise to guide the decision making process on the best use of the pupil premium funding. Schools have welcomed this direction from the Virtual School. The effectiveness of the spending is then monitored across the LAs schools.

Spending it wisely

We recommend that every decision about spending begins with a good understanding of each child's needs. Personal Education Plans, a format used for children in care, are ideal for gathering the views of the child, parents, school and social worker (where the adoption/special guardianship support service is involved). This shared understanding of the child's needs makes it possible to identify the intervention needed to support the child needs, which then informs Pupil Premium Plus spending. The PEP is also an excellent conduit for the school and family to work together. In some instances an Educational Psychology assessment of the child's strengths and needs may be helpful to inform this process. It might be possible to use Pupil Premium Plus to commission such an assessment from the LA's Educational Psychology Service.

The DfE has suggested that the funding could be partially used for training members of school staff in how to support children who have experienced trauma and loss.

Our experience is that permanently placed children can particularly struggle with:

1. Attachment relationships with adults
2. Managing their peer relationships
3. Managing their feelings and behaviour
4. Coping with transitions
5. Developing their executive functioning skills

It is suggested that schools consider using the funding to...

1. Provide nurture and relationships through:

- A nurture breakfast club which allows children to settle into the school day
- Providing meet and greets for children at the start of the day
- A nurture room and group.
- Training and supporting staff to provide key attachment relationships with regular 1:1 'attachment time' built into children's timetables

2. Scaffold children's social skills and peer relationships, for example through:

- Social skills groups or Circle of Friends interventions
- Lunchtime clubs with opportunities to practice social skills
- Friendship groups
- Facilitating friendships e.g. through a buddy scheme or peer mentoring initiative

3. Support emotional literacy and emotion regulation through:

- Emotional literacy and emotion regulation groups, including anger management
- Appointing and training an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
- Providing calm boxes and staff to spend 1:1 time helping children to regulate themselves
- Providing calm zones in classrooms and centrally within the school
- Providing alternatives to detention and isolation which focus on understanding and repairing what went wrong

- Therapeutic services (e.g. play, art, music, drama therapy) for individuals or groups of children; please note that therapists and counsellors who provide 'adoption support' must be registered with Ofsted as Adoption Support Agencies or commissioned by the local authority or a registered Adoption Support Agency

4. Support children to cope with transitions and change by:

- Providing additional structure during break and lunchtimes
- Providing safe spaces for children to come to throughout the school day
- Appointing a transition worker to support children through the Year 6 to Year 7 transition
- Identifying a group of staff who can provide cover for absence, reducing the need for external supply staff
- Spending time preparing children for change in advance e.g. using social stories or visual timetables
- Liaising closely with parents and guardians who can help their children prepare for and cope with change

5. Develop children's executive functioning skills through:

- Training staff in understanding and supporting executive functioning skill development in the classroom and on the playground
- Providing individual and group sessions which focus on scaffolding the skills needed
- Providing coaching for children who struggle to plan and organize e.g. check-ins to ensure they have books and equipment, have recorded the homework etc.

6. Address barriers to information sharing and joint working by:

- Developing policies and procedures which ensure that key information about children's needs is shared with all key staff coming into contact with them
- Identifying a named member of staff who liaises with the parents or guardians and facilitates regular meetings to discuss the child's need and progress