

Lancashire Virtual School

Policy for the allocation of Pupil Premium Grant + for looked after children.

2025-2026

Background

The DfE allocate funding to each local authority to provide PPG+ for looked after children of statutory school age who are looked after to each LA. The funding from financial year 2025-2026 will be allocated on the basis of £2,630 for each CLA in the LA's care. The conditions of the grant state:

The LAC premium must be managed by the designated virtual school head (VSH) and used for the benefit of the looked-after child's educational needs as described in their personal education plan (PEP). The VSH should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss how the child will benefit from pupil premium funding with the designated teacher in the child's education setting.

The condition of grant continues to stipulate that the grant is to be managed by the Virtual School Head Teacher and must be allocated in response to identified needs of the child and to support educational progress for the local authority's cohort of looked after children as a group, and not just to meet individual need.

The draft revised Guidance for Virtual School Head Teachers and designated Teachers also states:

In addition, we propose stating that all Virtual School Heads should publish a clear policy on the use of Pupil Premium Plus, including any funding top sliced by the Virtual School for authority wide services. This requirement promotes transparency and clarity for schools, carers and families about how local authorities use and manage Pupil Premium Plus funding.

Lancashire Virtual School Policy for the Allocation of PPG+: 2025-2026

The amount of PPG+ allocated to each Lancashire looked after child per term will be £550 (£610 in Summer 2025).

The school/setting in which a looked after child is on roll will be allocated £550 per term on receipt of a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is assessed as at least adequate through the Virtual School's quality assurance process. The PEP must demonstrate that the needs of the child/young person have been identified with a clear link to the intended use of the funding and the planned impact. In line with the DfE guidance [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#).

The allocation of PPG+ does not alter the school's responsibilities to the individual child. It is intended as a way to supplement provision and provide additional support, not replace support a school is funded to provide through its budget. The PPG+ must

not be used to pay for services or support that another child would receive from the school's general budget. All targets linked to it must be SMART targets.

The remaining £920 per CLA will form the PPG+ high needs fund and is utilised to:

- Supplement staffing in the Virtual School so that all schools have a designated Education Consultant who attends targeted PEP meetings and is available for consultation when needed.
- Provide additional funding support to school/education settings for pupils who have additional short-term needs identified, or a period of crisis that is impacting directly on learning progress.
- Support the wider strategies and activities of the Virtual School to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duties.

Requests for additional PPG from the High Needs Fund:

- High Needs Funding requests must be matched to the targets set on the child's PEP for this term/last term.
- Schools/education settings request additional PPG+ funding direct from the Virtual School by submitting the High Needs request form. The form is available on the Virtual School website and should be sent to virtualschool@lancashire.gov.uk. If this request is for Section 19 funding, this application must be made via e-form. For more information on this, please contact alternativeprovision@lancashire.gov.uk
- A High Needs Funding panel will meet fortnightly to discuss applications and make decisions. They will let settings know about their decisions within 3 working days. The dates for these panels will be shared through the weekly education bulletin. HNF applications will need to be submitted by 4pm on the Tuesday preceding the meeting.
- Schools/settings must discuss this with their named Virtual School Education Consultant prior to submitting their request. ECs will be asked for their opinion once the form has been submitted.
- Evidence of need and details of the proposed use of the funding needs to be provided as well as the reason it cannot be funded by any other means. In the first instance, schools should consider whether the funding can be met from within the school's budget or whether match funding would be appropriate.
- Schools will be asked for detailed information about their PPG+ funding for the last 12 months, spending of notional SEN funding (if appropriate) and why funding is needed over and above AWPU funding and cannot be met from within the school.
- The Virtual School will take every case on its individual merits. In some cases, we will fund the whole amount requested while in other cases, we reserve the right to ask the school to match-fund. If the application does not meet the criteria for additional funding, we will reject the request.
- Evidence of impact is required following an appropriate period, by the submission of the High Needs Impact form which is available on the Virtual School website. No further submissions from the school will be considered if this form is not completed in a timely manner.

Requests for additional PPG+ can only be requested once a term for any pupil except in exceptional circumstances. It is for short-term needs and cannot replace long-term funding to meet on-going needs, such as significant SEN.

The policy of providing access to additional PPG+ to reflect the different level of needs of individual CLA across time, is in line with the DFE conditions of the funding.

In the vast majority of circumstances, funding will be allocated for no more than 1 term with longer periods considered only in the most challenging cases. During this time, schools should use the funding and the time available to assess the child's needs and make appropriate arrangements for their future education, including, when necessary, using a graduated approach to assess need and applying for an EHCP.

Applications will not be processed where it involves removing a child from the roll of the school as this could be viewed as off-rolling.

