

Pupil Premium Plus for Looked After and Previously Cared for children:

Arrangements for 2025-26

Northumberland Virtual School



This policy sets out how Northumberland Virtual School will distribute and monitor the Pupil Premium Plus grant for cared for children and support the use of the Pupil Premium Plus grant for previously cared for children in the financial year 2025-26.

The policy should be read with the government guidance on the Pupil Premium: and [Virtual School Heads' Responsibilities](#),

and the statutory guidance for:

- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children, Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

The **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)** is grant funding from the DfE to improve the achievement of cared for and previously cared for pupils to close the attainment gap with their peers.

For the financial year **2025-26** the Virtual School will receive £2,630 of PP+ funding for eligible pupils from Year R to 11 who are looked after by Northumberland Local Authority*. This funding is managed by the Virtual School Headteacher.

The Virtual School is also responsible for managing the [early years pupil premium \(EYPP\)](#) for cared for children which in Northumberland is distributed through the Early Years team to providers.

Schools receive directly from the ESFA £2,630 of PP+ funding for pupils who are no longer cared for because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order. These pupils are known as previously cared for. This funding is *not* managed by the Virtual School Headteacher.

**cared for at least one day in the previous financial year*

1. Eligibility

- Eligible pupils who are cared for by Northumberland are identified by the Local Authority on DfE return SSDA903 in March of each year.

- Eligible pupils who are no longer cared for but who have been adopted or who left care on a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order (previously known as a Residence Order) immediately after being cared for (known as previously cared for) should be identified to schools/academies by parents or guardians and their status recorded on the School Census.

2. Role of the Virtual School Head

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires all Local Authorities to have a Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) who has additional statutory powers to carry out the duty to promote the educational achievement of the children it cares for. The VSH must manage the grant allocation to be used for the benefit of the cared for child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

This has statutory force and there is no requirement for the VSH to give the money to schools or to disperse the full £2,630.

VSHs are responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating PP+ funding to benefit children cared for by the authority:

- making sure that it is spent effectively and fully;
- being able to demonstrate how PP+ funding managed by the VSH is linked to raising achievement and closing the gap;
- having arrangements in place to engage with the cared for child's school/academy about how the PP+ funding is contributing to meet the needs identified in his/her PEP.

To ensure that these objectives are achieved and to enable the VSH to plan expenditure effectively to maximize impact of the funding, the following arrangements will be in place for dispersal of the grant in the financial year 2025-26:

- a. the Virtual School will retain the first £1135 of every eligible pupil's grant to be used to promote the educational achievement of all cared for pupils in Northumberland;
- b. to ensure transparency, the VSH will publish details of expenditure and impact in the Annual Report;
- c. schools/academies will receive a **direct payment** in three instalments of £365 each term to a maximum amount of £1095 per eligible pupil when the VSH has approved the Outcomes section of each pupil's ePEP and there is evidence in the ePEP of a termly review of progress to achieve those outcomes;
- d. a further £400 per eligible pupil will be paid to schools on completion of the 2 x 6 monthly **multi-agency PEP reviews**, at a rate of £200 for each review;
- e. the Outcomes section identifies the pupil's personalized needs through SMART targets and details the resources required for the actions which need to be taken to raise achievement;
- f. if the Outcomes section is not completed to an acceptable standard then the PP+ funding will not be paid to the school or alternative provider;
- g. if there is no evidence that previously set Outcomes have been reviewed termly or achieved then the PP+ funding will not be paid to the school or alternative provider;
- h. it is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher, with the support of the Virtual School when appropriate, to assess the needs of individual children and complete the Outcomes section of the ePEP;
- i. **additional funding** can be accessed from the PP+ fund held centrally by the VSH from retaining £1135 of each grant. Each will be considered on an individual needs-assessed basis and awarded at the discretion of the VSH;
- j. the VSH will also allocate an amount from that centrally held PP+ fund for **eligible pupils in crisis***. Each will be considered on an individual needs-assessed basis and awarded at the discretion of the VSH;

- k. any surplus funding at the end of the financial year will be distributed to schools with cared for children on roll at the discretion of the VSH.

**This allocation of PP+ funding is so that the Virtual School can respond to a crisis situation arising from the pupil's circumstances in care. These situations are ones that we can not predict and PP+ therefore allows us to intervene swiftly and responsively. This means that the Virtual School can fund high levels of support or personalized packages as and when required.*

Dispersing the grant on a termly basis will align the financial year with the academic year so that the outcomes in the PEP relate to the academic year (from September to July).

The proportion of the PP+ grant held centrally by the Virtual School will be used to accelerate the progress of all eligible cared for children belonging to Northumberland local authority. Details of expenditure each year are included in the VSH annual report and include:

- educational psychology support;
- teacher support and 1 to 1 tuition;
- careers advice and guidance for cared for children and care leavers;
- Thrive attachment training;
- Intervention strategies;
- Occupational therapy;
- support and education provision for children in crisis;
- therapies.

