

**Arrangements for the distribution of  
Pupil Premium Plus for the  
Education of Looked After Children  
2026-27**

**Leicestershire Virtual School**

**April 2026**

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout this document, the Pupil Premium for looked after children will be referred to as Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations.

The Leicestershire Virtual School works closely with Head Teachers and Designated Teachers to support ongoing improvements in the aspirations, achievement and attendance of children in care to Leicestershire County Council.

Our arrangements for the management of PPP funding for children in care are informed by three key Department for Education (DfE) papers:

- [Pupil Premium: Conditions of Grant 2026-27](#) (updated 31 Mar 2026)
- The pupil premium rates and detailed eligibility criteria for the financial year 2026 to 2027 are set out in the [Pupil Premium 2026 to 2027: technical note](#) (updated 31 Mar 2026)
- [Pupil Premium: Virtual School Heads' responsibilities](#) (9 July 2014, updated 19 March 2015)

n.b. In addition, and through a separate process, children who have left local authority care in England or Wales as a result of an adoption order, a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order are entitled to Pupil Premium Plus which is passed directly to the school.

***This grant is not managed by the Virtual School and is therefore not covered by this policy.***

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## 2. Eligibility and Allocation

### 2.1 Conditions of Grant, Pupil Premium

- PPG is also allocated to local authorities based on the number of looked-after children (LAC) supported by the authority. LAC are defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English local authority.
- Pupils who are recorded as LAC/PLAC and FSM Ever 6 will attract the LAC/PLAC per pupil amount only.
- In June 2026, an initial allocation will be calculated using the number of children looked after for at least one day, as recorded in the March 2025 children looked-after data return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 on 31 August 2023. The first 2 payments will use this data.
- A final allocation in December 2026 will use the number of children looked after for at least one day during the year ending March 2026, as recorded in the March 2026 children looked-after data return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 on 31 August 2024 to produce an updated allocation. The third and fourth payments will use this data.
- It is the responsibility of the Virtual School Head (VSH) in the local authority that looks after the child, in consultation with the child's educational setting, to ensure that PPG is

used to support those children's educational needs in accordance with their personal education plans.

- Virtual School Heads are responsible for managing the funding given to local authorities for the children in their care. They work with schools to ensure the funding is used to help deliver the outcomes identified in the children's personal education plans.
- They can pass all of the funding on to schools or retain some to fund activities that will benefit a group, or all, of the authority's looked-after children.

## 2.2 Pupil Premium Plus: Virtual School Heads' responsibilities:

- To work with each looked-after child's educational setting to agree how PPP funding will be spent to meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan (PEP).
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used, in consultation with the [child in care's] Designated Teacher, to meet their needs (which will be described in their PEP) and improve outcomes.
- The grant does not have to be allocated on a per capita basis, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care. The Virtual School Head can pass on less than the full amount or pass on more than the full amount based on individual circumstances and need.

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## 3. Pupil Premium Plus principles

### 3.1 Overarching principles underpinning our children's needs-driven model:

- PPP is intended to benefit the individual child and must be used to enhance and improve their education and narrow the achievement gaps between children in care and their peers.
- The child in care's voice and their specific needs are of central importance in considering the use and impact of this money by schools/settings.
- Some of the PPP funding can be held centrally to address identified needs of targeted individual, or groups of children and young people. None of the grant will be used to pay for Virtual School management or administration salaries.
- Leicestershire County Council and the Virtual School Head are corporate parents, so the question "would this be good enough for my child?" is central to making decisions about, and evaluating the effectiveness of, the use of PPP.

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## 4. Management and Accountability

### 4.1 Virtual School accountability

- The Virtual School Head is accountable to the Leicestershire Virtual School Strategy Group for setting up a transparent and rigorous allocation process to schools, ensuring its efficacy, monitoring its impact and where necessary challenging its use.
- The use and impact of PPP should be clearly recorded in the child/young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP)<sup>1</sup> and in other evaluative documentation held by the Virtual School. Impact will also be measured against termly progress data returns from schools.

