

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Corporate Parenting Panel
2.	Date:	2nd July, 2014
3.	Title:	The allocation and monitoring of the pupil premium plus grant for Looked After Children
4.	Directorate:	Safeguarding, Children and Families CYPS

5. Context and background

The pupil premium grant for LAC has more than doubled from £900 in 2013/14 to £1900 in 2014/15. It now includes children looked after for at least one day in the March 2014 CLA Data Return (pupils aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2012).

On 13th May the role of the Virtual Headteacher for LAC became statutory (Section 99 of the Children and Families Act). The Virtual Headteacher is now responsible for allocating the pupil premium plus and for monitoring its use and impact:

- making sure that pupil premium funding for looked after children is spent effectively
- demonstrating how pupil premium funding is linked to raising achievement for looked after children and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers
- having arrangements in place to engage with the looked after child's school (usually with the designated teacher) about how the pupil premium funding contributes to meeting the needs identified in the child's Personal Education Plan. (This includes support and challenge for all schools, whether in Rotherham or outside of the LA. Training provided by the VS will include the effective use of the pupil premium plus, linked to robust PEPs which drive accelerated progress. Training for designated teachers is now offered to all schools out of authority irrespective of distance, with the offer of support by telephone if this is more practical).

Unlike in previous years, there is no requirement for an authority to pass on the funding to the school where the child is on roll, to contribute towards meeting the needs identified in their Personal Education Plan. The presumption, however, is that funding will be passed to the school and this is strongly encouraged.

- It is for the Virtual Head to decide whether to allocate £1900 to a school for a looked after child, or whether this should be a higher or lower amount.
- Virtual Heads can decide on whether to pay the grant termly or annually, and they can also link allocation to the content of the Personal Education Plan.

It is evident from communication with other virtual heads, both regionally and nationally, that other local authorities are considering retaining a proportion of the overall grant to fund the following examples:

- Creation of new posts in the Virtual School. (The guidance states that the grant should not be used to fund posts that are the responsibility of local authorities as the corporate parent, but then goes on to say that a post to improve the quality of PEPs may be acceptable)
- Retaining funds to support pupils with a much higher level of need, who would receive more than the basic £1900 allocation.
- To fund projects such as Letterbox Club
- Allocating the centrally retained portion for the pupil only when a quality PEP is on the system

6. Proposals and Details

The arrangements for Rotherham for this financial year (to be reviewed for 2014/15) are as follows:

- The grant will be allocated on a termly basis; this is to take account of the fact that some children and young people move schools during the course of a school year. We will therefore not recoup any payments allocated to a school if the child/young person moves.
- For this financial year it will be funded at £500 per term. The retention of the remaining £400 will allow some flexibility according to need and wider consultation as to its use.
- The pupil premium plus will **only** be provided to meet the needs identified in a high quality plan in the PEP with clear targets for improvement, underpinned by well - targeted support. As PEPs are completed every 6 months we will use the Virtual School/ Get Real Team application form which include the progress monitoring proformas and action plans, to allocate the grant on a termly basis. This information can then be included in the child/young person's next PEP.
- Rotherham Borough Council and the Virtual School are corporate parents, so the question 'would this be good enough for my child?' is a central one in making decisions about the allocation of the pupil premium plus. The Virtual Headteacher has the responsibility for monitoring the use of the pupil premium plus and will be expected to report to Corporate Parenting Panel and Ofsted on the impact in terms of driving educational achievement.

7. Use of the Pupil Premium Plus

Schools and providers have been informed of the following:

- the grant should be used to support individual pupils and should not be subsumed into the school's larger 'pupil premium pot'.
- The pupil premium plus must be used to improve outcomes for children in terms of their academic achievement and progress e.g. through one to one tuition.
- It could also be used to support wider achievement, e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented; attendance; inclusion [by reducing internal and external exclusion] ; development of social skills and transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

8. Circumstances in which pupil premium plus will not be provided:

Pupil premium plus will not be used to double fund or replace funding which should already have been allocated to the school to support the child.

Examples include:

- Funding services that should be provided via a statement
- Other statutory work, e.g. statutory assessment or support from health
- Where the school's own funding should cover the cost of the interventions
- Where the action plan does not meet requirements
- Funding will not generally be provided to independent providers because these are already funded at a high level by central budgets. However, applications will be considered, and where there is compelling evidence that the grant is to be used to fund areas which are over and above what the provider could be reasonably expected to provide, payments may be made.

9. Finance

The allocation and monitoring of the pupil premium grant will necessitate an increase in the capacity of the administration team. The grant cannot be used for this purpose.

10. Risks and uncertainties

- New systems will need to be monitored for effectiveness
- Planning for any potential underspend, including the £400 per child currently retained centrally, will need to take place in the autumn term to prevent funding being returned to the DfE. (The Virtual School is not permitted to retain any surplus grant to carry forward into the following financial year)

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