3. Process

For 2025-26:

- The PP+ will be devolved to schools/academies/alternative providers on receipt by Northumberland of the funding from the DfE.
- There will be three payment windows a year based on those in care on the Summer Term 2025, Autumn Term 2025 and Spring Term 2026.
- If a school requires funding in addition to the direct payment then further requests can be made through the ePEP system. Evidence will be required of the impact of the initial spend.
- All requests for additional funding will be considered by the Virtual School management team and other professionals where appropriate eg the Independent Reviewing Officer.
- If a school has a cared for pupil in crisis and additional funding is required urgently then the VSH should be contacted directly to access crisis funding (Virtualschool@northumberland.gov.uk).
- If there are any changes of educational placement during the year other than transition in September, the funding will need to be managed between schools with the agreement of the Virtual Head(s) of the belonging Local Authority(ies).
- If a pupil has a placement at an alternative provider, including the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), then the PP+ will be paid to the provision on a pro rata basis to continue to support the outcomes detailed in the pupil's ePEP.
- If a pupil becomes eligible between payment dates then PP+ funding can still be accessed through the ePEP.

- If a child ceases to be cared for then there will be a review of the PP+ funding allocation by the VSH with the Designated Teacher. Funding may continue to ensure there is no funding gap and that the needs of the pupil are still met, for example a child who leaves care on an adoption order who then becomes eligible for the PP+ for previously cared for children which the school will received in full (£2,630) directly from the ESFA but not until the following financial year.
- If a pupil is eligible and is in Year 11 on and after 1st April 2025, the school will receive 5/12 of the pupil premium allocation to cover the period from April to August.
- The payments from the Virtual School will be made to the school where the pupil is on roll at the beginning of the payment period ie April and September.
- For Northumberland belonging children on roll in Northumberland schools the funding will be paid by journal to subjective code 300014 ED10PL of the relevant school's budget.
- For all Northumberland belonging children on roll in Northumberland academies the funding will be paid by the Virtual School raising a purchase order.
- For Northumberland belonging children on roll in schools in other Local Authorities a payment will be made directly to an Academy or school, or to the Local Authority to then transfer to the appropriate school (depending on other Local Authorities' arrangements).
- For pupils from other Local Authorities who are on roll in Northumberland schools, if a payment is made directly to Northumberland County Council with details of the school and amount to be paid, then this will be transferred into the appropriate school budget under subjective code 300014 ED10PL. It is also possible that some Local Authorities will pay schools/academies/settings directly.
- PP+ will not be used to replace other funding for which a cared for child might be eligible, for example SEND funding, and should not be used to fund services provided through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- We will only seek to recoup funding when there is evidence that the PP+ is not being used to address an individual pupil's needs, and therefore not where a pupil moves mid-year (for whatever reason).

Please note: other Local Authorities have plans to devolve the PP+ in different ways. If you have a query about the PP+ cared for child who is on your school roll but belongs to a local authority other than Northumberland then please contact the relevant Virtual School Head directly and ask to see their PP+ policy.

4. Pupil Premium Plus for previously cared for children

PP+ for previously cared for children is paid directly to schools by the ESFA at a rate of £2,630 per pupil registered in the January census. Schools are responsible for recording the number of eligible pupils in January so that the funding will follow in April.

Schools should do all they can to ensure that parents, carers and guardians are aware of the PP+ entitlement.

Parents, carers and guardians must self-declare to the school, providing evidence that their child is previously cared for and has an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order or Residence Order. The child must have been in care previously in England and Wales.

It is important for schools to discuss the use of the PP+ with parents, carers and guardians.

5. Private and independent settings

In Northumberland, independent special schools with Northumberland belonging children and young people on roll will not routinely be paid the PP+. The VSH will, however, consider proposals from individual schools about individual cases.

6. Monitoring impact

The Personal Education Plan (ePEP) will be used to inform discussions with schools and other stakeholders on the use of the PP+. Each ePEP therefore needs to be of high quality and set robust targets for improvement. The ePEP should be reviewed every term in accordance with statutory guidance and every 6 months as part of the multi-agency statutory review of the child's care plan. It is a record of what needs to happen for a child in care to reach their educational potential.

ePEPs will need to be monitored closely by schools, the Virtual School, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The ePEP review must evaluate the impact of the PP+.

The Designated Teacher for looked after children in each school should be able to influence how the PP+ is used to support progression and learning and report to Governors as part of their annual report on the impact the funding has had on education outcomes for each eligible pupil.

The VSH is accountable to the Corporate Parenting Partnership and Corporate Parenting Group for ensuring that the funding is effectively dispersed with maximum impact.

7. Developing good practice

The PP+ must be used to improve outcomes for pupils in the following areas:

- academic achievement and progress;
- wider achievement eg in an area in which the child is gifted and talented;
- attendance;
- inclusion eg reducing fixed term exclusions;
- mental health;
- emotional health and wellbeing and social skills;
- transition eg to a new key stage or learning provider.

Examples of the types of activities that the PP+ might be used to support children include:

- additional one to one tuition to support learning;
- additional group tuition to support learning;
- additional support in school that will build a child or young person's self-esteem, confidence or develop their learning skills eg mentoring;
- aspiration raising activities that will benefit the child or young person's learning and development;
- extra learning resources that may support these individual pupils;
- additional support for vocational training eg equipment;
- alternative education packages;
- revision courses;
- school organized overseas trips that promote learning.

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