### 4.2 Schools' accountability

- Schools and settings are accountable for ensuring that the money is used appropriately and effectively to enhance and improve the educational achievement of the child in care.
- Schools will be asked to review and detail the impact of previously allocated PPP during subsequent PEP meetings.
- PPP must be used to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in care to Leicestershire in the following ways:
  - Readiness to access learning (including addressing social and emotional needs)
  - Academic achievement and progress
  - Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
  - Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider

For example, TG (Year 5) is below national age-related expectations in reading.

*“Target: To make accelerated progress in reading: to achieve ‘Year 5 Developing’ by the end of the autumn term and ‘Year 5 Secure’ by the end of the academic year.*

*Strategies: 20 hours of one-to-one support during autumn term at £40 per hour funded by Pupil Premium Plus and 15 minutes daily reading with foster carers recorded in his reading log.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 28 of the statutory guidance, *Promoting the education of looked after children* (February 2018, DfE), states: “VSHs should make arrangements for PEPs to be reviewed each school term. This should include mapping how the pupil premium and any other additional funding has been used to support the targets set in the PEP. This is to ensure that the story of the child's educational progress is current and continues to meet the child's educational needs. It is also to ensure that information from the PEP is available to feed into the next statutory review of the wider care plan.”

## 5. Distribution

### 5.1 Retention of funding by the Virtual School

- In 2026-27 £590 of each eligible child's PPP allocation will be retained by the Leicestershire Virtual School to fund provision for:
  - Pupils temporarily not on a school roll
  - Pupils on a school roll whose needs exceed the per capita funding
  - Pupils on a school roll but not attending as a result of a temporary placement change
- This pooled funding will be used to benefit all Leicestershire LAC by the funding of individual or group resources e.g. training for DTs and other school staff, advocacy, aspirational and educational participation events, access to specialist educational psychology services, therapeutic interventions, book club subscriptions.

### 5.2 Allocation of funding to schools

- The remaining £2,100 of each eligible child's PPP will be transferred to schools on a termly basis, following submission of a plan detailing how the school intends to use PPP, including the costings and intended outcomes which have clear links to the child/young person's PEP targets; up to £700 in each term during 2026-27 providing the child remains in care and on the roll of the school.
- PPP for children in care will be transferred directly to the schools via the Leicestershire Virtual School.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will PPP funding be allocated to residential education providers and independent special schools because they are funded to meet all pupil education needs at a high level by other LA budgets.

### 5.3 Recoupment policy

- We will not recoup Pupil Premium Plus where a child moves during the term.
- We reserve the right to recoup or retain the funding:
  - If there is no evidence that the funding has been used to address the individual child's needs,
  - If the child's school and Virtual School agree that Pupil Premium Plus funding is not required e.g. due to other funding being available that meets the child's needs.
- In these circumstances the Virtual School will use the retained funding for the benefit of other children in care to Leicestershire.

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## 6. Other Authorities' looked after children

PPP for children and young people placed by other local authorities in Leicestershire schools and settings:

- Different approaches will be adopted by different Local Authorities (LAs) as the contexts vary so much in terms of the number of school-aged children in care, the size of the virtual school team and the existing operational budget for the virtual school team (which varies between LAs).
- Where children are placed in Leicestershire by other LAs, PPP payments to schools will be made by the other LA, who will determine how much will be paid and when it will be paid.
- Leicestershire schools who have children and young people in care from other LAs on their roll should contact the Virtual Head of the relevant virtual school to request their PPP policy as they are responsible for the allocation of PPP funding for all school aged children in care to their authorities, even though the child is educated in a Leicestershire school.
- The name and contact details of other virtual school heads can be requested from the Leicestershire Virtual School team.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **FAQ**

#### **Does the Virtual School Head have to manage the budget or can this be delegated to a local authority finance team?**

The conditions of grant state clearly that the pupil premium grant allocation must be managed by the designated Virtual School Head from the authority who looks after the children. This has statutory force. It is a Virtual School Head rather than a local authority finance team who is best placed to know how to use Pupil Premium Plus to maximise the benefits to looked-after pupils. Virtual School Heads should consult finance teams about the best way to distribute funding to schools.