Exceptions:

Pupils with an EHCP who are placed in an independent school setting, or any pupil placed in a residential setting with education will not usually receive PPG+ separately. The funding provided to commission the placement is based on meeting the full needs of the child. However, in exceptional circumstances based on evidence of need PPG+ funding may be allocated by the Virtual School Head Teacher.

Monitoring the management of PPG+.

Management of PPG+ is the responsibility of the Virtual Head but is also monitored through:

- Education Improvement SLT.
- Corporate Parenting Board.
- The Virtual Head Teacher's Annual Report.
- Reports to School Forum as requested.
- Ofsted inspection of LA process.

Impact of PPG+

The impact of PPG+ is monitored by:

- Required information on the PEP which indicates how the funding will be used to support identified targets and reporting on the impact of previous funding allocated.
- High Needs PPG+ allocated is monitored by a mandatory impact return for each allocation.
- The use and impact of funding is also reviewed as part of the regular tracking visits to each school.
- As part of the annual report.

Other Expenditure:

In accordance with the conditions of the grant, the PPG+ retained by the Virtual School can be used for projects, resources or programmes that support groups of looked after children and to fund training and support to Designated Teachers, schools and parents/carers. It can also be used to fund staffing in the Virtual School to provide advice and support to schools.

Programmes are identified that relate to the priorities identified through tracking or analysis of progress and attainment data.

Examples (non-exhaustive):

- Home Reading resources for Key Stage 1 and 2 children.
- Commissioning of Wellcomm and Verbo to support with speech and language.
- Access to educational on-line platform Britannica
- Reading programmes such as Reading Eggs and Book in a Box
- Revision resources for home use and training sessions for parents/carers
- Provision of whole school Attachment and Trauma Training programme available for all schools.
- Access to Virtual Reality Training to support Attachment and Trauma awareness.
- Conferences & CPD for Designated Teachers and other school staff.
- Group mentoring.
- Targeted individual tutoring for KS4 & KS5 pupils.
- Assistant EP time to support schools.
- Support from LPDS for behaviour in schools.
- Contribution to staffing for the Virtual School Team.

Lancashire policy and practice on the allocation of PPG+ is communicated to schools via:

- Termly newsletter
- Guidance to Schools on Supporting a Lancashire CLA
- Designated Teacher Training and Briefings
- Reports to School Forum as requested.
- Virtual School Web site.

Post 16 PPG+

Following a pilot, the DFE allocate additional funding for post 16 looked after children and Care Leavers to all Virtual Schools from September 2023 to support looked after children and care leavers from the age of 16. It is not yet known if this funding will continue in the future beyond 2025-2026, but the DFE expectation is that Virtual Schools will provide a level of support for Care Leavers up to 25. This is in line with the statutory duty of Local Authorities' Social Care responsibility.

This funding is to improve the education outcomes for looked-after children and care leavers at post-16. In particular, it should support improvements in:

- attendance

- retention
- attainment

This should enable them to have sustained involvement in employment, education and training.

The Lancashire policy for the use of Post 16 PPG is in development taking into account learning from the pilot and subsequent DFE evaluations which continue to be annual. Lancashire Virtual School contribute to these evaluations.

Funding allocated to Lancashire Virtual School for 2024-25 was £250,691 (figures for 2025-2026 have not yet been confirmed).

2024-2025 use:

- Extending the post 16 team to 2 full time posts.
- Provision of direct support to Further Education colleges and training providers to meet the needs of our post 16 students- both individual needs and cohort needs.
- Training provided to Post 16 providers of education and employers including a FE/Training providers forum to develop good practice and support offer for our young people.
- Funding of mentoring programmes
- Creation and funding of 2 posts within the Leaving Care Team to support the most disengaged into EET.
- Funding providers to trial innovative programmes to develop appropriate courses, pathways and support for our CLA and Care Leavers through the Aspiration Fund.
- To provide tuition for young people who did not attain their potential at school to access GCSE/Functional Skills

Early Years PP+

Pupil Premium for CLA in nursery settings, both maintained and PVI, is managed and allocated on behalf of the Virtual School Head Teacher by the Funded Nursery Education Team. Information on the use of the funding is requested on the Personal Education Plan. The rate is currently to 68p per hour accessed. The maximum EYPP allocated is now £387.60 when a child is accessing the maximum entitlement of 570 hours per year.

The Early Year PP+ now applies to all eligible children who are accessing a funded place not just 3- and 4-year-olds.

Previously Looked-After Children

Children who were previously looked-after are also entitled to the PPG+ funds. However, this money is paid directly to schools and is outside of the remit of the VSH. Schools and parents may want to consider how this funding is allocated to enhance the education of the child.

These children are not entitled to apply for High Needs Funding as the entirety of their PPG+ is paid directly to settings.

To be reviewed April 2026