#### **Can the Director of Finance dictate that the Pupil Premium Plus funding is passed directly to schools?**

The conditions of grant state that Virtual School Heads should manage Pupil Premium Plus funding. It is therefore for the Virtual School Head to decide how the Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children is managed. That is an important part of how the Virtual School Head complies with the duty under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of the children looked after by the authority.

#### **Does the Virtual School Head have to give the money to schools?**

There is no requirement to do so. There is, however, a strong expectation that Virtual School, Heads will pass on Pupil Premium Plus funding to a child's education setting so that it can be used to meet additional needs set out in his or her Personal Education Plan. Pupil Premium Plus can be passed to the school on a termly or annual basis. Local authorities may not carry forward funding held centrally into the following financial year; any centrally-held Pupil Premium Plus that has not been spent or allocated to the child's education setting by 31 March 2027 will be recovered by DfE.

#### **Does the Virtual School Head have to give the full allocation to schools or can they give a higher or lower amount?**

It is for the Virtual School Head to decide whether to provide the full amount to a school for a looked after child, or a higher or lower amount. If a school cannot identify what is the intended use or outcome of Pupil Premium Plus, the Virtual School Head may use that funding for the benefit of another child in care. They can also decide on whether to pay schools termly or annually. Allocation of the funding should be linked to the content of the Personal Education Plan as agreed with the school.

### **Can the Virtual School Head pool funding for some of the authority's looked after children?**

The Department expects Virtual School Heads to manage the Pupil Premium Plus to ensure that it promotes the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the authority. It may be appropriate to pool some Pupil Premium Plus for activities to benefit the authority's looked after children more holistically. For example, it might be appropriate to use this funding to provide training for a group of Designated Teachers across the authority or a group of Teaching Alliance schools.

### **Does the Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children need to be passed to non-mainstream schools?**

There is no requirement to do so. There should be a discussion about what provision is already being delivered and what additional value would be delivered if the Pupil Premium Plus funding was passed on to the non-mainstream education setting. This must be detailed in the child's Personal Education Plan.

### **Can the Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children fund a post in the Virtual School?**

Pupil Premium Plus is additional funding provided to raise the achievement of looked after pupils and close the achievement gap. It is not intended to fund posts that are the responsibility of local authorities as a corporate parent.

There may be instances where some Pupil Premium Plus funding can be used to support the work of a person where it can be demonstrated very clearly that their role makes a significant contribution to promoting the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority. That role could, for example, involve working with schools to raise the quality of learning targets in a child's Personal Education Plan.

### **Can some of the Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children be spent on providing other central services that support their education?**

Pupil Premium Plus funding is additional funding provided to support schools to raise the achievement of looked after children. It should not be used to fund central services that would reasonably be expected to be funded by local authorities to comply with their statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after. Virtual School Heads are responsible for managing the efficient use of Pupil Premium Plus funding for the purpose it has been provided and will therefore need to demonstrate a direct link between spending and raising standards of achievement for the children looked after by their authority, wherever they are placed.

### **Are Virtual School Heads accountable for the use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus on the achievement of looked after children, in the same way as headteachers?**

Virtual School Heads are responsible for managing the Pupil Premium Plus and making sure there are effective arrangements in place for its allocation to benefit the children looked after by their authority. That means:

- making sure that Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children is spent effectively and fully;
- being able to demonstrate how Pupil Premium Plus funding retained by the Virtual School 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 Pupil Premium Plus funding allocated to the school is contributing to meet the needs identified in his/her Personal Education Plan.

The Ofsted framework for the inspection of looked after children services states that, as part of the performance information required, the inspector will ask for the annual report of the Virtual School Head; that will include information about how the Pupil Premium Plus has been managed and the impact it has made.

Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils who attract Pupil Premium Plus on their roll, through Ofsted inspections and KS2/KS4 school performance tables. Schools will need to engage with the Virtual School Head and others involved in Personal Education Plans to agree how best to support looked after children and the use of the Pupil Premium Plus.

### **To whom is the Virtual School Head accountable within their local authority?**

That depends on the line management arrangements in individual local authorities. Ultimately, however, the Virtual School Head is accountable to the Director of Children's Services and/or the Chief Executive and the Lead Member for Children.

### **How should Virtual School Heads give schools funding for children who have been looked after for a very short period?**

It is up to Virtual School Heads to manage Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children. Although £2,690 is allocated for each looked after child, irrespective of how long they have been in care, this does not necessarily mean that Virtual School Heads are expected to manage the funding on the same basis to schools. Virtual School Heads can therefore manage the funding to take account of the length of time in care, as well as other factors, if they wish. The funding, however, should always be to support the educational achievement of the looked after child, as described in their Personal Education Plan.

**Can the Virtual School Head carry over Pupil Premium Plus funding to the following year?**

No. Any Pupil Premium Plus funding that has not been passed to schools or spent by 31 March must be returned to the Department for Education.

**Can the Pupil Premium Plus be given to foster carers to spend rather than schools?**

The Virtual School Head manages Pupil Premium Plus funding to support the education of looked after children, as set out in the Personal Education Plan. The expectation is that this funding is passed to schools unless there are clear reasons not to do this. It should not be used for activity that the local authority should normally be expected to fund as the corporate parent, such as support for foster carers. Foster carers, however, have an essential role in supporting the education of the children for whom they care; they can make valuable contributions to the Personal Education Plan, support with homework and experiential learning and ensure transitions go smoothly.

**Can Virtual School Heads impose conditions on how schools use the Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children?**

Local authorities should have a constructive and meaningful dialogue with schools on the most effective use of the funding and not impose conditions. The Virtual School Head manages the Pupil Premium Plus funding on the basis that it supports the child's Personal Educational Plan which is overseen by the Designated Teacher in the school.

**Can a school insist that they get the full allocation of £2,690 for a looked after child on roll?**

It is up to the Virtual School Head to decide how the funding is managed, including how funding is distributed to schools. Although £2,690 is allocated for each looked after child, irrespective of how long they have been in care, this does not necessarily mean that Virtual School Heads are expected to manage the funding on the same basis to schools, they can decide to pass on the full allocation, or more or less than the full allocation depending on the child's individual need. Virtual School Heads should work closely with schools about how best to meet the needs identified in a child's Personal Education Plan with support provided through the Pupil Premium Plus.

**Can an amount be held by the Virtual School Head to administer the grant?**

Pupil Premium Plus funding is additional funding provided to support schools to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including looked after children. It should not be used to fund central services such as the Virtual School Head to administer the funding. The Pupil

Premium Plus should be used to provide additional support in order to raise the achievement of looked after children.

### **How and why does the amount of Pupil Premium Plus vary from one local authority (LA) to another?**

- Children's needs vary and can change significantly.
- Children in care may move schools at natural transition points, i.e. infant to junior, primary to secondary, secondary to post-16 and/or due to care placement moves which may mean in-year changes.
- Some local authorities (LAs) may make annual allocations of Pupil Premium Plus rather than termly allocations.
- Some LAs may keep money back for the funding of schemes.

In view of this, there may be a significant difference in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed by different LAs.

### **How is use of PPP monitored?**

The use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) for Leicestershire children in care is robustly monitored by the Virtual School in PEP meetings and in relation to termly progress data returns and ongoing pupil progress reviews.

Each term existing PPP targets should be reviewed and, where necessary, new targets set termly. These targets are reviewed on a termly basis and impact evidenced in the PEP.

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